UKIP NEC MINUTES Sunday 7th July 2019

Members present: Piers Wauchope (Interim Leader) (PW); Kirstan Herriot (Party Chairman) (KH); Adam Richardson (Party Secretary) (AR), Marietta King (MK), Elizabeth Jones (EJ); Fiona Mills (FM) (By Conference Call); Gareth Bennett (GBt); Donald Mackay (DMc); Ernie Warrender (EW); Ben Walker (BW); Alan Bown (AB); Mark Harland (Treasurer) (MH); Paul Oakley (General Secretary) (PJO).

Apologies: Katie Fanning (KF), Ryan Waters, Nathan Ryding (NR)

Preliminary issue – Katie Fanning absence through illness and disciplinary matter
Resolved to adjourn until next meeting in compliance with Rule 6.22.

Minutes of the previous meeting
Approved with minor amendments.

Nate Ryding
The NEC was informed by KH that NR had moved to the Brexit Party and would be asked to submit a formal resignation from the NEC (which arrived before the end of the meeting).

Interim Leader’s Report (PW) [given in absence of GBt and BW]
In line with party procedure, the vetting panel had met and questioned Gareth Bennett, Helena Windsor, Ben Walker and Mike Hookem. There are no issues with the leadership candidates except for BW and GB. An issue has been raised about BW’s service discharge papers. Subject to his production of his discharge papers, agreed that BW should be approved by the NEC, as should GBt, Helena Windsor and Mike Hookem.

The big question is Gerard Batten. PW spoke to him last night about this. GB said he wasn’t coming to the interview today. PW said to him that some people on the NEC were already questioning whether he should be on the ballot. GB said “fine – I don’t want to do it anyway. It’s no problem if they block me”.

PW was of the view that it would be better if GB withdrew rather than have the NEC block him, and that we should get a statement from him to this effect. Four leadership candidates stood down when Gerard Batten announced he was standing.

AB proposed a motion that GB be prevented from standing as having brought the party into disrepute and therefore had failed vetting. As a result he would not be able to stand. and asked how we can have a leader whose heart is not in it, and who won’t appear on mainstream media? A discussion followed during which NEC members expressed various views about the candidacy of Gerard Batten.

PW said that he would speak to Gerard Batten about the mood of the NEC. If he decided to withdraw, there would be no need for AB’s motion and PW would extend the nomination deadline for up to a week to allow nominations from those who would have stood in the event that Gerard did not. PW intended to keep 8th August as the deadline for votes and 10th August as the day of the count. PW would inform NEC members of the discussions with GB tomorrow. If GB wanted to stand there would be a formal vote on AB’s motion by email tomorrow. If GB does not stand and the nomination deadline is extended, those candidates whose nominations have already been submitted may have their money back.

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GBt and BW returned to the meeting after this topic,

**Mark Angelides**
There was a presentation to the NEC via FaceTime. Analysis had shown that The Brexit Party and Change UK had spent a lot on social media but this didn’t help the latter who were vastly unpopular.

Mark said that over the last week UKIP had received 100,000 more engagements than The Brexit Party on Facebook which showed that it is a valuable form of communication with our members. It would be useful to make the Facebook page the first port of call for UKIP news. It is worth exploring the possibility of members using our own social media platforms as something for their own news. We can also “force” the other parties to spend their own money to counter us.

UKIP are the leading party on social media which is something we should be proud of.

Many branches are not using their websites properly. Mark will set up an outreach to deal with moribund branches. He would like packages to go out to the branches every week with professional content from Head Office to re-use.

**Membership Update (KH)**
An update of membership figures was given.

KH believes that people are leaving UKIP to subscribe to the Brexit Party. She confirms that under the Party Rules a branch or other officer cannot support The Brexit Party but if branch members who do not hold office say they wish to subscribe to the Brexit Party, they may be told that they do not need to resign from UKIP.

**Policy Development (KH)**
KH says that she will produce a folder of documents on policy for discussion by NEC members in advance of the Newport September conference. Two or Three co-opted NEC members can then polish the “stand out” policies and present them to conference.

**Staffing and Contracts (KH)**
Certain staff members’ contracts were discussed.

**Merged Branches (KH)**
John Ferguson at Glasgow had raised some concerns about the merger agreed by the NEC at the June meeting but these were unsubstantiated.

**Party Conference (KH)**
Upcoming Party Conference was discussed.

Katie Hopkins would not be speaking at the South Eastern conference but will be at the dinner which will no longer be at the Lansdowne Hotel.

**Treasurers Report (MH)**
MH delivered a report.
Other positive matters included the fact that thousands of pounds have now been recovered from dormant bank accounts up and down the country.

The UKIP shop would be promoted and Steve Beatty is “working like a Trojan” on new products.

MH intends to resurrect the dormant Finance and Remuneration Committee.

General Secretary’s Report (PJO)
PJO discussed an ongoing complaint. KH confirmed that she would not be exercising her emergency powers to suspend this particular member on the basis of a complaint submitted on 6th June.

A panel will be formulated to consider the complaint against that person, giving them 7 days notice and AR would email the full NEC to engage volunteer members for this.

Party Secretary’s Report (AR)
An update was given on various legal matters affecting the Party

Any other Business
KH stressed that NEC members should make every effort to attend meetings in person.

New NEC member to replace NR
To be invited to the next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting
Next meeting fixed for Saturday 17th August 2019.