

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 105th Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Great Britain on the 3 of May 2008 at 52 Clapham High Street, London

(These minutes are not official until ratified by the EC.)

Present: Carter, Deutz, Johnson, McEwan, Miller, Roberts, Thomas (present at 12.55), White.

Apologies: Buick. Absent. Wigley.

Meeting started late at 12.40pm. due to some members not receiving their papers in time for which the General Secretary apologised.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting.

a. Motion 1 McEwan/Deutz "That motion 9 be amended to replace "abstain" with "obtain". Agreed unanimously

b. Motion 2 Miller/McEwan "In item 6, replace "use non-copyright" with License". Agreed

Agreed to accept the minutes.

Comrade Carter complained that she misses the proof reading that Comrade Vein used to do. Comrade Deutz offered to proof read minutes, which offer gratefully accepted.

2. Matters Arising

a No nominations received for the Publications Department.

b No nominations received for the Advisory Committee to the Treasurer.

It was agreed that further calls be made for these two Committees.

c No responses yet to the Amendments to Branch Standing Orders

Agreed to defer till next meeting.

3. Notices of Business

a Resignation of T. Miller from the Internet Department. (T.Miller). This item is deferred as Comrade Miller has not yet completed certain aspects of his work.

It was agreed to make a call for nominations to the Internet Department.

b The situation of the people in India (N.White)

Comrade White had not meant this as a Matter of Business. Agreed to delete it as such. The Gen. Sec reported that in accordance with Motions 38 and 39 of the last minutes, copies of the documents have been despatched, by Comrade Buick. No reply yet received.

c Replacement of Computer (T.Miller)

Discussion on this item considered the necessity of another computer, some factors are that one is very slow and few find the other easy to use because of its Linus associations, that sometimes it's not possible for a third person to get on with work because both are in use.

Motion 3 White/Carter "That Comrade Miller is authorised to spend up to £400 to replace the slow computer in the office". Carried unanimously.

d Removal of the Treasurer Upstairs

Comrade Thomas suggests utilising the desk on the balcony that Comrade

Miller had used, that he would need a table and some drawers, he will provide figures for the move next month. He would need a basic computer that runs Excel with a black and white printer. Comrade Miller said that network connections to the top floor are a problem but it's possible to have a memory stick and a USB connection to enable printing downstairs. It was agreed that the move be carried out, but when HOO has finished re-organising the Literature room when the situation will be reviewed. The slow computer (Ermine) to be repaired.

e Terms of Reference of Committees and Departments

Deferred to enable the paper work to be sent out for members to consider this item.

4. Forms A and F

None

5 Accounts

a Comrade Thomas reports that the statutory return to the Election Commission was returned this week.

b He met with a representative of the Insurance company and our insurance has been extended. The exit door from the basement into the backyard should be open when meetings are in progress. Possibly we should fit a crashbar. He wasn't able to find the Fire Risk assessment, the record seemed to show that it was last done in November 2006.

6 Reports of Party Officers, Committees and Departments.

a Ballot Committee

Conference Voting Results. [Already published here at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/spintcom/message/7987>].

Motion 4 (McEwan and Thomas) "The General Secretary appraise Officers, Committees and Departments of the Conference voting results as appropriate". Carried unanimously

The EC. understands that the Ballot Committee did not use the unique stamp as required by the EC. and reminds the Ballot Committee of the need for this stamp. (Dec.EC Mins Item (g) iii Motion 13)

b New Speakers Handbook from L.Higgins

Consideration deferred

c Report from the Video Production Committee

Comrade Chesham reports that the unedited recording of the Global Warming meeting filmed by Comrade Otter is ready for the next decision to be made, about this and other recordings held by the Party, and those to be made in the future. Comrade Johnson referred to ex-member Carole Taylor and her offer of professional tuition to two Comrades and editing services. She suggests it better to buy the equipment and to use a computer. Comrades receiving tuition would need to travel to Derbyshire and possibly attend a weekend school. Some EC. members preferred the simplest, cheapest option. The question of the value of unadorned DVD's was raised, to have music and titles would be nice, and whether we wanted a professional or amateur result. We were reminded of the new computer which is to be ordered, that Comrades Chesham and Otter prefer a dedicated DVD/HDD recorder, that Comrade Chesham does not have time to travel to the Peak District. Comrade McEwan said that if DVDs produced she would add

music and titles.

Motion 5 (McEwan and Thomas) "That the Video Production Committee is authorised to spend up to £200 on the purchase of a DVD/HDD recorder".

Carried 6/1 1 abstention

d. Fire Risk Assessment

Report from M.Browne deferred

e Campaigns Department Report

The Climate Change Half-day school. Twenty members and eighteen visitors attended, thirty-eight in total. Comrade Johnson reported that all the usual channels were taken, advertising was extended, three different sites on the Internet were plugged. It was suggested that the reason for the lack of success of one-off adverts. was that they were one-off. The visiting speaker was interesting but was allowed too long with his presentation some of which was somewhat like a succession of holiday photos. The guest speaker should know be made aware of the format and time allowed. The meeting should not be for the sake of the film and allowed to run over time and edited. The Chair should be clear as to the procedures, deal politely with difficult visitors, banners should not taken down whilst the speaker was winding up, time should be allowed for questions and discussion and the room to be cleared on time. The counting of the collection should be discreet and the tea-urn must not be allowed to keep noisily reaching boiling point. It was felt that Comrade Gardner handled the difficult subject very well. Comrade Johnson apologised for the faults that were found. On the entertainment at the Social in the evening at Head Office, the drama duo's performance about Suffragettes was totally at odds with what the Party argues. Jacqueline (Visitor) said the idea was about how Socialists might put across an argument in dramatic fashion, they took questions. Comrade Johnson said it was Agitprop, he did make it clear about questions and discussion. The EC generally did not think it good enough to allow an opinion against the Party case without our case being put. And that in living memory Glasgow branch performed a hilarious skit with social comment.

f. Head Office Organiser Job Description Amendment.

Deferred

g Election Report

The result in the Lambeth and Southwark constituency which we contested: Labour 60601; Liberal 36 953; Con 32 835; Green 18011; Christian 4432; UKIP 3012; LeftList1956; Animals1828; EngDems1867; Socialist 1588

We will eventually get a break-down by ward, so that we can judge whether leafleting is worthwhile, probably we covered less than 10% of the whole constituency. So far probably less than 10 direct replies. Twenty members helped out in the campaign in one way or another. Unfortunately the other candidate's leaflets and flyers collected for the Archive were thrown away. A more detailed report with recommendations will follow.

Motion 6 (Miller and White) "The Election Department report be noted and that they, Comrade Lambert and all the others who participated in the campaign be thanked for their efforts". Carried 7-0 1 absent from the table.

h Autumn Delegate Meeting

Standing Orders Department propose that ADM be 18th and 19th of October

2008, midway between the EC meetings on the 4th of October and the 1st of November. They also propose that the dates for the return of Branch items for discussion be Friday 5th of September and the dates for reports for ADM be the same. If the EC agrees, these dates can be issued with the report of Conference voting and the Conference discussion to all members. Motion 7 (Miller and Roberts) "That the Standing Orders Committee suggestion for ADM dates be adopted". Carried 8-0

i Head Office Organiser Report.

Comrade Johnson reported that space at Head Office is at a premium, especially for the storage of Socialists Standards. There had been an incident of a missing cheque, which could not have been cashed and has now been cancelled.

j Internet Department

Comrade Miller gave an oral report that we did not receive invoices from the company Easistream who deal with the DVD. Capitalism and other Kids Stuff on the Internet. They finally sent one which he passed to the Treasurer. Now they threaten legal action. Comrade Thomas said that he had missed the original invoice back in February. Has paid the £17. He had suggested setting up a Direct Debit or Standing Order but if they insist on sending invoices by e-mail, these should be sent to Head Office and then put into the Treasurer's folder.

7 Correspondence

1 Swansea Branch 15th April 2008: "Swansea Branch at our meeting of the 14th April agreed to nominate Com. John Bissett for the Campaigns Dept. and the Blogs. Dept". Carried 6-0 6 members present

Motion 8 (Thomas and Deutz) "That Comrade Bissett be accepted for the Campaigns

Department". Agreed unanimously

Motion 9 (Thomas and Johnson) "That Comrade Bissett be accepted for the Blogs Dept." An opinion that Comrade Bissett had exercised poor judgement on what he had blogged, when he was out of the Party was expressed. There is no editorial control. Motion lost 2-3 3 abstentions.

2 Central London Branch 27th April 2008 Three Motions:

a) "Regarding Motion 29 of the March minutes and Motion 18 of the January minutes

warning the entire membership against violating certain Conference resolutions, Central London Branch takes the view that these warnings should be directed to the offending members in particular and not the membership as a whole." Carried 4-2-0

b) "BIRT the EC be asked for clarification on the financial arrangements with respect to the drama duo which performed at Head Office the evening of 5th April." Agreed

c) "BIRT Central London Branch nominate Comrade Bill Martin to the Library and Election Departments". Carried 6-0 (6 members present)

On the first motion, it was noted that here again is an example of an EC member who gets one decision at the EC and then comes back again from branch. That it is important that the EC exercises its own discretion in these matters, weighing in the balance against embarrassment caused by naming names. Comrade Miller said that he was also a member of the branch..

Motion 10 (Thomas and Roberts) "The resolution be noted". Agreed

There was a lengthy discussion on the second resolution.

Motion 11 (Deutz and Miller) "That Central London be informed that the duo were paid the union rate by an individual member. The Party did not pay the duo."

Carried 7-0 1 absent from the table.

(Generally felt that the vote for the above motion is not an endorsement of the action).

Motion 12 (Thomas and White) "That no private arrangements be made by Party members to subsidise Party activities without prior agreement of the EC"

The example of the trouble caused by Comrade Weidberg inserting and paying for adverts privately, was given. It was said that the motion was too general, and did not allow for Branch actions, and would bar any member from printing their own leaflets. This would not stop branches, but is about individuals and actions which the Party had no knowledge of. The members who make Standing Orders or do not claim travel expenses, are these private arrangements? Others felt that any contribution which goes into the Party coffers, the use of which is a group decision is not private. Comrade Thomas in winding up said that the wording of the motion was bad and he wouldn't be voting for it but to let it fall doesn't mean support for the action.

The motion fell 0-3 with 5 abstentions

Some thought that most people were stunned by what they had heard. Perhaps arrangements for meetings should be put in writing and its suggested that if anyone is sufficiently concerned, the matter could be brought back for further consideration.

On Motion 3 from Central London,

Motion 13 (Miller and Thomas) "That Comrade Bill Martin be appointed to the Election Department". Carried unanimously

Several issues were raised with reference to the Library nomination. That it was fully and adequately manned, That Comrade Allen is expected to be the Book Collection Officer, that Comrade Martin is a trained Librarian, the last time he was on the committee his attendance at Head Office had not fitted with the other members and the committee had been dissolved by the EC.

Motion 12 (Miller and Johnson) "That Comrade Martin be appointed to the Library Committee". Lost 3-3 2 abstentions.

3 Minutes of the WSP of the US. 25/2/08. Comrade Miller moved that they be noted. Agreed

4 Letter from Brecker Grossmith 7/4/08

The General Secretary reported that this is the second time these Chartered Surveyors have approached the Party with their offers for 52 Clapham High Street.

Motion 14 (McEwan and Thomas) "That the letter from Brecker Grossmith be circulated to Branch Secretaries". Carried 6-0 2 abstentions.

The EC is not endorsing this particular offer, Estate agents are sending these sort of letters out all the time but as some members might look with favour upon such offers the EC does not want to seem to be with-holding information.

Motion 15 (White and Deutz) "That the General Secretary again reply to the Estate Agent that Head Office is not currently for sale". Carried unanimously

5. Letter from Lambeth Planning Department 10/4/08. Noted Agreed

8 Any Other Business

a) The Funeral of Comrade Ron Cook has been announced on the forums as next Friday. Comrade Buick has said that he will be attending but is not sure of his times yet. Anyone wanting a lift could contact him. Though the Gen. Sec. said that due to family pressures, the minutes would not be produced very quickly this month.

b) New Rule Book

Motion 16 (Miller and Roberts) "The Publication Department be notified to print the New rule book". Agreed

c) Notice of Business

Comrade Johnson would like there to be called a special Party meeting regarding Climate Change.. Will be circulating a discussion document. Comrade Miller said that this was out of order, it should be through a branch, others said ADM or the Production for Use Committee. There was a discussion at Conference, and this needs a committee re Climate Change and its Implications. The Party should be dealing with it. Rule 25 was cited as being relevant to this matter.

d) Comrade White raised the matter of the Loop system.

Motion 17 (White and Carter) "The Premises Committee be asked for an up-to-date report on if and when the Head Office Loop system will be fitted." Carried unanimously

9 Chair of the next meeting: Comrade McEwan

10 Date 7/6/08

11 Adjourned 4.35 pm.

A second call is made for nominations for the Publications Department and the Advisory Committee to the Treasurer.

A call is made for nominations for the Internet Department.

A reminder that the dates of the ADM. are to be October 18th and 19th 2008
The dates for the return of branch items for discussion is Friday 5th of September and the date for reports for ADM .is the same 5/9/08. For SOC, M.Browne and P.Deutz.
