

NCG Meeting Minutes

Date: Saturday 15 January 2022

Time: 10:00am – 14:30pm

Present: Solma Ahmed, Craig Andersen, Sonali Bhattacharyya, Matt Buckley, Barry Gray, Deborah Hermanns, Tracey Hylton, Shona Jemphrey, Tony Kearns, Rory Maclean, Mick Moore, Ana Oppenheim, Jackie Owen, Mish Rahman, Andrew Scattergood, Liz Smith, Gaya Sriskanthan, John Taylor, Carol Turner, and Matt Wrack.

Apologies: Abbie Clark, Phil Clarke, Sarah Doyle, Leigh Drennan, Jennifer Forbes, Alan Gibbons, Emine Ibrahim, Darran McLaughlin, Harriet Protheroe-Soltani, Sam Tarry and Jon Trickett

Staff: Andrew Dolan, Ollie Hill and Hareem Ghani

Apologies (5 minutes, 10:05 – 10:10)

- TK, TH and SJ are running late.
- GS welcomes everyone to the meeting, informs members about recent recruitments and resignations, including CT, HG, CK and more.

Co-Chair Reports (10 minutes, 10:10 – 10:20)

- GS relays that she has worked on numerous issues including the climate justice programme, a community wealth building toolkit, and public outreach (via the Twitter-sphere).
- GS and AS met with the Socialist Campaign Group (SCG) in December 2021 and agreed to support their roadshow by contributing to the first of their ten policy seminars on the week commencing Monday 17 January 2022.
- AS reiterates the importance of Momentum's building a partnership with the SCG.

Officer Reports (10 minutes, 10:20 – 10:30)

- N/A

Climate Justice Committee Update - Gaya Sriskanthan (10 minutes, 10:30 – 10:40)

- GS details that the Climate Justice Committee has met with key stakeholders, including Labour for a Green New Deal (GND), Asad Rehman, and the COP26 Coalition since the committee's formation in February.
- GS states that the committee will be promoting a member-facing climate justice working group, composed of 30 – 40 members, who will help design and deliver political education, targeted at local groups. The intent of the workshops is to allow socialists in Momentum to fully comprehend the climate crisis. The committee will be launching a callout for applicants for the working group.
- On Monday 17 January 2022, GS will be participating in the SCG policy seminar which focuses on the GND. A member-wide email will be circulated.
- JO asks if the structure of the working group is flexible as it may be limiting to only have 40 members. GS outlines that it would be unworkable to have a committee of hundreds of people, and suggests expanding it at a later date when the activities have been designed by the core group.
- JO raises the issue of gender balance on the working group. GS assures JO that the working group will have regional representation, as well as ethnicity and gender balance.
- MW highlights that the Labour for GND workers' climate change conference has been delayed until October 2022. It would be useful for Momentum to signpost this to its members.
- AS asks for clarification on how the NCG will provide political guidance to the working group. GS responds that LS, DM and SJ are heavily involved in the Climate Justice Committee and would therefore be engaged with the working group.
- RM enquires about trade union engagement with the working group. GS says the trade unions are on the Climate Justice Committee, but the working group is largely focused on the membership. Nonetheless, she will reach out to unions to ensure they are informed about the working group.

- CA raises the issue of regional representation, and says he would be keen for the CFS to be involved with the working group. GS assures him that Welsh members are engaged with the process.

Racial Justice Programme Update - Sonali Bhattacharyya (10 minutes, 10:40 – 10:50)

- SB details that the Racial Justice Programme has been focusing on migrants' rights including resisting deportation flights, right to work, and hostile environment in the NHS.
- The programme's campaigning work has enabled them to work alongside Migrants Organise on issues including the Nationality and Borders Bill.
- The Programme ran a session at The World Transformed (TWT), and intends to record a podcast with the same guest speakers soon.
- Prior to Christmas 2021, the programme organised a call with the Trade Unionist Network about winning anti-racist demands in the workplace, mobilising against the EDL in Wales, and the 'No Police in Schools' campaign.
- The Programme is also working on arranging phone banking sessions for BAME members in Momentum to get them to support Black socialist candidates in local elections. This may allow a BAME network within Momentum to emerge.
- The remaining project is a collaboration with the Freedom Theatre in Palestine who are organising a verbatim theatre play on the experiences of political prisoners.
- The Programme also wants to organise a letter writing project for political prisoners in Palestine. If this is not feasible, the Programme could launch a Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign to organise members around a specific issue.

Refounding Momentum - Andrew Dolan (90 minutes, 10:50 – 12:00)

- AD provides an overview of Refounding Momentum: The process involved local groups across the country making proposals about local level reforms they wanted

enacted to Momentum's structures. They received 25 submissions from local groups. The second phase of the campaign involved organising two Momentum assemblies to begin reviewing the proposals and to make suggestions to the NCG.

- MW inquires if the purpose of this meeting is to collect the NCG's views on the proposals or to narrow down said proposals. AD relays that it is the former.
- RM asks about the feedback mechanism for when the proposals are made public. AD confirms that this will be a task for CT as the new Local Groups and Activist Development Officer.
- JO asks when WLG can further inform the recommendations since they are concerned about some of the proposals & would like opportunity to feedback
- TK raises objection with the proposal to remove the four affiliates, highlights that the CWU was not given adequate time to consider the proposals and suggests that the recommendations not be made public until a further conversation is had.
- MW stresses that members will expect the NCG, as the political leadership of the organisation, to give their view on the proposals.
- RM stresses that Momentum needs to press ahead with this work because trade unions were invited to the assemblies to provide their feedback.
- MB proposes a separate consultation with affiliate members.
- SB stresses that members must be given enough time to review these proposals.
- DH highlights that the purpose of Refounding Momentum was to collect members' views about Momentum's structures, not the NCGs.
- SJ agrees that the NCG should respect the members' feedback.

- CA asks if assemblies have taken place in Scotland. AD states that the CFS were unable to attend, but were invited.
- AS suggests delaying a vote on the proposals until the next NCG meeting in February 2022.
- DH stresses that the proposals are not an attack on affiliates, highlights that most affiliates are not democratic organisations and states that an affiliate committee will enable greater collaboration with left groups.
- SB emphasises that it is clear that members want reform and the NCG cannot ignore this.
- TK asks who made the submission to remove non-trade union affiliate seats.
- GS asks if a two week delay is a reasonable time for affiliates to form an opinion on this. BG, TK and CT suggest a delay until the next NCG meeting in February 2022.
- RM asks if we need to alert members to this delay.
- The NCG agrees unanimously to collect feedback from the affiliates, keep members' informed about the delay and return to this discussion on Saturday 5 February 2022.

Break (30 minutes, 12:00 – 12:20)

Six-month Planning - Andrew Dolan (60 minutes, 12:20 – 13:25)

- AD outlines Momentum's six month priorities including the upcoming NCG elections, internal elections (NEC, Young Labour, Labour Students, BAME committee, NPF), parliamentary selections, Refounding Momentum, leadership programmes ('Future Candidates' programme), broader campaigns (climate justice, community wealth building and trade unionism) and building a stronger relationship with the SCG.

- AD highlights the challenges for Momentum including extreme demoralisation amongst the left, the decline in membership, the rightward shift of Labour Party members (thus affecting the outcome of the NEC elections), resource limitation within Momentum, structural barriers including the Labour leadership taking control of all selections and JC standing as an independent candidate which would result in mass expulsion of socialists from the Labour Party.
- RM says Momentum must re-evaluate its political line (“stay and fight”) because it is alienating the membership, thereby affecting recruitment. Momentum’s messaging should also focus on people who are not engaged with the party. AD responds that Momentum’s line has always been “stay and organise” rather than “stay and fight”.
- BG supports Momentum’s strategic priorities, particularly parliamentary selection of socialist candidates. This is especially pertinent given the purge of left members from Labour.
- MW argues that Momentum must prevent the Labour Party from putting up a candidate against JC.
- MW and CT stress that the SCG, TWT and Momentum must platform the voices of organisation workers (instead of academics, charity workers and MPs). AD responds that trade unions are represented in Momentum’s Movement Builders programme.
- CT states that KS may be rising in the polls, but remains unconvinced it will continue in the long term.
- DH asks AD to clarify what 15 seats are up for election, says Momentum must defend existing SCG MPs and stresses the importance of encouraging the left to stay in Labour.
- AD highlights that Momentum should be organising with the left in Unison since they have 12.5 per cent of the vote on conference and occupy key seats on the NEC.

- MM needs to have a clearer position on JC standing as an independent, because people would expect Momentum to support him. In addition to this, Momentum needs a plan for local elections, because he does not feel comfortable supporting right-wing candidates. MR says Momentum needs to be unapologetic about campaigning exclusively for socialist MPs.
- TH has joined the meeting.
- RM suggests launching a new campaign on statutory sick pay to draw more members to Momentum. SB agrees that a new campaign could enable a broader coalition amongst the left. AD says there is value in launching a new campaign, but Momentum will need to cut back on other streams of work.
- SB says that local momentum groups must platform their campaign successes. AD responds that Momentum has recruited a new Communications Officer who will focus on local wins.
- GS relays that she met with members from Portsmouth Momentum who were expelled from the Party. Momentum needs to provide these individuals with reasons to stay engaged with the organisation. This could include campaigning for nearby candidates, getting involved with selections outside their constituency, and organising outside the party. GS says we need to create a left space that extends beyond certain personalities and focuses on grassroots organising.
- AD states that JC's election puts Momentum in a precarious position: if they support his campaign they would face backlash from the party leadership, but if they do not support his election they will alienate members. Instead, Momentum should focus on getting as many socialist candidates elected.
- MR says there is a lot of concern about Momentum's supposed inactivity regarding overturning suspensions. Momentum needs to challenge this
- TH states there are issues in Liverpool where the right is preventing anyone who is on the left from being interviewed for local council elections.

- GS brings the discussion to an end, noting that there is broad approval for Momentum's six month priorities.

Sub-item: 'To also decide the process for constructing a slate for Young Labour and Labour Students' - Andrew Dolan (10 minutes, 14:10 – 14:20)

- RM suggests a primary for national positions, but not regional positions.
- **BG asks whether the NCG will endorse candidates for the National Constitutional Committee. GS suggests the decision be taken to the OG.**
- OH raises a point of clarification: regional positions are difficult to fill so it is best for Momentum to refrain from additional hurdles.
- GS asks if there is any opposition to this suggestion, and the proposal passes.
- GS confirms there will be a primary for Young Labour national positions, but not for regional positions.

AOB

- TH says we need to look at the political situation in Liverpool, as the left is under attack. GS suggests a targeted discussion with AD on this.

End of Meeting (14:30)