## Draft Minutes of the Oxford & District Executive Committee, 23 January 2019

**Present:** Ann Black (minutes), David Blackman, Jane Darke, Alex Hollingsworth, Rabyah Khan (chair), Felicity Leary, Peter Nowland, Caroline Raine, John Stansby, Jane Stockton

**Apologies**: Shaista Aziz, Becky Boumelha, Susan Brown, Nigel Chapman, Michaela Collord, Hosnieh Djafari Marbini, Stephen Marks, Cherry Mosteshar, Hannah Riley, Andrew Smith, Linda Smith

1. Executive committee minutes, 21 November 2018. These were agreed as a correct record.

2. Matters arising. None.

3. Urgent business / other business

(a) **Sudan**. The executive committee agreed to send a message of support to the Sudan Doctors Union UK in their struggle against the dictatorship and for freedom and change (**Action:** Ann).

(b) **Oxford Union**. Members reported on the protest against the visit of Marion Marechal-Le Pen. There were concerns about the invitation to yet another fascist / far right speaker, and questions about the Oxford Union’s charitable status (Susan may be exploring this), the role of their elected officers, and liaison with students. Anisha and perhaps Michaela might be able to pursue this. Tom Hayes had put in freedom of information requests on the costs of policing these visits, but this was a slow process. Demonstrations and protests would continue as necessary.

4. National women’s conference, 23/24 February 2019, Telford. Ann reported that the cost of two delegates would be up to £440 for the fee and pooled fare, travel and accommodation for two nights, as our delegates were likely to be involved in compositing on the Friday evening. Annual conference was now starting on Saturday 21 September at 2:30 p.m. and finishing on Wednesday 25 September so our delegates would require four rather than five nights in Brighton.

5. Finance

(a) **Treasurer’s update**. The committee endorsed the CLP officers’ decision to pay one-third of the cost of fixing the wiring in the party offices given its condition. This would amount to about £175, with the rest paid by the MP.

(b) **USDAW**. Anneliese, Ann, Jane D and Mark had contributed to a report on how we used their £2,000 grant made under the constituency development agreement. After including a few final comments Ann would submit this to USDAW in the hope that the grant would be renewed for 2019. **Action**: Ann

(c) **Dinners etc**. The budget required two big-ticket dinners a year, plus two or three lower-key events. It was agreed that Ann would approach Paddy Lillis, general secretary of USDAW, for an informal evening, either the Green Road club in Kidlington or perhaps Rose Hill or the Gladiators. **Action**: Ann. Mark noted that UNISON’s assistant general secretary Roger McKenzie lived locally and might also be willing. David Lammy and Clive Lewis were suggested for dinners, and Ann would ask Anneliese to sound them out **Action**: Ann, Anneliese. [*NB Clive Lewis is not currently available*]. Jane D asked if we should look at doing our own food, with ten members each cooking a dish for ten people, along the lines of the women’s quiz night.

(d) **Other fundraising**. Alex proposed appealing to members in April for donations towards the Vale and Kidlington elections. **Action**: Andrew, Hannah to draft and distribute letter. Rabyah suggested adding e-campaigning to our efforts.

6. NEC development fund. The meeting noted that the Oxford Labour Muslim Network had bid for, and received, a grant of £758.93 for their activities. This would not affect the prospects of a bid from the O&DLP. The meeting approved a bid for £1,200 to help to fund two delegates per CLP to annual conference, necessary because of a new two-night women’s conference and a possible regional conference in the autumn. Ann would fill in the application, with Alex providing necessary financial information, and submit the bid by the deadline of 28 February 2019. **Action:** Ann, Alex.

7. Elections and campaigns

(a) **Wolvercote by-election**. Jane S reported. Although the Labour vote remained much the same, the candidate had worked very hard, assisted by branches and members from other areas, and their canvass returns were much improved. This would be important in Cutteslowe after the boundary changes. The LibDems had employed misleading statistics based on cherry-picking unrepresentative data. The meeting recorded thanks to Ibrahim, Jane and everyone who helped.

(b) **Council elections, May 2019**. Andrew was liaising with Jon Bounds in Abingdon, and had asked Co-op Party contacts if they knew of potential candidates. The meeting agreed that candidates in non-target seats should be approved by the executive committee or, if time was short, by the co-chairs / secretary / treasurer and chair of the campaign committee, with light-touch interviews if judged necessary. Bella Bond for Cumnor and Chukwudi Okeke for Kidlington West were approved. Further candidates were still needed for the Vale and for parish councils in the Vale, Kidlington and Gosford & Water Eaton, and the executive agreed to ask Andrew to co-ordinate phoning members as a matter of urgency, perhaps using Hannah’s Friday Club. Jane S stressed the importance of allocating sufficient centrally-organised voter ID sessions to these areas.  **Action:**Andrew

(c) **Oxford city council boundary review**. Alex reported that the electoral commission would announce their decision in early February.

(d) **Campaign committee**. Future meetings would be on Saturdays 16 February, 29 June and 19 October 2019.

8. All-member meetings.

**Dates and venues.** The committee agreed the attached schedule of dates and venues through to September. Meetings would be held on

**Friday 8 February 2019** (Dean Court, Botley – Anneliese, county Labour group leader Liz Brighouse, motions, Reading West parliamentary candidate Rachel Eden invited as a visitor.) Ann would write to the city Labour group leader and deputies suggesting a written report to be circulated in advance, on which members could ask questions.

**Thursday 7 March 2019** (Rose Hill community centre – AGM)

**Friday 10 May 2019** (Northcourt Centre, Abingdon – speaker to be arranged)

**Thursday 13 June 2019** (GLOW hall, Blackbird Leys – speaker to be arranged)

**Friday 12 July 2019** (Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, conference motions)

**Thursday 12 September 2019**, Exeter Hall, Kidlington (further conference business, possible speaker.

As usual there were sharply different views on the relative merits of Thursdays and Fridays, but venue availability often limited choice, and in practice provided a good balance. Felicity was thanked for co-ordinating bookings.

**Speakers**. Suggestions included Claire McCarthy, general secretary of the Co-op Party on the “Preston model” of working in partnership with local councils in communities [*has accepted for 13 June*], Sabby Dhalu of Stand Up To Racism (contact: Felicity), Jay Stewart from Gendered Intelligence on trans issues (contact: Rabyah, Debbie McIlveen), and a speaker on modern slavery and what members could do (this is also a current Co-op campaign, and Diana Holland of Unite als has a longstanding interest in these issues). **Action:** Ann and others

**Conference motions**. Because these no longer have to relate to “contemporary” issues, the executive agreed that these should be discussed at the July all-members meeting. This would allow branches to discuss motions at their June meetings and submit them in the usual way, rather than the “two-delegate” process previously used because branches did not meet in August. **Action**: Ann to advise branches in good time.

9. Annual general meeting, Thursday 7 March 2019

(a) **Branch AGMs**. With the addition of Botley the list was now complete, and these were being advertised in the weekly newsletter and elsewhere.

(b) **Officers’ reports**. All officers would be invited to submit reports (200 words?) by Monday 25 February, to go to all members. The co-chairs could choose to give a verbal report instead of, or in addition. As usual copies of the accounts would be tabled at the meeting and the treasurer would give an overview. City and county Labour groups would also be asked for reports.

(c) **Constituency officers**. All nominees, whether the post is contested or not, would be invited to submit a statement of up to 100 words by Friday 1 March for circulation to general committee delegates. Nominees for contested positions may also speak for two minutes.

(d) **Conference delegates**. Nominees would be invited to submit a statement of up to 100 words by Friday 1 March, and to speak for up to two minutes. These would be circulated to GC delegates with a record of their attendance at all-member meetings in the previous year, which would be checked with them for accuracy. GC delegates would be able to vote for up to two candidates within their own constituency. At least one of the two elected must be a woman.

(e) **Nominations for national committees**. Each CLP is entitled to nominate two candidates for the conference arrangements committee and three for the national constitutional committee. NCC candidates require nomination by their own CLP, CAC candidates do not. GC delegates would be invited to make nominations and to submit up to 100 words in support of their nominees by Friday 1 March, and these would be circulated to delegates in advance.

(f) **Method of election.** Last year the use of first-past-the-post was queried. Our standing orders say that election of officers and delegates shall be by secret paper eliminating ballot in rounds. If there are more than two candidates for any position the CLP officers would work through the mechanics before the meeting. In addition the standing orders specify that if there is a tie, delegates should be balloted again and, if the votes are still tied, lots should be drawn to decide the winner.

(g) **Rule changes**. The committee agreed the attached paper, which implemented the changes agreed at the previous meeting. Further consideration was still needed in drawing up a role description for a social media officer before filling the post.

10. Membership.

(a) **Update** Jane S circulated a report. There were 2,218 members in Oxford East and 1,406 in Oxford West & Abingdon, including 119 and 73 respectively in arrears, a net loss since 1 January 2018 of 182 and 131 respectively. Since 21 November 2018 24 + 8 new members had joined. Of the 73 + 42 who had left, only 17 + 6 had resigned, while the others had lapsed. Jane pointed out that members only lapsed when they had not paid anything for six months, indicating that their reasons for not renewing dated back to last summer rather than more recent events. Recruitment was higher in years when there was a general election (2015, 2017) or a leadership election (2015, 2016) which could explain the decline in a relatively uneventful 2018. Jane sent lists of members in arrears to branches from time to time. She said that phone-banking was not as effective for ringing mobiles as people tended not to answer if they didn’t recognise the caller. Also, following up members who had paid a single annual subscription should be prioritised: if someone cancelled a monthly direct debit this showed a deliberate intention to leave.

(b) **Organise**. Ann was now using Organise to mail papers for all-member meetings. Around 200 members do not have email addresses on the party membership system, and Organise believes that another 450 have opted out of receiving local emails. Ann has queried this, and hopes to send a “constitutional” email, which over-rides opt-outs, about the AGM, asking whether members have indeed opted out. Jane S had already asked branches to contact members with no email address, and reported that Julia Goodwin in North & St Margarets was surveying members as to what information they wished to receive. She would send Ann and other branches a copy of this. **Action:** Ann and Jane S to discuss how to follow up members currently not in receipt of anything.

(b) **Membership activities**. Jane S suggested a regular visible presence, with street stalls at least once a month in Cornmarket or other high-profile locations, and this was agreed as desirable. Ann asked if these could be combined with national campaign days, where the party provides free literature. Rather than a new member’s evening, Jane proposed a canvassing session followed by drinks or a social, which could include an introduction to party structures. This was also supported.

11. Reports. Reports from women’s officer Shaista and BAME officers Hosnieh and Becky had been circulated to executive members.

12. Executive committee meetings. Wednesday 20 February 2019, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. in the East Oxford community centre, March to be arranged. **Action**: Ann to canvass dates and book a venue for March.