

Young Fabian Exec – minutes

Present: Ria Bernard, Kuba Stawiski, Charlotte Norton, Ben West, Jack Phipps, Miriam Mirwitch, Nathaneal Amos-Sansam

Non-exec members present: Ben Gartside

Present via phone link: Luke John Davies, Andy Scott, Kirith Ahluwalia (later).

I. Minutes from last meeting

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

II. The Chair's report pt.1 (in Appendix 1).

1. Ben West noted, in reference to the proposal by Ellie Groves to create a brief advertisement for the Young Fabians, that he had not been aware of being assigned a task for the year.
2. Charlotte Norton said she had discussed the photos taken by Tim Khalid at the Open Day with Tim, so that they could be used for the advert.
3. Kuba Stawiski stated that the changes to the constitution would be passed in March, as the previous meeting had been inquorate.
4. Ben West pointed out that four Networks still needed to hold AGMs, but that not all had been organised.

III. [Item redacted for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998]

IV. The Chair's report pt. II.

1. Ria Bernard continued to read the Chair's report. She asked whether the Executive agreed with Ellie's proposal for the process to approve Network proposals.

Ben West disagreed fundamentally, arguing it conveyed a sense of bureaucratic complexity that went against the idea of a member-led organisation and deprive them of the empowerment the constitution envisions.

Ben noted it resembled the bureaucracy under Alex Adranghi and James Hallwood.

Charlotte Norton expressed her approval of the calendar and the WhatsApp Group, but not the extra regulations.

Nathneal Amos-Sansam said that life gets in the way of the calendar sometimes.

Kuba Stawiski noted that other places, like the elections, need more rules and regulations, but perhaps not the Network project proposal system.

Jack Phipps stated that the principle of this is sensible, but individual issues such as access to data remain a problem.

Miriam Mirwitch expressed concern in particular for under-18 members.

Jack said he believed if the ideas could be streamlined, they could be a workable solution.

[Redacted]

Ria acknowledged the issues around the numbers, but was happy with the open communication. Networks are offered help through a focal point on the Executive, which happens to be Ria this year.

Charlotte Norton stated that she didn't think this should be voted on, but should be refined and put as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Jack concurred and stated this could be discussed collaboratively at the next meeting.

Charlotte Norton wanted her view that the only people to have access should be the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.

Ria Bernard agreed, stating that the key players should be included and the Network Chairs invited to the next meeting.

Jack restated his position as being in agreement with the principles of Ellie's proposal, but disagreement with the wording.

V. Secretary business

1. Kuba Stawiski noted that a lot of Secretary business had already been covered.
2. [redacted]

3. Kuba stated the email problem had been buried in a sea of other business, particularly in relation to the networks and the Open Day. He said a further report with quotes for hosting would be made to the next meeting.
4. Kuba Stawiski informed the exec his first regular bulletin would go out at the end of the month, and raised the issue of whether minutes should be attached to the regular bulletin as a possible route to consider.
5. Ria Bernard spoke of the emails set to go out regarding Network AGMs.
6. Kuba Stawiski noted the issue of spamming and un-subscriptions to Young Fabian email communications.

Jack Phipps asked if this was the motivating factor behind Ellie's proposal.

Kuba answered it was not, but there is a need to address the question given circa 25 supporters unsubscribed from emails recently.

Jack noted Facebook was not an effective means of communicating, given he was beginning to ignore most of his event invites.

Kuba stated this would be an agenda item at the next meeting, restraint in sending out emails.

Charlotte Norton agreed, but asked Network Chairs also be consulted.

Ben West said that, in his experience, separate emails achieved better response rates, but they should not be directed to everyone and that the aim was to encourage people to sign up to network emails.

Nathaneal interjected that Kirith Ahluwalia wanted to call into the meeting.

Ria Bernard stated Kuba Stawiski would include this in the agenda for the next meeting.

VI. Accounts.

1. Ria Bernard noted Kyalo Burt-Fulcher's absence and stated that she had spoken to him the previous day. He still had not received an account handover from Unsa Chaudri, the previous Treasurer.

VII. Anticipations update

1. Charlotte Norton gave a short update on the current state of Anticipations.

2. Charlotte explained her plan to make slight changes to the formatting, spoke of the pitches she had received so far and her contacts with Liam Byrne MP, a previous Editor, regarding the article “Skinning Skinner” in an edition from when he was Editor.
3. Jack Phipps expressed his formal apology for not contributing enough and promised to step up in the amount of work he would be doing.
4. Ben Gartside spoke of his plans to improve young, female and BAME pitches for the magazine and of his planned interview with Stephen Kinnock MP. He asked if there was any interest in a panel debate to accompany the launch of the magazine, as it would help with getting reactive responses to the magazine.

Kirith Ahluwalia joined the meeting via phone

5. Ben Gartside spoke of his interest in the future of Milibandism.
6. Ben West stated it would “fall under a rock.”
7. Charlotte outlined her plan for Google Hangout events for women and BAME Young Fabian members to encourage them to pitch.
8. Charlotte asked if we needed to vote for Ben Gartside to have access to the Anticipations email address.
9. Jack Phipps said it should be fine.
10. Ria Bernard called a vote on whether both Ben Gartside and Jack Phipps could access the Anticipations email account.

Results:

For: 9

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0.

The motion passed.

11. Charlotte stated she would give Ben Gartside and Jack Phipps the password.
12. Ben West advised on Buffer, a potential tool to increase social media traffic for the Anticipations blog.,
13. Ben Gartside asked if there was an Anticipations Facebook page.

Kuba Stawiski said no.

Ben West said it would perhaps be appropriate to give access to exec members to the Facebook page.

14. Ben Gartside said the team would work on boosting the blog, producing articles for the blog alone of about 500 words in length.
15. Ben West stated there should be money available to boost posts for the blog from the Facebook page.

Jack Phipps agreed, stating it was incredibly cheap.

Charlotte asked if perhaps the Chair of London Young Labour could promote Anticipations.

Ben Gartside said he would come to that later.

VIII. Open Day feedback/ Network update

1. Ria Bernard asked for feedback on the Open Day. She thanked a number of exec members who had helped out, including Ellie Groves, Kuba Stawiski, Charlotte Norton and Ben West.
2. Ria Bernard noted it was difficult to get Young Fabian members to attend AGMs, but recognised that they had indeed attended.
3. Ria Bernard gave a Network update, noting the 4 outstanding AGMs, for which she gave dates. She confirmed emails had gone out announcing all of those.
4. Kuba Stawiski asked if the discussion could move on to the project proposal.

IX. Network event proposal

1. Ria Bernard asked if Andy Scott could update on the proposal to invite Douglas Carswell MP.

Charlotte Norton made her opposition to hosting that event clear.

Ben West said that Trump doesn't get to speak to Parliament, so Carswell should not speak to YF.

Luke John Davies noted the event was to be held in Central Birmingham.

Ria noted Ellie Groves's suggestion to invite a Labour MP to counter Douglas Carswell.

Andy Scott stated he had no other knowledge about the event apart from what had been said here. He expressed his belief that inviting a strong Remain MP might balance the discussion.

Charlotte restated her opposition. She noted that Douglas Carswell's beliefs are contrary to those of the Fabian Society and might violate the Safe Space Policy.

Miriam Mirwitch voiced her opinion that the situation might be different if it was Kate Hoey or Gisela Stuart, but Douglas Carswell was not appropriate.

Ben West suggested someone from local government might want to take part. He stated he thought this event was sensationalist and controversial for its own sake. He asked if Douglas Carswell has ever expressed any opinion on devolution, and if he had any experience of local government. He asked the Executive to vote to block the event.

Ben Gartside said he believed Douglas Carswell was, in principle, opposed to devolution. He noted there were plenty of Labour people with interesting perspectives.

Kuba Stawiski noted his opposition to the event, as Douglas Carswell's values stood in opposition to those of the Fabian Society.

Kirith Ahluwalia said that a UKIP MP might provide for an interesting and stimulating event. She asked if there were more details about this event available, and whether there would be more than just a UKIP voice.

Ria said she had had an email discussion with David McKenzie, the proposed organiser. The event was to be part of promoting Carswell's book "The Plan", which was hard on Carswell according to Dan Hannan. It would tie in to upcoming by-elections.

Ria noted the reputational risk involved in publicising such an event by Douglas Carswell, a UKIP MP. David McKenzie explicitly wanted to provoke a controversy, according to her conversations with him. He had stated, however, that this would not be the launch event for the Devolution and Local Government Network.

Kirith said she was satisfied with the answer and that this might be an interesting event if reframed.

Luke noted the problem with holding such an event in Birmingham, near Stoke, with the Stoke by-election looming. The Fabian Society might take issue with that.

Charlotte Norton stated she had just researched Douglas Carswell's stance on devolution and he has not once voted on it in parliament and had not, according to her findings, expressed an opinion on the subject.

Ben West said he believed we were wasting our time. At the last meeting, most of the agenda was taken up by a proposed project that was rejected due to its controversial nature, and now this.

Nathaneal Amos-Sansam asked why Dan Hannan had not been invited, rather than a UKIP MP? Why did it have to be Carswell?

Ria suggested this should go to a vote.

Ben West noted the exec had already by consensus decided a Remain MP was necessary for this event, and thus the vote would be on holding the event with Douglas Carswell and a Remain MP.

Ria asked to confirm that. No-one voiced objections.

Ria called a vote on the following:

The Executive approve the event with a Remain MP and Douglas Carswell.

The results were as follows:

For: 0

Against: 9

Abstentions: 0.

The Executive voted to block the event with Douglas Carswell.

2. Ria Bernard stated she would email Andrew Scott and David McKenzie with these official results, copying in Ellie Groves, the Chair.
Charlotte Norton stated the Young Fabians enjoy controversy, this vote wasn't about that, but about Douglas Carswell.

Ben West said he believed the event was simply not relevant to the network or the Young Fabians.

X. Project proposal

1. Ria Bernard outlined the proposal by Isaac Turner on the environment.

Ben Gartside said he would talk to Isaac Turner in Manchester.

Ben West thought there should be a counter-proposal put to the committee, as the current one provided insufficient details.

Charlotte Norton said she believed he should be invited to come to the exec.

Ria agreed.

Charlotte noted in tied in with the Fabian Society's recent document on rural policy.

Ria suggested Charlotte, Ben, Luke John Davies and Isaac should meet to discuss the proposal and that Isaac would be invited to an exec meeting.

XI. Charity proposal

1. Ria Bernard described her proposed hardship fund.

Ben West suggested it should be called “Charity of the Year”.

Charlotte Norton asked if it would be expanded to Tower Hamlets.

Ria said perhaps in future.

Miriam Mirwitch suggested a pound could be added to the Boat Party cost for this could.

Ria said she would liaise with Kuba Stawiski and Charlotte about publicity for the charity.

XII. A.O.B.

1. Charlotte Norton and Kirith discussed the timing of the next meeting and of BAME Network Steering Committee, and agreed the 8th of March was a suitable date.

Appendix 1

Chair Report – 13/02/17

Very sorry that I am unable to make this event, I have met with Ria before the meeting and am in constant contact with Kuba (sorry Kuba).

Very quickly, a short overview:

General

- Firstly, well done to Miriam!! I am so pleased that she has been voted to be chair of London Young Labour.
- Exec emails – Kuba is looking into this. It should be enacted as soon as possible. – also include all Networks having basic emails (eg. lawnetwork@....) They should then be included in all emails about the Exec meetings, agenda and minutes.
- When this is done I will get business cards worked up.
- **Action: Marketing materials – it would be good to get an A5 brochure to market the Young Fabians activity. Especially now we have pictures from Ian and Tim, I will contact Ian, Tim and Ben West (if Ben is ok with this?) so we can put something together and get it printed in time for our March meeting.**
- We will have our Conditional changes looked at and voted on by the Fabians in March, I have been drawing together a few documents to strengthen our case but this should go through easily.
- I have been helping with the coordination of the other network AGMs and facilitating answering emails.

Networks

- I have contacted Sonia and Laween in regards to the membership and Network Sec issue – this needs to be discussed further.
- Network AGM – was a good day where we saw a lot of new members come through the door, this shouldn't be missed as an opportunity.
- **Action: email - I propose that following all Network AGMs an email goes out asking all members to sign up to emails from Networks they are interested in hearing from (like the email we sent out last year.)**

- **Action: Meeting with all Network Chairs – when all Network chairs have been voted in Kuba, Ria and I will have a meeting where we give NationBuilder training and an overview of procedures – also set up a whatsapp group. (I would also suggest that Charlotte tries to attend the beginning or end so she can go through how she would like them to contribute to the blog/Antics magazine, but happy to talk to her offline about this?)**