**Minutes of NPC Executive Committee**

**22 July 2021 by Zoom**

**In attendance:** Please see appendix

**Apologies:** Janet Shapiro (Bill Dale stand in); Ralph Moses; Pat Turner; Phil Wiseman; Ray Jackson; Dot Gibson; Geoff Page; David Luxton; Jenny Sims; Francis Byrne

Ron welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting received information that Ray Jackson (ASLEF) was recovering from a stroke and has 24/7 care.

1. **Minutes of meeting held on 27 May 2021:**

* Gareth asked if a synopsis of the recommendations to be voted on could be included in the minutes to save seeking out other paperwork. Agreed.

1. **Matters Arising:**

None

**Minutes agreed.**

**Peter Rayner in the Chair:**

1. **Standing Orders Report:**

Peter gave the background as to why the Standing Orders Report is here. The EC agreed that motions to the EC and National Council would be seen by the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) and recommendations made.

He then asked Joel Kosminsky, Chair of SOC to present his report.

Joel stated that the matter is straightforward. SOC only consider what matters are before it, not what isn’t. Members will see from the report, the reasons behind the decision made by SOC; i.e. motions must be in line with the constitution; open references to older people (implication is not sufficient); be clear about what the NPC is being asked to do; and how actions will enhance the lives of older people. The London Region motions failed on all counts.

The General Secretary on receipt of our initial report, wrote to the region offering them an opportunity to rewrite in line with SOC recommendations and re-submit the motions. They did not and SOC could only consider the words of the motions before them.

There is also the issue of appeals and what can be an indefinite process for appeal stages. The SOC is looking at making it a less cumbersome process and fairer to everyone.

The EC must vote on the SOC report on the basis of their decision, not the content of the motions.

**Discussion:**

Barry, London Region: Speaking against the SOC report:

* Support view that motions need to be clear and within the NPC Constitution.
* There is nothing in the Constitution that limits words in motions. Perhaps this is something the SOC can look at.
* Motion on Zero COVID which SOC says has too many bullet points and if any one of those are not agreed, the motion fails. SOC do not seem to have taken on board the fact that any motion circulated to the EC is subject to amendment by National Affiliates.
* Recognition that regions are autonomous and don’t necessarily have similar constitutions. London has over 100 affiliates; not all are Trade Union branches where the understanding of how to draw up a motion is likely to be better.
* SOC report went on to say it wasn’t clear about affiliation. The EC does not instruct anyone.
* The region appealed against the first SOC decision.
* Clauses (a) to (f) in the Constitution refer to ‘pensioners, retired and older people’. The Constitution might need updating but NPC has policies on environmental issues and intergenerational solidarity which do not only apply to pensioners, retired and older people.
* It was not practical for London Region to amend the motions. For example, if the NPC voted and passed a motion at the BDC on care and that motion was then sent by affiliates to, say, the People’s Assembly or Health Campaigns Together, we would not expect them to amend our motion by saying that pensioners should have to sell their house to pay for their care. It is the same for those affiliates sending motions to London Region.
* Similarly, if one of our National or Regional affiliates decide to support a motion on Zero COVID strategy and sent it to the region for endorsement, as in this case, we do not believe we have the right to amend their policy document.
* Many of these points also apply to the motion on a UK Constitution.
* Therefore, I ask delegates to reject the SOC recommendations, allow the motions to go through the process of amendment and then debate them at the September EC.

Arthur: Quite clear what the issue is that SOC ruled out of order. The motions we have are so we know what has been looked at. Different views are valid and voted on by the EC.

Bill Dale: Agree with Barry on rejection. There is merit in going forward in the normal passage of motions. Perhaps the Constitution is not correct at the moment – in conflict with NPC motions.

Paul R: Haven’t seen the report.

Tony O’Brien: Major change – changing the whole nature of how we make decisions. EC has generally done OK. Overall support motions based on amendments put forward.

Peter then moved to the vote on acceptance of the SOC report. If the SOC report is accepted, then the motions are not discussed. If the report is not accepted, then the motions will be discussed further down the agenda.

**Poll results:**

For: 41% (12 members)

Against: 38% (11 members)

Abstain: 21% (6 members)

The Standing Order report accepted.

Note: As previously mentioned, observers are not entitled to vote.

**Ron Douglas in the Chair:**

1. **General Secretary’s Report:**

There were two updates as mentioned in the original report. These are:

1. **NHS Reform Bill**: The Bill had its second reading in the House of Commons on 14 July. It was passed by a majority of 141 with 3 Conservative MPs voting against the Bill. The BMA have now come out against the Bill and want it scrapped and are lobbying the House of Lords.

The House of Lords are also against the Bill so we can see what is likely to happen. It will go between the two Houses with amendments coming from the Lords highly likely to be opposed by the Commons. There is already a concern that it will not be ready for the Queens Speech and then implementation in April 2022.

The collection of quotes from members on what life was like before the NHS will be put into poster form for getting out to the public. It is key that we get clear messages out to the public in all formats.

There is an excellent video on our website explaining very clearly the concerns around further privatisation in understandable language. Please download the video and share it (or the points raised in it) with everyone you know.

Keep Our NHS Public (KONP) are doing lots on this, so please make contact with your local KONP.

1. **NHS Digital:** We have circulated the press release from NHS Digital from 19 July. This shows a huge turn around and is most of what we wanted. However, the sticking point is still the list of those organisations that are already accredited for access to data and those who are asking for accreditation.

GPs have been written to by Jo Churchill (Secretary of State for Primary Care and Health Promotion). Most have still to receive it. The letter contains a fourth point as a test and that is the issue of pressure on GPs to deal with this without any extra resources. The ‘opt outs’ will be registered by a central point of operation.

As good as this looks, we know only too well that what satisfies the government may not satisfy us. So we are continuing to work with the other organisations to keep the public up to date as there is no real commitment to a full-scale consultation/information process.

We will circulate the GP letter, so please continue to engage with your local GP, your local MP and getting the message out as widely as possible. There are still millions of people who have not heard of the data collection.

Legal action is not ruled out. We will keep you updated.

Questions/Comments:

* Marion: My GP has not seen the letter. *(Most have not up to now)*
* Arthur: Postponed indefinitely. Can we ask Health & Social Care Working Party to look at the criteria and set out a position for NPC?
* Tony D: Maximise communication to members, local commissioning groups. Data can be used for the benefit of the NHS, but other uses are not. The lobbyists will be working hard.
* Damian: 49 GP surgeries in London now private. Less medical care, medication more expensive. Death knell of the NHS. Inundated with adverts for insurance etc. Digitally excluded.

**Report agreed**

1. **Treasurer’s Report:**

Barry reported that three National affiliates are still to pay (Unite – in hand, Nautilus and UNISON). In regions – 4 still to pay. We are half way through the year and on target but we have to do better.

Limited influence; Age UK grant; unknown expenditure.

Barry also reminded the EC that we must be careful of what we agree in expenditure. For instance, it was agreed by the EC that working parties must make a formal submission with an estimate of cost and how they will raise funds for their activities.

*Point of Information: At the Working Party Chairs meeting, an offer was made to do in-house briefings instead of leaflets until we are able to bring in more money. Although this increases the workload of staff, we do at least have a very good idea of where they go. Leaflets are a cost, whereas booklets more or less pay for themselves.*

**Report agreed.**

1. **Campaign Officer Report:**

Bev introduced her report. It is an overview of work as she has just returned from annual leave.

There is a list of campaigns and we need to prioritise resources.

We have had excellent feedback on the Annual Convention webinars which members felt were relevant and reflected our work. Virtual is not ideal, but we are grateful to all our speakers and those who attended either on the day or on catch-up on YouTube.

Press releases on a wide range of subjects.

**Questions/Comments:**

* Bill Dale: Want to give a vote of thanks to the office and staff for putting the NPC in the public eye for all generations.

Ron thanked Bev for all her hard work.

**Report agreed.**

1. **Information Officer Report:**

Jonathan highlighted the consultation on the Lasting Power of Attorney and asked for members to send in their views in order that the NPC can respond. Please have your views into the office by 8 October.

The report reflects the day to day running of office processes and engagement with Bev and Jan on policy issues and campaigns/press releases and website work.

**Questions/Comments:**

* Steve: Are there any unique figures for each of the four webinars? Jonathan replied that the figures are based on the number of views. He will look further into the Zoom package to see if there is a function that would give us individual numbers.
* Arthur: Structure Working Party information. Has Prospect had a copy. Jonathan said he would have sent it to the contact person on the data base. The data base is only as good as the information we receive from affiliates. He will send contact name to Arthur and Prospect should inform him if different.

Ron thanked Jonathan for all his hard work.

**Report agreed.**

1. **Working Party Reports:**
2. **Finance:**  Peter presented the report as written with the understanding that a full report on the fundraising activities will be put to the September meeting of the EC. The Auditors are still reluctant to visit London, but have no issues with our accounts.

**Report agreed.**

1. **Structure:** We sent out a further letter to all National affiliates clarifying that the closing date for responses is 30 September, but that we will start work in August analysing those we have already received. We also sent the matrix agreed by the May EC to ensure an understanding of what was being done and why. As thing progress, the matrix will be updated and submitted to the EC along with report. In the meantime, EC members should ensure that they encourage their affiliated body to participate.

**Report agreed.**

1. **Minority Elders:** Ellen gave a comprehensive overview of the role of the Committee. The NPC has differing experiences of BAME membership, for example in some regions there are few in numbers, whereas it is somewhat better in the cities. BAME communities are all different, have a different impact and opportunities. We are looking to address equality, diversity and inclusion in the NPC in all the areas of our policies.

* Gareth: Last paragraph, the use of the word ‘connection’. It implies that the Minority Elders are somehow outside of the NPC, whereas they are an integral part of the organisation. Ellen will change.

**Report agreed.**

1. **Housing:**  The Personal Evacuations Plan consultation only came about because of pressure applied by campaigners. The rest of the report is as written, but thanks to Jan for dealing with items 2, 3 & 4 between EC’s. It is important that the NPC gets behind issues.

The main issues on housing are the outlay of income and the so-called free market creating housing wealth. Health is impacted on by lack of decent, affordable housing.

The two speakers from the LGBT group raised very real issues and the working party will be looking at those. Fuel Poverty Action are also to be invited to speak to the working party.

* Arthur: Thanked the working party for the whole range of work being done. Lots of people not able to afford their own home. On the campaign on evictions, how did that happen? Tony replied, by building pressure inside communities and organisations. The ban has been lifted on local authority capacity to build social homes.

**Report agreed.**

1. **Women’s Working Party:**  Rosie lost connection with us. Meg spoke to the report and asked that EC members encourage women to submit articles of around 250 words for the Women’s Exchange Newsletter through Jonathan. With the uncertainty of the pandemic, the working party had decided to continue with virtual meetings for the rest of the year. Speakers are available should affiliates want to know more about what the working party do and requests should go through Rosie as Chair.

* Arthur: Quite right to be concerned about the pandemic. In the interim, NPC should talk about how we manage it in the future.

**Report Agreed.**

1. **Digital Working Party:** David Briggs presented the report on scams for use as a campaign tool. During the research for this, he was shocked at the number of older people targeted for scams. There needs to be a debate how regions can be involved in our work, also other working parties. The comprehensive report covers compensation to victims; the agencies charged with dealing with scams and the scope of the problem.

* Marion: Very complex and difficult to read. Under conclusions and recommendations, not sure that NPC could implement them; e.g. first paragraph is just a statement. The second paragraph is a mixture of statement something that could be a recommendation about being supportive to members and older people, but how could it be implemented in conjunction with the first part of the paragraph.

Recommendations might not be risk free and highlighting ‘online novices’. Again a mixture and no suggestion as to how we would highlight ‘novices’.

Last paragraph is about Action Fraud and needing to ensure they have the resources and powers to do its job, Action Fraud is a national website for the reporting of scams and how the NPC makes sure it has resources and powers is not something that is clear. As a government funded agency, the NPC has little influence.

The recommendations need to be simple bullet points and separate from the conclusions.

* Paul: Report on scams is frightening. We need to identify what we can do. What about those digitally excluded? Options are post, email, telephone.
* Barry: Regional Secretaries turned down the offer for an agenda item at every meeting.
* Linda: Agree with Marion – recommendations need to be presented clearly and easy to understand.
* Damian: Exclusion, how do we include them.
* Tony O’Brien: Idea is to be inclusive. We didn’t invent the pandemic. How we involve all members.
* Meg: Pensioner poverty, affordability. Lots of fights to take on.
* Jan: Item 5 on first page of report. As you know we are in correspondence with the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and whilst some of the information they have given us is useful, it seems they are unable to answer our questions on ensuring that those not digitally connected have alternative accesses in place.

The government is currently looking at legislation to keep cash. They could logically do the same for digitally excluded people. We have also asked the Commission on Equality & Human Rights for help in understanding the complex area of age discrimination and in particular as part of digital exclusion. We look forward to working with them.

* Bev: the webinar in the autumn will look at safety online.

David offered to take the report back to the Digital Working Party.

1. **Health & Social Care:** The report was agreed with the addition of the request from the EC to write a paper on the criteria for NHS Digital, the pitfalls, concerns and strategy. A report will go to Officers as the next EC is not until September. Comments made on the health of a member of the working party are not appropriate for these minutes.
2. **A.0.B.:**

* Tony G: E-scooters – he reported an e-scooter parked dangerously on the pavement in the dark. It took a day and a half to get a response.
* Jan wished to respond to all the inferences about what the NPC is doing as a way forward out of lockdown. If members read my report, it is the very first point. At the risk of constantly having to repeat issues attached to the fact that the NPC relies on others to afford us free meeting spaces; having to operate within third party health & safety which is likely to mean not being able to have 35/40 people altogether in one room; whether there is the third party facility for hybrid meetings, perhaps members will begin to understand that it is easier to say than do.

*Point of information: On the issue of what we do for those digitally excluded again repeating what has been reported before – there are a range of options: the run up to EC & National Council starts earlier than normal so that those on post have time to respond to us on the agenda and documentation; our telephone answer machine can be remotely accessed; those on email but not on zoom are encouraged to participate by sending in comments, views and questions. We still have members write to us and we respond. We do the best we can.*

Finally, the webinar in the autumn will be about exclusion. There is loads of money floating about for organisations to get people online, but complete absence of understanding on how those who will never be digitally connected are being discriminated against.

1. **Next Meeting:** 23 September @ 10.30 am

**Appendix**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Group | First name | Surname |
| Co-optee ME Committee | Antonietta Bortone | Tinney |
| NPC Eastern Region | Tony | Garner |
| Treasurer | Barry | Todman |
| NPC Yorkshire & Humber | Paul | Russell |
| NPC President | Ron | Douglas |
| TSSA | Steve | Whitehead |
| UCATT | Tony | O'Brien |
| Vice President | Marion | Wilson |
| Vice President | Norman | Jemison |
| Vice President | Peter | Rayner |
| NPC Anglia | Chris | Brooks |
| UNISON | Rosie | MacGregor |
| General Secretary | Jan | Shortt |
| RMT | Tony | Donaghey |
| NPC West Midlands | Ingrid | Caras-Atlas |
| PCS / ARMS | Sandra | Durkin |
| co-optee WWP | Meg | McDonald |
| Prospect | Athur | Bavister |
| NPC Wales | Gareth | Parsons |
| NPC Thames Valley | Linda | Richards |
| CWU | Damian | Ibison |
| NPC Northern | Roy | Rix |
| NPC Vice President | Ellen | Lebethe |
| NPC London Region | Bill | Dale |
| NPC Home Counties | Allan | Jeyes |
| Standing Orders Committee Chair | Joel | Kosminsky |
| RCN | David | Briggs |
| RCN | June | Clarke |
| NASUWT/FRMA | Roger | Darke |
| UCU | Phillip | Burgess |
| NPC GAS | Keith | Evans |
| NPC Campaign Officer | Bev | Morrison |
| NPC Information Officer | Jonathan | Safir |