## Draft Minutes of the Oxford & District Executive Committee, 30 May 2018

**Present:** Luke Barbanneau, Ann Black (minutes), Becky Boumelha, Jane Darke, Anisha Faruk, Ray Hand, Rabyah Khan (Chair), Stephen Marks, Cherry Mosteshar, Peter Nowland, Caroline Raine

**Apologies**: David Blackman, Susan Brown, Nigel Chapman, Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini, Anisha Faruk, Tom Hayes, Alex Hollingsworth, Dan Iley-Williamson, Felicity Irwin, Mark Ladbrooke, Dawn Oliver, Andrew Smith, Linda Smith, Jane Stockton, Marie Tidball, Ed Turner

1. Headington byelection. Ruth Wilkinson, LibDem councillor for Headington ward, was standing down and there would be a by-election, probably in July. The executive committee noted that a normal selection procedure would require seven days’ notice of the branch selection meeting and perhaps, as for Northfield Brook, reopening the panel to new applicants. This would give the LibDems a significant headstart and could run up against the deadline for nominations. Simon Ottino, the candidate selected by the branch for the election on 3 May, had worked hard to build up Labour’s profile in the ward, and Andrew Smith was approaching him to see if he would be willing to stand again. The executive agreed to endorse Simon Ottino as the candidate, provided that the branch had no material objection.

NB Below from the rulebook (this refers to local campaign forums [LCFs]. The O&DLP does not have a separate LCF, and our EC acts as the EC of the LCF. So the two ECs referred to are one and the same.

*In the event of a by-election arising the executive committee [of the LCF] shall consult with the executive committees of the CLP and branches concerned to ensure that a candidate is selected as far as possible following the procedure referred to above. In the case of an emergency, it shall take whatever action that may be necessary to meet the situation and to ensure that the vacancy is contested by the Party.*

2. Planning for 2018 / 2019.

In a wide-ranging discussion the following general points were made:

1. Oxford West & Abingdon members sometimes felt like an afterthought, and it was important that they were involved as equal partners. Abingdon had some money inherited from the old Wantage constituency, and could afford to raise their profile, for instance with high-quality newsletters. The growth in membership should enable delivery throughout the branch area. Street stalls could help to recruit more members. For 2019, 21 candidates would be needed to stand in every ward, and more for town and parish councils, though active work would be concentrated in key target seats.
2. Increased membership did not always translate into campaigning, with only three or four helping candidates in some wards. We should look at ways of converting members into activists.
3. Personal contact with new members was important, phoning them and accompanying them to meetings. Sometimes new members came along, no-one spoke to them, and understandably they didn’t return. There should be a pack for new (and existing) members. The new members’ social organised by Dan and Jane S was successful, and we should repeat this.
4. Meetings did not necessarily draw people in. We should link into campaigns which affect people’s lives, such as the living wage, housing, the NHS, and highlight these on the doorstep between elections.
5. Rebuttal of misleading statements by other parties had to be sharpened up.
6. Our membership did not reflect the demographic make-up of the area. The bingo club next door to a branch meeting, with 60-70 people, was better-attended and more representative of the local community. Listening to people, whether members, supporters or voters, was essential, rather than talking at them, and taking seriously any concerns or criticisms of the party.
7. Branch officers also had to find ways of working with the increased membership, mostly with no training and little support. It could be valuable for them to meet from time to time and share good practice. A session specifically on producing newsletters was suggested
8. Branch size had been raised from time to time as an issue. Those at the meeting did not feel that this was a major problem, but were conscious that no-one from Headington was present. If branches were split into smaller subgroups each of these would need officers or co-ordinators to arrange meetings and activities and communicate with members.
9. Hannah and Anneliese were organising a summer school for 16-21 year olds, for two weeks from 26 July, including activist skills, communication, public speaking, which would be relevant both inside and beyond the party. Only 17 members in The Leys branch were aged under 27. This would be two-way, as young people had much to teach the party. Making videos of campaigning was suggested as a possible project.
10. Becky / Hosnieh, Shaista and Marie were thanked for their reports as BAME / women’s / disability officers, and the work proposed in these.

The following specific actions were agreed, subject to sufficient volunteers:

1. Ann would circulate the current new members’ pack and ask for suggested updates [*attached, and at the very least the officers should be updated following the AGM*]
2. Hannah had ordered 1000 free leaflets and giant cards to sign for the NHS 70th birthday campaign. Hosnieh, Mark and the local socialist health association branch were co-ordinating activity on the day. Peter would send Hannah details of the Oxford demonstration on 9 June and the national demonstration on 30 June for the members’ newsletter.
3. Cherry would approach Dan and Jane S about arranging a branch activists session, maybe two hours on a Saturday morning. It was agreed that all branch officers (chairs, vice-chairs, treasurers, secretaries, membership secretaries) should be included, as roles often overlapped Ann, Jane D, Rabyah and others were willing to help.
4. Dan and Jane S would also be asked if they could run a repeat of the successful new members’ evening last year.
5. Cherry offered to work with Erica and Becky on a calendar of cultural events. She would also co-ordinate a Labour presence at both the Eid extravaganza and the mela on 17 June, asking other EC members and activists for assistance, and provide details for the members’ newsletter.
6. Hannah was co-ordinating for Oxford Pride on 2 June, and Michaela, Luke and others offered to help.

3. Executive committee meetings. Thursday 28 June, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m., the Long Room, Oxford Town Hall; Wednesday 18 July, 8 – 10 p.m., East Oxford community centre.