

Attendance:

Richard F, Kate H, Andrew B, Jon D, Terry C, Pete McL, Toby A, Ruth S, Oliver N, Eve T, Pete G, Tom W, Guy H.

It was agreed that Pete McL would take the minutes and Kate H to chair. It was further agreed to add items on external and internal elections to the agenda

1. MINUTES OF THE JANUARY EC - These were agreed as correct

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- a) **Scotland** - deferred to the April 18th NC
- b) **TTIP leaflet** - reported this would be ready for the end of the week
- c) **NHS 999** - A report was given from their recent convention
- d) **Greece** - Following a discussion about the achievements of Syriza since the elections, the following suggestions made by AB were agreed:
 - LU confirms its support for the Greece Solidarity Campaign and will donate £ 100 to Medical Aid
 - LU will work towards promoting a solidarity conference later in the year
- e) **General Election update** - TC and TW reported from the weekly meetings of the Elections Sub-Committee. Materials were being prepared, including a national leaflet which led on austerity, housing and immigration. 'Briefings' for candidates on various issues were being prepared. The manifesto would be printed and then launched at a Press Conference. £ 8,500 had been raised towards the £ 20,000 elections target. Suggestions made in the discussion that followed included:
 - All the materials need to be posted on the web site
 - We need a template for letters to the local media
 - We need to establish what branches can do if they do not have any candidates, such as working for candidates nearby
 - There needs to be caution about incurring expenses if calling for votes - approval would be needed from the candidate. Section 75 Notices might also be needed
 - We should make use of on-line lobbying and telephone canvassing, using postcodesThe Elections Sub Committee was asked to offer branch guidance, and the LU office would circulate all these suggestions to branches
- f) **Disputes Committee** - KH asked for volunteers to help when issues arose. RF agreed to do so
- g) **Housing Conference March 7th** - it was agreed to encourage attendance, especially from the north west region. It was noted that the event clashed with the climate change demo. It was agreed to ask FD to live stream or video the event, TC to liaise with FD. It was agreed to minute our thanks to FD for all the work she had put in to organising the conference
- h) **Spring Political Event** - PG outlined the suggested programme on behalf of the Sub-committee that now existed. Comments made in a lengthy discussion included:
 - We should not be including prominent Green or Labour speakers in the final session
 - The event needs to be clearly post-election and address the issues raised by the General Election
 - Topics should include Greece and the EU, the welfare state, an analysis of LU
 - The debate about how the left should move forward post-election should be in the first session, not the last one
 - Workshops only need one or two key speakers, not three
 - The closing session could involve LU candidates
 - The European context should remain at the start, how the left should move forward at the end
 - The session on the way forward for the left should include TUSC, especially as it is standing over 100 candidates
 - The original title "After the Elections: Fighting the Right, Uniting the Left" should remain as that is what we should be discussing after May 7th
 - Our overall aim should be to discuss a new composition of the left post May 2015 - we need to unify the serious forces who could work together
 - The event should be centred around LU
 - The present style and format are not very appealing
 - We need to link culture to building the left
 - We could work more closely with the 'This Changes Everything Initiative' (TCEI) which has split off from Counterfire. It is a movement, not a party, and is attractive to young people
 - We need to learn from activists and not behave like the traditional left
 - The whole day could be centred around whether we want a party or a movement with contributions from members of LU, Podemos, the ACI and TCEI

Following the discussion it was decided to choose between retaining a similar format as circulated but with only two lead speakers per workshop, with the opening plenary based around an analysis of the General Election, and the final session on the way forward for the left. This choice was called the medium rewrite option.

The maximum rewrite option on the other hand was to have general sessions involving the more 'anti-capitalist' themes as well as socialist, with the debate about the way forward in the opening session followed by more open workshops - a less structured approach. **The maximum less structured view was agreed by 9 votes to 4. It was further agreed to minute our thanks to the sub-committee for their work so far.** KH and TW offered to join the sub-committee, and it was agreed to ask the sub-committee to carefully consider when the event should be held, bearing in mind that it needed to be May if it was relating to the General Election. An early evening social event was also suggested, as was an 11am start for the event.

- i) **White Balloons campaign**

JD reported that this needed to be raised at trade union conferences, which was agreed

3. FINANCE REPORT

AB spoke to his circulated written report. The year up until November 2014 showed a surplus of £3,411.45. Of the total income of £58,000, nearly £52,000 had come from membership subs. The highest items of expenditure were £14,000 on Conferences and meetings, £13,000 on printing, nearly £9,000 on travel, and nearly £6,000 on wages. AB also presented figures for the three months since then. There was a surplus of £2,282.35. He pointed out that the recent move of office had put the monthly rent up from £300 to £995 + VAT, and he explained why wages would be much higher this year. Both would be a tremendous boost for LU's work. He suggested that events should be self-financing wherever possible, and felt we should consider operating a pooled fare for meetings.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed to minute a vote of thanks to AB and the Finance Committee

4. INTERNAL ELECTIONS

TC reported that there were more contested posts this time, including every officer position. 42 members were vying for 15 directly elected places on the NC. Elections to standing committees needed to be re-opened. It was agreed that existing vacancies should be filled before any by-elections were held.

5. DISPUTES COMMITTEE REPORT

KH reported that the request from the Disputes and Appeals Committees for training, agreed at Conference, would be discussed at the next NC. Issues such as the absence of regional committees would also be dealt with by the new NC.

After some discussion, it was agreed that confidentiality in disputes or appeals should stretch beyond not including names to also not including jobs and anything else that could lead individuals to be identified.

6. ADDITIONAL MOTIONS

a) From West London LU *on giving culture a prominent position alongside political activities, and to establish a cultural wing of the party.* A lengthy discussion included the suggestion to have a review section on the web site - a left view on art and cultural events. It was unanimously **agreed to refer the motion to the new NC** with recommended support from the EC, and ask them to periodically discuss it.

b) From YM *calling for a special conference in 2015 to discuss constitutional amendments* - **referred to the NC**

c) From Stockport LU *calling on the NC to make anti-austerity campaigning the no 1 priority.* Some concern was expressed that the motion wanted branches to be instructed accordingly as this was not the way LU worked. Branches were already prioritising anti-austerity measures, as was the LU General Election campaign. **It was agreed to write to the branch** agreeing with the sentiments expressed in the motion.

7. OTHER MOTIONS TO THE NC

i) From Birmingham LU *on encouraging greater involvement of the disabled within LU.* **It was agreed to agree in principle with the suggestions within the motion,** and discuss the practicalities suggested with the Disabled Members' Caucus

ii) From Waltham Forest LU *suggesting LU conferences begin with a debate on the present political situation and LU's reaction to it.* There were mixed views on whether this would work, and **it was agreed to refer the motion to the NC** to consider how prioritising of motions and other business, including that suggested in the motion, should be conducted

iii) From Lambeth LU *calling on branches to be outwards and active, and to report their activities to the NC.* Some EC members felt it was not practical for all branches to be expected to regularly report, particularly where branches were barely functioning, and that, although the motion was too prescriptive, it had many useful elements. As a result, **it was agreed to support the motion in principle and ask for branches where possible to report what activities they were involved with to the next NC**

iv) From Yorkshire & Humberside regional committee *on the development of disciplinary and behaviour guidelines for LU* - **agreed to refer this to the Safe Spaces process**

v) From Matthew C and Garth F *calling for a similar tour to last year's with Podemos, Die Linke and Syriza* - **agreed in principle, to be considered for the autumn**

vi) From the LU LGBTQ Caucus *on equality training and the need to set up a black caucus* - it was agreed that training on equality was needed, and that we needed to do more to liaise with black members. **It was agreed to refer the motion to the NC with the EC's support**