

## **Minutes of Officer Meeting on 11.03.2024**

The meeting of the four Officers, Richard Moore (Chair), Councillor Jack Rydeheard (Deputy Chair Political - DCP), Councillor Jackie Harris (Deputy Chair Membership, Finance and Fundraising - DCM) and Henry Neville (Branch Secretary) took place at the Brown Cow, Elton Ward, at 7pm on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

The following was discussed:

### **Agenda**

#### *1. Welcome/Introductions*

The Chair opened the meeting, thanking Officers for making the time to attend. Brief introductions took place.

#### *2. Vision Document*

The Vision document was circulated prior to the meeting. The four Officers present confirmed their agreement to the content upon proposal by the DCP, who drafted the document, with minor amendments to some terminology.

The Chair proposed that the Branch vote on the document at the next Branch meeting, given that it is a positive vision for how the Branch would like to operate. The Branch Secretary and DCM both agreed that this would be a good idea, both for transparency and to get Branch members involved in the Officers' decision making.

The DCP proposed circulating the document prior to the next Branch meeting in order to allow members to read over it in advance – this should be by the end of Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March in order to allow members to read it over in good time. The DCP agreed to introduce the document at the next Branch meeting, and take questions from the floor from attendees.

The Officers agreed the proposal, and agreed that there be no quorum limit on adoption. A simple majority of those present would mean that the document is adopted in full for a period of one year until the Branch meeting following the next AGM for the Branch, at which time the elected Officers at the next AGM can consider whether to re-adopt or amend the document for the future.

#### *3. Fundraising Plan*

Many ideas were discussed by Officers, in terms of format and in terms of locations. The DCM, also the Fundraising Officer, suggested that we move fundraisers between the wards in the Branch and coordinate events with the main Association. The Officers agreed that this was the right approach.

Venues discussed were Elton Liberal Club, Cosalea, Elton Vale Sports Club, St Anne's Church, Bilardi's Bar, the Garsdale. The Officers agreed that this list is not exhaustive and is certainly not exclusive. Officers agreed that Members of the Branch should be encouraged to make suggestions to the DCM for any ideas for fundraisers.

Timings were also discussed. The DCP proposed that times to avoid for fundraisers were Bank Holidays, the school Summer Holidays and other major times of the year, as people are likely to make plans with family. The Officers noted this.

The DCM proposed that she go away and organise a fundraising diary for the Branch following the main Bury Conservative Association AGM on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March, to cross coordinate our funding for mutual benefit.

Officers agreed with this approach.

#### *4. Meeting Dates*

The DCP explained that the election period begins on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March. The Chair added that he agrees with the former Chair's point of view that holding a meeting during the election period was tricky, as we may have to declare any expenses incurred, split between the budgets for the three wards within the Branch.



The DCP proposed for the next Branch meeting to be on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March. This is due to their being no campaign sessions, no diarised Council Group meetings, no Council Committee meetings and no events of which he knew taking place on that evening. It is further prior to the start of the election period.

The Branch Secretary raised concerns over short notice for members, but acknowledged that it was probably the only plausible date.

The DCP proposed that a campaign session take place prior to the start of the meeting, at 6pm, with attendees to be entitled to a free drink funded by the Branch budget at the meeting to follow at 7:15pm. Officers agreed that this was a different but positive approach, and its success as a format should be evaluated following the meeting. The DCP agreed to go away and plan the session's and the meeting's locations, and for an email to be sent to Branch members by the Chair on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March.

The Officers agreed that the meeting should take place as above.

The Chair proposed that the meeting after that take place at Elton Liberal Club after the election on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May. The DCP offered to approach Elton Liberal Club to facilitate this.

The Officers agreed to this.

#### *5. Allocation of Financial Support for May's Elections*

The progress on the bank account is still pending. It was agreed that the Branch Chair, DCP and DCM would be the three signatories on the new amalgamated account.

Officers agreed that we have over £1,200 in the Branch's accounts as it stands, and that whilst this is a healthy position we would like to start spending this on campaigning activity.

The Officers agreed that it was only fair to ringfence any funding brought into the amalgamated account to the individual wards who currently have possession of the funding. Therefore, wards with existing funding in their bank account will be entitled to spend that funding on their own campaigning activities.

It was agreed that the funding is much more easy to distribute when the Councillors and Candidates have informed the DCP and Chair as to what help they need.

The Officers agreed to wait on hearing from the Councillors and Candidates as to what help they require before making any distribution of any funding from the Branch.

#### *6. Campaign Planning*

The DCP informed the Officers that he had sent a request to the Tottington and Bury West Candidates, and had spoken directly with the Elton Candidate, to ask them what help they need currently and are anticipated to need ahead of the elections. The Chair and DCP will both chase the Councillors and Candidates for a reply on this, alongside reminding them at the next Branch meeting on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March.

Aside from this, the Officers agreed that we should up our game on social media across the three wards in our Branch.

The DCP suggested that he make contact with the provider of his video ending clips, to develop one for each candidate. This will likely cost around £25 per ending at most. The DCP will contact candidates as to their design preferences when the quotation and the confirmation of ability to execute this is received from the provider.

The Chair suggested that an increase in online content would be a great idea, as we are doing a lot in our respective communities and we need to show our residents the positive actions we are taking. The Officers agreed, and the DCM suggested that each candidate commits to putting out at least one video dedicated to action on an online issue. The DCP suggested that the Branch fund this and the Officers agreed, with a budget to be set upon receipt of ideas from the Candidates as to the funding which they believe would be helpful from the Branch.



The DCP further suggested that the videos be completed and ready to be boosted by 8<sup>th</sup> April, in order to be received by the electorate in good time for postal votes landing from 18<sup>th</sup> April. The DCP clarified that he has software to edit, subtitle and add the respective endings onto videos to make them look professional. The Officers agreed that this should be an incentive.

Councillors and Candidates will be informed of the initiative at the next Branch Meeting, which provides a three week window for Candidates to prepare their video and for the DCP to finalise the edits and put them out.

In order to do this, The Officers agreed that the DCP should request administration rights to the social media accounts for the candidates in the three wards, in order to facilitate the efficient deployment of campaign material online.

The Chair and DCM agreed to chase the candidates on what help they need for their respective wards.

#### *7. Branch Email Addresses*

The discussion over whether to fund five new Branch email addresses was had.

The Chair indicated that this would cost £60 and he would explore the possibilities with the domain provider in order to confirm this in writing.

Officers discussed the format that the email addresses should take. It was agreed that the domain name would take the form of the current Association domain (i.e ...@buryconservatives.org.uk). Officers agreed upon proposal from the DCP that the five email addresses, if agreed, should begin as follows: Chair@...; DCP@...; DCM@...; Secretary@...; and Kirklees@... . This, the DCP clarified, was suggested in order to allow continuity upon changes to appointments of the officers at any future AGM. The Branch Secretary suggested that all four Officers should have access to the Kirklees@... email address in order to assist with general enquiries on a more fluid basis and this was agreed.

Officers agreed that the Chair would explore the costing of the above, with the above email address formats to be adopted should the costings be reasonable.

#### *8. Agreement Process for Signing off Expenses*

The Officers discussed plans for signing off expenses, and agreed that the DCP will design a formal process and form to be completed when requesting reimbursement of future expenses. This will be developed by Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

The Officers agreed that any expense to be reimbursed should be agreed in advance of the money being spent by the party requesting reimbursement.

The Officers, for transparency, have a WhatsApp group for efficiency. Candidates should approach the Chair or DCP with requests for funding and the four Officers will make a joint decision by majority on whether to approve this as soon as possible.

The DCP reiterated commitment for efficiency in this regard. The Officers agreed the above.

#### *9. Any Other Business (AOB)*

### **Membership**

The Chair set out his view that he would like to focus on a drive to increase membership for the Branch. The DCM added her appreciation to the old set of Officers for being successful in getting a high level of attendance at fundraisers and increasing membership in the Branch, despite main Association membership falling.

The Secretary spoke to acknowledge the difference between membership and active membership, and credited the previous set of Officers for fostering an active membership within the Branch. This was echoed by all four Officers.



The Chair proposed that he approach friendly local business owners with a view to exploring an incentive scheme for membership or active membership, as the national party does through offers like a discounted Telegraph subscription.

It was agreed by Officers that the Chair will work with the Association's DCP in order to design an approach towards local businesses with a view to developing a scheme in coordination with the Association.

### **Young Conservative Membership**

The Chair clarified that he knew of more than 30 Young Conservatives in Bury Conservative Association, though we are unsure how many of these reside within the jurisdiction of the Kirklees Trail Branch.

The Chair clarified that he had approached Adam Lewis, the Bury Conservatives candidate for Ramsbottom ward but a resident of Bury West ward, to ask if he might consider leading recruitment and enaction of a Branch Young Conservative Group should the Officers agree. Adam Lewis is in favour of the idea and is happy to lead the initiative.

The Officers agreed that Adam Lewis be agreed as the Young Conservative Lead for the Branch.

The Chair proposed that in the spirit of putting Young Conservatives at the heart of the Branch's decision making, that the Young Conservatives lead should attend Officer meetings. The DCP noted that whilst this was a positive suggestion, Officer meetings are made up of constitutionally appointed positions and the Young Conservatives Lead is not one of these.

The Officers agreed that the decision as to whether to adopt the Young Conservatives Lead as an attendee to future Officer meetings be delayed until he has had chance to settle into the role.