

Socialist Societies Executive

Minutes of the meeting of 16 July 2007

Present: Jacky Peacock (LHG) Chair; Emma Burnell (SERA); David Caplin (SfL); Huw Davies (SHA); Fred Grindred (CSM); Dianne Hayter (NEC); Neil Nerva (JLM); Nigel Spearing (SEA). Pat Ireland (NULSC) by phone

In the absence of the Secretary, minutes taken by DC

1. Introductions and apologies

Apologies from Bill Thomas (NULSC), Simon Wright (LGBT), Patrick Vernon (SHA), Nick Russell (LDMG), Carlie Newman (SLL)

2. Minutes of meeting of 21 May 2007

Approved.

3. Matters Arising

Attendance: it was noted that it was usual for one person from each Society to attend the Executive, but clarification was requested with respect to attendance by representatives and alternates.

(ACTION: Simon).

4. NEC Report (DH)

The first NEC to be attended by the new Leader and Deputy Leader; a sense of invigoration. Noted that the Leader refers to the Deputy Leader as "Party Chair" and that he has appointed 6 Party "Vice-Chairs" who are not members of the NEC.

Importance of affiliated Societies to interact as soon as possible with relevant Ministers was stressed.

Selection of candidates: there is still a significant shortfall of women and of BEM applicants, for both MPs and councillors. Party rules would change, in the case of local government selections, for those 3-member wards with a full selection, whereby the first vote would be for the female nominees, to select the one "automatic" woman candidate; any remaining women nominees then going in to the general ballot for the remain 2 positions.

A disability guide will be published in September.

In the 2008 London elections, the potential for transfer of UKIP votes to BNP could be dangerous. Therefore, exceedingly important to maximize turn-out.

5. NPF Report from 14-15 July (JP)

Main issues seen in re-energising the party are: embedding in local community; policy development; campaigning.

The manifesto will be policy-driven, with appointed backbench subject leads.

Possible Socialist Society seminar

HD, on behalf of the SHA, suggested a seminar for all societies, perhaps on inequality. However, it was pointed out that twice before this had been tried and cancelled, and that the third one (held in Manchester in September 2006) had not been well attended.

It was however agreed to hold an early evening meeting, with Ed Miliband (the “lead” cabinet member on the Manifesto) in late autumn, provided there was sufficient interest amongst societies. This would take the form of a discussion on the revised reports from the NPF (which would form the basis of the Manifesto), with three members per society invited; and with each society asked to produce in advance a brief response to the NPF document, highlighting their comments/ alternative views on the manifesto with respect to their particular area of interest. DH agreed to invite Ed Miliband, provided there was sufficient interest and subject to someone else agreeing to undertake the other arrangements for the event.

6. Deputy Leadership elections

Turnout was 99% for MPs/MEPs; 54% for individual party members; 8% for affiliates. Socialist Societies come in the latter, although with higher turnout. All societies requested to send their results to Simon for inclusion on the website.

7. Bournemouth LP Conference

The CSM venue may still have a few vacancies, details should be circulated to Societies (**ACTION: FG**).

8. Election to National Constitutional Committee

Pat Ireland (a nominee from NULSC) described her background (by telephone conference) and answered questions. Patrick Vernon (SHA nominee) was unable to attend because of a bereavement. For the benefit of others, DH described the origins of the NCC and its functions.

9. Officers' Reports including Treasurer's Report

Because of earlier extended discussions, there were no formal officers' reports.

Noted that replacement of Pete Moorey as a signatory on bank account(s), alongside Jacky Peacock and Simon Wright by Emma Burnell is ongoing.

(**ACTION: Emma & Simon**).

10. “Extending and Renewing Party Democracy” proposals

Closing date for submissions: 14 September. Most societies likely to put in their own responses, but it was also agreed to submit a joint Socialist Societies one if possible. DH agreed to produce first draft and to circulate for comment/ amendment.

11. AOB

None

12. Dates for future meetings.

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The meeting closed at 20:30

DC