Policy and Procedure on Organising and Running a UKELA event

Introduction – General Principles

Any UKELA event is held on behalf of the charity so it must be within the charity’s legal purposes:

‘To promote for the benefit of the public generally the enhancement and conservation of the environment in the United Kingdom and in particular to advance the education of the public in all matters relating to the development, teaching, application and practice of law relating to the environment.’

In short it should aim to make ‘better law for the environment’.

It should also fit within the current strategic aims and the yearly Work Plan. You can check what our strategy says on our website. If you are unclear about whether your idea for an event fits with these overall aims and legal purpose, then do get in touch to discuss.

UKELA holds a number of events each year all over the country, usually pulled together by our amazing volunteer team, such as Working Party convenors, Regional Group convenors, Young UKELA team, Wild Law team, trustees and a whole host of other supporters. These volunteers (referred to in this policy as the events Volunteer Team) are supported via the professional staff team or, for special events such as the Annual Conference and Annual Scottish Conference, our events organiser, Red Pepper Events (a contractual arrangement exists between UKELA and Red Pepper for the annual conference and is agreed on an annual basis for the Scottish Conference). Separate guidance is in place for the Annual Conference and the Wild Law weekend. If you would like to read either of these sets of guidelines, please get in touch.

This professional help will cover the overall administration, raising and agreeing with the Volunteer Team the budget, managing bookings via our online booking system on our website, provide marketing support and liaise with the venue on numbers and other practical details.

The Volunteer Team will be responsible for drawing up the programme, finding speakers and a Chair and liaising with those speakers on the content of their presentations and whether they will be using slides, running order etc.

Please note this policy does not apply to working party or regional group meetings where you are simply getting together to discuss a pertinent issue or plan your activity. This policy is aimed at speaker events such as seminars and conferences, aimed at inviting attendees from beyond, say, the Working Party.

A UKELA event is a fantastic opportunity to encourage engagement from both members and non-members whilst exploring and learning about a current legal topic. Our events should stimulate debate and discussion, give out information, promote UKELA and encourage networking.

It is UKELA policy that all events at least break even and ideally generate a small surplus for general funds to help the organisation run its wide range of charitable activities. More about budgeting later in the document.

What should I do if I have a good idea for an event?
First Steps

It is really important that everyone interested in running an event liaises with each other. We have plenty of ways to help you do this. First, check the UKELA calendar on the website. Next check the internal UKELA Google calendar to see what else might be coming up – it is common for dates to be held pending confirmation of a speaker’s availability or a venue. If you aren’t sure whether you have access to this internal calendar, please get in touch and we can help. You could use the Google groups to check with your fellow convenors what they have in the pipeline (we have google groups for the Working Parties and the Regional Groups – if you aren’t sure whether you are on the group you should be, please get in touch and we can add you if necessary). Swap plans at the Working Party convenors meetings, held 4 times per year. And ask the staff team! Staff will usually be across what is happening in any week or month, so can help you plan effectively.

We aim for a good spread of events across the year, so you might need to start planning for your event in the previous year if you want it to happen earlier in the year. There is a tendency for events to be squashed into the second half of the year, which is less helpful in terms of planning and member choice.

Planning lead in time

If you have a good idea for an event check the diary etc first, see above. It is best to give yourself and the professional team helping you plenty of time to plan and market the event. The staff team has limited time resource, so may not be able to help with short notice events and may, regrettably, have to say no on occasion. But the team will generally do its best to accommodate your idea, provided it fits within the overall aims and work plan. It is recommended that you allow at least 6 weeks for marketing and taking bookings. As such, you should aim, ideally, to have checked dates and the availability of any help you would like at least 2 months in advance of the prospective date.

Planning the event itself

i. **Theme:** You should identify the overall aim of the event, your target audience, the key speakers and then the programme in that order.

ii. **Venue:** UKELA is fortunate that the majority of the events it runs are hosted free of charge by law firms, barristers’ chambers or academic institutions and we are hugely grateful for this support. Once you have identified the theme for your event, you should find a host (possibly your organisation if you came up with the idea) – or ask the staff or relevant group or working party to help.

iii. **Date/Timing:** Once you have a host, set the date and timing. This is normally determined by the availability of speakers and key organisers and it can be helpful to have 2 or 3 options from the venue to give you some flexibility with busy diaries. As mentioned above, the date should be no closer than six weeks from the date the event is first marketed unless there are exceptional circumstances. It could easily take two or more weeks to gather the marketing details together. So do allow enough time to set things up.

iv. **Chair and Speakers:** This can be something of a chicken and egg situation – you may find yourself toing and froing a little to come up with a date that suits all your speakers and fits in with the venue’s availability, but once you have agreed a mutually workable date, make sure the date is fixed firmly in your Chair and Speaker’s diaries. Our volunteers are experienced in their area so are best placed to find expert speakers on the topic. But if you are not sure who to approach, do seek advice from fellow convenors, trustees or the staff team, all of whom will be happy to help.

v. **Budget:** When setting the date with the venue, be clear on any costs they would like covered. This is most likely to be refreshments such as tea/coffee at registration and wine/nibbles for the networking after the event has concluded. You will also need to ask your speakers whether they will want their expenses covered particularly if they have to travel a fair distance to speak. And you may wish to include in your budget a small amount for speakers thank you gifts, such as a bottle of wine or chocolates. More on the budget later on.

vi. **Setting up bookings:** Whilst you are gathering all the above details, you can ask the staff team or Red Pepper to set up the bookings website. The ticket prices will be dependent on the budget, so you should be clear on your costs to enable ticketing to be set up.
vii. **Tickets**: if possible set a range of ticket prices to make the event as accessible as possible. You should always aim to have a differential between member and non-member ticket prices, to preserve the member benefit. It is UKELA policy to offer a number of free student tickets if the budget can support this – note, this does not apply to the annual conferences or residential events such as the Wild Law weekend. There may be others.

viii. **Marketing**: When everything is ready to go, the staff team will put in place marketing such as sending an email to members, publicising on social media and the website. Marketing will continue until the event is fully booked or until about a week beforehand (to allow time for the delegate list to go to the venue). Messaging will include a reminder email to everyone who has booked a few days’ before, to remind them of the date, time, venue and directions.

**Drawing up a budget**

As mentioned earlier it is UKELA policy and included in the financial management rules of the charity that no UKELA event should be planned in such a way as to make a loss. This means that any income from an event must cover the costs, where possible. If there are any exceptions this will be with the agreement of trustees. It is helpful, therefore, to draw up a simple budget for your event. The staff team or Red Pepper is happy to help you with this. Indeed, for larger events such as the annual conference, it is part of the Red Pepper contract that they draw up and manage the budget.

Here are some tips on what the budget might include:

**Usual costs**:
- Speaker expenses (reimbursed via the expenses form and in line with the expenses policy – you should let your speakers have the form once they’ve agreed to speak so they are aware of the policy).
- Drinks and nibbles if the venue is not covering this cost (although many do). Bear in mind that not everyone who books will turn up on the day, so always ask for lower catering numbers. This also helps to eliminate waste.
- A small gift for speakers (eg bottle of wine)

**Unusual costs**:
- Venue hire (as UKELA has a large and diverse membership it’s usually possible to find a venue without cost. The exceptions are the annual conference, Scottish conference, Wild Law weekend and Wild Law conference).
- Speaker fees: fees are rarely offered for UKELA events (including the annual conference). As a member organisation with shared objectives most speakers are happy to share their expertise free of charge. There may be rare exceptions but please speak to the staff team first. In such circumstances it is ideal if sponsorship can be obtained to cover the cost.
- Dinner for the speaker(s)

**Unacceptable costs**:
- Expensive hotels (do ask if unsure what we mean by this)
- Travel arrangements outside the expenses policy
- Travel not directly associated with the event
- Champagne
- Dinner for non-speakers or organisers’ personal or work contacts

**Income**:
- Tickets generally provide the income – if you are offering a range of ticket options, bear in mind that some (especially if free) will not cover any of your costs, so you will need to be mindful of this when setting your ticket fees.
- Sponsorship – it is always worthwhile considering the possibility of sponsorship, particularly if you have speakers’ costs or venue costs to pay for. This will help keep ticket prices down and gives valuable exposure to the sponsoring organisation. Sponsors are usually happy to help promote the event too.

Any surplus generated goes back to UKELA to cover any costs or to go into charitable activities. Events income is an important element of UKELA’s yearly turnover.
**Payment, cancellation and refund policy for UKELA events**

Attendance at the majority of UKELA events is subject to payment of a registration fee. Whether a registration fee is payable or the event is free, is dependent on the budget (see above) and will be clearly advertised at the time of booking.

In order to secure a place at an event, payment should be made in advance as set out in the booking guidelines for the event in question. Payment by card is the preferred (and easiest) option, but payment by direct transfer into the UKELA bank account or by cheque is acceptable. Without payment, places are not guaranteed. In some instances (eg late booking) and at the discretion of the event organiser, the option of payment on the door will be available.

In the case of cancellation, provided the cancellation falls within the advertised cancellation period for the event in question, then payment will be returned. This will be subject to a small administration charge, the amount of which will be made clear at the time of booking.

Non-attendance for whatever reason without cancellation will mean forfeiture of the registration fee. Anyone who has booked but not paid by the time of the event and who does not attend will be required to pay the registration fee to cover UKELA's costs. By completing registration for an event, delegates accept the terms and conditions of the booking.

**Students**

Free student places are offered at the majority of UKELA events, subject to budget and space. Exceptions include the Annual Conferences, Wild Law weekends and some others. These places are strictly limited and must be booked.

**Risk**

UKELA has a risk policy and register. All events should be planned in accordance with the most up to date policy. The main risks of holding an event are:

Financial - as mentioned, all events should aim to break even, so making a simple budget and then monitoring is important. However, things sometimes do not go to plan; if your event looks like making a loss then please talk to the staff team as soon as possible; monitor cancellation terms at the venue carefully if an outside venue has been hired as it may be possible to pull out or reduce the liability if numbers are falling short; be wary of minimum numbers specified. **If a contract is required to be signed, eg if you are holding your event at a chargeable venue such as a hotel or conference centre, any contract must be cleared by at least 2 trustees and then signed off by the Operations Director. Any onerous terms should, therefore, be picked up this way. It is vital that UKELA is not exposed to undue risk via contractual terms.**

Harm – UKELA has £5m public liability insurance for all its events; but this won't help if we are negligent. So a simple risk assessment is helpful to make sure we have recognised and mitigated risks. **If you are holding an event at (eg) a law firm, they will usually have their own risk procedure in place. But for an event such as the Wild Law weekend, you should carry out a risk assessment well in advance of the event taking place. See separate guidance on running a Wild Law weekend. The staff team holds a simple risk assessment template, so do ask if you would like to use this.**

**The Event itself**

UKELA staff are happy to help with registering people, meeting and greeting, helping look after speakers and logistics, but if you want someone from the team there, you will need to take that into account when setting the date, to check someone is free. You might also find it helpful to recruit volunteers from your (eg) working party or regional committee. This can be a good opportunity for a younger member such as a student, to help out as it gives them some valuable experience and exposure. Speak to the staff team for advice.

The UKELA banner should be used if at all possible. If one of the staff team is coming along, they will bring it with them, but if not, please check where it is currently stored and make arrangements to
collect it and ensure its safe storage after the event. We currently have 3 banners stored at various member organisations in London and 2 banners looked after by Red Pepper in Scotland. If you would like a banner to be held in your area, please speak to us about arranging this.

Speakers’ presentations – you should arrange with the speakers to send you their slides in advance of the event so that they can be made ready on the system at the venue. Check with the venue how much in advance they need slides to be ready. It is good practice to bring along an extra copy of the slides on a memory stick just in case. Check with the speakers that they are happy for pdf versions of their slides to be made available to attendees and on the members’ only area of the website after the event.

Press and social media – sometimes the specialist press come along to a UKELA event. If this is the case, make sure your speakers are aware. It is also likely that members of the staff team and the delegate audience will tweet about the event whilst it is taking place (or use other forms of social media).

Follow Up
Feedback - The staff team or Red Pepper can help with gathering feedback from delegates about the event. This can be valuable for sharing with other event organisers on, for example, quality of speakers, the venue and to gather ideas for future events on different topics.

Paying for everything – please pass any invoices for refreshments etc to the staff team as soon as possible (this may need to happen in advance or at least a deposit paid). UKELA runs a payment run once a month on the last day of the month or the nearest weekday. Any payments that need to be included on the payment run MUST be with the staff team by the second Tuesday in the month at the very latest.

Thanks – send a note of thanks to your speakers, sponsors, host venue and anyone else that has helped make the event a success. And give yourself a big pat on the back too! UKELA is hugely appreciative of the time and effort you put in to make our events programme as successful as it is.

Helpful Contacts:
Alison Boyd, Operations Director
Elly-Mae Gadsby, Senior Administrator
Paul Stookes, Working Parties advisor
Louise Hotchkiss, Admin Support
Eleanor Whitby, Red Pepper Events
Note on Events and Activities

Annual Conference – see separate guidance.

Annual Scottish Conference – organised by the committee and supported by Red Pepper. See above for sources of help.

Annual Garner lecture. This speaker is organised by trustees – usually one or two have this role. As this is a keynote event in the UKELA calendar, the aim is to book a high-profile speaker to deliver a lecture on a key environmental law topic. The lecture is open to members and non-members and takes place in London (currently hosted by Freshfields). A limited number of free places are available to students. On occasion, there will be a dinner afterwards for the speaker and dignitaries, but the main post event activity is drinks and canapes served for about an hour at the conclusion of the lecture. Timing is usually 6pm start, finishing at 7.30pm after audience questions. Drinks run until about 8.30-9pm. Regional committees around the UK often host a live video link or webcast.

Wild Law Conference – organised by volunteers from the Wild Law Special Interest Group, supported by the staff team. See above for sources of help.

Wild Law weekend – see separate guidance.

Herbert Smith Freehills seminars. This series of events in London is the longest running event put on by the UKELA team. HSF has hosted almost all of the seminars. A team of trustees and volunteers set up 4 seminars per year on a variety of topical themes. Each volunteer organises one event each, booking the Chair and speakers.

Working Party seminars or conferences. Organised by the convenors, these seminars cover a topic of relevance to the working party members. The committee is responsible for booking speakers and organising the venue etc. See above for sources of help.

Regional Group seminars. Organised by the regional committees, these seminars cover a topic of local interest to members. The committee is responsible for booking speakers and organising the venue etc. See above for sources of help.

Partner events – UKELA is regularly approached, either via the Working Parties or the staff team, to run a joint event with a partner organisation on a topic of mutual interest. This is a really useful way to broaden the themes we are able to cover and provide a significant member benefit. It is important to agree in advance who is doing what, what the arrangements are for covering costs and any share of any surplus. A simple reciprocal agreement is useful. If in any doubt, do seek advice from the staff team.

Student Events

The Andrew Lees Essay Prize - this competition is open to any student, trainee solicitor, pupil or solicitor/barrister with not more than 2 years’ post qualification experience. Andrew Lees was the Campaigns Director for Friends of the Earth and a leading environmental campaigner on a range of issues from water pollution to illegal waste dumping. He died suddenly in 1994 while on a working holiday in Madagascar campaigning against a large opencast mine. The theme for the essay is set by a volunteer academic panel who also act as judges. The prize is a free conference place for the winner.

Mooting competitions

a. The Lord Slynn of Hadley (Senior) Moot is open to all those who as of a nominated date are in pupillage, a trainee solicitor, on the bar vocational course or legal practice course, or those who have completed the bar vocational course or legal practice course but have not yet secured a pupillage or a place as a trainee solicitor.

b. The Dame Frances Patterson (Junior) Moot is open to those who as of a nominated date do not qualify for the Lord Slynn Moot, but who are studying for a degree (including a graduate degree, e.g.
LLM’s or a non-law degree), or taking the GDL. If an applicant has completed a vocational course, they are not able to enter the Student Moot.

The Moot Master is a barrister from the trustee team. Their decision is final on any question of eligibility and they set the moot problem and rules. Teams consist of two members. An institution may enter more than one team. Teams may comprise of competitors from different institutions. The final is held in late February/early March in front of a senior judge (booked by the Master of the Moot). Prizes are provided by sponsors and include trophies, books, cash and free UKELA membership. The trophies remain the property of UKELA. Hosting is provided by a sponsor.

Student Vocational Bursary Fund - this fund is intended to enable students to undertake a period of vocational placement (such as an internship or externship) in the field of environmental law. Placements may be with a public body (e.g. a government department, local authority, regulatory agency), with a not-for-profit organisation such as a non-governmental organisation, with a university department, in private practice (legal or otherwise), or any other vocational placement which would further the charitable objects of UKELA. Decisions on applications are made by the trustees who have responsibility for student activity and the Operations Director.

Simon Ball Prize - recognises and celebrates student achievement in the field of environmental law. The award is open to undergraduate and postgraduate students at a UK higher education institution from any academic discipline so long as the basis of the contribution has relevance to the advancement of environmental law or otherwise to the charitable objects of UKELA. The basis of the award is not limited to academic achievement and may extend to any achievement attained by, or contribution made by, the student. The prize is awarded annually.

Fundraising events
As a small charity operating in a very competitive environment, any support via a fundraising event is always welcome. To give a flavour, recent fundraising events have included a lunch with a high-profile speaker and the Recyclists fundraising cycle to the annual conference. Any suggestions should be discussed with the staff team.