UKIP NEC Meeting Agenda

30/05/20 – 13.00 – 17.00

Online via ZOOM Meeting

1, Attendance

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

Apologies

None

2, Approval of Minutes

All minutes from the two previous meetings had been circulated and accepted via email and already posted to the members section on UKIP.org.

3, Matters Arising

NEC members discussed the government lockdown, loss of personal freedoms and illegal immigration as brought to the meeting by (DM). It was agreed to produce a set of graphics which could be used in the coming weeks to highlight these issues across social media.

Members also discussed the party’s stance on marking religious occasions. A vote was proposed by (EJ) and seconded by (DM) to cease marking ANY religious occasion from this point on. The vote was carried. 7 – FOR, 2 – AGAINST, 1 – Abstention.

4, Leaders Report

(PatM) reported on her work over the last month which has involved communicating directly with branches for varying reasons and her work in filling vacancies on the current Spokespersons list. She thanked her colleagues on the NEC and Interim Management Team for their support and expressed thanks for being able to help the party recover from what has been an extremely testing period for the party. A vote of thanks was proposed by (FV) and was carried unanimously.

5, Treasurers Report
(NH) reported to the meeting that the party was now firmly back in the black following some of the recent changes. Work was continuing to re-configure directorships of the Sovereign Draw and the party needs to start to consider the funding of future political campaigns.

6, **General Secretary’s Report**

(FV) informed NEC members that there were currently no outstanding disciplinary matters or appeals outstanding including the confirmation that one historic appeal due to COVID-19 will no longer be taking place as the applicant had withdrawn from the process.

7, **Party Secretary’s Report**

(NH) updated members on live legal matters being undertaken on behalf of the party and was supported by (AR).

(AR) left the meeting following this item.

8, **Chairman’s Report**

(BW) reported to the meeting that the current membership stood at around 9000. There had been a small rise in new members to the party and a resurrection of some defunct branches which was extremely encouraging.

He also reported on the current leadership election and the exclusion of one of the candidates due to them failing vetting and being unable to meet the basic application criteria as set out for the election. The result of the election would still be announced alongside the NEC elections.

Rob McWhirter the Chair on the party’s Tech Sub Committee joined the meeting and reported on the NEC elections in his capacity as Deputy Returning Officer and answered questions relating to the committee’s work. The NEC election was progressing as planned and five candidates had been successful in completing vetting and will be progressed to the electronic ballot stage. Members will soon be receiving their email invitation to vote and take part in an online survey. Members who had not supplied the party with an email address will be written to with their invitation and encouraged to supply an email address. The election timetable continues to be followed with a view to announce the successful applicants on or around the 14th June.

The migration of administrative functions to the new Head Office model were progressing well and a new HO telephone number was now in use: 020 3476 9564. The new address for all postage was now UKIP, Henleaze Business Centre, 13 Harbury Road, Henleaze, Bristol, BS9 4PN.

The restructuring has already saved the party around £23,000.00 per month and these savings are predicted to increase.

(BW) had circulated a report prepared by Dr Tomaz Slivnik on behalf of the Constitutional Working Group of recommended changes to the party’s constitution which will be discussed in full at the next NEC meeting.

There were no branch mergers to present to the NEC.

9, **Policy**

(PM) was reticent to push forward any further policy prior to a new leader being announced. (BW) supported this stance and confirmed it was indeed the role of the leader to influence and drive party policy which is ratified by the NEC.
Campaigning Update

No further work has been carried out in terms of local campaigning for the next round of delayed local elections although the party continued to accept prospective candidates for vetting.

(NH) reported on the work currently being undertaken to prepare for the now named Welsh Parliament elections in 2021 and what his team headed-up by Tom Harrison were doing. It was noted that a substantial amount of money may be required to cover the costs of a Wales wide election address but (NH) was not sure if this would be the best use of funds at this point or prove effective. (BW) informed the meeting that the company who would be re-designing the party’s website were experts in targeted social media campaigning and could assist in this area. Wales could be used as a test bed for future elections.

Scotland Report

(DM) explained the percentages required for successful election to the Scottish Parliament and that the election may benefit from a high-profile candidate. Suggestions were welcomed and (BW) could potentially approach people if requested.

Wales Update

(NH) covered this under (10).

Northern Ireland Update

(PG) updated members on a successful ZOOM meeting he had held of NI key members and was positive about the party’s future. He made the point that BREXIT is far from settled for the residents of NI and UKIP must remain in point to ensure pressure is applied to get the right sort of BREXIT for the party and NI.

Any Other Business

(JM) brought the matter of a reduced membership fee being offered to younger members to try and entice them to join. (BW) who had previously spoken to (JM) about this recommended that the party could allow members 25 and under to join in 2020 for £10.00 alongside the 2020 joining offer. This could be reviewed in December. (JM) proposed this and it was seconded by (IG). The NEC voted unanimously in support of this.

The next meeting was agreed to take place using ZOOM on 27/06/20.

The meeting ended at 18.05

Ben Walker
Interim National Party Chairman