

Minutes of Left Unity Executive meeting

17 January 2015

Attendance: Felicity D, Salman S, Pete G, Kate H, Andrew B, Chris H, Tom W, Terry C, Oliver N, Matthew C, Jon D, Sharon McC, Stephen H, Pete McL, Barbara S, Sharon McL, Mike S (East Mids), Simon H (London), Matthew J (Scotland), Darren McC (West Mids), Brigitte L (Women's Caucus)

Apologies: Micheline M, Andy H (Wales), Gioia C, Merry C, Liz D, Kath Owen

Chairs: Sharon McC, Felicity D,

Minutes: Kate H

1. Matters arising from NC minutes not elsewhere on agenda:

- TTIP leaflet written and in production
- Sam working on branch pack
- Discussion on division within NHS 999 movement. Convention on 28th Feb noted; branches asked to send information about local NHS events to Sam at sam@leftunity.org

• Scottish aggregate: After discussion the following motion was agreed with 2 against:

1. An Aggregate of all Scottish members on 31st January in Glasgow
2. To be organised by the NC
3. To be attended by Andrew B and Jon D on behalf of the EC
4. To have a discussion about the way forward without preconditions
5. To invite ex members in Scotland to rejoin and attend

Southern Mediterranean Forum: Felicity D, Ed B and Jim H to attend.

Felicity D to circulate papers and write report.

2. Greece election update and LU work:

Andrew B introduced discussion on Syriza and prospects for left, including necessity of Europe-wide solidarity with a Syriza government.

Agreed: LU should hold local meetings where possible and should encourage local groups to participate in Greece Solidarity Campaign.

3. General Election update:

Chris H introduced discussion on LU general election candidacies so far, including Hackney South, Exeter, Lambeth, Stockport and Bristol West. Noted that a larger number of local election candidacies is likely. Noted that paperwork for 'Left Unity – trade unionists and socialists' description is finalised with Electoral Commission and can be used where appropriate. Decision on Liverpool contest will be made following Convention of Left in Merseyside on February 14th. Possibility of GLA contest in 2016 noted. Oliver N reported on meeting with Bristol West, which is not willing to stand in a different constituency. Kate H asked for her opposition to standing in Bristol West to be minuted. Barbara S asked for thanks to Oliver N and Chris H to be minuted.

Agreed: to ask branches for an update on general election and local candidacies and to reconsider standing if possible.

To approach RMT for financial support at Oliver N's suggestion

Election finances: Simon H introduced discussion on election fundraising and has drafted materials for appeal; discussion included proposal for

fundraising event, public crowd funding via social media.

Agreed:

The following motion was agreed:

“That we elect a national election campaign committee from this EC to shape our general election work. This will include all the general election candidates as they are agreed, the press officer, plus others. The NC will be asked to endorse this in February. The following will be actioned by the committee: a finance appeal; public crowd funding appeal via social media plus short videos; a separate bank account for election funds raised; a national focus on whole election as well as where we are standing candidates.”

Barbara S agreed to set up the separate bank account for the election account

Tom W agreed to convene the election campaign committee comprising himself, Pete G, Terry C, Barbara S, Sharon McC and GE candidates plus Chris H, Felicity D and Kate H to be copied in.

4. Disputes items:

Agreed: that Kate H approach NC members to constitute a sub-committee – first suggestions Kathy L and Pip T.

That the member's request that was tabled be considered by this sub-committee.

5. Housing Conference:

Felicity D introduced discussion on housing conference in Liverpool on March 7th asking for support from all branches. Discussion included: need for focused support on housing issues; 2 housing demos in London on 31st Jan; possibility of collective transport; number of housing activists in Lambeth; Stop Evictions should be added to promotional material; querying of cost of using eventbrite (no cost if event is free); use of interviews on housing on website to promote event; that fares be offered to invited speakers from housing campaigns e.g. Focus E15; noted that info on conference had been available at last NC and leaflets had been at national conference so no branches/members were excluded.

Agreed: £500 is maximum budget and speakers' costs to be paid from that.

6. Spring Political Event:

Kate H introduced Kathy L's two papers. Kathy was thanked by the EC for her work on this event. Discussion included the following points:

That the draft was a welcome start to the discussion on the event; that total estimated cost (venue plus promotion, travel etc) was unviable, that the event should be self-financing and that a different venue should be sought and date changed if necessary; that it is important to engage with other political forces, including trade unions as well as green left and left Labour; that more LU speakers and distinct LU politics should be included, esp. principal speakers; that gender balance is necessary; that Friday doesn't work for out of London people – possibly move rally to Saturday evening; that plenaries should be single theme, that the opening plenary should be on Greece, Spain and the developments in Europe and LU place within them; that there should be separate sessions on austerity, economics etc; that the final session should be on how to unite forces to the left of Labour; that LU has specific things to say and these need to come out clearly; that debate workshops would be interesting; that gender

balance is important but also a workshop/speaker on the gendered nature of austerity; that Fawcett Society and European gender research reports (EIGE) have useful material on this; that campaigns on gender, race, child abuse and housing need to be brought into it; that building a broad party of the left, in the post-election context, needs to be central; that post-election it may be possible to work with others on a joint event; that the programme is top down and needs more room for grass roots participation.

Agreed that Pete G, Terry C and Simon H would join sub-committee to work on this, convened by Kathy L.

7. White Balloons Campaign:

Felicity D introduced discussion reporting on very successful and powerful meeting in parliament: discussion included: next stage - events in local areas; if individuals contact us who have been abused, refer them to NPAC or to contact police; 'Stop It Now!' the child sexual abuse prevention campaign is a useful point of information.

Chris H raised question about an anonymous email trail before Xmas.

Agreed: Kate H to follow up as agreed.

Oliver N offered to work with Terry C on whistleblowing/gagging.

8. Additional NC Agenda:

Agreed to prioritise: GE manifesto, UK constitution, housing, social security and how to proceed on safe spaces