**MINUTES OF NPC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**25 JANUARY 2022**

**HELD ON ZOOM**

**In attendance:** Please see appendix

**Apologies:** Dot Gibson, Damian Ibison, Geoff Page, Roy Rix, Barry Todman, Keith Evans

Ron welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2022 and his last as President. He thanked everyone for all their support over his terms as President.

1. **Minutes of Meeting held on 25 November 2021 – Accuracy**
* Tony G: page 4 e-scooters. Essex is the County
* Jenny Sims: page 4: article has been submitted to WWP from the Digital WP and accepted.
1. **Matters Arising:**
* Arthur: the stall at the Prospect Conference in June is being sorted out. Ron asked that the details be passed to Jonathan in regard to what materials were needed.
* Tony G: trial period for e-scooters – end of year for report. Survey has shown that the majority of people in the area are opposed to the scheme.
* Issue of signed Working Party Reports: agreed that a named person agreeable to each Working Party would appear at the bottom of the reports.

**Minutes agreed**

1. **General Secretary’s Report:**

Jan said there were some additions to her report.

* Megaphone (an arm of the TUC) have produced a petition for the BBC – ‘More than a TV Licence’. Whatever we think individually about the BBC, it is our policy to retain a publicly funded broadcaster. Everyone please sign and ask everyone you know to do the same. *The link has since been circulated*
* The meeting with GMB has been cancelled and will be rescheduled
* We have had media interest from Switzerland, Canada and Germany on aspects to do with the lifting of restrictions and the suspension of the triple lock and it impact on pensioner poverty in the UK.
* We would welcome comments on the letter circulated from Guy Opperman in order for the NPC to send a factual and focused response.

**Questions:**

* Paul R: Has received a letter regarding payment of his TV licence saying he will receive a visit. Jan responded asking that members send in their letters so that we can contact the BBC. If we don’t know, we can’t do anything. We also would ask that if members do get visits to let us know how they were treated and the outcome.
* Jenny: Asked if she could send information on the triple lock to the NUJ – *Yes, everything we send to affiliates if for sharing.*

Digital switch over – OFCOM is UK wide. People can register as vulnerable.

*Jan asked for information from members who have been switched and what problems that has caused.*

* Bill D: Peter Bone MP has a private members bill in its 2nd reading on scrapping the TV licence fee.
* Philip B: Will send Jan details of his digital switch over experience as a person who lives in a location which does not have adequate mobile signal and the different equipment sent to him. The same for Mr. Opperman’s letter.
* Arthur: Risk assessment – fed back from one of Prospect delegates to the BDC who felt it was ‘over the top’. *At this moment in time, restrictions have been lifted, but the NPC needs something in place to implement quickly if things change.*
* David L: Digital switch – there are other providers as well as BT.
* Tony G: BDC: SOC passing of motion onto the agenda that contains both policy and constitutional changes. *Jan said it was a matter for the SOC and delegates can challenge their reasons at Conference.*
* Meg: Local Councils should be informing customers of the switch over.
* Linda: As a member of the SOC, the motion was discussed at length.
* Janet S: Will wi-fi be available at the venue for BDC? *Jan explained that the venue has free wi-fi in all rooms (including bedrooms). She also encouraged those with laptops or devices accessible to emails etc. to support those wishing to make contact with others. Peer support to help members who are not au fait with technology is much appreciated.*

**Report agreed**

1. **Treasurer’s Report:**

Barry is on holiday. Ron moved the report which showed that NPC got through the year better than first thought. Affiliations went very well.

**Questions:**

* David L: Is there more income coming in? Bringing money in through external sources.

Les McD: FWP have worked hard to make it a realistic budget. Also pursuing other sources.

**Report agreed.** The meeting thanked Barry for presenting accurate information and working with the FWP to ensure everything is in order.

1. **Housing Working Party Amendments to Recommendations:**

Ron informed the meeting that after Tony has presented the amendment document, he would take the two amendments before opening up discussion.

Tony O’Brien, Chair of NPC Housing Working Party. It is three years since our policy was formed. In that time, homelessness has increased in different categories; better standards are needed for housing older people; fuel efficiency need to combat climate change.

Points 10 & 23 are about reversal of funds from speculators.

With increased costs of living, we need to plan further campaigns to reduce fuel and housing costs.

The Working Party accepts the two amendments from TSSA and thanks them for their participation.

Steve Whitehead TSSA introduced both amendments, thanking the Housing WP for their support.

**Discussion:**

* Janet S: Amendment 1: position of GP surgeries in communities.
* Meg: Points 6 and 26 – working parties are encouraged to share issues.
* Arthur: Government elected on promises they have forgotten and private landlords profit is out of control.

Ron explained that there was one vote; i.e. accept the document with both amendments, reject or abstain.

**Vote: For 90% (27) Against 0% (0) Abstain 10% (3)**

1. **National Public Affairs Manager:**

Bev moved her report saying that a lot of issues had happened over the Christmas break.

She promoted the Dignity Day Webinar on 1st February and asked that members attend and also send in questions for the panel. Media interest is increasing on a range of issues with interest from international press.

The demonstration on winter deaths went very well with Lord Prem Sikka, Sue Ferns and Ruth London giving eloquent speeches. Thanks to London Region for organising.

A flavour of some of the press coverage is attached to the report.

**Report agreed.**

1. **National Administration & Information Manager Report:**

Jonathan moved his report which reflects his role in the NPC.

**Report agreed.**

1. **Working Party Reports:**
2. **Womens’ Working Party:** Rosie presented the report and it recommendations.

On the issue of women’s pensions and superannuation funds Rosie stated that women who had husbands older than themselves were finding they had a reduced pension on the death of the husband. Problems with superannuation fund have arisen due to their failure to take into account the contract out element. When you contract out, you pay less National Insurance. It is a combined complexity of Law and old computers.

* Tony G: Money Box Live will be looking at this issue
* David L: Need to adjust Limitation Act
* Tony D: Superannuation disregarded
* Ellen: What happens to the information collected from the monitoring form.
* Linda: It will be used to review progress over coming years.

**Report agreed.**

1. **Health & Social Care:** The report was self-explanatory.
* June: The Chair of the Working Party has suffered long-term illness. She apologised for not being able to help more, but Jan had kept things going.
* Janet: spoke about sos for the nhs *– this is the GS report with link.*
* Bill D: GP appointments – there are real difficulties with booking appointments online.
* David J: Centene/Operose not providing services
* Tony O’Brien: Online is not that good at his surgery. None of the surgeries are working well. Relatively the North East and South West have good services. KONP and Health Campaigns Together campaigning. *NPC works with both organisations.*
* BMA need to be made aware of your problems.

**Report agreed.**

1. **Pensions & Income:** Jan introduced the report.
* Arthur: Thanked the Working Party for taking on PPF issues.
* Philip B: Will email issues on Guy Opperman letter.

**Report agreed.**

1. **Digital:** Jenny reported that their guest speaker, Stephen Carlil had been extremely good. Lack of awareness of training; signposting. Missed opportunity to include in the Dignity Day Webinar.
* Philip B: Experiencing scams of all kinds of things.
* Janet S: Lack of broadband – connections not training – no good if no access.
* Bev: Wished to deal with the missed opportunity reference.

It was pointed out that two of the eight webinars NPC has hosted since 2020 were devoted to digital inclusion/exclusion and to Connections For All – one of many current NPC campaigns. There has also been a considerable amount of PR, along with briefing documents and statements issued on every aspect of the subject, from where to get digital training, to more frighteningly, the proliferation of digital scams.  We have also endeavoured to engage with local NPC regions on the matter, as well as the Good Things Foundation.

At the webinar on 1st February, Jan as Chair intended to point out that the NPC acknowledges the wide range of issues currently contributing to pensioner poverty, including digital exclusion, and she would be mentioning that this was in fact the subject of last year’s Dignity Action Day webinar.

The 2022 Dignity Action Day event would be dealing with the huge and urgent concerns for older people around fuel poverty, rising food prices and the suspension of the triple lock.

It was intended that the NPC would hold another, separate webinar on digital exclusion, alongside other pressing issues covering the need for more homes to be built and adapted for older people, which should not only be warm, well insulated and cheaper to heat but also with inbuilt wi-fi access.

Bev suggested a question be sent that Jan can put to the panel.

A meeting has been set for 17th February with the Digital WP to discuss viable and feasible ideas for the next stage of the Connections for All campaign

**Report agreed**

1. **Housing:** Tony introduced the report. Need to set priorities including energy crisis; supporting Grenfell to hold authorities to account for failures; collaborating with other organisations.
* David L: 7 February OFGEM will announce the April price cap.
* Tony asked if a demonstration was possible at OFGEM offices on 7 February

*Jan reported that she, Bev and Jonathan would be speaking with BT on digital phone problems. But there was no reason not to have a demo. Tony took on board the responsibility.*

*As it happened, the announcement was brought forward to the Friday 4th to allow Rishi Sunak to make his own announcement about his support package in the House of Commons on Monday 7th.*

*Ultimately we were able to get a small group outside Downing Street on the 4th and a larger demonstration involving the TUC, Trade Unions, FPA and pensioner organisations on 7th.*

*Thanks to Tony, Bev and Jonathan, all the speakers and those who gave up their time to attend.*

**Report agreed.**

1. **Minority Elders:** Ellen gave a verbal report of the meeting in December. The 3.1% increase on pensions is already a cut. BAME community are the most impoverished. New edition of Speaking Out soon. Discussions on housing, digital exclusion and the targeting of BMA people by the police. The difficulties of not being able to meet face to face will hopefully change for the future.
2. **Transport:** Peter had no idea why there was no report, but stated there were a number of worries that link together; i.e. cuts in local services, danger of pushing people off buses; lots of buses now missing; running trains with no staff to a station with no staff – discrimination under the 2010 Equality Act. Transport links together housing, retail and all other things.
3. **A.O.B.**
* Daryll asked about Assisted Dying event. This will be done after the BDC

Ron wished to thank all the Officers retiring in March for all their hard work and support. Also staff for their persistent hard work and commitment to the NPC.

We record here our vote of thanks to the President and Officers of the NPC

1. **Next Meeting:**

24 May 2022

**Appendix**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Group | First name | Surname |
| Co-optee ME Committee | Antonietta | Bortone-Tinney |
| NPC Eastern Region | Tony | Garner |
| NPC Northwest | Derek | Barton |
| NPC Yorkshire & Humber | Paul | Russell |
| NPC President | Ron | Douglas |
| TSSA | Steve | Whitehead |
| NPC General Secretary | Jan | Shortt |
| Unite/UCATT | Tony | O'Brien |
| NPC Vice President | Marion | Wilson |
| NPC Vice President | Peter | Rayner |
| NPC Vice President | Norman | Jemison |
| NPC Anglia | Chris | Brooks |
| UNISON | Rosie | MacGregor |
| NPC West Midlands | Ingrid | Caras-Atlas |
| PCS / ARMS | Sandra | Durkin |
| co-optee WWP | Meg | McDonald |
| Prospect | Athur | Bavister |
| NPC Wales | Gareth | Parsons |
| NPC Vice President | Ellen | Lebethe |
| ASLEF | Bill | Dale |
| RCN | June | Clarke |
| London Region | Janet | Shapiro |
| NASUWT/FRMA | Roger | Darke |
| NPC Thames Valley | Linda | Richards |
| CSPA | David | Luxton |
| UCU | Phillip | Burgess |
| NARF | Francis | Byrne |
| NFOP | Steven | Turner |
| NPC East Midlands | David | Jones |
| BTPF | Les | McDowell |
| NPC Wessex | Tom | James |
| NPC GAS | Daryll | Collins |
| UNITE | Phil | Wiseman |
| NUJ | Jenny | Sims |
| NPC National Public Affairs Manager | Bev | Morrison |
| NPC National Administration & Information Manager | Jonathan | Safir |