

Dr Peter Gates  
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**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

To: Ann Black, Christine Shawcroft, Darren Williams, Andy Kerr, Jeremy Corbyn, Claudia Webb, Pete Willsman, Jennie Formby, Jim Kennedy,

CC: Martin Lee Solicitors,

Dear Ann and Colleagues,

**Serious Concerns over Procedural Irregularities and Interference in Dealing with an Administrative Suspension**

I was hoping that I would not have to write again after Ann Black emailed me back in July informing me she was intending to request the immediate lifting of my suspension. However, I have now found myself in a situation where it appears the procedures over my suspension have been seriously compromised, and I do not feel that I can have any confidence in the independence of the process, or in the likelihood of a hearing being at all just or fair. This is a result of interference in the process, and further irregularities which appear to be not of a random or unintentional nature. I am writing to Ann as Chair of the Disputes Panel, and to Christine, Darren, Ian and Jeremy, as members of that Panel and elected officers of the NEC because these irregularities represent quite serious transgressions. I no longer have any confidence that I will get a fair hearing from the NCC. More significantly I feel that this needs to be dealt with in other ways, and referred back to the Disputes Panel for reconsideration given the seriousness of the irregularities which contravene due processes including Labour Party rules and natural justice.

I have prepared and presented to the NCC my full response and complete rebuttal of all allegations made against me; this now runs to 475 pages including the original Charges Pack; not one of the allegations has any substance and are all fabrications. I am happy to supply you all with copies of this. I do not know if any of you or the Disputes Panel itself has actually seen the so-called Charges Pack, but it is an absolute disgrace; devoid of any evidence, full of invective, false allegations, irrelevant material and missing pages. I cannot believe anyone on the NEC has seen or approved it. In any fair process, it would have been thrown out as inadmissible. Through my solicitor I have asked for evidence to be provided to substantiate the allegations. No evidence has thus far been provided. Naturally – because there can be none.

The Secretary of the NCC makes it clear in her email of **4th December 2017 (Email 11)** that *"the NCC ... will act on the basis that the charges are properly brought before them and cannot become embroiled in dealing with complaints about the administration of any investigation leading to the charges" ....* Furthermore, complaints about the conduct of an investigation are not within the remit of the NCC. It therefore seems inappropriate to continue communicating with the NCC when there are serious concerns about impropriety. Hence, Ann and colleagues, my contacting you.

In my personal and long professional life I have always treated people with respect and courtesy. I expect no less of the way I should be treated by the Labour Party. Instead I find myself treated with utter contempt as if I were a common criminal – rather than a committed Party member of 25 years standing. I will outline here the main issues, but they are complex and I apologise for the length of this letter. I have appended important documentation to this letter including all correspondence between my solicitor, Martin Lee, and Jane Shaw, Secretary of the NCC.

## Procedural Irregularities

1. **Irregularity in original Suspension.** I was suspended after attending a CLP meeting to which I was invited on **7<sup>th</sup> March 2016**. It was only at this meeting that it was suggested it was a CLP Executive Committee meeting. I only discovered on receiving the Charges Pack on **27<sup>th</sup> July 2017** that this meeting was to discuss allegations made against me in **January 2016**; allegations of which I had absolutely no knowledge until I received the Charges Pack **27<sup>th</sup> July 2017**, almost *17 months* after the suspension! In addition, only the complainants and *no other* EC member, had any knowledge of the purpose of the meeting in the absence of any agenda. One of the complainants was the CLP Secretary and minute taker to this meeting, which was quite improper. It is now clear that this meeting was an attempt to ambush me in an egregious kangaroo court, and Regional Officials were complicit in setting up this meeting in clear contravention of Labour Party Rule **Chapter 6, Clause II, 1, A-M**.
2. **Collusion Between Complainants and Party Officials.** It is clear to me, and evidence is provided in my Response, that there was collusion between the small number of complainants and Regional Officials. Evidence of this is clear in the Charges Pack, and represents one-sided partial liaisons at the expense of even-handed, open, objective and fair communications. A series of email complaints was coordinated and all allegations were kept secret from me and all other nine suspended members for eighteen months. I can provide more details, but do not want to be seen as making allegations against Party employees at this point, other than to point out anomalies in the process. Errors were made, Labour Party Rules were not adhered to, information has been kept from me for 18 months, and improper allegations made by the Regional Director (All detailed in my response, and see **Item 5** below). There are serious questions to be asked about the intentions of those involved.
3. **My Subject Access Request.** In order to try to find the reasons for my suspension, I submitted a Subject Access Request in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 ("DPA 1998") and followed procedures outlined by the Office of the Information Commissioner. After forty-one days, I received forty-seven pages — which can be found in my Response. What is especially worrying is that in the material supplied by the Labour Party, there is no record of any communication with *me*, particularly over issues I have fully documented in my Response. Specifically, there is no record of:
  - communication with Regional Officer Finbar Bowie over the Members' Workshop;
  - communication over my resignation as a CLP Secretary on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015;
  - my complaint over the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015 GC meeting at which I resigned;
  - correspondence with Finbar Bowie over the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016 meeting;
  - my meeting with Regional Director Gordon Pattison in June 2016.

The material provided contains no complaint made against me other than an obscure reference to a complaint in one email dated **19<sup>th</sup> January 2016**. All of this suggests a failure by the Labour Party to comply with the DPA 1998. What is very worrying is it is as if the material has been carefully selected to give a one-sided and negative impression of me by omission of significant material the Party holds on me, and which documents the hostile treatment I received, and the advice I received in response to my own complaint in November 2015, to deal with disputes locally.

4. **Falsification of Evidence.** It only came clear in **October 2016** that the CLP Secretary - one of the complainants - had prepared two quite distinct sets of minutes to the CLP meeting on **7<sup>th</sup> March 2016** and presented these to two different groups. When this came to light, the CLP EC and subsequently the CLP GC agreed to undertake an investigation into this in accordance with Labour Party Rules (**Chapter 6, Clause II, 1, A-M**) and set up a panel of three EC members (6,II,2,G) chaired by one of whom is a Barrister. (See **Item 12** below).

5. **Meeting with Gordon Pattison.** On **28<sup>th</sup> June 2016**, I had a meeting with the then East Midlands Regional Director, Gordon Pattison (with a Regional Organiser, George Carr-Williamson, taking notes). I have still been denied access to the official notes of that meeting. It was not an unpleasant meeting by any means. Gordon apologised for the process taking so long (this was 18 months ago!). I understood that Gordon was the Investigating Officer, so might need to be impartial. It was quite worrying, then, when Gordon attended a West Bridgford BLP meeting at the request of members to explain the suspensions. A transcript of his intervention is included in my Response. The incident occurred at a meeting of the West Bridgford BLP of Rushcliffe CLP on **24<sup>th</sup> October 2016**. Gordon Pattison, then Regional Director of the East Midlands Labour Party had been requested to attend the meeting to answer questions regarding the suspension of ten members of Rushcliffe CLP, eight of whom belong to West Bridgford BLP. At one point, Gordon was asked "*But is that evidence or is that just hearsay?*" He replied "*As far as I'm concerned, it's evidence because I've read it, I've seen it*". To Gordon then, it appears "*evidence*" is what he reads in one-sided emails from only a small number – ostensibly two – complainants in the absence of any investigation. It is difficult to see how a supposedly *independent* Investigating Officer can have then made two such contradictory statements in public as:

*The two suspended members currently will have all the paperwork and they'll be able to share it with you and you will be able to see what I've seen - and some of it is disgusting, I'll be honest with you. I've never seen anything like it in twenty-eight years in politics.*

and

*I can't tell you exactly what's happened or what I've seen because I'm not going to prejudice the case [that is] ongoing.*

It is difficult to see how that first comment has *not* prejudiced the case, especially since Gordon had never once tried to validate nor substantiate any of the allegations with me or anybody except the small number of complainants. I have still been denied access to the notes of that meeting. It gives the impression that Gordon Pattison had already made up his mind in the complete absence of any evidence or investigation, bearing in mind that our meeting never discussed any complaints or allegations. It felt as if, for some reason I could not fathom, that he was deliberately keeping these from me.

6. **The Hearing.** A date for the hearing was eventually set (See **Email 3**) although this took until **2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017** – some 12 weeks after receipt of the Charges.
7. **Suppression of Witness Evidence.** I have 20 witness statements including local Party Officers, City and Borough Councillors, and a member of the Shadow Cabinet. Fifteen of these made themselves available to attend the hearing on 9<sup>th</sup> December. One cut short a family holiday and booked a flight back to the UK from Spain to attend. Every single one of these are material witnesses, as can be seen from the witness statements, and are important because they testify to the full extent of the falsity of the allegations. It was not clarified until **28<sup>th</sup> November 2017** that the NCC would only allow 6 witnesses (See **Email 8**)

*"With regard to the 15 witnesses which you have indicated that your client wishes to call at the hearing, I am now instructed by the NCC Panel that in accordance with appendix 6.5.B.iii.d, to which you have referred, it will not take oral evidence from more than six, not being prepared to hear those that are just "character" witnesses and being of the view that the remaining witnesses are not all necessary on the basis of having specific evidence that cannot also be confirmed by others. I look forward to your confirmation as to which six witnesses you will now call of those identified."*

**Appendix 6.5.B.iii.d** of the Labour Party Rules 2017 clearly says *"unless additional witnesses are material to specific elements of the charges and their evidence is not able to be confirmed by other witnesses"*. This is indeed the case, yet there is an attempt to restrict and suppress the evidence and witnesses I can call - I can only suspect in order to weaken my case. This suppression of key material witnesses is quite improper and illustrates one further impropriety in the process. I want to stress, that every single one of the allegations in the Charges Pack is false, and is presented without any supporting or substantiating evidence whatsoever. Indeed, several pages of anonymous letters conveniently appear in the pack, presumably in order to insinuate they were sent by me; they were not. Given the extent of the false allegations made against me in the Charges Pack, a concomitant number of material witnesses are required to rebut all the false allegations.

8. **Last Minute Cancellation of the Hearing.** Because of the full and detailed extent of my rebuttal of all charges, I sent my response to the NCC on **9<sup>th</sup> November 2017** - three weeks before it was requested on 30<sup>th</sup> November (See **Email 3** and **Letter 1**) and one month before the panel hearing - in order to give Panel members an opportunity to read and get to grips with the information. Yet it was not until **4<sup>th</sup> December**, only five days before the hearing was scheduled, that it was cancelled. Remember one witness had already cut short a family holiday and booked a flight back to the UK to attend the hearing on 9<sup>th</sup> December. I was given no reason for why the cancellation was so last minute. The hearing was subsequently cancelled *yet again* by Jane Shaw after I had obtained at very short notice the support of my witnesses to attend a rescheduled hearing on 9/10 February, (See **Emails 14-19**) now because apparently the two complainants were claiming they could not attend.
9. **Unreasonable Expectations.** There is now a request to (see **Email 11**) *"let me have a note of the dates in January when your client, his witnesses and you can attend for two consecutive dates."* The very idea that so many people can yet again just drop everything and rearrange their lives for a second time, to attend a two-day hearing is preposterous - and yet again another attempt to compromise the integrity of the proceedings. The level of contempt for Party members here is both crass and quite astonishing. I have never seen anything like it. The quite cynical question posed in **Email 13** testifies to me a level of contempt quite unbecoming a democratic socialist party: *"Will we still need to hear this case during a weekend?"* It is quite clear many witnesses are still working - though by the time we might eventually get this to a hearing most (like myself) might well have retired or died!
10. **Additional Allegations.** However, since then there have been further more sinister events, as you can see in **Emails 12, 13 and 14**, supported by **Documents 1, 2, 3 and 4**. I will detail these in turn here, but would add that we still await answers to the questions we posed in **Email 13**. My strong suspicion is that there is no intention to respond to them. However, it is really not possible to continue whilst these key issues remain unresolved.
11. **Document 1 Additional Statement by Sandra Coker.** This is a totally unsubstantiated set of allegations, for which it would be easy to provide evidence - for example the emails and minutes of meetings - yet none is forthcoming. It cannot be acceptable that complainants make prejudicial assertions that are not backed up with any evidence. However there is now a further more serious claim by Sandra Coker that in both Rushcliffe CLP and West Bridgford BLP: *"anyone who is not an active 'momentum' supporter is branded 'right wing', side-lined, excluded from groups and/or actively encouraged to leave the branch/CLP."* This is a serious allegation against, not only me but also the current democratically elected leadership of both the CLP and BLP. I believe this needs to be presented to both Chairs of the CLP and BLP in

order for them to present this to their respective Executive Committees and consider a response. It suggests to me there is some underlying political motivation behind the coordinated allegations made. To be allowed to introduce such serious allegations against a CLP and BLP is quite preposterous and inappropriate for a just and impartial hearing.

12. **Document 2 – Complaints cover Letter.** This relates to **Item 3** above, and the final **Document 4**. The issue here is that the integrity of a key document (the minutes of the March 7<sup>th</sup> CLP Meeting referred to in **Item 1**) leading to the suspension of 10 Party members, appears to have been compromised by one of the complainants. This cover letter appears to have been written by a Richard Oliver, who is someone of whom I have absolutely no knowledge, and who has had no involvement in this matter up until now. He is not involved at all in Rushcliffe CLP. This letter appears to contain some incongruous comments which seem to be at odds with Labour Party Rules. There is also a very direct criticism of the CLP which I feel needs to be drawn to the attention of the Chair of the CLP to present to the CLP Executive Committee for a response. In this document Richard Oliver makes claims and assertions without any evidence, yet he seemingly does so on behalf of the NEC. Worryingly, the comments he makes suggest he has not actually read the documentation to which he is referring (See **Document 4**) and which contradicts his comments in several places.

One further issue is that one version of the minutes of the **7<sup>th</sup> March 2016** meeting were presented to the CLP EC on **4<sup>th</sup> April 2016**. There was a long discussion and much disagreement over the accuracy of the minutes presented to the EC, which takes up three pages, such that a vote had to be taken on amendments, one of which fell by 4 votes to 3. In my 42-year career, including attendance at a multitude of meetings in very diverse contexts, I have *never* had a situation where approval of the minutes went to such a vote, that wasn't unanimous. I presume the four here were the four complainants. To quote Winston Churchill, history is written by the victors.

Richard Oliver further claims: "*specifically the excessive and punitive use of legitimate Labour Party structures and processes.*" This is not a charge that is included in the Charge Sheet contained in the Charges Pack and again there is no information on either the "*excessive*" and the "*punitive*" uses of Labour Party "*structures and processes*" to which Richard Oliver is referring; this is another fabrication. Is the NEC claiming that adherence to Labour Party Rules and procedures is against Labour Party Rules? Does the NEC actually know this?

Finally, what is more unusual here is that a CLP has democratically and appropriately followed the Labour Party Rule book (**Chapter 6, Clause II,1, A-M**), has discussed a complaint and decided by a very large majority, that it warrants a formal CLP investigation. Richard Oliver, completely overlooks the possible wrong-doing in producing contrasting sets of minutes one of which presents an inaccurate account of a meeting, and makes allegations against someone making a legitimate complaint that adheres to the Labour Party Rulebook. This again is quite breathtakingly improper. Subsequently the current Regional Director appears to have instructed the CLP Chair to stop the investigation into the alleged malpractice – because it might suggest I was breaking the conditions of my suspension. Another breathtaking and crass attempt at interfering in the legitimate Party processes by Regional Officials.

My inquiry about the progress of this matter received a response (See 2. Correspondence with CLP Chair over CLP Investigation) from the CLP Chair which suggests there is an attempt by Regional Officers to quash discussion of the matter – the very same Regional Officers involved in liaising with the complainants back in January 2016. I gather the CLP Chair (a very well respected long-standing member and local councillor) was threatened by the Regional Director, with disciplinary action for bringing the Party into disrepute if he allowed the CLP GC to discuss what they had democratically and within Party Rules agreed by a large

majority. I understand that the current CLP Secretary (a very competent professional woman and Professor of Physics) was so insulted by the tone of the correspondence she received from the Regional Director, she threatened to resign.

13. **Document 3 – Email to John Walsh.** This is most serious. This document appears to have come out of the blue, and is referenced nowhere. It purports to be an email from me – highlighting a phrase I am supposed to have written – from a private exchange with another member. I can provide the complete email exchange. My first question here is how this was come by? I have no recollection of sending this email and a thorough search of my email records can find no trace of it or of any of the phrases within it. It is very suspicious that it comes on a pdf, without all the headers that allows an email to be traced, and with so many punctuation and grammatical errors it looks more like a primary school attempt than something written by someone who makes his living as an academic author. If this was part of action within a court of law, I believe we would have a case against the Presenter for potentially perverting the course of justice. If it is fabricated, I know not by whom, potentially by whomsoever fabricated the anonymous letters I referred to above in **Item 5**. Without access to the original and demonstrable proof that the email is genuine, we have a potential case of fabrication of evidence. Is this something the NEC is now aware of?

## Conclusion

There are very serious irregularities in this process outlined on the preceding four pages, which are prejudicial to a fair hearing. The latest material (**Documents 1-3**) contains very prejudicial claims, and the NCC panel appear to be seeking to restrict witness evidence I can call on. I can only presume this is an attempt to interfere with a genuine and honest process to resolve an issue within Rushcliffe CLP and cover up previous irregularities by Party Officials. I have no appetite to be yet again ambushed at a further meeting, where unspecified, unsubstantiated and spurious allegations, and undeclared witnesses are introduced, as I was set up to experience on **7<sup>th</sup> March 2016**. I cannot see any justification for continuing with this charade. I would like to suggest that this whole matter be looked into at the highest level, in particular the attempt to interfere with the due process, the absolute lack of any evidence, the false allegations, fabricated documentation, and the level of contempt shown by Party Officials toward Party members

In the spirit of the Chakrabarti report, like all such matters, this needs to be dealt with honestly, fairly and impartially. So far, these three characteristics have been absent in the process. I believe now this can only be done by the Disputes Panel reconsidering the matter, and ideally referring it to the CLP, where it needs to be fully considered by local Party members and elected officers, in a spirit of conciliation, honestly, fairly and impartially and to look for a constructive way forward. This matter has been going on now for over *two years*, and is bringing the local Party into disrepute; Party members are voting with their feet, not wanting to be associated with an organisation that appears to have so little regard for honesty and social justice. The next 29 pages will, I believe, clarify much of what I have described in **Items 1 - 13**:

1. The correspondence between my Solicitor, Martin Lee and Jane Shaw;
2. Email received from Rushcliffe CLP Chair over interference in the CLP investigation;
3. The four documents sent to me after the cancellation of the Hearing.
4. Documentation over the potential malpractice over CLP EC Minutes

At the bottom of all this, lay mendacious and vexatious, totally false, allegations by ostensibly two members – a married couple. For over two years I have failed to understand their motives, and am incredulous at the extent they have been able to deceive. As a Democratic Socialist Party however, we need to look to the future, learn lessons and take power – for the many, not the few. None of this is helping. I look forward to hearing from you.

## Supporting Documentation

### 1. Correspondence between Jane Shaw and Martin Lee, Solicitor

#### Email 1

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**From:** Martin Lee [mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk]  
**Sent:** 22 September 2017 09:51  
**To:** 'jane\_shaw@labour.org.uk' <jane\_shaw@labour.org.uk>  
**Cc:** 'Peter Gates' peter.gates3@btopenworld.com  
**Subject:** Labour Disciplinary Proceedings - Dr Peter Gates - Rushcliffe CLP

Dear Jane

I have been advising Peter Gates about his appeal against his administrative suspension from the Party and note that you have been in communication with him about the process in your capacity as the Secretary of the National Constitutional Committee (NCC). I note that on 26/27 September 2017 the NCC will be meeting to discuss a number of appeals that are before the Committee, including Peter's case. I understand that this is a meeting to discuss procedure and in particular, in Peter's case, whether he can be legally represented at his appeal. I hope that will be a formality in the interests of natural justice.

I have reviewed a comprehensive document that Peter has compiled to rebut the charges and allegations made against him. I have to say that, taking into account the "Charges Pack" that has been sent to Peter and the paucity of the evidence disclosed, it seems that any tribunal considering his case will be compelled to dismiss the charges. I therefore write to you to see if an informal meeting with you and/or any other responsible officer(s) of the Party engaged in this process before moving towards a full hearing might be appropriate, to avoid a waste of resources and unnecessary costs. My client would be happy to disclose his defence document prior to such a meeting.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

*Martin Lee*

Martin Lee & Co

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#### Email 2

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**From:** Martin Lee [mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk]  
**Sent:** 05 October 2017 12:44  
**To:** 'jane\_shaw@labour.org.uk' <jane\_shaw@labour.org.uk>  
**Subject:** FW: Labour Disciplinary Proceedings - Dr Peter Gates - Rushcliffe CLP

Dear Jane

I refer to my e mail sent to you on 22 September 2017 (below). I note that you were unable to respond as you were at the Party Conference.

Are you able to address the points I raise now? Specifically can you let me know the outcome of the NCC as far as Peter's case is concerned?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

*Martin Lee*

Martin Lee & Co

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### Email 3

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**From:** Jane Shaw [mailto:jane\_shaw@labour.org.uk]

**Sent:** 02 November 2017 11:33

**To:** Martin Lee

**Subject:** RE: Labour Disciplinary Proceedings - Dr Peter Gates - Rushcliffe CLP

Dear Mr Lee,

I am so sorry not to have responded to you sooner, but since Annual Conference I have been tied up with other disciplinary hearings around the country and I've also taken some annual leave.

I am pleased to be able to now inform you that the NCC has agreed that your client can be legally represented at the hearing of the NEC charges, which has now been arranged to take place at **a venue to be confirmed on Saturday 9 December 2017, commencing at 10.30am**. Your client advised me in September that his witnesses would not be able to attend a hearing during a weekday.

It is noted what you have said about the NEC's case, but Labour's procedures for dealing with disciplinary matters, copy attached, do not provide for the type of meeting you have requested, but the NCC does have the authority to dispose of cases without a hearing (Labour Party Rule Book appx 6.4.) and the panel could decide to do so after consideration of your client's answer to the charges etc. Your client has already confirmed his intention to contest the charges and he is now asked to provide the following in writing by **Thursday 30 November 2017**:

1. The Respondent's written answer to the charges;
2. Details of any witnesses the Respondent wish to call at the hearing to give evidence;
3. A written statement from each witness the Respondent wishes to call at the hearing and of any other witnesses, whose evidence he would like the Panel to consider, but who he would not wish to call, or who would not be able to attend the hearing;
4. Any challenge the Respondent wish to make to the NEC's case and supporting evidence.

I look forward to hearing from you or your client in due course.

Kind regards

Jane Shaw

Governance and Legal Unit

The Labour Party

Labour Central, Kings Manor

Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6PA

[jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)

[www.labour.org.uk](http://www.labour.org.uk)

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## **Letter 1. Accompanying Response to Charges**

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Our ref: MKL/SW

Jane Shaw  
Governance and Legal Unit  
The Labour Party  
Labour Central  
Kings Manor  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 6PA

9/11/2017

Dear Ms Shaw

**Re: Dr Peter Gates**

Thank you for your e-mail of 2 November 2017, the contents of which I note.

My client has now prepared his full response to all the allegations, and the three charges laid against him. The allegations in the Charges Pack appear to cover a period between October 2016 and January 2017. They relate to circumstances of which a significant number of Labour Party members of Rushcliffe CLP have knowledge and who can therefore provide evidence in relation to the events. Since the allegations against my client are both professionally and personally considerably damaging, and given the standing which he has in the Party locally, all the witnesses are central to his defence.

My client has consulted with all those who have prepared witness statements and has identified that those listed on the attached documents will be able to attend the hearing to give evidence in relation to one or more of the charges. Given the vagueness of the allegations in the Charges Pack there is considerable overlap between the three charges. However, the number of witnesses falls within paragraph 5B(iii)d of Appendix 6 – Procedural Guidelines in disciplinary cases brought before the NCC. Each of these witnesses have provided a witness statement, and each have a significant material contribution to make to one or more of the charges and allegations. In consequence stipulation as to oral evidence being taken from no more than six witnesses does not apply as set out in paragraph 5B(iii)d of Appendix 6 referred to above.

It is my client's intention that there is no substance whatsoever in any of the allegations and his response provides clear evidence of that. The witnesses identified on the enclosed list are able to provide solid evidence for clear rebuttal of all the charges and the specific allegations.

All the witnesses referred to in the enclosed documents have confirmed to our client that they are willing to attend the hearing set for Saturday, 9 December 2017 at 10.30am. A number of these witnesses have requested the hearing be held at a location that is as convenient for them as possible. Given where the considerable majority of the witnesses reside, a location in West Bridgford, Nottinghamshire would be appropriate. To that end, my client is prepared to book a local community facility for the hearing being the West Bridgford Methodist Church Hall, 29 Patrick Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QE. He has indicated a willingness to cover the cost of the booking fee for this location. This is the facility used by Rushcliffe CLP for its GC and all-member meetings.

I now send with this letter six copies of my client's response to the charges as required by paragraph 5B(vii)(b)c of Appendix 6. Five of these copies are bound and the sixth is provided for ease of copying. I believe that these cover the stipulations set out in your e-mail of 2 November 2017 and numbered 1 to 4 inclusive. Whilst you did not require this until 30 November 2017, my client is keen to allow the members of the NCC panel as much time as possible to read and consider his submissions. My client's response contains all the 20 witness statements that are central to his case.

I note in your e-mail reference to paragraph 4 to Appendix 6 and have also given consideration to paragraph 5B(iv)c. It is unclear whether the rules intend that a pre-hearing meeting of the panel, along with legal representatives and presenter, may be convened on a date prior to the date set for the hearing or, on the day, immediately before the hearing. I should be grateful if you could clarify that position. It is certainly my view that a pre-hearing meeting is the appropriate course of action in this case. In light of the comprehensive information now provided on behalf of my client in response to what are, at best, vague allegations against him, it would be reasonable for the panel of the NCC to deem that a hearing would not be in the best interests of either side, and certainly not in the best interests of the Party.

I should be grateful if you could acknowledge safe receipt of this letter, enclosure and bundles and provide your response to the points raised at the earliest opportunity.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

**MARTIN LEE**

**MARTIN LEE & CO**

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#### **Email 4**

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**From:** Jane Shaw [[mailto:jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)]

**Sent:** 13 November 2017 11:32

**To:** Martin Lee

**Subject:** Fw: Peter Gates response

Dear Mr Lee,

I've a heavy cold and unlikely to be in the office for the next few days, but I have been informed of your letter and your client's answer received today. I have arranged for copies of the answer to charge to be sent to the Panel and the NEC Presenter and will get a fuller response to your letter to you as soon as possible.

Regards

Jane Shaw

Governance and Legal Unit

The Labour Party

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#### **Email 5**

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**From:** Martin Lee [<mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk>]

**Sent:** 24 November 2017 10:48

**To:** Jane Shaw <[jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: Peter Gates response

Dear Ms Shaw

I hope you have recovered from your cold, they do take some shaking off.

Are you in a position to respond in detail to my letter of 9 November 2017? If there is to be a hearing, it is only fair to inform the witnesses and provide information on the venue so I can undertake the necessary preparation and put together a timetable for the witnesses to give their evidence. It would also be useful to

know whether you wish to take up my client's invitation to use a room in the West Bridgford Methodist Church Hall at his expense. On the other hand if, on the basis of the very considerable evidence Dr Gates and the 20 witnesses have provided to rebut the charges, the NCC panel decide to dispense with a hearing and lift Dr Gates' suspension, it would be helpful to inform Dr Gates and the witnesses so they can free up the day.

If the hearing is to go ahead I should be grateful if could let me know the names of the three members of the NCC who have been allocated to my client's hearing so that I can determine whether I want to raise any objections in advance of the date if the hearing which is now only 10 working days away.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

**Martin Lee**

Martin Lee & Co

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## **Email 6**

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**From:** Jane Shaw [[mailto:jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)]

**Sent:** 24 November 2017 11:47

**To:** Martin Lee

**Subject:** RE: Peter Gates response

Dear Mr Lee,

I am back at work, thank you.

With regard to your letter, I'm not yet in a position to respond fully, but I can now advise that the venue will be the **GMB Union Offices, 542 Woodborough Road, Nottingham NG3 5FJ**. There is parking at the rear of the building. As regards the NCC panel due to hear this matter, the identities of the Panel are never disclosed prior to a hearing, but I can assure you that none of the Panel are members in the East Midlands Region or have any prior knowledge or connection with your client.

Regards

Jane

Jane Shaw

Governance and Legal Unit

The Labour Party

Labour Central, Kings Manor

Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6PA

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## **Email 7**

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**From:** Martin Lee [<mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk>]

**Sent:** 26 November 2017 14:21

**To:** Jane Shaw <[jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)>

**Subject:** RE: Peter Gates response

Dear Jane

Thank you for your confirmation about the venue for the panel hearing.

I would be very grateful if I could have a response to the substantive points raised in my letter of 9 November 2017. I really need to know as a matter of urgency that it is accepted that Paragraph 5B(iii)d of Appendix 6 of the Party Rules applies and that oral evidence will be heard from all my client's witnesses. I want to make arrangements as to what time each should attend. You will appreciate that they are all giving up their time on a Saturday, two weeks before Christmas, and certain of them have commitments involving Party activities commensurate with positions they hold within the Party. Please respond on this point by Tuesday afternoon, 28 November 2017

In the course of my preparation for the hearing I note that the following pages are missing from the Charges Pack:

Page 2 of the e mail from Elizabeth Edgerton to Emma Foody sent on 31.5.2016

Pages 2,4 and 6 of the statement of Gary Edgerton made on 27 May 2016

Page 2 of the statement of Robert Crosby made on 25 April 2016

I should be grateful if these pages could be scanned and sent to me by e mail, tomorrow if possible.

I would also like you to confirm that no further documents will be produced in support of the case against Dr Gates at the hearing. If the Presenter does intend to do so then please arrange for copies of any such documents to be scanned and sent to me by e mail.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

**Martin Lee**

Martin Lee & Co

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## **Email 8**

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**From:** Jane Shaw <[jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)>

**Date:** 28 November 2017 at 11:01:24 GMT

**To:** Martin Lee <[mlee@martin-lee.co.uk](mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk)>

**Subject: RE: Peter Gates**

Dear Mr Lee,

I have now received from the NEC presenter and attach full copies of the three documents in the NEC's bundle that had pages missing.

With regard to the 15 witnesses which you have indicated that your client wishes to call at the hearing, I am now instructed by the NCC Panel that in accordance with appendix 6.5.B.iii.d, to which you have referred, it will not take oral evidence from more than six, not being prepared to hear those that are just "character" witnesses and being of the view that the remaining witnesses are not all necessary on the basis of having specific evidence that cannot also be confirmed by others. I look forward to your confirmation as to which six witnesses you will now call of those identified.

The NEC presenter has not stated that the NEC will not be submitting further evidence in support of its case, it is of course within appx 6.5.B.iii.f able to call additional witnesses and lodge additional witness statements in the rebuttal of the Respondent's reply to charges.

Regards

Jane

Jane Shaw  
Governance and Legal Unit  
The Labour Party  
Labour Central, Kings Manor  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6PA

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## Email 9

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**From:** Jane Shaw [[mailto:jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)]  
**Sent:** 01 December 2017 13:46  
**To:** Martin Lee  
**Subject:** NCC Hearing - Peter Gates

Dear Mr Lee,

Further to my email sent on Tuesday, we will clearly not conclude this matter in a one day hearing. Others involved have confirmed that they could continue the hearing on Sunday 10 December and I have now learned that the venue can also be available for that date also. Can you therefore let me know whether you, your client and his witnesses will be available to continue on Sunday 10 December.

I look forward to hearing from you and with confirmation of the names of the six witnesses that you will be calling for your client.

Regards

Jane

Jane Shaw

Governance and Legal Unit  
The Labour Party  
Labour Central, Kings Manor  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6PA

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## Email 10

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**From:** Martin Lee [<mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk>]  
**Sent:** 02 December 2017 15:14  
**To:** 'Jane Shaw' <[jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: NCC Hearing - Peter Gates

Dear Jane

I note the position concerning the proposed Panel hearing listed for next Saturday, 9 December. It has been apparent for some time, and certainly since service on the Party of my client's very detailed rebuttal of the charges made against him, that there were serious questions about the robustness of the evidence on which the allegations against him have been made. It is very regrettable therefore that we have reached this stage only now, with my client and his witnesses rearranging previous engagements to attend on Saturday 9 December 2017, to receive the suggestion that the hearing continues into the Sunday. I'm afraid I am not available on Sunday due to a longstanding prior engagement, and neither is my client nor are some of his witnesses. Given that this has gone on now for two years, one would have thought there would

be an appetite to bring it to a close as efficiently as possible. In order to help expedite matters my client is prepared to reduce the number of witnesses he calls - all of whom will be providing evidence that is materially related to one of the three charges. None of the witnesses are considered by us as "character witnesses".

I understand my client was informed by Ann Black, Chair of the Disputes Panel some months ago that the Disputes Panel described the delay in resolving this matter as "unacceptable". Surely no one wants this to extend into 2018 and a third year. There must surely be an alternative that looks for some harmonious resolution.

Having made that observation, I wonder whether an alternative resolution process could be explored. It has always troubled me why the complaints against my client have resulted in this course of action which does not, in my reading of the Labour Party Rule book, accord with the provisions of Chapter 6. I cannot see that at any time the process in Chapter 6 Clause II was followed by the complainants writing to the Secretary or Chair of the CLP in this case, and thereafter those complaints being investigated by the Constituency EC, followed by a report to the CLP. I raise this as there may be a way forward where responsibility for investigating the complaints could be referred back to the CLP and subject to any findings the officers of the CLP make, only come back to the NCC if it is found necessary. Given the location of those giving evidence, along with the local knowledge of Constituency Party Officers, this would on the surface provide greater opportunity for a constructive outcome.

Might there, alternatively, be scope for the parties involved to enter into mediation, possibly engaging an outside mediator?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

*Martin Lee*

Martin Lee & Co

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## Email 11

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**From:** Jane Shaw <[jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)>

**Date:** 4 December 2017 at 16:13:43 GMT

**To:** Martin Lee <[mlee@martin-lee.co.uk](mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk)>

**Subject:** FW: NCC Hearing - Peter Gates

Dear Mr Lee,

Thank you for your email sent on 2 December.

It is unfortunate that this matter is not now going to be concluded before the end of this year, but the NEC presenter has now confirmed that it is his intention to call five witnesses and if your client is to call the maximum number of witnesses (6) that the panel has said it will hear in support of his case, even if we were to continue into the evening of 9 December, it is very unlikely that this matter can be determined in a single day. While some of those involved can continue with a hearing into 10 December, in addition to yourself, others have also now told me that they too would be unavailable on that date. Therefore the Panel has decided that rather than go part heard with a considerable gap between the beginning and the end of the hearing, the hearing should be postponed and re-arranged for two consecutive days in January.

I will be grateful if you can confirm whether the reduced number of witnesses that your client can call will continue to only be available to attend on a weekend and in any event if you could let me have a note of the dates in January when your client, his witnesses and you can attend for two consecutive dates.

Although allowed within appendix 6 of the Party's rule book to dispose of cases other than by hearing, the Panel does not consider this to be an appropriate matter to determine without a hearing.

With regard to your reference to Chapter 6 please see appendix 6.6.D which states:

- i. The rules under which the NCC operates make it clear that the NCC and its panels are concerned only with the charge(s). The procedures adopted on behalf of the Party or a CLP in advance of a referral to the NCC are not matters for the NCC dealing with a particular case. The NCC is entitled to (and will) act on the basis that the charges are properly brought before them and cannot become embroiled in dealing with complaints about the administration of any investigation leading to the charges. Any such complaint will therefore not be entertained by the NCC or panel thereof unless it is material or relevant to the consideration of the evidence to be used by the presenter in support of the charges.
- ii. Complaints about the conduct of an investigation at CLP level should be addressed to the appropriate RD(GS), or the Party's General Secretary in the case of national investigations, and not to the NCC.

Regards

Jane

Jane Shaw

Governance and Legal Unit

The Labour Party

Labour Central, Kings Manor

Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6PA

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## Email 12

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**From:** Jane Shaw

**Date:** 11 December 2017

**To:** 'Martin Lee' <[mlee@martin-lee.co.uk](mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk)>

**Subject:** Peter Gates

Dear Mr Lee,

Further to my email to you sent on 4 December, I have now heard from the NEC presenter in response to your client's answer to charge. The Panel has now allowed the NEC to call an additional witness, Robert Crosby whose statement is already included in the NEC bundle and having been told that Sandra Coker will not now give oral evidence at the hearing the Panel has allowed a second statement from her to be submitted a copy of which is attached, with other documents provided by the NEC in response to the answer to charge, all of which the Panel have decided to allow.

I would like to get a date for the re-arranged hearing agreed before the Christmas break and so look forward to hearing from you shortly with the information requested in my last email and your client's revised list of witnesses that he wishes to call at the hearing.

Regards

Jane

Jane Shaw

Governance and Legal Unit

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## Email 13

**From:** Martin Lee [mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk]  
**Sent:** 20 December 2017 17:15  
**To:** 'Jane Shaw' [jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)  
**Subject:** RE: Peter Gates

Dear Ms Shaw

Thank you for your e mails of 11 December 2017 along with the new documentation attached. My client and I are of the opinion that this documentation now compromises the integrity of the proceedings.

We acknowledge the sensible decision to remove all reference to the material from Ms Gill Taylor. Can you confirm that this also implies withdrawal of the allegations by Ms Keri Howe, equally unsubstantiated and which in themselves require a number of witnesses to attend the hearing to rebut the allegations?

To facilitate a full investigation, I would be grateful if you could provide as soon as possible the following information on the three documents you sent.

### 1. Statement by Sandra Coker

a. I request you provide full particulars of the claim by Sandra Coker that:

*"I was subjected to behaviour from Peter Gates which was nothing short of harassment and intimidation. It included being bombarded with emails, aggressive representations at meetings and having my views, personality and actions misrepresented to others that he enlisted to support his cause."*

In particular copies of the emails referred to, evidence of the aggressive representations at meetings and the misrepresentations to "others that he enlisted to support his cause".

Due process demands that my client knows the case against him. It is not acceptable that witnesses make prejudicial assertions that are not backed up with any evidence.

b. There is now a further claim by Sandra Coker that in both Rushcliffe CLP and West Bridgford BLP:

*"anyone who is not an active 'momentum' supporter is branded 'right wing', sidelined, excluded from groups and/or actively encouraged to leave the branch/CLP."*

This seems to be a serious allegation against, not only my client but also the current democratically elected leadership of both the CLP and BLP. My client believes this needs to be presented to both Chairs of the CLP and BLP in order for them to present this to their respective Executive Committees and consider a response.

### 2. Complaints Cover Letter

This appears to have been written by a Richard Oliver. Richard Oliver is unknown to my client, and has had no involvement in this matter up until now and who we understand is not involved directly in Rushcliffe CLP. This letter appears to contain some incongruous comments which would seem to be at odds with the Labour Party Rules. There is also a very direct criticism of the actions of the CLP which we feel again needs to be drawn to the attention of the Chair of the CLP to present to the CLP Executive Committee.

a. Can you please explain who Richard Oliver is and what his involvement is in this matter? Who had asked him to draw up this Statement?

b. Richard Oliver claims "These complaints are inappropriate and demonstrate a continued pattern of behaviour on the part of the Respondent since suspension". This is another assertion without evidence. Can you please provide the evidence upon which this claim is made of my client's "continued pattern of behaviour since suspension"?



c. Richard Oliver further claims: *"specifically the excessive and punitive use of legitimate Labour Party structures and processes."* This is not a charge that is included in the Charge Sheet contained in the Charges Pack. Please can you provide information on both the *"excessive"* and the *"punitive"* uses of Labour Party *"structures and processes"* to which Richard Oliver is referring?

d. Can you point to the section of the Labour Party Rules that is being relied on by Mr Oliver?

### 3. Email to/from John Walsh

There is a pdf of an exchange of emails between John Walsh and my client.

a. Can you provide us with the electronic version of this exchange so we can identify the route and the provenance of the original emails themselves?

b. Can you provide us with information on how you came into possession of what was a private communication from John Walsh to my client, whether it was obtained legally, and why it is included in the documentation?

I look forward to a speedy response with the information we require to move this matter forwards. My client however is at pains to point out the continued damage being done to the local Party's reputation by the continuation of this matter, now about to move into its third year, and which could have been easily resolved locally. My client is still content for this matter to be referred to the CLP so it can be dealt with more appropriately and constructively.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

*Martin Lee*

Martin Lee & Co

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### Email 14

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**From:** Jane Shaw <[jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)>

**Date:** 21 December 2017 at 11:01:24 GMT

**To:** Martin Lee <[mlee@martin-lee.co.uk](mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk)>

**Subject: RE: Peter Gates**

Dear Mr Lee,

Thank you for your email sent yesterday. As you know I can only comment on procedural issues relating to this case and much of what you have asked in your letter relates to the content of the case being brought by the NEC. I have therefore forwarded your email to the NEC presenter, Richard Oliver, who has been appointed by the NEC to replace the original presenter of its case. I would remind you though that the NCC has no powers to compel either party in disciplinary proceedings to provide any particular evidence or any individual to attend to give oral evidence at a hearing. If you consider that aspects of the NEC's case and the evidence it has or has not produced affect the integrity of its case or the proceedings then those are matters which should be raised by you at the hearing for consideration by the NCC panel.

As I mentioned in my last email, we want to get on and rearrange the postponed hearing therefore please confirm the revised list of witnesses which your client wishes to give oral evidence (maximum of six) and let me have a note of the dates in January when your client, his witnesses and you can attend for two consecutive days. Will we still need to hear this case during a weekend?

Regards

Jane

Jane Shaw

Governance and Legal Unit

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## Email: 15

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**From:** Jane Shaw [mailto:jane\_shaw@labour.org.uk]

**Sent:** 09 January 2018 15:57

**To:** Martin Lee

**Subject:** FW: Peter Gates

Dear Mr Lee,

Further to my email to you sent 21 December, the NCC will be meeting this coming weekend and one of the matters it will discuss is the setting of a new date for your client's hearing. We are keen to avoid the need to postpone another hearing of this case, so if you could respond to my last email, particularly regarding availability to attend a hearing in January and also February, before Saturday, that would be helpful.

Regards

Jane

Jane Shaw

Governance and Legal Unit

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## Email 16

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**From:** Martin Lee [mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk]

**Sent:** 11 January 2018 21:23

**To:** 'Jane Shaw' <jane\_shaw@labour.org.uk>

**Cc:** Gates Peter <ttzpg@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk>

**Subject:** RE: Peter Gates

Dear Jane

Thank you for your e mail. I have considered the position with my client and we believe that until we receive substantive responses to the points made in my e mail to you sent at 17.15 on 20 December 2017 it is not appropriate to make arrangements for a rescheduled hearing. I understand that in your role you cannot respond in full to the points I raised but believe it is incumbent on the case presenter to provide the replies to the matters set out in my e mail as these involve new matters that did not form part of the original charges against my client. My client is particularly concerned at the new allegations now being made against officers of the Rushcliffe CLP and West Bridgford BLP which they need to be made aware of. Of greatest importance are the points I raised under the heading "3. Emailto/from John Walsh" in particular the email that my client is alleged to have sent to John Walsh timed at 10.10 on 22 January 2016. This raises considerable concerns for my client that justify further investigation, starting with disclosure of the original document in possession of the case presenter and an explanation as to how this came into his possession. Did he receive it electronically or a paper copy and who from? It is right that we have the opportunity to investigate the provenance of this document and if appropriate refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a proper investigation. If it is found to have been obtained improperly, or even illegally, then the NEC may prefer to withdraw the document.

To progress matters I would be prepared to meet with Mr Oliver when he might be able to allay the fears that my client has about the possibly fraudulent compilation of materials aimed at causing damage to him. Perhaps you could raise that suggestion with Mr Oliver and we could then arrange a mutually convenient date to meet.

I look forward to hearing from you.

*Martin Lee*

Martin Lee & Co

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## Email 17

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**From:** Jane Shaw [[mailto:jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)]  
**Sent:** 23 January 2018 11:17  
**To:** Martin Lee  
**Subject:** RE: Peter Gates

Dear Mr Lee,

The Panel has now considered your email sent 11 January. The Panel take the view that much of what you asked about relates to the method and presentation of the investigation, which are explicitly not matters for the NCC, other than as to the general credibility of the charges, which will be examined at any hearing in any case. I am therefore instructed to re-schedule a hearing of this matter as soon as possible.

Looking at the Panel's availability in February, the only three days that they could all attend together in the entire month would be 9, 10 and 11 February. Your client has previously said that some of his witnesses would only be available to attend a hearing held on a weekend, so it is assumed that the second day of the hearing at least needs to be held on either a Saturday or Sunday. Therefore can you please let me know by Monday 29 January, whether you, your client and his witnesses can attend a hearing to take place on two consecutive days out of 9,10 and 11 February and if that is not possible if you can let me have a note of the dates that you, your client and his witnesses would **not** be able to attend a hearing held on two consecutive days in March 2018. Failing which the hearing will be scheduled without further reference to you and your client.

Your client's revised list of witnesses has also not yet been submitted and the Panel will be obliged if that too can also be received by 9am on Monday 29 January. Failure by your client to comply with the panel's request to provide a revised list of no more than six witnesses to be called by him to give oral evidence at the hearing could lead to the Panel declining to allow any of his witnesses being called at the hearing.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Jane

Jane Shaw  
Governance and Legal Unit  
The Labour Party  
Labour Central, Kings Manor  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6PA

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## Email 18

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**From:** Martin Lee [<mailto:mlee@martin-lee.co.uk>]  
**Sent:** 30 January 2018 11:26  
**To:** 'Jane Shaw' <[jane\\_shaw@labour.org.uk](mailto:jane_shaw@labour.org.uk)>  
**Cc:** Gates Peter <[ttzpg@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ttzpg@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Peter Gates

Dear Jane

Further to my email sent to you at 15:53 on 25.1.2018 my client has instructed me [that](#) in a spirit of moving forward constructively, he has been able to get his witnesses (as per the list in his letter dated 25 January 2018) to make themselves available at quite short notice over 9/10 February. This has required some to alter prior commitments. Whilst all witnesses can do at least some time Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February, not all can do

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> so we will need to arrange scheduling to make attendance possible if it does indeed stretch over into two days. If Charge 3 were withdrawn, this would make the process more straightforward and require significantly fewer witnesses. I think this further demonstrates the willingness of my client and his witnesses to be as constructive and supportive of this process as possible and to be desirous of a satisfactory solution and hope for a reciprocal willingness to work together on this matter. I would appreciate a response to my client's letter of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018. Apologies for a slight delay but my client and many of the witnesses were tied up with the Rushcliffe PPC Selection which concluded on Saturday. I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

## Email 19

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**From:** Jane Shaw [mailto:jane\_shaw@labour.org.uk]

**Sent:** 30 January 2018 17:37

**To:** Martin Lee <mlee@martin-lee.co.uk>

**Cc:** Gates Peter <ttzpg@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk>

**Subject:** RE: Peter Gates

Dear Mr Lee,

Thank you for your emails of 25 January and today the contents of and attachments to have now been seen by the Panel.

The Panel is concerned that there is a danger for this case to be argued through continuing correspondence and is therefore keen to re-arrange the hearing as soon as possible. As regards dates for the hearing, your client's efforts to be ready to attend a hearing on 9 & 10 February is much appreciated, but the NEC presenter developed flu at Christmas and while he had been expected to return to work sooner, he was only well enough to return yesterday, for the first time since the holiday. He has since yesterday checked as to the availability of the NEC's witnesses, and has today advised me that two have confirmed that they cannot attend on 9-11 February. Can you therefore let me have a note of the dates that you, Mr Gates and his witnesses would **not** be able to attend a hearing in March or April.

After consideration of the attachments sent last Friday, the Panel's view remains as previously stated; how the NEC presents its case, what charges it pursues and evidence it provides is a matter for its presenter not the Panel and as regards the number of witnesses that the Panel will hear, it will still not allow your client to call more than six to give oral evidence. However, please assure your client that the Panel is giving full consideration to the content of all of the witness statements that are included in your client's bundle. It is through its study of the statements provided that the Panel is confident to restrict the number of witnesses called by your client to six and to be of the view that the majority are either attesting only to your client's character, issues that do not form part of the charges or to specific elements of the charges confirmed also by other witnesses.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible regarding availability and a re-revised witness list as soon as possible.

Regards

Jane

Jane Shaw  
Governance and Legal Unit  
The Labour Party

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## 2. Correspondence with CLP Chair over CLP Investigation

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**From:** Keir Chewings [<mailto:kchewings@me.com>]  
**Sent:** 07 December 2017 11:42  
**To:** Peter Gates <[peter.gates3@btopenworld.com](mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com)>  
**Cc:** penny.gowland <[penny.gowland@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:penny.gowland@nottingham.ac.uk)>  
**Subject:** Re: CLP Investigation

Good morning Peter,

I can confirm that your complaint has proceeded in line with the rule book, It was cleared by the exec, and then presented to the GC for authorisation to investigation where again the GC delegates decided that your complaint warranted investigation. At the next exec meeting the following 3 members of the exec were appointed to conduct the investigation:

Stuart Brady  
Lewis McAuley  
Get Talty

However it was pointed out that we should get the GC to approve the investigators. This was originally tabled to be heard at a meeting on the 13th November 2017, however an email from Emma Foody (regional director) stated:

***The substance of this complaint is currently part of a hearing with the National Constitutional Committee, the highest constitutional body in the Labour Party. It would therefore be completely inappropriate for any other body of the Labour Party to commence an investigation into the same matters while the NCC is considering the issues concerned. In order to protect the integrity of that hearing and avoid prejudicing it in any way, no investigation should commence, and no process should be undertaken until the NCC hearing into these matters has been concluded.***

***I would also ask you to forward to me all correspondence you have relating to the complaint so that it can be included in full in the upcoming NCC hearing.***

***Failure to comply with this guidance, and therefore knowingly engaging in conduct which risks prejudicing a hearing of the National Constitutional Committee would likely be deemed grossly detrimental to the Party and therefore a serious breach of rule 2.I.8.***

Subsequently a response was submitted to Ms Foody by the CLP Sec and we were once again told that we could not deal with this at this time, stating:

***There is no provision for the two complaints to be heard together as the alleged counter complaint has no locus standi. I would repeat my request for any details of the complaint to be passed to me by return as Mr Gates is currently administratively suspended and should not be seeking or undertaking to have any input into the affairs of the Constituency Party. As such, the action of making a complaint and having it pursued by the CLP may be relevant to the terms of his administrative suspension and whether it has been breached. It is certainly a matter that the NCC will expect to be reported to it ahead of the hearing.***

So at this time we have been ordered not to do anything with your complaint, I have to say that after reading the rule book I do not find any basis for this instruction and am seeking further advice, until this advice is obtained we are unable to proceed with your complaint.

I appoligise for the delay in dealing with your complaint and would like to reassure you that Rushcliffe CLP take all complaints seriously and deal with all members equally and impartially, and look for this to be done as expediently as possible.

However at this moment in time due to external instruction we are at a stall in dealing with your complaint.

Kind regards,

Keir Chewings Chair or Rushcliffe CLP

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## **Document 1 – Additional Statement by Sandra Coker**

### Peter Gates Disciplinary Hearing

I have neither the time nor the appetite for raking over unpleasant details of events that took place two years ago. I am not attending this hearing in person as I choose to avoid contact with Peter Gates who continues to attempt to manipulate all situations to his own advantage. I have withdrawn from all active involvement with the Labour Party in West Bridgford and Rushcliffe CLP, including the Women's Forum, since I resigned as Rushcliffe CLP chair in December 2015.

In the short space of time (September to December 2015) that my position as chair of Rushcliffe CLP coincided with Peter Gates's position as secretary, I was subjected to behaviour from Peter Gates which was nothing short of harassment and intimidation. It included being bombarded with emails, aggressive representations at meetings and having my views, personality and actions misrepresented to others that he enlisted to support his cause.

My experience of West Bridgford branch and Rushcliffe CLP, where widely differing opinions and viewpoints were openly shared, discussed and respected, has changed under Peter Gates influence (which persists although he has been suspended from the party for some time) to one where anyone who is not an active 'momentum' supporter is branded 'right wing', side-lined, excluded from groups and/or actively encouraged to leave the branch/CLP.

I will continue to refrain from active involvement in West Bridgford Branch and Rushcliffe CLP while Peter Gates continues to be allowed to dominate and set the agenda.

Sandy Coker 30/11/17

## Document 2 – Complaints cover Letter

### Complaints pursued against Elizabeth Edgerton by Peter Gates

Since suspension, Peter Gates has pursued a complaint against Elizabeth Edgerton within the CLP structures, specifically attempting to get Rushcliffe CLP to undertake a local investigation into the conduct of Elizabeth Edgerton.

These complaints were that she had fallen short of her obligations to take accurate minutes of meetings when in her role as Secretary of the CLP.

These complaints are inappropriate and demonstrate a continued pattern of behaviour on the part of the Respondent since suspension.

Note:

- Peter Gate's complaints are in regards to Elizabeth Edgerton's minuting of the special meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016.
- She has not been CLP Secretary since October 2016.
- Peter Gates did not raise a complaint regarding her conduct as Secretary until the end of March 2017, nearly a year after the meeting and five months after she stepped down as CLP Secretary.
- There are other inconsistencies in the dates referenced in the enclosed documents, namely the highlighted dates
- The CLP Secretary and Chair were asked for all documentation relating to this by the East Midlands Labour Party Regional Office, as of yet they have not provided this.
- The complaints made by Elizabeth Edgerton and others are in regards to bullying and intimidation on the part of the Respondent, specifically the excessive and punitive use of legitimate Labour Party structures and processes.
- A simultaneous local investigation against a witness in this NCC hearing would undoubtedly jeopardise its integrity and arguably provide additional support to the Respondent.
- Suspended members raising a local complaint, the content of which is already being considered by a live NCC case is inappropriate.

This behaviour shows a continued pattern of behaviours on the part of Peter Gates since suspension, specifically the use of legitimate party process in excess to intimidate and undermine others.

Please the enclosed documents

- 
- 1 – Peter Gates' complaints (30/3/17) against Elizabeth Edgerton
  - 2 – Letter from CLP Chair seeking clarity from Peter Gates on the complaint (16/3/17)
  - 3 – Peter Gates' response to this letter (12/5/17)

The CLP had opted to pursue a local investigation into this matter but have been asked to suspend the investigation until completion of the NCC hearing. They had assembled an all-male panel to interview Elizabeth Edgerton and put Peter's complaints to her.

Regards.

Richard Oliver



## Document 3 – Email to John Walsh

**From:** peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]  
**Sent:** 22 January 2016 10:10  
**To:** john.walsh@designforpurpose.co.uk  
**Subject:** Re: EM Momentum letter to Trade Unions, EM Momentum letter to CLPs and LP Branches

lots to do eh.

I think however I will still flag up educational policy for a debate at GC.

Kate is great! interestingly a Rushcliffe lovely person had to go to Broxtowe to get elected.

The anti new member is a solid position we have to counter - and it will go on..it is the defining issue in labour. which is why we have to keep pushing. Look we have ousted Sandy and Liz! We are getting people on GC etc. and making life difficult. WE are ploughing on in only a few months.

Peter Gates  
10 Belfry Way  
Edwalton  
Nottingham  
NG12 4FA

**From:** john.walsh@designforpurpose.co.uk  
**Sent:** Friday, 22 January 2016 10:04  
**To:** PETER GATES

The conversation was at a Keyworth executive meeting. I don;t think it would help to try and alter opinions by doing good things (e.g. sound education policy). It's part of a narrative - yet another dimension to the anti new member position. R argued that there are more important, wider issues than the local parish council agenda that dominates Branch meetings - the reply was that as she lived in a 600k house (cheeky gits, it's more than that) she doesn't understand the lives of the poor folk of Keyworth.

The narrative is about us having self-interests which are the main reason for engaging with new members. This is a bit of a shock and will be very difficult to counter. It's not only a Keyworth 'small-minded' thing, it's also a Rushcliffe thing. Lots of wealthy people and lots more than average frustrated, under-achieving, not going anywhere people. If you've achieved more than most, you must have been bad to get there.

Difficult to get across in email - am I making sense at all?

According to KK folklore, Kate Foales is also a bad person - something to do with Branch boundaries and a shouting match involving the lovely Finbar.

> On 22 January 2016 at 09:44 PETER GATES <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com> wrote:  
>

## Document 4 – Falsification of Minutes

Peter Gates  
10 Belfry Way  
Edwalton  
Nottingham  
NG12 4FA

Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Jean, Keir and Alistair,

### Suspensions in Rushcliffe

I am writing to you as officers of the Rushcliffe Labour Party EC to lodge a formal complaint over what appears to be deliberate distortion of minutes of a local Rushcliffe Labour Party meeting – distortion which I believe has led to my suspension from the party. I do not know who to take this to, as the formal procedures are not transparent, but I hope as CLP Officers you can deal with my complaint appropriately. Allow me to expand.

On 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2016, along with several officers within Rushcliffe CLP, I attended a meeting that had been described by Finbar Bowie, the East Midlands Regional Officer, as “a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP”. I had received an email specifically inviting me to attend this meeting which was set up to discuss “recent complaints and the situation in generally in Rushcliffe”. It was not stated why I had been invited, nor whether anyone else had received similar invites. I brought this meeting to the attention of a number of new GC delegates, and 8 attended. Prior to this meeting I had not been told anything about why the meeting was called, nor why I had been specifically invited. In order to clarify the purpose of the meeting Finbar Bowie assured me the week before that he would arrange for Andy Furlong to ring me before 7<sup>th</sup> March to explain what the meeting was about. This never happened. I also informed Finbar Bowie that I was happy to go to Leicester, or wherever else was convenient, to talk to Andy Furlong before the 7<sup>th</sup> March meeting. No response was received to that offer. That 7<sup>th</sup> March meeting ended in a fiasco and along with the 10 officers I received a letter of Administrative Suspension on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016. I have not been informed that my suspension has anything to do with that event, this is mere speculation on my part. I have now been suspended since 11<sup>th</sup> March 2016. I have not been informed why, nor do I know when the case will be investigated. This seems to be a total abnegation of any system of natural justice and seems to be contrary to both Labour Party Rules and the recommendations of the Chakrabarti Report.

However, it has recently been brought to my attention that there were two quite different sets of minutes produced for the EC Meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016; one set sent to West Bridgford Branch members (Eve Cina, Linda Burdett and Zbyszek Luczynski) by the CLP Secretary and another set presented to the CLP EC on 4<sup>th</sup> April. I have appended both sets of minutes to this letter.

The first set of minutes, on the left, appears to be a fairly accurate account of events, though there are some inaccuracies. For example, neither set of minutes includes the attendance of the husband of the CLP secretary as an observer. On the basis of those minutes I can see no justification for any suspension.

The second set of minutes, on the right, not only omits crucial details of what took place on that evening, but also seriously misrepresents the events. It is possible these second, inaccurate, minutes were used to suspend the 10 Officers including myself if these have been believed by officers of the Party. This is not only an injustice, but I would suggest is a significant offence. The two sets of minutes are very different, omit a request by an EC member to allow the observers to attend, but most significantly replaces three pages of detail, which includes my call for unity and offer to leave, with:

*“The two invited members were asked to come into the room. Eight others who had not been invited also came in. They were asked to leave twice by the Chair and twice by the representative of the Regional Board. There were expressions of dissent from some of those who had not been invited, and as they did not leave the meeting it was adjourned by the Chair on the advice of Andy Furlong”*

This is quite an inaccurate distortion of events which is contradicted on the other set of minutes. I would like to point out four issues:

- I was personally invited to the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting;
- Prior to 7<sup>th</sup> March all CLP meetings had been open to observers, and two of the 10 had been specifically told by a previous CLP Secretary - Steve Calvert – they could attend.
- We were told by the Chair of the Regional Board that the meeting was "*not a disciplinary hearing*";
- At that meeting (as shown in the first set of minutes) I called for unity and offered to leave.

The basis of my complaint therefore is that I think there has been a serious breach of procedures here, which needs to be investigated by the appropriate body. I have also attached a brief chronology of events which I believe illustrates serious shortcomings in this process.

I would be grateful if you might look into the appropriate procedures to follow here, and take whatever action is called for in the Party Rules and procedures, as I do believe this is bringing the local Party into disrepute, is quite unjust and needs resolving.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Peter Gates

## Keir Chewings

Chairman of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party

163 Ringleas, Cotgrave, Nottingham NG12 3PQ  
Tel: 0115 9893110 Mob: 07557528255  
Email: kchewings@me.com

Date: 16/03/2017

Peter Gates

10 Belfry Way  
Edwalton  
Nottingham  
NG12 4FA

### REF: SUSSPENSIONS IN RUSHCLIFFE

Dear Peter:

Thank you for your correspondence dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017. I replied to you at the time confirming receipt of your formal complaint and that it would be discussed at Rushcliffe CLP Exec meeting on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017 in line with the Labour party rule book.

Your written complaint was considered as to whether it met the threshold to refer to the next GC meeting for consideration to undertake an investigation. However there were queries raised about your complaint that need to be answered to allow us to follow the due process.

Could you please clarify the following:

Who is your complaint about?

What action are you asking to be taken?

If you could please respond to this letter and clarify these points I will ensure that your complaint is listed at the next executive meeting.

Also detailed in your letter was the amount of time that you have been suspended from the party with out a hearing or a date for a hearing. I would like to take this opportunity to express my extreme disappointment and sadness that you and John Walsh has been subjected to suspension for this time with out any apparent progress in the situation. The amount of time that has passed, is in my view unacceptable and needs to be addressed. For this reason I will be writing to the chair of the NCC, Ian McNichol and the leader of the Labour party Jeremy Corbyn to:

Express my extreme disappointment that 2 members of Rushcliffe CLP have been suspended for this length of time with out further progress on the investigation.

Ask exactly what you have been accused of and ask that you are informed, to allow you the opportunity to gather supportive documents or evidence that may be relevant to the case in a timely manor to prevent loss or destruction.

Why has your suspension and investigation taken so long?

I will CC you and John Walsh as well as the members of the exec into this letter to ensure full transparency.

If you have any queries on this or any other matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Chewings'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Keir Chewings

Chairman of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party



Peter Gates  
10 Belfry Way  
Edwalton  
Nottingham  
NG12 4FA

Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Dear Keir,

### **Complaint to Rushcliffe CLP over possible misconduct**

Thank you for your letter regarding the complaint I made to my Branch and to the CLP.

As you can see it relates to a possible case of serious misconduct over the management of Rushcliffe CLP insofar as two very different sets of minutes were presented to Party members and to EC members for a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016 that was described as "*a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP*" by the East Midlands Regional Officer, Finbar Bowies, but which turned out to be a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP EC. This would not normally be significant where differences were largely minor or typographical. However, the differences in the two sets of minutes are so significant and striking that one set totally misrepresents the meeting. Since this EC meeting led to the suspension of 10 members, causing considerable division within the CLP, this difference has a material relevance especially if the minutes were deliberately altered to that effect.

In my complaint, I did not want to identify any one person as culpable; it is not my way to make complaints about Party members behind their backs. I personally prefer a more comradely approach to politics. However, given the circumstances, and the seriousness of this matter I feel I have no alternative but to follow the Party Rule book, as I outlined in my original letter. This construction of two sets of minutes appeared to be part of the management of the CLP and I felt it more appropriate that the CLP itself apportioned responsibility. However, I take your point about the nature of a complaint.

Given that my complaint relates to the construction of EC minutes, this has to be therefore part of the remit of the CLP Secretary at the time, Elizabeth Edgerton. From the evidence that I have been provided with, it would appear that Mrs Edgerton has produced two widely different sets of minutes and distributed the two versions to two different sets of people – the EC and Party members. One set of these minutes – the shorter version – seriously misrepresents the events at the EC meeting, whilst the other more detailed set, appears to be largely accurate. This seems inexplicable, but does not seem to have been brought to the attention of the EC, the GC or indeed the East Midlands Regional Office. This would appear therefore to warrant disciplinary action.

My apologies for only bringing this now, but we only discovered this by accident quite recently, when a member of the EC asked a Party member if they had a set of the minutes, because their laptop had crashed, only to find the version they were given was very different from those they remembered. This caused some members of the EC to compare the documents they had with the set that had been given to Party members.

Thank you again for raising this.

Regards

Peter Gates

## **Minutes Sent to Members by CLP Secretary, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

### **Minutes from GC EC (from 8:00pm) Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016-03-08**

Those present: Gill Aldridge, Keir Chewings, Robert Crosby, Harry Curtis, Lizzie Edgerton, Andy Furlong, Bill Logan, Alistair MacInnes, Liz Plant, Jean Stansfield, Nadia Whittome.

Gill Aldridge (Chair) began the second part of our meeting by introducing Andy Furlong, from the Regional Board. Nadia Whittome asked whether those outside should be invited in and Andy Furlong requested to address the Executive first. He said he wanted to give a very clear perspective on what the meeting was about and said the most important thing is that it was not a disciplinary meeting in any way, but an opportunity for the Regional Board (of which he is a representative) to get a fix on what is happening in the Rushcliffe Constituency and to satisfy itself that this is not going to implode. He said he wanted to talk about the Constituency Development Plan, particularly in the light of the County Council elections in 2017, he would touch on the organisation and governance of the Rushcliffe Party because clearly that has a bearing on the 'rash' of complaints that have been flying around since the latter part of last year. He said what he would like to do is to address the meeting as a whole with the Chair as sovereign authority. He said he would introduce himself, set the scene and express a view from Regional Board, and then (if it works for the EC) he would ask those who have raised complaints to offer some perspective. Because it is not a disciplinary hearing he said there is no 'right of reply' to this but he would like the people who feel they have a grievance to express a view. He said he would like to ask the complainants to express a view. He said there would be no 'cross examining' of one another but he would take some questions at the end and then would prepare a report for the Regional Director and Chair, which would be a distillation of what is going on and what the way forward is. He said he would like Lizzie Edgerton (Secretary) to minute the salient points and would appreciate it if he could have the opportunity to make sure that the minutes reflect the key points he is trying to make, and that the minutes of the meeting would provide some guidance and a touchpoint for the way we manage and run Constituency matters in the future.

## **Minutes Presented to EC by CLP Secretary, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

### **Minutes from GC EC Meeting Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March, 7:00 pm, St Giles Church Hall, West Bridgford.**

Those present: Gill Aldridge, Keir Chewings, Sandy Coker, Robert Crosby, Harry Curtis, Bill Logan, Alistair MacInnes, Liz Plant, Jean Stansfield, Nadia Whittome.

Apologies for absence: Chris Kemp.

Gill Aldridge introduced Andy Furlong, who had come to address the meeting. He asked if he could brief the Executive on the purpose of the meeting. He said the most important thing is that he was not there to conduct a disciplinary in any way, and as he would explain when members who are not members of the executive came in the room it was an opportunity for the Regional Board (of which he is a member) to satisfy themselves that the situation in Rushcliffe was not going to implode.

He said he wanted to talk about the Constituency Development Plan, especially in the light of the County Council Elections in 2017, the organisation and governance of Rushcliffe CLP. He said he would like to address the meeting through the Chair, introduce himself and set the scene. He said that he would then ask those who have raised complaints to offer some perspective and to express a view.

He said there were four complaints and some informal complaints. He said he would take some questions at the end and would then prepare a report for the Regional Director and the Chair, with recommendations for the way forward. He asked the Secretary to take minutes, which he said would provide some guidance for the way constituency ran things going forward. He said this was a special meeting of the executive Committee, which Region is comfortable is a legitimate body.

Andy Furlong said this is a special meeting of the Executive Committee of the Rushcliffe Party, which the Region is comfortable has the authority here, it is a legitimate body, it is the Party unit that invited Regional Board to come along and participate, Chaired by Gill Aldridge. He said when the invited members come into the room we should introduce ourselves, then he would tell those present who didn't know anything about him why he is here. He said he would like to take fifteen minutes, then the other key people should speak for approximately five minutes each.

Keir Chewings asked for clarification and asked who had determined the special meeting to take place – was it Regional or had Andy Furlong been invited? Andy Furlong replied to say the Regional Party was aware of difficulties within the constituency as a result of escalating correspondence. Some of those matters can not be allowed to continue and therefore the purpose of this meeting is for a representative of the Regional Board (the authority of the National Executive Committee) to come along to express a view on how the constituency should manage its affairs and move forward, and to give an opportunity for those who feel aggrieved to be able to express a view (through the Chair) with him in the room. He said this is not the sort of thing we want playing out in a GC, that the Executive is a legitimate body and the relationship between it and the Regional body (of which he is Chair) is going to be between the Chair of Rushcliffe and himself. He said that Peter Gates and John Walsh have been asked to join the meeting because the correspondence refers to them. Keir Chewings asked if whatever happens at the meeting can be used in any further disciplinary matters and he asked for this to be clarified before he made up his mind whether to stay. Andy Furlong said he hoped that the conversations would be conducted in an orderly and comradely manner and that there would be nothing said by any party that might lead him to feel that further formal disciplinary action against individuals (or indeed an administrative intervention against the constituency) is necessary. He said it is on the record because the Secretary is keeping the minutes and he has asked to have the right to some scrutiny of those minutes to make sure they concur with his own.

John Walsh entered the room and said it was ten past eight. Gill Aldridge asked him to leave the meeting as we were having a discussion about how the meeting was to be conducted, which he did.

Keir Chewings asked for some clarification of the meeting, specifically who had called the meeting to take place. Andy Furlong said the Regional Party was aware, as a result of some complaints, of difficulties within the constituency. Some of the matters he said cannot be allowed to continue, so the purpose was that a member of the regional Board would come along to give an opportunity to those who feel aggrieved to express a view, through the Chair, with him in the room.



Keir Chewings said he was concerned and had wanted clarification because he had received an email saying that the meeting was to be held but didn't know what it was about. Andy Furlong explained again that it is a special meeting where the various parties could express a view on what has happened and that following that he would write to the Chair and to Regional Office expressing his view as an elected member of the Regional Board in the East Midlands. He said it is about what has gone before but primarily should be about the Constituency Development Plan and how we move forward – ideally united.

Andy Furlong said that he would like to start off by asking people to introduce themselves, he would introduce himself and speak to the matter in hand. He said the people he felt had something to say were those mentioned in the various complaints, so he would ask Peter Gates and John Walsh to speak for five minutes each, followed by Lizzie Edgerton and Sandy Coker, because they were the people who have put something on the table. He said there would be no cross-examination but an opportunity for the aggrieved parties to express their view. He said there were three formal complaints and one informal complaint, and he said the purpose was to try to deal with it in Rushcliffe with the support of the Regional Board, rather than having to put it in the hands of the Organisational Sub-Committee and Compliance Unit.

Gill Aldridge asked if Peter Gates and John Walsh should come in at this point and Bill Logan went to invite them in. Bill Logan asked if we could admit observers to the meeting, as there were several other people in the corridor. Gill Aldridge said that if they are not members of the Executive they are not invited, so no observers.

At this point several people (10) walked into the room. Zbyszek Luczynski was one of the first in and asked 'Why no observers?' Gill Aldridge said because it's a meeting of the Executive and Zbyszek Luczynski replied to say that every Labour Party meeting should be open to observers. John Walsh said that there is concern about the way the CLP is operating. Gill Aldridge said this is not a GC which is open to members, but was an Executive Committee where we were discussing matters of importance to the constituency and we do not have observers at this meeting (she was interrupted here by Zbyszek Luczynski who said 'It's about time you did') and therefore she requested that everyone except Peter Gates and John Walsh leave the room.

Keir Chewings asked him to confirm that Regional Office had asked him to come along to the meeting and he did so. Andy Furlong said the matters to be discussed were not something that members would want playing out at a GC, and this was the appropriate way to do it, through the legitimate body of the chair. Keir Chewings said he had a few more points to clarify. Andy Furlong said he was just concerned he would be repeating himself when the invited members came in. Keir Chewings asked for clarification on what happened after the meeting, in particular could what was said be used if any further disciplinary matters come to light. Andy Furlong said he was confident that what happened next would be conducted in an orderly and comradely manner and that he hoped that nothing said around the table would lead him to feel any further disciplinary intervention would be necessary, but that this was on the record, as the Secretary was keeping minutes. He said it was a special meeting of the Executive of the Rushcliffe Constituency after which he would report to the Regional Board. He said primarily it would be about the Constituency Development Plan and how the constituency moved forward (ideally united). He said it was simply an opportunity for the aggrieved parties to put a view forward. He said there were three formal complaints and one informal complaint involving four people, and that the purpose was to try to deal with those in Rushcliffe, rather than to have to put it in the hands of the Organisational Sub-Committee of the NEC and the Compliance Unit.

The two invited members were asked to come into the room. Eight others who had not been invited also came in. They were asked to leave twice by the Chair and twice by the representative of the Regional Board. There were expressions of dissent from some of those who had not been invited, and as they did not leave the meeting it was adjourned by the Chair on the advice of Andy Furlong.

Andy Furlong said he would address them all and explained this was a special meeting of the Executive Committee of Rushcliffe GC but was interrupted by Zbyszek Luczynski who said 'You are making it up, mate'. Gill Aldridge said Andy Furlong is the Chair of the Regional Board and asked that he be heard without interruption. Andy Furlong continued, reiterating that this is a special meeting of the Executive Committee of the Rushcliffe Party, which has been called at the suggestion of Regional Office in order to try and deal with the difficulties that have become apparent in the constituency as the result of correspondence going back to the Autumn of last year. He said that two additional individuals had been invited to participate because they are either the subject of complaints or they have themselves made complaints. He said to the Chair that, as such, if the observers that had been brought in by John Walsh and Peter Gates (at this point Zbyszek Luczynski interrupted to say 'we are here because we want to be'). Andy Furlong continued by saying the observers had no legitimacy to be at the meeting and asked them to leave the room in the next two minutes. Gill Aldridge said again that it is not an open meeting but a meeting of the Executive Committee, which is a specific small group of people who deal with the management of the constituency plus the two people who have been invited. She said there is no role for observers at this meeting and again asked anyone who was not a member of the Executive to leave.

Rachel Scudamore said she questioned the validity of the Executive Committee. She said she is new to the Party but can read and had read the Rule Book. She said her understanding is that the Executive comprises of six officers, and subject to the general meeting approving it further officers if the GM approves. She said she had not seen any evidence of General Meeting approving any other officers and so she did not think it was a legitimate grouping. She said however if this meeting was about moving things forward then as a group of Labour Party members from the constituency it was great that they were all there and could talk about positive moves forward.

Gill Aldridge said that members of the Executive Committee were elected at the last constituency AGM and said that this was a formally constituted Executive Committee, that as such those who had come in to observe were not members of that Executive and asked them again to leave the room. Rachel Scudamore said she contested that those on the Executive had been elected.

Andy Furlong said (through the Chair) that he wished to express a view as Chair of the Party in the Region and said that the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Executive was recognised by the Region, that he was satisfied that the EC is bona-fide and legitimate, that we had invited two participants because they have been the subject of, and have themselves made complaints. He stressed that this was not a disciplinary meeting in any way, that there would be no disciplinary action arising from the meeting but was an opportunity for those parties who feel aggrieved to be heard within the context of an Executive meeting and reinforced the Chair's view that with the exception of Peter Gates and John Walsh the other members should leave.

John Walsh said it may look from afar as if it is a legitimately elected committee but that from the perspective of the members within the CLP it does not look like a legitimate committee and that this was why so many other people had bothered to turn up.

Andy Furlong said that the Regional Board of the Party within the East Midlands recognises this forum as legitimate and constitutional. Rachel Scudamore asked on what basis, as she had not seen anything in the minutes about the election of any others to the Executive Committee. Andy Furlong said the Regional Board and the authority invested in him as the Chair of that Board recognises the Executive Committee in Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party as legitimate and bona-fide and therefore in order to proceed as they had been envisaged he asked all those present with the exception of Peter Gates and John Walsh to leave so that things could proceed as the Regional Board had authorised him to do. Rachel Scudamore said it was not up to Andy Furlong to decide.

Peter Gates said he had had some communication with Finbar Bowie about the meeting, but that Finbar was the only person who had communicated with him about it. He said he had made clear to Finbar Bowie, as well as to other people in the room that he had communicated with, is that what is crucial for our CLP is that we move together, move forward, unite and work together. He said we have got a group of people here who want to do that, that they are new members to the party and returning members to the Party. He said we have an opportunity to say this is the way we want to move forward. He said he did not know whether there have been any complaints made against him. He said no one has had the decency to tell him that. He said the way this constituency seems to work is 'let's fire off a load of emails, let's fire off something to Regional Office', rather than just picking up a phone and saying

'what's going on?', rather than going to people and talking reasonably to people. He said he didn't know anything about complaints, he said he had not seen any, and therefore he was not able to talk about those complaints, nor did he want to. He said he had made a complaint to Finbar Bowie in November about the organisation of a particular meeting and that he had had a response from Finbar Bowie on December 7<sup>th</sup> that said it was to be sorted out in the CLP. Peter Gates said that for him, that was the end of it. He said he had tried to work hard to create a party in the Branch and to support the Constituency to try to move the Party forward. He said there was a choice what to do with the group of observers, who he said are so concerned it reminded him of people breaking in to meetings that Jeremy Corbyn was having, and that those who had come to observe had done so because they are concerned about the Party. He said the choice was whether to throw people out or do you try to be more united and he said if those people didn't stay, he would not stay.

Andy Furlong asked the Chair to adjourn the meeting. Gill Aldridge said we cannot conduct the meeting in this way, that the idea was that John Walsh and Peter Gates had an opportunity to speak and that having other people there was not going to make the meeting work. John Walsh said that this was no way to deal with complaints and mentioned the Rule Book.

Andy Furlong said we had come up with Regional Board what he believed to be a fair and amicable way to allow all the individuals who had a problem and who had either been complained about or who had made a complaint to air their views in a comradely manner with the Executive Committee which is sovereign with him in the room as a representative of the Regional Board and as a result of that conversation he would have written a report to Chair and to Regional Office with advice on how best to proceed with the Constituency Development Plan and other matters as we go to the current round of elections. He said it was a meeting of the Executive Committee to which two other members had been invited, that the others in the room were there uninvited. He said that the meeting had been disrupted by people who were not invited in the first place. Gill Aldridge said that the meeting could not continue with people in the room who were not entitled to be there and therefore adjourned the meeting and said she would consult with Andy Furlong and Regional Office about how to proceed.

Rachel Scudamore asked who she should complain to about the operation of the meeting. Gill Aldridge replied that as she had not been invited to the meeting she did not see how she could complain about it. Andy Furlong confirmed that the meeting had been adjourned. John Walsh commented 'well done.,

The meeting began at 8:00 pm. John Walsh and Peter Gates were invited in at 8:12 pm. The meeting was disrupted by ten people who had not been invited and was adjourned at 8:26 pm.