



The Chairman
The Events Industry Forum
Engine Rooms
Station Road
Chepstow NP16 5PB.

Monday 9th May 2022

Dear Mr Heap,

Following the EIF Board meeting on Monday 25th April 2022, NOEA's Council has been discussing the situation and I regret to inform you that a decision has been made that the National Outdoor Events Association should leave EIF with immediate effect. It follows that Susan Tanner, our CEO must stand down as a director of the Board and she will be tendering her resignation separately, also with immediate effect.

I suspect that this news will not come as a great surprise to you as for many months now, Susan (on behalf of NOEA) has been expressing concerns about not simply the direction that EIF has been taking but also the way in which decisions have been made.

Much of the history revolves around what is now the Purple Guide. This had its origin back in 1993 when there were two separate publications – the Health and Safety Guide for Pop Festivals and Other Events plus the Code of Practice for Outdoor Events which was largely written by NOEA members.

By about 1999, these two documents became the Event Safety Guide (known as the Purple Guide) which was published by HMSO and endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Around 2014, HSE decided that they no longer wanted to be involved in production of the Guide and “ownership” was passed to EIF – at the time the Forum was an unincorporated association whose membership consisted of various associations representing those involved in many different sectors of the event industry.

A decision was made to form a company – The Event Industry Forum Ltd – principally to deal with the financial aspects of the Guide. Its memorandum and Articles of Association specifically provided:

“to publish and maintain The Purple Guide as guidance for the outdoor event industry and to fund, through sales of the Guide, projects and charitable organisations that will generally benefit the outdoor event industry”

It is important to note that throughout, all those involved with the Guide gave their time voluntarily, other than paying J & M Contractors a fee for administering the on-line version of the Guide (something with which NOEA has no issue). There was also a specific bar on payments to office bearers – the Articles provided:

“The income and property of the Company shall be applied solely towards the promotion of its objects as set forth in this Memorandum of Association **and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit, to members of the Company.** On liquidation whether voluntary or otherwise any assets or property of the Company shall not be transferred or returned to the member of the Company but transferred to an undertaking with similar restrictions on application of income and property.” (My emphasis)

Following the formation of the Company, the Forum itself continued and although it had no constitution as such, its purpose as we understood it was to seek to represent the event industry’s interests at Governmental level.

In 2021, a number of significant changes were proposed. At the risk of oversimplification, the initial proposal was in effect to allow part of the accumulated profit within the company to be used to make backdated and future payments to yourself and Jim Winship to “compensate” you both for the time and effort that had put in on behalf of the Forum (as opposed to the company) during the pandemic.

Susan on behalf of NOEA has been expressing our concerns about these (and other) proposals since July 2021 but found herself in a minority (on occasions a minority of one) in opposing what led to the adoption of a new Memorandum and Articles of Association in February of this year, the effect of which was to combine the original Forum with the Company responsible for the Purple Guide and to present certain of the members of the Company with a (personal) income stream.



NOEA considers that there has been a lack of transparency throughout this process with decisions seemingly taken by exchanges of emails (some of which have been acrimonious) between Board members – there has been little consultation with the wider membership of the Forum and I doubt that they fully understand the consequences of what are in effect very fundamental changes.

Further, on occasions (particularly with regard to backdating payment to you and Jim), Susan took the view that what was being proposed and apparently supported by a majority of Board members (but again without reference to the wider membership of the Forum) was unlawful. To an extent, that view was acknowledged but even as recently as the last Board meeting, it was being proposed that payments be backdated to January 2022 – a month or so before the new Memorandum and Articles were adopted. When Susan raised this, I understand that she was laughed at and told that she was raising “fiddly little bits of detail”.

NOEA remains deeply concerned about the allocation of the proceeds from the sale of the Purple Guide. We remain of the view that the original purpose namely “to fund, through sales of the Guide, projects and charitable organisations that will generally benefit the outdoor event industry” should remain and that the original intention that no payments be made to directors should continue.

That the only current grant proposals being considered are from organisations closely connected to Board members is a further cause for concern, not least given the very substantial funds available (I believe these to be in excess of £150,000).

NOEA recognises that in any democratic organisation, the will of the majority should prevail but as we consider the application of these funds to be a fundamental issue, we can no longer remain part of EIF.

I should also add that I am also deeply concerned about the way in which Susan has been treated both in email exchanges and during virtual meetings. Some of the comments that have been made are in my opinion misogynistic (e.g. “Gentlemen and Susan”).



It is clear that she has often been treated with a lack of respect and quite frankly, it seems to me and my NOEA Council colleagues that at times, she has been the victim of bullying. This is, frankly, unacceptable.

Against that background, I am afraid that NOEA considers that it can no longer be part of EIF in any form, hence our decision.

Yours faithfully

Tom Clements Dip.ESM

President