## Draft Minutes of the Oxford & District Executive Committee, 18 January 2018

**Present:** Jamila Azad, Ann Black (minutes), Nigel Chapman, Jane Darke (Chair), Ian Flintoff,Damian Haywood, Dan Iley-Williamson, Mark Ladbrooke, Stephen Marks, Dawn Oliver, Hannah Riley, John Stansby, Jane Stockton, Marie Tidball, Becky Boumelha (observer)

**Apologies**: David Blackman, Sally Copley, Tom Hayes, Alex Hollingsworth, Andrew Smith, John Tanner, Ed Turner, Tom Zagoria

1. Executive committee minutes, 22 November 2017. These were agreed as a correct record.

2. Matters arising.

(a) **1(c)(ii) Conference delegates**. Ann clarified that there was no difference in voting rights between the lead delegate and the additional woman delegate and it was mainly an administrative classification: the lead delegate had their fee paid centrally, and must be a woman at least every other year. If two women were nominated by either CLP, women delegates at the AGM would need to vote on the delegate to the women’s conference. Ann would bring voting procedures to the February EC.

3. Urgent business / other business.

(a) **Donald Trump visit**. It was agreed to take the banner to an Oxford Says NO to Trump demonstration if and when he comes to the UK.

4. Finance and fundraising.

(a) **Treasurer’s report**. Alex sent apologies but there was little significant change in finances.

(b) **Fundraising**. Around £3,000 had been raised from the fish-and-chip supper and James Fry’s Al Shami dinner. The Keir Starmer dinner on 1 March would be in the First Floor restaurant.

5. Campaigning and forthcoming elections

(a) **Oxford city elections, 3 May 2018**. The regional director had given permission for an open selection for Jennifer Pegg’s successor in Northfield Brook. The committee agreed to reopen the candidates’ panel to new applicants, with a closing date of Saturday 27 January, interviews on 31 January with Jane Darke, Jane Stockton and John Mercer as the external member and Ann as a reserve, and the selection meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday 10 February.

(b) **OxWAb elections**. Notes from the OxWAb action group meeting on 16 January 2018 were circulated and are appended to these minutes. There would be elections in Kidlington in May 2018 and 2019: it was agreed that voter ID sessions in Kidlington should be included in members’ mailings, and members from Oxford should be encouraged to join them. Dawn reported that Botley members were raising contact rates and had identified three target wards for May 2019. She was asked to let Hannah know times and places, and to advertise for candidates when ready.

(c) **National campaign activity**. The rail fare protest on 2 January was well-received by commuters. Dates and themes of future national action days were awaited. Members asked for localised party publicity materials, for instance numbers affected by the bedroom tax and the loss of NHS beds. Ann would ask if this was feasible within national and regional resources. It was agreed to take the banner on the NHS demonstration organised by the trade unions and Keep Our NHS Public.

(d) **Campaign committee**. Ann was awaiting a decision from the regional director on our proposed rule change to define the membership of the campaign committee and on whether we could elect the Chair of the campaign committee and the election agent at an all-member meeting / general committee. It was agreed to add Becky to the current campaign committee.

6. Organiser’s report. Hannah now had four people coming to the Friday Club who were helping her with printing, and an Oxford Brookes student volunteering several times a week. She had organised themed local campaign sessions around universal credit, with 25-30 members canvassing across seven wards. Calling cards were being printed, and she was learning to use the Promote software. The new electoral register would be on Contact Creator on Monday. Executive members congratulated Hannah on her initiatives and suggested obtaining voter registration cards and exploring crowdfunding.

7. Equalities

(a) **Disability officer**. Marie paid tribute to Jennifer’s support for the disability network. Three candidates with different disabilities were standing in May, and council officers were already making preparations if they are elected. Those in marginals would welcome extra volunteers, and she had met Helen Evans to discuss building a volunteer hub. Social media could help to complement more exhausting physical canvassing. She would circulate her previous paper on supporting disabled members for submission to the party democracy review. The committee regretted that the lift in the new Westgate library could not accommodate wheelchairs.

(b) **Ethnic Minorities officer**. Jamila had met with Becky. It was important to involve young BAME members, and to reach out to non-members in BAME communities. Ann reported that the national party aimed to start recording BAME and disability status for members on the basis of self-identification within the near future, and this could underpin local initiatives as well. LGBT representatives were consulting their constituents as to whether they would also welcome this.

(c) **Young Labour**. The Oxford university Labour club representative Tom Zagoria was meeting with local young members and would bring ideas to a future meeting.

(d) **Women and branch officers**. It was reported that efforts to meet the requirement for at least two of the four lead branch officers to be women were backfiring, in that those women who did attend meetings were now staying away because they felt pressured. This led to discussion about whether the branch officers specified in the rulebook were the right roles, and if they looked intimidating. It might be better to list branch activities and develop a collective approach, with members taking on those tasks for which they were best suited. This had worked well for Botley, with five members (all women) coming forward as co-convenors and sharing the work. Ward or campaign organisers should be elected alongside other officers. Branches should also be offered mentoring and support, with Jane S able to assist with MemberCentre. It was agreed to give further consideration to new ways of working within branches after the AGM.

8 Membership

(a) **Update on numbers**. At 16 January 2018 Oxford East had 2400 members and Oxford West & Abingdon had 1539 members. These totals included several hundred in arrears.

. (b) **Recruitment and retention**. Jane S reported that the local phonebank contacted 126 people about to lapse, of whom 20 said they would renew and at least four had done so. Damian said that he emailed members in arrears, identified from the membership action reports or extracted from MemberCentre by secretaries and membership secretaries. Jamila and Stephen suggested identifying potential new recruits through community organisations. However, recording and holding contact details required written consent under data protection laws. Mark suggested that trade union membership should be collected as well as BAME and disability status. Damian drew attention to the relatively low membership in The Leys: around 77% of party members were in the top three socio-economic classes (ABC).and we had to reconnect with the working classes that Labour should fundamentally represent, through promoting policies such as the national living wage. John S said that the Labour vote in Kidlington was also shifting away from council estates.

9. AGM, Friday 9 March 2018

(a) **Nominations for national committees.** It was agreed that as last year, general committee delegates from branches and affiliates would be asked to circulate short statements in support of their nominees, with votes on nominations within the AGM. Dan suggested that delegates should also be able to speak on behalf of their choices. Ann pointed out that there were likely to be at least 18 candidates for the NEC alone, and this could take half an hour with few minds changed.

(b) **Constituency officers and delegates**. Past practice has been to allow candidates for contested positions to make short speeches in addition to circulating a statement. The committee agreed that all nominated candidates should be strongly encouraged to provide statements supporting their candidacy, including those who were unopposed.

(c) **Procedures**. Ann would bring draft procedures for all elections and nominations at the AGM to the next executive meeting on 21 February, for discussion, amendment and approval.

10. All-member meetings.

(a) **Friday 9 March 2018**. Rose Hill community centre, AGM and, provisionally, discussion of the party democracy review

(b) **Thursday 10 May 2018**. Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, review of elections and a speaker from Oxford Co-Housing on community-led and affordable housing.

(c) **Thursday 14 June 2018**. Abingdon United Football Club, agreed to invite a speaker on electoral reform as requested by the OxWAb action group [*Mary Southcott has accepted*].

(d) **Thursday 12 / Friday 13 July 2018**. Venue and topic to be arranged.

(e) **Thursday 6 / Friday 7 September 2018**. NB first Thursday / Friday to meet deadline for conference motions. Venue to be arranged.

(f) **Thursday 11 / Friday 12 October 2018**. Conference reportback, and [*REDACTED*]

11. Executive committee. 7 – 9 p.m. Wednesday 21 February 2018, Regal community centre, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Thursday 15 March 2018, the Judges Room, Oxford Town Hall

**Notes from OxWAb Action Group Meeting, 16 January 2018**

Present: Geoff Taylor, Jane Stockton, Julia Goodwin

Apologies: Erica Davis, Jon Bounds, John Tanner (clash with SWC Branch AGM)

1. Review of OxWAb canvassing

Except for a short break over Christmas, the weekly Saturday afternoon canvassing sessions have been maintained. Attendance has been variable, but all Branches have been represented, and 5 wards have been covered, including Botley where there are no elections in 2018. We hope to make a start soon in Abingdon too. There is still concern that we are not advertising the sessions as effectively as we could. In the weekly members’ newsletter, the session is getting ‘lost’ amongst the many locaI sessions now included. OxWAb Branch secretaries are rightly reluctant to send out additional emails every week, and Facebook only has limited reach. It was agreed that we need to reinforce much more the message that this is an **OxWAb** session and not just a Branch session. Jane agreed to talk to Hannah about this. The next few sessions were agreed as follows (all 2-4pm):

Sat 20th Jan Kidlington East

Sat 27th Jan Summertown

Sat 3rd Feb North – to be confirmed

Sat 10th Feb Botley – to be confirmed

Sat 17th Feb St. Margaret’s – to be confirmed

Sat 24th Feb Kidlington East – to be confirmed

1. Newsletters

Julia shared a copy of North Branch’s latest newsletter which is currently being distributed. The colourful, glossy and well laid out production was admired by all of us, but unfortunately most branches don’t have the resources to do this. It was agreed though that it is useful to share each other’s content, and we supported North’s decision to address the Lib Dems’ ‘lies’ about tactical voting head on. It was agreed that it would be useful at some point in the future to have a fuller discussion about strategies and arguments that we could use to defeat the Lib Dems.

1. Proportional Representation

Julia reported that North Branch are very keen that this issue is discussed more widely in the Party. A speaker from Labour4PR did address a Summertown & Wolvertcote Branch meeting recently, at which several members from other OxWAb branches attended, and it is clearly an issue about which a lot of OxWAb members feel very strongly. Jane agreed to raise this at Oxford District EC, with a suggestion that we invite a prominent PR speaker to a future All Member Meeting, ideally one located in an OxWAb venue.

1. Candidate selection in Abingdon and Botley

No update received.

1. ‘Layla Moran watch’

It was agreed that one of the difficulties in campaigning against Layla Moran is the lack of a confirmed Labour parliamentary candidate. The Party is currently focussing quite rightly on getting candidates in place for all the target seats, but it was felt important that we are not completely forgotten about, and that selection is not left to the last minute. Jane agreed to try and find out more information about the timetable for selections.

1. AOB

Date of next OxWAb meeting. Tuesday 27th February - to be confirmed. Please could everyone check that this does not clash with anythingAny offers to host?

Notes written up by Jane Stockton 18/1/18