**MINUTES OF NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2022**

**BY ZOOM**

**In attendance: Please see appendix**

**Apologies:** Sandra Durkin, Mary Brodbin, Phillip Burgess, Francis Byrne, Joel Kosminsky, David Pearce, Meg McDonald, Damian Ibison, Owen Sloss, Freda Gray, Melvena Richards, Angela Banner, Mel Burgess, Keith Fradley.

**Rosie MacGregor in the Chair:**

Rosie welcomed everyone to the meeting. We have a lot on the agenda and some items will need discussion and decisions made, so we ask delegates to be brief in their contributions.

1. **Minutes of National Council held on 26 April 2022**

**Accuracy:**

* Page 1: apologies to be added and minutes re-sent
* Page 3: Gareth: National Savings & Investment – the millions in Premium Bonds cannot be transferred or left to anyone after their demise.
* Page 4: NUJ motion was agreed by Standing Orders Committee, but was asked to be withdrawn, NUJ did not withdraw but nevertheless the motion was ruled off the agenda. Standing Orders state that if the proposer of a motion does not agree withdrawal, the motion should be heard.

*Point of information. On checking the Standing Orders for Delegate Conference, this clause does exist. However, Standing Orders for National Council are different. We will consult with the Standing Orders Committee to propose that the paragraph on the process of a motion be applied to the remaining Executive Committee/National Council meetings and be part of the Standing Orders for the new National Executive Council.*

With these amendments/comments, the minutes are agreed.

1. **Matters Arising:**

* Page 2: Brian asked about the LGBT group. Jan replied that it was working well, a newsletter was being produced and a report will go to the EC in November on proposals from LGBT members.
* Page 3: item 5(a). A letter has gone to National Savings and Investment – no reply as yet.
* Page 3: item 5(b). A letter has gone to NHS England asking for guidance as agreed with the North West region – no reply as yet.
* Page 4: The Digital Working Party have launched their newsletter. Jenny asked for contributions from members, particularly their experiences/difficulties with technology. She added that the National Officer for NUJ sent a letter of concern to the President and General Secretary. A response has been received and the NUJ is considering its position. Rosie commended the newsletter.

1. **General Secretary Report:**

Jan reported some additions to her report. These apply to items 2 & 3 of her report and will be taken together.

The problem we have is it is now clear that the figures for winter deaths will not be published until 8 December. Added to that, we still have no idea whether the triple lock will be restored for 2023. Based on the September figure for inflation, we should be in line for 10.1% although there is the prospect of being offered 5% in line with earnings.

The NPC is supporting the Fuel Energy/Cost of Living protest organised by Friends of the Earth along with Fuel Poverty Alliance and Energy Action. This has been called for the 3 December and will also have events around the country. We traditionally demonstrate on the day the winter deaths figures are published and this may cause an issue for our members with the two dates being so close together. We recognise the difficulty for those outside of London in terms of travel, cost and availability of trains and also that the weather in December is likely to be colder than now.

The TUC Lobby of Parliament is now 2 November which is continuing its Demand Better theme and decent pay for workers. Frances O’Grady has been elevated to the House of Lords. She steps down from her role as General Secretary of the TUC at the end of the year. Paul Nowak with take over the role in the new year.

**Agreed:** We will support the demonstration on 3 December in London with as many people as we can. Also we will encourage our regions to contact local groups involved in the fuel poverty campaign and join them in whatever way they have organised their event.

We will be doing press releases/articles on the triple lock from today onward. *(Reminder that the history of the triple lock document is available on the NPC website as a good argument against further suspension/cuts)*

Send a letter of support to Frances O’Grady for the TUC Lobby of Parliament and congratulate her on her House of Lords nomination.

**Questions/Comments:**

* Dereck – the Police Bill going through parliament. *We entered amendments and comments through the House of Lords. The Lords virtually ripped up the bill and told the government to start again. However, government still promoting the original bill. Another bill currently being pushed through is one taking away the EU legislation on worker’s rights, family rights and just about every other right given by the EU. Again, lawyers are arguing the legalities of the process and lack of consultation.*
* Chris: Winter deaths and fuel poverty – Greater London Region held successful joint protests on both and will do so again. Concerned about the triple lock as the new Prime Minister has already said we don’t need 10.1%. We all know what is lost can never be made up for future pensioners.
* Dereck – NPC Wales writing to all MPs in Wales asking them to commit publicly to support the triple lock and vote against any change in parliament.
* David L: Legislation has to happen by 13 November. Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast is expected 31 October. 10% of a small amount is a small amount!
* Tony O’B: A petition of 650,000 signatures was handed over by the Fuel Poverty Alliance. Important NPC supports demonstrations. The government figures for winter deaths may include those from COVID. *This was the case last year and NPC wrote to ONS asking that they be separated and highlighted as different causes. However, we do understand that being in a cold, damp home exacerbates COVID infections.*
* Bill M: Agree letter to Frances, furlough payments would never have happened without the TUC. Triple lock – demonstrate to MPs that NPC and Trade Unions will not tolerate another year with less,
* Pat: The bill taking away all manner of rights affecting everyone including older people; transport is expensive; health, welfare and environment all at risk. Need to tell the story of what it means.
* David B: Reminder that state pensions are lowest in Europe, occupational pensions already lower. Manifesto commitment.
* David L: Refresh figures of how many on state pension and not paying tax.
* Paul R: Be prepared to make a noise on triple lock if changed. Leaflet ready to go, emailed out and printed locally.
* Chris: Pensions is No.1 issue – government call it a benefit. Both state and occupational pensions have been paid for. *For information – NPC has challenged the use of ‘benefit’ and found that it is in pension legislation as such.*
* Mike McL: Triple Lock is important. Hasn’t done us any favours. A proper basic state pension. Occupational pensions are not for everyone.
* Barrie F: LESE TUC have a seminar on Trade Union Freedoms from 11.00am until 4.00pm that day at NEU offices.
* Jenny: Digital Poverty Alliance: Jan reiterated her report. We will update everyone when there is some feedback from the Alliance.
* Brian: NHS: Local issues are important. Publicise the State of Health & Care report which clearly shows the failure of the government.
* David V: Commissioner for Older People in England – much needed – promises not kept, manifestos not delivered.
* Norman: Links and support from Trade Unions
* Dereck: Commissioner for Older People in Wales has statutory powers, is independent of the government. Older people were on the interview panel.
* Linda: Trade Unions – a lot of our members are not in Trade Unions. Need to make sure Trade Unions are not seen to be the only support for NPC.

**Report Agreed**

1. **Financial Report:**

Steve reported that there was only one outstanding National affiliation and two regional affiliations as the October figures will show at the end of the month. Anticipated deficit is broadly in line with budget.

Looking to the budget for next year. The Finance Working Party is not helped by the shambolic actions of government in the past weeks. Next year will be very difficult dependent on the path of inflation.

We need to attract different funds. Work on sponsorship is ongoing and we are hopeful.

**Questions/Comments:**

* Chris: 2021 – deficit £4K-plus. Income to London Region – 26% has been donations. Important to encourage local and national donations.
* Arthur: Thanked Steve for his report.
* Jan: reported that letters seeking donations had been sent out to those affiliates already paid up. She asked that Council members make a point of following up with their nominating body and pushing for a donation before the end of the year.

Steve was not suggesting looking at the level of affiliation fees. These were last increased in 2015/16, but reduced due to Trade Union mergers. The answer is new members, new affiliates, donations and other sources of income.

For instance, TSSA support the NPC, but don’t encourage branches to affiliate or make donations.

We send out a review of the year’s activities with the renewal invoice.

**Annual Accounts**: These are approved either at the Biennial Delegate Conference or National Council. We appointed a new auditor and the accounts were examined at the start of the month and signed off no problem. We are waiting for the return of the signed account from the auditors.

Steve thanked the auditors and Mohammad who organised all the required information to ensure that the audit was properly supported.

* Jenny: Individual members, NUJ numbers are increasing.
* Steve: Structure Working Party looking at membership. We need to attract new members across the board. University of the 3rd Age (U3A) have decided not to affiliate, but we made the approach.
* Jan: Recruitment is something everyone needs to do. Don’t leave it to others otherwise it won’t happen. You are here representing your nomination bodies who affiliate to the NPC and should be talking about it and asking for action.
* Mike McL: NPC is an umbrella organisation with the benefit of branches from its affiliates and other outside bodies. Future retirees – get a message out about retaining their rights in retirement.

Approval of Accounts: Moved by Chris Mason-Ryan, seconded by Tom James

**Accounts Agreed**

**COMFORT BREAK**

1. **Draft Roles/Responsibilities – new National Executive Committee/Council**

The Structure Working Party considered that delegates to the new NEC should have an understanding of their role and responsibilities. With the right to attend and participate comes the responsibility to carry out the role appropriately. It has been identified through responses from affiliates and regions that our information does not always reach the parts it should. This draft is for discussion and amendment as necessary.

* Arthur: typo in 10a – should be ‘or’ and prefer Council to Committee
* David H: 10a should be part of 10. Question the word ‘skills’.
* Paul R: Found it insulting. We are supposed to be encouraging people to get involved. We should forget it.
* Jan: Roles and responsibilities are not always obvious to new delegates. We rely on members here to bring others through and make sure there is an understanding. We are not going to forget it, there is a need for some form of information to be given when nominations are sought.
* Jenny: Need proactive members who can have information on NPC functions and understand how things work and who people are (names on reports etc) New delegates at the BDC.

*Jan, all these issues have been taken on board and there will be an updated guidelines booklet as well as a new delegates pack.*

* Chris: When you join something it is a learning curve. Not a problem in general, but perhaps change to ‘guidelines’
* David B: Asked to do this by the Working Party. The format is a matter of how it is finally presented.
* Barrie F: Consistency in wording, attracting new members, mentoring new members.
* Pat: Mentored in her union UCU and in the Health & Social Care Working Party. She has achieved things that she had not thought possible through this support.

David H: Offered to re-draft with David B which was acceptable to Council

1. **Structure Working Party Report:**

The report was presented asking Council members to take on board the current and future issues of NPC finances. An in depth discussion and consideration of how we move forward is necessary.

**Questions/Comments:**

* Arrival in Blackpool for the Special Delegate Conference would need a stayover the night before, adding to costs for delegates.
* Tony: All organisations have arrangements to pay expenses.
* Job sharing seats should bring new people through.
* David V: Need a timed agenda if going to two days.
* Harry: People will be there the day before
* Mike: Support reduction to two days. Savings to affiliates and regions
* Tony O’B: Only one amendment to the Constitution. There may be substantial changes to the Constitution and one amendment may not be fair.
* Linda: Need to be realistic
* Rosie: Tuesday is a better day for the Special Delegate Conference in terms of timing and travel.

1. **On the question of reducing the Annual Convention to 2 days (28/29 June 2023)**

Poll result: For 68% Against: 27% Abstentions 5%

1. **On the question of increasing ticket price for the Annual Convention \*\***

Poll result: For 89% Against 8% Abstentions 3%

1. **On the question of holding the Special Delegate Conference on 27 June 2023**

Poll result: For 85% Against 6% Abstentions 9%

\*\* A report will be sent to the Finance Working Party to consider the increase in ticket prices for 2023

Jan thanked Council members for their time. These are hard decisions to make, but we have to take heed of the financial information prepared for us.

1. **National Public Affairs Manager Report:**

Bev presented her report. We are making headway with the Commission for Older People in England. Age UK is a welcome addition. Scotland has a Minister at the moment, but we agree that a Commissioner in all four nations should be a reality.

The feedback from the Annual Convention in Birmingham has been extremely good and a lot of connections have been made from that.

Press releases on the triple lock and cost of living, along with opportunities to comment in national newspapers.

Rose thanked Bev.

**Report agreed**

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

Jonathan had nothing to add to his report.

* Arthur: A big thank you for the BT switch report. Very useful and understand more now.
* Jenny: Thanked Jonathan for the work on the switch over and reminded Council about the next edition of the working party newsletter.
* Dereck: Asked Jonathan about posting to the website. Jonathan explained that press releases, information, publications from a variety of sources are put on the website as they come in. Individuals can register for subjects of interest and these are sent out.

Welsh media is almost all online – can we add to list for press releases/information?

* Jenny: NUJ Wales has lists, including radio
* Louisa: County Times covers from Brecon to North Wales. She will send Bev details so we can add to our list.

Rosie thanked Jonathan.

**Report agreed**

1. **A.O.B:**

* Arthur: Last meeting of Council and wished the NPC all the very best for 2023.
* Tony: Build a break into the agenda.

1. **Next Meeting: 25 April 2023 (last one as a National Council)**

**Appendix**

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| **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Organisation** |
| Brian | Allbutt | NPC West Midlands |
| Arthur | Bavister | Prospect |
| Tony | Hall | CSPA |
| Mike | Moriarty | Prospect |
| Jenny | Vaughan | NUJ |
| Andy | Warnock-Smith | RMT |
| Louisa | St Bartholomew Brown-Morgan | NPC Wales |
| David | Humphreys | NPC West Midlands |
| Vince | Hill | NPC Thames Valley |
| Sam | Sirdar | NPC Anglia |
| David | Briggs | RCN |
| Philip | Brown | NPC Home Counties North |
| David | Vickers | RCN |
| Martino | Cranchi | FNP CISL (GB) |
| Tony | Donaghey | RMT |
| Mike | McLoughlin | NPC East Midlands |
| Mike | Sparham | CSPA |
| Barrie | Finch | NPC Thames Valley |
| Alan | Edgar | NPC Thames Valley |
| Peter | Nowland | NPC Thames Valley |
| Tom | James | NPC Wessex |
| Cheryl | O’Brien | TSSA |
| Chris | Mason-Ryan | NPC London |
| Paul | Russell | NPC Y&H |
| Brian | Adams | GMB |
| Rosie | MacGregor | NPC President |
| Ken | Ward | CWU |
| John | Martin | NPC Northern Ireland |
| Trish | Mensah | NPC GAS |
| Fran | Postlethwait | NPC Y&H |
| Bill | Moores | Unite |
| Tony | O Brien | Unite |
| Roy | Rix | NPC Northern |
| John | Harrison | BTPF |
| Dereck | Roberts | NPC Wales |
| Gareth | Parsons | NPC Wales |
| Patricia | Roche | UCU |
| Pat | Hughes | RCN |
| Jan | Shortt | NPC General Secretary |
| Jim | Symons | NUJ |
| Christina | Stokes | NPC GAS |
| Barry | Todman | NPC Vice President |
| Harry | Brett | NPC North West |
| Bill | Dale | ASLEF |
| Linda | Richards | NPC Deputy General Secretary |
| Tony | Garner | NPC Eastern |
| Steve | Whitehead | NPC Treasurer |
| Marion | Wilson | NPC Honorary Vice President |
| Steve | Turner | NFOP |
| Ellen | Lebethe | NPC Vice President |
| Jonathan | Safir | National Administration & Information Manager |
| Bev | Morrison | National Public Affairs Manager |