UKIP NEC Meeting Minutes

14/03/21 – 13.00 to 16.00

Online via ZOOM Meeting

1, Attendance

Ian Garbutt (IG), Elizabeth Jones (EJ), Donald MacKay (DM), Ben Walker - Chairman (BW), Neil Hamilton (NH), Pat Mountain (PM), Julia Searle (JS), Tom Harrison (TH), Steve Hollis (SH), Eddie McNally (EM), Joel McGuigan (JM), Pat Bryant (PB), Rob McWhirter (RM), Richard Elvin (RE), Party Secretary (PS), Robert Stephenson (RS), Adam Richardson (AS)

Apologies

(JM) would be joining the meeting late due to work commitments.

2, Approval of Minutes

Carried out by email prior to meeting

3, Matters Arising

(PM) presented the concept of an obituary page on the website to the NEC. The matter was discussed and would be designed pending investigations into to data/legal considerations.

(BW) asked that the NEC consider the existing situation in Surrey. (PM) & (JS) presented the issues faced in the region. The NEC gave clear instruction to (BW) The National Party Chairman to carry out a course of action.

An “Over 65’s” membership Scheme had been floated as a potential idea for the NEC to consider. After discussion, the proposal to introduce a £15.00 membership for the Over 65’s was voted on and was rejected. VOTES FOR – 3, AGAINST – 5, ABSTENSIONS – 0.

(RS) joined the meeting at 14.04

General Jonathon Riley had prepared a discussion paper on COVID-19. The NEC discussed the issue and decided that given the current situation with the gradual lifting of restrictions, the party wouldn’t start to produce new policy in this area at present and monitor the effects of the easing of restrictions. (RS) & (RE) advised that this will very much remain a live issue.
4, Leaders Update

(NH) updated the meeting on his work over the past few weeks. He continues to produce videos and social media content.

He is continuing to recruit high profile members with skill sets and expertise which are of use to the party to help generate interest and offer credibility.

He advised the NEC about the collapse of Reform and how that may affect UKIP membership and electoral success.

5, Treasurer's Report

(IG) updated the NEC on the status of a legacy that is due to the party.

He reported that the party continued to operate well within its means and had a healthy bank balance thanks to the Party Officers.

6, General Secretary’s Report

(TH) reported that there was one live disciplinary matter which was currently being dealt with.

7, Party Secretary’s Report

(PS) reported details of another successfully defended claim brought against the party and an ongoing matter relating to mis-spent branch funds and their recovery.

9, Chairman’s Report

(BW) advised on the current party membership and of a snapshot study which had been carried out since mid-January to the present day.

(JM) joined the meeting at 14.47

The GLA Candidates List was discussed, and NEC members all played their part in a debate around the placement of candidates. After discussion, a vote to present the candidates to the London Membership to decide the order of the list was proposed. The vote would be completed by 21/03/21. PROPOSED (IG), SECONDED (SH), VOTE FOR – 5, AGAINST – 1, ABSENPTION – 1.

Campaign funding was also discussed. The NEC agreed that (BW) would support the Welsh campaign from UKIP LTD and Scottish campaign from Sovereign Draw LTD.

10, UKIP Tech Group Update

(RM) joined the meeting at 15.33 and brought the NEC up to date with rolling changes/updates to the main party website and the latest “Why I Joined UKIP” feature.

(RM) left the meeting following his report.

11, Local Elections & Campaign Manager

(PM) reported to the NEC on a growing approved candidates list. She would be organising meetings with Regional/Branch Chairs to increase the numbers of candidates.

She reported on the completion of an electronic campaign pack which would be provided to candidates which will include a Canvassing Risk Assessment due to COVID-19 restrictions which needed to be agreed by (BW). The guide would also be available from the website along with campaigning materials which could be downloaded.
(PM) asked (BW) to clarify the current amount of time a lapsed member was considered as such and if they re-joined when branches could retain their membership period. This was currently set at one year. Following discussion, (IG) proposed that the period a former member had to be away from the party until the branch could retain their membership fee be reduced to six months. This was seconded by (PM). VOTED FOR – 9, AGAINST 0, ABSTENSIONS – 0.

(PM) reminded NEC members that ALL councillors and candidates needed to be vetted to stand for the party.

12, **Branch Structure Officer**

(PB) reported on her continued meetings with branches and regions across the country to re-organise the branch structure. She also gave a run-down of how the structure looked to date.

13, **Party Director Report**

There was nothing to report not covered elsewhere.

14, **Leaders Policy Report**

There was nothing to report not covered elsewhere.

14, **Campaigning Update**

(DM) reported on the current campaign preparations and the candidate list which was well populated. A message of thanks from Janice MacKay to candidates and the party vetting team was read out by (BW).

(TH) reported on the current Welsh campaign preparations and the released candidates list.

15, Covered in (14)

16, Covered in (14)

17, (BW) & (PM) advised the meeting on the new members of the NI Leadership Team.

18, **Branch Mergers**

There were no branch mergers for this meeting.

19, **Any Other Business**

Members asked that in the next (BW) electronic communication to members that he remind them to ensure they check their spam/junk settings to allow party emails through.

Members also discussed having a stock of correx board labels which could be used on existing boards to cover the old 0800 telephone number and carry the new imprint. (BW) would action.

20, **Date of Next Meeting - The NEC would meet online via ZOOM on 10/04/21.**

The Meeting was closed at 16.55

Ben Walker
National Party Chairman