Minutes of South West Central Branch 20th March 2018

1. Present: Liz Peretz (chair), Bill MacKeith, John & Sue Tanner, Chris MacMacklin, Colin Cook, Susanna Pressel, Emma Turnbull, Rosemary Preston, Rachel Hickman, Harm-Jan Fricke, Richard Howlett, Edward Pope, Alex Donnelly, Pat & Gordon Kennedy & Mike Rowley.
2. Apologies: Stephen & Anne, Bruce McLaren, Tonya Kocharova, Marie Tidball, Nadine Bely-Summers, Felicity Irwin, Peter O’Leary, Abdul Rahman, Richard & Ruth Shallard, Wendy Mantle, David Preston & Pol O’Ceallah. Not present: Cllr Bob Price, Cllr Alex Hollingsworth & Cllr Sobia Afridi.
3. Minutes: Minutes of 20th February agreed.
4. Matters Arising: Bill said 200 supporters were outside the court in Chelmsford where 15 people were on trial for preventing a deportation aeroplane taking off. **John to ask for our trans-women item to be put on** **an All Member Meeting agenda**. **Agreed to postpone discussion on Funding for Schools to the May meeting.**
5. Party Democracy:
   1. Richard Howlett introduced a discussion about the Review of Labour Party Democracy. He explained it was in three phases dealing with different areas of the Party. An Oxford constituencies’ meeting the day before had discussed the issues, including organisation of local branches.
   2. This was followed by discussion. **Richard will talk with our membership secretary, Felicity Irwin, and submit some of the ideas raised through the Party website.** A grand democracy proposal will be submitted by the National Executive Committee to Party Conference.
6. Speaker:
   1. Cllr Mike Rowley, City Executive Board member for Housing, spoke about street homelessness in Oxford. The official count was up from 33 to 61 in November because of Government cuts in benefits, rent rises and poor mental health provision. He said the City Council was increasing support for voluntary organisations, preventing homelessness happening and working through the ‘City Conversation’.
   2. In questions Mike said there were enough beds for rough sleepers from Oxford. The cladding on some tower blocks will be replaced by the summer. Haringey Council’s housing development was a huge mistake. By contrast Oxford City’s housing company is 100% owned by the Council. He said the City Council can help people ‘without recourse to public funds’ through voluntary organisations.
7. Campaigning: Alex Donnelly (Hinksey Park), Richard Howlett (Carfax) and Susanna Pressel (Jericho & Osney) reported on their campaigns.
8. Reports from Councillors: Emma is seeking a list of Labour school governors. Colin said the City Council is taking over the repair of main roads for the County Council. Susanna said a Labour motion to the County would ask that women councillors should not have to be called ‘chairman’. She will ask why supporting information was not included in this year’s Council Tax demands. The junction at Hythe Bridge Street/George Street is to be restored to how it was.
9. Members’ Issues: **Agreed to arrange policy discussions related to the National Policy Forum at future meetings**. Bill had visited the anaerobic digester for food waste at Cassington.
10. Next meeting: Agreed to meet on Tuesday 22nd May.

John Tanner 21/3/18