

NCG Meeting

Saturday 4/07/2020

Date and Time: 10:00 4/7/2020

Participation: Abbie Clark, Ana Oppenheim, Andrew Scattergood, Alan Gibbons, Barry Gray, Callum Bell, Carol Turner, Charlie Bollaen, Darran McLaughlin, Deborah Hermanns, Ed McNally, Gaya Sriskanthan, Harriet Protheroe-Soltani, John Taylor, Jon Trickett, Leigh Drennan, Liz Smith, Matt Wrack, Mick Moore, Mike Bird, Mish Rahman, Phil Clarke, Puru Miah, Rory Maclean, Sarah Doyle, Shona Jemphrey, Sonali Bhattacharyya, Tony Kearns, Tracey Hylton, Solma Ahmed.

Apologies: Alan Gibbons (partial absence), Jon Trickett (partial absence)

Staff: Ollie Hill, Chloe Koffman, Rachel Godfrey Wood, Conor Dempsey, Tyrone Nicholas, Joe Todd, Emil Charlaff, Santiago Bell Bradford

Introduction

Discussion around items to be included in the agenda. MW noted that should be decided after the chair is elected. TK noted the decision should be next week. DH clarified that decisions can be made next week and can just be discussed today.

Item 1: Staff Presentations

OH outlined Operations team presentation.

PC asked if there is a regular structure with meeting the staff union and OH clarified they meet regularly and that OH brings issues to the NCG. RGW noted that appropriate documents should be shared with the NCG.

OH explained staff structure. PC asked for job descriptions to be circulated.

TN presented the Digital team presentation. TN addressed previous short-term digital projects and a lack of long-term reform.

JT presented the Comms team presentation. JT noted that he is leaving the role in the next few days. JT noted the previous lack of strategic direction. JT explained the structure of the Comms team and their duties including member comms, press, NCG training, crisis management, WhatsApp comms, growth and membership drives. Noted the proposals for visualisations of the NCG to the members. Noted the political objectives of the Comms team. JT noted the large mobilization and electoral campaigning capacity as well as social media reach, outperforming the Labour party. JT highlighted opportunities and threats going forward. JT highlighted the possibility of an NCG Comms working group.

EC presented the digital media team presentation. EC presented staff structure and outlined duties and roles. EC highlighted involvement of membership on different levels. EC noted video views and the wider social media presence. EC noted the reach beyond interested audiences. EC noted the much larger reach than the Labour Party. EC noted that content should come from all tiers of the organisation, rather than just centrally. EC noted the creative network, the advertising and growth work and the graphic design work.

RGW outlined the Organising team's presentation. RGW noted organising team effort during the GE and noted expansion of the team since then. RGW noted there is now time to think about longer-term development given the lack of elections coming up.

RGW noted support to Groups needs to be improved and the new groups agreement and handbook is being worked on. RGW noted the Conference operation and election mobilization, including unseats, Labour Legends and persuasive conversations. RGW noted the Future Councillors programme. SBB explained the Campaigns team and noted work around election mobilization. SBB noted the training and skills delivered by the team. SBB noted the leadership development projects and their relation to political education. SBB noted Momentum's experience with delivering training and the plans to formalise and expand this.

SB asked if there was a straightforward way of communicating with chairs of local groups. RGW noted that they should speak to their local Regional Organiser and set up a meeting. DM noted the importance of developing local Momentum groups when some Labour councils are dominated by the right. Noted the success of Bristol Momentum selecting left wing candidates.

Break

Item 2: Elect Chair

RGW noted the interim chair will chair until if and when the Chair/chairpersons are elected. LS proposed PC to be interim chair over the process. RGW asked for other nominations. None were made. PC asked for clarification over interim Chair and RGW clarified.

LS proposed having co-chairs instead of one chair, with a gender balance. CB seconded and AG agreed. TK noted constitutional issues, noted previous responsibilities of the Chair with the COO and managing the staff. TK asked about the authority and power between co-chairs. TK noted that the constitution talks about a "Chair" and this would mean a constitutional change if a unanimous vote was not reached which would mean a change put to the members. TK noted concerns around issues with members around constitutional power and noted that the paper should be considered before a decision is made. CT noted the Chair as the key political position of the organisation and noted that co-chairs would be great for training and developing people. CT noted that the Chair must be in tune with the whole NCG, dealing with controversy and this has been underdeveloped in the past. CT noted that having co-chairs may not address these problems.

SD noted agreement with CT and noted it may not solve problems with the organization and asked if the benefits of co-chairs could be explained. EI noted co-chairs in principle are good but they need to be clearly defined roles and the legal implications in regards to staffing need to be defined. EI noted that there needs to be a clear level of accountability and noted that there has to be clarity around who is the technical employer of the staff. EI noted confusion over employer status in the past and noted there should be clarity given the comments about recent appointments.

HPS noted opportunities to transform the organization and co-chairs would be the first big signal of that. HPS noted the power-sharing would give more opportunity and accessibility to a wider group. DH noted that the constitution doesn't define that the Chair cannot be a job-share and noted that the NCG can appoint any other Officers they choose. DH noted the validity of points around the relationship between staff and Chair/employer. MW acknowledged TK's point and noted that the NCG must follow the constitution. MW noted that the constitution needs to be clarified in regards to this. MW referenced the papers and acknowledged that the single Chair has not led to all of the problems within Momentum. CA

noted from a CfS perspective, the roles of the co-chairs need to be defined and noted concern around the standing orders and constitution. CA noted that it has been useful having one Chair in terms of a point of contact and decision making, CA noted there is still the position of Vice-Chairs and they should be picking up some of the work of the Chair. CA acknowledged HPS point about accessibility and people's ability to take on the role. PC clarified that the proposal is just around co-chairs rather than the entire structure.

RM proposed moving to a vote. CB asked for clarity regarding the constitutional change. OH noted that the constitution in Point 6.7 which is most relevant and noted the "casting vote" mechanism causes issues but can be resolved by who chairs the meeting in question.

AG noted that the conventional left-wing organisation usually has one chair but a gender/BAME balanced co-chair more reflective of a modern organisation. MW asked for clarification around constitutional issues. LS clarified that the proposal is that Momentum move to a system of co-chairs. MM noted confusion around the proposal and DH noted that it should be an amendment to the proposal around moving to a system of co-chairs, LS accepted. EI noted confusion around the proposal. CT noted that it is not democratic to make people decide now and that they should have time to consider. PC clarified that if people do not want to elect co-chairs today then they should not vote for the proposal. MR noted that the co-chairs are for this term only and it is not a constitutional issue.

RGW asked for clarification around the wording of the vote. JTa asked for clarification around the length of the term and this was clarified.

Move to a vote. The proposal was carried, 28 to 4.

PC proposed to move to a vote to elect co-chairs and asked for nominations. SJ nominated AS and GS. AG seconded. No other nominations were made. **AS and GS were elected.** GS volunteered to chair the rest of the meeting. JTa noted the election of VC and Treasurer, GS asked for any comments to proceed. LS proposed leaving this until next week for greater deliberation. AS noted that now that there is a co-chair system, this should be explained exactly how that will function. AS suggested that this be considered and be reported back.

Item 3: Election of NEC shortlisting and interview panel

RGW noted responsibilities of the panel and noted that the applications are currently being collated for consideration tonight. JT noted concerns around member involvement and asked about the possibility of a ballot or other member involvement. GS clarified that this was discussed on Thursday and it was deemed to be next to impossible due to the time constraints. MB noted the previous NCG had not involved the members and this is something the new NCG should be involved in. MM noted the platform he was elected on was member democracy but the time constraints are too great for a ballot. MM noted the importance of a unified left slate above all else and noted the importance of consensus and the election of the panel. MM noted the importance of communicating the process to the members. MM suggested discussing who will be on the panel and noted the importance of maintaining a unified line in regards to the left.

EI asked for clarification around if there is a possibility for an indicative ballot and RGW clarified that there is no capacity for this. DH noted that the decision on the ballot has already been made and noted the focus should be on transparency to the membership. DH noted thanks to the Comms team regarding their actions to provide transparency and encouraged negotiators and co-chairs to feed in on the process. DH noted the Zoom call planned for Sunday and noted that it should be decided who should run it. DH proposed that there should be ten potential NEC candidates that should be brought to the full NCG on Monday. PM asked to agree on the logic of selecting the panel and proposed having a representative from each region and each section of the NCG. CA noted Comms presence around explanations and noted the panel should be as diverse as possible. CA noted that the left is on the backfoot in regards to the NEC process. RGW clarified the process that is being suggested, that the panel will suggest between 10-15 people following shortlisting and interviews and will take these candidates to the full NCG on Monday.

MW noted communication issues around explaining the process and that this should be improved so the process is clear to members. MW noted concerns about shortlisting 10-15 candidates given that the actual number taken to negotiations could be much smaller. MW suggested that the panel minimise the numbers as much as possible and noted the importance of high recognition names given the STV voting system. MM noted the 10-15 candidates could be narrowed down by the full NCG on the Monday meeting and noted a wider range of candidates gives some room for the negotiators to fall back on. MM noted the importance of electing the selection panel and noted that the selection panel should decide

how many candidates to bring forward to the full NCG. RGW noted that the candidates are being collated, none are eliminated and all will be available to the panel. RGW noted the quick turnaround for the interview process.

Break

GS proposed to move to nominations for the panel. BG noted the history of the CLGA and that there is goodwill to reach an agreement and this can be achieved this time as well.

GS asked for nominations. TK noted the composition of the panel and noted the previous suggestion of five people on the panel and noted that POH should be involved in the process. CB proposed six panellists. CT proposed 5 people and noted it is useful to have an uneven number if there is a tie. This was moved to a vote to decide the number of panellists. The vote was 20-10 for a panel of six.

GS asked for nominations for people to be on the panel. EI noted SD. CB nominated HPS. AG nominated MW. AO nominated MM. CB nominated LS. CT asked if the two negotiators will be on the panel. GS clarified that they would have to be nominated. DH nominated SB. CA nominated RM and LD. LD clarified that he does not want to be considered. EI suggest SB be automatically elected. **This was agreed.** LS suggested taking all seven proposed candidates and EI seconded. GS asked for objections, none were made. **The panel was elected from all nominees.**

MM noted the importance of the full NCG being involved in the process and noted that the panel shouldn't proscribe anyone and this should be for the full NCG to consider on Monday. GS suggested that the panel agree the points made regarding the panel's approach. PM noted that the panel should ask candidates how they are going to win, given the difficulties STV presents. GS proposed to move to the next item, no objections were made.

Item 4: Internal Structures and Ways of Working

RGW noted time constraints on strategy and ways of working. CT suggested each meeting start with an item that provides context to strategy to the organisation. RGW noted that it would be good for the meeting next Saturday to conclude a set of procedures for meetings/business going forward. GS suggests to take a break and agree the rest of the agenda after.

Break

GS noted apologies for confusion over the agenda. GS suggested resending appropriate documents and coming back with proposals by Wednesday to discuss on Saturday. DH agreed and suggested Wednesday as a hard deadline for any new proposals for the structure.

Item 5: Transparency paper

DH apologised for late papers and noted that some decisions in the paper could be made at a later date. DH suggested setting up communication channels to discuss the proposals. DH noted the urgency in regards to the data being democratically owned by members of the NCG. DH suggested that the co-chairs write to the current director to help facilitate this transition. DH proposed discussing the ownership of Momentum's data.

GS clarified that a proposal is being made to decide on democratization of Momentum's data. JTa noted a concern, noting the legal implications. JTa suggested speaking to the current director first about handover and they should be aware of any legal issues that may result. GS clarified that DH was asking for commitment to the democratisation of the data, rather than committing to specific actions at this time. AG noted that the NCG should agree the general principle and involve the Officers in the process itself, based on the principle of member ownership. SB noted there is not a contradiction between the points and noted that there should be consensus first. MM echoed these points. PM asked if the staff could consider the issues around the capacity of the organisation to deliver the handover. AS acknowledged JTa's point and noted the risks to the organisation should be considered. AS noted there should be an early conversation regarding data ownership and he is happy to take it forward. AS noted that the NCG should consider how Momentum is set up in regards to the company structure. AS noted this should go along with the discussion of members owning Momentum.

GS proposed to agree on the principle that the data should be democratically owned by the NCG. RM moved to a vote and CB seconded. **This was agreed unanimously.**

DH asked if there was anyone available to develop proposals around transparency in the coming days.

Item: Tower Hamlets Motion

PC noted the attack on Tower Hamlets council worker's terms and conditions and noted it is coming from a Labour council. PC noted the importance of solidarity and attention for this issue. LS seconded the motion.

Notes this change was tabled by the current Mayor for quite a while and noted that the Mayor/council is set in their ways. PM notes UNISON is the only union that has managed to ballot their workers. Noted the Mayor has said over 50% of staff have already signed the new contract and the cabinet is supporting this decision. JTa noted shock at the actions of the council. AS noted that it is difficult for people given the fear of losing their job and Momentum must address its duty to the working class and championing causes as well as holding the Labour Party to account. AS noted support for the motion.

RGW suggested JT following up with co-chairs regarding the Comms output in regards to the issue. RGW acknowledged general practice in regards to these issues was for the NCG to specify the need for action but not specifically outlining the operational output. SD noted support for motion and noted the possibility of a charter between union and local council and asked if this could be a way forward. PM noted the current standing of council union representation and noted Unite and GMB failed to meet turnout for a ballot and this isn't possible given the current timescale. AG acknowledged the role of Labour councils in regards to austerity and cuts and noted that it is important for Momentum to establish themselves against these cuts. GS proposed to move to a vote, no objections.

A vote was taken and **the motion was agreed.**

AOB

AS noted STV paper that was circulated and noted it is useful for the upcoming negotiations. RGW noted the paper but noted that it doesn't really answer the questions for the NEC negotiations and noted an article online from Stats for Lefties that proposed five candidates as the ideal maximum. RGW noted that without a strict cap, the number of candidates standing may increase due to political reasons. RGW noted there should be reserve candidates to avoid any preferences being switched to non-left

candidates. RGW said that there should be a video on STV but the information needs to be developed around the issue before being produced. GS suggested that RGW consider a timeline to communicate with the NCG. RGW also noted the framing of the previous JC9 slate was very successful but we are in a different time politically.

DH raised the topic of the Zoom call with members on Sunday night. DH suggested negotiators and GS to host. RGW noted SDG has volunteered to help. DH asked for some promotion tonight and tomorrow morning. RGW agreed.

DH asked for a breakdown of the current working groups. OH noted the Officers Group, Disputes, Resources, Party Reform, Review Group and Councillor Group. OH noted that the Officers have had final sign-off in the past and this led at times to a degree of duplication. OH noted the current schedule of meetings, noted Disputes doesn't meet regularly. RGW noted the difference between sub-group and working group. Chairs of subgroups form the Officers then the Officers report back. RGW noted working groups are more informal and time limited although noted the proposed Review Group is time-limited and formal. RGW noted the importance of establishing the remit of a working group with clear objectives.

HPS asked about the selection panel process and RGW noted she would set up a channel of communication later today.

JTa acknowledged the extra workload on the staff and delay of the pay review since 2019 and noted the pay review should be implemented as soon as possible and noted his thanks to the staff.

RM asked about NCG contact details on the website and EC confirmed they would be up on Monday.