

Full NCG Meeting-Minutes

Sunday 26/04/2020

Date and Time: 26th of April, 10:30-18:00

Participation: Jon Lansman (JL), Carol Turner (CT), Mike Bird (MB), John Taylor (JT), Aneesa Akbar (AA), Joe Ejiofor (JE), Tony Kearns (TK), Craig Anderson (CA), Cecile Wright (CW), Natasha Josette (NJ), Martin Menear (MM), Apsana Begum (AB), Elizabeth Hayden (EH), Elizabeth Smith (ES), Leigh Drennan (LD), Becky Boumelha (BB), Emina Ibrahim (EI), Michael Thawe (MT), Sam Tarry (ST), Ian Hodson (IH)

Apologies: Yannis Gourtsoyannis

Staff: Ollie Hill (OH), Chloe Koffman (CK), Rachel Godfrey Wood (RGW), Joe Todd (JTo), Matteo Tiratelli (MTi)

Item 0: Agreement of previous minutes

Minutes agreed.

Item 1: Political update and discussion

JL noted that it would be a mistake to only look inwards when rebuilding the left and the left should build a broad coalition. JL acknowledged the report and shocking nature, including incidents of racism and the effect on the 2017 general election. Noted Momentum's social media response. JL acknowledged the NEC meeting on the topic of the report and the subsequent inquiry.

CT noted the weight of evidence in the report and noted concern about reporting of the content of the report. CT noted that the results of all left leadership and NEC candidates should not be discounted. MM acknowledged the report and noted lack of political drive from party staff. MM noted concern about lack of suspensions of those who have been named in serious incidents in the report and noted strong argument to push for suspension. TK noted CWU response. TK noted that it is important to not totally oppose the leadership to avoid conflict and should instead offer constructive criticism, focusing on

democracy and democratic structures. TK noted the importance of working with other trade unions about reaching out to the leadership.

JE noted concerns about appearing to focus on past issues with the report. JE also noted concerns around the influence of the left in the Party and noted the importance of building a coalition throughout the Party, not just through the leadership. CW noted that she wrote a piece in the Morning Star, focusing on the knock on effects of New Labour/Blair aligned staff during the GE 2017. CW also noted the intense racism noted in the report. CW noted that MBC (Momentum Black Caucus) has put out a statement calling for suspensions of those named in the report and noted a call for an external inquiry. CW noted the BAME Labour community may collapse as a consequence of the report. CW noted that trust and confidence of BAME voters must be cultivated after it has been taken for granted. CW noted that the Tories may bring attention to the report.

JTa acknowledged the report and shocking contents. JTa noted that Momentum should lead on the political narrative and work with the leadership as well as holding him accountable. EI noted the importance of considering the public response considering the issues of data protection. EI noted the importance of clarity of approach and noted that the issues of the report should be separated from the leadership. EI noted the possible breach of the Labour Party ethics and serious electoral interference. EI noted the importance of legal advice when considering any further public response.

MT noted the racism of the incidents in the report and noted that in the case that the offenders were BAME, then they would likely be suspended. MT noted that Momentum needs to be strong on this. MT noted that poor, working class people's money has been used by people to manipulate election results. MT noted the frustration of activists and noted that the NEC should have immediately organised an apology to Diane Abbott, Clive Lewis and other victims of racism named in the report. MT noted that the leadership should be held to account and they should put out statements of solidarity with the victims of racism in the report. BB noted agreement with MT and noted anger from BAME members. BB noted the possibility of changing the BAME structures in the Party and noted that Momentum should focus on handing powers to BAME members who feel disillusioned. BB noted there can be constructive criticism.

JL noted agreement with MT and impact of racism in the report. JL noted that Momentum must acknowledge Starmer's leadership in order to build the base in order to defeat the right. JL noted acknowledgment of disciplinary action from leadership at the NEC meeting. JL noted that the issues are dealt with as an employment issue firstly and the same applies to MPs and members of the House of

Lords. AA noted agreement with MT and BB about assessing and rebuilding BAME structures. CT asked about further discussion about the future of the left. JL noted that it can be discussed under Item 6.

Item: 2 NCG Elections

OH noted the varied discussion of the timetable of NCG elections and that there is currently no clear consensus. OH noted the proposal from JL and timetable noted in paper and noted staff proposals for activities to be run during the NCG elections. OH noted the proposal to approve TK as returning officer. AB asked if there has been consideration of Party/MM meetings being resumed if the lockdown is lifted. JL noted that there has not been a decision regarding the NEC elections yet and noted that the process for AGMs happening after the lockdown as there needs to be branch meetings beforehand. JL noted that the delays are complicated by other meetings and Party conference which could delay NCG elections until the end of the year. CT noted agitation from Momentum members and impression of members that Momentum does not seem to consult and the disparity between local and national Momentum. CT noted the need for discussion before a timetable is decided. EI noted the insensitivity of conducting internal elections during this period and external criticism. EI noted that any relaxing of restrictions will be limited for the next several months and it will reflect badly on Momentum.

MT noted agreement with EI and noted it would be beneficial to delay the elections until the end of the lockdown in order to ensure participation from membership. LD noted agreement with EI and noted that there are other things for the left to do during a difficult period. LD noted that people may be affected by illness or their work if they are key workers and this may affect their ability to campaign and noted support for delaying elections until after lockdown. BB noted previous support for balloting members but noted that there are possibilities to make it easier as it can be run online. BB noted that the NCG elections have been delayed for so long and any further delay will lose members and affect our reputation. . BB noted that if Momentum delays until normal meetings can be resumed, it could be delayed until well into next year. CA noted concern with online hustings with the number of candidates and noted issues of fairness. CA noted support for going ahead with elections on the proposed timetables. MM noted the difficulty of the situation and noted agreement with EI and that an internal election will reflect badly. MM acknowledged risk of losing members either way. MM noted that there is an in-principle objection and should wait until the lockdown is over. MB noted disagreement and noted that the right of the Party is organising and it is vital that the left stays vibrant and improves. MB noted

an appetite for life to be normalised as much as possible. MB noted support for balloting the members. MB noted previous use of online technology for meeting. MB noted support for the proposed timetable and noted that any delay will reflect badly politically.

CW noted that people have died due to coronavirus in her local community and noted agreement with MT. CW noted the severity of situation and number of deaths and noted that the internal elections will look self-indulgent. CW noted that members will understand the need to wait due to the virus. CW noted support for delaying elections. ES noted the widespread impact of coronavirus and the impact of the lack of testing which will result in a high rate of sickness and death. ES noted support for delaying elections due to severe medical and economic effects. ES noted that Momentum can still lead on issues of PPE, testing and UBI. ES noted support for taking a view from the membership.

NJ noted that Momentum can lead on the primary issues outside of the NCG elections. NJ noted the support for going ahead with the elections. NJ noted there are several possibilities to ensure fairness of elections. TK noted support for the proposed timetable and noted that life will not “return to normal” anytime soon. TK noted that the right of the party will be organising. TK noted that though there are difficulties on both sides but Momentum is being democratic by pushing ahead. TK noted that a delay will reflect on Momentum badly and make it seem like it is defending its position. TK notes that a ballot will be redundant and noted logistical difficulties with hustings. TK noted the powerful argument of anti-democracy from the right.

EH noted support for the proposed timetable and noted delays are already significant. EH noted concerns for internal democracy and noted that there will never be a good time considering isolation could continue until the rest of the year. EH noted logistical difficulties with online hustings. ST noted frustration from membership and noted that there is not a good reason to delay, given we have the technology to organise online and Momentum will lose legitimacy if Momentum delays. ST noted a desire from the members to know the direction of the organisation and it is important to involve the members. ST noted that the general public does not care what Momentum does with their internal elections and so it should go ahead.

AB noted society adapting to the coronavirus crisis, including Parliament. AB noted the feelings of the membership and suggested a clearer plan in the proposal for engaging the membership in the NCG elections process. JE noted disagreement with balloting the members. JE noted that he does not support the proposed timetable but suggested that Momentum acknowledge a plan for a timetable, pushing

back until September. JL noted that, regarding engaging with members, the priority is who gets elected. JL noted concerns with online hustings and noted possibilities of staff developing new ways for candidates to engage. LD noted the split and suggested compromise position, if the elections go ahead, there should not be online hustings and additional campaigning pressure and on this condition, he could support. EI noted agreement with LD and noted the possibly bad reflection on councillors and those in elected positions. EI noted that there should be strong restrictions on campaigning and noted agreement with JE about delaying until August/September. JT noted change in support following debate and noted that there shouldn't be online hustings. JT voiced support for the proposal.

JL moved to a vote on whether to delay the NCG elections. JE raised the question about $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote needed to delay the elections, JL clarified point in the Constitution 7.2 about "exceptional circumstances". Delay was rejected by a significant majority and the proposal was moved to proceed with the timeline outlined in the paper.

JL moved to a vote on whether to hold online hustings during the NCG elections. Hustings were rejected by a significant majority.

RGW noted the possibility of groups organising unofficial hustings and asked how the staff will be asked to respond to this. EI and JL noted that Momentum cannot stop people from doing this. RGW noted in previous elections unofficial hustings were held and there could be issues of fairness. CT noted that there is the possibility of there being a "lack of choice" and noted that if the elections go ahead without facilities to question them it will reflect as undemocratic. CT noted possibilities of alternative hustings. CT challenged the hustings ruling and NJ seconded. JL responded and acknowledged the criticism of Momentum being undemocratic but noted defence of Momentum's internal democracy.

JL moved to a vote on the challenge and the challenge was defeated with a significant majority.

Item: 3 General Election Report

RGW noted the report reflecting on the general election including a submission for Labour Together report and the report for internal use. MTi noted the two sections of the report and summarised the report. MTi noted interviews with organisers, including Party and Momentum staff. Noted obstacles in

organizing broadly and Party culture, including culture and training. MTi noted candidates were dismayed with lack of protection and financial support. MTi noted interviews with Momentum staff and noted ability to connect with other grassroots organisations. MTi noted the social media exploring testing the efficacy of their social media output. SJ asked if there was a particular tool to recommend to Momentum to help improve social capacity. MTi noted that some tools may not be particularly useful for FB advertising.

JTa noted the impressive nature of the report and noted the importance of community organising. JTa noted that Momentum should campaign to increase community organising. ES noted that Momentum cannot be expected to be all community organisers and there are others on the left who should fill that role. ES asked about training and if Momentum will offer training to potential councillor candidates. RGW noted that Momentum has been developing the Councillor Network to support left councillors.

MB acknowledged the report and noted the Party's method of campaigning and asked if people supported the traditional method of campaigning or do they want a new approach. MB also asked RGW about the councillor network and if Momentum could provide training to councillor candidates. CA noted logistical difficulties with organising. MM noted thanks to the Community Organising Unit and their work, under sometimes difficult circumstances. MM noted Momentum can help fill the gap in community organising and help to educate and upskill activists to help build a robust left. JL noted the number of unsupportive councilors and noted that poor Labour councils helped contribute to the electoral loss. JL noted misdirection of resources and organisers fulfilling the priorities of council leaders. JL noted the importance of democratising local government.

NJ noted that the COU primary function is to train members and councillors and noted they need a fully resourced COU in order to do so. NJ noted the training of nearly 20,000 people last year.. MT noted the efforts of good councillors and good local initiatives and noted that Momentum should support these voices. MT noted that Momentum should place an emphasis on digital tools and pressure Party to improve digital tools.

MTi noted summarised the report and strategic findings, especially in certain regional areas and ways to move forward. MTi noted that there needs to be a developing strategy for Momentum and the Party's relationship with the COU.

Item 4: Affiliations to Momentum

OH noted affiliation applications from Tribune, LARAF, Labour for a GND, Labour Hub. NJ noted concern about affiliation from media organisations in general and noted the concern about having representatives on the NCG. CW asked for a descriptor for the organisations in future presentations. OH described organisations who wished to affiliate. JL reiterated the history of Tribune and its role in Labour history. MM asked about the difference between campaigns and organisation, on the basis of internal transparency and asked about the internal democratic structures for Labour for a GND. EH noted agreement with MM but noted favour for these affiliations and noted support for Tribune affiliation due to their political alignment with Momentum. EI noted support for Tribune and Labour Hub's affiliation and noted the positives of associations with the media. JE asked a question regarding the NCG representation of affiliates and CT asked a similar question about representation regarding the affiliate positions. TK noted support for affiliates and noted that Momentum is very specific in the media representation it allows and can support the longer vision for Momentum. RGW asked for clarification regarding the affiliate election process.

CW asked for clarification regarding MBC's affiliation. OH clarified the lack of decision making and also clarified that some affiliates may not seek voting places on the NCG. OH clarified that at the next term of the NCG, there would be an election for four affiliate spots. JL notes that his recollection is that MBC wanted to nominate someone for a voting place on the NCG. CW noted that her understanding was that MBC was affiliated, as discussed at an NCG meeting. CW noted MBC's constitution and structure can be sent in order to get clarity of MBC affiliation. NJ asked about the process for affiliation and application. JTo noted that the announcement may anger other organisations about lack of public application. OH noted that applications for affiliates can be taken at any time and is subject to approval by the NCG. LD noted happy to agree.

CT noted that there are problems with the affiliation process as it stands. CT noted that there should be a formalised application, clarity over the election process and consideration of the size of the proposed affiliate. CT noted possibilities of different constitutions and procedures of potential affiliates. CW noted concern about representation and noted that the equality strand should be included. CW noted concern for the lack of a Black members affiliate organisation. JL suggested that MBC be included in the list of organisations agreed for affiliation. JE clarified his previous point about MBC his understanding was there was specific representation and JL clarified that it is not provided for in the constitution. OH

clarified that the constitution allows for one vote per organisation in the case of a contested election for affiliated organisations. ES noted given the disillusionment of BAME voters with the Party, proposed to have two out of the four affiliates as BAME organisations. JL clarified the rule changing process and noted that it would need NCG agreement. ES proposed to look to it in the future and JL proposed that it be put on the agenda for the next meeting. LD proposed to move to a vote. JL clarified that MBC be included in affiliations and it was agreed. JL moved to agree and it was agreed.

JL **proposed** 4 organisations be considered suitable to affiliate to Momentum: Tribune, Labour Against Racism & Fascism, Labour Hub, and Labour Green New Deal. **Agreed** after discussion.

OH presented a **paper**, Process for new affiliations under section 11 (iii) and (iv), as guidance for assessing the suitability of potential new affiliates. **Accepted** after discussion.

Item 5: Coronavirus update

5a. Business Continuity

CK gave business continuity and staffing update.

5b. Political Response

JTo outlined Momentum's projects that have launched in response to the coronavirus including repurposing MyCampaignMap, running online trainings and events and developing the Councillor Network. JL added that he wrote to affiliate trade unions and Unite the Union to propose coordinated action in response to coronavirus and noted urgency in creating adequate response in light of government mishandling. CW noted MBC is in contact with Marsha de Cordova about the disproportionate effect of COVID19 on BAME people. CW asked about if MBC could assist with Momentum and the left to get an investigation into this and to put a focus on class intersection. JTo added that Momentum is fairly constrained in making political demands due to change of leadership and noted that in order to campaign on active issues like UBI and PPE etc, would need an NCG mandate. JL noted agreement and noted that there should also be collaboration with trade unions on this. JL proposed an agreement and it was agreed.

MM noted support for Momentum working with trade unions during precarious working conditions caused by COVID19. LS noted that Momentum should add test and trace to the demands. JL suggested convening an online meeting with unions. TK noted that telecommunications workers are at risk, including those working on installing broadband. TK noted that workers are suffering outside of the virus itself. CA noted the importance of not returning to key workers being undervalued and noted that the left must fight for their values during this crisis. CA noted hundreds of incidents of telecommunications workers being attacked and noted the valuable work of telecommunications workers in Scotland. CT noted poor conditions of domestic and care workers and proposed that this be added to the demands. MT noted the lack of community testing and poor response from the government and noted the leadership's lack of policy focus on issues such as UBI.

Item 6: Quarterly Operational Plan

RGW outlined QOP as summarised in papers.

JL raised the "Building a social movement plans" and noted that the top priority should be campaigning on the issues previously discussed such as UBI and PPE. JL noted that there was low mobilization during the leadership election and people must be reoriented to campaign along with the trade unions. JL noted concern about failing to engage people in primary issues. RGW noted that proposals outlined are for tool development and could be harnessed towards campaigning on specific issues.

RGW suggested holding political education discussion with NCG in the following months. RGW noted the impact of COVID19 on organising activity with the Councillor Network and noted there should be discussion with NCG councillors. RGW highlighted the importance of training programmes. JTa reiterated the importance of councillor networks and councillor training due to poor labour councils and councillors. JL noted surprise at the SCG councillor network announcement. MB noted the poor political quality of councillors and noted that Momentum should offer training for councillors. CW asked about what the councillor network will do to encourage prospective candidates and also asked if prospective candidates could be found through those who are involved in Mutual Aid organising. MM noted that the training should be distributed in order to use better resources and could be distributed to groups, rather than the responsibility be solely on the staff.

BB asked if the push for funding on local government could have a higher comms presence and Momentum to push stories of municipal socialism. BB also noted it should be combined with the trade unions and a collaborative approach. ES noted difficulties with poor councils in regional areas and noted the importance of developing quality councils. ES noted that there also has to be an expansion of participation in local politics.

RGW noted the developing response to coronavirus related issues and noted that there needs to be collaboration with the unions over local government demands. RGW noted that Momentum has had a distributed training model in the past but has been used less in recent times. RGW noted agreement with having distributed training and political election in combination with a targeted focus. RGW noted difficulties regarding selections during the COVID19 crisis and noted the possibility of work on selections resuming during lockdown. EI asked the number of councillors signed up to the network and RGW clarified that there are around 350 signed up. EI notes there has to be a system in place for evaluating councillors. JL noted the suitability of some aspects of the situation for engaging with prospective candidates and noted the importance of targeting and RGW noted difficulties with this previously.

OH noted efforts in “Building a Sustainable Organization” which are the core operational projects for this quarter. Noted efforts to get through the Electoral Commission’s post-election process. OH noted the administration of the NCG elections and noted that the NCG elections will be used to test targeting of FB advertising. OH noted the 2020 budget which would run provisionally April to April which includes a pay review and restructure. OH noted improvements to fundraising systems and GDPR policies, with both approval and implementation.

Item 7: WLG Data Access

JL acknowledgment of previous discussion and noted that the discussion should be primarily with staff. OH noted that this is primarily a technical error that has fallen behind in staff priorities and noted his apologies. MB noted frustration with the length of the process and noted the problems it causes in Wales. MB said a regular update of members joining or leaving Momentum in Wales would be an alternative to access to download lists, but this would need to be backdated to the middle of 2019, as WLG do not now know who has joined or left since then. MB noted he had sent a list to Momentum of WLG members not in the Nationbuilder database, they are not all yet present, so this still also needs updating so they get a vote in the NCG election, etc.

OH proposed raising it to the Officers and noted the staff will lead on it. JL noted limitations with NationBuilder. CA noted the possibility of further virtual calls with staff on a regular basis to move things forward, in particular with CfS. CA suggested this being actioned after this meeting.

Item 8: GDPR Policy Refresh

JL noted the new policies to be implemented and MB noted they seem to be uncontentious. JL proposed agreeing and it was agreed.

AOB