## Draft Minutes of the Oxford & District Executive Committee, 18 October 2017

**Present:** Ann Black (minutes), Nigel Chapman, Jane Darke (Chair), Erica Davis, Damian Haywood, Alex Hollingsworth, Dan Iley-Williamson, Mark Ladbrooke, Stephen Marks, Jennifer Pegg, Jane Stockton, John Tanner, Tom Zagoria. Becky Boumelha (for item 1).

**Apologies**: Jamila Azad, David Blackman, Sally Copley, Ian Flintoff, Tom Hayes, Felicity Irwin, Hannah Riley, John Stansby, Marie Tidball, Ed Turner

1. Ethnic minorities report. Becky Boumelha attended, as Jamila was at the county Labour group. She and Jamila were discussing ways of reaching out to BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) communities, with the aim of increasing membership, attendance, engagement and representation within the Oxford & District Labour Party. The Regal community centre was booked for the afternoon of Sunday 29 October, with BAME councillors, members and non-members invited, and Becky asked for some financial support, and for the meeting to be advertised to members. Their planning group was currently finalising aims and objectives, and hoped to establish an ethnic minorities forum with regular meetings. The rulebook said that the ethnic minorities officer was entitled to a list of BAME members, and she also asked about the procedure for affiliating an ethnic minorities forum to the CLP.

The executive committee welcomed the initiative. Oxford Labour Women had been effective in encouraging more women to stand as councillors, and Marie’s disabilities network had already led to three disabled members being selected as candidates for 2018. The committee agreed to grant up to £100 for room hire and refreshments on 29 October, to advertise it in the next members’ mailing and on Facebook, and to ask branches to publicise. Regarding membership, BAME status was not visible on party systems, and data protection laws might prevent sharing access. However, if members gave permission to use their email addresses, this could be a way to keep in touch, and would be followed up. It was for the BAME group to decide whether to establish a formal ethnic minorities forum, or a more informal arrangement. Oxford Labour Women took the latter approach, as a formal body came with significant bureaucratic and financial overheads. Both women’s forums and ethnic minorities forums were entirely within CLPs and did not affiliate to them in the same way as branches of unions or socialist societies. The meeting thanked Becky and Jamila and wished them well.

2. Executive committee minutes, 19 July 2017. With Dan’s name removed from the list of apologies, because he was present, these were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising. None.

4. Urgent business / other business.

(a) **NEC nominations**. The meeting agreed to include nominations for three new NEC constituency seats within the November all-member meeting. As at the AGM, nominations would be accepted from general committee delegates, who would then vote on which names to put forward.

(b) **Conference delegates.** Following discussion at the October all-member meeting, Ann would bring a paper to the next executive committee on the cost of sending one extra delegate per CLP. There might also be a south-east regional conference in the autumn of 2018.

5. Finance and fundraising. Alex reported that the current surplus was mainly due to generous donations for the general election campaign, from Unite, Oxford Labour Women, the Co-op, and individual members. Costs were being effectively controlled, but income from events was well below budget, and with James Fry’s Al-Shami dinner on 3 December there was little time to organise a big-name event before Christmas. However the Oxford Labour Women quiz would be on Friday 26 January, and Jonathan was checking with Keir Starmer about a date early in 2018. Other suggestions were Richard Burgon (Dan to approach) and Debbie Abrahams (Ann to approach). One of these could be a fish-and-chip supper, at relatively affordable prices. The executive committee approved the purchase of a new folding machine for £960 (though saving £300 on maintenance costs).

6. Organiser. Hannah Riley had been appointed, and would be starting work soon. She was keen to get to know members, and with her involvement in equality campaigning in Lewisham Deptford, a meeting with equalities officers would be valuable. However there will be many demands on her time, particularly building towards the city elections in May.

7. Campaign committee. Notes of the meeting on 7 October 2017 had been circulated. Andrew Smith was elected as Chair, taking over from Ed Turner. Members agreed to ask Andrew to review its purpose, remit and membership, with a view to making it more inclusive and ensuring that every branch had a voice, along with the university Labour clubs. Currently active campaigners are invited without a formal basis of representation, but only two members from Oxford West & Abingdon attended the latest meeting. This impacted on priorities across the whole of the Oxford & District party, and OxWAb were organising their own action group to plan for elections outside Oxford. The committee currently met three times a year, and focused on the next round of local and national elections, and there were questions about whether it should include more general campaigning through the year, or whether this should remain with the executive committee. Mark was concerned that the general election literature did not include key points from Labour’s excellent manifesto. However, copy had to be submitted in the first 48 hours after the election was called, and was signed off by the candidate.

8. Forthcoming elections

(a) **Oxford city council, 3 May 2018**. Candidates had now been selected for all wards except Summertown and Wolvercote, who would select on 26 October. They included three members of Marie’s disability network, one in a safe Labour seat and two in target wards. A manifesto conference would be held on the morning of Saturday 20 January, with members and councillors meeting to discuss Labour’s priorities.

. (b) **Cherwell district council, 3 May 2018**. The executive committee endorsed John Stansby and Andrew Hornsby-Smith for the two Kidlington wards.

(c) **Vale and Cherwell elections, 2 May 2019**. Jane S reported that the OxWAb action group met on Monday and aimed to select candidates early in 2018 for the target seats identified by Jonathan. If possible, an invitation to apply would be sent out with a deadline of 31 December, followed by interviews in January and selections in January / February. All executive committee members were willing to help with the process. The balance of the 20 candidates would be identified later.

9. National campaign day, 25 November 2017. This was the weekend following the budget, and although its contents were not known, universal credit, the impact of high inflation on wages, the Oxford living wage would undoubtedly still be relevant. The previous national campaign day was the best yet, with branches taking the initiative in their own area. Jane S and Dan would contact branches. Hannah as organiser might be asked to order materials, including membership forms and, if available, giveaway freebies such as badges and balloons.

Mark stressed the need to reach out to blue-collar working-class groups through trade unions, with USDAW, Unite and the bakers’ union BFAWU engaged. The council was consulting on housing and homelessness, and the living wage, and Ann would publicise this through the members’ mailing.

10. Membership. Including those up to six months in arrears, Oxford East had 2,469 members (down 11) and Oxford West & Abingdon had 1,590 (up 3). Jane S was offering help to branches with following up those in arrears, and Erica was planning a collective effort in Botley. The paid-for phone lines at Bishops Mews were not really accessible, and it was agreed to authorise room hire for a phone bank as a pilot. Retrieving one full-rate member would pay the cost of a two-hour session. Dan and Jane S were also planning another new members’ social event.

The executive committee agreed to accept into membership an applicant who had formerly nominated a Green candidate, as his branch reported that he was sincere in now supporting Labour.

11. Links with European socialists. John Tanner’s report of a visit to Nanterre by John, Ann Black and Rosemary Preston was noted. Comrades from Bonn, the Haute Seine, and Opole in Poland would be joining us in Oxford from 5-7 October 2018.

12. All-member meetings.

(a) **Friday 13 October 2017**. It was suggested that councillors and delegates should be asked for written reports in advance, to allow more time for engagement within the meeting.

(b) **Friday 10 November 2017**. Michael Wheeler, USDAW’s political officer, would speak on their trade union work.

(c) **Friday 8 December 2017.** Richard Benson Church Hall, Cowley Road, short meeting followed by refreshments.

(d) **Friday 12 January 2018**. Dean Court, Botley, hopefully with a speaker from the Labour Assembly Against Austerity

(e) **Friday 9 February 2018**. St Clements Family Centre, discussion on Brexit [*Giampi Alhadeff, Chair of the Labour Movement for Europe, has accepted our invitation*].

(f) **Thursday 8 / Friday 9 March 2018**. AGM. The executive expressed a preference for Wesley Memorial Church. [*The church was available on the Thursday which clashed with a city Labour group meeting, but not on the Friday. Rose Hill CC has therefore been booked for the AGM on Friday 9 March, and Wesley Memorial for the following meeting on Thursday 10 May.*]

Dr Ruth Martin, suggested as a speaker, has moved to a different job and therefore declined.

13. Executive committee. 7 – 9 p.m. Wednesday 22 November 2017, Regal community centre.