



NEC Report – Grassroots Voice Team

This is the first of the GV5 NEC reports. During the elections, we ran on a platform of extending party democracy, building on the radical, socialist policy platform developed over the last five years, and supporting trade unions and social movements fighting for workers' rights, peace and social justice. Since being elected, we've been working hard to put these principles into action. Below, we've outlined what we've been doing on a range of issues, from standing with education unions, to pressing the leadership on tackling islamophobia in the Labour Party.

NEC Induction Meeting

We attended an induction meeting in November as new members of the NEC and were given a guide and presentation on various organisational structures. We were welcomed by the General Secretary and the various heads of the other units within the party's bureaucracy.

Labour Muslim Network Report

In our first meeting with the new General Secretary, we raised the issue that members have flagged to us regarding a perceived lack of action and response to the Labour Muslim Network (LMN) Report, which presented some damning evidence of Islamophobia within our party.

The General Secretary was keen to point out that all recommendations of the paper will be implemented. We will continue to review this and update members over the coming weeks and months, once dates and timescales are shared of how these recommendations will be implemented.

Forde Inquiry

We also raised the view that many members felt the Forde Inquiry had been kicked into the long grass. We were assured, at the time, that the report would be delivered by the end of the year. As it happened, the report was not delivered as expected at the end of 2020, so we wrote to the leadership for clarity on the exact date and how this will be shared with the wider membership, as well as the plan to address any findings. We were notified that the report will be provided to the NEC. Our next full NEC meeting is now February, so we will ask for this to be on the agenda.

NEC Away Day

Our first NEC meeting at the end of November was presented as an awayday. We had been told that this would be an opportunity for the NEC to review the previous year and plan for the challenges ahead. We are at a crucial point in our party's history, given the recent examples of funding being withdrawn by Unite and – more recently – the Baker's Union (BFAWU) consulting with their members about the possibility of disaffiliation.

It was announced that there would be an election of the Chair and the Vice Chair at the away day. We were aware that custom and practice for a number of years was that the Vice Chair moved into the Chair position, which in this case would be a member of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). Therefore, when the agenda item for the election was moved, it seemed obvious that the new leadership wanted to change that practice and implement their own preference for Chair and Vice Chair.

The NEC is the governing body of the Labour Party and the Labour Party was born out of the trade union movement. There are millions of trade union members and many of them are also party members, including the GV5 - the new leadership should be looking to build on and strengthen this relationship, not blocking trade union representatives from taking roles on the basis of factional political manoeuvring.

This anti-democratic action, the insult to the FBU, with a move away from agreed protocol, and the ongoing perceived factionalism from the new leadership, left those who disagreed with this decision with no alternative but to leave the meeting as a unified block. There were no tirades and no abuse, just a point of order – the content of our views is now on public record. You can read our letter to David Evans [HERE](#)

All Women Shortlists (AWS)

We wanted to set out to make a difference for members, so it's been great to see and to be part of the work to reverse a decision that had removed the All Women Shortlist protocol (AWS) for local candidates in one of our regions. Women are integral to our movement and the AWS requirements MUST be maintained, so this was a great result for all concerned and one of the first initiatives we became involved in with our trade union comrades on the NEC.

NEC Agenda

We stood on a platform of being the voice of members within the NEC, so we have asked that a standing item for CLP Representatives is included on the agenda for future meetings to represent the issues that matter to you, as and when they arise. Members are our greatest asset, and your views are as important as the Leader and Deputy Leader, who both enjoy dedicated slots on the NEC agenda. Our request hasn't been accepted; however, we will continue to press for this at all future full NEC meetings.

Windrush Scandal - Stop the Plane

Following the absence of their names from a 'round robin letter' signed by more than 60 MPs, we [wrote](#) to Keir Starmer and Angela Rayner, urging them to speak out over the unjust deportation flight that had initially sought to remove 50 individuals from the UK. Campaigners and lawyers were able to get 37 people removed from the plane before take-off. Labour must join these efforts, with the leadership at the forefront of speaking out against the government's "hostile environment" policies. No response has been received.

Sexual Harassment Panel Training

We undertook training, so that we can take part in cases that are brought through the Sexual Harassment Panel.

Equalities Committee

We attended our first equalities committee, where there were further elections for Chair & Vice chair, following the departure of Ann Henderson, Ann was thanked by all for her dedication and hard work over the last few years as the Chair. -She will be missed by all. Nominations were then taken from the floor for a replacement Chair, (there doesn't appear to be a custom and practice of statements or requests for candidates in advance of meetings to put themselves forward for role). James Asser was elected Chair and Vice chairs were elected for a number of roles. Ellen Morrison was elected Vice Chair for Disability, Lara McNeill was elected Vice Chair for Youth, Nick Forbes was elected Vice Chair for LGBTIQ, Carol Sewell was elected Vice Chair for BAME while Jayne Taylor and Ann Black were elected to job share Vice Chair for Women's role

Special Meeting - EHRC response

There was a special NEC meeting to discuss the ongoing response of the Party to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report. The party's initial plan for the implementation of the report was discussed and agreed to be sent to the EHRC. The next step is for the EHRC to agree to the initial plan before more detailed discussions as to the recommendations and implementation of the report are had.

We are totally committed to rebuilding trust and relations with Jewish communities and ensuring the Labour Party is a welcoming and inclusive space for people of all backgrounds and communities.

NEC Development Fund Committee

We attended our first Development Fund Committee, where we reviewed 50 applications from party members / groups. We elected our new Chair Ellen Morrison and were able to make some additional approvals for funding for accessibility for member meetings. We also suggested some improvements to the application form and ask for better guidance for members to aid their application in the hope that these would be more successful.

We are also happy to support any queries members may have in readiness for the next round. The next funding application deadline will be 26th February 2021. If you would like to make an application for the fund, please find all information [HERE](#)

Women's Conference

The Labour Party will be holding an online, fully democratic Women's Conference from 26th-27th June. There were discussions about a physical conference but due to social distancing this presented obvious issues with being able to ensure that each CLP would be able to send representation to the conference. The Women's Conference Arrangements Committee (WCAC) reps also had concerns about people travelling alone and not being able to socialise with other delegates which could have made for a very lonely occasion without the incredible atmosphere that our most recent conferences have had.

The delegate entitlement will be the same as before, 2 delegates per CLP, one of which must be BAME, disabled or LGBT+. CLP reps and the WCAC, in consultation with Young Labour are also working to ensure that representation of young women is increased at the next conference and that young women feel as engaged as possible in our women's structures going forward.

LBC - Call Keir

We wrote to Keir Starmer following his failure to challenge the far-right views expressed during his Call Keir slot on LBC – A caller had made comments likened to the racist 'great replacement' conspiracy theory, stating that the "racial inequality is now against the indigenous people of Britain, who are set to become a minority in 2066". We wanted an urgent meeting to discuss this incident and to suggest how the party could reassure members that we are committed to fighting all forms of racism wherever we find it. No response has been received.

Well-being of Members

We wrote to David Evans and the new leadership asking for an urgent meeting, as we were concerned for members wellbeing due to the spate of suspensions, the lack of detail provided to members and the fact that emails notifying members of their suspension were being sent late at night. We were initially provided with details to signpost members to a number of organisations like the Samaritans, MIND, A&E as well as referring members to their local GPs. We felt this response was a shocking superficial way to meet our obligations to our members, so we restated our request for a meeting to discuss the wellbeing of Labour Party members. No further response has been received.

Standing Up for Labour Party Democracy

At the last NEC meeting we had wanted to raise a motion regarding discussions in CLPs - at the request of thousands of members – in particular, the seemingly arbitrary undemocratic guidance from the General Secretary, which has no basis in the Labour Party Rule Book. The guidance prohibits some political discussion, including the discussion of the current status of the Labour Party's former leader, who has been cleared of a suspension charge. This is clearly relevant party business, and we believe that this unprecedented undemocratic crackdown on normal CLP functions is destroying the party from the inside out.

Moreover, we must recognise the undue stress CLP officers as volunteers have been placed under because of this move, documented in [this letter](#) from 240 constituency Chairs and Secretaries. The letter calls for David Evans to withdraw his guidance. As Labour's NEC, we have a vital role to play in ensuring that we provide CLP officers and members with a safe environment to volunteer their time in the Labour Party. We must ensure that CLP officers are supported in their roles of administering their local parties and are able to express themselves freely as a part of our duty of care to those who campaign for the Labour Party. Their voices must be heard and respected by the General Secretary.

Our motion wasn't allowed on the agenda, but we will push to ensure that this is taken at the next full NEC meeting and continue to work to have this issue progressed

We were co-signatories to a letter calling for the reinstatement of the whip to Jeremy Corbyn and the rights of members to discuss legitimate topics in their CLPs, as well as calling on the leadership to end the attacks on party democracy. You can read the full letter [HERE](#)

School Closures

We started the New Year as we intend to continue as trade unionist-supporting workers. We organised an open statement regarding the situation on the reopening of schools, asking the new leadership to support the trade unions' call for schools to remain closed for the safety of working people, children and our communities. This received overwhelming support across the Labour movement and had joint signatories from TU General Secretaries, MPs, left Groups within the movement as well as support from a leading Parent Group. We have received no response to date – you can read the statement [HERE](#)

Member Surgeries

Part of our manifesto was the commitment to regular engagement with the members, so we'll be organising our first Member Surgeries in the coming weeks to enable us to listen to your concerns and issues, as well as feeding back the work we are undertaking on your behalf. So, watch this space.