

Affiliates' Day

Saturday 4 November 2006

YHA Coalport

Attendees from the Hostelling and Local Groups:

40 delegates attended the meeting, representing 22 Groups.

YHA was represented by:

Alan Bourne, Treasurer

Dave Mills, Trustee and Task Group Member

Sarah White, Director of Human Resources

Alan Hopley, Director of Marketing and Corporate Affairs

Crewenna Dymond, Head of Volunteering and Task Group Member

Independent Facilitator

Richard John, Consultant

Programme

Morning

1. Brainstorming session

Sarah White and Richard John facilitated the morning session. The delegates were split up into 6 small working groups and asked to record on flip chart paper their views on three topics:

1. Our current view about the relationship between YHA Centre and Groups is...
2. Our concerns about the future are...
3. List the things happening between YHA Centre and Groups that should Start/Stop/Continue/be Done Differently....

Following the session the YHA team pulled together all of the responses and drew out the common themes. From these themes 6 questions were generated to and put back to the groups in the second session.

2. Fix-it session

Working in different groups, the delegates were asked to answer 6 questions, which emerged from the brainstorming session. Each working group was given the opportunity to answer each questions and each individual was

encouraged to put down their opinion/thoughts, even if they did not agree with other members of their working group. The six questions were:

1. How and what do you want YHA to communicate with you?
2. How could YHA show its commitment to Local Groups?
3. How can YHA balance the needs of families, individuals and groups?
4. What do you think are YHA's key priorities
5. How should YHA protect its name and maintain standards?
6. What would be the key features of a perfect partnership between Local Groups and YHA?

Both sessions generated a lot of comments and ideas. Over lunch the YHA team looked over the Fix-it responses and found that for a number of comments and suggestions progress was already being made, plans were in place or the idea could be 'actioned' quickly.

Afternoon

3. Insurance

Paul Nicholson, Sports Executive from Perkins Slade, spoke about how the Civil Liability Insurance Package for outdoor and sport clubs was set up. He explained the two options open to YHA groups:

- a) All groups join one scheme, the risk is shared between many people and the costs are kept low
- b) Groups negotiate separate insurance, either with Perkins Slade or other brokers, and have a tailored made package but at higher cost.

Perkins Slade and YHA have agreed that in order to make the Option A work, YHA will handle all the premiums from all the groups taking out the package so that Perkins Slade can operate a single policy and keep the costs down.

Paul was able to answer questions from the floor and clarified a number of concerns. He invited anyone (attending the event or otherwise) to contact him at the Birmingham office with queries.

A separate "frequently asked questions" (FAQ) document has also been produced.

4. Marketing

Alan Hopley, Director of Marketing and Corporate Affairs, spoke about plans to redesign YHA's website which will include an area for all the Affiliate Groups to be listed with their contact details and website addresses to help YHA members to find out about the groups in their area. YHA will use the information gathered on the Affiliate Membership Form for the website so groups must keep YHA up to date about changes. He also confirmed that Triangle will carry information about Affiliate Groups.

Alan explained that when Hostelling and Local Groups become Affiliate Groups (using the Group Membership Card) they will have access to dynamic and flexible pricing and receive information about offers, especially at off-peak times.

Developments in the Orion booking system mean that Hostel opening patterns and bed availability will be visible on the web for at least 12 months ahead. Every bed in YHA, including Enterprise hostels, bunkhouses [and the small volunteer run hostels], will be visible on the web in 2007. Developments at the Contact Centre mean that callers unable to speak to someone at the Hostel will be diverted to the Contact Centre, which will have extended opening hours (8am – 9/10pm weekdays and longer at weekends).

YHA plans for pricing to be more flexible and while there may be lower prices at off-peak times this will mean higher prices at high-peak times. The new pricing structure means there will be 10 pricing bands, although most hostels will not operate all of these. Within a band the price will range no more than 50% from the top price to the lowest. YHA must be commercially aware and compete well.

The next Go-Guide will be released in January 2007. It is not possible to include the opening times in the guide because it would be out-of-date the moment it was printed.

YHA understands that some groups may find it difficult to operate under the new terms and conditions that will apply to them from March 2007. Alan explained that the terms and conditions are to be reviewed and the problems of Affiliate Groups will be considered but he could not commit to any changes at this stage.

Alan re-iterated that group membership was not a second class of membership and YHA would be working hard to offer as many benefits to group members as possible. At the moment the deals offered to school groups reflect the amount of business they have with YHA.

5. Licensing

Following the AGM YHA sought legal advice about licencing groups to use the YHA name and logo. Crewenna Dymond, Head of Volunteering, explained the legal advice received from William Colacicchi at Browne Jacobson:

“The name and logo of the charity, and its associated reputation, are important assets of the Charity. The law requires the Charity to protect these in the same way as protects its buildings, investments or other assets. Therefore, if the Groups, or anyone else, are allowed to use the name, there must be some regulation of what can and what cannot be done.

If YHA was entering a commercial sponsorship agreement, whereby a Bank, for example, used sponsorship of YHA to enhance its own image, then there would be a very long and stringent list of requirements the Bank would have to observe to ensure that YHA did not

become tainted by any bad publicity caused by the Bank; for example, if the Bank was all over the news because it was found to be financing corrupt companies or regimes, the reputation of YHA could be damaged if its name and logo appeared on all the Bank's credit cards and literature as a supported charity.

In the case of the Groups, who are obviously non-commercial, and made up of supporters (and in many cases volunteers) of the charity, the risk is reduced meaning that the terms of the licence can be quite simple. But there is still some risk, and there must be some constraints.

For example, it should require not much more than that the Group agrees;

- (i) to use YHA's name and logo only as authorised
- (ii) to take reasonable steps (not involving cost) to protect YHA's name
- (iii) not to use the name in any way detrimental to YHA
- (iv) to cease using the name at the end of the licence, or if so requested if there is a breach

This is designed to protect YHA against reputational risk (groups behaving badly under the YHA badge), or YHA suffering infringement of its name: I fully accept both are highly unlikely from Groups, but the law (and the Charity Commission are becoming increasingly strong on this) requires the charity to guard against such risks."

All (new or existing) groups who do either or both of the following, and wish to continue to do so, will need to have a licence if they:

- Use YHA in their group name
- Use the green YHA logo

The licence will be valid for one year at which point it will need to be renewed. YHA intends to charge only a nominal £1 fee for the licence.

Groups without YHA in their name (e.g. 'Placename Outdoor Group') will not need to hold the full licence, provided they do not wish to use the YHA green logo.

YHA has created a new logo for Affiliate groups:

Affiliated to YHA

The licence will not cover this logo and all groups are able to use it to promote their affiliation to YHA. All groups will be asked to sign a Declaration (or Affiliate Contract) on the new Affiliate Membership Form, which sets out the arrangement between YHA for the use of this logo.

Sarah White responded to concerns raised and clarified the legal position on licensing.

6. Governance Review

Alan Bourne, Treasurer, explained that the Governance Review has begun and the first stage consultation deadline was at the end of October. All members are invited to contribute to the consultation exercises. Dr Andrew Purkis is the independent consultation leading the review. Alan emphasised that Dr Purkis will be scrupulously fair and has not reached any conclusions yet.

The review will look at the AGM, the Board of Trustees and the role of the National Officers. The first phase of the review ('What needs fixing?') is complete and Andrew will now move on to look in more detail at the areas that need review. Phase 2 will look at the options available and a second consultation will take place. The final proposals will be put to the AGM in September 2007.

Alan explained that the best way for members in Local Groups to get their views included is to participate in the consultation exercises. These are announced in various media, depending on the timing involved.

Alan also explained that using 0870 numbers enabled YHA to transfer calls within the network, which is not possible from the geographic numbers. He offered to check the cost compared to standard long distance calls and report back.

Some group members expressed concern that Dr Purkis had not attended the event. Crewenna Dymond explained that Dr Purkis was unable to attend as he was working on the consultation feedback. Sarah White suggested that Dr Purkis could be invited to the Local Groups conference in March.

Summing up

Following up from the morning session Sarah White announced that there were a number of comments/ideas raised that could be dealt with quickly. Some of the remaining items could be dealt with in the short-term, others would take longer and naturally some suggestions were not possible to action at the present time. Sarah committed that a report on the meeting and a draft action plan would be circulated to groups on Friday 10th November.

It was also agreed that YHA would support the request that the groups themselves should manage the Local Groups' Conference. A suggested date for the event is 17th March 2007.