UKIP NEC Meeting Agenda

09/04/20 – 13.00

Online via ZOOM Meeting

1, Attendance

Ian Garbutt (IG), Paul Girvan (PG), Elizabeth Jones (EJ), Marietta King (MK), Donald Mackay (DM), Joel McGuigan (JM), Pete Muswell (PeteM), Freddy Vachha (FV), Ben Walker (BW), Neil Hamilton (NH), Adam Richardson (AR),

Apologies

Pat Mountain (PatM), Steve Hollis (SH)

2, Approval of Minutes

Minutes were circulated by email prior to the meeting but, for members to have time to read them, they will be voted on for acceptance by email to the Party Chairman (BW).

3, Matters Arising

(BW) discussed the difficulties facing the NEC at present in relation to meetings and advised that the ZOOM Online platform would be utilised until it was possible to meet again in person and that tonight’s meeting would be used as a test.

(DM) brought up the previously NEC agreed 20/20 membership drive of which (BW) had already organised but, it was felt by the management team that a membership drive at this point wouldn’t benefit the party due to the current pandemic and it being portrayed as politicking during a time of national emergency and unity. This was discussed by the NEC and it was agreed to publish the offer on the party website and give the details to regional officers to promote in a way they see fit along with staff from head office contacting lapsed members with the offer. (BW) to action.

The current content of the website was discussed, and it was decided that the covering page should be updated and potentially show pictures of UKIP members/branches doing their bit in the community to assist with the current COVID-19 pandemic. (BW) will include this in his next email to the membership.
4, **Leaders Report**

In (PatM’s) absence she asked (BW) to give a short report on her behalf. (BW) reported to the meeting that (PatM) continued to work independently and in partnership with the management team dealing with emails and taking calls. Whilst the country finds itself in the middle of this pandemic its difficult to promote the party but, she had been carrying out some local events to her which had created some local media interest and some cloaked publicity for the party itself. She had also been working closely with HO to deal with long outstanding business along with current issues. She also paid thanks to the HO staff and the management team who are collectively dealing with many issues for the betterment of the party.

5, **Treasurers Report**

(NH) reported to the NEC the current membership figures which stand at approx. 9,500 which still returns a healthy monthly income as long as the party cuts its cloth accordingly. He continues to work to reduce the party’s overhead costs at this difficult time and has made substantial headway in doing so, cutting away much of the rot and mismanagement from previous leadership teams.

(NH) reported to the NEC that the current HO lease will expire in September 2020 and he is currently in the process of potentially negotiating a rent holiday given the current pandemic situation.

(NH) continues to work on regaining control of the Sovereign Draw and will report back to the NEC when the required official meeting of its company has been organised/taken place.

(EJ) joined the meeting at 20.20.

6, **General Secretary’s Report**

(FV) reported that there were no outstanding disciplinary matters except for one appeal hearing which may take place once lockdown restrictions are lifted or other arrangements are made. He expected there to have been more but those subject to procedure seemed to prefer pressing their case one-sided on social media rather than explaining themselves.

(FV) reported to the NEC the status of one live issue regarding the contract of the former party chair of which (NH) has been dealing with. (NH) added to (FV’s) report and will advise the NEC accordingly if required.

7, **Party Secretary’s Report**

(AR) who is currently acting as the party’s legal advisor (Pro-Bono) and not as the Party Secretary gave an update on various legal cases.

8, **Chairman’s Report**

(BW) stressed the importance of board confidentiality as a general principle and given the period of enhanced splinter extremism the party has endured in recent times, it’s imperative that directors take their roles and responsibilities seriously.

Membership figures were repeated following (NH’s) report.

The leadership election was going to continue as planned to follow the original timetable as closely as possible regardless of the lockdown restrictions. It was likely that interviews and vetting of candidates will now take place via an online meeting platform of which (BW) had already started to organise. Its likely that the results of the interviews/vetting will be reported to the next NEC for final decision/ratification.
The NEC elections were discussed which will run alongside the leadership election with online voting taking place at the same time. Following a robust and lengthy discussion the NEC resolved the following:

1. £300 non-refundable deposit
2. Either (a) 12 months unbroken membership of the party and must have stood for public office AND/OR (b) been a member since 23 June 2015 (a year before the Referendum).
3. Complies with ALL aspects of the Party Constitution & Rule Book
4. Will not have had any involvement with proscribed groups or groups with aims contrary to the party's direction.

Proposed by (EJ), seconded by (MK), 5 – FOR, 1 – AGAINST, VOTE CARRIED

The following branch mergers were approved by the NEC:

North Herefordshire with West Worcester (WM),
Brighton Pavilion with Hove & Portslade (SE),
Devizes with North Wiltshire & Chippenham (SW),

9, Policy Report & Head of Policy Appointment

(PeteM) gave a brief update on policy development which had slowed recently due to the current pandemic. He had been in contact with Spokespersons and some were generating ideas for presentation to the NEC and integration into the living manifesto. It is proving difficult to promote UKIP at a time of national political neutrality but, we will continue to do what we can on social media.

10, Campaigning Updates

The local elections have been postponed until next year (2021) which has stalled our plans and development of local campaigns and a local manifesto. The pandemic delay buys us some time in terms of campaign development. (FV) advised that branches should be as ready as possible for potential by-elections following lockdown restrictions being lifted and we come to the end of the pandemic's overall effect on society.

11, Scotland Update

(DM) advised the meeting that it would be advisable to do more in terms of the party's stance on the abolishment of devolution as he felt there was a definite appetite for it in Scotland. (BW) is to arrange a new graphic which can be used in the three areas of the UK where devolution has taken place.

12, Wales Update

(NH) advised that the Welsh parliament continued to operate via ZOOM and have recently reformed voting legislation to enable 16 yo's to vote. (NH) still feels UKIP has a strong hold on its Welsh USP of scrapping the assembly even though another party have their name based on exactly that. The fear is a split vote, but the Welsh team will continue to work to raise the profile of UKIP Wales.

13, Northern Ireland Update

A “Scrap Stormont” FB page has been set-up and continues to do well in terms of hits and engagement. Recent graphic produced by the party has been well received and (PG) made a plea for more and passed on his thanks to George Pykov and (BW) for arranging/producing them.
Any Other Business

A weekly Wage of Shame scheme was proposed by (PeteM) whereby public servants and the like, including Police Commissioners, University Chancellors, Charity & Medical Trust CEO’s who receive exceedingly high wages should be exposed and advertised on social media to help generate more interest in the party. The whole NEC believed this was a good idea. (FV) advised that the Taxpayers’ Alliance had already done the hard work/investigations on this and we could simply use their data/information. (FV) also made clear we must ensure there is no way any potential lawsuit could come our way due to some small error with the numbers but, it we used the Taxpayers’ Alliance information, that would be unlikely.

Following the resolution at the last NEC meeting. (JM) was asked to demonstrate that he is fully aware of his responsibilities as a company director and NEC member and was reminded by (BW) of his duties and what his fellow NEC members expected of him. He was advised to control his communication with poisonous factions and always refer external questions to the leadership team. Due to another misplaced question/point being made about a live legal case, (EJ) proposed that (JM) still be removed from the NEC as a protection to the party and its directors and advised (JM) to concentrate on the revival of Young Independence. There was no seconder to that proposal but NEC members did agree that a meeting should be held in a week or so to explicitly deal with this matter and new information about the potential leakage of minutes before they had been ratified by the NEC. (BW) will organise the meeting to take place and advise members accordingly.

Date of next full agenda meeting: Monday 11th May 2020

Ben Walker
Interim National Party Chairman