

**Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting
of the National Health & Safety Groups Council**

Held at RoSPA, Birmingham
On Wednesday 12th October 2005

Present:

Kerry Ross – Chair	
Peter Bennett	Wiltshire
Roger Bibbings	RoSPA (secretary)
Richard Collman	Cambridge
Neal Davis	Peterborough
Ed Ferrett	NEBOSH (sponsor)
Jim Flynn	Coventry & Warwickshire
John Haddon	Peterborough
Gordon Hicks	London
Richard Johns	Sheffield
Mike McMahon	The Marches
Frank Miller	Lancashire
Roger Monaghan	HSE (partner)
Mr R Muir	Nottinghamshire
Mike Nixon	Manchester
Fred Parkin	Herefordshire
Karen Pring	Cambridge
Ted Roe	Gloucestershire
Maria Sanderson	North Lincs
Norman Stevenson	SHEF Scotland
Charles Tracey	North West Association of Health & Safety Groups
Alan Yeo	Cambridge

Apologies:

Northern Ireland Safety Group
Isle of Wight Health & Safety Group
Charities Safety Group
Teesside Safety Group
West & North Yorkshire
South Cumbria
Burton & District
Somerset
Lea & Ouse
South Yorkshire

Bob Rajan	HSE
Ian Coombes	NEBOSH

- Welcome from Janice Cave – Head of Safety Policy at RoSPA
- Minutes of the AGM 15th June 2005 were agreed as a correct record.
- Presentation by Kerry Ross (Chairman) on

Safety Groups UK – ‘Promoting Safety and Health Nationwide’

The presentation highlighted the potential of the organisation.

Kerry pointed out the experience and commitment of the local groups that made up the organisation. That with this wide variety of knowledge there was a potential for the organisation to have a real influence and say in UK Health & Safety matters which currently it was not achieving.

Also that some local groups were struggling and needed support, guidance and help from the organisation which they were not getting, that the organisation had an opportunity to help these groups by sharing the knowledge and experience from other groups in the organisation.

Kerry also commented that the organisation had to be flexible enough to move with the times, remaining static would make the organisation obsolete.

Currently the organisation did not receive the acknowledgement or respect of key players in the Health and Safety System. The organisation needed to change the way it was perceived and publicise the fact that it had a collection of knowledge and experience that should be utilised.

The plans for the future were explained.

The Organisation would need to be more business like in its approach.

- Funding

The organisation needed revenue to achieve its objectives.

The Management Committee would continue to try hard to get sponsorship but that some funding from groups may be asked for.

Groups were asked to support the organisation in where it was trying to get to.

- Business Plan

The business plan showed the way forward for the organisation and it would be reviewed/produced/modified and managed as time went on. Groups would be kept informed of any changes.

- RE – Branding

Changing the name reflected the new objectives of the organisation.

The official launch of Safety Groups UK would take place at the meeting of the organisation at Water UK on 26th January 2006, followed by the Alan Butler Awards at the House of Lords.

Although the Alan Butler Awards would be sponsored by BT, sponsorship was needed for the event at the House of Lords.

- NEC Stand

This was an opportunity to advertise the organisation and promote the local groups to the Safety Community and needed to be more professionally presented and developed.

- Partnership Agreements

The DERM project was taken as an example of the kind of project the organisation wanted to help and support the HSE in.

The HSE were committed to giving support to groups. (see below)

- Government Initiatives

To be supported or not supported as the organisation felt fit.

Comments

Partnership Agreement with HSE

Responding to comments regarding the wording of the Partnership Agreement with the HSE, Kerry Ross said that the meeting needed to concentrate on the issue of whether the organisation as a whole was supportive of the partnership.

Kerry Ross also said that the Management Committee had to be allowed to be flexible and groups would decide at the annual AGM whether they agreed or disagreed with the Management Committee when they also had the opportunity to vote members out if they hadn't delivered.

The Business plan stated what the Management Committee was committed to delivering and they would be accountable to this.

Environment

Karen Pring (Cambridge Group) wished to emphasise the links between health and safety and the environment. She suggested as this is a relatively new area for Health and Safety it would be good opportunity for the organisation to give support to groups and be a driving force in putting this issue forward.

Support for SMEs

She also made the point that the membership and support of the Cambridge group was from big companies who have a Health and Safety professional but that they have problems reaching SMEs and the self-employed who really need the advice and information, as they don't have their own Health and Safety people.

Cambridge would like more inclusion on the Mission and vision and forward plan of the organisation on how the organisation will target the SMEs.

Kerry Ross responded that at the moment the environment was not appropriate issue for the organisation as initially there was enough to do on Health and Safety. The organisation needed to consider whether environment was a separate subject.

Charles Tracey pointed out that in the Objectives (section 2) of the proposed Safety Groups UK constitution it states that

"The objective of the organisation shall be to advance education in all aspects of health and safety at work and to promote the provision of safe and healthy working environments for the public benefit."

Therefore the organisation already has a key emphasis on health and safety and the working environment.

Karen Pring stated that her concerns had been that the constitution should be flexible enough to allow the organisation to look at environmental legislation in the future. It was agreed that the proposed constitution allows this flexibility.

Kerry Ross also reminded everyone that the organisation did not wish to interfere with local Groups and they were free to explore all Health and Safety issues but that the organisation needs to be developed before it started to think about the environment.

Richard Collman stated that the environment overlaps with health and safety and that this overlap should be included

Kerry Ross stated that he had no problem with that.

Richard Collman also stated that there was a need to get greater awareness of SMEs by commercial organisation and Health and Safety organisations like the HSE.

Funding and Support

Gordon Hicks (London Group) said that the London Group had suffered a decline and now had some financial problems. They were doing what they could to supplement the finances with sponsorship and raised membership fees. At the moment the Group needed support and couldn't give any financial support to the organisation but that they could provide help in other ways.

Kerry Ross stated that the organisation did need revenue in order to achieve its objectives and move forward but also stated that part of the organisation's business plan was to support struggling groups and if the organisation received enough revenue to give financial help to groups then that should be considered

He also added that the organisation would like to give their gratitude and send their best wishes to Tony Corfield and his wife Irene.

Richard Johns (Sheffield) commented that the Sheffield group were not keen on the idea of per capita funding but would be able to offer meeting venues and help and support the organisation in other ways. He also said that the group was thinking of increasing its membership fee as it was currently far below the national average. Kerry Ross pointed out that this was an area that the organisation could help with, by sharing the experiences of groups to see how they were funded and what had been successful.

Richard John suggested that the organisation could produce a 'ten point' plan for groups on improving their programme and membership. This could be produced from feedback from groups on how they had developed their programmes and increased their membership.

Kerry Ross commented that this reinforced the need for opening up the communication process between groups and the organisation.

Richard Collman (Cambridge) stated that hiring venues was a huge cost and that finding a free meeting venue was one of the best ways to preserve group funds. Mike Nixon (Manchester) agreed that free venues were the best way to save money.

Mike Nixon (Management Committee Treasurer) also pointed out that support of the organisation from groups could be for example; attendance at meetings, providing venues or providing speakers names or programme ideas that the organisation could distribute to groups. This all required better communication between the organisation and the groups. He also said that although the organisation needs revenue, if groups couldn't pay to be members of the organisation they would not be forced to.

Kerry Ross stated that the Management Committee would gather information and disseminate it to groups.

Roger Bibbings (RoSPA) emphasised that the organisation needed to produce an annual report to show what the Management Committee and the organisation had achieved and to show what it was doing for the groups and what it was doing for Health and Safety.

Maria Sanderson (North Lincs Group) explained how the North Lincs group had strengthened and grown. A report was produced on the group's plans and what they had achieved. The group was able to increase its membership fees and also achieved an increase in members. The SMEs and self-employed were attending meetings because they got information, advice and support on Health and Safety.

The HSE

Kerry Ross stated that the organisation was currently in talks with the HSE regarding the funding of a Groups researcher for the organisation and that this showed how the HSE was supporting the organisation as it moved forward.

Charles Tracey commented that the organisation had not yet achieved the right communication with the HSE. That the HSE had projects on Intervention Logic Modelling and on the new Probabilistic Safety Analysis (PSA) but that this information had not been communicated to groups.

Roger Monaghan from the HSE explained that the HSE received funding for projects in a 3 year cycle and this might explain why the two projects: Intervention Logic Modelling and the new Probabilistic Safety Analysis (PSA) had not been promoted.

Voting on the New Proposed Constitution for 'Safety Groups UK'

The Chairman, Kerry Ross, asked the Groups' representatives present to vote on whether to accept the proposed constitution for 'Safety Groups UK'

10 Proxy votes were received from Groups unable to attend.

The results were:

22 votes For accepting the proposed constitution and 1 vote Against.

The Chairman declared the proposed constitution would be adopted from 13th October 2005 and the organisation's name would now be 'Safety Groups UK'.

Regionalisation

The point was made that regionalisation was introduced to achieve participation in the organisation Nationwide but it needed to evolve and develop. The Management Committee would look at the issue and see how the organisation could move it forward.

Roger Bibbings wanted to make the point that Regionalisation would be a learning exercise and that it wouldn't prescribe how groups talked to each other.

Richard Collman was concerned that the Regional representative should have enough support from all the groups it represents and not just represent their own group's interests.

Kerry Ross commented that the organisation would not be able to regulate, it could only help and support and the accountability of the Management Committee would be at the AGM.

Charles Tracey representing the North West Region made the point that the North West had its annual conference last week and all groups in the region were represented and also that the conference attracted the SMEs.

Charles wanted to thank the HSE for their support at the conference.

Norman Stevens also made the point that the Scottish groups worked together as a region and that it worked well, they also held an annual conference.

Neal Davis on behalf of the Management Committee and the Groups thanked Kerry Ross for all the time, effort and negotiation that has led to the successful re-launch of the organisation.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be the 26th January 2006 at Water UK, followed by the Alan Butler Awards ceremony at the House of Lords.

The day will include a press conference and the official launch of Safety Groups UK.

A proposed date for the AGM is 4th April 2006 in Dunblane, Scotland.