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Case Study #2

UK Environmental Law Association

Chelsea Physic Garden, Royal Hospital Road, London 21 September 2015

UKELA (UK Environmental Law Association) is the leading membership organisation for those interested in environmental law. Their aim is to improve understanding and awareness of environmental law to make the law work for a better environment.

Members include: Lawyers in private practice; Barristers; Environmental consultants; Academics and Scientists; Public body, local authority and industry lawyers; Environmental groups and environmentalists; Students; and Planning consultants among others.

Established in 1988, UKELA will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2018. This awayday was called to scan the horizon and adapt existing strategic plans for the next four year period. Representatives of all major stakeholders, including Working Party and Regional Convenors, Patrons and Honorary Members were called together with executive staff and external contributors to contribute to the discussion.

Our remit was to:

- Design the workshop with the executive team to ensure the purposes of the awayday were clear and would be met
- Review and advise on pre-event reading pack and preparatory materials for delegates
- Facilitate the day, including energisers as required
- Include exercises to promote a sense of team and good team-working practice
- Ensure a high level of interaction to enable participation and emphasise collaborative ownership of the plans

The Event

There were 30 delegates, many of whom had not had the opportunity to meet before. Given the environmental context and the beautiful garden setting, we ran a pair of ice-breakers outside. The first got people to share a passion as they introduced themselves, which reduced formality and prompted personal connections. The second exposed team-working preferences, giving instant insight into group dynamics for participants and facilitator alike.

After an overview of the workshop objectives and UKELA's current position, the group was invited to explore organisational strengths in the first session. External speakers offered horizon scanning views of the changing context for Environmental Law, setting the scene for a deeper exploration of significant trends and emerging developments.

Delegates were invited to consider:

- what UKELA should build on, adapt, start or stop.
- the implications for current aims and resources
- the implications for stakeholders

At the end of the day, delegates were invited to write a postcard to themselves as a reminder of the commitments they'd made. These were retained by us and posted back to them as agreed several months later before their next strategic gathering.

Feedback

“Today was a big success - Feedback over drinks was very positive. There is a lot of goodwill, energy and support from attendees to take UKELA forward over the next couple of years.”

“There were some fantastic suggestions to increase membership services - benefits. Please extend my appreciation to Mike for all his hard work today. He did very well.” Stephen Sykes, Chair of Trustees

“Mike facilitated our Trustee away day very ably. His role was invaluable in allowing all of us to be active participants, rather than worrying about whether the process and timings were on track. He asked challenging questions at key points to make sure we covered the ground we wanted to.”

Linda Farrow, Executive Director