



## **Planning a Conference**

A PCN checklist to help local groups to run a successful conference

### **Before starting to plan:**

- Let PCN trustees know that you are thinking of staging a conference
- Decide which PCN group or groups are going to be organising
- Ensure you will have enough support for planning, organising all aspects, and helping on the day

### **Conference check list**

#### **Speaker(s)**

- Speaker and/or enabler?
- Availability? - many have busy diaries - arrange well in advance
- Date(s)?
- Fee(s)?
- Expenses?
- Hospitality?
- B&B?
- Other requirements?

*PCN recommends that there should be an early discussion with speakers about any honorarium and what expenses you will cover and whether receipts are needed. Payment should be made either at the conference or immediately afterwards. Payment is the responsibility of the conference organiser, even if there is an expectation that PCN will refund the organiser from central funds.*

#### **Conference**

- Whole or part day?
- Date?
- Timing?
- Theme/title? Agree with speaker(s)
- Bookstall? - organisation needed in advance

- PCN stand, with leaflets etc.

### **Programme**

- Agree this with speaker
- Registration on the day - how?
- Include realistic timings (including registration), breaks, discussion groups, Q and A session, etc.
- Arrangements for any smaller group and/or Q and A sessions?
- Lunch break? - bringing packed lunch is probably the cheapest; sandwich shops nearby?
- Programme available in advance? - at least in outline? - online?

### **Venue**

- Church premises or other?
- Cost of hire? Church usually cheapest. Include all areas required in the 'deal'
- Public liability insurance – are you covered by the venue management within the cost of hire? NB The venue's policy should cover anything related to the building but may not extend to harm caused to the organiser's negligence. PCN's third part liability covers this for most meetings provided they are clearly a PCN meeting, organised by a PCN member. But you **must** tell us in writing if you wish to rely on our policy for this cover so that we can check your eligibility.
- How many can venue accommodate? – this will limit income if charging for the conference
- Access to venue - how long beforehand and afterwards?
- Access to kitchen?
- Access to other smaller rooms if required?
- Contact with caretaker?
- Keys? - Getting and returning them
- Toilets? - Sufficient for numbers likely to attend?
- Audio/Visual arrangements? - Microphone, screen, projector etc. + cost?
- Eating allowed on premises? Where exactly?
- Refreshments? - Where exactly? - How to organise?

### **Location and accessibility of venue**

- Address with postcode of venue?
- Car parking? Where? Cost involved?
- Precise directions - for attendees coming by car, train, bus?

### **Covering Costs**

- Make a budget – can you cover your expenses?
- How much to charge for tickets? - Concession for PCN members - for any other groups? Session tickets for weekend conferences to allow attendance on only one day?
- Consider worst case scenarios - too few attendees, speaker falls ill - what are the costs of cancellation and who is financially responsible?
- Underwriting by PCN trustees required? (Max £500). Are there other financially responsible stakeholders? To cover initial outlay, PCN seedfunding may also be available repayable after the event.
- If no charge, donations to cover speaker's (and home team's) expenses?

### **Banking/Accounting**

- Booking arrangements? – booking forms, on line bookings?
- Handling of tickets/cheques/money? Who are cheques made out to?
- Who is responsible? eg a treasurer
- Banking arrangements
- Ensure accounts are kept

### **Advertising**

- On PCN website, Newsletter, and other PCN Britain communications.
- Where else?
- Write copy giving some information about conference programme, theme, speaker etc. with start and finishing times and practical details about venue, directions, postcode etc.

### **Other considerations**

- Print a flyer and booking form?
- Audio or video recording?
- It would be good to take photos to use in future publicity and the Newsletter

- Organise a crèche?
- If a weekend event, recruit volunteer overnight hosts?

To ensure the smoothest running of the whole event, it is important to develop a good relationship with the speaker, as well as to keep other planners and helpers and PCN trustees in the loop, and to ask for advice where required.

It is very important to decide **who** is going to do, or be responsible for, **what**, and **when** or **by when**, and to make sure that **every aspect** of the event **is covered**.

Sandra Griffiths 2011

Updated Andy Vivian 2015