Report on UKIP NEC meeting April 28th 2017

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

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

The meeting started at 2.28pm.

Apologies were received from John Bickley, Mick McGough, Fiona Mills, David Sprason and Alan Bown.

Leader’s Report

Three weeks ago the Prime Minister said that there wouldn’t be a General Election. Six weeks ago there was a 50-50 chance.

KF said that we knew that they had been canvassing.

PN said that when a Prime Minister categorically denies such an election, you tend to believe her. We suspect the opinion polls changed her mind.

SC pointed out that Danny Finkelstein said – a minute before she left no.10 – that this wasn’t going to be a General Election. He had the proverbial egg on his face.

PN said that we need to stand in as many seats as possible.

KF asked about further opportunities; PO said that those who stood in 2015 may now be allocated to a seat. We are now looking at seats where there is a vacancy and many chairmen have come to us proactively with suggestions.

PN said that this is going to be difficult; 2017 was going to be difficult for whoever took over the leadership. Theresa May’s ‘walking the walk’ must begin in September; if we can stay on the pitch the Party is going to start to fly.

KF said that we must put up with what is to come, and we will ultimately survive it.

PN recalled that we went through all of this in 2006-2007 after the 2004 European Elections, and again after the 2009 European elections. We lost
12,000 members in the year of the referendum. Our membership will fall off in the short term – but it will rise again once May starts to backslide.

KF said that the Conservatives will never steal the Direct Democracy proposals. However, another leadership election would destroy the Party. Will PN guarantee not to stand down as Leader after the election?

PN said that the job of restructuring must continue after the election.

The NEC discussed the policies from the ‘integration agenda’.

AR said that there will be an emergency NEC meeting to sign off the Manifesto.

PN said that we’ve launched our Six Brexit Tests, but we are waiting on Gerard Batten for the full document.

PN said that we spoke on Foreign Aid, spending money on the NHS, recruiting 20,000 more police officers, 20,000 more troops (more people are in prison than in the Army), House of Lords reform, an English Parliament, proportional representation, immigration, a full Brexit and protecting British culture through equality and free speech. The press will claim it was a farce – implying that the protestors gatecrashed it. They got their timings wrong, doing so 25 minutes before the meeting.

Anne-Marie Waters presented her views on Islam and the future of UKIP to the NEC.

Alan Bown has purchased 50,000 Correx boards and 2 million generic leaflets. We will be launching an Election Address system on Monday.

PO said that in 2015 we stood 600 or so candidates. We have about 50 branches which have said they wish to avoid fielding a candidate. Where there is a Brexit challenger going up against a Remain MP, we are happy to have that conversation. We didn’t stand a full slate last time, so if we are above the 500 mark then we should have little problem.

The NEC formally selected candidates for target seats, and (separately) ruled that Anne-Marie Waters would not be allowed to stand as a candidate at the General Election.

PW will put off the Stoke report until after the General Election.