

UNA-UK Annual Conference 2006

Summary of feedback received – compiled by Ann Ashton, Deputy Chair of Annual Conference

Just over 40 responses were received. Delegates expressed support for the new format of having policy commissions and were particularly happy with the accommodation.

The new format: policy commissions & experts

- It was felt that the policy commissions gave scope for more informed and focused discussion and prevented the “nit-picking” over wording which has “scuppered” substantive debate in the past.
- Some confusion arose over the incorporation of “old-style” motions within the new format and over the process by which the discussions in the commissions and plenary would become official UNA-UK policy.
- Questions were raised as to how the UNA-UK Board should best input into the formulation of the UNA-UK policy statement.
- The external experts had played a valuable role in correcting factual errors and in providing an informed framework to guide the discussions. Greater use should be made of their expertise at future annual conferences, and they should be given clearer introductions at the outset.

General comments & suggestions for improving Annual Conference

- It is vital that the audiovisual system functions well; particularly important are the audibility of the microphones and the legibility of the text on the overhead projector.
- The balloting system was too complex and possibly unnecessary.
- UNA-UK staff should be introduced at the beginning of conference rather than at the end.
- The opening of conference created a good feeling for the whole event.
- The first night of conference (i.e. Friday) could be better utilised, for example by holding smaller group discussions on particular themes.
- Saturday was thought to be too “heavy”; more free time should be provided.
- It would be helpful if any written briefings on policy areas and the titles of the commissions could be posted to delegates before conference began.
- The list of those attending conference would be more helpful if it contained contact information and details of branch/regional/national UNA membership.
- The compositing of motions should be carefully planned so as to avoid duplication and disparity within themes.

Methods for passing on information from Annual Conference to members and friends

This is done mainly through oral and written reports, and possibly also through the sharing of the background policy notes which were circulated at Annual Conference.