**MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON 26 JULY 2022**

**ON ZOOM**

**In attendance**: (See appendix)

**Apologies:** Tony Hall (NPC Thames Valley), Angela Banner (NPC London), David Luxton (CSPA), Geoff Page (USDAW), John Martin (NPC Northern Ireland - stand in Margaret Galloway), Meg McDonald (Women's WP co-optee), Harry Brett (NPC North West - stand in Derek Barton).

Rosie welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that everyone keep their contributions to no more than 3 minutes in order to get through the agenda.

Bill Dale (London Region) asked permission from the Committee to move the motion from the London Region further up the agenda as he had family commitments. It was agreed to take the motion after ‘Matters Arising’ from the Minutes.

We wish to record the sad passing of Douglas Dean who has been a sterling supporter of the NPC. In particular, his work with the Pensions & Income Working Party has kept the NPC at the forefront on consultations on RPI/CPI and challenging the government on pensions legislation. He will be very much missed.

Rosie also commended NPC Wales for their comprehensive report and the wealth of work being done in Wales.

1. **Minutes of meeting held on 24 May 2022:**

Accuracy: Page 2: Item 5; second bullet point. Correction Public Service ***Pensioners*** Council

**Agreed**

1. **Matters Arising:**

* Page 1: Gareth: NPC Wales attended the TUC Wales Conference. New contacts made.
* Page 1: Arthur: Thanked Jonathan for getting NPC resources to the Prospect Conference. The President announced our webinar.
* Page 1: Item 3: Jan reported that Robert Halfron MP had responded positively to our letter in regard to his private member’s bill on companies keeping the public hanging on phones and also that the first point of contact should be a human being rather than expecting customers to press different buttons.
* Jenny: Reminder that names should be put on reports.

1. **London Region Motion: Moved by Bill Dale; Seconded Tony Donaghey:**

*"UK Citizens over 60 are entitled to purchase a Senior Railcard which affords them a 33% reduction on many rail fares in the UK. First one has to purchase the card at a Main Line Railway Station, or on the Internet. It has to be purchased in advance of travel and carried with you on the journey.*

*We propose that the Older Persons Bus Pass be used to obtain a 33% discount on national Rail Travel in Britain.*

*We call on the Executive Committee of the NPC to negotiate with the relevant governments of the UK to enable this proposal to take effect."*

Discussion on motion:

* Arthur: bus pass is free; National Rail administer the railcard. Issue of state pension age for bus pass.
* Clare: concerns about an ‘open goal’ to make it all apply at state pension age. Difficulties in accessing railcard.
* Tony O’B: reservations in terms of priorities – cuts to rail services, jobs, pensions. Same for buses.
* Gareth: Can’t support. Bus passes are local authority administered; railcard is nationally administered. It would be a good principle, but problems abound.
* Tony G: Concerned about age differences. Rail offices closing to improve customer service is also concerning.

Bill in his right of reply said he understood the reservations around two different ages at which the bus pass and railcard are eligible and that one is overseen by local councils and the other by National Rail.

**Poll result: For: 24% Against: 58% Abstentions: 18%**

**Motion is LOST**

1. **General Secretary Report:**

Jan updated on the following areas:

* Item 3: NHS Digital Data: We did a press release through Foxglove on the issue of consultation with the public being delayed until 2023. The government are now saying that NHS Digital is independent of them and therefore the Department of Health and Social Care are not respondents to our claim.
* Jan asked Jonathan to expand on his meeting with the BT Steering Group. Jonathan said it was the very first meeting of many. BT had paused the roll out of the digital switch. It was said that even where contracts are coming to an end, the customer will not be switched. Only where customers asked for full fibre would it be considered against the fact that the roll out is still paused.

BT are engaging a lot more with groups that they should have done in the first place. Lots of organisations on the steering group advocating on behalf of older people. We still need to reinforce our concerns about engineers (franchised but wearing BT logo).

**Questions:**

* Gareth: Engineers are still switching. Jan asked Gareth to email the detail to Jonathan as he can raise.
* Marion: Provided with a battery free. There was a power cut last week, phone would not ring.
* Arthur: Taking the ‘N’ out of the NHS: Jan said that the NHS is no longer a universal service. It is 42 separate local Integrated Care Services/Boards (ICS/ICB) with their own funding and constitutions. Arthur raised the subject of landlines. Jonathan said that BT have been testing landline phones with their new system and they all work – even the oldest dial phones.
* Jenny: Complimented the NPC on the work on the digital switch.
* Tony O’B: Webinars are narrow – should be about getting people involved. Disappointed in the Assisted Dying webinar. There was no one speaking against and not many questions.

Jan responded that the NHS webinar was different in that we used break out rooms to enable participants to discuss how we should campaign. This has led to working with Keep Our NHS Public, We Own It, SOSnhs and potential for work with Unite Community. There is a template letter to send to the Chair of each of the 42 ICS/ICBs asking for them to ensure specific things like no discharge to assess; no private company representatives; emergency services for local people and those visiting.

In respect to Assisted Dying, the Officer Team discussed the webinar and felt that as it is a deeply personal decision, we would restrict the webinar to giving a briefing on the Bill and where it is at this moment in time. It is a sensitive issue with personal circumstances different for everyone and there had been concerns raised at the National Council in regard to the dangers and the reputation of the NPC. These are issues that the Officer Team are elected to take into account for the good of the NPC.

In terms of questions – Jan asked all those that came through – she can’t make them up!

* Allan: BBC Complaint and Guardian article on £8 a day hospital stays charges/prescription charges. Jan responded saying we were still waiting for a response from the BBC; there is still a wrangle with the government on prescription charges.
* David Lammakin: Engineers without good cause changing over to digital lines. Not all BT employees as they are franchised. Poor advertising, public not aware and/or not understanding. Again, we will pass to the BT Steering Group and reinforce that what they are telling us is not happening on the ground. There are other providers and you should contact them with a copy of your letter to Ofcom.
* Philip: Triple Lock – RPI is at 11% - pensioners are not getting rich.
* Tony G: Digital switch – complaints about broadband width and landlines. Also Telecare and alarm pendants.
* David L: Old devices don’t work on new systems. Jonathan reported that Open Reach has written to all alarm providers and is providing a testing system. Only about a third of providers so far have taken part.

If members can email issues to Jonathan please for his next meeting, we can ensure that BT are fully updated about our concerns. In the meantime, if there are problems, get in touch with your provider with a copy to Ofcom.

**Report agreed**

1. **Treasurers Report:**

Steve had produced a written report along with the income and expenditure. It remains the case that we are still facing a deficit and it is everyone’s responsibility to ensure that the NPC is profiled and we can recruit new members. Any questions regarding the detail in the accounts will be answered at a later date if the information is not available today.

Prospect may have paid – we will have a look at the July income and let Arthur know.

**Report agreed**

1. **Officer Team Project:**

The General Secretary met with Linda and Jonathan yesterday (Monday) to go through the briefings from Working Parties on Poverty. There are some changes to be made to some briefings and Jonathan will do these as soon as possible and pass back to the relevant Working Parties. Clare said this was a very important piece of work as it is linked to the cost of living.

Jan asked where the completed briefings should go other than be available at the Annual Convention session in Birmingham. Agreed to send to National and Regional affiliates, organisations we work with, potentially politicians?

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

Bev was thanked for her comprehensive report, in particular noting the wide range of media interest.

The first ‘face-to-face’ session of the Annual Convention has now been confirmed and will take place in Birmingham at the newly refurbished Birmingham Council House – which we have obtained free of charge. This will be on 21 September with registration opening at 10.30 am, lunch and refreshments and closing around 4.30 pm. The venue is very close to New Street station. We will be charging a £5 registration fee for members to help pay for the lunch. The theme will be Pensioner Poverty and Older People’s Rights.

Some speakers may need to be on zoom and the equipment is available for us to use.

We hope that local groups will be able to attend and registration information will go out initially through the Campaign News, followed by a circulation to all affiliates. Please advertise widely in your local area.

It has been difficult in that COVID is still with us and we rely on our members having the confidence to travel and take part. Also finding a suitable venue outside of London (requested by those who returned our survey). These are not normal times and we hope to get back to our usual format next year

**Questions:**

* Clare – Lobby of Parliament? *Jan said she was trying to get a booking through a relevant MP for the Committee Room in the House of Commons.*
* Tom: Tolpuddle event – NPC presence? *Jan said this was predominantly something that was taken on by an individual. If others wish to carry it on, then the funding will need to be raised to do so.*
* Allan volunteered to help with setting up etc.
* Tony O’B: Not seen an NPC banner before but will take the banner if required.
* Kevin: Holding an event on 1 October in Leeds
* Norman: TUC Congress – NPC stall – offered to attend. He also attended the Durham Gala which this year featured only speakers from front line services.

**Report agreed**

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

Jonathan had nothing to add to his report and there were no questions.

1. **Working Party Reports:**
2. Minority Elders: Ellen reported that the ME Committee had met regarding the poverty briefing. Low paid jobs, pensions, cost of living, housing, health inequalities – all are related to income.

**Agreed**

1. Digital Working Party: Jenny reported that there are free initiatives in some areas of the country. We needed to find out where our members are who need free devices.

*Jan pointed out again that Working Parties are not able to put motions to the EC. These need to be recommendations. On the Digital Poverty Alliance, Jan had put an online inquiry form in asking about membership fees. She asked the EC in principle to agree to the NPC joining the Alliance as long as there was no cost.*

**Agreed**

1. LGBT: Damien reported that the next meeting would be on Thursday.
2. Housing: Tony reported that the Fuel Poverty Coalition has had some success in that equality impact assessments should have been undertaken on fuel poverty. Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) have been abandoned.

*Jan asked if this was a done deal or whether we could still challenge the decision. Tony replied it was already done.*

*On the Warm Homes motion, the Working Party need to look at a strategy for the wider participation of NPC members.*

*Extension of the Right to Buy can be part of the session at the Annual Convention.*

**Questions:**

* Arthur: Energy Act – oil fired systems and calor gas. There is no help from the government on this. *Ofcom response tells us to speak to the government and we will do so.*
* Rosie: There is a consultation at the moment on short term tourist accommodation.
* Damien: Right to Buy is divisive and has crippled generations unable to get social housing.

**Agreed**

v Transport: Tony Donaghey moved the report. *In terms of the motions from the BDC, there was a Regional Secretaries meeting in September that could look at what local action could be taken.*

* Tony G: Megaphone have a petition set up by the RMT campaign against closures of ticket offices and loss of staff on trains and stations. This will be circulated and please encourage everyone to sign. This affects everyone.
* Yorkshire/Humberside are supporting RMT. The General Secretary has written to Mick Lynch and visited Newcastle Central Station where a lot of public support was being shown by pedestrians and motorists alike.
* Kevin: The offer on pay is subject to the closure of ticket offices.
* Arthur: Newbury station is under refurbishment and the ticket office closed.
* David B: Reducing guards on trains as well as closing ticket offices – prices are not always cheaper online. Equality issues on pay.
* Norman: Northern Region support RMT. Only uses the local ticket office.

Vote on co-option of Richard Worrall:

**For: 83% Against: 3% Abstentions: 14% Richard is co-opted**

**Agreed**

1. Pensions & Income: Nothing to add.

**Agreed**

1. Health & Social Care: Jan reported that she had just received an invitation to participate in the Fabian Society road map to a National Care Service.

* Jenny criticised the fact that she thought one of the areas of submission from the H&SC Working Party was ageist and that she had not seen the submission before it was sent off.

*Jan responded saying without the detail she would not comment. In terms of the submission, everyone knew the tight timescale and the office works hard to reach deadlines*

**Agreed**

1. Women: The Working Party had not elected a Chair or Secretary. This should be rectified at the next meeting.

**Agreed**

1. Structure: Nothing to add.

* Sandra was concerned about the final process. *Jan explained that the BDC had agreed to a final report being prepared along with the relevant changes to the Constitution. How we do this is for discussion with the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) and then a report to a future EC. It was made clear at the BDC that a proper process would take place and this is her intention. Some discussion has been had at the Working Party, but we now needed guidance from the SOC.*

1. **AOB:**

* Jenny challenged the procedure for voting of working party nominees who had tied votes in certain Working Parties. It is the decision of the General Secretary and her process has been well documented in the report.

*Point of information: The General Secretary’s report had already been agreed with the voting procedure as part of that report. Therefore, this question should have been asked at that point on the agenda.*

* Labour Research: has offered a discount on their publication for 12 months. *Jan will look into it.*
* Arthur: Face to face meeting. *Jan explained that although the Trade Union offices may be open to staff, they are not yet open to visitors. We will follow up and also find out what the specific health and safety requirements are.*
* Clare: COVID is unpredictable and East Midlands is more in the mix.
* Philip: London from Scotland is cheaper. *Jan – understand. Everything is rising and this will have a bearing on our meetings as well as accessible venues.*
* Allan – hybrid meetings need technology which is expensive.

1. **Next Meeting:** 27 September 2022 @ 10.30 am

**Appendix**

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| **Group** | **First name** | **Surname** |
| FNP-CISL (GB) | Antonietta | Bortone-Tinney |
| NPC Eastern Region | Tony | Garner |
| NPC Northwest | Derek | Barton |
| CWU | Damian | Ibison |
| NPC Treasurer | Steve | Whitehead |
| NPC General Secretary | Jan | Shortt |
| Unite | Tony | O'Brien |
| NPC Honorary President | Ron | Douglas |
| NPC Honorary Vice President | Marion | Wilson |
| NPC Northern Ireland | Margaret | Galloway |
| NPC Vice President | Barry | Todman |
| NPC Vice President | Norman | Jemison |
| NPC Vice President | Sandra | Durkin |
| NPC President | Rosie | MacGregor |
| Prospect | Arthur | Bavister |
| NPC Wales | Gareth | Parsons |
| NPC Vice President | Ellen | Lebethe |
| ASLEF | Bill | Dale |
| RCN | David | Briggs |
| NPC Deputy General Secretary | Linda | Richards |
| NPC Home Counties North | Allan | Jeyes |
| UCU | Phillip | Burgess |
| NPC South East (SENPEC) | David | Lomakin |
| NARF | Francis | Bryne |
| NASUWT/FRMA | Roger | Darke |
| NPC East Midlands | Clare | Wilkins |
| BTPF | Les | McDowell |
| NPC Wessex | Tom | James |
| NPC GAS | Keith | Evans |
| NPC West Midlands | Owen | Sloss |
| NPC Northern Region | Roy | Rix |
| NPC Yorks & Humber | Kevin | Fradley |
| RMT | Tony | Donaghey |
| NUJ | Jenny | Sims |
| TSSA | Cheryl | O'Brien |
| NPC National Public Affairs Manager | Bev | Morrison |
| NPC National Administration & Information Manager | Jonathan | Safir |