

Young Fabian Exec – minutes

Present: Ellie Groves, Ria Bernard, Kyalo Burt-Fulcher, Kuba Stawiski, Charlotte Norton, Ben West, Luke John Davies.

Present for a period: Amrita Rose.

Present via phone link: Rebecca Meredith

I. Minutes from last meeting

1. The minutes of the last exec were taken as read.

II. Individual positions and aims for the year

1. Charlotte Norton noted that Anticipations was currently dominated by professional writers in their late twenties. She stated her aim of expanding the breadth of contributors to the magazine.

Charlotte Norton stated her intent to recruit an Anticipations Contributing Editor from outside Greater London.

Ellie Groves described the application process for an Anticipations co-optee last year. The Executive would review the applications, although the final decision would lie with Charlotte.

Charlotte Norton stressed it would be an open process, that would, however, exclude members resident in London.

Ben West offered to help with redesigning the YF blog.

Charlotte stated her intent to call out for photography and artwork pitches. Tim Khalid had already declared interest and offered the photography he took at the YF fringe at Fabian conference.

Charlotte expressed her intent to call for pieces from the speakers at the YF fringe. Charlotte asked everyone to continue to speak to members to encourage them to pitch for Anticipations.

Charlotte described her wish to make sure the blog was updated with two to three contributions a week.

2. Kuba Stawiski declared his intent to support chair Ellie Groves in her bid to professionalise the organisation, including producing YF business cards for the executive.

Kuba described his plan to create YF liberation forums as per the motion passed at AGM. This would be promoted at the YF Open Day at the end of January, and advertised by email.

Kuba Stawiski spoke of his proposed monthly regular email bulletin to members, which would maintain a constant dialogue with the membership and contain an overview of events, publications and society updates.

3. Amrita Rose began to present her proposal to conduct research on a Bedouin settlement near Ma'ale Adumim scheduled for demolition.

According to Amrita, the project was the result of the delegation to Israel and Palestine conducted last year. In particular, the focus would be in petitioning MPs to ask what had been done to keep the EU-funded school intact.

Amrita Rose asked if the Young Fabian name could be added to the petition, given the EU funding for the school and the recent UN Security Council resolution.

She noted the legal backing for the letter and that it would be a positive piece of work.

Rebecca Meredith noted that the EU funding meant that it was our taxpayers' money that would be endangered as a result of the demolition of the school, but that it would have to be balanced with Labour Friends of Israel to avoid perceptions of bias.

Ben West stated he would personally consider signing the letter, but that the Young Fabians do not, constitutionally, take collective positions.

Ria Bernard noted the need, if it were to be signed with the Young Fabian name, to agree the text with the membership, and the enormous difficulty of such an undertaking.

Luke John Davies said there was no issue with it being a list of Young Fabians as individuals.

Amrita said she understood the point, but could the term "YF Member" be added after the name.

Amrita reiterated the letter was being sent in a neutral context.

Ellie Groves suggested it might be worth contributing an article for the YF blog.

Luke John concurred, suggesting it might be possible to add a hyperlink to the article to sign the petition.

Ellie Groves agreed with the constitutional point about neutrality that had been raised.

Amrita asked if the exec would authorise an email to be issued to members.

Ellie suggested it might be something for the bulletin Kuba Stawiski had planned.

Amrita asked if there might be a way to get around the constitution.

Ben stated there was no precedent or constitutional foundation for policy motions at the Executive.

Ellie said the letter referred to the delegation only.

Jack Phipps noted that actioning all that had been proposed would affect more members than the delegation alone.

Kyalo Burt-Fulcher agreed.

Amrita insisted that the UN & pro-Bedouin organisations had fact-checked the letter.

Charlotte Norton asked if the claims could be referenced.

Luke John enquired if the demolition order had been put in place because the school was unsafe.

Ellie noted that it seemed there were two issues here – petitioning MPs, and spreading awareness. The letter only addressed the first.

Ellie further noted that the names of constituents needed to be added to the letter for it to be read by MPs. She suggested Wes Streeting MP and Andy Slaughter MP might be appropriate recipients of the petition.

Ellie suggested the letter be adapted and re-submitted to the exec.

Amrita demurred, stating the letter needed to go out on the day of the inauguration of US President Donald Trump.

Ria noted the strong language of the letter and the diversity of opinion among the membership on the issue of Israel and Palestine.

Amrita stated two perspectives could not be noted in the letter.

Ellie mentioned the need for events coordinated with LFI to maintain balance.

Kuba Stawiski said to the exec that, while he had deep sympathy towards the Bedouin people and had personally witnessed their plight around Ma'ale Adumim and that, in a personal capacity, he might even sign the letter himself, given the constitution and the need to maintain neutrality due to the diversity of membership, he recommended rejecting Amrita's proposal at the present time.

Ben stated that the Young Fabians do not send emails on behalf of causes.

Luke John suggested the name be changed from "Trump's inauguration" to "Trump's Presidency" to allow for more time to issue the letter.

Ellie restated the need to tread carefully in this complicated matter.

Amrita's colleague Rebecca, dialed into the conversation, declared that she believed the state of Israel should exist and that the project was not anti-Israeli. She said she believed the actions of the Israeli state go against the Oslo agreement.

Ellie restated that she believed individual Young Fabians should be able to sign the letter.

Amrita declared that, moving forward, individuals can sign the letter, she would call out for signatures, and that an event coordinated with the LFI needed to happen. She stated she wanted to present both sides of the argument.

Ria responded that she had been led to believe there would be a joint item.

Ellie said that in the circumstances of the recent weeks, the Israel and the Palestine delegations should be put together when producing output.

Ben expressed his concern about what was happening with the Israel and Palestine delegations and becoming involved in the inimical debate about the Middle East conflict.

Luke John concurred, stating the issue is hugely divisive to our membership.

Ellie expressed her belief that the Fabian Society executive should become involved in order to discuss what the purpose of the delegations is.

Amrita expressed her opposition to those proposals. She noted the delegations had received YF executive approval and they had engaged with experts.

Ria noted the Israel delegation could not produce a pamphlet.

Ellie suggested a joint pamphlet, with one chapter referring to Israel, one to Palestine.

Amrita disagreed, stated that was not what had been approved.

Luke John noted that, during his tenure as chair of the international network, while there was no intent to put out a joint pamphlet, the aim was always that the delegations be viewed in conjunction and two related pamphlets be published.

Ellie expressed her belief that meetings with Martin, Rayhan, Nathaneal and Amrita should be set up, including another exec member, to coordinate the delegation efforts.

Amrita expressed her disagreement with the executive's conclusions.

Ellie asked about the point of the LFI event, if not to coordinate with the Palestine delegation.

Miriam Mirwitsch noted that she agreed fully with the content of the letter and stressed the need to provide members with the option to sign it, though she would not be comfortable signing it given the strong wording of it.

Ellie asked if, in the present circumstances, the LFI event could be postponed until further notice.

Kuba concurred, and expressed his growing concerns after a more detailed reading of the letter.

Jack expressed his concerns about safeguarding in the current circumstances.

Miriam concurred.

Amrita noted that the LFI event was meant to demonstrate the diversity of views within the Young Fabians.

Ellie expressed her belief that this conversation should be postponed until circumstances change and the executive has time to properly consider any proposals.

Ben suggested organising an event with a Middle East expert.

Ellie asked for a proposal from Amrita.

Charlotte asked for a proposal for research from Amrita.

4. Nathaneal Amos-Sansam's proposal for his role was read out and, in principle, agreed.

Ellie Groves also individually expressed her agreement.

5. Miriam Mirwitch presented her proposal for a streamlined disability, safeguarding and welfare service as her role for the coming year. She declared herself available for contact in case of any disability concerns and noted the need for a standardised complaints procedure.

Ria Bernard noted the accessibility issues for many Young Fabian events, including the inability of a Fabian member to join the post-conference social due to an inaccessible venue.

Miriam stated she would be happy to check the local pubs with regards to accessibility.

Luke John Davies said the executive should speak to member affected by the inaccessible venue for the post-conference social.

6. Jack Phipps noted he would be helping out with Anticipations, as he had done with the previous edition. They would be, as Charlotte Norton had declared, be co-opting another person as well. He declared his intent to expand into the blog as well.

He also expressed his readiness to work with Nathaneal in organising campaign training rounds for members.

7. Luke John Davies noted he would be performing the role of Regions Officer. He had already had conversations with members in Liverpool and Oxford. He noted a number of local groups he wanted to help expand, and his desire to hold events out of London.

Kuba Stawiski suggested getting in touch with Adam Nundy in the East Midlands.

8. Ria Bernard noted she would continue her work with promoting and training women to participate in the organisation. She would also provide network support, and take a lead role on event organisation.

9. Ben West stated he wanted to continue his role with the Defence Review, including organising a launch event for it. He also wanted to begin a Brexit project, as well as continue last year's work on door-to-door canvassing opinion outside London, such as had been conducted in Birmingham in August.

Ellie Groves noted it would be interesting to conduct some research on campaign effectiveness.

10. Rebecca declared she had liaised with Emma and they would both be interested in jointly performing the role of campaigns officer. Rebecca discussed her belief that members feel the lack of a vehicle to put their conclusions into practice.

Rebecca expressed her intent to lobby Bills in parliament and to get politicians to take up causes close to members' hearts, though she noted this could not work for controversial causes.

Rebecca expressed her belief that the Young Fabians are silent on what precisely they are doing.

Ellie Groves noted her wish to produce more written output, given the quality of Young Fabian thinking.

Ellie further noted her intent to make the Young Fabians slightly more relevant to the national political conversation.

Kuba Stawiski advised to liaise on that role with Nathaneal Amos-Sansam.

Rebecca further expressed her idea to provide legal advice for Young Fabian members, so that the Young Fabians are not just a voice within the Labour Party.

11. Kyalo Burt-Fulcher updated on the role of Treasurer. He hasn't received financial details from previous Treasurer yet, though will be soon. The Treasury owes over £400 to members, though the current account stands at £7300.

He said there would be no issue with printing Young Fabian business cards in terms of finances.

Ellie Groves again noted she would like to produce business cards and provide more written work. She again emphasised her desire to produce more written work, both pamphlets and smaller campaign

III. Comms strategy inc. emails to members and emails

1. Ellie Groves spoke of the problem with the Young Fabian email accounts. She had concluded that new accounts would be necessary.

Kyalo noted that it might be worth tracing the account the money is coming from to identify the administrator.

Ellie stated there would be two actions on this point:

- a) Identifying the source of money,
- b) Setting up new accounts, with @yf.org.uk as the domain.

Ria Bernard also discussed the need to set up auto-forwarding from the old accounts.

2. Kuba Stawiski laid out his proposal for a monthly bulletin, to be launched at the end of either January or February.
3. Kuba Stawiski also stressed the need for a coherent social media strategy, and noted the need to not engage in factional disputes using the Young Fabian social media.

IV. Network funding

1. Ellie Groves noted that access to some funds was already embedded in the network structure.

Ria Bernard concurred.

Charlotte Norton stressed the need for executive members also holding official network positions to excuse themselves from funding decisions which might affect the networks involved.

Ben West argued this called for a clear set of guidelines on funding.

Kyalo Burt-Fulcher concurred with the previous speakers, on the assumption he could access the funds.

Ellie Groves stated she believed guidelines could be provided even if Kyalo could not access funds.

Kyalo noted that a different debate that might be necessary was whether the Young Fabians would not provide funding to some initiatives.

Luke John Davies stated that guidelines could be developed through practice.

Ben West disagreed.

V. Regional strategy (inc. funding)

1. Ellie Groves noted that events needed to be made more accessible to members outside of London. As an example, she cited subsidizing boat party tickets and a targeted regional leaflet – about which she had spoken to Ben Gartside. She asked if Ben West could design one.

Ben West stated he could not see a reason why he couldn't.

Ellie Groves noted that the Fabian Society had spoken of funding for this initiative.

2. Luke John Davies stated he believed couchsurfing could be an important initiative towards making the Young Fabians more inclusive.

Ellie Groves agreed the boat party should be on the agenda for next month.

VI. Open Day overview

1. Ria Bernard discussed her proposed plan for the Open Day, including a short, introductory talk at 8:45, six network AGMs and two training sessions. She outlined the six networks that had requested a slot, including the three new networks.

Miriam Mirwitch asked if a pub social would be organized. Ria said it would.

Ria Bernard discussed the issues surrounding the venue booked by Jade Symmonds – the Roberts Building at UCL and argued the venue be reconsidered.

Miriam expressed her concerns regarding the accessibility of the venue.

Ellie Groves noted the overcrowding of last year's Open Day, held at Fabian HQ.

Ria noted that last year it had been used for two events at the same time.

Rebecca Meredith expressed her concern for wheelchair users. She declared she would investigate the possibility of booking the Royal College of Surgeons.

Ellie asked for the venue to be considered carefully, with special regard for accessibility issues.

Ben West stressed the need for clear voter registration procedures.

Ellie concurred.

Rebecca stated she would ask about the Royal College of Surgeons the following day.

Ellie asked if the Facebook event could make the venue TBC.

The agenda for the Open Day was accepted as proposed by Ria.

Ellie asked Kuba Stawiski if the proceeding of the Open Day could be included in the proposed bulletin.

Kuba said he would seek to clarify the voting rules with Ellie by Friday.

2. Ria Bernard stressed she would try to make it possible to videolink into the conversation.

Miriam Mirwitch asked if it would be filmed, given the safeguarding issues.

Ria said probably no, but that members should be made aware this is a public event in case of concerns.

VII. Next meeting

1. Ellie Groves noted her intent to schedule the next meetings for the first Monday of each month at 7:00 – 8:30 PM.

VIII. A.O.B.

1. Ria Bernard spoke of her charity proposal regarding donations to a registered charity that assists children with development and adjustment issues within the schools where Ria works.

The exec had no in principal objections to the proposal.