Report on UKIP NEC meeting March 27th 2017

Members present: Paul Oakden (Party Chairman) (PO), Paul Nuttall MEP (Party Leader) (PN), David Sprason (DS), John Bickley (JB), Steve Crowther (SC), Elizabeth Jones (EJ), Marion Mason (MAM), Anish Patel (AP), Paul Oakley (PJO), Katie Fanning (KF), Alan Bown (AB), Piers Wauchope (PW), Fiona Mills (FM).

Also present: Adam Richardson (Party Secretary) (AR), Jonathan Arnott MEP (General Secretary) (JA), Peter Whittle AM (PWh) (Deputy Leader).

The meeting started at 2.08pm.

Apologies were received from Mick McGough. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

PW asked about Seamus Martin’s new membership idea which was raised on January 30th; KF said that this will come up later on the agenda when the ‘Direct Democracy’ paper is covered. PO said that PN has meetings this week which will be looking at options for membership.

FM said that Gary Robinson had an idea about Party membership.

JA said that the [Gary Robinson’s] idea is for people to be able to ‘upgrade’ their memberships of other parties to a UKIP membership for a reduced fee, ideally with them taking photographs of them cutting up their old membership cards.

PO said that this idea will be fed into the review.

Leader’s Report

We are trying to get UKIP back on the front foot. We spent three weeks of March on the back foot, with negative stories – often from Arron Banks. We had ‘knighthoodgate’, which was farcical. We looked like a divided Party. There were some people in the Party who wanted to disagree in public. We took a dip in the opinion polls.

We had the tragic terrorist attack last Wednesday. We came out of it as a Party with the right line; we were far stronger than the other parties who came out with the usual guff. There are a small number of people who hate our democracy and want to kill us. This caused a furore amongst the media
establishment and we moved the Party on into an area which is going to dominate British politics.

We have to be very careful about the language which we use; we must not sound like extremists.

On Saturday morning, PN found out by a text message at 12.03pm that Douglas Carswell had resigned from UKIP. With Douglas Carswell gone, we now have a great opportunity of uniting the Party.

Today we had a fantastic press conference launching our Six Brexit Tests. We cancelled it from Thursday, and Labour decided to announce their own ‘Six Brexit Tests’ at 8.30am this morning.

UKIP’s tests are as follows:

Parliament must resume its supremacy of law-making with no impediments, qualifications or restrictions on its future actions agreed in any leaving deal.

Britain must resume full control of its immigration and asylum policies and border controls.

Leaving the EU must involve restoring to the UK full maritime sovereignty.

The UK must retake its seat on the World Trade Organisation and resume its sovereign right to sign trade agreements with other countries.

There must be no final settlement payment to the EU, and no ongoing payments to the EU budget after Brexit.

Brexit must be done and dusted before the end of 2019.

PN gave a round-up of interviews planned in the next week, including Gerard Batten on the Daily Politics, Patrick O’Flynn on Channel 4 News, Nigel Farage on Good Morning Britain, Suzanne Evans and Paul Nuttall on Question Time and a number of appearances for Peter Whittle.

We were the only voice to be saying what most of the country was saying about the attack on Westminster.

PWh said that the next event that we do like we did today will be about culture and Islam, which he will be doing with PN. No other Party will do this. This needs to be one of our main things going forward.

Chairman’s Report
**Motion: That the NEC has confidence in the Party Chairman.** Proposed by AB, seconded by PJO. *Carried by 9-0 with 2 abstentions.*

The Party Conference will take place in Torquay on September 29th-30th.

A lot of the reforms which PN is looking to implement over the summer months will conclude in September. It is really important that we fill the venue. We will launch the post-Brexit UKIP.

KF asked whether we will have a new Manifesto. PN said that there will be a brand-new raft of radical policies.

AB said that the same page announcing it must also include cheap hotels in that area.

SC said that Torquay is one of the best-run towns in that respect; they immediately put up a list of hotels with discounts.

**Motion: That the NEC decides not to fill the vacancy on the NEC at the present time.** Proposed by AB, seconded by EJ. *Carried by 7-2 (KF, PW) with 2 abstentions (AP, FM).*

**Motion: To thank Toby Coke for his service to the NEC.** Proposed by PW, seconded by SC. *Carried by 10-0 with 1 abstention (MAM).*

Stuart Agnew MEP (SA) entered the room.

SA provided some background information regarding Toby Coke’s resignation, based upon local issues and a desire to deselect candidates which had not been done at regional level.

JA said that deselection can only be done by the NEC.

PW said that it did not work out and this is sad.

PO said that it is, but we should be aware of this as it is a serious matter.

SA reported on MEPs’ attendance to campaign at the Stoke by-election, and specifically that four MEPs had not ‘made the cut’ with regards to the Party’s request that MEPs should spend at least 10 days campaigning in Stoke (or alternatively donate an additional £2,500 to the campaign).

SA circulated a paper on MEP donations.

There was a discussion as to whether MEPs have done enough with donations to the national Party, which varied amongst different MEPs. It was noted that
there may be some donations missing from the spreadsheet, and that some had contributed in other ways: to candidates, branches and regions, and/or by taking on national roles within the Party – but that nevertheless, many MEPs could have done more.

The NEC thanked specific MEPs who had donated to the national Party over and above the amounts expected of them (William Dartmouth, Nigel Farage, Stuart Agnew and Julia Reid).

*Stuart Agnew left the room.*

DS gave a brief update on County Council candidates; he needs a figure for how many that we have in place. AR said that it is likely to be between 1,300 and 1,600.

DS said that there are 4,796 seats available. Hope Not Hate will target all UKIP-held seats with leafleting over the next two weeks.

DS has spoken to PN about a clear message over what we stand for as a Party.

AR said that the threshold for a broadcast is standing in one-sixth of all seats.

DS said that Conservative councils are increasing Council Tax and cutting services.

Graham Young was invited in to the room. He gave a report on progress in restructuring UKIP Northern Ireland and fielded questions from the NEC.

**Motion:** To thank GY and Noel Matthews for all the work they have done in making progress in UKIP Northern Ireland. Proposed by PW, seconded by AB. *Carried by 8-0 with no abstentions.*

The motion on Northern Ireland was deferred.

*The meeting finished at 5.20pm.*