

NCG Meeting-Minutes

Wednesday 11/01/2020

Date: 11th of January, 11:00-17:00

Item 0: Agreement of previous minutes

Verbal agreement was made.

Item 1: Introductions and Welcome

Item 2: Election Evaluation

JL acknowledges disappointing election results, noting a particularly disappointing result in Scotland. JL noted the working-class vote shifting to Boris Johnson and the importance of ensuring this does not happen again. CW also noted the particularly disappointing result in the Midlands. BB also noted the current discourse about abandoning the “white working class” ignores the Party’s ignorance of BAME voters and that we should focus on maintaining good positions on immigration and foreign policy. BB also noted the importance of listening to BAME communities and BAME structures.

BG noted the shift to remain and the current narrative that Labour lost because of leave. BG also discussed the data from the different shifts between remain and leave. BG also highlighted the need for a serious strategy going forward. CT agreed that the results are very worrying and also highlighted keeping unity in the left and ensuring the strength within the left. LH noted that we have lost the argument over Brexit and noted the success in her CLP, with the first black MP in Merseyside. LH noted we should ask why the vote went up in Liverpool and down in other mining towns. LH noted the

importance of good Labour councils and the effect it has on the vote. MM noted agreement with previous statement and noted that Targeted seat strategy narrows resources too much in the long term and end up damaging efforts to build Labour votes in places where it has decreased.

LM noted that the 2019 general election represents the long triumph of Thatcherism. Noted that heartlands were lost following the loss of working class institutions including unions. Noted that the priority needs to be to rebuild unions etc in a geographically distributed way as well as local government. LM also noted that although results were disastrous, Labour's vote was still better than those of many European social democratic parties. Acknowledged one reason for the decline in 2019 was that the establishment finally took the left seriously and fought hard. LM noted that going back to the bromides of the 1990s will not be the answer.

LD noted tacking to the right strategy based on the idea working class votes will stay loyal but noted that analysis is now debunked and that the old campaign strategies of the right won't work. LC notes regional differentials. North East infrastructure spending per head vs London is a massive disparity. Noted that the Blair government didn't do anything to redress those inequalities and Labour won't win that back just by sloganeering and will need to be rooted in those communities.

AW suggests that Momentum have become good at mobilising people for elections but questioned the longer term organising in their communities. SJ noted that the COU in it's 18 months achieved a 2% less swing against Labour in those seats they were present. AW also noted that deep organising is an opportunity that Momentum has with the next four years, and combining that with the electoral mobilisation is the best solution.

YG noted that it is important to focus on the immediate priorities as well as making a long term analysis. YG noted questioned what Momentum would do to remain viable and also noted that the left should focus on maintaining influence. MT noted the huge local community organising efforts despite the loss. MT noted the importance of focusing on these efforts.

RGW introduced the Momentum Election Evaluation, including all the work Momentum did in the election including digital tools, Unseat Campaigns, Social media and the ground operation. RGW noted the political importance of campaigning and the left to keep campaigning and mobilization of activists as a priority. RGW also noted issues with the Labour Party which caused problems with campaigning,

including lack of access to data and poor printing machinery. RGW noted serious campaign issues with Labour which need to be resolved and noted that a leadership contender should have some proposals for how to fix this. RGW then highlighted the proposal to hire a researcher to examine the operational effectiveness of Momentum's campaign to improve our performance in the long and short-term future.

JL noted the importance of understanding how and why we lost certain areas and this would help do so. MM noted that the quality of contacts must be good as well as the quantity and canvassing can be used as tool to measure the strength of community organising. CW requested adding an analysis of the BAME vote to the evaluation proposal. BB noted the need for discussion around the Political Director hire and Momentum's political strategy going forward. CT thanked the staff and noted the immense success of Momentum's campaign in London. MB requested the addition of requesting voter ID whilst noting the age and inaccuracy of some local data. MB requested that voter ID and data quality should be included in the research. RGW in response highlighting the targeting of voters and noted that the results were mixed.

JL proposed the proposal with additions from CW and MB. **Verbal agreement was made.**

Item 3: Leadership and Deputy Leadership

CW agreed to chair the meeting as JL has a conflict of interest. JL introduced the topic of the leadership and noted the amount of members brought into politics and the Labour Party who do not have years of experience in the left previously. JL noted that Keir Starmer's campaign is appealing to many members. JL noted that Keir Starmer has appointed many members of the Labour right to his campaign team. JL noted Lisa Nandy's impressive performance at the PLP hustings and noted that although she may not be a serious contender for the leadership, she may take votes away from Rebecca Long Bailey. JL noted Clive Lewis' commitment to Momentum in the past but noted the unlikelihood of him getting on the leadership ballot. JL noted Lewis' request to ballot the membership. JL noted that RLB's campaign is far behind other candidates and there is no time to lose. JL noted that the CLP nominations will start this week and the campaign must begin in order to get ahead of the other candidates. JL noted the pressure of balloting the members but noted the importance of beginning the campaign as soon as possible.

JL addressed the deputy leadership. JL noted RLB is running on a ticket with Angela Rayner and referenced Jeremy's 2015 campaign ticket with Tom Watson. JL noted the broad support for Angela

from across the political spectrum of the party. JL noted the extreme difficulties that Jeremy faced from the PLP after his election and noted that RLB must be in a better position. JL noted that reaching out to the centre-left would do this and garner her support within the PLP. JL noted that other leadership candidates may back Angela Rayner which would further ostracize the left. JL noted that there must be no attempt to undermine RLB by supporting someone other than Angela Rayner. JL noted that Momentum should back Angela Rayner as it is the best way of electing RLB. JL also the possibility of not backing a candidate or having very divisive ballot results.

BG agreed support for RLB and agreed that the Keir Starmer is a significant threat. BG noted Starmer's long-term campaigning and keen understanding of the Labour membership. BG noted Starmer's participation in the coup against Jeremy's leadership and his abstention on the Welfare Bill. BG noted that if Starmer is elected, the left faces serious losses in both policy and institutionally. BG noted his support for backing RLB immediately without a ballot and noted that he believes having a left and centre left candidate is not necessarily problematic. BG voiced support for Momentum not backing a candidate for deputy. MM noted his support for RLB and acknowledged the good personal relationship between RLB and AR. MM noted concern around the optics of Momentum endorsing without any consultation and the possible criticism that may occur from this. MM proposed having a short ballot. IH noted trade union's consulting their members in the leadership and noted concern about the possible media fallout.

ST noted the danger of Keir Starmer as a candidate and noted the danger of the Phillips campaign detracting from Stramer's politics. ST also noted how serious the current demoralization of members is. ST also noted the possibility of Momentum working with Clive Lewis if he does not get on the ballot paper. Also noted the importance of RLB not being seen as anyone's puppet but being seen as the key decision maker. ST also noted the importance of backing the joint ticket as it has the best chance of getting RLB elected. ST noted Rayner's popularity not only with the membership but also the Party and the members. ST voiced his support for Momentum backing the joint ticket.

CT noted support for RLB and support for supporting immediately. CT noted the importance of Momentum having a formal position before the nominations close on 13/01. CT also noted the ability of Momentum to influence the trade unions. CT noted that RLB being a woman is a strong element in the debate and noted strong desire for female leadership. CT also noted the concern about protecting the left membership as much as possible and that is why Momentum should back immediately. CT also

proposed Momentum backing Richard Burgon for deputy. CT noted that Burgon represents the continuation of the Corbyn project.

AW noted the long-term implications of not balloting the membership. AW noted confusion from the Momentum base regarding RLB's campaign and noted the importance of the membership understanding the strategy. AW noted that the Deputy leadership has a seat on the NEC and this is an important role. AW recognises the strategic advantage of the ticket but placed importance on communicating this to the membership.

LM noted the defeatism of the membership and noted the support of the joint ticket will only be valid if we ballot the members. LM noted the importance of showing respect to the base if we take an immediate backing. TK noted the importance of the deputy leadership and referenced Tom Watson's undermining of the leadership whilst he occupied this position. TK noted that in order to elect RLB, Momentum have an understanding of the joint ticket and the choice that RLB has made. TK noted the importance of having strong support when the press attack her. TK noted if Momentum supports RLB, then Momentum must support her decision in who she feels is the best choice for deputy. TK noted the importance of ensuring RLB is not seen as the continuity candidate and noted that the language of "The Corbyn Project" should be dropped. TK noted that balloting the membership would take too long and the campaign is too far behind for this to be a viable option.

BB noted the risk of damaging the campaign and mobilization if we are on the back foot. BB noted Momentum has data and mobilization as distinct advantages. BB noted the possibility of consulting the membership in a few different ways.

SJ noted RLB's campaigning on the Green Industrial Revolution and other impressive campaigning during the campaign. SJ suggested a form of consultation with the members. JE noted that RLB is likely to win a ballot but the deputy candidate which would be much more complicated and this could damage RLB's campaign. JE suggested not backing a deputy candidate or endorsing either Burgon or Rayner. JE noted time pressure on having a ballot and asked what decision the NCG can take that would minimise the fallout. LM asked how quickly a ballot could come out. TN noted that it would be viable from 14/01. CT suggested waiting till the end of discussion to explain the logistics.

YG acknowledged that Momentum is a membership organisation and there is no good reason not to ballot the members. YG noted the need for some form of consultation. MB noted that it would be a strategic mistake to not ballot. MB also noted that reaching out to the centre-left may not work, in

regards to the Deputy. JT noted support for RLB and Rayner for deputy, as it what RLB campaign wants. JT noted that some of the membership understands the decision for the NCG to back without a ballot but notes that the reason behind this should be communicated to the members and explained properly. JT suggested a leadership hustings in the North held by Momentum.

LD noted the right of Labour do not want Momentum to support Rayner on a strategic basis. LD noted Angela has supported many of Corbyn's policies and Corbyn himself. LD noted that Momentum should trust RLB's judgement. LD noted the possible media attention on "the joint ticket" and this could positively affect RLB's campaign. LD voiced support for backing the joint ticket. LD noted the importance of consultation but noted that balloting is currently not a viable option due to the time pressure. LH noted agreement with LD and noted positivity for the joint ticket. LH noted that balloting would put the campaign on the backfoot.

MT noted support for the joint ticket but noted the importance of balloting the members. AA voiced support for the joint ticket and noted her popularity with the public. AA notes that the ballot keeps us on the backfoot. CK read a message from AB, supporting Becky and calling for an abstention on the Deputy until 13.01. CW voiced support for Becky and also support for Dawn Butler for the deputy leadership.

JL acknowledged discussion and highlighted the importance of RLB being the left candidate. JL proposed three things. Firstly, JL proposed that Momentum formally agree to back RLB now. Secondly, JL proposed to have a confirmatory membership ballot as soon as possible. Thirdly, propose to have an indicative NCG vote on the deputy and then decide how to proceed further.

YG noted confusion about the balloting of members and asked for clarification. MB agreed. JL explained the proposal to have confirmatory vote on Momentum's backing of RLB. JE clarified the confirmatory procedure. MB noted the language around the ballot is unhelpful and noted that the NCG vote on the principle of balloting the members. IH noted support for consulting the membership but also noted the confidence from the membership in the NCG decision-making. BG noted that a ballot could undermine RLB's campaign. LH noted agreement with BG and support for confirmatory ballot. JL proposed staying with his original proposal.

JL proposed the first part of his proposal, that the NCG agree to support RLB. LH seconded. **Unanimous agreement was made.**

JL then proposed that Momentum have a confirmatory membership ballot for RLB's leadership. MM seconded. **Agreement was made with four abstentions.**

JL proposed the 3rd part of the original proposal, to have an indicative vote on the deputy leadership and then decide how to proceed. IH seconded.

JL proposed the indicative ballot for the deputy leadership. ST alternatively proposed supporting the joint ticket. The indicative vote was agreed and carried out.

Vote was carried out to indicate support for a deputy candidate. There were 13 votes for Angela Rayner, 6 for Richard Burgon and 1 for Dawn Butler. Following this, JL seconded ST's proposal to back the joint ticket in the confirmatory vote. **Verbal agreement was made to this proposal.**

RGW asked about the confirmatory ballot asking for support for both candidates separately. JL proposed doing this. TK asked for clarification regarding this, asking if there would be two separate questions regarding each respective candidate. BG clarified that it would be a confirmatory on both endorsements but posed separately in two questions. ST noted that it won't make a big difference. BB disagreed, noting concerns from members. MM noted that Burgon may not even make it on the ballot. AW noted that not separating the confirmatory question may have a negative effect on some members. CW proposed that there be two questions, one on the recommendation of RLB and one on the recommendation of AR. **Unanimously voted in favour of this proposal.**

OH noted that there are two ways of doing the confirmatory ballot, as soon as possible or after a hustings. **Verbal agreement was made to be as soon as possible.** OH suggested that no one say anything publicly until it goes to the membership. BG noted that we should point out that the NCG unanimously supports RLB. ST disagreed and LH also disagreed. CT proposed preparing a short press release along the lines of the decision made by the NCG to avoid leaks and to give members a proper response. JT proposed that an email be sent out to members before the conclusion of the meeting. JL noted that the messaging must be correct as well as the speed of the email. JL suggested leaving it to the Officers after this meeting to determine the messaging. CT asked for assurance that the message would get it out before the end of today or tomorrow. JT confirmed that he will try to get the communication out before the end of the meeting.

JE noted the importance of not publicly releasing the result of the meeting before the email. CW proposed that the NCG voted on whether or not NCG members can verbally update anyone before the official email goes out to members. **The vote was carried out with four in favour and ten against.**

It was concluded that Momentum will endorse RLB and AR for the positions of leader and deputy leader respectively, with a confirmatory ballot that will be sent out to the members imminently.

BREAK

Item 4: NEC By-Elections

JL noted the two vacancies on the NEC in the CLP section and one vacancy for a trade union NEC place. JL noted the left's narrow victory at the NEC meeting to determine the conditions for the leadership race. JL noted if the left loses the leadership election then it is likely that the left would lose the CLP spots on the NEC. RGW noted that previously Momentum has made a shortlist previously and interviewed candidates and then decided who to back. JL noted the timescale mimics the leadership nominations and candidates must be in place quickly. JL also noted whoever wins the by-election must also stand in the full NEC elections in the summer.

MM noted concern with asking all Momentum members to apply to be NEC candidates. JE asked if the NCG or the members decide on the support. JE also noted that two members who have stepped down are BAME and whether or not they would be replaced by BAME candidates. CT suggested collective participation with the left. AW asked about the relationship with the CLGA. JL noted contention around Pete Willsman. JL noted that the CLPD is the most influential organisation and often Momentum has agreed political decisions with CLPD rather than the wider CLGA. JL noted very serious opposition in the NEC elections in the summer. BG clarified the organisations within CLGA, clarified that it was not a voting group and explained the historical wins. BG noted the importance of agreement on a single left slate and not splitting the vote. JL further explained the conditions of nominating people for the NEC.

BG noted that there may not be another full NCG meeting before nominations open for the full NEC elections and suggest that the NCG proposed working with the CLGA to fill the 3 by-elections spots. BG proposed adding in a system for the full NEC elections with the item. CW noted the absence of

procedure for the by-elections and also noted that the CLP NEC members are not representative of the regions. CW suggested that attention to be paid to regional representation as well as to ethnicity. LD noted that we should also make considerations for LGBT and disabled candidates. LM suggested having a pool of candidates to have for any future by-elections/elections. CT noted the importance of strengthening the left and noted that candidates should be experienced and have good personal qualities and resilience. JL noted that part of the election defeat was down to the failure of the NEC and wider governance. JL recapped that previously the Officers group had the responsibility in regards to the candidates.

MM proposes that the Officers group undertake the process of deciding candidates for nominations, BB seconded. JE asked for more clarification around timelines. JL clarified. LM noted that members should have access to information about the CLGA and the process around how Momentum decides on candidates. JL noted the position of BAME Labour on the NEC and noted that it may be inappropriate for the NCG to discuss. JL noted the possibility of voters self-identifying as BAME. MT noted that CLPs don't have the data about BAME candidates. MT noted support for the candidate being a black man, as there is a lack of representation across the Party. MT noted that imposing the same candidates at the full elections would not work with the membership. MT also noted that the union vote is almost entirely white. JL noted that without the support of the left unions, a Momentum BAME candidate would not win and noted the difficulties of this. BB noted that the BAME NEC seat may be out of Momentum hands and that attention must be paid to the data collection. BB also noted that the priority is that the candidate votes with the left. BB proposed collecting Momentum data on BAME and left members so that we can better organise and allocate resources.

MM proposed that the process be returned to the Officers, who will report back to the full NCG. **Verbal agreement was made.** JL also added that the Officers will consult with BAME groups and unions. JL noted concerns with data collection. JE asked for JL to provide further details and a timeline when possible.

Item 5: NCG Elections

JL proposed that the nominations open after the May local election results. LM proposed acknowledging this situation but solidifying the dates regardless of the outcome of the leadership election. BG noted that it would be valid under the constitution. AW asked about the exact length of time that the NCG elections have been delayed and JL clarified. RGW referenced the paper to outline the timeline. MM proposed emailing the membership saying that the details of the NCG elections will be published after the leadership election. LM alternatively proposed telling members the timetable immediately. **The vote was carried out, and MM's proposal for a brief announcement without details was agreed upon.**

Item 6: Quarterly Operational Plan

RGW noted the operational plan is heavily impacted by the leadership election. RGW highlighted the internal evaluation of Momentum's operation as well as the election campaign. RGW also noted the GLA Selection Campaign. Also noted improving Momentum's digital tools as well as identifying future campaigns. JL noted that Momentum is likely to be giving a lot of support to RLB's campaign.

JL noted various efforts from Momentum around local campaigns and there was a discussion about the specific campaigns in local areas. AA noted that Momentum should focus on councils as well as mayors and other campaigns. JT noted that Momentum Local Councils Network has not expanded as it should have and the rebuilding of the Party begins at the local level. JT also noted the correlation between a good Labour council and increase in the vote share. MM noted the importance of working towards higher trade union membership. LM noted that emphasis needs to be placed on CFS and WLG and to make sure that they have access to all their data. LM also suggested that the Officers work on a plan for the organisation in case the left lose the leadership election. LS noted the large areas in regional areas which need strong community organising alongside trade unions in order to win them back.

JE also asked about ensuring that there is a left candidate for the open GLA spot and RGW/JL confirmed that there is a panel that has been shortlisting candidates. AW noted that TWT is planning a leadership debate and would like to work with Momentum. JL noted there is the possibility of a simultaneous hustings and the grid will need to be addressed before any events planned. JL also noted the importance of having Scottish and Welsh Campaigns.

AOB