

# NCG Meeting Minutes

Date: Saturday 7 May 2022

Time: 10:00am – 11:31am

Present: Solma Ahmed, Craig Anderson, Callum Bell, Sonali Bhattacharyya, Matt Buckley, Barry Gray, Shona Jemphrey, Tony Kearns, Darran McLaughin, Mick Moore, Ana Oppenheim, Jackie Owen, Harriet Protheroe-Soltani, Mish Rahman, Andrew Scattergood, Gaya Sriskanthan, Jon Trickett and Carol Turner.

Apologies: Abbie Clark, Phil Clarke, Sarah Doyle, Leigh Drennan, Jennifer Forbes, Alan Gibbons, Deborah Hermanns, Rory MacLean, Liz Smith, Sam Tarry and Matt Wrack.

Staff: Andrew Dolan and Hareem Ghani

## Apologies

- AC, PC and DH send their apologies.
- OH sends his apologies.
- GS expresses concerns about the local election results which has resulted in the Greens and Liberal Democrats making considerable gains at the expense of Labour.
- GS expresses gratitude to Momentum's organising team for supporting socialist candidates standing in the local elections.
- GS informs the NCG that AD has added an additional item on the agenda on Refounding Momentum.

## Co-chair reports – Gaya Sriskanthan

- GS relays that she has been supporting Momentum staff organising for local elections. She has also been working with 30 volunteers to deliver training on the climate justice course, launching on 26 May 2022.

## Update on Local Elections – Andrew Dolan

- AD says that Momentum made the decision three-and-a-half months ago to invest time and resources into the local elections. They picked key strategic areas such as North Ayrshire, Westminsiter, and Worthing to host campaign days in collaboration with SCG MPs such as BRA, KC and NW .
- An estimated 150 and 200 Momentum members have been elected in this round of council elections. This is a significant victory for the left.
- Momentum's priority is to ensure the recently-elected councillors engage with the CWB toolkit and engage with the Councillors Network to help create a community of left councillors that the organisation can draw on. This will prove useful during the NEC elections as the right's candidate in Oldham lost their seat in the election.
- CA adds that it has been a disappointing result for North Ayrshire Council. He says it is important to develop a coordinated approach on rolling out the CWB to local councils in Scotland. GS agrees that the result in North Ayrshire was disappointing. Labour campaigners in the region reported that locals thought the area was an SNP council. This demonstrates that it is important for Labour councils to communicate its gains to local communities.
- CB asks when the CWB toolkit will be rolled out and asks if Momentum has produced a communications strategy on the local elections. AD responds that Momentum provided extensive media coverage immediately after the elections. There will also be publishing an opinion piece in the Labour List shortly. AD says the CWB toolkit is already underway and a training session took place six weeks ago. Another training is planned for next month. He also stresses that the newly elected councillors have already been mapped and added into the relevant councillor chats. This will be followed by phone-banking and regular texts to ensure they attend Momentum's CEB training sessions. GS adds that

she has been working with RGW and the Democracy Collaborate to deliver the CWB toolkit. They have discussed dates for early workshops in July 2022.

- CA states it is important for Momentum to speak with CfS about the CWB toolkit.
- AD says a number of councillors selected for local elections came through Momentum's Futures Councillors programme. This training programme is an area of growth for Momentum.
- TK says Momentum should keep in touch with CWU on the CWB toolkit since they presented the motion to party conference in 2021. GS suggests a joint meeting between CWU and Momentum. She also says there should be a parallel process for training activists on the ground on how to push for the CWB toolkit.

#### Additional Motions to Labour Party Conference – Andrew Dolan

- AD says the Policy Primary concluded 10 days ago. They received 2,200 votes, which is down from 3,000 in 2021. However, when you take into account the membership decline, this is not a substantial amount (down from 13 per cent to 11 per cent).
- AD says Momentum was able to convince 90 members to increase their membership subscriptions, increasing its revenue by £5,000 annually.
- The policies that proved popular among members included:
  - Labour for a Green New Deal
  - Two Linked Crises: the Cost of Living Crisis and the Climate Crisis
  - Proportional Representation
  - For Public Ownership of Energy
  - Advancing Workers' Agenda by Repealing All Anti-trade Union Laws
- However, there is a glaring omission on issues relating to immigration, policing and crime (which the leadership has been implementing via the Overseas Operations Bill, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, the recent UK-Rwanda Agreement). AD says it is important for Momentum to encourage its members to take up these issues or it risks losing credibility. Subsequently, AD suggests adopting two additional motions that came through the Policy Primary titled 'Build a Welcoming Britain: Towards an Internationalist Socialist Immigration Policy' and 'Policing and the Right to Protest' as the NCG reserves the right to approve additional motions.
- Finally, Momentum will collaborate with CLPD, trade unions and left organisations to coordinate on the priorities ballot. Momentum will be supporting additional motions on conference besides the ones being discussed at the NCG meeting.
- TK says he supports what AD is proposing, but on the first motion on 'Building a Welcoming Britain' Momentum should specify which policies are "out of touch" with membership opinion. The point needs to be explicit.
- CT informs the remainder of the NCG that US nukes will be returning to the UK and stationed at Lakenheath. Consequently, the CND will be circulating a resolution for the party conference. They will also be hosting a [protest](#) on 21 May 2022.
- SB says she supports AD's proposals, but she is disappointed with the outcome of the ballot. Momentum must continue to advocate for racial justice and migrant rights.
- AD proposes an amendment to the motion on 'Policing and the Right to Protest'. The motion references "A major prison release programme", but this should be revised as follows: "To reduce the use of prisons and short-term sentences". This is because the right may spin the motions as a major prison-release programme.
- GS asks if there are any objections to the two additional motions being added, there are no objections.
- GS asks if there are any objections to AD's amendments, there are no objections.
- GS asks if there are any objections to TK's proposals, there are no objections but AO asks to be consulted since she helped compose the motion. AD agrees to this.

#### Reviewing Momentum's Affiliates – Andrew Dolan

- AD says Momentum is approaching the NCG elections and standard practice involves writing to all affiliates to ask if they wish to re-affiliate. This refers to the additional affiliates including Tribune, LGND, Labour Briefing Coop, CND, CLPD, Momentum Black Caucus and LARAF.
- However, AD has two proposals that require a unanimous vote from the NCG:
  1. To remove Left Futures from the constitutional list of organisations eligible to affiliate. The previous NCG adopted a process paper about the criteria underpinning affiliations. For media outlets, it referred to publishing frequency, reach and impact. However, Left Futures does not exist.
  2. To write to LARAF and request an overview of the activity they have overtaken over the last 12 months to see if they should re-affiliate. This is because the committee has not been functioning in the last 12 to 18 months.
- AD says Momentum has to be proactive about organisations listed in the constitution as there is longstanding scepticism as to whether they are functioning organisations.
- AD highlights that one affiliate has not sent a representative to NCG meetings for over a year. He says the NCG may wish to discuss this at a later date.
- GS asks if there are any objections to AD's proposals, there are no objections.

#### Refounding Momentum – Andrew Dolan

- In March 2022, the NCG approved a series of proposals for Refounding Momentum besides the following:
  1. A Momentum convention or conference
  2. Reform of affiliates
  3. Election of the public office holders by the full membership, and
  4. A hybrid of regional elected and nationally elected member representatives.
- Following discussions with NCG members, options two and four were removed.
- However proposal one and four still require sign off. AD has met with different parties and drafted the following compromise:
  - Option one should be amended to include the following phrases (highlighted in bold): “Momentum will organise a conference held every year composed of **delegates from affiliated trade unions (weighted in line with the current constitution for every 100,000 members)**” and “The conference will have power to debate and vote on constitutional amendments **(which will require a simple majority of TU delegates to pass)**”.
  - Option three should be amended to the following (changes highlighted in bold): “The Convention in and of itself will not have voting rights on these issues. Proposers of any motion will have speaking rights. Following the Convention, proposals will then be put to an OMOV ballot of all members **(with constitutional amendments requiring a simple majority of TU representatives on the NCG to be approved for ballot).**”
- There needs to be a majority vote from NCG members and trade unions represented today for these proposals to pass.
- GS asks if there are any questions, TK responds that he has been part of the consultations and he welcomes the current compromise on affiliates and public office holders.
- DM asks why people oppose the election of public office holders by the membership.
- MB expresses disappointment about the compromise especially since members have repeatedly raised concerns about the lack of transparency within Momentum. Moving forward, Momentum needs to communicate with its membership about how these changes were agreed. SB and GS agree.
- MM says he is also concerned about the amendments as all members should have a say on who gets to represent them. He does not understand why Momentum should privilege certain members.
- JT leaves the meeting.

- SB points out that this amendment gives union delegates a veto and implements a block on members' democracy. This demonstrates a lack of trust in the membership.
- BBG responds that he does not regard Momentum as solely an individual membership organisation but a membership organisation composed of individual members and organisational members. JO and CT agree. CT adds that national groups, interest groups and trade unions are choosing representatives who best reflect their priorities.
- MB argues the suggested compromise does not achieve parity between individual members and organisational members. Organisational members are being given greater voting power than ordinary members, meaning there are two-tiers of membership. He says this compromise may result in greater conflict in the future. SB agrees.
- SB states that Momentum relies heavily on its membership to lead on campaigning work. Thus, the disgruntlement that has developed over the years is because members feel they are being taken for granted. She stresses members should be allowed greater say within the organisation.
- SA says she is not happy with the compromise since it is overriding proposals made during the assemblies. NCG members have an obligation to listen to members' concerns.
- CA says he sympathises with both sides of the argument.
- MR says public office holders need to be accountable to the membership. The trade union veto is not democratic.
- TK says MB's observation is incorrect since the trade union veto only applies to constitutional changes rather than policy changes. He challenges SB over her earlier comments about distrusting the membership and asks if the membership mistrusts the CWU. The argument applies both ways.
- SJ joins the meeting.
- MM states he will not be lectured on mistrust by TK. He says he will vote for the compromise, but he takes issue with "backroom dealings". TK responds that the issue of mistrust was raised by SB who argued that TUs mistrusted the membership. He is not lecturing anyone, he is simply responding to an earlier remark.
- GS concludes the discussion.
- AD adds that there are a significant number of proposals within Refounding Momentum, besides the two discussed today. The NCG needs to consider the entirety of the package. He believes members will be satisfied with the package.
- GS says Momentum needs to offer members more of a stake in the organisation, and working with members has been one of the most rewarding aspects of her role.
- GS asks if there are any objections to the compromise, there are no objections.

#### AOB

- AD says the Leo Panich programme is relaunching soon. He encourages NCG members to put forward young members.

#### Meeting ends