

Attendees:

Tara Copeland

Chloe Hutchinson

Guy Benson

Katharine Macy

Finn Conway

Dan Schmeising

Jack Worrall

Chessie Flack

James Bliss

Alex Howarth

Sadie Trent (Excluding closed business)

Amanda Curtin (For discussion introducing herself)

April Preston (For discussion on party leadership election)

Apologies

Apologies received from Charlie Murphy (Vice Chair)

[NB: No apologies received from International, Events or Scotland]

Amanda Curtin Introduction

AC explained that she is here to support anyone going through emotional difficulties or if anyone has any concerns

The Exec explained their roles on the YL exec alongside what they do outside of the party in their work and personal lives

A discussion was held in relation to webinars and feedback from them. KM spoke about some feedback she had with regard to content and GB mentioned to be conscious of timings of webinar as some individuals still working from home so importance of doing some outside of normal working time

AC said she's happy to receive feedback and tailor things to what YL would prefer

AC spoke that on Thursday there would be another webinar led by Christine Jardine. This would be more policy based whereas AC's role is more supportive and practical

Leadership Election

TC explained that only herself and one or two others wanted the existing timetable to stay in place as opposed to some level of delay. The main discussion then was around whether it should be delayed to the autumn or to after the next set of local elections in May 2021. Overall Federal Board voted against a delay to autumn by about 20-15 in favour of a delay to May 2021.

April Preston joined the call to provide a further update to the exec

AP explained that she is aiming for a group of associated bodies coming forward and saying that they have issues with a delay to May 2021. She also had an idea that a different MP would have to lead from now until leadership election if the interim leader is going to be in place for more than a year for fairness.

JW said he was dismayed with decision, and that there has been no consultation with English Council exec and no consultation with YL

GB raised about whether vote results could be released and about the fact that he believed a lot of people who were involved in leadership campaigns were asked to leave

AP said that it was “self-policed” in terms of people deciding to not vote due to their campaign involvement but that the chair and RO, Mark Pack, the current acting leader, remained in the room which didn’t seem fair or appropriate given this decision effectively extends his term as co-leader by a year. AP said that pushing for transparency regarding the vote and process is the best idea, we don’t want it to be seen as YL being difficult. As it’s not a contentious issue we should be able to release votes but YL and those seeking a different outcome need to be clever and to push for transparency.

CH made point that this issue will exacerbate problems in Wales (and to a lesser extent Scotland), as will mean no mandated leader going into 2021 elections increasing the real risk for zero Lib Dem parliamentary representation in Wales.

JB agreed with AP’s idea, and also doesn’t see why a year delay was needed. Also raised that he was worried about Mark’s role as co-leader and RO-ing the vote for this.

CF raised the point that we don’t want to be seen as infighting when we are already polling badly

FC said that we need to get feedback from members to ensure that we are not replicating Federal Board and criticising a closed door decision as an exec but simultaneously making this criticism without a mandate and as a result of a “closed door” exec meeting.

AP stressed the importance to present arguments in a technocratic fashion and to do so positively, stressing that the decision is against all Principles, the Constitution and Common Sense. Also mentioned that Jon Ball has put in a complaint to Federal Appeals Panel. There are many reasons why this decision is bad which needs to be taken together.

JB said that we need to be constructive, an open letter is a bad idea. On getting membership feedback suggested a YLF post that would allow discussion and an email inviting discussion.

JW said that Jo Hayes has made a complaint to the standards officer on the constitutionality of the move. Simon McGrath has said that the chair of the federal appeals panel disagrees with Jo’s reading of constitution. A closed letter to every member of federal board from the chairs of all SAOs would

be a good way that it can be done while not being seen as being disruptive. YL has influence and we should not be afraid to use it.

Action Point: TC to do post in forum and email from herself. She suggested wording along the lines of "A lot of decisions being made and Tara wants YL people to ensure that voices and concerns are understood when your representatives attend meetings". This would ensure that she had a mandate and that she would be accurately expressing YLers concerns in meetings.

Everyone agreed this was a good idea.

Autumn Conference

AP said that Geoff Payne seems to suggest there's not going to be a conference. But Federal Board are waiting to make a decision.

GB raised costs and importance of making decisions early for individuals

CH mentioned that Wales Conference is in October. Scotland is also in a worse position as they cancelled their Autumn Conference last year due to the general election.

TC said that Federal Board has postponed making a decision but it is likely to come up at meeting on Monday. Costs to cancel now will be less and additionally exhibitors and the like will be less likely to exhibit this year. Deadlines for policy motions are coming up so decision should happen soon to cancel.

FC raised about our conference and asked what was happening with it in terms of moving bookings. This needed Events Officer input who was not on call.

AOB: Friends of Palestine

AP said that she is helping to collate evidence relating to Friends of Palestine and IHRA code. Said that if anyone had any evidence relating to breaching IHRA code please send to April Preston before Monday

Professional FB Accounts

TC presented idea of having professional FB accounts to separate personal and party professional accounts

CH said she thinks that if we decide to have it should be everyone or no one, but said personally she wouldn't use it

AH is concerned about privacy settings as he has made a conscious decision to have high privacy settings due to his job role, he thinks it's possible to separate personal and private stuff with one FB account and would be conscious that this may make difficult or even impossible to do his role if he had a business account with his name on it as all of his social media accounts need to have the highest privacy settings due to his job

KM thinks it would be a good idea, we'd have more transparency and would make roles more accessible for people and would reduce use of official YL stuff on personal account, also raised issue that she is not comfortable getting messages from people she doesn't know on her personal fb account

CF asks if there is a general YL fb account that could be used. TC says there is not it is just the page.

JB leans heavily in favour of this. While he is happy to take messages on Facebook not everyone is.

JW said he doesn't mind if we do this or not but that if we did do this but that conscious to remember our own personal accounts still reflect on our officer role even if we do this.

DS agrees need for something however doesn't see that it would solve issue as we already have emails and would create admin and could lead to messages being missed if some exec members didn't use it

JB said emails are impersonal and FB would be more engaging

CH says we need to approach it consistently, problem arises when people have different approaches. We need to set boundaries. If something is serious it should be done via email. If something is minor it's usually OK to do via FB but boundaries should be put in place so that individual exec members are happy to do it over personal fb.

KM has moved to the suggestion that we try and use the YL page. Suggests that we do a post in YLF suggesting people to use emails and also messages the .

DS confirms he is happy to do this

Action Point: DS to do reminder post as per above

TC thinks it's good to remind people that the page exists and it is a form of contact. We should make sure we utilise the page to post about events we are doing. We should make sure the FB page is used.

JB asks if everyone could be made admins on the FB page

FC says they can be editors so they have fewer permissions and don't break things

TC says if everyone is happy with that we will do this

Action Point: DS/TC to add people as editors to YL page as per above

Online Engagement

TC says that as it is looking like Autumn Lib Dem conference will be cancelled officers won't have scrutiny so it is important to set up events online to keep membership involved. Also raised that she doesn't think federal party is doing enough to engage members online.

DS says we're in extraordinary times so we could consider a YL chat. Would not be a Facebook chat as needs to have a robust moderation tools. DS says we could consider using Discord but issue with people using it anonymously, alternative is Slack but this is more of a business tool he'd avoid using for social activity.

AH says he's not opposed to idea of YL chat in principle. Doesn't think Discord is best idea due to anonymousness of it. Happy if platform is found for it to happen. AH says there is no constitutional requirement for exec scrutiny but thinks it would be good to hold a webinar so that we can submit ourselves to scrutiny and questions. We also need to hold an AGM.

JB says it is constitutionally required for conference/AGM. Conference has exec scrutiny session with reports etc. We usually have two conferences a year where we can be scrutinised and people can issue votes of no-confidence in us. We need to have that opportunity for scrutiny. JB would be in

favour of formal chat but not FB messenger based as no moderation tools. Thinks Discord could work.

TC explains that what to do with executive scrutiny and conference may be a separate issue and should be discussed with Michael (Events) when they are around. This discussion should mainly be about ensuring online engagement with members.

JW says Discord could be used. On Conferences, conference committee shouldn't be undermined and work is being done in that committee. JW went through what a conference should have in terms of the minimum constitutional requirements of a conference. We can't have a slimmed down conference as it would not be constitutionally valid unless it contained everything as per constitution.

CH said that broad consensus seems in favour of Discord. Discord could work well in having more organised discussion on things. Let's you have clear threads so could have a light hearted thread, and also threads on policy discussions. Should also have an introductions thread. It's an optional thing for people to engage in so people shouldn't be anonymous. Because of party complaints procedure we need to ensure people can still submit complaints so therefore no one is anonymous.

FC says it won't wrap up after Coronavirus so need to be sure that we have procedure in place and agrees that we should delegate stuff about conference to conference committee and agrees we need scrutiny. Mentions that we didn't know conference committee was doing this because no report submitted. We can bring the honorary president, Tessa Munt, into anything where we may need to reinterpret constitution if for example doing an online conference and having to reinterpret certain sections of the constitution in terms of doing an online conference.

DS says that people can set their own nicknames but can be set so people have to answer questions and we can use the system like what is used in the Lib Dem Reddit discord. The system can be that you sign up and you get a welcome message asking for proof of identity (i.e. confirming via messenger or email that this is my discord username) and it can then be made clear that nicknames needs to be real life name so no one is anonymous. Will require testing and checking the system works but agrees that discord can be the way forward. Happy to proceed with discord and setting up if people are happy.

TC agrees discord seems the way forward. CH says it will be a lot of work for YLF forum mods and it would make sense to offer it to them first but find others to mod if they didn't want to do it, JB said he is happy to mod if needed

Action Point: DS to lead on setting up Discord and sorting out moderators

Mental Health Support

KM has a document she is working on with a number of different sections that she has written and sourced with Amanda. She's finishing this off and wants to get it into the point where we can PDF it and post it on the website.

Discussion held between Carol (Carers Rep) and KM on what could go out about students and carers and raised that other issues include graduating students whose plans may be disrupted or who are having difficulties paying rent with student finance about to end.

CF spoke about possibility of doing something on each of the sections she's talked about – staying social; keeping your schedule etc that would allow a focus on one area each week and could also do YL webinars

KM said we could push for different things. We could look at what different universities are doing responding to Coronavirus. We could do some webinars on different topics, something for women, something for carers, something for policy etc. KM also asks for feedback on document from other exec members.

JW agrees with idea of doing webinars. Thinks it's needed as we have all this time available. We could open it up to other topics that people would like – for example training or policy. We have an opportunity now with all this time.

CH mentioned that, on how to support carers, the most efficient and effective campaign would be to provide template letter for branches and individuals to send to students unions and councillors in local party. Raised that students unions should be involved with universities COVID-19 crisis centres. We should encourage engagement with SU's to engage with universities to ensure student voices heard. We could engage with NUS as they have templates and contacts available.

CF likes Jacks' idea on webinars. Can use Kathy's topics as a base and set stuff up based on those.

KM agrees on having non-mental health areas too and having a calendar of when events are to be held, can bring in accreditation scheme to do branch/society events

Action Point: TC says that AH, KM and CF can work on webinars together. We should make clear on any mental health advice given that we are not mental health professionals if we do give any advice as individuals or exec members. We could use the discord as a way of doing all this.

Campaigns Co-option

All voted to go into closed business (non-minuted)

Officer Reports & Exec Responsibilities

TC explained that we need all exec members to send apologies and officers report. It was in the exec regulations that if exec members miss 2 meetings in a row without apologies or 3 meetings in a term without apologies then technically the exec could count this as a resignation. She explains that she doesn't want to implement this but that sending apologies is very easy to do and that, going forward, she will have to implement these regulations. It's come up here that we don't know what conference committee is doing and this is an issue and it makes it harder for everyone else to do

their job. Providing officer's reports and apologies are the bare minimum asks and attendance of meetings is constitutionally what we were elected to do.

JW raised that we still don't have updated constitution and minutes on the websites. Thinks we should have one document that talks about all the actions that the exec and individual officers needs to be doing.

FC raised amending exec regulations so officers reports mandatory. TC agreed this was a good idea.

JB says that we shouldn't be enforcing things strictly now but that we should say if you're not sending apologies we will have to enforce things going forward and would agree on amending constitution to include officer's reports.

TC says in regards to updating minutes and officers reports to website, they are all with Charlie. He didn't have Nation builder access until Wednesday so couldn't do it before then but he should be able to do it now.

FC raised that it says that VC should be doing minutes. FC raises that amending the exec regs to ensure that people have codified responsibilities for example on updating constitution on website and asks when we were not following constitution and raised that it was easy to send apologies.

CH asks how this affects state chairs as they are not elected as part of federal executive

TC says that with state chairs they are elected by their own members and sent as representatives so it is not for YL exec to hold to account, it's up to individual state organisation to hold to account if they do not attend YL meetings

AH agreed with sentiment and that it was easy to send apologies. Said how it was currently difficult given the constitution on the website hasn't been updated and minutes are also lacking

TC will reemphasise the issue with everyone and restress the position of everyone in terms of sending apologies

CF said that she's had issues with contacting some people with requests from HQ which haven't got responded too. Asks that people be responsive even if it's just an apology and you can't look at things now.

GB raised if anyone is already in breach of the technically resigned position for lack of apologies/attendance as mentioned earlier

TC said they believe two roles currently in this position of technically resigning from the exec due to this. She reiterated that sending apologies as a minimum and officers reports wasn't too much to ask for an elected position we have all ran for.

JW raised that we voted last year on giving Vice Chair the task of updating constitution and raised that Exec Regulations could be amended by us as an executive to include any specific tasks if we wanted too.

AH agreed and said we could do it as an executive

TC said she'd send an email reminded people of duty to send apologies and that we'd be holding a vote to make officers reports mandatory in exec regulations

GB raised that it should be wait until Monday/Tuesday as we'll have a new campaigns officer in place then

TC agreed that it should wait a few days for new campaigns officer to come onto exec

AH raised that meetings are way that exec functions so that is why it's important everyone attended or apologised

GB raised that councillors have minutes and attendance summary available online, could we set up a similar thing for YL exec members, JW agreed

TC said minutes should be on website with attendance information and doesn't want to make the system too complicated

KM raised a colour coded system in students union for attendance and apologies

TC asks whether the exec would prefer to do a vote today to change exec regulations and in what way we'll do it.

KM thinks we need to ensure that we are mindful of extenuating circumstances. Said this vote could be email but that stressed future votes would be in meetings.

JB and AH both expressed their support for doing a vote now in the meeting

FC proposed amendment to Exec Regs:

add Exec Regs 2(6) and renumber accordingly: "6. All executive officers must submit written reports to the Chair at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting"

JW said FC has put forward a good amendment and that we should vote on it now

GB and DS both said happy to vote now

CH abstained, all others present voted Yes – vote passes overwhelmingly

JW raised the fact that vice chair had already been tasked with updating minutes and exec regs as per vote that took place last year

Action Point: JW to send to CM to update exec regs

Furlough

CF explained that the federal party was furloughing 50% of HQ staff due to COVID-19 crisis. Party services will go down from 9 people to 4 people. CF will therefore be doing other things aside from YL to keep HQ going. There would be a Federal board meeting on Monday confirming this.

BAME Officer Update

GB asked for an update on what was going on with the BAME Officer role

CF said that LDCRE had asked lawyers to investigate the validity of the constitution and co-option process. HQ believes YL has done nothing wrong. HQ and Amanda believe YL will need to wait until confirmation in legal advice is received to proceed with BAME officer co-option. YL was told three weeks ago about this from LDCRE but have been waiting for this time for a legal response. This means the position is in limbo. LDCRE hasn't told YL on what exactly they are consulting lawyers on nor have LDCRE asked YL for any information from Tara, Chessie or YL.

JB raises that he has concerns with the way that the current BAME officer position gives LDCRE and Federal Appeals Panel a lot of power over YL and consider whether we move to elected position or whether we do something else to give LDCRE less power over the officer role.

CF raised that we may have to rewrite the constitutional amendment if it is in violation of law. Opinion of HQ is that that part of constitution should be deemed null as in violation of the law.

JW raises that it might be an idea to invite BAME officer who is on diversity committee onto exec at least until situation is resolved and we have a BAME officer

JB raised that the way current BAME officer is selected doesn't take into account the views of BAME YLers because it is LDCRE's decision

AH reminds exec that Chris Annous remains the BAME officer as he was always temporary BAME officer until a permanent BAME Officer was appointed, which obviously still hasn't happened.

TC said she has informed Chris that he is still BAME officer but that Chris wasn't as interested in attendance of meetings if it was just a general YL meetings and discussions relating to BAME issues weren't coming up

KM said that other than Trans and Carers reps she hasn't had any other responses from diversity committee members but that she has asked the committee about this. KM said she could have a word with BAME officer on diversity committee about attending this meeting so we are ensuring BAME representation in the interim and mentioned that most other areas of diversity are present with current exec.

Action Point: Agreed that CF could continue to sort out co-option process for BAME Officer and that KM could extend invite to BAME Officer on Diversity Committee to Federal YL meetings.