

# **National Coordinating Group (NCG)**

**Saturday 24th February 2018**

**Minutes**

**In attendance:** Jon Lansman, John Taylor, Mike Bird, Cecile Wright, Rida Vaquas, Helen McDonald, Tony Kearns, Lorcan Mullen, Barry Gray, Puru Miah, Emine Ibrahim, Carol Turner

**Apologies:** Liz Hayden, Nav Mishra, Sahaya James, Joe Ejiofor, Sam Tarry, Yannis Gourtsoyannis, Laura Snell

**Staff:** Santiago Bell-Bradford, Laura Parker, Rachel Godfrey-Wood

## 1. Welcomes, apologies and aims of meeting

### Aims of meeting:

- To develop a shared analysis of the current political context and what this means for Momentum
- To review Momentum's activities over the last quarter
- To agree Momentum's priorities moving forwards
- To develop a positive team culture within the NCG

*Apologies noted. Aims agreed.*

## 2. Notes from last meeting - matters arising

- **Jamie Driscoll** has been hired on a 2 day a week basis based in the NE - doing some regional organising and selections support plus leading preparations of **Momentum's annual conference** which this year will be held alongside Durham Miners Gala - to be held on Sunday after the main Gala; work on logistics underway; anyone has suggestions for conference, please pass to Laura
- **Members Council:** final meeting of the first tranche of the Members Council is on the 10th of March. It will focus on Groups, as well as reflections on how the Members Council has progressed so far. A report will be provided for the next NCG meeting

## 3. Q1 Strategy Document

Noted that there are four strategic objectives (SOs) - related to

- Elections (SO1)
- Labour Party Democracy (SO2)
- building a social movement (SO3)
- Momentum's organisational development and capacity (SO4)

Key points in relation to each were noted, including:

### SO1:

**Local Elections:** Jon Lansman emphasised the importance of abiding by the electoral regulations for the Local elections, and that the team lead on legal issues is

currently working on providing guidance and policy. These will be circulated once completed.

## SO2:

**Democracy Review and Selections:** Discussions on both deferred until their individual agenda items later in meeting

**NPF:** Rachel gave an update on the progress of creating an NPF slate: encouraging overall number of candidates, including in some regions a high number of high quality applicants - but in some regions it has been more difficult to identify a sufficient number of candidates. Rachel offered to give regional updates for any NCG members during the lunch break.

**Regional Boards:** The NCG congratulated Joe Bradley on his work helping get the Momentum slate elected at the NW Regional Board elections.

Cecile noted that incorrect information was circulated about the East Midlands: they did in fact have elections at their Regional Board AGM.

Laura noted that greater collaboration would be welcome between staff organising team and regional NCG reps.

Mike Bird provided an update on the Welsh Regional Board: it would be achievable to get a Momentum slate elected at the next board AGM.

Lorcan was happy to provide an update on the Scottish Regional Board for those who needed it.

It was agreed that Regional Board elections should be a higher priority going forward - Laura noted possible staff capacity constraints and need for this to be included in strategic priority setting.

## SO3:

**Groups Audit:** There is a need for a comprehensive audit of the state of Momentum's groups as well as revamping the groups guidance and support documents. Input to be made also from the final meeting of this Member's Council whose focus will be on Momentum groups.

**GDPR:** The change in data processing regulation will also have an impact on local groups and the organisation as a whole. Our legal staff member is currently still analysing the various impacts the new legislation will have on Momentum and we will be seeking external expert support - without which it will not be possible to fully comply given the complexity and scale of the legislative requirements and the need for Momentum to ensure best practice.

**TWT:** Laura Parker and other staff members Joe Todd and Katy Herrington (all members of TWT Core Group) attended a TWT away weekend to discuss the organisation's strategy. Useful first discussion on long-term strategy and relationship with Momentum - including in relation to business planning, fundraising and

managing political risk at TWT events. There will be further discussions with TWT in this quarter and a meeting will be set up between TWT and NCG Officers Group.

**Supporting Workplace Struggle:** Rachel gave a general update of our work with the Bakers Union which is going very well - there has been joint collaboration on training as well as powerful films, both of which supporting BFAWU to recruit new members. The next steps are to further use Momentum's social media reach and video output to identify McDonald's workers who could be trained as shop stewards. Lorcan noted that the McStrike campaign has already had successes with an change of pay terms.

#### SO4:

**Property:** Finding suitable office property has been very challenging given extremely high rents in London. We hope to have found a suitable premises near our current office and aim to move on March 2nd.

**Finances:** Momentum is currently still operating at a surplus although finances are tight. We are waiting on a meeting of the Finance sub-committee to finalise the budget. Significant progress made on financial procedures.

**Members Council and NCG Term Length:** There was a brief discussion around the current term lengths of both the NCG and the Members Council. Jon Lansman suggested that these issues be brought to the next meeting for more substantive discussion.

**Agreed:** strong consensus that very useful to have comprehensive overview of the key activities of the team - and that the Quarterly Operational Strategy document should regularly be presented to the NCG.

## 4. Timetable for the NCG Elections

**Agreed** - the revised timetable also includes monthly scheduled meetings for the Finance sub group and the Complaints Panel

## 5. Local Elections

Laura Parker gave a brief outline of the current guidance and it was noted that the guidance had been agreed by the NCG officers group:

- The staff team legal officer was praised and thanked for having provided such comprehensive guidance on such a complex subject

- Laura noted that due to the complexity of local government electoral spending regulation, it can be very easy to misinterpret the guidance and there are significant risks in giving incorrect advice. Laura suggested that if any NCG members are approached by lay members asking for Electoral Spending advice that they instead pass them on to the staff team to handle effectively.

***Agreed***

- Rachel highlighted that due to regulations, Momentum's contributions to the local elections will be reduced. Despite this, there is a consensus between both Momentum and the Labour Party as to what the national target Councils are, providing greater opportunity for collaboration.
- Jon Lansman pointed out that the 'Corbyn Surge' has yet to touch local government, and a renewed focus is needed for real change to take effect. Jon asked if the various upcoming elections could be put into Momentum's planning calendar, especially in areas where Councillors are elected by thirds
- Emine fed back on her recent experiences with Haringey Council, and working with the staff on the upcoming election. Barry suggested that many of the issues to which Emine referred to surrounding local government will be coming up in Track 3 of the Democracy review: it is important that we have substantive discussions on the issues of local government.

## **6. GDPR**

As a substantive conversation around GDPR regulation was already had during item 3. On the agenda, the guidance was noted by the NCG

*Noted*

## **7. Selections**

Laura began the discussion by noting that Momentum's involvement in elections was always going to be challenging, and that lessons were going to be learnt along the way. Joe Bradley, who is leading on selections, has already produced an interim report which outlined some of the lessons learnt made in these first selections which will be reflected in revised processes going forward - specifically:

- Mike Bird provided an update on the single selection happening in Wales at the moment. He noted that whilst the process itself has been quite smooth so far, he felt the need for more preparation and training to be provided for candidates.
- Rida commented that whilst she understood the difficult and complex nature of selections, there was a need for guidance on the formal role groups play in the process as well as a need for more support generally.

- Emine expressed the need to move away from ‘ultra-localism’ with selections, and that it is acceptable to have candidates stand in areas where they are not local, provided they are willing to put the necessary work in to be elected
- Lorcan provided an update on Scottish selections, which have yet to start, but will do so imminently and likely all at once.

Laura suggested that once all of the selections are over, there be a short, NCG summary document which will clarify the process going forward, including in relation to how groups can input. This will be circulated to groups.

**Action Point:** Draft policy from the NCG to be circulated in due course to all groups on selections

## 8. Democracy Review

With Track 2 of the Democracy coming to an end, the NCG was required to vote on those proposals or amendments which had not been unanimously supported.

### 8.1 Putting the draft proposals to a vote:

The NCG unanimously agreed to put all Track 2 proposals to a vote of the membership, on the general understanding that any proposal which gets more than 50% of a ‘yes’ vote will become a Momentum campaigning position and that any that fails to get 50% will not.

*Passed*

### 8.2 Charter of Members’ Rights: Amendments:

There were two suggested amendments to the Charter of Member’s Rights.

#### **Amendment A.**

*2.1.4 B. A member of the Party who ~~joins and/ or supports a political organisation other than an official Labour group or other unit of the Party, or~~ supports any candidate who stands against an official Labour candidate or publicly declares their intent to stand against a Labour candidate, shall automatically be ineligible to be or remain a Party member, subject to the provisions of Chapter 6.1.2 below of the disciplinary rules.*

#### **Amendment B.**

*“2.1.4 B. A member of the Party who joins and/ or supports a political organisation whose principles, values, objectives or methods of organising are demonstrably incompatible with those of the Labour Party, or who supports any candidate who stands against an official Labour candidate or publicly declares their intent to stand against a Labour candidate, shall automatically be ineligible to be or remain a Party member, subject to the provisions of Chapter 6.1.2 below of the disciplinary rules.”*

Jon opened the discussion by saying that whilst the line that amendment A proposes be removed is too broad and has been used improperly in the past, removing it is not necessarily the solution. Removing the line, for example, would allow members of political parties who have recently decided not to stand candidates to join the party.

It was acknowledged that whilst amendment B was by no means perfect, it was a great improvement over the original provision, whilst being a better solution than removing the provision altogether. After a lengthy discussion, amendment B was passed.

*Amendment B passed*

### **8.3 A Democratic Selection Process for the 21st Century**

Rachel outlined the suggested process for Parliamentary candidate selections that was drafted by members. There was a lengthy discussion about whether or not the process did indeed bring enough democratic accountability to the selection process.

A vote was called on whether to accept the proposal as is, or suggest a different selection process. The NCG voted in favour (6-4) of the proposal in the Democracy review.

*Amendment passed*

### **8.4 Track 3 Democracy Review**

After the productive discussions around the issues of Track 2 of the Democracy review, Rachel suggested that another NCG meeting would be needed to make political decision on the proposal on the third track of the review. This was unanimously agreed by the NCG which welcomed the opportunity to discuss these key issues.

**Action Point:** The staff to organise an extraordinary meeting of the NCG to discuss Track 3 of the Democracy Review

## **9. Agenda Items Requested by NCG members:**

### **9.1 Momentum Youth Review**

Moved by Rida Vaquas

*A variety of people have expressed concerns about a negative culture particularly in Momentum's intervention into Young Labour structures.*

*There are questions to be raised about why Momentum's slate for the London Young Labour and national Young Labour elections was decided at a meeting only publicised by word-of-mouth and not open to nominations from all of Momentum's eligible members. This is unlike the process for deciding endorsements for Momentum's NEC candidates, in which every member received an email informing*

*them of how to apply. Some young activists emailed Momentum asking how to apply to stand and received no response.*

*How were decisions made about which motions Momentum would submit and endorse at LYL conference and other Young Labour events?*

*At both the word-of-mouth meeting to decide the candidates, in the lead up to, and at London Young Labour conference, activists who had decided to stand on a different slate, or associated with those people, were intimidated, harassed and bullied.*

*This included one activist staying away from the conference all together, and an activist under the age of 16 being reduced to tears. This is not political discussion and debate. This is harassment to shut up "opponents" (also largely other people on the left and members of Momentum).*

*This is more than just a matter for individual complaints, but a political one. What is being done in Momentum's name? What culture do we want to exist in Momentum for young activists new to politics?*

*Proposal: NCG members review the structures and methods by which Momentum intervenes in Young Labour.*

It was broadly agreed that both Momentum's youth structures, and the means by which Momentum engages with Labour's Youth structures, need review - and that this would be put on the future workplan of the staff team, for subsequent consultation with the NCG.

*Passed*

## **9.2 UCU Strike Support**

Moved by Rida Vaquas and Cecile Wright

*Momentum should support the ongoing UCU strike in practical ways, and encourage Momentum members to take part in solidarity actions like rallies, leafleting and joining picket lines.*

There was unanimous support for this motion. Laura suggested that due to already high workload of the social media team, the advance planning required for mass social media mobilisations and the short timetable (strike is underway and motion proposed action for Monday morning), it would not be possible to proscribe in detail what they should be posting and when. Instead, Laura suggested that the Digital Communications team work out how best to engage with the UCU strike and that she would reach out to the UCU leadership on behalf of Momentum. This friendly amendment was agreed by Rida.

**Action Point:** It was also noted that Momentum should work toward creating more formal links with the UCU union.

*Passed*

## **10. Agenda Items Requested by NCG members:**



### **10.1 Endorse Sahaya James for NUS President**

Moved by Rida Vaquas

Rida noted that NCG and Momentum member Sahaya James was running to be President of the NUS. She asked if the NCG could endorse her campaign.

After a short discussion, it was noted that it is not appropriate for Momentum to endorse candidates in elections within organisations other than the Labour Party. It was unanimously agreed that whilst the NCG supports Sahaya in her endeavours, the organisation could not formally support her.

*Not Passed*