



Naturist
Action
Group

NAG – Past, Present and future

Change is inevitable. NAG wants to change things. In 2020 NAG itself is changing. Perhaps you would like to be part of that change? Read on.

NAG came together in about 2009 when a group of naturists agreed that enough was not being done to proactively campaign for naturist acceptance and freedom. We view naturism as a lifestyle choice rather than an occasional hobby, so it follows that we want the freedom to live that lifestyle wherever and whenever we like, rather than accepting restrictions which have no practical reason. We decided not to be a 'members organisation', so we do not have 'members' as such, though anyone can become a supporter for free (see our website <https://naturistactiongroup.co.uk>).

This decision was because we don't want to spend our time and resources administering a membership system. We are financed by voluntary donations and sundry bits of income such as occasional publication fees. Similarly, we do not organise events unless they have some campaigning purpose. Rather, we have concentrated our efforts on 'top down' approaches to decision makers who influence the acceptance of naturism. This is done mostly out of the glare of publicity, where such talks are usually more fruitful. It has required patience and persistence, but we have achieved some considerable success, particularly in the fields of the way the Police and Judiciary treat naturism, in how naturism is accepted by park authorities in London, and in how nudity and naturism are portrayed by the press and media.

We have operated alone and also in cooperation with other organisations when appropriate. Being a 'free spirited' group we can sometimes say or do things which more conventional organisations do not feel able to, and indeed we see it as part of our raison d'être to suggest to the naturist world where some of its priorities should lie.

NAG's work is all done by volunteers, most of whom bear their own costs, and contribute time and resources according to their individual circumstances. For many years the guidance and leadership was the founders, but in recent times this 'management collective' is being expanded to include others who like NAG's aims and our rather informal way of operating. As such we are as much a think tank/focus group as an executive organisation; but in all issues we return to the question "what can we do about it?".

Much has been achieved on the clarification and better guidance on the law relating to nudity, but there is still a hill to climb in terms of what is possible in practice. Naturists still need to be very careful, whatever the law may say, and this is down to public opinion much of which still finds public nudity unacceptable. This in turn makes decision-makers risk averse. For example, earlier this year the naturist swim at Alton has been disbanded by the pool authorities because they feared that a glimpse of flesh through the windows would upset the public. They never asked the public, but when the public hear of such a decision they assume it must be in some way illegal to be naked!

Similarly, concerns about children's safety has turned into paranoia such that even mentioning children in the same sentence as naturism is likely to attract accusations of paedophilia. How to address these, and similar, problems is a current concern of NAG, and does not lend itself as easily to the top-down approach as do things like Police policy NAG – Past, Present and future or park use. But such matters will not change unless someone

works to change them, so NAG still considers itself relevant, and needed for the future.

The changes I alluded to at the start were triggered by recent coincidences. Our website was subject to a serious malicious attack late last year and was out of order for quite a time. It is now back under control, and we have a new Webmaster who is looking at various updates. This happened at a time when Reg Barlow, who was one of the founders of NAG and had been Chairman from the outset, had a change of personal circumstances which led him to resign just before Christmas. We thank Reg for all he has done and wish him well.

Another of the founders, John Paine, has taken over as Chairman of the management collective. However, we are actively seeking 'new blood'. We are an eclectic group of self-motivated, tenacious people who use their initiative, and are not prepared just to talk about things when action is needed. We are committed to greater acceptance of naturism, and the normalisation of nudity. NAG continues as a group of like-minded people doing what they can for a lifestyle they love. If this sounds like you, please get in touch via the website.

This may all sound a bit serious. But serious does not mean solemn. Campaigning can also be fun, especially when it involves naturism. Many of the best things in life involve a bit of hard work!

Duncan Heenan February 2020

Note: This article was also published in the March 2020 issue of ***H&E Naturist*** magazine