UKIP NEC Meeting Agenda

01/02/20 – 13.00

Union Jack Club, Sandell St, London, SE1 8UJ

1, Attendance
Ian Garbutt (IG), Paul Girvan (PG), Elizabeth Jones (EJ), Marietta King (MK), Donald Mackay (DM), Joel McGuigan (JM), Pat Mountain (PatM), Pete Muswell (PeteM), Mike Shaw (MS), Freddy Vachha (FV), Hoong Wai Cheah (HW - Minutes taker), Ben Walker (BW)

Apologies
Paul Williams, Lawrence Webb, Neil Hamilton

New members (PG) & (IG) were welcomed to the meeting.

2, Approval of Minutes
Proposed by FV, seconded by PM – 5 Votes FOR, 2 Abstentions, 0 Against

3, Matters Arising
Mike Shaw addressed the NEC with some questions which were answered throughout the duration of the meeting.

4, Leaders Report
(PatM) (BW) (NH) & (FV) are working hard to firefight, answer emails, etc further complicated by lack of funds.

(PatM) responded to (MS) ref Mark Harland issue - UKIP went to court to get permission to pay late invoice for EU election. It is the Treasurer's job to do this. Mark did not feel competent to attending court. Adam Richardson was asked to attend instead. Mark and others took steps to get Adam debarred. Adam demanded an apology for past grievances before doing this. Pat did not ever say she would attend. Mark apologised. Adam was unhappy with the sincerity of the apology. Pat asked Neil to help. Neil tried to get Adam to go. It was Mark’s responsibility as Treasurer but indicated his intention to resign on 31 Dec. Mark resigned the next day. Adam went instead. Liz pointed out that we now have permission to file expenses late, so this discussion is moot. Mark Harland is bringing legal action against the party.

(PatM) discussed current membership levels, finances and NEC perception. Donald suggested that the problems of perception may be because people don't know what is going on in the NEC.

5, Treasurers Report
In (NH)'s absence, (FV) presented the Treasurers Report to the NEC along with up-to-date accounts.
The party's biggest current outgoing is its staff and office costs. With the departure of Mark Harland as Party Treasurer, the party was now saving £2500 + Expenses PER MONTH as he was no longer being paid. Historically, the Party Treasurer has not been a paid role in recent years, but Gerard Batten agreed payment with Mark Harland.

There might not be a legal contract to employing Mark Harland. Mark Harland is suing for £4000. 17th Feb to file for defence.

Kirstan Herriot’s employment is now terminated following her leaving employment without notification. She has made a claim against the party for constructive dismissal due to the treatment of her by Richard Braine. (NH) is currently dealing with this on behalf of the party. (BW) as chairman is ultimately responsible as employer for UKIP employees.

In the span of 8 months to end of December 2019, membership fell from 27,109 to 14,266.

(FV) gave an outline of the current financial situation of UKIP.

(BW) stated that everything discussed in meeting is required to be confidential until final accounts are published. Attendees unanimously assented to destroying any handwritten notes about figures discussed.

6, General Secretary’s Report & EGM Update

EGM - Currently applications to hold 5 different items, but not been chaired properly by the officers. Previous emails had been sent out to the branches regarding the requirements for an official EGM. Currently there is no EGM process as there are NO correct applications. As of tomorrow, leadership election will begin.

(MS) shared that the meetings he chaired he attempted to be impartial and referred to the constitution. At branch EGMs there have been huge amount of dissatisfaction. The Constitution was revamped in 2012, but no obvious paper trail. It was circulated for approved at EGM 2012, which created the NEC.

(BW) declared that the constant infighting and introspection, instead of outward looking, could result in the end of UKIP. Objectors should put themselves forward for the constitutional working group. Generally agreed that Constitution needs reform, but this will take a long time. The best thing for unhappy members is to get involved in the reforms. (FV) pointed out that reform of the Constitution will require detailed analysis. Constitution takes precedent over Rulebook. An EGM to get rid of the party chairman is unconstitutional as is an EGM to force the current NEC to stand down.

7, Party Secretary’s Report

Adam Richardson is happy to come back as party secretary, but only after the issue with the bar is cleared up. The party cannot operate without legal advice. Adam's costs are very reasonable, and his contribution has been very helpful. There are several historic issues, including Mark Harland's (which is being handled by (NH). The Richard Braine case has accrued costs on Adam's team. Unfortunately, some decisions have been made by former Chairman without the NEC's approval. Currently still in court. If UKIP is successful, it can recover £41k plus costs.

UKIP has paid the Injunction costs in full as directed by the court.

(FV) has investigated the technical aspect of Jeff Armstrong's claimed actions. Mark Dent's lawyers claimed that UKIP deceitfully claimed that Mark acquired the data; (FV) presented a counter to that claim which UKIP's counsel failed to advance in Court. Ben will update the NEC when he receives more updates.
Chairman’s Report

Membership figures is 13,989 as of 31 January.
List of suspensions by (BW) and Kirstan was provided which were carried out using the Chairman's emergency powers.
(DM) enquired to why Nicole Bushill was suspended. Wrongful use of regional membership mailing list as of 16 Nov 2019. Nicole will face the complainant. Additionally, Nicole disseminated the previous NEC notes without ratification or approval of the NEC, which is not in the reason for suspension, but will feature in the appeal.
Members Not In Good Standing was put in by Returning Officer Piers Wauchope, so Ben does not personally know the reasoning behind them. (BW) suspensions entailed: Suspension letters sent via recorded mail, which is signed for, and explains why they are suspended and what the process of appeal. Suspensions have a time limit set by the Chairman (max 11 months). Not in Good Standing status is distinct from Suspension; one difference relates to how it comes off.

Vote to "Accept that Ben Walker has produced a list of suspensions to notify the NEC that emergency powers have been used."
8 Votes FOR, 1 Abstention, 0 Against

No direct action to be taken on branch bank accounts due to objections by the Regional Committees

Successful and productive regional meeting was held prior to the NEC meeting and items discussed were shared with the NEC.

Proposal to end the £4 monthly membership. It is difficult and expensive to administer 1396 currently. (FV) noted that the number was 2000 in previous analysis. A lot of the membership loss is from this. Monthly subscriptions are 60% more expensive. Vote to stop new applications of the £4, whilst honouring the existing subscribers, disallowing switch from annual to monthly. (MK) proposed, (FV) seconded. 5 Votes FOR, 2 Against, 1 Abstention

The party Leadership Election was discussed.
-Agreed that Ben is returning officer and that the process begins on 2nd Feb
-(BW) proposes to reduce candidate charge and length of membership requirement
-(EJ) suggested it is a sensible proposal. Suggested 2 years and £3000.
-(FV) analysis of membership qualification: 1 year almost 100%, 2 years 70%, 3 years 45% (IG) agrees that 3 years is required experience to understand the party
-(EJ) suggested that qualification is required in terms of donor/officer ship.
-(PatM) asked (JM) about experience: 2-year suggestion, £2000-£3000
-It is not difficult to become branch chairman but can show commitment. Leader has limited powers in the party but can make a difference to the party's performance. How to convince the party that the leader can lead.
-(EJ) pointed out that £3000 might be needed to bring in money as well as additional charge to cover costs. (FV) objected that cover costs are not necessary as Independence is now an electronically distributed. Vetting process will be published. Process will not be stopped and/or re-opened. (EJ) suggested parliamentary candidate as a requirement. (FV) says a charge needed to stop timewasters, £3000 may not be enough. (MK) suggested being branch chairman might be a sensible qualification component. (PeteM) pointed out that non-refundable will deter mischief-makers. (EJ) says patrons should be encouraged, non patrons will qualify, or parliamentary candidate, must have attended hustings. General agreement that full CV for vetting.

Proposal on leadership race requirements:
-£3000 non-refundable (in any circumstances) candidacy fee
-2 years membership
-Must be a branch officer (4 statutory: chair, sec, treas, memb sec.) or a patron
-Stood in a public election
-Full CV.
-Must pass vetting.
- Must be prepared to give time and support themselves in an unpaid post, with no expenses allowed.
- Leader will be director of UKIP Ltd, including liabilities.
- Fulfil requirement 12.1.2 of constitution (candidates must be reminded that they are bound by constitution - and must make a clear public declaration of abiding by it).

Proposed by (IG), Seconded by (MK)
Anyone voting rules themselves out for standing in leadership.
6 Votes FOR, 2 Abstentions, 0 Against

Money ring-fenced for electronic voting. Voting will include survey of members.
Limit amount that can be put on website.

Proposal to run NEC election at the same time:
7 Votes FOR, 1 Abstention, 0 Against

Administration review
Proposal to restructure the leadership team to change the way the party operates
Proposed by (IG0, Seconded by (EJ)
5 Votes FOR, 1 Against, 3 Abstentions

(BW) is putting together a campaign team for local elections.

(BW) is putting together a Constitutional working group

MyUKIP update: Constitution and party rules must be on the main website and visible. UKIP online should be consolidated.
A lot of people are reluctant to donate to legal squabbles, Joel proposes the idea of ring-fenced donation pots - management will have to consider.

Staff update: Any changes to employment will be discussed separately.

Patrons club: Hugh Moelwyn Hughes standing as interim chair. Looking to revive patrons club. Patrons fund is in a ring-fenced account.

Sovereign draw is only bringing in a few hundred. Mark Harland, director of Sovereign Draw is drawing £10,700. Shareholders can remove a director.
(FV) proposes that UKIP Ltd (owner of sovereign draw) issues an EGM to removing Mark Harland, subject to gambling licence is being held by UKIP Ltd Ian pointed out that we need to look at the betting/lottery licence.
Pete Muswell will investigate gambling licence.
"Chair and treasurer of the party are empowered to negotiate with the directors of sovereign draw ltd in the matter of removing their directorship whilst protecting the gambling licence."
Proposed by (FV), seconded by (IG)
7 Votes FOR, 0 Against, 1 Abstention

9, Policy Report & Head of Policy Appointment

David Kurten has resigned from the party to stand as an independent.
Proposal that (PeteM) take over policy, and act as the "NEC Relations Officer" who is responsible for informing the membership about NEC decisions and defending them, saving NEC members time and the stress of being misrepresented or misunderstood.
(BW) wants one press release every month from each Spokes Person.
(PeteM) shared his vision for policy development
(MK) proposes that for each spokesman to produce 3 bullet points.
Proposed by (FV), seconded by (JM)
8 Votes FOR, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

10, Campaigning Updates

(MS) Leaves the meeting
(FV) gave a short update on the General Election result being better than predicted and paid thanks to his Election Team.

11, **Scotland Update**
16% (1 in 6) want to get rid of Scottish parliament. Might succeed if we play our cards right.
Mirror policy in Wales.
Proposal to abolish Scottish, Wales, and London parliament
Unanimously passed.

12, **Wales Update**
(NH) was now the sole Assembly Member in Wales and his team are still working hard to ensure UKIP has the best possible chance of success in the 2021 Assembly Elections.

13, **Branch structure** - Lawrence Webb has proposed an improvement - NEC to read and consider it.
NEC to approve branch mergers, unanimously passed

14, **Any Other Business**

(BW) wants to push UKIP’s USP on social media (shared in meeting)
(PeteM) made the point that immigration should not be top of agenda, but that the impacts on the poorest should be used, so be clever about it.
(MK) suggests that we are still the "guardians of leave"
(JM) mentioned youth affairs spokesman, not that he necessarily wants the job - will park this for discussion later

Date of next meeting: 7th March

**Ben Walker**
Interim National Party Chairman