## Draft Minutes of the Oxford & District Executive Committee, 19 July 2017

**Present:** Jamila Azad, Ann Black (minutes), David Blackman, Jane Darke (Chair), Jonathan Harty, Damian Haywood, Alex Hollingsworth, Dan Iley-Williamson, Felicity Irwin, Mark Ladbrooke, Stephen Marks, John Stansby, Jane Stockton, John Tanner, Marie Tidball, Ed Turner, Tom Zagoria

**Apologies**: Nigel Chapman, Anneliese Dodds, Ian Flintoff, Tom Hayes, Jennifer Pegg

1. Executive committee minutes, 29 June 2017. These were agreed as a correct record.

2. Matters arising.

(a) **2(a) Executive committee membership**. Dan would be visiting the branch later in July, and would seek volunteers.

(b) **2(c) Conference delegates**. Attempts to contact Barry Wooding by the deadline had failed, and on 5 July Cherry Mosteshar was therefore authorised as the OxWAb delegate. In view of the late substitution the executive had no option but to agree £850 for accommodation, to which Oxford Labour Women would contribute £200. Lotte Boumelha, the OxEast delegate, had been elected back in March, giving her time to find somewhere affordable. It was agreed that in future the secretary would book two conference rooms well in advance rather than leaving it to delegates.

3. Urgent business / other business. None.

4. Finance and fundraising. Alex had nothing to add to his comprehensive report at the last meeting. It was agreed to invite Angela Rayner to speak at a fundraising dinner, and Ann would try to contact her.

5. Oxford West & Abingdon general election campaign. Jane D reported from a debrief meeting with Marie and Jonathan, and Marie’s notes would follow. The campaign would have benefited from clearer channels of communication, and from using voluntary organising capacity more effectively. Members added that this election was uniquely challenging because of its sudden announcement and lack of time to plan; a new candidate in Oxford East as well; and the distraction of the “progressive alliance”. Kidlington reported delays in receiving much-needed leaflets. Alex highlighted the potential of Botley, Kidlington and Abingdon and, if the boundary changes went ahead, the need to organise in Wheatley, Garsington and Horspath. OxWAb and OxEast were a single merged party except for selection of parliamentary candidates, but it was important for OxWAb to have a strong voice within the campaign committee and other party structures. The meeting recorded thanks to Fran Tidball for her help throughout. Ann suggested that it was not enough for the party simply to select disabled candidates: support during the campaign and after was essential, and she would raise this at national level as well.

6. Forthcoming elections

(a) **Oxford city council, 3 May 2018**. Ed reported that members had been invited to put themselves forward; councillors were being asked if they wished to stand again; Laura Price had agreed to act as an external Chair. The meeting agreed that sitting councillors would be interviewed if reports from the whip, the organiser or the branch raised any concerns, but would request a waiver from national guidance that all councillors should be interviewed after two terms. The region would also be asked to approve continued selection of candidates for all wards within a branch by all branch members, in view of the very small wards. Ann was collecting branch selection meeting dates. Panel interviews should be conducted by the end of August, and Ed would ask the regional office to have a panel ready to hear any appeals so that selections would not be delayed. Unless there were too many candidates, it was agreed that all panelled candidates would be invited to branch meetings, and if shortlisting was required, it should be conducted within the same meeting.

There were concerns about the proportion of women councillors falling from its current 43%. NEC rules required at least one female candidate within a two-member ward, where a sitting councillor was standing down, unless balanced by two women elsewhere. Whether this was an issue would not be clear until we knew who was standing down and who was applying, but imposing restrictions after candidates were known could also be contentious. It was agreed that Ed, Ann and Jane D would keep a watching brief and consider whether active measures were needed. Marie reminded the meeting that her NEC-funded project promised at least four disabled candidates, with two in winnable seats, and she offered to extend her training session to other aspiring candidates. Members added that that non-graduates and Afro-Caribbean women were also under-represented within the Labour group. Finally it was noted that successfully-elected candidates would only serve for two years, as there would be all-out elections on new boundaries in 2020.

(b) **Cherwell district council**. Ann reported that Banbury CLP interviewed new candidates, but accepted previous candidates on the basis of a written application. It was agreed that Jonathan would advertise opportunities in Kidlington East and Kidlington West, and a panel of O&DLP members would interview applicants. John S reminded the meeting that Kidlington has elections every year, at parish, district or county level, so candidates were always needed.

(c) **Council elections, 2 May 2019**. The OxWAb review recommended selecting candidates for elections in 2019 as soon as possible, to build the Labour vote. Alex reported that Botley were already planning ahead, and there would be parish council elections in Gosford and Water Eaton. John S said that by-elections at town and parish council level were not well-advertised

6. Membership.

(a) Dan reported that membership numbers were steady. It was agreed that branches were best placed to follow up members falling into arrears, with Jane S and Dan providing backup capacity where necessary. Currently it was not possible to analyse membership by ethnic origin.

(b) Some branches, for instance Greater Headington, were now very large, and it was suggested that there was scope for devolving some functions to ward level. However this would require consensus within the branch. There was also a need to develop skills in using the membership system within branches, and to share good practice, perhaps through meetings between branch officers. It would be useful if the O&DLP could provide lists of speakers for branch meetings.

(c) Not all Oxford University Labour Club members were on MemberCentre, as some were registered at their home address, and some had signed up at Freshers’ Fayre and were not necessarily party members. Tom Z offered to use the OULC Facebook page to publicise O&DLP events.

(d) The meeting endorsed Dan and Jane S’s plans for a picnic in South Park on Saturday 29 July, particularly aimed at new members. The only costs were light refreshments and a backup room in the East Oxford community centre for use if it rained.

(e) The meeting agreed that when the organiser was on leave, arrangements should be put in place for editing and sending members’ mailings and updating the Oxford Labour Facebook and web pages with forthcoming events. This would be co-ordinated by the organiser’s line management.

(f) The new members’ booklet was ready to go, after a few minor edits, an intro from Anneliese and photos of Anneliese and Jeremy Corbyn. Jane S suggested that the booklet should be updated annually, with a welcome letter from Dan and herself changing more often to reflect current events.

(g) Dan reported that he was preparing local recruitment leaflets.

7. Black and minority ethnic (BAME) engagement. Jamila introduced the paper from Dan, Jane S and herself, included as appendix A. Ethnic minorities were under-represented within the O&DLP at every level, and she suggested that councillors and others should take membership forms when door-knocking and aim to recruit more BAME members. On the third recommendation Damian explained that class rather than ethnicity was the main factor behind low membership in The Leys. There were five city wards with a higher proportion of ethnic minority residents than Blackbird Leys, and eight wards with more than Northfield Brook.

The recommendations were welcomed, though members recognised that significant work would be needed to put them into effect. Ann would follow up Jamila’s proposal that Ruth Martin from the equality and human rights commission should be invited to address an all-member meeting. David asked whether multi-lingual content for literature was available from the national party, or from areas such as Birmingham. Damian suggested holding street stalls in Templars Square, for which Jonathan could provide tables etc if volunteers were forthcoming. Marie offered to circulate information on networking with disabled members as a possible model for BAME networking, and also highlighted intersectionality, where members who were BAME and/or women and/or gay and/or disabled faced multiple discrimination. The planned discussions between Sally, Tom H, Jamila and Marie on involving more LGBT, disabled and ethnic minority members could help to take this forward. Executive members hoped that further specific initiatives would come to future meetings.

8. Local complaints procedure. Jane asked members to send comments to her directly, for discussion at a future meeting.

9. Social media, including the Oxford Labour website, Twitter and Facebook. Jonathan said that the website was improving, but needed up-to-date content, and perhaps an area for members only. Dan suggested adding information on wards and branches, officers and the executive committee, and Alex proposed including councillors and other members who are active in their communities. Jonathan asked members to send him contributions and ideas for additional content.

10. All-member meetings.

(a) **Friday 8 September 2017**, Exeter Hall, Kidlington (motions and other business for annual conference, and Anneliese’s MP’s report). Contemporary motions must refer to an event on or after 1 August and branches do not meet during August, so it was agreed that Ann would write to general committee delegates inviting them to submit motions. Any motion proposed by any two GC delegates would be included on the agenda.

(b)  **Friday 13 October**, Rose Hill community centre (conference reportbacks and speaker to be arranged), **Thursday 9 / Friday 10 November, Friday 8 / Thursday 14 December 2017.** Dates, venues and topics to be arranged.

Suggestions included an USDAW representative as part of our constituency development plan; education policy, perhaps including a teachers’ union representative; a speaker from the Labour assembly against austerity; David Isaac from Modern Art Oxford; Ruth Martin of the EHRC; a speaker on proportional representation as an alternative to “progressive alliances”. Mark reported that the Barton community centre should be able to accommodate an all-member meeting, but currently there is no central, suitable and affordable venue in Oxford West & Abingdon.

11. Executive committee. 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Thursday 14 September, St Aldates room, Oxford town hall, Wednesday 18 October, Wednesday 22 November (provisionally 7 – 9 p.m. Regal community centre for October and November, to be confirmed).

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Appendix A

**Increasing the number and involvement of BAME members in Oxford District Labour Party**

Whilst the exact number of BAME members in Oxford District LP is not known, and is difficult to ascertain, it is clear that BAME communities in Oxford are under-represented in our membership, and in particular there are not enough BAME members in positions of responsibility within our party. There are no simple solutions to this, but we would like the following ideas to be considered as ways of moving forward:

* Hold events on topics of relevance to BAME communities e.g. racism, colonialism, Black history.
* Regularly have BAME speakers at All Member meetings.
* Ensure that meetings are regularly held in locations with under-represented BAME communities e.g. Blackbird Leys.
* Hold regular street stalls in areas of the city with large BAME communities, with the aim to attract new BAME members.
* Make sure recruitment materials reflect the multi-cultural communities we represent, and consider having some multi-lingual content.
* Hold social and fundraising events which will appeal to BAME members.
* Set up a local BAME Forum for local councillors and council candidates to provide mutual support.
* Form links with other CLPs/District Parties with strong records in recruiting and involving BAME members.

**Jamila Azad**

**Dan Iley-Williamson**

**Jane Stockton**