

Here are the draft minutes of the AGM:

Autscape AGM, Friday 29th July 2005, 2.30pm

Chair: Kalen

Minutes: Charles

Present: Yo, Dave, Larry, Paul, Katie, Robin, Kazumi, Nic, Seth, Aisa, Michelle, Dave, Heta, Sebastian, Dorit, Ian, Jodi, Martine, Chris, Felix, Matt, Phil (arrived half-way)

(I may have left one or two out whose name badges I couldn't read, if so please let me know)

Item 1

Should we hold another Autscape event?

This was a unanimous "yes" without any discussion.

Item 2

Where should it be? Ammerdown or elsewhere?

Kalen quickly made it clear that the existing management team would prefer it to be at Ammerdown, and in fact would not be prepared

to organise an event anywhere else, meaning that a new team would have to be elected. Despite this, there was a certain amount of discussion on the point. Matt in particular expressed the view the Ammerdown is limited in size, and given the obvious popularity of this year's event we ought to consider looking for a larger venue. Yo & Paul both separately offered help in sourcing such a larger venue if necessary.

There were many objections to an immediate change of venue which can be summarised as follows:

1. Familiarity. Many autistics thrive on familiarity, and would feel far more comfortable returning to an event they are familiar with. They would also be more able to describe the event to other people who might want to attend in the the future.

2. Ease of organising. This was the main reason for the management team position, who felt they had put a disproportionate amount of work into this years event, in the hope that next year's event would be easier, being in many ways a re-run of this year's event.

3. The event is still in it's infancy. It was felt that we needed more experience in consolidating Autscape as an annual event, and that this could be best obtained by using the same venue for now.

4. There will be some limited room for the event to grow, as we can insist on sole-occupancy of Ammerdown next year, giving us another 15

beds. There is also space for more campers if needed.

5. An increase in the physical size of the venue would also mean an increase in problems for many autistics, as it would be even harder for people to find their way around. It is also doubtful whether a larger venue could offer the same level of in-house care & support which Ammerdown so successfully did.

After a period of discussion the meeting moved to a vote as follows:

Should we use Ammerdown as a venue next year?

For: 11, Against: 4, Abstentions: 3

So this motion was carried by a large majority.

Item 3.

When should it be, and how long should the event be?

This was on the agenda because many attendees had privately expressed the view to various members of the organising team that

the

event should be slightly longer. It was pointed out to the meeting that we have provisionally booked the following dates for Autscope 2006:

Monday 31st July - Friday 4th August 2006

Giving us the option of a Mon - Fri event rather than a Tues - Fri event like this year's.

When should the event be?

There was a general feeling in the meeting that a summer time event was a good idea, and so the dates were about right. This part of the motion was assumed to be carried without a vote.

How long should the event be?

This was the most contentious issue of the day, and a large part of the meeting was spent discussing it.

The advantages of a longer event can be summarised as follows:

1. Autistics have more time to get used to the event, and feel comfortable in "Autistic space"
2. There will be less need to overlap presentations, forcing people to choose between two presentations when they might want to see both.
3. The last day can be less intense, with perhaps just a single closing meeting, the AGM, and longer periods timetabled for packing & general networking.

The disadvantages are as follows:

1. There will be an increase in cost of at least 25%. Kalen pointed out that the increase might actually be much larger than this, as we cannot be sure of repeating the generous funding we received this year (the Ammerdown bursary & Sainsbury's grant).
2. A longer event will need more on-site help (we'll need more of this anyway with a larger number of delegates). Seth pointed out that one aspect of this year's event which didn't go well was the work

rebate scheme. Nobody outside the management team volunteered to help, apart from a couple who ran discussion groups.

After a period of discussion the meeting moved to a vote as follows:

Should we hold a 5 day event next year?

For: 10, Against: 10, Abstentions: 0

As the vote was tied Jo immediately offered to change her vote, but it was decided to discuss the issue further and re-cast the vote.

The issue of on-site help was discussed further. It was pointed out that people might be more willing to volunteer help now that they have been to one event, and have more idea what to expect. This might actually be another benefit of using the same venue. More effort would be needed asking delegates to volunteer for jobs before the event.

The vote was then re-cast as follows:

For: 12, Against: 8, Abstentions: 0

So the motion was carried, albeit by a small majority.

Item 4.

Appointing a management team for Autscope 2006

This year's team were largely happy to continue (with the exception of Heta, standing down as secretary) but more people were needed to spread the workload better.

Charles read out the 2005 team as follows:

Kalen - chair

Kazumi - venue coordination
Seth - treasurer
Heta - secretary
Charles - vice-treasurer, artwork, etc
Ian - internet manager
Larry - larry
Phil - printing

It was felt the following extra jobs were needed. Transport coordinator (to help delegates with trains & flights), a website designer (to work with Ian). We also need somebody to re-think publicity outside the internet community, as it was felt that over-reliance on the internet would exclude those autistics not computer-literate.

Kalen said that an ideal number would be about 10. After some discussion the 2006 team looks like this:

Kalen - chair
Kazumi - venue coordination
Seth - treasurer
Robin - secretary
Charles - vice-treasurer
Ian - internet manager
Jodi - website
Phil - printing
Larry - larry
Yo - fundraising
Sebastian - publicity (possibly with help from Nic)
Matt - rail transport
Katie - air transport
Felix - anything labour intensive, pre-event

It was also suggested that we form organisers sub-committees, rather than have all discussion on a single management mailing list. Three possible committees were mentioned:

1. Transport (air, rail, website & venue people)
2. Publicity (publicity, website, internet & printing people)
3. Finance (treasurers, fundraising etc)

As time was running short it was felt that further discussion about how exactly to incorporate these new people, and the manner of on-line meetings, could be best continued on-line.

Item 5.

Feedback from the event

As much feedback had been given during discussion of the above 4 points, there was no further discussion on this point. Kalen reminded people to fill in their feedback forms.

The meeting closed on time at 3.30pm