

## **BiCon Decides – 2023 Organising Team Submissions**

### **Summary**

Organising a BiCon is always a challenging task but organising BiCon 2023 was a particular challenge for a number of reasons outside the organisers' control. The amount of time and effort that the team had to put in was unsustainable and the BiCon community cannot rely on future teams being able or willing to do this. However, the organisers believe that a number of realistic changes could be made that make it easier for future teams and ensure the continuation of BiCon.

### **Challenges**

- The lead organiser was not in place until November 2022, which meant that right from the start they were working against severe time pressure.
- BiCon Continuity Ltd had limited capacity to support the organisers, which resulted in delays obtaining essential information.
- The appointment of the lead organiser was not effectively communicated to the BiCon community, which prevented additional volunteers from being recruited. As a result, the lead organiser was reliant on recruiting their own team from known contacts, most of whom had not been to previous BiCons or only one BiCon, to fill essential roles such as budget forecasting, website design and safeguarding.
- On several occasions the team felt inundated with unrealistic and burdensome requests from the BiCon community.
- Knowledge from previous BiCons was not effectively handed to the organiser team. Where it was provided it was largely reliant on the goodwill of a single volunteer.
- The organiser team faced pushback when incorporating a company and opening a bank account, possibly due to institutional biphobia from public bodies and banks.
- The cost of living crisis and inflation made it difficult to run an event that broke even.

### **Recommendations**

For BiCon to remain sustainable it is essential that organiser teams are supported and have the necessary skills and knowledge. Equally, clear expectations on the roles of BiCon Continuity Ltd and organising teams need to be set with the BiCon community.

The organising team recommend that the BiCon community and BiCon Continuity Ltd do the following:

- Appoint additional directors and trustees of BiCon Continuity Ltd to ensure that the board has additional capacity.
- Proactively seek out volunteers to organise future BiCons, ideally at least 12 months in advance.
- Ensure that when prospective lead organisers are vetted consideration is also given to whether their team has the required skills, at minimum the ability to budget and manage finances, manage a website and handle the social inclusion goals that are central to BiCon.

- Assign a director of BiCon Continuity Ltd or other volunteer to act as a “project sponsor” when an organiser team is appointed. This person will act as BiCon Continuity Ltd’s point of contact with the team and maintain regular contact and oversight of them. The person should ideally have organised a previous BiCon, so that they can provide advice and institutional knowledge.
- Ensure that outgoing teams provide a handover to incoming teams.
- Publish a single document setting out the remit and responsibilities of BiCon Continuity Ltd and organiser teams, so that teams are empowered to set clear boundaries when faced with unrealistic requests or direct people to contact BiCon Continuity Ltd where appropriate.
- Provide clear advice to organising teams on how to manage commercial, legal and financial issues based on previous experience. Where possible solutions used for previous BiCons (e.g. corporate entities and bank accounts) should be reused to save time and effort.
- Explore additional forms of funding other than ticket income, such as grants and donations.

### **Conclusion**

The above changes would not alter the fundamental character or values of BiCon. They will require some additional volunteer capacity but this will save significant time and energy, and make BiCon easier and more efficient to organise. The result will be that BiCon becomes more sustainable and can continue its long history as one of the biggest events for the bisexual community.

### **Proposed Resolution:**

To recommend that the BiCon community, including BiCon Continuity Ltd where appropriate, make all reasonable efforts to implement the BiCon 2023 Organising Team’s recommendations.

### **Submitted on behalf of the BiCon 2023 Organising Team**

Al (they/them) – Lead Organiser & Bookings Coordinator (Director of BiCon 2023 CIC<sup>1</sup>)

Kathryn (she/they) – Finance Lead (Director of BiCon 2023 CIC)

Daisy (she/her) – Website & Sessions Coordinator

Emily (she/her) – Safeguarding & Welfare Lead

Eunice (she/her) – Anti-Racism Officer

---

<sup>1</sup> The 2023 organising team incorporated a community interest company as the legal entity that contracted with the venue and attendees, BiCon 2023 CIC (company number: 14764551)