

Section A: 1. Context

1.1. My Own Situation

I am grateful to the National Constitutional Committee ("NCC") for finally allowing me the opportunity to know and to contest the allegations that have been made against me. Like many in my local party I have been mystified for eighteen months over why I was suspended. In all that time, I was given no information on the reasons for that suspension, nor any detail of any charges or allegations. On 28th July 2017, I received the "Charges Pack" from the Secretary of the NCC. For transparency and completeness this is included in full in this Response in **Section 28.2**. I was invited to identify people who would be witnesses on my behalf. It becomes very difficult identifying witnesses given the vagueness of the charges, that most seem to be both unverifiable by witness statements and that the allegations are all unsubstantiated. It is very disturbing that the document contains so much that is innuendo, distortion and falsehood. I can provide evidence that counters the accusations, and I do so in this Response. However, what is most disturbing is that officials in the Party have allowed this document to be released without first checking the veracity of any of its contents outside of a very small number of people making allegations.

I deplore the use of malicious and vexatious false allegations against Party members. These have caused me particular distress and damaged my reputation and standing within the Party and my local community. I can only assume this was the intention. I hope that the National Executive Committee ("NEC") will take the opportunity to review the current practice on suspensions so that only in exceptional circumstances is a member suspended whilst unsubstantiated allegations, such as those in the Charges Pack, are investigated.

At the start of this Response I want to make it clear: no one in the Party should suffer bullying, intimidation and hostility from other members or staff. It is unacceptable and should not be permitted to take the place of legitimate and democratic debate. There are procedures in place to deal with this, and they should be followed with transparency. I am fully supportive of the Labour Party Bullying and Harassment Policy ("LPBHP"). However, in addition, no member should have to experience false allegations, slurs or insinuations against their character by Party members or Party Officials. If it is categorically shown that I have harassed, bullied or intimidated anyone, I will publicly apologise and I expect nothing less in return from those who have knowingly sullied my reputation.

As I explain later, I began regularly attending Labour Party meetings in West Bridgford and Rushcliffe immediately after the 2015 General Election. I found myself welcomed, and already knew some people – including Richard Crawley and Cllr Alistair MacInnes – from having lived in West Bridgford for almost twenty years and having been a Labour Party member since before I arrived in 1996. What I found was a surprisingly small group of people at both Branch and Constituency level. I have great respect for the members of West Bridgford Branch Labour Party ("BLP") who have worked tirelessly in a strongly Conservative constituency for many years, and I can understand the sentiment that asks "*where were you lot when we needed you?*". In my view, this fostered some resentment and retrenchment and we are now experiencing the fallout.

You will see from Cllr MacInnes' submission in **Section 8.2** an acknowledgement that the explosion in membership after May 2015 took the local Party by surprise and, whilst the growth in membership was welcome, the increase in member activity was not.

"My view is that many particularly, those in executive positions as well as some who were just members of the executive, were resentful/piqued by the changes and the speed with which the programme was being introduced and driven forward and furthermore, the increased amount of work this generated."

It is my belief that many of the difficulties faced in the BLP and Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party ("CLP") have derived from this increase in activity and engagement and how this has necessitated change in procedures and expectations. Rushcliffe is not alone in experiencing this challenge. What I do not understand is the level of vilification and abuse I have personally faced

that is reflected in the Charges Pack from a very small number of people. I hope that my Response will go some way in resolving any issues so that the Party locally can go forward united to success both in Rushcliffe and nationally.

I will give a brief synopsis here, though this is discussed in considerable detail throughout this Response. On 19th February 2016, I received a letter inviting me to a "*meeting of Rushcliffe CLP*" to discuss "*complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe generally*". I attended that meeting against my better judgement, in spite of a refusal by the East Midlands Labour Party to divulge the purpose of the meeting. On 19th March, I received a letter of "*administrative suspension*", dated 11th March, but was provided with no information of the reason for the suspension. I was immediately removed from BLP and CLP circulation lists in spite of the former Deputy Director of the East Midlands Labour Party, Emma Foody, informing me at the time that was not necessary. Between March 2016 and July 2017, I took a full part in local campaigning for local County Council elections, PCC elections, the EU Referendum and the snap General Election.

After repeated requests, I eventually received the Charges Pack on 28th July 2017, some sixteen months after being suspended. In this pack, I discovered for the first time that unbeknownst to me a small number of complaints had been made about me to the East Midlands Regional Office in January 2016. The evidence on which those allegations are based and the specific details were not included in the pack meaning that I was still in the dark as to what it was alleged I had done; the majority of allegations are merely hearsay. During the period of suspension, I have been described by the then East Midlands Regional Director at a West Bridgford BLP meeting as "*disgusting*" (See **Sections 1.2** and **14**). The former Acting Branch Secretary has told a West Bridgford BLP meeting that I had "*disrupted*" a meeting, which I and others contested in written statements and is still disputed. On reading the Charges Pack, I find it full of unsubstantiated allegations, untruths and misrepresentations from a small number of Party members. None of these allegations have been previously brought to me but have been used to slander my reputation behind my back and through prolonged suspension. In the documentation, I found to my horror that one of the longest serving and most respected Party members, Jean Stansfield, has been described by one complainant (Lizzie Edgerton) as "*gullible*" (see page 40 of the Charges Pack and my discussion in **Section 10.1**). This is appalling disrespect for a long-standing woman member who has served both as Vice Chair of our Branch and as Women's Officer — creating a dynamic women's group in the BLP and CLP — in order to try to discredit her character and her opinions which run counter to the complainant's.

For the duration of this process, I strongly believe that I have neither been treated with respect nor dignity, as is required under page 2 of the LPBHP. I have been assumed guilty of allegations which were not declared to me and for which I was never asked for my response. Information has been kept from me such that I was unable to defend myself against unsubstantiated rumours contrary to the definitions of acceptable behaviour in LPBHP (page 3). As such I felt intimidated and belittled. The documentation I received contains derogatory remarks which are neither supported by any evidence and, in many cases, nor can they be. I have been unjustifiably excluded from the CLP, and from all communication in spite of this not being required by the Regional Party. It was only by my partner complaining to the Membership Secretary that she was having to be the go-between, passing on information to me that I have a legitimate reason to receive, that this changed - first in the BLP but only more recently in the CLP. There is no justification for this exclusion as is outlined on page 3 of LPBHP.

Furthermore, there are a considerable number of statements in the Charges Pack that twist what I might have said or done, and invent conversations and actions that never took place. At no time have I been asked whether I actually did say or do those things, contrary to the definitions of acceptable behaviour on page 3 of LPBHP.

In the CLP General Committee ("GC") meeting on 16th November 2015, a barbed comment was made about a disability I have which makes writing difficult, and this is repeated in the Charges Pack. This disability for which am receiving medical treatment, means taking minutes impossible. I have been ridiculed and belittled because of that and have not had a sensitive understanding of the effect that might have on me. This behaviour which makes reference to and patronises

me and offends me as a result of a physical disability, falls into the definition of harassment under page 4 of LPBHP.

Furthermore, on page 48 of the Charges Pack, there is a slanderous statement by someone who was Vice Chair of Rushcliffe CLP that I am "*a dishonest and highly manipulative individual*", which goes unchallenged especially as it is made without any evidence. My recollection of my dealings with Robert Crosby is that they were always professional and respectful. Yet, Robert Crosby acts toward me in a thoroughly disrespectful and uncomradely manner contrary to LPBHP.

It was only on 28th July 2017 - eighteen months after some of these allegations were made - that I had any knowledge of any allegations or complaints against me. There was, in those eighteen months, no personal contact with me, no conversations with me and no instigation of any informal procedure about these issues that could have resolved any issues early on. This appears to be contrary to the informal procedures described in page 5 of the LPBHP.

In conclusion, I feel that, over the past two years in various ways, I have experienced what the Labour Party Bullying and Harassment Policy defines as *harassment*, *bullying*, and *exclusion*. At no time has anyone tried to ameliorate the situation or effectively intervene through any form of mediation. I have also been discriminated against as a result of a physical disability, which may seem relatively minor compared to what some colleagues have to bear, but which nevertheless impacts on my daily life and my own self-image.

During this whole process, I have faced a level of personal abuse that is frankly little short of a scandal. That no one thought it appropriate to talk to me at any time, face to face, about these allegations at the time rather than send a coordinated set of secret emails, is highly suspicious.

It is not for me to impute motives for the gross misrepresentation of events in these documents. There are procedures in the Party for undertaking such complaints. Here, I am solely responding to allegations that are inexplicably and completely without foundation. It is for the relevant Party structure to consider whether *malicious and vexatious complaints* have been made against me.

My task here is to set the record straight and to work on moving forwards, and to pull together in order to advance the programme of the Labour Party rather than to cause division. It is not my intention to be tendentious; rather, to respond in a positive and constructive manner.

I very much resent the fact I have never been presented with these matters nor asked for a response for eighteen months. This is a total lack of natural justice that needs to be dealt with. It brings the Party into disrepute.

1.2. My Meeting with Gordon Pattison

On 28th June 2016, I had a meeting with the then East Midlands Regional Director, Gordon Pattison (with a then East Midlands Regional Organiser, George Carr-Williamson, taking notes). I have still not been provided with the official notes of that meeting. My account is as follows. I went with Adele Williams (Secretary, Nottingham East CLP) who took copious notes. My meeting lasted ninety minutes and was very positive and constructive. On the face of it Gordon seemed a reasonable man. The meeting took so long as I insisted on giving a full account and trying to put it in context. It was not an unpleasant meeting by any means. Gordon apologised for the process taking so long.

After this meeting, I was still not in a more informed position about what this was all about. I had no idea about any complaint until 28th July 2017 and I made that point repeatedly. I also made the point that I was making that point repeatedly. I reminded Gordon of Franz Kafka's book "The Trial" where the protagonist, Josef K, is arrested but never told of his crime. I pointed to the Labour Party Rule Book and Rushcliffe CLP Standing Orders, which Gordon in fact had open on the table, and he agreed that they needed to be radically changed. I took that to mean that he acknowledged some impropriety in the meetings.

We talked for thirty minutes about the November 2015 events. I was asked about what led me to resign and so forth. I talked a lot about the push-back against new members. Gordon talked

a bit about there being a need to look into Rushcliffe CLP and I agreed. I gave him a copy of the very positive report and member evaluations of the Members' Workshop (discussed later) which, surprisingly, no one had given him. I talked about what I saw as the resistance to the rise in membership and the engagement of new members in the Party.

We talked a lot about the lack of transparency in the re-establishment of an Executive Committee ("EC"). This went on for quite a while and I think it was quite important. It was clear that one view was that the 7th March meeting was an EC which are generally closed to members and to which we had been invited but supposedly gate-crashed. As Adele Williams was there from Nottingham East, it was easy for me to point to different practices in different CLPs. I asked Gordon to show me where we had ever been told it was an EC meeting and he could not do so. I pointed out that the EC had never reported to any GC meeting since March 2015. I reminded him that West Bridgford EC meetings are open to all. I complained about the aggression of Andy Furlong but suggested that even he might have been misled by CLP officers into accepting their narrative but the evidence I had, showed an alternative interpretation of events.

We talked a lot about the 7th March meeting and went over how that was badly handled. He said - and we have this now in our notes - that if it had only been John Walsh and I who had attended, we would not be where we are now and the matter would have been sorted. I strongly countered that with how we should never have arrived in that position in the first place, that this was outside Party rules and that we still had no idea what that meeting was for. I presumed that meant any other complaints were not sufficient for suspensions in and of themselves.

Gordon asked me to respond to the claim that we were an *"organised attempt to disrupt a meeting"*. I took time to deconstruct the language. How *"organised"* is used to demonise an otherwise legitimate democratic right; how *"disrupt"* ignored our attempts to engage in a dialogue then offered to all leave; how enough of the "EC" wanted the meeting to continue; how *"meeting"* ignored the spurious and unconstitutional nature of the event. I sensed he realised that final point. We discussed a lack of democratic accountability in the CLP. On a positive note, it had brought out the problems with Rushcliffe CLP, which Gordon acknowledged.

It was difficult to predict what would happen next. I was asked a final question about whether I was *"prepared to work with and support CLP officers"*. My reply was *"Of course!"*

About a month after that meeting, I received an email from Gordon Pattison telling me that he had referred my suspension to the NCC. I was devastated. He would neither tell me why he had done so nor why I was suspended. 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 in **Section 14** and I include it here.

The incident occurred at a meeting of the West Bridgford BLP of Rushcliffe CLP on **24th October 2016**. Gordon Pattison, then Regional Director of the East Midlands Labour Party was 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.

GORDON PATTISON: I'm afraid I'm going to struggle to explain where I'm going to come from tonight because I can't tell you everything that is going on with the ongoing investigations, unfortunately. There is a wider issue to all of this. There is a background that has gone on months, *months* before this meeting.

PENNY GOWLAND: It sounds like smears.

GORDON PATTISON: Sorry? [*In order to clarify.*]

PENNY GOWLAND: It sounds like smears to me.

GORDON PATTISON: Well, look, when the investigations are over, you know, hopefully the two suspended members currently...

PENNY GOWLAND: You can't speak about people like this, you know.

GORDON PATTISON: 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.

[*There are gasps and a clear sense of disbelief around the meeting hall.*]

GORDON PATTISON: No, I'm just saying, I'm not on about this meeting of the members that have been suspended...

PENNY GOWLAND: You can't talk about them like that, you can't talk about them like that. [*Penny walks out of the meeting hall and does not return.*]

GORDON PATTISON: Well, I'm sorry, but that's the truth.

PETER SORENSEN: You're implying the Branch Secretary of this branch is operating in a manner which...

GORDON PATTISON: No, I'm not, what I'm saying is...

PETER SORENSEN: You're *implying* it by what you're saying!

GORDON PATTISON: What I'm saying is: there are a lot of other issues ongoing around this, right?

PETER SORENSEN: Right, so let's have...

STEVE CALVERT (*Chair*): Give Gordon a chance to speak, please.

GORDON PATTISON: 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.

PETER SORENSEN: But you've told us it's "disgusting"!

GORDON PATTISON: Yeah, it is, some of the stuff I've read and seen is, quite frankly, it's... it is!

KERI DUTCZYN-HOWE: But is that evidence or is that just hearsay?

GORDON PATTISON: As far as I'm concerned, it's evidence because I've read it, I've seen it.

To Gordon, it appears "*evidence*" is what he read in emails. It is difficult to see how a supposedly independent Investigating Officer can make 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 has not prejudiced the case, especially since Gordon had never tried to validate or substantiate any of the allegations, especially remembering no allegations were raised in my meeting with him in June. 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.

1.3. 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 **Section 28.1**. 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 this Response. Specifically, there is no record of:

- communication with Finbar Bowie over the Members' Workshop (**Section 2.4**);
- communication over my resignation on 16th November 2015 (**Section 2.5**);
- my complaint over the November 2015 GC meeting (**Sections 2.6, 2.8 & 2.9**);
- correspondence with Finbar Bowie over the 7th March 2016 meeting (**Section 6.1**);
- my meeting with Gordon Pattison in June 2016 and subsequent actions (**Section 1.2**).

What is very worrying is the material provided contains no complaint made against me other than an obscure reference to a complaint in one email dated **19th January 2016**. All of this suggests a failure to comply with the DPA 1998. It is almost as if the material has been carefully selected to give a one-sided 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 complaint: to deal with disputes locally (**Section 2.9 & 2.10**).

2. Background

2.1. My History

The paperwork in the Charges Pack consists of accusations without evidence. What I offer here in my Response is evidence without accusations. I do not intend to engage in personal abuse or attacks on fellow members, no matter what has been directed at me. I will merely provide what evidence I can to illuminate matters. The set of documents in the Charges Pack feel as if they have been compiled to create an image of me as a hostile abuser acting contrary to the interests of the Party. I will offer a counter-narrative to that. Given the Charges Pack reads as a character assassination by a small number of people, it is critical that I provide some context.



I first campaigned for Labour in 1974 supporting Gerald Kauffman's re-election in Manchester Ardwick in 1974. As the photograph (*left*), shows I have been a Party member for nearly twenty-five years. I have had the same membership number (A751876), which ought to show I joined early October 1994. Unlike many who joined the Party because they were inspired by Jeremy Corbyn, I joined in October 1994 because I was inspired by Tony Blair; his first party conference speech as Leader on 4th October 1994 I found particularly inspiring.

I moved to Nottingham in 1996. My membership was transferred and I became a Labour-nominated school governor for Edwalton Primary School serving two terms. I have had regular communication with the Membership Secretary and always contributed to Christmas fundraising. I attended some meetings in 1996 and 1997 but because of a very demanding job at the University of Nottingham, as well as bringing up two daughters, I did not feel I was able to commit to additional activity or meetings

Part of my political commitment was working alongside Graham Allen, former Labour MP for Nottingham North. For almost ten years, I supported Graham's mission to make the world a better place for his constituents through research activity. Supported by Graham, I undertook projects on widening participation (funded by HEFCE and DFE), teenage pregnancy, post-16 education in Nottingham North, supporting young fathers, keeping an FE presence in Nottingham North and, in particular, chairing the Research Panel of his Early Intervention strategy. All activities in some way intimately connected to Labour's vision of a fair and just society.

This all changed on 9th May 2015 when, like many millions of other socialists, I was devastated at the Conservative victory. On that morning, I decided I needed to do something and committed to working hard for a Labour victory. My children were older (eighteen and fifteen years of age respectively) and I had given up a major international research commitment. It was on that morning I discovered somehow my standing order to the Party had not been paid. I do not know when it stopped, and I was not contacted by anyone, and as I paid yearly this seems to have been overlooked. I re-established my standing order that morning. As I have had the same membership number for over twenty years, I assume the Party has records of that.

I am not someone who is a late arrival to the Party. I was, like many in West Bridgford's 800+ strong membership, supportive but not active for reasons of work and family.

At no time since I became particularly active in the Party after the May 2015 General Election has anyone indicated that I was other than well-respected. It was never indicated that there was a complaint against me or indeed that there was any concern about my behaviour towards members. Indeed, during that time, I was elected Constituency Labour Party ("CLP") Secretary

and narrowly lost re-election on a vote of 12-10 on 16th November 2015, elected and re-elected Branch Secretary having been nominated by two women members. I was nominated for Vice Chair by the Secretaries of two other Branches of Rushcliffe CLP (Radcliffe-on-Trent and Cotgrave). I would have been horrified if it had brought to my attention that a single person had complained about something I had done. In a forty-two-year career spanning schools and higher education institutions, I have always sought to be inclusive, supportive and empathetic; one does not become a very successful teacher, academic and social researcher at an international level by being abusive or hostile.

Professionally, I have an international reputation for equity and social justice specifically within the field of education. I am regularly called upon to write and speak on such issues around the world which has taken me to over twenty countries during my career. I have led the largest international research organisation for mathematics education in the world, and established an international research organisation specifically oriented towards social inclusion, justice and equity which is now twenty years old.

Looking back on the past two years of Labour Party engagement, if I have been guilty of anything I would say it is excessive enthusiasm, throwing myself into activity with energy and high expectations of what Labour could achieve. I began attending meetings in May 2015, and found a Branch Labour Party ("BLP") and CLP full of long-serving, dedicated officers.

There are four significant events that I want to cover here, which will be important later: my becoming BLP/CLP Secretary; the East Midlands Regional Conference; the members' workshop; my resignation; the November GC and my complaint to Regional Office about the procedures in that meeting.

2.2. Becoming CLP/BLP and CLP Secretary

Steve Calvert, who was a local County Councillor, was also West Bridgford BLP Secretary and Rushcliffe CLP Secretary. Steve announced at the 21st September 2015 meeting of the CLP GC (see **Section 17**) that he wanted to stand down both as Secretaries of West Bridgford BLP and Rushcliffe CLP, but that no one was prepared to take either of those roles on. In my enthusiasm and desire to do the best I could to support the Party, I made it clear to Steve that I would be happy taking those two posts on. This can be found in the Rushcliffe CLP GC minutes of 19th October 2015, included in **Section 17**. The relevant extract is below.

G3. ELECTION OF NEW CLP SECRETARY AND MINUTES SECRETARY:

G4. Steve Calvert had circulated a list of tasks that the secretary needs to carry out (or delegate). Jean said we need similar lists for other officers' roles (**ACTION PG**).

G5. Peter Gates was nominated as CLP Secretary by Trish Whittome, seconded by Jean Stansfield. There were no other nominations so Peter Gates was elected. He thanked delegates for electing him and said he hoped to bring fresh thinking to the role.

There was a discussion about the role of Minutes Secretary and we agreed that it would be better if there was one named person, and others could fill in when that person was not available. Liz Plant said the minutes of meetings were important as a record of decisions, and to inform members who were not able to attend. However, there were no volunteers. Trish Whittome said in future she could make her notes available to Peter who could write them up, but we agreed that this would not be a very satisfactory solution.

At the time, people seemed pleased to accept my offer. Looking back with the benefit of hindsight, I was inexperienced and knew little of the nature or scope of the task. My view now is that it was not ideal for someone in that position to assume such a leading role; I would think it rather questionable that such a person take on both those roles at the same time but, at the time, no one said that.

Steve helpfully produced a list of **Tasks for the Secretary of the CLP (and WB Branch)** (see **Section 19**) and I met Steve one evening in a local pub, the "Test Match", to talk it through. This was the only induction I received. Indeed, there was no other support on offer and I was given no other support on taking on the roles. I contacted Finbar Bowie shortly after, and went

to meet him to try to uncover the nature of what I had taken on and he was very helpful and supportive. Yet, he indicated there was no programme of induction. I very much got the impression that Rushcliffe CLP was viewed by the Regional Office as a problem, had particularly low voter-contact rates and a CLP Development Plan which was both insufficient and not implemented. I remember walking out of Harold Wilson House, the location of the East Midlands Regional Office, thinking – “*What the hell have I taken on?*”

2.3. East Midlands Regional Conference

I attended the 21st September 2015 GC meeting (minutes can be found in **Section 17**) and one item was the then forthcoming Regional Conference. There was a call for delegates and I was keen to attend so I volunteered along with Lizzie Edgerton. There was also a call for two nominations to the East Midlands Regional Board. The CLP Secretary - Steve Calvert - had received a letter from Nicki Brookes from Gedling CLP requesting a Rushcliffe CLP nomination, and this was agreed. Somewhat naïvely, I also offered my name. At this point, I had assumed this was for a Rushcliffe CLP delegate on the Regional Board; although no one on the GC seemed to know much at all about the Regional Board structure. It came as a surprise therefore when, a few days later, I received the following email informing me that I was on the ballot form for election to be held at the Regional Conference.

From: Emma Foody [mailto:emma_foody@labour.org.uk]

Sent: 09 October 2015 17:18

To: Undisclosed recipients:

Subject: Nominations to East Midlands Regional Board

To: Candidates for Nottinghamshire County, Constituency Section of the East Midlands Regional Board

Dear All,

Please find a below a list of those nominated as of 12 noon today.

Two to be elected, at least one of whom must be a woman.

Name	CLP
Aspinall, Jim	Ashfield
Brooks, Nicki	Gedling
Darrington, Melanie	Ashfield
Gates, Peter	Rushcliffe
Griggs, Penny	Nottingham East
Williams, Adele	Nottingham East

Best Wishes

Emma

Emma Foody

Deputy Regional Director

At this point, I was minded to withdraw my nomination as I was virtually unknown. However, I also noticed Adele Williams from Nottingham East had also been nominated. I had known Adele for some time as she is the Administrator for my union branch – the University and College Union at the University of Nottingham. Adele is now a Nottingham City Councillor and CLP Secretary of Nottingham East. I contacted Adele and discussed the Regional Board elections and I decided to keep my nomination, and we agreed to issue a joint election leaflet. However, this was not any form of “joint slate” but provided information on two individuals who stood for the same things. Adele pointed out that, although we would have a joint leaflet, she would be unable to vote for me, as her CLP had nominated herself and Penny Griggs, meaning the Nottingham East votes were mandated to go to them. Similarly, the Rushcliffe votes would need to be cast for

myself and Nicki Brookes. The procedures were reinforced when I received a helpful phone call from Finbar Bowie a few days before the election making sure I knew everything I needed to know about the election. At the Regional Conference in Leicester on 24th October 2015, Adele and I distributed our leaflet around the reception/ registration. I bumped into Nicki Brooks and confirmed with her that she was one of our nominees and she would get our votes.

I spent much of the day in two sessions on Contact Creator and NationBuilder, at least one of which I sat with Lizzie Edgerton. I say that because, as far as I understood, relations between us were positive and constructive. Indeed, at some time during the day - I cannot quite remember when now - I met Lizzie in a corridor and she said we ought to get a "selfie" (*below*) with Tom Watson, which we did after following him to (not into) the Gents.



During the lunch break, I went to vote in the Regional Board Elections to be told someone had voted. I presumed it was Lizzie, though we had not at any time discussed who would cast Rushcliffe's vote. When I saw Lizzie a little while later I asked if she had voted, and she looked a little distressed and told me that Nicki Brookes had looked for her and "*frogmarched*" her to the ballot box - I specifically recall her using that word. I tried to help by pointing out that it really did not matter as Rushcliffe would need to vote for its own nominees. I left it at that and thought no more of it.

2.4. Members' Workshops

I first met John Walsh, a new Party member and Rushcliffe CLP delegate from Keyworth BLP, for the first time at the 21st September GC meeting which he attended with his partner, Rachel Scudamore. Rachel worked for some time at the University of Nottingham as Head of Learning Enhancement. After that meeting, John contacted me with an idea that he had for new member workshops to capitalise on the enthusiasm engendered by Jeremy Corbyn's election. Through Rachel, he knew of my long-standing involvement in professional development and facilitation at the University of Nottingham. As such, he asked if I would consider possibly working alongside Rachel in facilitating the workshops. John was clearly very enthusiastic and so, I agreed. At the Rushcliffe GC meeting on 19th October 2015 (see **Section 17**), John came along with a proposal for two half-day workshops for new members. This was discussed, and John was nominated by Liz Plant for the vacant post of CLP Political Education Officer and this was agreed, as was the proposal for the workshops. The specific minute is below.

G6. POLITICAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS:

Liz Plant nominated John Walsh for the vacant post of Political Education Officer and this was agreed.

John had circulated a discussion paper with a proposal for two half-day skills workshops, led by Rachel Scudamore and Peter Gates. We would need to find a suitable venue. Trish suggested the GMB or Unison offices in Nottingham.

Working party: John Walsh, Rachel Scudamore, Gary Edgerton, Kevin Lowe, Patrick Walsh. Liaise with Bill Logan about costs.

Sandy thanked John for the work he had put into preparing this initiative.

I was not at all involved in the planning of these workshops, and expected to be provided with more structured guidance later. What gradually unfurled next was a maelstrom of a feud that made the Montagues and Capulets look like a minor disagreement!

There was clearly some tension between John Walsh on the one hand and Gary Edgerton on the other. I had received an email from Sandra Coker, CLP Chair, asking me to put five questions to John, which I did do, and to which he replied within a few hours:

From: Sandra Coker [mailto:s.coker@ntlworld.com]
Sent: 30 October 2015 07:41
To: Rushcliffe Labour <rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com>
Subject: Re: Hi

Morning Peter,

I would be happy to meet with you and in the interest of time-saving it may well be appropriate to combine that with a meeting with Liz. Unfortunately I am not free until the middle of next week at the earliest. I will liaise with Liz and get back to you.

In the meantime I wonder if I might enlist your help in finding the answers to some questions?

1. How many and which members of the working party have been involved in planning the forthcoming workshops?
2. How many and which members of the working party will be involved in facilitating the workshops?
3. How many and which venues were considered before a decision was made to book Lutterell Hall?
4. What is the total cost for the two workshops planned?
5. Has Bill Logan, CLP treasurer, been consulted and/or approved the costs?

Thanks for your help with this Peter. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards

Sandy

From: Rushcliffe Labour rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com
To: Sandra Coker s.coker@ntlworld.com
Sent: Fri 30/10/15 13:17
Subject: Fwd: Skills Workshops

Sandy,

John's responses to your queries are below which John tried to provide as fast as possible. I hope this is sufficient. If you require any further information do let me know. As I said in my message to the gmc yesterday now we seem to have the structure in place and a viable number interested, it's the time to put details onto the sessions. More info will follow. Is there anything else you think you as CLP chair need to know or say at this stage? I've copied John and Rachel in to this email as a courtesy.

Peter Gates
Secretary
Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party

1. The morning after the last GC meeting (Oct. 19th) I sent a 550 word email to the working group where I set out the immediate tasks in a 5 point list. I have sent 2 further emails to the group, detailing the tasks and requesting input. At each step I attempted to make it clear that input was welcome and needed. This was my attempt to involve members of the working group in planning the workshops and in answer to your specific question, I have tried to involve all members of the working group. However, I accept that I do not have experience of leading a working group and I apologise if in my actions I have fallen short of expectations.

2. I note that the GC Minutes say that the workshops 'would be led by Rachel Scudamore and Peter Gates'. Consequently, I have handed over responsibility for facilitating the workshops to Rachel and Peter. My understanding was that the format of the workshops required a lead facilitator and one other person. Gary Edgerton offered help with facilitation by email on 20th Oct and I replied within a couple of hours to say 'Thanks

for the facilitation offer - you're on the reserve list'. This seemed appropriate at the time and I also asked Gary what experience he had of facilitation. This seemed appropriate at the time as I understand that 'facilitation' has many different meanings. On 26th Oct. I sent an email to the group where I noted that 'Rachel will email later regarding the format of the workshops.' I am not experienced in facilitation and the above is the extent of my efforts to involve members of the working group. Consequently, and in answer to your specific question, I do not know how many and which members of the working party will be involved in facilitating the workshops. I apologise if in my actions I have fallen short of expectations.

3. Booking the venues was described in my 20th Oct email to the group as 'the most pressing issue'. Pat Walsh provided useful input, in reply to my email to the group and subsequently I contacted Rushcliffe BC and emailed Richard Crawley (RBC had advised on availability of Lutterell Hall and the The Sir Julien Cahn Pavilion). By Wednesday evening I had arranged firm dates for the workshops (based on Rachel and Peter's availability) and that I would hand over all the venue details I had gathered to Gay Edgerton (I sent a 500 word email to Gary first thing the next day). Gary replied on Friday afternoon to say he had looked around and asked 'why can't we use the dates that Lutterell Hall and Sir Julien Khan are available?'. These dates did not match Rachel and Peter's availability. Lizze Edgerton mentioned at the Regional Conference that Gary had booked All Hallows church for one of the dates. On Sunday I drove to All Hallows but thought that parking and access was limited. By the following Monday morning I had not received confirmation of this booking and in an effort to quickly resolve the venue issue I emailed Gary to ask him to put the venue work on hold, then rang RBC and booked the Lutterell Hall dates. In answer to your specific question, I do not know 'How many and which venues were considered before a decision was made to book Lutterell Hall' as I do not know how many and which venues Gary considered. I made the decision to book Lutterell Hall as it is a well known, high-profile venue. I felt there was a pressing need to make a decision and apologise that, given my lack of experience in these matters, you feel that I have made the wrong decision.

4 and 5. I do not know the total cost for the two workshops planned and I have not contacted Bill Logan, CLP treasurer. On 21st Oct I emailed Richard Crawley and at point 2. 'Paying for a venue' I enquired about venue costs (and at point 3. about printing costs). In an effort to ensure that the workshops would be do-able, quickly, I asked Richard if it would be possible, if the venue cost was outside of what the CLP could afford, if I could pay the difference in the form of a private donation to the Party, as I would not want such an arrangement to be made public. Richard replied that I should contact Bill Logan on this matter. My 'Labour time' has been taken up by other Skills Workshops matters so I have not found time to contact Bill. I have felt that it was OK to continue organising the workshops on the basis that I would make up any difference in costs versus available funds. I apologise that I have not contacted Bill Logan to confirm if this arrangement would be acceptable to the Party
John.

I tried to placate the situation and invited John and Rachel, and Gary and Lizzie to my house on Saturday 31st October 2015 to talk through the problems.

However, I received an email from John Walsh at 2:52pm on Friday 30th October 2015 informing me that he had resigned from the Labour Party and asked me not to communicate with him. Whilst I was naturally intrigued, I could do no more than follow his wishes, but I did not understand what had brought this about.

As CLP Secretary, I was then in a quandary. A disagreement between four new members of the Party over the organisation of two workshops, appeared to have got quite out of hand.

I contacted Sandra Coker and Liz Plant by phone, text and email over the weekend but could get no reply for three days, and neither Sandra nor Liz would meet me unless they could both be present. Richard Crawley, a very long-standing member of Rushcliffe CLP, was away in France, and Steve Calvert had indicated his wish to pull out. I felt it was not right to pull him back in.

Eventually I met Sandra and Liz Plant in what was quite a tense meeting; I am afraid I still did not know what was at the root of all this. I was looking for a way forward but came away feeling somewhat intimidated, harangued and blamed for something that was not really of my own making. After the haranguing, I agreed reluctantly to cancel the workshops. I came home really demoralised. It took me several days to get time to sort out the emails that we had received

from people wanting to attend the workshop. I found eleven for the session on Saturday's workshop and around twenty for Tuesday's. My gut feeling was that we had a huge influx of new members here wanting to be involved. It would be a tragedy to just cancel it. In fact, I felt that it was not my right to cancel it unilaterally when the GC had agreed on it in the first place. So, I thought I would do my best to see if I could pull something together. Once it got to twenty-eight members, I felt more pressure and responsibility to respond to their wishes. Hence, I asked around and used Facebook as I have several hundred local and national Labour Party people as friends on there. My feeling was we needed experienced Party people running such a workshop.

I found Chris Williamson - the then former MP for Derby North and a national figure who Jeremy Corbyn had spoken of in positive terms - and Adele Williams - a local Nottingham Branch Secretary and Union activist. I got a room for £30 and was feeling very positive and upbeat. I told Sandra Coker and Liz Plant that I thought I had found a solution. However, I had no reply for three days when I got a curt response from Sandra Coker that she was unhappy that I was planning the event and that, six days since our meeting, I had still not cancelled.

From: Sandra Coker [mailto:s.coker@ntlworld.com]
Sent: 09 November 2015 12:22
To: Rushcliffe Labour <rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com>
Cc: liz.plant2@btinternet.com
Subject: Re: Workshops

Hi Peter,

I am not happy with your proposals. Following our meeting which took place one week ago and which you called to ask for advice, we agreed to postpone these workshops until January. You have only postponed one - 6 days after our meeting - and been publicly advertising for support for the other. This is not what was agreed. I shall take advice about how to proceed from here.

Sandy

I find this unnecessarily aggressive and intimidating. Here is a good example of me being the recipient of abuse, intimidation and harassment from emails, rather than the initiator.

I also got an email almost simultaneously (12:22pm and 12:44pm) from Liz Plant. Within which, she complained that I had booked a room for a West Bridgford BLP meeting without asking her, which was after all my responsibility as Branch Secretary, and that I did so without asking the Branch Executive which, at that point, had only met once in about nine years (as I am told).

I then contacted Finbar Bowie and went to see him to ask for advice. He said that the easiest thing to do was to cancel the meeting or, alternatively, to take it to the GC for a democratic decision. Since I hold participatory democracy in very high regard, I decided this was the best course of action. I sent this email to him:

From: Peter Gates [mailto:Peter.Gates@nottingham.ac.uk]
Sent: 05 November 2015 12:44
To: rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com
Subject: FW: workshops - fairly urgent

Finbar, good to talk earlier, just to confirm that I will come over tomorrow

Regarding the workshops as I explained there was a feeling we ought to cancel, but having spoken to you I'm feeling now we really ought to see if we can go ahead. So .. the session in particular is Tuesday November 24 th 7-9. I will confirm the venue later. I think we have over 20 people currently signed up though that may go up if we push it more. (Theft were two events originally planned one on Saturday 14th but I think we are going to cancel that and postpone till after Xmas if we want to have another one. The purpose of the event is to introduce people the party, how it operates, both nationally and locally and we can get a local councillor to do that part, also how to get involved, campaigns, leadership all that stuff. There is a lot of enthusiasm in the membership and I do think we need to move quickly as you say.

Can you possibly confirm fairly quickly if you think you can sort out a facilitator or someone to lead it. We will provide others to support and be there of course and maybe we can deliver future ones ourselves. We have a huge new membership here and need to capitalise on that .. the seat might be winnable but certainly we might get more possibility of councillors .

Best Wishes,

Peter

I then contacted Sandra Coker with the following:

From: rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com [mailto:rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 12 November 2015 11:38
To: Sandy Coker <s.coker@ntlworld.com>
Cc: Finbar Bowie <finbar_bowie@labour.org.uk>
Subject: Rushcliffe clp gc

Morning Sandy,

Apologies for my not getting back to you sooner, but I needed to take advice on the appropriate way forward regarding the skills workshops and the issues there may be within the CLP. As you know I am fairly new to Party procedures and need to be certain I am doing the right thing.

I have now had a chance to discuss matters at length with the regional office - and they have been really helpful.

I have asked the Regional Officer - Finbar Bowie - to come to the GC meeting on Monday evening - and he will do his very best to do that, as long as Campaigning in Selston allows it. I have asked Finbar if he might make this a priority. (He is also copied into this email)

His advice on the remaining skills workshop was, that it is a matter for the GC to decide. I will therefore leave the decision to cancel or go ahead with the GC on Monday. Whatever the GC decides to do will be the way we need to go and I will proceed that way. That is still a week before the proposed date of the event. (There are so far 32 people signed up).

I trust this is ok with you. I do hope Sandy that we are able to move forwards from this in order to focus on the campaigns Labour needs to be fighting, rather than looking inward.

Best Wishes,

Peter

Peter Gates
Secretary
West Bridgford Branch Labour Party
Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party

At this point I was feeling unclear as to why Sandra Coker had become more aggressive toward me. I emailed the GC:

From: rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com [mailto:rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 12 November 2015 11:39
To: Allen Ashmore <ashmoreallen@hotmail.com>; Ailish D'Arcy <a.darcy1@ntlworld.com>; Keir Chewings <kchewings@me.com>; Hayley Chewinngs <michaelhayley@talktalk.net>; Chris Kemp <chrisjkemp@btinternet.com>; Robert Crosby <robertcrosby35@aol.com>; john.walsh@designforpurpose.co.uk; Patrick Walsh <pat_j_walsh@hotmail.com>; sharon.howard@eon.com; Kevin Lowe <kevpalowe@gmail.com>; Peter Brodie <pabnott@gmail.com>; Steve Collins <stevecollins06@yahoo.co.uk>; Harry Curtis <harry.curtis01@ntlworld.com>; Pam Thompson <pamthompson2@btinternet.com>; stuubradly@googlemail.com; Nigel Boughton-Smith <nigel.boughtonsmith@btinternet.com>; Annette Beaumont <akbeaumont9@btinternet.com>; Kate Foale

<kate@thefoales.net>; gill aldridge <gill.aldridge@btinternet.com>; stevecalvert39@gmail.com; john bannister <johnbann24@ntlworld.com>; jude.burgess@me.com; janevcaro@yahoo.com; Sandy Coker <s.coker@ntlworld.com>; Rushcliffe Labour Party <rushcliffe.labour@ntlworld.com>; g.edgerton@edgerton-consulting.com; Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@mac.com>; peter.gates3@btopenworld.com; Colin Gibson <c.gibson12@ntlworld.com>; jo.higman@gmail.com; Bill Logan <william.logan3@ntlworld.com>; terry@terrymorrell.com; Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>; Patricia Whittome <trish.whittome@ntlworld.com>; Alistair MacInnes <alistair.macinnes@gmail.com>; Jean Stansfield <jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com>; Alan Tiplady <atiplady@ntlworld.com>

Cc: Finbar Bowie <finbar_bowie@labour.org.uk>

Subject: Re: Rushcliffe CLP GC Meeting 16th November

GC Delegates:

Hello colleagues, I really am sorry for another email, but I think this is important.

I needed to take official advice on the appropriate way forward regarding the issues there may be within the CLP and also the skills workshops which we agreed at the last GC meeting - and which seemed to be the catalyst for a number of difficulties. As you know I am fairly new to Labour Party procedures and I need to be certain I am doing the right thing. I have now had a chance to discuss matters at length with the regional office - and they have been really helpful.

I have asked the Regional Officer - Finbar Bowie - to come to the GC meeting on Monday evening - and he will do his very best to do that, as long as campaigning in Selston allows it. I have asked Finbar if he might make this a priority. (He is also copied into this email)

His advice on the remaining skills workshop was, that it is a matter for the GC to decide since we are a democratic organisation. I will therefore leave the decision to the GC on Monday whether to cancel that workshop or go ahead. Whatever the GC decides to do will be the way we need to proceed. That is still a week before the proposed date of the event.

(Just for information. There are so far 32 people signed up for the session on 24th November. I have not checked which Branches they are from but will bring the list on Monday and you may recognise people. Because of previous circumstances, I had arranged for Chris Williamson (Ex Derby North MP, and leader of Derby City Council) and Adele Williams (Nottingham East Branch and local organiser of UCU) to lead/facilitate the session. I also approached Liz if she might do a slot on the local council). I have booked a room in the Methodist Church Hall in West Bridgford. However, I realise there might be diverse thoughts on this, and you will see the workshop is on the GC agenda.

I trust this is ok with all of you. I do hope that we are all able to move forwards from this, in order to focus on the campaigns Labour needs to be fighting, and the people we need to be supporting rather than looking inward. Every day Labour is making gains and winning arguments for progressive politics, and every day a victory in 2020 looks ever more possible. In the meantime, we have local council seats to win, and there is campaigning in Selston on Saturday and Sunday. I have attached the campaign schedule. By the way .. do have a look at today's Telegraph front page!

My best wishes,

Peter

Peter Gates
Secretary
West Bridgford Branch Labour Party
Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party

I think at this point it is worth reminding ourselves: we are merely talking about the organisation of a half-day workshop for new members of the Labour Party.

2.5 Resigning as BLP and CLP Secretary

At this point I had had enough of the suspicion, lack of respect and lack of trust, intimidation, and bullying I felt I was subjected to. After a discussion with my partner, I decided that the way I was being treated was entirely inappropriate and that I should resign. I emailed and apologised to Trish Whittome, Steve Calvert and Jean Stansfield, all of whom had supported me, and they emailed me back almost immediately expressing their regret, upset and sadness. I sent my resignation to Sandra Coker and Liz Plant:

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Sent: 10 November 2015 09:07
To: Liz Plant liz.plant2@btinternet.com; Sandra Coker [mailto:s.coker@ntlworld.com]
Subject: Re: Rushcliffe Labour Party

Dear Sandy and Liz,

I have given our recent communications some considerable thought, and deeply reflected on how best to respond to you. I do have to say that I have found the suspicion, lack of respect and lack of trust for me in my role as Secretary from you both has now made my position untenable. I therefore feel I have no alternative but to resign as both Secretary of the CLP and of West Bridgford branch.

I will prepare the agendas for the next CLP and Branch meetings, but will resign at the end of those meetings. I believe I have at all times worked in the best interests of the Labour Party and will continue to work for a Labour victory in 2020. I will remain a West Bridgford delegate to the GC and will actively campaign for Labour Party success in all upcoming elections, as well as campaigning for those who are traditionally supported by the Labour Party. I deeply regret that it has come to this, as I hoped we could have achieved great things.

Best wishes,
Peter

I received the following replies:

From: Liz Plant [mailto:liz.plant2@btinternet.com]
Sent: 10 November 2015 21:58
To: <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com>
Cc: Sandra Coker <s.coker@ntlworld.com>
Subject: Re: Rushcliffe Labour Party

.
Dear Peter,

Thank you for informing me of your resignation as Branch secretary and of your intention to do so at the end of the Branch meeting on Nov. 23rd.

Please accept this email as a formal receipt of your resignation.

Kind Regards,
Liz

From: Sandra Coker [mailto:s.coker@ntlworld.com]
Sent: 10 November 2015 15:25
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Cc: Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>
Subject: Re: Rushcliffe Labour Party

Hi Peter,

Thanks for letting me know that you will be resigning as CLP secretary at the next meeting. Would you kindly send me a copy of the email cancelling the workshop on 24 November?

Kind regards
Sandy

I have to say, on a personal level, I found those two replies very hurtful, cold and uncomradely.

I sent the following email to all GC delegates and others:

From: rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com [mailto:rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 11 November 2015 10:01
To: Allen Ashmore <ashmoreallen@hotmail.com>; Ailish D'Arcy <a.darcy1@ntlworld.com>; Keir Chewings <kchewings@me.com>; Hayley Chewinngs <michaelhayley@talktalk.net>; Chris Kemp <chrisjkemp@btinternet.com>; Robert Crosby <robertcrosby35@aol.com>; john.walsh@designforpurpose.co.uk; Patrick Walsh <pat_j_walsh@hotmail.com>; sharon.howard@eon.com; Kevin Lowe <kevpalowe@gmail.com>; Peter Brodie <pabnott@gmail.com>; Steve Collins <stevecollins06@yahoo.co.uk>; Harry Curtis <harry.curtis01@ntlworld.com>; Pam Thompson <pamthompson2@btinternet.com>; stuubradly@googlemail.com; Nigel Boughton-Smith <nigel.boughtonsmith@btinternet.com>; Annette Beaumont <akbeaumont9@btinternet.com>; Kate Foale <kate@thefoales.net>; gill aldridge <gill.aldridge@btinternet.com>; stevecalvert39@gmail.com; john bannister <johnbann24@ntlworld.com>; jude.burgess@me.com; janevcaro@yahoo.com; Sandy Coker <s.coker@ntlworld.com>; Rushcliffe Labour Party <rushcliffe.labour@ntlworld.com>; g.edgerton@edgerton-consulting.com; Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@mac.com>; peter.gates3@btopenworld.com; Colin Gibson <c.gibson12@ntlworld.com>; jo.higman@gmail.com; Bill Logan <william.logan3@ntlworld.com>; terry@terrymorrell.com; Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>; Patricia Whittome <trish.whittome@ntlworld.com>; Alistair MacInnes <alistair.macinnnes@gmail.com>; Jean Stansfield <jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com>; Alan Tiplady <atiplady@ntlworld.com>
Subject: Re: Rushcliffe CLP GC Meeting 16th November Agenda

I have attached the agenda for the GC Meeting next **Monday 16th November 7:30, St. Giles Church Hall.**

I will be circulating papers later this week, But will ensure there are paper copies for those who can't print these off.

You will see an item on the agenda on the election of a CLP secretary. I came to the decision a few days ago that I could no longer remain in this role and I informed Sandy accordingly. I have copied my letter of resignation below, as I feel it is important as the CLP GC you have my reasons. I feel, as Jeremy Corbyn repeatedly says, there is no place in Labour Party politics for personal attacks or abuse and I will not engage with that. For me, it is most important we build a strong democratic party capable of taking on the Conservatives and other parties of the right. The Labour Party in Rushcliffe needs to be united, it needs to engage with the swathe of new members and supporters, and it needs to interact with the electorate. My energy will be best directed at that. I intend to remain on the GC and will give the new secretary my support.

"Dear Sandy and Liz,

I have given our recent communications some considerable thought, and deeply reflected on how best to respond to you. I do have to say that I have found the suspicion, lack of respect and lack of trust for me in my role as Secretary from you both has now made my position untenable. I therefore feel I have no alternative but to resign as both Secretary of the CLP and of West Bridgford branch.

I will prepare the agendas for the next CLP and Branch meetings, but will resign at the end of those meetings. I believe I have at all times worked in the best interests of the Labour Party and will continue to work for a Labour victory in 2020. I will remain a West Bridgford delegate to the GC and will actively campaign for Labour Party success in all upcoming elections, as well as campaigning for those who are traditionally supported by the Labour Party. I deeply regret that it has come to this, as I hoped we could have achieved great things.

Best wishes,
Peter"

Peter Gates
Secretary
West Bridgford Branch Labour Party
Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party

In addition, I sent the following email to Finbar Bowie

From: Rushcliffe Labour [mailto:rushcliffe.labour@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 11 November 2015 17:08
To: finbar_bowie@labour.org.uk
Subject: Rushcliffe Labour Party

Hi Finbar, this is a very difficult email to send.

I think I owe it to you, as someone who supported my thinking recently on developing the CLP in Rushcliffe, to tell you I have been forced to resign as CLP and Branch chair. You will find out in due course but given the part you played in my thinking of the role and your wider role in the party, I thought it right to inform you personally. I very much appreciated your support and I really wanted to make a huge success of the party locally. However I am just not prepared to take the way my election to the roles has been treated by The Chair of the CLP and the Branch. They clearly never wanted me to have the roles and have made that apparent. For your information here is the letter I sent to Sandy and Liz.

"Dear Sandy and Liz,

I have given our recent communications some considerable thought, and deeply reflected on how best to respond to you. I do have to say that I have found the suspicion, lack of respect and lack of trust for me in my role as Secretary from you both has now made my position untenable. I therefore feel I have no alternative but to resign as both Secretary of the CLP and of West Bridgford branch.

I will prepare the agendas for the next CLP and Branch meetings, but will resign at the end of those meetings. I believe I have at all times worked in the best interests of the Labour Party and will continue to work for a Labour victory in 2020. I will remain a West Bridgford delegate to the GC and will actively campaign for Labour Party success in all upcoming elections, as well as campaigning for those who are traditionally supported by the Labour Party. I deeply regret that it has come to this, as I hoped we could have achieved great things.

Peter

I am really sorry Finbar to find myself in this position. I think it's really unfortunate as I really wanted to help take the party forward in ways we discussed. The lack of member engagement is low, and at the moment doesn't not seem to be a priority. I have a CLP workshop arranged which over 30 members have signed up to but have been instructed to cancel it by the chair even though I have got Chris Williamson and Adele Williams to offer to be involved. It seemed to me a disagreement was that a particular new member who happens to "facilitate" as his job was not asked to run the workshop.

As you know yourself, in addition there is little contact across the CLP with the electorate. There needs to be new ways of thinking but new thinking down not really seem to be welcome. I am just not prepared to be a dogsbody to the chair of the CLP or branch. That is not what I see the role of a secretary in my view. I joined labour to fight the Tories not other members of the Labour Party. I shall continue to work for a victory in 2020, and for all other campaigns. I am really disappointed at the turn of events locally but it has not diminished my enthusiasm for the party.

Best wishes and thanks for your offers of help,

Peter

Peter Gates
Secretary
West Bridgford Branch Labour Party
Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party

I sent the following to Richard Crawley and received a reply:

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 12 November 2015 17:01
To: Rushcliffe Labour Party <rushcliffe.labour@ntlworld.com>
Subject: CLP

Richard, I want to say something to you, because it is important to me.

I want you to know that I feel, in spite of some differences we have in terms of operational matters, I don't believe you have in any way been anything other than helpful to me. You have made parts of the job possible and more straightforward. Without you the job of Secretary would just not be possible. I looked forward to us forging a constructive relationship to build a strong local party, something you have been working so hard for, for many years. Whilst it is very easy these days to complain and criticise, I always try to be professional and look for ways of thanking people. I may get under your skin, you may get under mine, but in the end, we get on with things because we are both passionate. Thanks.

Peter

Peter Gates

From: e-mail rushcliffe.labour [mailto:rushcliffe.labour@ntlworld.com]
Sent: 12 November 2015 22:20
To: peter.gates3 <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com>
Subject: Re: CLP

Hi Peter

Thank you for this, and thank you again for all you have been trying to do.

I know I got annoyed with you several times, but I never doubted you were trying to do your best for the party. A few weeks ago I decided to try to ignore all the niggles and irritations and just get on with trying to help you. I must have succeeded at least partially!

I'm not sure where we go from here, perhaps we will be able to sort out some things on Monday.

Best wishes,
Richard

Subsequent to the GC Meeting in November, I was approached by several West Bridgford members and officers and I was asked to reconsider and withdraw my resignation as Branch Secretary. After some days, I agreed to do so and sent the following email to Liz Plant:

On 13 Nov 2015, at 05:39, <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com> <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com> wrote:

Hi Liz,

In the past few days I have had a number of conversations with people in the Branch, particularly on the Branch Executive and as you know I have been in touch with the Regional Office. I have been touched by the number of people who have asked me to reconsider and I have given that some thought. What I am planning to do therefore is, as far as the Branch is concerned, I will withdraw my resignation as Branch Secretary and will continue to act as Secretary working with you until the AGM in January 2016, when I understand elections will be held. I may, or may not, decide to stand again at that point.

I think this allows you and I time to work together to build a positive working relationship and it means the Party remains united rather than presenting difficulties to the membership. I want to stress I am most committed to being constructive and I think we both do need to be quite honest with each other and find constructive ways of working together for the benefit of the Party. I don't believe that is an impossible task. I

do have great respect for you and have much to learn from you. As I have said many times I do want the Party to win in 2020, and in as many council seats as possible before then, and will want to work for that - as I know you do.

I am very happy to meet with you just to chat this over whenever we can both find a mutually convenient time.

Best Wishes,

Peter

Peter Gates

From: Liz Plant [mailto:liz.plant2@btinternet.com]
Sent: 15 November 2015 13:49
To: <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com> <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com>
Subject: Re: West Bridgford Branch

Thank you Peter for informing me of your decision to withdraw your resignation & your intention to continue in the role of Branch secretary until the AGM in January.

I welcome the sentiments expressed in your email & feel I must re-iterate my view that the Labour Party is a democratic socialist party. We have rules, systems & procedures in place to ensure that the democratic views of the membership are implemented by the party officials. It is not the place for individuals to act independently without an agreed mandate.

I appreciate that with the increase in attendance at Branch meetings, the Branch executive needs to meet on a regular basis in order to facilitate that decision making process. I'm going to check with Richard on his return today to see if St. Giles is available on Monday Nov.30th. If it is I would like an executive meeting called for that date. I hope you are in agreement with this & I will inform you ASAP if the room is available on that date.

Regards,

Liz

Sent from my iPhone

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 15 November 2015 10:32
To: Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>
Subject: Re: West Bridgford Branch

Liz, thanks so much for this. Which I think is very positive. Let me say I do not disagree with any of this whatsoever.

The rules and procedures but also accountability and engagement in party policy-making is of the utmost importance.

Regarding "It is not the place for individuals to act independently without an agreed mandate." I do fully agree, and my stance is that is exactly why I was unable - and unwilling - to cancel the second CLP workshop.

I think the Branch exec is now of the utmost importance. They can do some of the business that members might not relish but which is important. Maybe we weren't responsive enough to see that - and maybe that should have been the Secretaries responsibility. But in my defence it wasn't a body that has played a big role recently as far as I think you said. I agree that we ought to try for 30th and get a regular meeting slot in. (I'll happily book the room but know Richard might have better contacts.) Then we can work on any other ways that body needs to operate. It can also become a "fast response" body if we ever should need to take decisions in a hurry. I do think we need to cascade out and having a wider branch exec will draw in more people, who in turn can draw in even more people.

I am not too sure what you are referring to Liz in lines 3-5, because democracy has always been of the utmost importance to me. If it is about Louise Regan, you did ask me about doing that because I had said she was

willing to do it. At least that is my understanding. As for other speakers I'll happily look around going by the list from the breakout groups (Trident, fracking, electoral reform...) but there will probably be other things we want on - and the exec might suggest. We can raise this again maybe on 23rd. Or maybe on 24th if the CLP GC decide it goes ahead. (Can I just ask, should the GC decide the 24th workshop goes ahead will you be happy contributing something on the working of the local council? Steve is down to go too. You might of course want to leave a response to that until we know on Monday.)

If it is about rooms, we are not at all committed but have a space at least. That gave us time to think about the future. I had to get in fast. I think we ought to seriously consider asking for donations for the room. I might have some ideas on making that a more attractive proposition!

So it is entirely possible there has been some misunderstandings by people who don't really know each other very well.

Having said that there will be times we will be called on to use our judgements; you as chair or me as secretary. We both need to have the belief and trust in each other to feel we can do that.

Here is the final agenda I'm sending round today. I am waiting for a response from Richard about whether we send the minutes out too. My gut feeling is not, but I can't express really why... its something about not having electronic copies circulating widely. Maybe you can advise.

I've put rough guidelines for timings on there for you as chair, so it all fits in and we don't spend too long on one thing. I hope you think I've got the balance right, but its only a guide not a guillotine!

Best wishes and thanks again.

a luta continua!

Peter

In addition, I sent the following to Richard Crawley:

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 13 November 2015 10:18
To: Rushcliffe Labour Party <rushcliffe.labour@ntlworld.com>
Subject: West Bridgford Branch

Richard, I want you to be one of the first to know that I have today contacted Liz and withdrawn my resignation as Branch Secretary. I have been touched by people asking me to reconsider, and I did have to think about that. I think that is the best solution for all concerned, not least Party unity (and all that goes with that like winning elections etc.)

I have indicated that I will consider standing in the election for Branch Secretary in January 2016, which gives us all time to move forward. Most importantly it gives Liz and I time to work together to develop a positive working relationship. I am very positive about that and will do all I can you try to make that work. We do after all need to fight the Conservatives, not each other.

I hope you have a pleasant journey home.

Best Wishes,
Peter

I think what all this shows is far from being some hostile, bullying and undemocratic political terrorist, I am a reasonable, thoughtful, committed, democratic socialist. I was not however prepared to be treated with such disrespect and hostility from a small number of people in the Party I had been a member of for so long, and I decided enough was enough. This led to the 16th November 2015 GC meeting. However, it was the emails I received from some GC members such as this one that lifted my spirits:

From: Jude Burgess [mailto:jude.burgess@me.com]
Sent: 20 November 2015 16:22
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Subject: Re: West Bridgford Branch

Hi Peter glad to hear you're staying! I don't know you yet but I've been impressed by your passion and enthusiasm- something the party needs to hang onto! I'm sure we can all learn to work together for a positive outcome in 2020.

Unfortunately I have a work commitment on Monday so need to send my apologies.

Bye for now

Jude

In spite of all this, my passion and enthusiasm persists.

2.6. November GC

I have to say that the November GC was one of the most humiliating and unpleasant experiences I have sat through. I think there is widespread agreement that it was badly handled. Personal relationships were at an all-time low, and I just wanted out as it was having negative effects on my family life. The minutes of this meeting can be found in **Section 17**. The Chair - Sandra Coker - presented to the meeting a document I had not seen before and which is included here in **Section 16**. I felt it was unreasonable to present such a long document to the meeting with no prior notice, and present it whilst remaining in the Chair. I believe an objective and impassioned reading of that list of communications will show how reasonable and professional I had been throughout. However, it is a partial account, for example:

8/11/15 He informed me that he had thought more since our meeting and had gone ahead and booked a new venue, two external speakers – Adele Williams of Nottingham East and Chris Williamson was keeping the date of 24th free and suggested the event would not work with himself and Gary as facilitators.

This is not quite the full story, as I have indicated above. I felt we had a duty to all the members who had indicated a desire to attend, and looked to see if I could come up with a viable proposal, including a venue, which I did. It was this that I felt the GC should have the opportunity to vote on. My idea of the workshop was that we needed experienced Labour Party members, which neither myself nor Gary Edgerton were. In addition, Gary had informed me that he was actually unavailable on 24th November. In addition to Adele Williams and Chris Williamson, I included Cllr Steve Calvert (Nottinghamshire County Councillor and former CLP Secretary) and Gill Aldridge (Local Campaign Forum, and former CLP Chair). I just did not understand what was behind Sandra Coker's opposition to my proposal to put the continuation of the Workshop to the GC to decide, as it was the GC that had approved the plan after all.

My plan was put to the vote at the GC meeting in November, where it was proposed by Gill Aldridge that the 24th November workshop should be reinstated. The relevant minute is below - including a recorded vote - which I think vindicated my decision.

G4. POLITICAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS:

There was a long debate about the events of the previous few weeks. Two workshops had been arranged, for Saturday 14 November and Tuesday 24 November, but had then been postponed.

Gill Aldridge proposed that the workshop on 24 November should be reinstated. Seconded by Jean Stansfield. There was a call for a recorded vote so here it is:

Gill Aldridge	For	Alistair MacInnes	For	Gary Edgerton	Abstain
Richard Crawley	Abstain	Trish Whittome	For	Peter Brodie	For
Jane Caro	For	Nadia Whittome	For	Harry Curtis	Against
Colin Gibson	For	Keir Chewings	For	Steve Collins	For
Steve Calvert	Against	John Walsh	For	Liz Plant	Against
Chris Kemp	For	Jude Burgess	For	Sandy Coker	Against
Robert Crosby	For	Jean Stansfield	For	Bill Logan	For
Lizzie Edgerton	Against	Peter Gates	For		

Total 16 For, 5 Against, 2 Abstentions. Proposal declared carried.

It was proposed that the following people should be on a working group to organise the workshop: Peter Gates, Gill Aldridge, Gary Edgerton, John Walsh, Steve Calvert.

This was carried on a show of hands with nobody voting against.

The workshop went ahead and was a very successful event (see **Section 21** for the Workshop Programme) and I received positive feedback from a number of members who had attended (see **Section 22** for the report).

We then moved onto my resignation. The relevant minute of the November meeting is below. When nominations were called for, I was immediately nominated by two female members: Trish Whittome and Jean Stansfield. Whilst I had not expected to be nominated, I would have been prepared to continue if the GC had supported me.

G3. ELECTION OF NEW CLP SECRETARY:

Peter Gates had resigned as CLP Secretary so we had to hold an election.

Two candidates were nominated:

Peter Gates was nominated by Trish Whittome and seconded by Jean Stansfield.

Lizzie Edgerton was nominated by Richard Crawley and seconded by Gary Edgerton.

Both candidates were asked if they were willing to stand and indicated that they were.

Blank ballot papers were distributed and two people who were not entitled to vote were appointed as tellers: Allen Ashmore and Andrew Clayworth.

Result: 12 votes for Lizzie Edgerton, 10 votes for Peter Gates, 1 abstention.

Lizzie Edgerton was declared elected as the new CLP Secretary.

I narrowly lost, but was concerned at the lack of democracy and comradeship in the organisation of the meeting. In a complaint to Finbar Bowie (see **Section 2.8**), I raised the possibility that the process was illegitimate as there seemed inbuilt bias. There was some support for this view from Gill Aldridge, who was then Vice Chair, and can be seen at the end of **Section 25**.

"Was Monday's process illegitimate? Messy, acrimonious and not following the ethos of the Labour Party as a democratic, socialist organisation – YES."

Shortly after I heard Sandra Coker had resigned as CLP Chair and I was told this was as a result of a family illness. I contacted Gill Aldridge and Robert Crosby asking for clarification in what is my usually professional and polite form of communication:

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]

Sent: Tuesday, November 24, 2015 9:48 AM

To: gill aldridge; Robert Crosby

Subject: Working toward a common endeavour

Gill, Robert

Can I please ask for some clarification. Given that Sandy's resignation after last week's GC meeting has now been made public, might I ask who is leading/chairing the GC? I am assuming it is one or both of you as vice chairs? I ask because I think it is important that someone can provide a lead to the GC on managing the fall out from that meeting. Some of us are trying to pull things together and unite around a common endeavour and a more kinder, honest politics as expounded by Jeremy Corbyn. What we don't need is for the argument to continue into the next GC meeting and, heaven forbid, into the membership.

"Jeremy Corbyn has called for an end to "personal abuse" in his first speech to the Labour Party Conference as leader. My Corbyn urged delegates to "treat people with respect" and said there would be "no rudeness from me".

I think we do that by working positively toward each other and thinking before we send emails - in particular, Richard's ill thought out and deliberately taunting email last night to the GC. We are in the Labour Party because we achieve more by the strength of our common endeavour than we achieve alone, and we ought to be working hard to avoid extending arguments in order to exacerbate personal differences.

Peter

Peter Gates
Secretary
West Bridgford Branch Labour Party

From: gill aldrige
Sent: Tuesday, 24 November 2015 10:54
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com, Robert Crosby
Cc: Rushcliffe Labour Party

Peter, Robert

I shall chair the next GC meeting on 14th December – Robert is happy for me to do this.

I will make it very clear in my opening remarks that we have a lot of business to get through and I will NOT allow any of last week's arguments to be resurrected.

I hope that other members will back up any rulings that I make.

We need to elect a new chair and I am willing to stand.

At the workshop, I think we should invite one of the participants – not one of us – to make a brief written report on the event to present to the GC.

I am not sure what you mean by Richard's taunting email – unless it is the quote at the beginning of his invite to the PCC affirmative nomination meeting. I think it was meant ironically, but perhaps some people did not take it that way.

Gill

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 24 November 2015 11:08
To: gill aldrige <gill.aldrige@btinternet.com>; Robert Crosby <robertcrosby35@aol.com>
Subject: Re: Working toward a common endeavour

Thanks Gill, yes I am behind all you say here.

I don't believe Richard was being ironic at all. I think he was being deliberately taunting and hurtful. Just what was the point? That was my point that he is allowed to get away with so much inappropriate commenting - including a piece in the West Bridgford Members newsletter about the "Acrimonious discussion" at the GC leading to the resignation of the Secretary and the Chair. Neither Liz nor I approved that before it went out. A very unprofessional thing to do. I had some members come up to me last night and ask what it was all about

and asking we discuss it out in the open. Another wants to take the newsletter to a disciplinary panel. I managed to quell both those I think because that's the last thing we need. But he needs some admonishing and reigning in because he will make matters worse.

But, I'm looking forward to tonight.

might I do two things at the start..

1. nominate you as chair.
2. offer a vote of thanks to Sandy

we need a kinder, more inclusive politics. That will be a start.

Peter

Peter Gates

2.7. Planning of the workshop

The workshop went ahead, and planning was very constructive, as can be seen from the brief email exchanges below. The programme and a report of the workshop is enclosed (see **Sections 21** and **22**).

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 22 November 2015 18:51
To: gill aldrige <gill.aldrige@btinternet.com>; stevecalvert39@gmail.com
Subject: Re: workshop

Are you both ok for me to send out the programme(attached) to participants -stressing it's Draft.

We have a flipchart. I will have the clipboards too. Gill can you bring big pens blutak? Shall I get some?

p

Peter Gates

From: Steve Calvert [mailto:stevecalvert39@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2015 8:00 AM
To: <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com>
Cc: gill aldrige
Subject: Re: workshop

Hi Peter

OK with me. The second bullet point on Adele's list has some typos as I am unclear what it means.

I am interested in the comparison of election outcomes in Gedling compared with Broxtowe. With similar demographics the former is successful but the latter is much less so. Are there lessons to be learnt?

Regards

Steve

From: gill aldridge
Sent: Monday, 23 November 2015 08:39
To: stevecalvert39@gmail.com, peter.gates3@btopenworld.com

Good morning Peter and Steve

There is a lot of overlap between Steve's list and mine. Does this need editing? My list should include all the things the LCF is doing to develop a panel of candidates and oversee selection. The penultimate bullet point, about time commitment and the Labour Whip, is probably better done by Steve. My last bullet point will probably be covered by Steve, if he includes target seats and All Women Shortlists. Campaigning is covered by all the speakers.

Gill

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 23 November 2015 08:49
To: gill aldridge <gill.aldridge@btinternet.com>; stevecalvert39@gmail.com
Subject: Re: workshop

Hi,

OK it makes more sense to combine you two and let you two decide on the split.

So see this version. I think this is much better. Bring you two together as one.

Typo on Adele sorted.

Are we ok to send this round now?

Peter

Peter Gates

2.8. My Complaint to Regional Office

As a result of the intimidation, misrepresentation and harassment I experienced at the 16th November GC and in my role as CLP Secretary, I felt I had no alternative but to lodge a formal complaint to the Regional Office.

20th November 2015

To: Finbar Bowie
Regional Officer
East Midland Labour Party
Harold Wilson House
Attenborough
Nottinghamshire NG9 6AD

Dear Finbar,

I am sorry to have to feel the need to bring this to you, as I would rather we focused on more important political matters. However, I have what feels to me like a serious complaint to make and which I feel it is best to make formally.

This matter refers to the procedures in the recent GC Meeting of the Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party on Monday 16th November.

You will be aware of a number of issues which I had previously discussed with you, and in particular the advice you gave me over the cancellation of a Workshop for Party members.

You will also be aware of my resignation from CLP secretary in a recent email because of the way I had been treated by the CLP Chair, Sandy Coker. I copy my resignation letter below, which I sent to you.

Dear Sandy and Liz,

I have given our recent communications some considerable thought, and deeply reflected on how best to respond to you. I do have to say that I have found the suspicion, lack of respect and lack of trust for me in my role as Secretary from you both has now made my position untenable. I therefore feel I have no alternative but to resign as both Secretary of the CLP and of West Bridgford branch.

I will prepare the agendas for the next CLP and Branch meetings, but will resign at the end of those meetings. I believe I have at all times worked in the best interests of the Labour Party and will continue to work for a Labour victory in 2020. I will remain a West Bridgford delegate to the GC and will actively campaign for Labour Party success in all upcoming elections, as well as campaigning for those who are traditionally supported by the Labour Party. I deeply regret that it has come to this, as I hoped we could have achieved great things.

Best wishes,
Peter

I have since then received requests from members to rethink, and indeed I have done so with the West Bridgford Branch where I am now working closely with Liz Plant. The issue remains with the CLP and that is the source of this complaint. I will not at this stage go through a blow by blow, email by email chronology of events because that would just be very long, open to multiple interpretations, and I do not think would be helpful. What I could not, and still do not understand is why the desire to engage members in thinking of how they could support the Party could cause so much antagonism.

As advised by you I felt I had no alternative but to take the issue of the Members Skills Workshop to the GC meeting in spite of being asked by Sandy Coker to cancel. Whilst I originally agreed to cancel once I found how many people wanted to come (almost 30) it just seemed too good an opportunity to miss. I was also uncomfortable taking a decision that contradicted the GC decision.

I set about looking to see if I could pull together a viable programme using high level Party members with a strong reputation and managed to get Chris Williamson and Adele Williams to offer to contribute. I also had asked Liz Plant to contribute on Local Council activity. I suggested this possibility to Sandy and eventually she advised me she did not agree and would be "seeking advice". However I had received advice from you about taking the decision back to the CLP GC, and I advised the GC of this.

Here comes the source of my complaint. At the GC Sandy took the chair, and remained in the chair throughout, which given she was a main protagonist on an item was I think against our Standing Orders:

1. CHAIRPERSON SPEAKING TO A MOTION

The Chairperson, if desirous of speaking individually to any motion, shall request the permission of the meeting to leave the chair for the purpose of so doing, always provided that this shall not abrogate the ordinary right of the Chairperson to sum up or comment on discussion to clarify the issues on which the members are to vote.

Although we were not discussing a "motion" as such, the Chair was leading a sustained and orchestrated attack on me and a member from another Branch – John Walsh, who had been approved by the GC to develop the workshops in the first place. A document was produced for the meeting and circulated which we were told was a "chronology" of events (see **Section 16**) however this document merely listed emails that Sandy had been involved with. Those of us attacked in that document had been given no prior notice or warning and no invitation to present a paper our account of events. I repeat I still cannot understand why the issue of engaging members in activity is so much of an issue.

I do have to say I have never encountered such a level of vitriol at a meeting. It was in my view quite un-socialist, very un-comradely. It certainly made several members uncomfortable. After the meeting, I received the following from a new member of the GC:

Hi Peter,

I understand you're still the branch secretary at least until the next meeting.

I'm contacting you because I have decided I no longer want to be a GC delegate. I feel very uncomfortable about what happened at the meeting last night. I still don't understand fully what has happened, but it doesn't feel like the 'Straight talking, honest politics' I re-joined the Labour party for. It seems clear to me that there are all sorts of machinations going on behind the scenes which I'm not part of. I came away feeling like a pawn in someone else's game which I haven't got time for.

I'd also like to say that on a personal level I feel disappointed that you aren't continuing in post as Secretary. It seems to me you've been treated in a shabby and un-comradely fashion which I don't want to be personally associated with.

Kind regards,
XXXXX

Thankfully I have managed to convince that member to reconsider and remain on the GC, but it is indeed a travesty for this to start impacting on our membership in such a way. I do not know why I have come under such a sustained attack, since I have tried to suggest Sandy and I meet to talk it through, but have been ignored.

Two things are important. A vote was put over whether the workshop should be continued or cancelled and it was overwhelmingly agreed to continue the workshop. In that decision I felt vindicated.

Secondly, the GC was not allowed by the chair to consider my resignation or to approve or reject it. Which I feel is improper. It was suggested we elect a temporary secretary, and I was immediately nominated and seconded, as was another member. In the election process the other candidate, Lizzie Edgerton was allowed to say why she should be elected and I was not. Bear in mind at this point of the meeting, I had already been subjected to a vilification and condemnation by the chair – and indeed the other candidate - during an earlier party the meeting, which will have affected how people voted given they had only received a partial account of events

This further I think raises questions over the legitimacy and propriety of the election. It certainly felt to me as if the Chair was determined to get me out and keep me out at all costs. In the election, voting was 10-12 against myself, which again illustrates the support in the CG for my position.

What I do know is that this should not be happening in a democratic socialist party, and I have been treated in an unacceptable way

I think some action needs to be taken now to unite the local party, and we are doing that with the two vice chair, and Gill Aldridge in particular. But I particularly feel some redress is needed to reinstate my own integrity. I understand Sandy has resigned since then, so we have issues in the local CLP all of which seem quite unnecessary over the organisation of member activity. I do feel there are questions over the legitimacy of the election of the Secretary and that even temporary, the election does need to be re-run by the new chair (albeit a vice-chair) with full democratic procedures.

I feel, as Jeremy Corbyn repeatedly says, there is no place in Labour Party politics for personal attacks or abuse and I will not engage with that. For me, it is most important we build a strong democratic party capable of taking on the Conservatives and other parties of the right. The Labour Party in Rushcliffe needs to be united, it needs to engage with the swathe of new members and supporters, and it needs to interact with the electorate. My energy will be best directed at that rather than internal arguments. I intend to remain on the GC and as West Bridgford Branch Secretary and will give the Party my continued support.

Best Wishes,

Peter

Peter Gates

The emails I exchanged with Finbar Bowie are below in **Section 2.9**. These are very significant because they suggest a strategy – that “*disputes are best resolved at a local level*” – that was not followed with the subsequent complaints on pages 10 – 24 of the Charges Pack. These were dealt with at East Midlands Regional level without any reference to myself. This seems quite inconsistent and inexplicable.

2.9. Emails between Peter Gates and Finbar Bowie

Email 1

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 20 November 2015 14:20
To: Finbar Bowie
Subject: Complaint Regarding Rushcliffe CLP

Hi Finbar,

I have attached a formal complaint about events at Rushcliffe CLP.

I would appreciate some idea of whether this is an appropriate avenue to go down and what might happen next.

Peter

Peter Gates

Email 2

From: Finbar Bowie
Sent: Friday, 20 November 2015 14:27
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com

Hello Peter,

I can confirm receipt of the attached and will respond in due course.

With thanks,

Finbar Bowie

Email 3

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 20 November 2015 14:37
To: Finbar Bowie
Subject: Re: Complaint Regarding Rushcliffe CLP

Thanks Finbar, I won't bother you with a phone call, (I left a message earlier) I have spent far too much time on this - as I am sure you have.

I will leave it to you, and will try to bring people together as much as I can. We are supposed to be all on the same side for God's sake.

Peter

Peter Gates

Email 4

From: Finbar Bowie
Sent: Friday, 20 November 2015 14:42
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com

Peter,

You refer to a document on page 2, as below. Can you provide us with a copy of this?

Finbar

"A document was produced for the meeting and circulated which we were told was a "chronology" of events"

Email 5

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 20 November 2015
To: Finbar Bowie
Subject: Re: Complaint Regarding Rushcliffe CLP

Finbar,

No I don't have it electronically, it was only in paper and was prepared by Sandy and handed out at the meeting. I only have a paper copy. I could drop it off, but am not sure of the best thing to do about that. Can your advise. My complaint - as was others' at the time - was this was to some extent a fabrication being a partial truth of events. Let me knew what you want to do.

Peter Gates

Email 6

From: Finbar Bowie
Sent: Monday, 7 December 2015 16:23
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com Cc: Emma Foody

Peter,

The points you raised have been read and considered and although the situation is regrettable, it is felt no further formal action on behalf of the party is required.

However I would like to make the following points, all of which that relate to points in your email.

- These disputes are best resolved at a local level.
- All members should act in a comradely manner towards each other at all times.
- The upcoming AGM will be an opportunity for everyone in Rushcliffe to begin the process of building the structures of the CLP.
- As such I have suggested to the Secretary of the CLP that the current Standing Orders are considered ahead of this event.
- I will be meeting with both Vice-Chairs of the CLP to discuss the proper process for the election of officers at the AGM.
- On further investigation, I understand the CLP has completed a Development Plan in the past. I have asked for this to be provided to me, and I will circulate to other relevant officers in the CLP and branches.

Please let me know if you have any further questions on this matter.

With thanks,
Finbar Bowie

Email 7

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 09 December 2015 11:16
To: Finbar Bowie <finbar_bowie@labour.org.uk>
Cc: Emma Foody <emma_foody@labour.org.uk>
Subject: Re: Complaint Regarding Rushcliffe CLP

Thanks Finbar, (cc Emma)

Given a) the CLP Chair resigned and b) the Member workshop was supported by the CLP GC to go ahead, and was a great success, I feel vindicated in this whole sorry episode. I do feel it is very unfortunate you were not there, because had you been, I do feel you would have been able to obviate the excesses of the Chair (and some other GC members) and the procedural irregularities.

I agree with all your points below, and whilst I do feel I deserve an apology for the uncomradely way I was treated (as was noted by one GC member who resigned because of it), I am expecting that to be a step too far for some.

It is time now to move on, and not back. I trust we have all learned lessons from this, and I do feel you would be well advised to keep an eye on Rushcliffe CLP for some time. All we ever wanted to do was engage new members in the Party; that too was a step too far for some.

Peter

Peter Gates

2.10. Comments

I welcome Finbar's approach that difficulties should be sorted out at a local CLP level, but his 6-point response leaves some questions:

- I am wondering whether he gave the same advice to all complaints that were made to him that disputes are best resolved at a local level. It appears that unfounded and unchecked allegations were made in secret behind the backs of the CLP and those accused.
- I am wondering why a small number of local members - and indeed the Labour Party - have not acted in a comradely manner towards me.
- I felt this was very good advice, and responded to that by trying to work with members of the CLP to build the party
- The Standing Orders were never looked at after in the wake of my resignation as CLP Secretary.
- I do not think there was a meeting to discuss election procedures.
- The insufficiency of the CLP Development Plan does not seem to have been addressed.

3. Response to the Charges

I will now respond to the charges, by responding to each of the documents provided in the Charges Pack one by one. Before I do that, I want to say that the documents provide a singularly one-sided account of events, and at *no time* was I ever approached about *any* of these matters. Had that been done, I am sure we could have dealt with them in a constructive and comradely fashion. It is not helpful being presented with documentation that is in some cases eighteen months old. The documents appear to have been written and put together with a specific purpose of creating a false and negative image of me to which I had been given absolutely no opportunity to respond for seventeen months. I have not been told who put this pack of materials together, but it represents a smörgåsbord of: factual errors (**page 1**); half-truths and partiality (**throughout**); material that concerns another individual (**pps 19 – 20**); irrelevant material which has nothing to do with me (**pages 35 – 38**). It is difficult to credit that this document legitimately forms the basis of my suspension from the Labour Party.

Although there is repeated reference to “multiple” and “frequent” complaints, there are only four examples offered here (one other is a follow up). All sent on three days to the same person (Finbar Bowie) in what appears to be a carefully coordinated campaign, though notable by the absence of any validation or substantive evidence. More disconcerting is that Finbar Bowie never considered it appropriate to contact me at any time.

- **15th January – 3:48pm**
Email from Sandra Coker to Finbar Bowie
- **15th January – 17:26pm**
Email from Liz Plant to Finbar Bowie
- **16th January – 11:32am**
Email from Lizzie Edgerton to Finbar Bowie
- **18th January – 4:10pm**
Email from Gary Edgerton to Finbar Bowie
- **18th January – 11:25pm**
Follow up email from Liz Plant to Finbar Bowie

On the evidence in the Charges Pack, this appears to be the sum total of complaints. Even here it is doubtful whether Liz Plant’s comments constitute an allegation of “*bullying, intimidation and acting in a hostile manner*”. Sandra Coker makes no identifiable allegations, either. So, we are left with unsubstantiated allegations by just *two people*. I do wonder why, if my behaviour is so bad, intimidatory and hostile, not one of the other 800+ Labour Party members in West Bridgford BLP, or 1300+ Labour Party members in Rushcliffe CLP ever noticed any such behaviour.

Most significantly, there is no reply to any of these emails from Finbar Bowie in the Charges Pack, other than a very brief acknowledgement to Liz Plant’s email of 15th January, sent three days later on 18th January 2016 (see page 15 of the Charges Pack): “*Liz, I will look into the issue and respond. with thanks. Finbar Bowie*”. My understanding from Liz Plant is that Finbar *never actually responded* (see **Section 4.3**), which casts some doubt on whether the Regional Office considered the matter to be at all important:

“I asked for advice from Regional office nearly 3 weeks ago & tried again before I left I had no information to pass on to him and have practically given up on them. Perhaps the issue and decision is best made by the G.C.

Something that is supported by a lack of reply in the Charges Pack and nothing appearing in my Subject Access Request. Inexplicably, he certainly never seems to have suggested “*these disputes are best resolved at a local level*”.

4. Response to Material Relating to Charge 1

Charge 1

In the period leading up to January 2017, you are alleged to have acted in a bullying, intimidating and otherwise hostile manner towards a number of other members of the CLP including, but not limited to excessive correspondence in breach of the Labour Party's Bullying & Harassment policy. This behaviour continued after the expectations of the Party with regard to the conduct of individual members were raised with you.

4.1. Detailed Response to Materials: Pages 1 - 17

I will here go through the Charges Pack, page by page, starting with numbered page 1 of 69.

Page 1 - Introduction

This appears to be an overview and summary, but it is not clear who wrote this section and it is fallacious on a number of key points. There are a number of issues and inaccuracies here:

- It is stated that I am a "new member of the Labour Party, joining at the end of May 2015". I have already indicated that I have been a member since October 1994 in **Section 2.1** and my membership number clearly indicates membership for a considerable length of time; starting with A not L.
- It is stated I have been the subject of "frequent complaints from members of the CLP and CLP Officers". Yet those complaints were never dealt with by presenting them to the CLP, nor were they ever presented to me for a response until some eighteen months later. These "frequent" complaints appear to be four emails sent on three separate days of the same week.
- The "frequent" and "multiple" complaints appears, from the material in the Charges Pack, to refer to two emails from two people, Lizzie Edgerton and Gary Edgerton. Neither Liz Plant nor Sandra Coker identify any specific allegations of bullying, hostility, aggression or intimidation. It is strange that no one else in the 1300+ membership of the CLP has noticed any such behaviour. This is because my behaviour, as a longstanding professional, is always impeccable.
- It is claimed that I arrived at a meeting with ten "uninvited" members. However, I was in fact invited, and eight other members attended because all meetings in Rushcliffe were open to all members who therefore never required an invite. Gary Edgerton also attended the meeting "uninvited", but this is not mentioned in the minutes, taken by Lizzie Edgerton.
- It is claimed that the behaviour of several members at a CLP meeting was "hostile". Evidence is provided in the minutes of that meeting on pages 57 - 64 of the Charges Pack that contradicts this claim (see **Section 9**).
- It is suggested that I was invited to "an informal meeting with members of the CLP EC and a member of the Regional Board". This is not the case, and the word "informal" or "EC" were never in the communications between myself and Finbar Bowie. This is all discussed later in **Sections 6 - 10**. Indeed, along with most members of the newly-constituted Rushcliffe CLP EC (see a discussion of the re-formulation of the EC in **Section 5.2**), I did not know what the meeting was about, having been told nothing about complaints. We were never informed it was an "invite only" meeting. This will be discussed in more detail later. This does not appear in any communication prior to the meeting. It would seem that communication was severely lacking at regional level.

- It is stated I was written to “*by the Deputy Regional Director and invited to a meeting to attempt to resolve the matter locally*”. It does not give a date for that letter, so I will assume it might be the letter dated 9th February (see **Section 15**). My reading of that letter was rather different, and this is discussed later. That letter does not refer to an “*informal meeting to resolve matters locally*”. I do not know what meeting this refers to unless it is the CLP meeting on 7th March 2016. Again, this will be discussed at length later when the complete email correspondence will be presented.

Once these inaccuracies are removed from page 1 there is nothing left.

Pages 2 - 7

This section consists of the *Labour Party Bullying and Harassment Policy*: a useful document that should be more prominent in meetings. It has to my knowledge never been presented or discussed at BLP or CLP level in Rushcliffe.

Pages 8 - 9

This consists of the original letter of administrative suspension dated 11th March 2016 which merely says that “*allegations ... relate to your conduct toward another Party member*”. This was the only information I was given until 28th July 2017 - over sixteen months later. I would have expected higher standards of natural justice in a Party committed to democratic socialism than to take disciplinary action merely on the basis of “*allegations*”. This letter identified what activities I am unable to engage in as a suspended member.

Pages 10 - 24

These pages seem to consist of the bulk of the “*frequent complaints from members of the CLP and CLP Officers*”. They come from just four people and all were submitted over a period of only four days between 15th and 18th January 2016. It is difficult to see this as anything other than a coordinated series of emails. It would appear to be a response to my e-Bulletin to new members (see pages 24 - 28 of the Charges Pack) in which I talked about the success of the Members’ Workshop.

I will now deal with each of the documents on pages 10-24 in turn.

Pages 10 – 14 - email from Gary Edgerton

This is a series of allegations from Gary Edgerton but which does not contain any evidence to substantiate these allegations. As such, it is difficult to engage with the contents in a meaningful way. Indeed, the veracity of the allegations is without any foundation and I do not understand why some of the more farfetched allegations seem never to have been checked. I am very suspicious why none of this was brought to my attention many months ago.

There are so many unsubstantiated allegations and untruths in this email that I will have to deal with it paragraph by paragraph. This gets difficult when some paragraphs do not relate to me. I have not included those paragraphs. The allegations are on the left and my response is on the right (see below).

Upon first re-joining the Labour Party, before my first Branch meeting, I was contacted by Peter Gates, by telephone, ostensibly to welcome me into the party (though in what capacity I was not aware, as he said he was also a new member) but in which I was given the distinct impression that as a new member we were faced with a 'battle' in the local party against 'right-wingers'. I found this very confusing but didn't think about it again. Immediately before my first meeting I was asked by Peter Gates to nominate him, on a 'signal', for 'any positions' that came up at the Branch, further however he told me that we, '... must not be seen to be trying to take positions'.

I wrote back expressing enthusiasm for taking part as a facilitator, I was however told that I was not needed in that capacity but I kept to find a venue, Disconcertingly however I was asked, 'who I was, what I did and who I did it for', again this seemed irregular but I complied and added that 'I had a particular set of skills ...' this is a line from the film 'Taken' meant light heartedly. That night I saw Peter Gates and John Walsh at a Momentum meeting and everything was very friendly. After the event Peter Gates asked if he could have a lift home, which seemed odd as he had been driven in by John Walsh. During that car journey I had the distinct impression that Peter was trying to ascertain where I stood politically e.g. on the 'right' or 'left' of the Party. Peter told me that over the years he had been 'in and out of the Party' and that up until recently he had been a longstanding member of the SWP, further, he was at pains to point out that he did not know John Walsh prior to that week. We dropped Peter Gates in the centre of West Bridgford, far from his home but where he said he'd left his car. We did so but had to park up ourselves as we had to go to a super market. On our way we saw' Peter going into a local pub with John Walsh and Rachel Scudamore. We thought it strange but, thought no more. The next day I engaged with finding a venue having limited email communications with John.

I saw Peter and John that following weekend, at Regional conference, Peter was especially friendly towards my partner going out of to sit with us, not John, and during the day he had persistently engaged me in a conversation around where I stood with my personal politics. One conversation Peter initiated revolved around how we were going to get rid of the 'right wing' in the WB Branch and the CLP. At this point I told Peter that I did not share his interpretation and told him that I was simply keen to work with everyone, using the party rules to move things forward. Peter Gates told me, 'we aren't going to defeat the Tories with that lot (meaning sitting officials) and that first we had to get rid of them and change the Party regardless of the rules. Again I disagreed.

I have no recollection of ever contacting Gary Edgerton by telephone. Neither have I any recollection of any of the conversation he reports here. They did not happen.

I had already discussed with Steve Calvert my willingness to take on the position of Branch Secretary, that was no secret, and there was no need for any subterfuge. At about this time I was receiving frequent long late-night phone calls from Lizzie Edgerton where she made it clear she and her partner Gary were looking to take up positions in the Branch. This seemed a little unusual and was somewhat disruptive of my home life.

This is all discussed elsewhere and evidence provided in **Section 23**.

This was on Thursday 15th October 2015.

I had left my car in the car park in West Bridgford and went into Nottingham with John Walsh who actually lives in Normanton some miles away. It was easier getting a lift back with Gary and Lizzie as they lived in West Bridgford. They dropped me off by the main car park and I drove home. I imagine we talked about politics in the car.

This is totally untrue. See below. This conversation never took place.

I do not understand why being friendly is an issue! In fact, Gary came to sit next to me as I was in a row that had a dead end.

This conversation never took place.

This is absolute nonsense.

The following week I received an email from John telling me that I was no longer required in any capacity within the Political Education Working group. I got back to John repeatedly asking why but he failed to answer any email and then he blocked my emails altogether (they bounced back). I asked Peter if he knew what was happening and he indicated that he did know but could not share what he knew with me. I tried to communicate with John through Peter but found Peter to be increasingly difficult to get in touch with and absolutely refusing to answer direct questions I was posing around what was happening with the working group. This culminated with Peter informing me that I should just 'go for a run'.

At the next Branch meeting Peter was incredibly frosty and hostile in tone towards me. At that meeting he was elected Branch Secretary. The role of Branch Political Education Organiser also came up, I volunteered for this and was accepted. On the way out Peter Gates said to me, '... we don't need you doing anything. Political Education should be left to John and kept at a constituency level.

After that Richard Crawley, membership secretary, told Lizzie I (my partner) that John Walsh had said that he had received death threats and was scared to leave his house. Richard advised John that if this were the case then this should take it up with the police but told that police were too busy to do anything about it.

I engaged with a fellow Branch member in the Branch Political Education Working Group and we began work putting together a programme for consultation with Branch members.

At the next CLP the role of 'Social Secretary' was discussed and I volunteered for this too.

[...]

At the next CLP I sat next to Peter Gates and was vocally engaged by Peter Gates on the subject of essentially how he had been hounded out by the right wing. The meeting was interrupted at every turn by both Peter and John who repeatedly talked over people, sniggered and shouted their points of view. There was an election for Secretary during which Peter was not re-elected and Lizzie Edgerton was. This was greeted by jeers and cat calls with phrases like, 'this STINKS' being thrown around. Sitting next to Peter I saw that he had a copy of my email, mentioned above, in which I had said that I had 'special skills'. Peter was anxious to bring this to the meeting but Rachel Scudamore passed notes between John and Peter, one of which I saw urged him not to. Even though I was keen to challenge because of the hostility of the meeting I had no desire to bring up the matter of my email being in Peter's possession at all even though he had not been party to my reply.

After that last CLP meeting from that point on Peter Gates, as my Branch and CLP Secretary stopped any communication with me with regards to anything.

John had indicated to me he was getting bombarded with emails from Gary and was disturbed by the "particular skills" email. He asked me not to talk about it, which I honoured. All this is discussed below.

Gary is again misrepresenting this conversation, which is included later.

I have no recollection of being "frosty or hostile" to Gary. Indeed, I supported his election as Political Education Organiser.

This conversation never took place.

This conversation never took place.

This is untrue.

This is hearsay and I am afraid I have no memory of this. Certainly, I was not involved.

John had shown me the email to ask my opinion, but he did not want it publicised, I do not know why, but I guessed he was feeling bullied and humiliated. This is merely supposition on my part.

This is not true.

- I organised a Christmas social for the CLP which was not given publicity by the Branch Secretary
- Peter has put people onto the Branch agenda whose exclusive aim is to question/attack the structure of the meeting itself.
- I was present at meeting, outside of the Party, in which John Walsh actively attacked our Rushcliffe CLP denouncing them, and the Regional Office as 'Blairite right wingers who are getting in the way.', he was also forth right in his views that we, should not even bother campaigning in seats like Selston as was this is '... a waste of time'.
- I have also been told by members in other constituencies that Peter Gates has taken to the floor at Momentum meetings denouncing the right within the Rushcliffe CLP, which is a description of our loyal supportive constituency, which I do not recognise.
- I attended a 'Rushcliffe Momentum' meeting, organised using the West Bridgford Branch membership list, Peter proudly said, 'I've set this meeting up taking emails from here, breaking the Data Protection Act, taking emails from there I questioned this as I know how serious this is but was met with silence on the matter. At that meeting leaflets were issued, ostensibly drawn up under the auspices of 'Rushcliffe Labour Momentum' with contact details, such as calls to reply to an mobile telephone number with the phrase 'I'M IN', the telephone number belongs to Peter Gates as does the email address and twitter feed. This has nothing whatever to do with the Party
- After that meeting Perter went on to report on the meeting with report from John Walsh in a 'West Bridgford Branch newsletter
- Peter subsequently went onto repeat the exercise with a report from John Walsh from a Momentum meeting in the e-newsletter, which is a clear abuse of powers by the Branch Secretary as Momentum is not affiliated to the Labour Party. Further, there were activities assigned to John Walsh to be carried out within our Branch which were clearly the responsibility of the Political Education Organiser, me.
- The workshop from whose organisation I was excluded was reported back in a report from Peter. In that there was full page of gushing and enthusiastic praise for the event itself and in praise of Peter and John in particular. I asked why it was anonymous as we know everyone in that room and if it was anonymous it could look fabricated.
- I asked Perter about these things repeatedly and I have had no reply.
- Further, our Branch Political Education working group has produced a skills survey, in conjunction with our Women's Group and EC officers. Peter told my colleague that this document was not acceptable and that he as, a professional, would have to take it on completely undermining our work to date. After we submitted a further draft we were told that it was improvement but still not good enough. I emailed back telling Peter that we were not putting it forward for grading but were producing it as collegiate exercise noting at the Branch EC last week it was agreed and so therefore could go. My colleague told me subsequently that after the meeting Peter had told him that he would amend it and let us know.

The Christmas social was advertised in the newsletter.

I have no idea what this refers to. It is untrue.

I cannot comment as I was not at this meeting whatever it was.

This is not true.

This is wholly untrue. Gary attended the inaugural meeting of Rushcliffe Momentum which was held on Thursday 17th December 2015. At that meeting, the main speaker was Cllr Steve Battlemuch from Nottingham South CLP. Also attending was Richard Crawley the West Bridgford BLP and Rushcliffe CLP Membership Secretary, Cllr Steve Calvert, the previous West Bridgford BLP and Rushcliffe CLP Secretary, and Colin Gibson a West Bridgford BLP Auditor. Had anything untoward been said, particularly about the DPA 1988, I would have expected this to have been picked up by these people and dealt with appropriately.

I think this refers to the same report and is discussed under Liz Plant's email below

This is untrue.

This has been discussed in detail elsewhere. Gary had already told me he could not do the 24th November as he was away with work.

Yes, the report was very positive. But I take great offense to the wording here and the implication that it was fabricated. I can provide the emails I received but I have no permission from the individuals.

This is a distortion of the truth, which I provide detail on the next page.

I have been holding back on these complaints for a long time hoping that these things could be resolved in a comradely manner. However, it is clear that unless action is taken by the Party, the bullying and harassment from Peter Gates and John Walsh will continue, and several members will reconsider their involvement with the Party

It would have been very helpful if these allegations had been dealt with in a comradely fashion and discussed openly at the BLP and CLP. There are procedures in the Labour Party Rule book for dealing with local disputes and this whole debacle could have been avoided had that procedure been followed and all sides would have been able to present their account of events. I remain very suspicious of the way all these allegations have been withheld.

Whilst this contribution is a collection of falsehoods and distortions most of which I have responded to above, I will expand on four here: the Members' Workshop, my membership of the Labour Party, allegations of death threats, and the members' skills survey.

Members' Workshop

It is clear there was a considerable amount of enmity built up over the organisation of the Members' Workshop. I became embroiled in this because my role as CLP Secretary required me - I firmly believed - to take the responsibility to resolve the issue. However, I became the recipient of repeated (and I might say, excessive) emails from Gary Edgerton, which became subtly hostile and intimidatory. I provide one such exchange in **Section 26**. It is clear here my comment about my taking up running has been mischievously misrepresented by Gary Edgerton in his submission into a "go for a run" comment, which is untrue, as this extract from an email from me to Gary shows:

So it will be good for us to see how that goes and how we can learn from all pulling together on that. I hope you are happy with that. It seems a positive outcome and will give us a chance to have a political event with members sooner rather than later.

As for the running ... I've put off and put off running for decades but have just started on a NHS app that leads you through 9 weeks. I've been surprised how much I've enjoyed it. I'm not up to the marathon yet but .. Maybe by 2020!

Ok. Thanks for emailing mate. Can we get together next week?

The email exchange is quite comradely and friendly but has been misconstrued as hostility and harassment. As can be seen here, it is nothing of the sort.

Labour Party Membership

As I have indicated above there are a number of fantastically untrue claims in this piece. Here is just one striking example, where Gary Edgerton says:

"Peter told me that over the years he had been 'in and out of the Party' and that up until recently he had been a longstanding member of the SWP..."

I have said nothing of the sort. My association with the SWP was in 1975-6 for seven months whilst a student at Manchester University. Hardly "recent" or "long-standing". I had been a Labour Party member since October 1994. Like many long-standing Party members, I went through a process of political education whilst a youth, and I offer this quote from one other long-standing Labour Party member who took the same path:

"I suddenly thought, the world's full of these extraordinary causes and injustices and, here's this guy Trotsky who was so inspired by all of this that he went out to create a Russian revolution and change the world. I think it's a very, very odd thing, just literally it was like a light going on. And even though, you know, over time I obviously left that side of politics behind, the notion of having a cause and a purpose and one bigger than yourself or your own ambition, and I think ... that changed my life in that period."

Tony Blair. 10th August 2017. BBC Radio 4.

I am simply bemused by Gary Edgerton's outrageously false claim here.

The "Particular Set of Skills" Exchange

On page 43 of the Charges Pack, Gary Edgerton alleges:

"12. I have been the subject of accusations spread around the Branch and CLP members, that I issues Death Threats to John Walsh." (Charges Pack, page 43)

However, it is not stated who it is alleged made such accusations or indeed exactly what the accusations were. So, I am not sure exactly what it is alleged that I am supposed to have done but, as it is in the Charges Pack, I will respond. In order that this can be properly evaluated, I have included the whole exchange in **Section 23**. It is worth reading that now.

Gary says on page 12 of the Charges Pack:

"Disconcertingly however I was asked, 'who I was, what I did and who I did it for', again this seemed irregular but I complied and added that 'I had a particular set of skills ...' this is a line from the film 'Taken' meant light heartedly."

What John Walsh actually asked was: "can you say what you do - e.g. who with and where it fits with the workshops' purpose?" I have to say, this seems perfectly reasonable to me. Yet, Gary's response was not exactly what he claims, but rather (in a large font, see **Section 23**):

"Aside from that we have previously been very active in the party where we amassed (to quote that bloke from 'Taken') '... a very particular set of skills ...', I'm sure you know how the line goes."

On the assumption that not everyone is familiar with the film, here is "how the line goes":

*"I don't know who you are. I don't know what you want. If you are looking for ransom I can tell you I don't have money, but what I do have are **a very particular set of skills**. Skills I have acquired over a very long career. Skills that make me a nightmare for people like you. If you let my daughter go now that'll be the end of it. I will not look for you, I will not pursue you, but if you don't, **I will look for you, I will find you and I will kill you.**"*

Bryan Mills, Taken.

If you Google "Taken phone speech" you will find it on YouTube, it is so well-known. The "long career" was as a CIA operative and the "particular set of skills" referred to are surveillance, torture and murder. Google, for example, "Taken I told you I'd find you" and "Taken Interrogating Marco" to see those "skills" in action.

Now, we are expected to believe this is just "light hearted". However, personally, I consider it was crass at best, threatening and bullying at worst. Why use this quote? Why the ellipsis? Why pointing to "how the line goes". Why then say "Hope those last two paragraphs help"? What is important in such matters is how the comment would be received, not how it might have been intended; something that is so basic in understanding patterns of intimidation and bullying. There was never any suggestion that Gary Edgerton would go to John Walsh's house, shoot his partner and connect John up to the electricity mains. However, bullying and harassment works more insidiously than that.

Later, on page 13 of the Charges Pack:

"Peter I saw that he had a copy of my email, mentioned above, in which I had said that I had 'special skills'. Peter was anxious to bring this to the meeting but Rachel Scudamore passed notes between John and Peter, one of which I saw urged him not to. Even though I was keen to challenge because of the hostility of the meeting I had no desire to bring up the matter of my email being in Peter's possession at all even though he had not been party to my reply."

"Subsequently it transpired that John Walsh had taken my email and interpreted it as a death threat. I have no way of controlling how people choose to interpret things but I was clearly horrified. Further, indirectly, it came to my attention that the rumour

had spread amount other members that I had issued 'death threats' against John Walsh, as this would seriously impact me professionally I was forced to seek legal advice with the entire email trail but was advised that the whole thing was ridiculous and to just ignore it regardless of how it impacted me emotionally.

"The rumour spreading behind my back did not go away however, and as recent as this weekend it came around again that John had been threatened with death."

Unfortunately, Gary did not feel sufficiently "horrificed" to apologise to John Walsh. Further on:

"After that Richard Crawley, our Branch membership secretary, told Lizzie and I that John Walsh had said that he had received death threats from me and was so threatened that he was now scared to leave his house (these were extrapolated from the 'Taken' quote mentioned earlier). Richard advised John that if this were the case then this should take it up with the police but John said that police were too busy to do anything about it. Subsequently it transpired that John Walsh had taken my email with the quote from 'Taken' and interpreted it as a death threat." (Charges Pack, pages 11 and 44)

I am not sure where the idea that this was perceived as a "death threat" came from because no substantiating evidence is provided for who claimed that apart from Gary himself. Rather, it seems to be a clear case of intimidation. To send a cryptic message, then claim it was intended as "light hearted" (or, as children say, "it was only a joke"), to recruit others into the bullying (Richard Crawley's email in **Section 23** and below) then to turn it on the victim and make out it is their fault for complaining, is all classic bullying behaviour. We are asked to believe, in the absence of any manifestation, that Gary and Lizzie were subject to bullying and harassment from me, whilst Gary Edgerton's bullying and harassment of John Walsh was just "light-hearted".

I am not purporting to speak for John Walsh, as he is perfectly capable of speaking for himself, and this exchange does not involve me, other than the implicit and unverified allegation that someone is supposed to have told someone else who told Gary, that someone is supposed to have accused Gary of issuing death threats. It is no joke making threats. It is no joke making false allegations.

From: Rushcliffe Labour Party
Sent: Tuesday, 24 November 2015 12:02
To: Rushcliffe Labour Party

To delegates to Rushcliffe GC:

I understand that some people have been offended by the quotation in the first paragraph of my email of 23 November about the PCC Re-Selection Meeting, although I included the phrase 'please don't take this seriously'.

I apologise to anyone who was offended.

I was told a few days ago that the quotation from 'Taken' (or part of it) might have been what caused a GC delegate to say that he had 'received physical threats' and was 'unsure about leaving his house'. But I did not know it for a fact, and after my son explained the reference to me, and I had googled it to find the context, I was unable to believe that he could have taken it seriously.

One of the people who has complained about the quotation has used it in one of his own emails.

Best wishes

Richard Crawley

Hi John and Peter

I am very sorry that my attempted apology yesterday has only served to inflame the situation further. I understand that you have complained about it to the two CLP vice chairs

I realise now that I should have taken this much more seriously. I apologise again for all the distress I have caused, without any reservation. I am very sorry that I referred to that quotation, and I will never do so again.

Richard Crawley

I am only sending this email to the visible addressees – you and the two vice chairs – but I will send it to more people if you would prefer me to do so.

Members' Skills Survey

Gary Edgerton claims:

"Peter told my colleague that this document was not acceptable and that he as, a professional, would have to take it on completely undermining our work to date. After we submitted a further draft we were told that it was improvement but still not good enough. I emailed back telling Peter that we were not putting it forward for grading but were producing it as collegiate exercise noting at the Branch EC last week it was agreed and so therefore could go. My colleague told me subsequently that after the meeting Peter had told him that he would amend it and let us know."

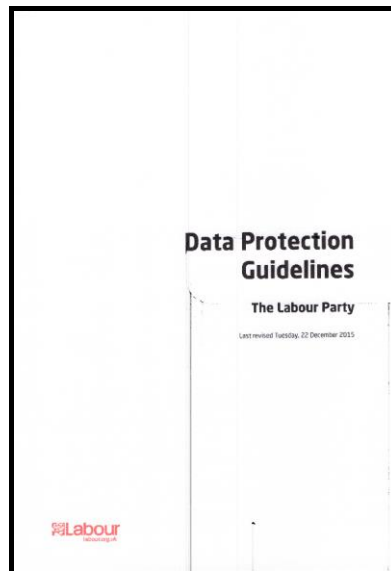
This, again, is far from what happened. I provide the complete communication in **Section 24**, in which it can be seen that this does not mirror Gary Edgerton's claim. I should add, one area of my specific expertise at the University of Nottingham is in social science research methodology, in particular survey research. I have, for over fifteen years, taught all the social science doctoral students within the Economic and Social Research Council, Doctoral Training Centre at the University of Nottingham. I know what I am talking about in respect of designing surveys. My aim was to support Zbyszek Luczynski and Gary Edgerton, as West Bridgford BLP's two Political Education Officers, to produce a high-quality survey. I am informed by Zbyszek that Gary hardly contributed to the design of the survey, but it became clear that my high-level expertise was not wanted. I knew it was going to be a waste of everyone's time but Gary seemed to think he knew best. So be it. The survey, as I warned it would, elicited a pitiful **thirteen replies** from our 800+ members, eleven of which came from Branch officers or GC members. The information was virtually worthless, as I tried to suggest would happen. I do not believe the information supplied has ever been used.

Pages 15 – 17 - email from Liz Plant

This consists of an email from Liz Plant to Finbar Bowie and an email to me regarding the content of Branch emails, which is repeated on page 23 of the Charges Pack.

I will deal with the first email here. I agree with Liz that our working relationship had not been easy, but I put this down to differing personalities. I do not know why Liz claims I hold the opinion that the Labour Party has *"changed irrevocably and that means that many of the systems and procedures in place need to change accordingly."* I do not believe that and I have never had such a conversation with Liz, though I can understand her concerns. Liz had the very difficult job of leading the Branch through a turbulent time of change, when attendance at Branch meetings rose from around 12-15 to over 70. Many new members were expecting exciting things and were inspired by Jeremy Corbyn's election (which itself bought understandable tensions). Some had resigned over the Iraq war and felt now was the time to return. To Liz's eternal credit, along with many of the other long-standing Party members, she stayed and kept the flag flying.

When I became BLP and CLP Secretary, I received no induction and no support other than a brief conversation with Steve Calvert in a pub. It is possible that Steve never had any induction, either. I did not know what the *"systems and procedures"* were and no one really went out of their way to educate me. I did not even know there was a Rule Book for a long time and did not receive the Data Protection Guidelines from Finbar until 22nd December 2015.



I would have much appreciated a meeting with Liz Plant and Regional Officers but nothing was ever offered and there was no regional or national induction for new CLP officers that I was aware of; it was presumed I had to know it all.

I think it is fair to say, and that Liz will agree, that Liz is not as digitally switched on as many. These days, Labour Party members regularly communicate via email, Google groups, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and a number of other platforms. My work as an academic takes place digitally, and I think the Party is also recognising the importance of a digital strategy. What some may consider "bombarding" with email, is to others normal levels of communication.

I have always had a high regard for Liz Plant and appreciated the very detailed attention she gave to planning the agendas of West Bridgford BLP meetings. It was for this reason that I withdrew my resignation as Branch Secretary, which I discussed in **Section 2.5**.

I will respond now to the three examples Liz provided. Liz indicates there are more, but I am afraid without the detail I am unable to comment on those.

1. Having agreed with myself and the Ex-GC chair (Sandy Coker) to cancel the 2 political education workshops until the working part agreed by the GC could actually meet, he then cancelled one of the courses and advertised for facilitators for the second one on his Facebook page without informing any officer of his intention to carry on with the work- shop.

2. He decided to produce a West Bridgford E-bulletin with no consultation with any branch officer and to promote and report Rushcliffe momentum meetings in the bulletin.

3. He devised a format for the nomination of officers for the forthcoming branch AGM circulated by email. He asked for comments, by email. I responded, disagreeing with the proposals saying they should be brought to the EC meeting for discussion. He said there wasn't time (there was), slightly amended the proposals and sent them out the night before the EC meeting to all members- presenting the EC with another "fait accompli"

This was all discussed in **Section 2.4** where I explained my rationale which was supported by the Rushcliffe CLP GC.

I was the Branch Secretary and so had responsibility for communication with members. I did not think I needed to ask permission to pass information to members. Indeed, I circulated my draft to Liz before sending it out. I sent out an e-Bulletin (these are all available in **Section 20**) on 1st December and 1st January and never received any comment from Liz or other officers. I took this as indicating no one had any issues. Indeed, the e-Bulletin was used in place of sending lots of information out to members at different times.

It appeared to me that I was responsible for organising the elections at the Branch AGM. There was little in the previous minutes, and I was keen to respect members' democratic rights. During all this time and leading up to the AGM I was working in Kuala Lumpur. Whilst working long days, teaching, researching, giving seminars, and I had to sit up late into the night exchanging emails with members of the Branch EC.

I will now tackle the three items one by one.

4.2. Item 1 – Members’ Workshop

This has been dealt with in **Section 2.4**, and I will comment no further here.

4.3. Item 2 – Distribution of a Branch e-Bulletin

The three e-Bulletins I distributed can be found in **Section 20**, but the chronology is as follows:

- **1st December 2015**

I distribute the first e-Bulletin

- **1st January 2016**

I send an e-Bulletin to all West Bridgford BLP members. This is included along with all the e-Bulletins I sent in **Section 20** as well as pages 25-28 of the Charges Pack.

- **14th January – 9:46am**

I resent the e-Bulletin to new members who were not on the previous list.

- **15th January – 11:46am**

Liz Plant sends me an email objecting to “*advertising momentum meetings and report of momentum meetings*”. This was in spite of me receiving no comment whatsoever after including a notification of a Momentum meeting in an e-Bulletin on 1st December and sending out the e-Bulletin on 1st January. I did this quite innocently on the understanding that Momentum was the successor to the Jeremy Corbyn for Labour Leader Campaign and therefore I felt of legitimate interest specifically to those new members who had joined as a result of Jeremy’s election.

- **15th January – 5:26pm**

Liz Plant emails Finbar Bowie asking for advice.
Series of emails between myself and Liz Plant

- **11th February – 2:20pm**

I distribute the third e-Bulletin

On the next three pages, I provide the full email exchange that relates to Liz Plant’s email on pages 16 - 17 and repeated on page 23 of the Charges Pack. Unfortunately, in the Charges Pack, only the *first* email in that exchange was included, which gives a false picture of the conversation. Whoever made the decision to include only the first email has failed to give the full context of the communication in which I feel I come across as reasonable, sensitive and appreciative.

This is important because this was the *very first* indication I had received from Liz that she had an issue with the information I was sending round to members. In **Section 20** I have included the e-Bulletins I sent to members on **1st December** and **1st January**, *neither of which* caused Liz to get in touch with me. A simple phone call or a friendly chat would have sorted the matter.

Party membership had ballooned as a result of Jeremy Corbyn becoming leader. So, I contend that the assumption I made that that members might want to know about an initiative established to support him, seems reasonable. In the absence of any comments I received to the contrary, I presumed there was no issue with informing members about Momentum, or The Fabians, or The Friary Homeless Centre for example. Why would I?

Liz Plant’s email comes amidst the series of emails between 15th and 18th January discussed in **Section 3**. I found the email particularly hostile and aggressive as the first we had on the matter, which, for some inexplicable reason, Liz refers on to the Regional Office. This in my view contravenes all notions of what I understand as comradely behaviour. We never did discuss it at a Branch EC meeting because as Liz subsequently told me she never received a reply from Finbar Bowie, and no reply is in the Charges Pack. However, communicating with me, easily solved it.

Emails Between Liz Plant and Peter Gates regarding the e-Bulletin

From: Liz Plant
Sent: Friday, 15 January 2016 141:46
To: Peter Gates

Dear Peter, As chair of West Bridgford Labour Party I want to inform you that I do not think it is appropriate for you to be advertising Momentum meetings and reports of Momentum meetings in your e- Bulletin to branch members and new branch members. I had hoped this issue could have been raised at the EC meeting on Monday, but unfortunately we ran out of time and you have sent out another e- Bulletin advertising Momentum since then. I don't think it is appropriate for the following reasons :-

You have set up another organisation within the branch with no mandate and no discussion with any other branch officer.

You are informing members of this organisation in your role as branch secretary and in a West Bridgford Labour Party e-Bulletin.

You are using W. B. Membership data to inform members of an organisation that you have been instrumental in setting up that is not an official part of the Labour Party.

I am referring the issue to Regional Office for advice as I appreciate that what I have written is my opinion , but I feel in my role as chair it is my responsibility to clarify the issue for the Branch and a number of members have raised the issue with me. I am therefore asking you as Branch chair to desist from any further publication of Momentum activities in your e- Bulletin from West Bridgford Labour Party and in your role as the secretary of West Bridgford Labour party until I have a response from Regional Office and the issue can be discussed at the next EC meeting.

Regards,
Liz

From: wb.labour@btopenworld.com
Sent: 15 January 2016 12:08
To: Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>
Subject: Re: E- Bulletin

Hi Liz, that's fine, it is important to be clear on these things. Naturally I take a different position but appreciate your concern. I have merely re-sent the previous email to new members who weren't on the original list. I copied you in so you were aware. I don't feel underhand or secrecy is the way forward and am always trying to be transparent in all I do, that for me is the basis of democracy. I have never considered Momentum to be any threat or persona non-grata. For me Momentum is about supporting the Leadership of the party. Something not all groups of party members sadly do. The thousands of party members within Momentum are working hard to ensure a labour victory in 2020. That is what Momentum is all about and I get rather confused at the opposition from some quarters of the party. I thought we all wanted to see Jeremy Corbyn as Prime Minister in 2020. Though clearly I suspect some don't.

I think it is important to discuss this issue. Momentum was set up out of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership campaign, so not something I personally can take responsibility for. I am just one individual in a much larger movement.

By the way there were five branch officers at the first local momentum meeting and none of those raised an issue at the time. All participated constructively I thought. Richard even went so far as to say he was "very impressed".

By the way John McDonnell, Shadow Chancellor is addressing the Momentum East Midlands conference in March. It would be a pity if we had an embargo and weren't allowed to let our members know.

Best wishes

Peter

From: Liz Plant
Sent: Friday, 15 January 2016 14:51
To: Peter Gates

Thank you for your response Peter.
You will have worked out from Richard's email that I am not standing for re- election as Chair of the branch. I'm sure I can hear your sigh of relief from here!
I wish therefore to nominate or second Steve for that position.
Regards,
Liz
Sent from my iPhone

From: wb.labour@btopenworld.com
Sent: 15 January 2016 16:03
To: Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>
Subject: Re: E- Bulletin

Hello Liz,

No it wasn't my sigh of relief. (I suspect it wasn't Steve either!)

I have enormous respect for you Liz. You have actually been on a governing body with my partner. I know how committed you are. But, I wish we had got on better Liz; I wish you had picked up the phone more often; I wish you'd felt you could talk to me. I feel I did try. (It sounds like we are embarking on a divorce!)

If on Momentum after the first member email you had called or texted and said "hang on..." we could have talked about it. No one, no one expressed any concern. Yet now it seems to have gone to regional office, when you have my mobile number.

When I came back to Labour I desperately wanted to do something. We can't suffer five more year of Tories. I came with enormous energy and experience and skills. But I seem to spend most of my time under attack from a small number of people.

Last night's Momentum meeting was electric. So much energy, and we spent an hour working on techniques for dealing with the media attacks on immigration on the doorstep. We had people from four branches. Now, I'd love to do that sort of thing at a Branch meeting.

One day, I hope you will take up my offer of going out for a coffee or a drink. But thanks for the help you have given me. I hope I will be able to get the chance of continuing to work for the Branch as Secretary. I'm learning all the time and I think I've done some good stuff.

Best of luck with all you plan to do with all that free time!

Peter

Further Emails about Momentum Conference

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 11 February 2016 16:03
To: Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>
Subject: bulletin to members

Hi Liz,

I hope you are enjoying your holidays.

I just wanted to let you know that when you see the news bulletin I have sent to members there is an item about John McDonnell speaking to the East Midlands Momentum Conference.

I want you to know I raised this with the Branch Executive and got their approval and Steve saw the wording before it went out and was happy with it. It was felt members had a right to know the Shadow Chancellor was coming and this should be done in as neutral a way as possible. Given our previous conversations, I don't want you to think I was being in any way underhand or awkward.

By the way, Jeremy Corbyn is in Nottingham this evening doing an impromptu rally on Jubilee Campus.

Best wishes,

Peter

Peter Gates

From: Liz Plant [mailto:liz.plant2@btinternet.com]

Sent: 12 February 2016 01:46

To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com

Subject: Re: bulletin to members

That's fine Peter- I meant to speak to Steve before I went but as I asked for advice from Regional office nearly 3 weeks ago & tried again before I left I had no information to pass on to him and have practically given up on them. Perhaps the issue and decision is best made by the G.C.

Have at last arrived at the relaxing part of the holiday- a week in Penang in the aptly named hotel Shangri-La!!!

Sorry to have missed J.C.- not just once, but twice!

Regards,

Liz

Sent from my iPhone

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com

Sent: 15 January 2016 14:34

To: Steve Calvert [mailto:stevecalvert39@gmail.com]

Subject: Re: branch

Steve, can I just personally say how pleased I am you are standing as Branch chair. Whatever happens in the rest of the elections, I think you will do a really great job. Of course I don't know what will happen with Secretary, but if I were to be re-elected I'd really be pleased to work with you. It has not been easy since October but I do feel working with you would be a positive, constructive and learning experience. ...if it happened of course!

Peter Gates

From: Steve Calvert [mailto:stevecalvert39@gmail.com]

Sent: 15 January 2016 20:47

To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com

Subject: Re: branch

Hi Peter

Thanks for that. If we are both elected it will not be all plain sailing but I am sure we can help steer the ship through whatever is thrown at us.

The official statement ends with "improve" but I would like the meeting to be told before the vote about my absence.

Regards

Steve

4.4. Item 3 - Planning for Branch Elections at the AGM

On the next seven pages, I provide the email exchanges I had with the West Bridgford BLP Executive over the organisation of the elections at the AGM. The implication in Liz Plant's email to Finbar is that I was acting undemocratically and that, somehow, working by email is inappropriate. By including all of these emails I hope to demonstrate that neither of these allegations have any justification. I suggested a structure, adjusted it by taking into account responses from members of the Branch EC and we reached a satisfactory conclusion. I would add that I was sitting some 6500 miles away in Kuala Lumpur, eight hours ahead working into the night to organise the elections.

a) Email from Peter Gates to Branch Executive

From: wb.labour@btopenworld.com

Sent: 04 January 2016 11:37

To: Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>; Richard Crawley <richard.crawley2@gmail.com>; Bill Logan <william.logan3@ntlworld.com>; Patricia Whittome <trish.whittome@ntlworld.com>; Nadia EW <nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk>; Jean Stansfield jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com

Cc: stevecalvert39@gmail.com

Subject: West Bridgford Branch Elections

Hi,

I am aware I might have picked this up before but I think it was because I feel I was the newbie and everyone else knew. However as I think about it, I am more unsure and unclear about the procedures for the Branch elections. For example no one thought to tell me we also might make nominations for GC also at the AGM. This seems strange to me and maybe we can talk about it on 11th.

However several people have identified that we are in a different place to where the branch - and party - was last year when it was often difficult to get people to stand for posts, and where virtually everyone at the branch meeting went away with a role. We are in a much stronger place now, but this brings challenges for transparency and democracy.

So I am unsure of the procedures for elections .. over and above what might be in the rulebook. Can someone point to them or send them to me please?

On the assumption there may not be any written procedures (and I might be wrong) might I suggest the following for now but that we look at these for the future. (Bearing in mind we are a "democratic" socialist party.)

1. I write to all branch members now inviting nominations.
2. These nominations get sent to me by email by 18th January with the exception of Branch Secretary which needs to be sent to The Chair in the case - as now - where the incumbent is standing for re-election.
3. Nominations consist of a proposer, seconder and the agreement of the candidate along with a statement of support of no more than 500 words
4. All nominations are then sent to members in advance of the AGM
5. Branch members vote by secret ballot at the AGM.
6. The proposer, seconder and candidate all need to attend the AGM or a nomination falls

Now I appreciate this is a bit tight.. but what a wonderful place to be in! I don't feel too comfortable with it all being done by show of hands at a meeting where most new members won't have a clue who is who.

I don't know who actually decides these things because I have had no real induction into the Branch Secretary role, but the procedure above seems to be a basic democratic one that is manageable. Some of you though will have more experience with the branch than others.

I have copied in all key officers of the Branch and Steve because it feels like everyone should be included in this.

We do need to act fairly quickly, and I can send out an email to all Branch members from Kuala Lumpur! (where by the way it was 34 degrees today) Bear in mind I am 8 hours ahead of you.. so if by 4pm you stop getting any response from me, it is because I am in bed!

Thoughts??
Peter Gates

b) Responses from Branch EC members

Please bear in mind that the following emails are presented in reverse order and that some of the timings are Malaysian.

Responses from Bill Logan

From: Peter Gates [mailto:wb.labour@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 04 January 2016 16:42
To: Bill Logan <william.logan3@ntlworld.com>
Subject: Re: West Bridgford Branch Elections

Hi bill.

Yes, that's true, and if the AGM were to be this week, I'd be away! So it's about finding a satisfactory way through. As I understand it .. He made little inroads. But ...

It's really hot today. Well over 35°C also a monsoon downpour. But it's never too hot for me. I was in Seville at 45° and lived in Africa too, when it was 40°s.

Peter Gates

On 5 Jan 2016, at 00:06, Bill Logan <william.logan3@ntlworld.com> wrote:

Peter,

There could be all sorts of reasons for the nomination to be legitimately absent; in fact I seem to remember Andrew Clayworth wasn't at the selection meeting when he was appointed as Labour candidate for the 2005 General Election as he was abroad at the time (although I think that was stretching it a bit!)

Hope it's not too hot in KL for you.

Bill

On 4 Jan 2016, at 14:51, Peter Gates <wb.labour@btopenworld.com> wrote:

Thanks bill that's much better. Problem of getting a lecturer writing it ---- I'd have had assessment criteria and grade boundaries!!

I thought Richard said no need for ALL THREE to be there. I'm really looking for Commitment. Maybe the candidate needs to be there. (I think one other but won't go to the wall on that) if the candidate isn't there ... How do we judge?

But thanks for a speedy and useful. response

Peter Gates

On 4 Jan 2016, at 22:40, William <william.logan3@ntlworld.com> wrote:

Peter,

I'm not sure we need a 500 word statement. Given that some of the candidates may be new and unknown to many, a brief history of relevant activities and skills should be sufficient. Also, I agree with Richard there's no need to be present for a nomination to go to the vote.

Regards
Bill

Response from Richard Crawley

From: Peter Gates [mailto:wb.labour@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 04 January 2016 14:34
To: Richard Crawley <richard.crawley2@gmail.com>
Cc: Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>; Bill Logan <william.logan3@ntlworld.com>; Trish Whittome <trish.whittome@ntlworld.com>; Nadia EW <nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk>; Jean Stansfield <jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com>; Steve Calvert <stevecalvert39@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: WB Branch AGM

Thanks richard that is really helpful and offers a number of improvements. I'll wait a little, till more people have had a chance to reply. I'll probably go to bed in a couple of hours and see where we are in the morning. I think I can take most of your suggestions constructively and improve where we are.

I think there are a number of things this raises we can usefully consider. I think waiting for the branch exec will be too late for inviting nominations but not for other things.

In terms of attendance I did ponder that, but wanted to avoid nominations where no turned up!

Thanks again.

I'll not go too deeply into the first paragraph because i think we might be seeing this differently. I know Lizzie (and I too) faced no structure of induction got CLP but ... Then again why would anyone think of it? But it has consequences - some of you are well versed in existing procedures. Some of us aren't. So we need a creative and collaborative way forward.

But I genuinely appreciate your ideas.
Thanks again.

Peter Gates

From my iPhone+44 (0)773 0808 353

On 4 Jan 2016, at 21:20, Richard Crawley <richard.crawley2@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Peter

In response to the first paragraph of the email you have just sent (...no one thought to tell me...), please re-read the email that I sent you on 7 December (below). Nominations for GC officers are mentioned in the text of the email, in the agenda for last year's AGM, and in the minutes of last year's AGM. What more could I have done to tell you about this?

I think it is a good idea to invite nominations before the AGM, but I think we also need to be able to make nominations at the meeting, otherwise we could end up with a number of unfilled posts.

If we are going to have nominations before the meeting, and have a statement of up to 500 words (!), I think it is unreasonable to insist that the proposer, seconder and candidate are all present at the meeting. We should not deprive ourselves of the talents of anyone who has taken the trouble to submit a nomination just because they (or their supporters) cannot be at a specific meeting. The members at the meeting can make up their own minds if they think the person has a valid reason for absence.

The above two paragraphs are just my personal opinion, and we can discuss this at the branch executive meeting next Monday. However...

Paragraph 15 of Rushcliffe CLP Standing Orders states:

Nomination of absent delegate: An absent delegate may be nominated for any office at the discretion of the Chairperson whose ruling shall have regard to circumstances.

Best wishes,
Richard

Responses from Liz Plant

From: Peter Gates [mailto:wb.labour@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 05 January 2016 16:11
To: Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>
Subject: Re: West Bridgford Branch Elections

Genuinely sorry for the long email....

Hi Liz, no, I'm happy with people not agreeing with me, it's the tone and the universality of criticism that is the issue. Never any.. "Great to be thinking of that" "Thanks Peter"... "Let's get together", ..., You know the positivity that is supposed to be embedded in our democratic party.

You are reading too much in to this. It's not me that has said all went before was rubbish, at all. It is about fitness for purpose. And I did say thatyou know the different world where we might get 70 people at the AGM not the usual 15 all of whom went away with a job maybe grudgingly. I already said below we won't do the 500 words - you really are selective! Though I do have to say I think it is not a bad idea to expect some commitment. I accept however it might put people off as we are still feeling our way. Many people have come in looking for a new kind of politics, because of Corbyn and they will be looking for more than same old same old.

You now say you presume we would have a secret ballot when last time you said a show of hands Well what is it! We need to sort that out . You have told me several times we are a democratic party and these days we can't just make it up as we go along Liz. I ought to be getting ballot papers ready. We ought not to expect Richard to magically pull them out of his folder like Tommy Cooper!

Look I accept your apology over the getting together. But see it from my position, that it feels deliberate (even selective!). I really think just meeting up would help on a guest basis, we do need to get over the animosity. I'm not a bad person. Really! Honest! I'm lovely really. There is still time for that.

If we had nominations beforehand, And no one was nominated at the meeting we wouldn't need to have a vote and it all runs smoothly. If we had no nominations is for a post you and I could try to work on people in advance. I don't see any sort of takeover of the branch happening. Though I do think there are some who seem to want to take over and control too much and I think that is the problem we have. There might be people interested in BME and disability .. That chap in the wheelchair for example.

I'll accept your point about the 500 words, I already have below, but I'd like to talk about that for the future. That was just a suggestion. I want a dynamic branch and party where we don't just have the same old people doing the same stuff for years and years. Look there might be people out there who in a year or so could take over the chair releasing you. Same for other posts. It is not healthy having people doing role for 20 odd years. There might be younger people who can be put forward for council posts who would be the next generation of politicians.

I accept that maybe you don't work with email as easily as others. All the more reason for you and I to look for more personable ways to work together.

Look it's midnight here and I've had a long day. I'll sleep on this and get back to you in my morning. If you seriously want to wait till 11 then let's think of that. I am aware we do need to get information out to members efficiently if we are to keep them engaged.

Where does that leave us.....well you and I need to sort it. I'll email again, hopefully a bit shorter, in the morning, I can hardly keep my eyes open. Long days, the heat and jet lag.

Peter.

Peter Gates

On 5 Jan 2016, at 23:12, Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com> wrote:

Peter- if I don't agree with you - you automatically think it's because I am thinking the worst of you, when in fact I just have a different opinion to you! I appreciate we are in different times, but that doesn't always mean that what went before was rubbish anymore than what went before was perfect- it was often neither!

My personal view is that you are making hard work of the AGM and that a proposer & seconder and 500 words (presumably in support of their application), a week before the meeting could put members off, rather than encourage them. At previous AGM's I can't remember having 2 members stand for the same position, but if that were to happen in our brave, new world of doubled membership then as I said in my last email I presume we would have a secret ballot. If we have to have a secret ballot for every position we'll be there all night & we've still got a Branch meeting & a speaker to get through.

I still think there's time to go through your proposals at the Executive meeting. We should be trying to get a BME & Disability officer, we have had a BME officer in the past.

I'm not trying to be difficult- I just have a different point of view. I appreciate, with hindsight that all the work falls on you as secretary and that a face-to-face meeting would have been helpful to you and I apologise for not responding to that request, although I can't actually remember it, owing to the amount of emails that buzz around many of which I'm not sure are wanting a response from me or not.

Not sure where this leaves us,

Regards,

Liz

On 5 Jan 2016, at 01:15, Peter Gates <wb.labour@btopenworld.com> wrote:

Hi Liz, you too have the most selective reading of any person I've ever known. (Ok that's a bit of an exaggeration). I wonder if your mindset when you get anything from me is to instinctively think the worst? Have another read of the first message below, it's not as you portray.

I'm talking about the detail of the procedure. Sure, it is obvious there will be elections, but the detail of nominations and voting hasn't been described. For example is anything in writing? You say "I presume we will have a show of hands". Well that's not what happened in the gc to elect the secretary. Richard conveniently had pieces of paper ready on which people voted on a secret ballot paper. Do you see my point? Do I need to prepare some ballot forms is my question and it seems even you aren't clear whether it is a secret ballot or not. I expect as I say it's because we are in new territory and those of you who have been around for some time are having to cope with that. I appreciate that previously people had to be cajoled into taking up a post and where everyone attending the AGM appeared on the Attendance list in the minutes. We may need to be a little different now. We can't really go to an AGM and not appear to know what is going on.

Remember too in an email I sent you I asked for us to meet up and talk about the AGM but I've yet to get a reply or indication you would be happy to do that. I'm still happy to meet up 1-1. I think that's what happen in some other branches.

All I was doing was making a suggestion. So far everyone has indicated the 500 words is too much and that's fair enough, we won't do that. That's collegiality.

As for turning up on the night as usual I take your point that we have to have a get out for those cases where people might not stand in advance. Let's see and it can always be the chair's decision as Richard has suggested.

I also indicated I wasn't sure of a BME or disability officer. You didn't respond to that either. Should I include it, I think so, but don't want to unilaterally make decisions. Both are in the role profiles sent from the region. I'll include those two unless you say otherwise, we might be lucky.

I merely proposed a procedure Liz, I am not making decisions and toy feel to be over-reacting. What I am doing seems to be in the spirit of collegiality and I live in hope that one day you can see the good in me!

Leaving it all till the exec meeting on 11th might be leaving it too late for informing members and getting them thinking. That's what I asked. Neither Bill nor Richard yet have said they disagreed with asking for nominations in advance.

I do need to tell members what to expect on 25th... We need to be clear. I need to be clear as secretary. Asking for nominations in Advance feels advantageous as it gives people time To think and gives us an idea. So how about this...

1. I write to all branch members now inviting nominations for all posts including BME and disability.
2. These nominations get sent to me by email by 18th January with the exception of Branch Secretary which needs to be sent to The Chair in the case - as now - where the incumbent is standing for re-election.
3. Nominations consist of a proposer, seconder and the agreement of the candidate along with a brief statement.
4. All nominations are then sent to members in advance of the AGM (or are given out on the night?). Nominations can be accepted on the night at the jurisdiction of the chair.
5. Branch members vote by secret ballot at the AGM.
6. The proposer, seconder and candidate are normally expected to be present at the AGM but if not they should indicate in writing to the chair why they are unable to attend.

Feel free to comment, that's my intention. I'm collegiate and democratic.

Best wishes,

Peter

Peter Gates

On 5 Jan 2016, at 03:28, Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com> wrote:

Peter you have the most selective memory of any man I have ever met! You were told by me & Richard about the format of the AGM & were sent a copy of last years AGM agenda. You even put nominations for GC officers & conference delegate on the agenda of the EC meeting under the item on the AGM!

Are we saying now that we will not be taking any nominations from the floor on the night - because if so what is the procedure if we don't get any nominations in by the 18th, which could well happen even with our huge Branch Membership. People often respond to persuasion/ encouragement on the night. And if we are in the position of having more than one nomination for the same position I presume we'll have a secret ballot, not a show of hands.

I think new and old members could well be put off by the prospect of writing a 500 word application and also by the prospect of reading them all.

I'm sorry to be so negative, but again decisions are being made by a few people which I think should at least be discussed at the Executive Meeting on Monday.

Regards,

Liz

Response from Steve Calvert

From: wb.labour@btopenworld.com [mailto:wb.labour@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 06 January 2016 16:23
To: stevecalvert39@gmail.com
Cc: Richard Crawley <richard.crawley2@gmail.com>; Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>; Bill Logan <william.logan3@ntlworld.com>; Patricia Whittome <trish.whittome@ntlworld.com>; Nadia EW <nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk>; Jean Stansfield <jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com>
Subject: Re: WB Branch AGM

Can I say thanks to all of you for your responses on this ... and Steve has come up with a summary beautifully. I think this really summarises what everyone else has said. I think it also satisfies Liz's concerns in emails we have exchanged between us. Can I therefore amend my 6 points along Steve's lines as follows:

1. Secretary to write to all branch members now inviting nominations for all posts including BME, TULO and disability
2. These nominations to get sent to me by email by 18th January with the exception of Branch Secretary nominations which need to be sent to The Chair.
3. Nominations to consist of a proposer, seconder and the agreement of the candidate along with a brief statement of support (around 200-300 words) by proposers or candidate.
4. All nominations received by 18th are then sent to members in advance of the AGM.
5. Nominations can be accepted at the AGM at the jurisdiction of the chair.
5. The proposer, seconder and candidate are normally expected to be present at the AGM for the nomination to stand. If the candidate is unable to attend, they should explain their absence in writing to the Chair who will have discretion on acceptance and whose ruling shall have regard to circumstances.
6. Branch members vote by secret ballot at the AGM.

I think this satisfies everyone - and thanks for the way we have come up with a strategy collectively.

if there is any important message you think should go out with the email to members, please drop me a line. I'll try to do this tomorrow.

Basically I want to encourage members to see us as a democratic organisation, where they can have a say.

Also I want to say that if anyone is thinking they want to play a role but feel now is too early for them, we will support them in shadowing officers. I think I'd like to somehow encourage younger members.

If you are happy with this and have no additions, feel free not to reply

Peter

From: stevecalvert39@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, 5 January 2016 17:47
To: Peter Gates
Cc: Richard Crawley, Liz Plant, Bill Logan, Patricia Whittome, Nadia EW, Jean Stansfield

Hi Peter

A few thoughts on the suggested process.

1. Agree we write to all Branch Members inviting nominations.
2. Agree with Richard that nominations should be allowed at the meeting. This will help with unfilled vacancies. Where there are already other nominees it will be up to voters to consider why they had not submitted earlier.

3. I would think a statement of min of 200 and max 300 words (which outlines why the nominee wishes to stand and why they consider themselves suitable for the post) should be adequate. It would seem appropriate that the proposer and seconder support the statement.

4. Agree that those nominations received by 18th Jan are sent out by 19th. However members should be advised that nominations can be made on the night if there is a proposer and seconder and they are supported by an appropriate written or spoken statement.

5. Agree with secret ballot.

6. Don't agree with this requirement. Can you propose or second two or more people for the same post? If not, the nominee will have lost two votes if he/she cannot get them to turn up!

Regards

Steve

Summary

The process, then, seems to have been a robust and democratic one where a group of people came to a conclusion and moved to a process for elections. Again, it is worth reminding ourselves that what we are considering here is a process to ensure nominations and elections to Branch Officer positions were democratic and intended to be transparent in order to avoid a criticism that a small clique was running the Party. I do not believe the process arrived at was in any way deficient and, importantly, it was used again at the AGM in 2017.

The minute relating to the discussion of this from the approved minutes of the Branch Executive meeting on 11th January 2016 is as follows and can be found in **Section 18**.

B8. BRANCH AGM + ELECTIONS:

- 8 branch officers were consulted the draft agenda and call for nominations, and a number of amendments to take account of their views. Nominations to be sent in advance, and candidates to submit a statement of around 200 words. Nominations could still be accepted at the AGM.
- Some feared that members would be put off by "a brief statement of support (around 200 words)"; we would not ask for statements from people nominated at the AGM.
- Discussed nominations for GC officers and delegate to Annual Conference to get people thinking. Branch nominations could only be made at the branch AGM.

My overall view here is that for all Liz Plant's strengths, she was finding it hard to accommodate to new members and in particular people like myself, and other new people, who already had devised effective strategies elsewhere in my professional life. This is about coping with change, which we all find potentially difficult.

I have nothing but admiration for Liz Plant and as she will substantiate I have spent a lot of time canvassing for her in West Bridgford North Ward.

I am struggling in fact to see the allegations in Liz Plant's email to Finbar Bowie that justify an administrative suspension.

4.5. Detailed Response to Materials: Pages 18 - 38

Page 18 – Email from Sandra Coker

This is an email from Sandra Coker which appears to quickly follow the email from Lizzie Edgerton on pages 19-20 of the Charges Pack. Again, it is difficult to respond to any of these allegations as they are totally unsubstantiated. The claim is that I am guilty of:

"Misrepresentation of the words, actions and motives of members of Rushcliffe GC, their repeated slurs on the character of respected Labour Party members and their threatening and abusive behaviour in meetings."

I am not aware of any "misrepresentation of words, actions and motives of members of Rushcliffe GC" and none is identified here. Nor is it identified here which members of Rushcliffe GC this is supposed to be referring to.

I am not aware of any "slurs on the character" of any Labour Party members on my part. I am bemused at why the word "respected" needed to be placed here. Surely, we respect all members of the Party? Again, no individuals and no incidents are identified here.

I am not aware of any threatening or abusive behaviours from me at any meeting, and the minutes of meetings do not in any way indicate that to be so, nor has this been raised by anyone at any time (see **Sections 17** and **18**). Being threatening and abusive is so far removed from my way of operating that the allegation is perplexing.

Furthermore, it is alleged that "the focus of their harassment has now been directed at others including Lizzie Edgerton – CLP secretary and, as you will see from the threatening email above, Pat Walsh – Keyworth GC Delegate". It is not for me here to discuss whether the email referred to (from John Walsh, on pages 19 - 20) is in fact "threatening", only to point out: it is not from me. I am also not aware of ever harassing Lizzie Edgerton and, in this Response, I provide examples of my support for Lizzie below.

If any of these allegations had any justification, I would have expected the incidents to be referred immediately to the GC under the Party's rules. If people are being abused, misrepresented, slandered or threatened, that is intolerable and needs to be properly dealt with. I am surprised this was never brought to anyone's attention so we could resolve any tensions.

The only abuse and misrepresentation I am aware of is what I faced at the 16th November 2015GC meeting, which I have already discussed in **Section 2.6**. Immediately, I lodged a formal complaint which I accept I possibly ought to have brought first to the CLP GC. However, relations at that time were very fraught.

Finally, I think my behaviour toward Sandra Coker has always been respectful and professional. I greatly respect the commitment she has given to the Party over a long period. Indeed, at the 18th January 2016 GC meeting where a new Chair was elected, I was concerned that Sandra was being ignored and I asked the Chair - Gill Aldridge - if I might offer a vote of thanks, which I did. See **Item G5** of the minutes in **Section 17**.

I have not been in too many meetings with Sandra, but I do wonder whether she is acting on information passed onto her, rather than on first-hand experience.

One issue here is over Sandra's claim on page 18 of the Charges Pack that she was "standing down as women's officer for both the Branch and the CLP" as "a direct result of the behaviour of Peter Gates". I would point out that I resigned as Secretary of the CLP as a direct result of the behaviour of Sandra Coker. However, if Sandra did stand down as Women's Officer beforehand, she would no longer have been a member of the CLP Executive according to the list circulated by Richard Crawley on 11th January 2016 in **Section 5.2**. I am not aware there was an election for a new Women's Officer, so it appears that Sandra did not in fact stand down which casts doubt on her claim. I do want to say, however, that I would have thought it regrettable if Sandra had stood down, as she was an excellent Women's Officer. No one should

be forced to stand down because of the behaviour of others and I include myself being forced to resign as CLP Secretary in that.

Pages 19 – 20 – email from Lizzie Edgerton to Sandra Coker

This does not appear to relate to me and should not have been included as part of the allegations against me in the Charges Pack.

Pages 21 - 22 – Email from Lizzie Edgerton to Finbar Bowie

This is an email from Lizzie Edgerton to Finbar Bowie which refers seemingly to a previous “complaint of harassment”. Since this is not included, and Lizzie goes on to say “*I would like to add Peter Gates to my complaint*”, I will assume that previous correspondence does not relate to me.

I will deal with the allegations paragraph by paragraph but, again, we are dealing here with unsubstantiated allegations for which no evidence has been provided.

“I would like to add Peter Gates to my complaint. I have long suspected, but have not had solid evidence to prove, that he has been spreading malicious rumours about me. Yesterday I received an email from a respected member of the Branch to say she had heard I had gone to the Keyworth AGM to put a case against John Walsh so that he didn't win the election for Keyworth delegates, and that she felt if this was true she could not support me. I understand this information came from Peter Gates. I sent her my notes from the meeting and hope that is sufficient to convince her I did no such thing, but this insidious gossip and the false accusations further lead me to feel bullied and harassed.”

I am intrigued to know what the “solid evidence” is that Lizzie is referring to as no evidence has been provided in the Charges Pack, solid or otherwise. That does not surprise me as I am unaware that I have been “spreading malicious rumours” about Lizzie, or indeed about anyone. What we have here is a particularly insidious chain of Chinese Whispers, that someone told Lizzie that someone had said something about what someone did. There is no indication of what was said, to whom, by whom where and when. I have to say, somewhat ironically, “*the false accusations further lead me to feel bullied and harassed*”. I was not at the Keyworth meeting so would be unable to pass comment on the proceedings.

“Further in relation to Peter Gates, he has been hostile to me since the Regional Conference, when I voted as mandated by my CLP for Nicki Brookes and him, as he had been openly canvassing with leaflets at the conference for delegates to vote Adele Williams, and not Nicki. He described my vote as ‘a farce’.”

I have described in **Section 2.3** what took place at the Regional Conference and I stand by that. The malicious insinuation here is reprehensible and is a gross distortion of what happened. Rushcliffe’s nomination of Nicki Brooks meant our votes would have to go to her as far as I understood it. I am unaware of describing the vote as “a farce”, rather it was “a requirement”.

“When I was elected as CLP Secretary his criticism of me escalated, to the point where it has had a wider impact on my ability to even do a simple task without doubting myself, as I know everything I do comes under scrutiny and criticism. I have countless emails where he has questioned how I do routine things.”

I would be interested in seeing some of these “countless emails” where I have questioned how Lizzie did “routine things”. I have requested the official notes, but I have been denied them, for reasons I cannot understand. Had any email I sent been inappropriate, I would have expected it to have been dealt with at the time, which seems the appropriate and comradely thing to do.

“After my election he did not offer a hand-over, or the release of the CLP printer, which left me in some considerable difficulty. I had the support of two previous CLP Secretaries, without which I would have struggled further.”

To be honest, I had been CLP Secretary for such a short period, and had myself received no hand-over or induction, I had little to offer anybody. Personally, for some time after the November GC where I resigned, I felt so bruised and intimidated that I did not really want to talk to anyone about anything. I had no idea how the printer worked and it had sat in my loft where I forgot about it. However, Lizzie only contacted me once for information in the following exchange, which I felt was professional and friendly. There seems no underlying problem here at all. It started with me sending Lizzie an email from Ann Black with her regular NEC report.

From: Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Sent: 03 February 2016 21:57
To: PETER GATES [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Subject: Re: NEC 26 January 2016

I believe we've all (CLP and Branch Secs) had Anne's email personally. I don't mind and will go with the group decision, but can you let me know Peter, without me having to check back, what sort of thing you sent out as CLP Sec and what you passed to Branches to send? I have asked before but can't find a reply. I remember getting a fair few things from you and am happy to be clear on a communications strategy, but if you did send things out as CLP Sec I'd clearly like to do the same.

There are a few who can't come to the next GC, shame, as you say, the NEC nominations are important. We can always raise it at the GC and agree to postpone until the March meeting, I am sure no one would object as the votes don't have to be in until April.

Best wishes
Lizzie

From: PETER GATES [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 03 February 2016 10:27
To: Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Subject: Re: NEC 26 January 2016
On Feb 03, 2016, at 10:27 PM, PETER GATES <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com> wrote:

As far as I remember I only sent one email out as clp sec. Which was the one inviting people along to the CLP members workshop. (I think the best response to that is "ironic"!)

I don't believe I received anything that needed passing on. Branches appeared very autonomous. I wasn't clp sec for long after all. I received the email about the PCC which I passed onto you and a communication with Jon ashworth. Again, which I passed onto you. I suspect some things might have still been going to steve.

Yes I know liz won't be at the GC either. It would be good to get nominations for the centre-left slate. (I saw your comment to steve so assumed you support that too) but we might benefit from a discussion/paper in advance if the GC and we might not have too much time for that. I think votes are not due until July/August and nominations on 24th June ? Why not raise it and set up an exchange of info for the march meeting.

I'd be happy putting together a discussion paper together on a communications strategy if that might go to GC in March or thereafter.

P

Peter Gates

From: Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Sent: 03 February 2016 22:43
To: PETER GATES [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Subject: Re: NEC 26 January 2016

I thought nominations were due in for April, but either way I agree we should set up an exchange of info for March. Yes, I support the centre left nominations and can't see why they won't be agreed at GC, if I am wrong on timings at least it's the right way to be wrong.

I think the GC Communications does definitely need discussing and a paper would be a good thing. Harry is kind of out on a limb on his own, the website is still a work in progress and I am sure between us all we can make some improvements.

Best wishes
Lizzie

From: PETER GATES [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 06 February 2016 09:33
To: Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Subject: Re: NEC 26 January 2016

Yes that seems important. I'm happy to talk to Harry and Marc to start a conversation toward putting a discussion brief to the march GC. I think it's important also to pull in. Cotgrave and Radcliffe and see what's happening in Rudd and SN.

See you Monday.

P

Peter Gates

So, this reinforced my belief that we had put all the previous issues behind us. I am finding it difficult, therefore, to see any justification in the following allegation:

"This constant nit-picking in relation to the work I am doing, the negative attitude to me (especially in front of other members at meetings) and the implications of incompetence leave me mentally exhausted and, more importantly, take up valuable time that I give to the Party."

Again, I have no idea what this refers to and cannot imagine "constant nit-picking ... in front of other people" where those other people did not pick it up and report it, because no one at all has reported it or mentioned it to me. Let me add again here something I have said before: the first time I was made aware of these allegations was when I received the Charges Pack on 28th July 2017. If these allegations about my supposed aggressive and intimidatory behaviour were so serious, why was nothing said or raised via the appropriate channels before? Why did no one bring any of this to my attention, and why has no one else ever mentioned my supposed hostile and bullying behaviour at meetings? The answer is simple: events simply did not happen as described by Lizzie in her complaint.

Here is another example of an email exchange with Lizzie, this time in **October 2016**, almost a year after the November 2015 GC. This refers to a canvassing session in West Bridgford, where we had hugged when we met and chatted as we moved from house to house.

From: Peter Gates [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 17 October 2016 05:05
To: Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Subject: Re: Hello !

Lizzie.

I just wanted to say thanks for yesterday. It was good to have the opportunity to chat.

I hope tonight goes smoothly. Sorry I can't be there.

See you soon.

Peter.

Peter Gates

From: Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Sent: 18 October 2016 20:48
To: Peter Gates [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Subject: Re: Hello !
Peter

No idea what you're thanking me for.

I'm sure by now you've heard all about the AGM!

Lizzie

From: Peter Gates [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 18 October 2016 21:09
To: Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Subject: Re: Hello !

Hi Lizzie,

Friendship, a hug, empathy and a chat on the way.

I've heard bits and pieces from various people. But too much in the background I don't know so am reserving judgements. A few surprises I must say but ... I'm guessing that's where we are. It would just be nice being able to be all working together to change a few people's lives.

A little while ago I heard you were a candidate for Council, but not sure what happened. Sorry if it didn't work out. I've no idea of the process - I've been out of it for a few weeks!

By the way I heard you got a letter rather like Liz. I wanted to say on Sunday (but never found the right moment) how awful that was and what a disgraceful thing for anyone to do. You don't deserve that. I didn't realise earlier when I wrote to Liz and posted a condemnation on Facebook. I thought it was just her. So sorry if I missed you off.

Take Care though. I do hope we might get the chance to work together sometime soon.

Best wishes

Peter

I am at a loss to recognise the description of harassment and bullying.

Pages 23 – 28 – email from Liz Plant to Finbar Bowie

This is a repeat of pages 16 - 17 and has already been covered above.

Pages 31 - 34 – email from Lizzie Edgerton to Finbar Bowie

This email on 11th March seems to have been copied to Andy Furlong, the Chair of the Regional Board (acfurl@gmail.com). I presume this might have something to do with the CLP meeting on 7th March.

This seems to have arisen from a brief request from me on 8th March for three items to be placed on a GC agenda:

Lizzie, Keir Chewings, John Walsh and myself would like the follow three items placed on the GC agenda for its next meeting please

- *CLP Standing Orders*
- *Role and Makeup of the CLP EC*
- *CLP development Plan*

Thank you

Peter

This seems to me to be a reasonable request for a Branch Secretary to make and I cannot in any way see how this email can be interpreted as hostile, aggressive or abusive or indeed questioning the competence of the CLP Secretary. As I understood it, the CLP Development Plan for Rushcliffe had been an issue for the Regional Office for some time, and was due to be discussed - or so I thought - at 7th March meeting. That meeting had raised issues with the Standing Orders and the role of the EC - which had only recently started to operate after some months of inactivity, unbeknownst to the GC (see **Section 5.2**). After two days with no response I merely sent the same request, in a polite and straightforward manner.

Thereafter, Cllr Keir Chewing's email, followed by John Walsh's, seem to be identifying some concerns over perceived structural and procedural problems within the CLP, all of which are legitimate issues for a Branch Secretary to raise.

Lizzie's response that she is "*on the verge of a nervous breakdown*" appears an over-reaction, but I do not know what else Lizzie is facing in her personal life which might contribute to this. However, describing legitimate scrutiny as "*intolerable harassment and bullying*" and that she feels "*sick even thinking about being in a room with these people*" would suggest to me some other issues going on. It is certainly not a legitimate and measured reaction to a reasonable request.

The accusation that I have been harassing and abusive and undermining the CLP Secretary is something I would completely reject and, in my defence, I offer the following email exchange between myself, Robert Crosby and Lizzie Edgerton. I think this demonstrates that, far from me bullying and harassing, the agency goes the other way. An innocent request to be included in communications so we could play a part in Labour Campaigns (which I had been assured by the regional Office that we could) suddenly becomes "*a tactic to destabilise the CLP*", and me "*failing to recognise*" Lizzie Edgerton in her role.

From: peter.gates3 <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com>
To: gill aldrige <gill.aldrige@btinternet.com>
CC: Jean Stansfield <jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com>; stevecalvert39 <stevecalvert39@gmail.com>; Robert Crosby <robertcrosby35@aol.com>
Sent: Sun, 3 Apr 2016 19:31
Subject: Campaigning and suspensions

Dear Gill,

(I have CC-ed Steve as my Branch Chair)

I hope you are well and are well over the operations.

Now that some dust has settled on the 7th March, I'd like just to ask a question for you to raise with the EC which I think is meeting on 4th.

Whilst I am not speaking on behalf of the 10 suspended members, I think my feelings are common, that we are members because we support the Party and want to go on doing that.

Our letters say we can't attend "any Party Meetings" but they do not say we can't operate as a Party member. I would be very keen to play a part in all CLP activity and campaigns and I am sure we all feel that. I think it would be helpful if the EC felt able to endorse that and clarify what we can do.

One thing that is a real frustration is the apparent delay due to staff shortages at regional office level. This could mean we might well be suspended until the summer or after. As I understand it, this could be reviewed at the NEC meeting on 11th April. It has been very difficult just knowing who we are able to talk to and communicate with - and I am hoping I am not breaking any rules or protocols here.

In addition, you can rest assured we are all abiding by the conditions in our letters, whilst not accepting the justification of the suspensions in any way. It would help if I were still kept on distribution lists as a member of the GC. I don't think there is anything in our letters which stipulated we should be completely omitted.

Best Wishes,

Peter

Peter Gates

On Apr 03, 2016, at 09:21 PM, Robert Crosby <robertcrosby43@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Gill - and others

I have just picked this copy up in my In Box.

I suspect that this is nothing more than a different tactic to try to destabilise the CLP. The fact that he has visibly copied Jean in as well as Steve ahead of tomorrow's EC just adds to that as I expect she will want to repeat the same arguments yet again. Any hope that he may have that this will be resolved as quickly as he appears to hope looks very optimistic to me?

I suspect Peter is well aware of what he can and can't do because I believe those "terms" will have been set out in the letter that he will have received. My feeling would be that he should not receive invitations to GCs (not that we are holding them anyway) this side of the completion of the investigation. Can I suggest though that we ask Lizzie to refer his e-mail to the Regional Party for an appropriate official there to comment?

Best wishes.

Robert

From: Elizabeth Edgerton [mailto:l.edge@me.com]

Sent: 03 April 2016 22:21

To: robertcrosby43@gmail.com

Cc: gill.aldridge@btinternet.com; stevecalvert39@gmail.com; richard.crawley2@gmail.com; jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com; peter.gates3@btopenworld.com

Subject: Campaigning and suspensions

Hi all

Thank you Robert, I had not received this, which is interesting and is another example of Peter failing to recognise me in my role. Robert, and all other officers, please direct any members to me directly. As CLP Secretary I am responsible for liaison between members/suspended members and Regional/National office.

Lizzie
Lizzie Edgerton
Rushcliffe CLP Secretary

From: PETER GATES <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com>
Date: 3 April 2016 at 22:59:34 BST
To: Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Cc: robertcrosby43@gmail.com, gill.aldridge@btinternet.com, stevecalvert39@gmail.com,
richard.crawley2@gmail.com, jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com
Subject: Campaigning and suspensions

Thanks for clarifying that Lizzie - it's the first time I've been informed that liaison ought to go through you. I'll await further clarification. As I indicated I was cautious of not stepping out of line. As you will know the letters we received don't clarify the boundaries very well. We are all socialists fighting for Labour success and I didn't want to put anyone in a personally difficult or embarrassing position by just turning up to canvass etc. without further clarity.

I copied Jean in because we have spoken about my wanting to be involved in campaigning on the PCC and EU but I have as yet not received any formal advice on that. I copied Steve in because he is chair of my branch and ought to be aware of my interest in involvement in campaigning. Given Finbar and Emma's secondment the RO seem stretched. I presumed Gill and Robert would have the authority to deal with this. I merely didn't want to make things more difficult for people. Nothing more sinister than that.

Best wishes.

Peter.

Peter Gates

I simply cannot see how the content and tone of my communications can in any reasonable way be interpreted as threatening or harassing. After this, Lizzie Edgerton appears (so I was informed by the Deputy Regional Director) to have taken a unilateral decision to remove all suspended members from the CLP's communications, something that was not at all helpful or required by the Party.

Pages 35 – 38 – anonymous letters

Anonymous letters were sent to certain members of the Party. The inclusion of these four pages is particularly offensive, and arguably contravenes the Labour Party Bullying and Harassment Policy, by making false accusations. It is innuendo and to make such an unsubstantiated and unfounded allegation is nothing short of inflammatory and thoroughly uncomradely. This should itself be a cause for disciplinary action against whoever took the decision to include these four pages in the Charges Pack. Immediately when the first leaflet appeared (page 38 of the Charges Pack), I telephoned Gordon Pattison to discuss it. His advice was to take no further action, as doing so would give unnecessary attention. A message condemning the leaflet was immediately posted on the Nottinghamshire and Rushcliffe Momentum Facebook pages.

After my conversation with Gordon, I sent the follow email:

From: Peter Gates [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 28 July 2016 17:33
To: 'Gordon Pattison' <gordon_pattison@labour.org.uk>
Subject: Rushcliffe Labour

Gordon,

Here is the leaflet...

It has been brought to my attention that today this appears to have been posted to members of the Labour Party.

I want to say that I totally disassociate myself from that and have nothing whatsoever to do with it. I feel it totally inappropriate thing to do. I am very happy to cooperate with you on investigating how it might have happened, but as you will know I have co-operated with you at all times. I can't say how angry this has made me.

I am happy contacting other officers in Rushcliffe if you feel that appropriate, but will wait for advice from you on how to proceed. A copy of the leaflet is attached.

Peter

I also sent the following message to other BLP Secretaries in Rushcliffe CLP:

From: Peter Gates [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 31 July 2016 09:26
To: 'CHRIS KEMP' <chrisjkemp@btinternet.com>; 'stevecalvert39@gmail.com' <stevecalvert39@gmail.com>; 'pabnott@gmail.com' <pabnott@gmail.com>; 'kchewings@me.com' <kchewings@me.com>
Subject: Rushcliffe leaflet

Chris, Keir, Peter, Steve

There appears to be a leaflet circulating around Rushcliffe Labour Party members that is a disgraceful attack on the Rushcliffe Labour Party. It purports to be supporting the case of the suspended members in Rushcliffe. It would appear to have used Labour Party data to post out first class with typed up address labels. The leaflet has no contact details and is anonymous. Clearly whoever is responsible wants to cover their tracks. No one in my family has received one, and I know of other members who have not. Regardless of what one might feel of the internal business of Rushcliffe CLP, this is something which has no place in the Labour Party. The leaflet is extremely badly written and quite amateurish and the strategy of posting out to some members is quite unacceptable. As I think you all know, we have all been careful not to make a big public issue of the suspensions for the sake of the Party. This leaflet does not help our case and is ironically potentially damaging.

Because of the potential damage this might cause, I spoke with Gordon Pattison. I also referred the leaflet to Momentum in London and to Jeremy Corbyn's election campaign team also in London. Both have been provided with a screen shot of the leaflet and are considering a response. I posted the follow disclaimer on Momentum Rushcliffe Facebook Page after discussion with Momentum National Committee members.

"It has come to our attention that some people have been receiving leaflets with a Jeremy Corbyn logo on through their doors regarding Rushcliffe CLP. In addition, this leaflet has been posted on social media. This leaflet has not been sanctioned by either the Jeremy for Labour campaign nor Momentum. Neither have been involved in, nor know who is responsible for, its production and distribution. We do not endorse its content and we disassociate ourselves from it entirely."

Although Momentum is not mentioned on the leaflet, because of the connection with Jeremy, Notts Momentum put a similar disclaimer on Facebook. It is difficult to know exactly how to respond as we do not know yet how widespread the leaflet is – and why anyone would want to circulate it. It might not be wise to over-react as one does not want to be responsible for exacerbating something which might go quiet of its own accord. For me it is not beyond imagination that it has been circulated by people who would want to damage the reputation of the people referred to in the leaflet – namely 10 suspended members (and specifically John and myself). We still do not know why we were all suspended, nor who is responsible for the allegations behind those suspensions, so it is difficult to judge the provenance of that. We are of course strong supporters of Jeremy Corbyn and the thought that supporters of Jeremy's "honest politics" would engage in such underhand tactics is incomprehensible. Having communicated with those suspended, this is indeed my best guess for the source of the leaflet; I can't believe anyone else would be quite so stupid.

As my situation is tricky - still being suspended - I do not want to exacerbate tensions by contacting too many officers. I just thought it important to communicate the above to you guys.

Best wishes,
Peter

This is the first time I have seen the letters on pages 35 - 37 of the Charges Pack.

There is a view in the Branch that these letters were an example of a "false flag" defined by Wikipedia as follows:

"Proponents of political or religious ideologies will sometimes use false flag tactics. This can be done to discredit or implicate rival groups, create the appearance of enemies when none exist, or create the illusion of organized and directed persecution. This can be used to gain attention and sympathy from outsiders, in particular the media, or to convince others within the group that their beliefs are under attack and in need of protection."

Indeed, there is a legal principle "*cui bono*" which applies here:

*"**Cui bono?**" literally "for whose benefit?", is a Latin phrase which is still in use as a key forensic question in legal and police investigation: finding out who has a motive for a crime. It is an adage that is used either to suggest a hidden motive or to indicate that the party responsible for something may not be who it appears at first to be. The phrase is a double dative construction. It is also rendered as "**cui prodest?**" ("whom does it profit?"). Commonly the phrase is used to suggest that the person or people guilty of committing a crime may be found among those who have something to gain, chiefly with an eye toward financial gain. The party that benefits may not always be obvious or may have successfully diverted attention to a scapegoat, for example.*

So here, I am apparently the scapegoat.

In my professional judgement, these letters are the creation of a troubled and disturbed individual, whose weak literacy and communications skills may make engaging in rational debate difficult. I have no evidence as to the provenance of these appalling letters, but I do know they have absolutely nothing to do with me and I resent the insinuation as a very cheap attempt to smear me by association. That is deplorable. Their inclusion in this pack should not have occurred.

5. Response to Charge 2

Charge 2

On or around 7th March 2016, you are alleged to have attended a meeting arranged by the CLP EC and regional board to resolve historical complaints and arranged for a number of uninvited members to also attend who refused to leave the meeting which was subsequently abandoned.

5.1. Background

Charge 2 is somewhat difficult to understand. I seem to be being charged with attending a meeting that I was specifically invited to, that others attended and refused to leave (which is untrue). The background to this meeting is complex and demands a clear response, which I offer in this section. I need to point out again that I had no indication that any allegations had been made against me until **28th July 2017** and this has to be the backdrop to this whole section. It is my belief that the handling of the run-up to this meeting, and the management of it, were ham-fisted as I hope will become clear as I describe in detail the events surrounding the suspensions after 7th March. I will provide accounts and minutes of that meeting which contradict the accounts provided in the Charges Pack.

In **Section 6**, I provide the email evidence to support my claims in **Section 5**. In **Section 7** and **Section 8**, I provide the other submissions that were not included in the Charges Pack and which give a very different account of the meeting. It seems most inappropriate to provide only four submissions, whilst failing to provide submissions from other EC members and the suspended members. In **Section 9**, I go on to deal with the allegations that were included in the Charges Pack.

On Saturday 19th March 2016, I received a letter informing me of my “*administrative suspension*” from the Labour Party, alleging that I had been involved in a breach of Labour Party Rules and that my presence at meetings might be detrimental to the Party. Nine of my colleagues also received one of these letters. It is not at all clear from that letter what rules we have been accused of breaking; however, I am assuming that it is related to events of 7th March. I would, therefore, like to expand on our description of events leading up to these suspensions as I am not sure this version has been communicated in the Charges Pack, to the NCC, or to the NEC. I would like to make the case here that these suspensions are both unjust and unjustified, and result from a number of miscommunications. I do not wish to pass criticism on anybody in this unfortunate business, merely to identify a number of procedural issues.

5.2. Re-Establishment of the Executive Committee in Rushcliffe CLP

I received an email on 19th February from Finbar Bowie, an East Midlands Regional Officer, asking me to attend “*a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP at 8pm on March 7th to discuss complaints and the situation generally in Rushcliffe*”. I was told that Andy Furlong, the chair of the East Midlands Regional Board, would be in attendance. I subsequently discovered that John Walsh of Keyworth Branch had also received the email from Finbar on 18th February (see **Section 6, Evidence 1**).

I initially queried the date, since our CLP General Committee (“GC”) meetings are on the third Monday of each month, so I asked what meeting this was. I was told (again by Finbar) that it was to be on the same day as a CLP Executive Committee (“EC”) meeting so as not to add another meeting date. I was surprised by this as I had never heard of the CLP EC and, since I joined the CLP GC in June 2015, the Executive had never been mentioned, nor had the GC received reports or minutes from an EC. This might explain part of my query over the status of the meeting to which I was being invited.

I then exchanged several emails with Finbar Bowie (see **Section 6, Evidence 2**) in which I tried to make it clear what I felt was important. Subsequent to the meeting on 7th March, concerns had been raised by other GC delegates over the EC and the status of the 7th March meeting because the GC was unaware of the functioning of the EC.

At the May 2015 CLP AGM, as per standard practice, the make-up of an EC was recorded (at Item A6) in the AGM Minutes:

A6. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Ex officio: Chair, 2 Vice Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Ethnic Minorities Officer, Women's Officer, Youth & Student Officer, Leader and Secretary of Rushcliffe Borough Council Labour Group

Branches (6):

Cotgrave & Cropwell Keir Chewings

Keyworth Chris Kemp

Radcliffe on Trent (vacancy)

Ruddington & Tollerton (vacancy)

South Rushcliffe (vacancy)

West Bridgford Jean Stansfield

Trade Unions (4) Alan Tiplady (3 vacancies)

Other Affiliates (1) (vacancy)

Women's Forum (1) Liz Plant

Young Labour (1) (vacancy)

The CLP EC met from January 2015 to April 2015, and reported to the GC in January, February and March 2015. There was no GC meeting in April 2015, and the EC did not report again to the GC until April 2016. This is all in the minutes of relevant GC and EC meetings in **Section 17**. At that time, the members of the EC and attendees at the GC largely overlapped and so it appears that monthly EC meetings were suspended. There is no mention of an EC report in any of the GC minutes between March 2015 and April 2016. There is no discussion in the minutes of its cessation or of its existence. It was simply never mentioned because, presumably, it was not functioning, until an email went out on **26th January 2016** for a February meeting. A decision seems to have been taken in early January 2016 to resurrect the EC but it is not clear who made that decision. In an email from Richard Crawley dated **11th January 2016**, sent to just four CLP Officers, a new list of EC members was proposed (see next page), with the proviso "*I hope I have got the members of the Executive Team right*":

From: Richard Crawley <richard.crawley2@gmail.com>

Date: 11 January 2016 at 12:52

Subject: GC Delegates

To: Lizzie Edgerton <l.edge@mac.com>, Gill Aldridge <gill.aldridge@btinternet.com>, Robert Crosby <robertcrosby43@gmail.com>, Bill Logan <william.logan3@ntlworld.com>

Hi Lizzie, Gill, Robert, Bill

Attached is an updated list of GC delegates. New delegates and other significant changes in red. I hope I have got the members of the Executive Team right.

It is noticeable that the delegations from Keyworth and Radcliffe branches do not include any women. They are supposed to be at least 50% women. We need to insist on this ahead of the CLP AGM.

I have sent out updated membership lists to all the branches with the number of delegates for 2016 based on current boundaries. I will produce revised figures based on the proposed new branch boundaries ahead of the GC meeting on Monday 18 January.

Best wishes,

Richard

After April 2015, all CLP business was conducted by GC Delegates at GC meetings. There is no question over the legitimacy of an EC in a CLP; indeed, it is stipulated in **Chapter 7** of the Labour Party Rule Book. The issue here is over the process, the transparency, and the level of open democracy in operation. Given the numerous changes in personnel in officer positions, the unprecedented increase in the membership and the large number of previous vacant EC positions shown in the 2015 AGM minutes item (10 vacancies out of 23 positions), the January 2016 make-up of the EC required considerable alteration from that agreed at the AGM.

Rushcliffe CLP/LGC Delegates 2015-2016

Names in italics are on the mailing list (for info) but are not delegates.

			Exec Team
COTGRAVE + CROPWELL	(3)		
Keir Chewings (Secretary)		kchewings@me.com	Cotgrave Branch
Hayley Chewings		michaelhayley@talktalk.net	
KEYWORTH	(3)		
Chris Kemp (Secretary)		chrisjkemp@btinternet.com	Keyworth Branch
Robert Crosby		robertcrosby43@gmail.com	Vice Chair
John Walsh		john.walsh@designforpurpose.co.uk	
Pat Walsh		pat_j_walsh@hotmail.com	
Sharon Howard (TU)		sharon.howard@eon.com	
Kevin Lowe (TU)		kevpalowe@gmail.com	
RADCLIFFE on TRENT	(4)		
Peter Brodie (Secretary)		pabnott@gmail.com	
Steve Collins		stevecollins00@yahoo.co.uk	
Harry Curtis		harry.curtis01@ntlworld.com	
Stuart Brady		stuubrady@gmail.com (note uu)	
RUDDINGTON + TOLLERTON	(3)		
Nigel Boughton-Smith (Secretary)		nigel.boughtonsmith@btinternet.com	
Annette Beaumont		akbeaumont9@btinternet.com	
Kate Foale (for info)		kate@thefoales.net	
SOUTH RUSHCLIFFE	(3)		
Gill Aldridge		gill.aldrige@btinternet.com	Vice Chair
WEST BRIDGFORD	(13)		
Peter Gates (Secretary)		peter.gates3@btopenworld.com	
Steve Calvert		stevecalvert39@gmail.com	
Jane Caro		janevcaro@yahoo.com	
Sandra Coker		s.coker@ntlworld.com	Women's Officer
Richard Crawley		richard.crawley2@gmail.com	WB Branch
Gary Edgerton		gary@two-edge.com	
Lizzie Edgerton		l.edge@mac.com	Secretary
Colin Gibson		c.gibson12@ntlworld.com	
Bill Logan		william.logan3@ntlworld.com	Treasurer
Terry Morrell		terry@terrymorrell.com	
Liz Plant		liz.plant2@btinternet.com	Women's Forum
Trish Whittome		trish.whittome@ntlworld.com	
Alistair MacInnes	RLG Leader	alistair.macinnis@gmail.com	RLG Leader
Martin Edwards	RLG Secretary	mandfedwards@talktalk.net	RLG Secretary
Jean Stansfield	Co-operative	jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com	Co-operative
Nadia Whittome	co-opted	nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk	Youth + Student officer
John Bannister	(for info)	johnbann24@ntlworld.com	
BINGHAM (Local Campaign Forum only)	(5)		
Allen Ashmore		ashmoreallen@hotmail.com	
Ailish D'Arcy		a.darcy1@ntlworld.com	

Pam Thompson, Jo Higman and Alan Tiplady have been deleted at their own request.

Delegates+emails+Exec-2015k

11 Jan 2016

One week after Richard Crawley's email, at the **18th January** GC, delegates elected a new Chair (Gill Aldridge) and Vice Chair (Richard Crawley). There was no election for a new Women's Officer, there was no report back to the GC by the then re-formed EC and there is no mention of the EC in the minutes. In the subsequent days, there must have been discussions between some EC members and the Regional Office over complaints, unbeknownst to the majority of the EC. We do not know who these discussions involved.

An agenda for a **1st February** EC meeting was sent to members of the proposed EC but, as recipients were in a BCC field, we cannot see to whom this email was sent. It is important here to stress: this was the first *and only* mention of a meeting or the existence of an Executive Committee or Team since April 2015.

From: Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Subject: Rushcliffe CLP GC EC Meeting, Monday 1st February
Date: 26 January 2016 at 13:45:57 GMT
To: l.edge@me.com

To the CLP GC Exec Team

Please find attached the agenda for the Exec Team meeting on Monday 1st February at 7:30 pm at St Giles' Church Hall, West Bridgford, and the minutes of the last meeting.

If you have any items you'd like adding to the agenda or you're unable to attend please let me know.

Best wishes
Lizzie

The EC met on **1st February** (see **Section 17**) and discussed, among other issues, boundary changes, a finance report, a Momentum conference and County Council leaflets. *No mention whatsoever* was made at the EC of the any complaints or communication with the Regional Office. However, on **9th February**, I was sent a letter by the Deputy Regional Director referring to complaints. The letter did not provide any details of the complaints nor who they had been made by or against. The letters did not request any response from me (see **Section 15**). At the GC meeting on **15th February**, the EC did not report back to GC delegates and no mention was made of any ongoing complaints (see **Section 17** for the minutes of this meeting).

On **19th February**, a Regional Organiser, Finbar Bowie, emailed me to request my attendance at a "*meeting of Rushcliffe CLP*" at 8:00pm on 7th March. The meeting would also be attended by the Chair of the Regional Board and would provide an opportunity "*to discuss recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally*". From subsequent discussions with proposed members of the EC (listed in the 11th January document), it was clear that few members of the EC knew about the proposed meeting or were party to the complaints.

On **1st March**, an email invitation to the March EC was sent to fourteen EC members for a 7:00pm meeting, noting that the Chair of the Regional Board would be "*attending our EC to discuss recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally*" at an 8:00pm meeting. Despite subsequent attempts to discover the nature of the complaints, who would be attending the meeting and the terms of reference, no information was allowed to be given to members of the EC or myself.

In email exchanges following the events on the **7th March**, it seems clear that only a small group within the EC were responsible for initiating the complaints, the "*meeting of Rushcliffe CLP*", liaising with the Regional Office and Regional Board and devising the complaints meeting process. The majority of the EC knew nothing about it. Detailed, direct questions were asked by Cllr Keir Chewings, an EC member, about the issues surrounding the 8:00pm meeting and a request was made to discuss matters at the next GC (see **Section 6.5**). There was no response to those requests. A request was made to include on the CLP GC agenda:

- CLP Standing Orders
- Role, and Makeup of CLP Executive
- CLP Development Plan

It is still unclear which members of the EC were involved in the calling of the 8:00pm meeting on 7th March and what the purpose of the 8:00pm meeting was.

It became clear that members of Rushcliffe EC had not been fully informed of the purpose of the 7th March meeting by the CLP Secretary. I spoke with six members of the EC who, a few days before 7th March, had no information as to the purpose of the meeting. Indeed, the agenda for the EC meeting on 7th March went out on 1st March and were not given detailed information about the subsequent meeting at 8:00pm (see **Section 6, Evidence 3, Evidence 4**).

"Please note the earlier start time. This is because we need to conclude business by 8:00 pm, as the Chair of the East Midlands Regional Board, Andy Furlong, is attending our EC to discuss recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe generally."

There is no mention here of this being a closed meeting or who else had been specifically invited. There is no agenda for the 8:00pm meeting and it is unclear whether Andy Furlong is discussing "complaints and the situation" before the 8:00pm conclusion of business. If, indeed, business was to be concluded at 8:00pm, then the subsequent discussion would appear not to be a formally or properly constituted meeting of the EC.

The events of **7th March** are described in detail in **Section 5.3** and followed up in **Sections 6 – 9**. However, on **14th March** Jane Caro, a GC Delegate, received a "Notice of administrative suspension from holding office or representing the Labour Party" from the Party's Compliance Unit, based on "allegations". Jane had received no prior notice of a complaint and has an exemplary record at both BLP and CLP level. Shortly after, nine other local officers received similar letters. The Compliance Unit suspended the ten members without any consultation with the GC or, indeed, the EC. Further, it would appear that there had been close liaison with the Regional Office over matters that have not been discussed or disclosed to the GC or the EC.

5.3. Timetable of events

It is useful to look at a detailed timetable of events from January 2016, as this sheds some light on how the events of 7th March unfolded.

- **1st January**
I send an e-Bulletin to all West Bridgford BLP members. This is included along with all the e-Bulletins I sent in **Section 20** as well as pages 25 - 28 of the Charges Pack.
- **11th January – 12:52pm**
Email from Richard Crawley to four CLP Officers establishing an EC.
- **14th January – 09:46am**
I re-sent the e-Bulletin to new members who were not on the previous list.
- **15th January – 11:46am**
Liz Plant sends me an email objecting to "advertising momentum meetings and report of momentum meetings". This was in spite of me receiving no comment whatsoever after including a notification of a Momentum meeting in an e-Bulletin on 1st December and sending out the e-Bulletin on 1st January. I did this quite innocently on the understanding that Momentum was the successor to the Jeremy Corbyn for Labour Leader Campaign and therefore I felt of legitimate interest specifically to those new members who had joined as a result of Jeremy's election.
- **15th January – 3:48pm**
Email from Sandra Coker to Finbar Bowie containing a complaint of harassment.

- **15th January – 5:26pm**

Liz Plant emails Finbar Bowie for advice though there is no record of his advice. Liz later reports she never received and advice, maybe because it was not considered serious enough. Series of emails between myself and Liz Plant, reported in **Section 4.3**, resolving the issue.

- **16th January – 11:32am**

Email from Lizzie Edgerton to Finbar Bowie containing a complaint of harassment.

- **18th January – 4:10pm**

Email from Gary Edgerton to Finbar Bowie containing a complaint of harassment.

- **18th January – 11:25pm**

Email from Liz Plant to Finbar Bowie about procedures in the West Bridgford Branch.

- **18th January**

Rushcliffe CLP GC meeting where delegates elected a new Chair (Gill Aldridge, unopposed) and Vice Chair (Richard Crawley, who beat me). No report back to the GC was provided by the re-formed EC and there is no mention of the EC in the minutes.

- **26th January – 1:45pm**

Email from Lizzie Edgerton to EC members informing them of an EC meeting on 1st February.

- **1st February**

The Rushcliffe reformed EC met for the first time in eight months (see **Section 17**) and discussed, among other issues, boundary changes, a finance report, a Momentum conference and County Council leaflets. *No mention whatsoever* was made at the EC of any complaints or communication with the Regional Office.

- **9th February**

Letter sent to me by the Deputy Regional Director referring to complaints. The letter did not provide any details of the complaints or who they had been made by or against. The letter did not request any response (see **Section 15**).

- **15th February**

Rushcliffe CLP GC meeting (see **Section 17** for the minutes of this meeting). Neither the re-establishment of the EC nor an account of its 1st February meeting were reported to GC Delegates and no mention was made of any ongoing complaints.

- **19th February - 2:32pm**

Email from Finbar Bowie inviting me to a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP on 7th March.

- **1st March**

Email from Lizzie Edgerton to EC members for a 7:00pm EC meeting, noting that the Chair of the Regional Board would be "*attending our EC to discuss recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally*" at an 8:00pm meeting. No one was told why.

- **7th March – 8:10pm**

Meeting of Rushcliffe CLP/EC.

- **11th March**

Letters of Administrative Suspension sent.

It is difficult from where I sit not to see this as some form of coordinated series of events much of which is below the surface of GC accountability. I stress again that I knew nothing of any of the above complaints until **28th July 2017**. I also cannot see why this was not dealt with through the procedures of the Labour Party Rule Book rather than in a clandestine way behind the scenes.

As I say in **Section 3**, I find it surprising that the allegations against me consist of unsubstantiated allegations by just two people. Furthermore, I do wonder why, if I am such a bad person, not one of the other 800+ Labour Party members in West Bridgford, or 1300+ Labour Party members in Rushcliffe ever noticed any such behaviour.

5.4. Events Surrounding the Suspensions in Rushcliffe CLP

Back in October 2015, when I was Rushcliffe CLP Secretary, there had been a disagreement over the organisation of two workshops for new members. This is a long and drawn out issue, which might appear relatively insignificant in hindsight and is described in detail in **Section 2.4**. However, it became the catalyst for my resignation as CLP Secretary and what I considered to be bullying by the CLP Chair. At the CLP GC meeting on **16th November 2015**, the Chair, Sandra Coker, produced a document listing a number of interactions we had had that purported to illustrate, I think, unacceptable behaviour on my part. I was subjected to an onslaught of attacks on my integrity. I include that chronology (see **Section 16**).

The fall-out from that resulted in my making a complaint on **20th November 2015** to the Regional Office about the hostile and aggressive treatment I received from the CLP Chair at a GC meeting as was discussed in **Section 2.6**. This was all documented in my letter of complaint to Finbar. I accept a first port of call to complain to the Regional Office might, in hindsight, not have been the best way to handle the situation. However, I had already discussed this with Finbar and I was relatively new to the post. I resigned as CLP Secretary as I did not feel particularly supported by the Chair and staying in the role would not be satisfactory. Shortly after that meeting the Chair also resigned. I received a response from Finbar Bowie on **7th December** as follows (see **Section 2.9**).

"The points you raised have been read and considered and although the situation is regrettable, it is felt no further formal action on behalf of the party is required. However, I would like to make the following points, all of which that relate to points in your email.

- ***These disputes are best resolved at a local level.***
- *All members should act in a comradely manner towards each other at all times.*
- *The upcoming AGM will be an opportunity for everyone in Rushcliffe to begin the process of building the structures of the CLP.*
- *As such I have suggested to the Secretary of the CLP that the current Standing Orders are considered ahead of this event.*
- *I will be meeting with both Vice-Chairs of the CLP to discuss the proper process for the election of officers at the AGM.*
On further investigation, I understand the CLP has completed a Development Plan in the past. I have asked for this to be provided to me, and I will circulate to other relevant officers in the CLP and branches.

"Please let me know if you have any further questions on this matter."

Referring this back to the local Party seemed the best approach. At this point, I presumed the matter was closed, and a new Chair of the CLP had expressed the hope that we would all move on; I believed we had.

I had received an email from a GC delegate on the 17th November 2015, just after this event, expressing their unhappiness at the way I had been treated:

"I feel very uncomfortable about what happened at the meeting last night. I still don't understand fully what has happened, but it doesn't feel like the 'Straight talking, honest politics' I joined the Labour party for. I'd also like to say that on a personal level I feel disappointed that you aren't continuing in post as Secretary. It seems to me you've been treated in a shabby and un-comradely fashion which I don't want to be personally associated with."

I did manage to convince this person to continue their engagement with the Party and the GC. I also felt enough had been said and done and it was time to move on. I have to add, I have had no untoward comment or complaint or indeed any suggestion that any of my behaviour has been at all hostile or uncomradely. Indeed, quite the contrary. So, the letter of suspension came as a complete shock.

I had not been informed of any complaint made against me or my behaviour, even up to **28th July 2017**, nor would I expect such a complaint. So, getting this invite to a meeting was rather a surprise as I did not know what "complaints" there were to discuss, nor what "the situation" was in Rushcliffe. I asked the Regional Office several times for the remit of the meeting, the status of it, who would be attending and what the outcome would be. I got no answers to these questions. I even offered to go and talk to Andy Furlong in Leicester before the 7th March meeting, but I got no response to that offer. I think I went out of my way to be constructive.

It does not appear however that the correct complaints procedures had been put into place as provided in Labour Party Rules 2016, **Chapter 6 Clause II, Para 1**. There, it stipulates that complaints should be put in writing to the Secretary of the CLP (A) and passed onto the Executive (B) or the General Meeting (D). From there an investigation should have been undertaken with three members (G, H):

G. Where the General Meeting so authorises an investigation the Executive Committee shall appoint three of its members to act as investigators. The investigators may be agreed by the original Executive Committee meeting, subject to subsequent endorsement by the General Meeting. None of these investigators shall be a party to or a subject of the original complaint.

H. The investigators shall conduct their investigation of the complaint(s) or allegation(s) in such a manner as they see fit, including the receipt of written evidence from the complainant(s), those complained against and from other Party members.

Similarly, **Chapter 8, Clause VII, Para 3** suggests complaints at a BLP level should also be made by reference to the CLP to be dealt with under the aforementioned procedures. As such, it seems at odds with the Party's rules that any complaints against members would be *first* referred to the Chair of the Regional Board. Furthermore, to then take this to a meeting described as "*a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP*" at which two of those invited had previously been provided with no information seems to be at odds with Party procedures, which call for a referral to an independent panel of the CLP EC. It is also possible that one of the complainants might have been a member or Officer of the Executive Committee, which makes the process feel rather irregular. This seems an unfortunate failure to follow the Party's rules which may have inadvertently led to uncertainty over the status and purpose of the meeting. It is being suggested now that this meeting was about conciliation and mediation, but I am still unaware of exactly what it is that needed mediating as we had been given no information prior to the meeting about specific complaints or problems, despite requesting it.

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Sent: Wednesday, 24 February 2016 11:42
To: alistair macinnes <alistair.macinnes@gmail.com>

Alistair,
I am wondering if you know anything about this CLP meeting on 7th? What it is? Who called it? etc.

Peter

Peter Gates

From: alistair macinnes <alistair.macinnes@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 24 February 2016 12:49
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com

Peter,

I have no knowledge of this meeting or any communication between any CLP member and Regional HQ. You could contact the Chair to check with her or contact Finbar Bowie directly.

All a bit mysterious given things seemed to have satisfactorily settled down with meetings going well and activities being organised. If I hear anything I will contact you.

Alistair

Indeed, many of the EC were unaware of the purpose of the meeting. A couple of days before the meeting, I contacted the following EC members to ask them what they knew about the meeting because I could get no information from the Regional Office, and Andy Furlong had not contacted me as Finbar had promised he would: Alistair MacInnes, Jean Stansfield, Keir Chewings, Nadia Whittome, Bill Logan, Chris Kemp. Not one of them knew anything about the purpose of the meeting.

On 6th March, I emailed Finbar Bowie again and in that email said:

"I remain unclear of the purpose or outcome of the meeting, and where it fits within the Party Rules etc. It seems very odd. However in the spirit of the unity and harmony that I feel is so vital in the party at the current time, I will be prepared to come along and support the CLP in moving forward. In your email you identified two things this meeting would be for:

- *to move forward on some of the issues in Rushcliffe*
- *do discuss the situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally*

"I know you are concerned for Rushcliffe - on a number of counts. So am I. However, I remain committed to continue to work toward pulling things together and moving forwards as I know a number of GC Delegates are. I cannot however speak for all those who will be at the meeting on Monday - indeed I have no idea who else will be there as I am completely in the dark as to all these "complaints" - as nothing has come my way. I can only presume therefore that no complaint has actually been made against me, since there are proper procedures for those to be raised and resolved - if nothing else through just decent ways of treating each other in a comradely way. So it will be important to look to restricting discussion to those two points. I will not get drawn into looking back, reopening complaints or responding to, or indeed making, personal attacks and I hope whoever chairs the meeting will ensure that is not allowed to distract from the intention of resolving issues and moving forward."

I also had a further discussion with Cllr Alistair MacInnes, a member of the EC, about my attendance and made it clear that I would only attend to be constructive and united, not to discuss complaints (see **Section 6.1 Evidence 1, Email 6**). There, I expressed my doubts about going to the meeting:

"I am not decided yet whether to go - I'm not going for it to become another Spanish Inquisition and shouting match. There is no point in that, it only moves us backward, though my fear is that might be what some want. I don't."

I had also told Jean Stansfield, another EC member:

"I will go but have told Finbar I will only go on the understanding we are building and looking forward. Building bridges and working together."

My concern that this meeting would possibly become counterproductive and that my only desire was to move forward is, I think, not in question.

Our assumption that this meeting was a discussion about Rushcliffe CLP is therefore not such an unreasonable one. I spoke to several colleagues who were all GC delegates or delegates-elect in Rushcliffe who felt they wanted to come along to the meeting, as observers to hear about the

issues. Up to this point, all meetings of Rushcliffe CLP had been open to members as observers. Consequently, ten of us turned up to this meeting at 8:00pm. We knocked on the door and were asked to wait outside, which we did. We waited and were asked in at 8:12pm.

We understand from colleagues on the EC and who attended the 7th March meeting that between 8:00pm and 8:12pm the Chair of the Regional Board decided the meeting should be a closed meeting. This was neither, however, communicated to us in advance nor was it explained to us why. **We were thus totally unaware and were not informed of this when we went in at 8:12pm.** At all other CLP meetings, observers are positively encouraged to attend. Furthermore, none of the information circulated about the meeting prior to the event, including the agenda and notification to EC members, mentioned that observers were barred on this occasion.

A group of us entered the room and some sat down, while two remained outside the room (Brent Abbott and Linda Burdett). At this point we were still under the impression that this was an open meeting. Indeed, Gary Edgerton came into the meeting at 8:12pm, having told Linda Burdett and Brent Abbott in the corridor on his way in that he had come back specifically to attend this meeting (see **Section 7.4**), further suggesting it was considered an open meeting by others since the spouse of the CLP Secretary had planned to attend.

As is clear from the minutes in **Section 9.3**, we all remained calm and polite because we all thought we were in a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP to which we had a right to attend as observers; we are all professional people. It was a surprise, then, when we were asked to leave, saying that if we did not the meeting would be abandoned. At this point, Linda Burdett and Brent Abbott left the building. After a few minutes, I raised my hand and was allowed to speak by the Chair. My full contribution can be seen in the minutes on page 60 of the Charges Pack and in **Section 10.6** in this Response.

I proposed that we had a good opportunity now to move forward together and work for a united Party. Four EC members had their hands raised to speak but were ignored by the Chair, Gill Aldridge, and by Andy Furlong, who stressed that everybody would need to leave except myself and John Walsh; the reason for that was never clarified. I explained *"If these people can't stay, I won't stay either"*. At that point, Andy Furlong appeared agitated, took over and closed the meeting at roughly 8:26pm with EC members having had no opportunity to speak or vote although we know some wanted to propose that the observers should stay in accordance with well-established custom and practice in Rushcliffe CLP. I reiterate my earlier point: we had never been informed this was a closed meeting.

This process feels at odds with the spirit of the Model Procedural Rules provided in the **Labour Party Rule Book 2016** which says in **Chapter 15, Clause 1, Paragraph 2 O (ii)**:

"Any member acting in an unruly or disruptive manner, in contravention of the standing orders, may be removed from the meeting by action of the chair. The chair shall put such a motion to the meeting, which to be carried shall require the support of two-thirds of those present and voting. Any member who has been removed from two meetings during a 12-month period shall, with the approval of the appropriate RD(GS), be ineligible to attend meetings of this body for the next 12 months."

Had we been acting in a disruptive manner, the Chair could have put our removal to the vote, something which Cllr MacInnes points out in his submission in **Section 8.2**. These **Model Procedural Rules** *"have the full authority of the NEC"* as indicated in **Clause 1, Paragraph 1**. Hence, this would have procedurally resolved the matter. In the heat of the moment, I am sure we can all make mistakes. The point here is that several people, including all those of us who attended, wished the meeting to continue with observers present. This is important because it also appears to contravene the **CLP Standing Order 17** - which is consistent with the **Model Procedural Rule 15.2.N.i** in the **Labour Party Rule Book 2016** - suggesting that such actions should have been put to and voted by the members of the EC.

"17. CHAIRPERSON'S RULING

"If any point arises not provided for in these Standing Orders the Chairperson shall give an opinion on the point. Should the Chair's opinion be challenged by not less than 3 persons a vote shall be taken to decide the point for that meeting."

It appears that the meeting we had entered had indeed been a CLP EC meeting starting at 7:00pm, yet the status of the meeting we had been invited to at 8:00pm was never made clear, and is still not clear. At that point, I do not believe the GC knew that the EC had been re-formed; I certainly did not as a West Bridgford BLP Secretary, nor as the previous CLP Secretary. A CLP EC had never been mentioned since April 2015 and its existence never appears in the GC minutes (see **Section 5.2**).

Two days after the 7th March events, Cllr Keir Chewings, Secretary of Cotgrave BLP and member of the Rushcliffe CLP EC, sent an email to all EC members expressing his grave concerns over the events of 7th March, and his disagreement over the organisation and status of the 8:00pm meeting (see **Section 6.5, Evidence 5**). One day later, several of us felt sufficiently concerned at the potential damage done to the CLP that we wrote a joint letter to outline the need for mediation and unity (see **Section 6.6, Evidence 6**). This illustrates our concern for the Party to be united and working together, but also serious concerns over the unconstitutional nature of the events of 7th March. To date, neither Cllr Keir Chewings, nor the rest of us have received any acknowledgement or reply to any of our correspondence.

I do not want to argue that any one version of events is privileged over another. There are, however, various versions of events. Yet, one version seems now to be the official version that led several days later to all ten members receiving a suspension letter. Our version of events has not been taken into consideration, which contravenes the principles of natural justice.

The ten members suspended were:

- **Brent Abbott (GC Delegate-elect, West Bridgford)** stayed outside the room and left at the Chair's request.
- **Linda Burdett (GC Delegate-elect, West Bridgford)** stayed outside the room and left at Chair's request;
- **Jane Caro (TULO Officer GC Delegate, West Bridgford)** entered the meeting, sat down and remained silent;
- **Mia Colley (Newsletter Editor and GC Delegate-elect, West Bridgford)** entered the meeting, sat down and remained silent;
- **Peter Gates (Secretary, West Bridgford)** was invited to the meeting, spoke only when allowed by the chair, spoke calmly in support of party unity;
- **Marc Gibson (Communications Officer and GC Delegate-elect, West Bridgford)** entered the EC meeting, sat down and remained silent;
- **Umaar Kazmi (BAME Officer, GC Delegate-elect, West Bridgford)** entered the meeting, sat down and remained silent;
- **Zbyszek Luczynski (Political Education Officer and GC Delegate-elect, West Bridgford)** entered the meeting, sat down;
- **Rachel Scudamore (Membership Secretary, GC Delegate-elect, Keyworth & District)** entered the meeting, sat down, spoke assertively yet calmly;
- **John Walsh (GC Delegate, Keyworth & District)** was invited to the meeting, sat down, raised hand indicating a wish to speak, spoke when allowed.

These suspensions meant that we were all unable to take up our elected posts on the GC, and eight officers of West Bridgford BLP and two in Keyworth BLP were out of action for months. This at a time when we had a Police and Crime Commissioner election, an EU referendum, a Local Council election, and a party to build. All of these members were enthusiastic enough to seek election to posts in their respective Branches, and popular enough to be elected — all committed to building a strong Labour Party.

The ten who received suspension letters were not hotheads who set about to cause trouble. We can, indeed, get numerous testimonials to this from our respective Branches. We are all

professional people who are always reasonable and considered, some holding employment in very sensitive roles, others quite senior in their institutions. They were all post holders in the CLP and, therefore, had a significant role to play in building the Party.

Whilst there are clearly going to be differences in interpretation of people's actions and intentions, it felt rather excessive to suspend ten really committed Party members who had no intention of disrupting any Party event.

The ten suspensions only caused considerable harm to the Party's ability to organise at a time when we were in great need to be united. We are talking here about events which took place between 8:12pm and 8:26pm on Monday 7th March. All those suspended had no record of any untoward or disruptive behaviour whatsoever. We also had no particular complaint or disagreement within our respective BLPs or the CLP, and it would appear that this conflict was created by intervention from outside the local Party.

There was no risk to the Party that the events of 7th March would lead to disruption or hostility; the ten members had excellent track records of support and activity for the Party. Indeed, this extended to taking their BLPs into new areas of activity, such as engaging members in campaigning workshops (Walsh and Gates), collecting donations for foodbanks (Burdett and Abbott), visiting registered supporters (Abbott, Walsh, Scudamore, Luczynski, Burdett, Kazmi), constructing a Trade Union strategy (Caro), Developing a newsletter to engage all members (Colley), organising the BAME members (Kazmi), building an active and engaging BLP (Gates), developing a BLP political education programme (Luczynski), developing our digital communications strategy (Gibson), getting elected as Young Labour representative on the East Midlands Regional Board (Kazmi).

A long, drawn-out process of suspension led to a hiatus in many of these activities and, naturally, some demotivation. Instead, the CLP could have been encouraged to, and been allowed to deal with, any ongoing issues locally following a mediation process agreed at the CLP GC.

My attendance at the meeting on 7th March was because I believed it was an open meeting to discuss the "*situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally*" as provided for in my invitation; I was only interested in participating and listening. Eight members attended that meeting only to be told to leave without anyone being clear why. When that was questioned, the Chair was instructed to close the meeting. This feels very different from an atmosphere of conciliation and mediation which I had asked for and very inappropriate to result in suspensions of ten committed BLP Officers. This sequence of unfortunate miscommunications seems now to have reached a stage out of all proportion such that it is being detrimental to the interests of the Party.

It has been suggested to me that the meeting had been intended to be a small meeting for mediation that we somehow disrupted. First, I hope I have dispelled the suggestion that we were in any way disruptive. Indeed, the minutes make that point. Second, why would we want to disrupt a meeting that we knew so very little about? As I have indicated above, it has never been clear just what needed "mediating". Finbar Bowie's email came totally out of the blue, with no previous communication coming from the CLP Secretary about this meeting or indeed any prior issues or difficulties raised within the CLP. On the contrary, the CLP appears to have been running relatively smoothly with a new Chair in place whom I had supported. Indeed, at the GC meeting where elections were held, I proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chair (Sandra Coker), which no one else had thought of doing. I felt that was the comradely thing to do for someone who had committed so much of her time to the local Party. At that meeting, I was nominated as CLP Vice-Chair by the Secretaries of two other BLPs - Cotgrave and Radcliffe-on-Trent. Furthermore, Finbar Bowie had described my organisation of West Bridgford BLP as "*exemplary*", and I was re-elected unopposed as BLP Secretary in January, at the same well-attended BLP AGM where seven of the other suspended members were elected to their posts.

So, if there was to be "mediation", what was it that needed mediating, and why was I invited? What did it have to do with me? I had absolutely no idea. Surely, it is not asking too much to expect that someone might have communicated that to me and to John Walsh. Furthermore, I have to ask what had gone on recently that was so significant that it required the Chair of the

Regional Board to attend a meeting held *in camera*? I am still none the wiser. I was under the impression that any local issues should be dealt with locally — as Finbar had suggested back in December. There had been no attempt to raise any issues, let alone resolve them, in the CLP. It also seems very inappropriate for one of the complainants to be taking the minutes.

As soon as possible after 7th March, I arranged to meet with the BLP Chair, Steve Calvert, to discuss what had happened and, more specifically, to see how we could ensure any disagreements or tensions did not spread out across the BLP, as we had a BLP EC meeting on Monday 14th March 2016. Steve agreed to make a brief statement that we would not be discussing the matter and I sent the following email to Liz Plant and to members of the EC.

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 13 March 2016 19:20
To: Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>
Cc: stevecalvert39@gmail.com
Subject: Branch Exec

Hi Liz,
(CC Steve)

You may already know but I met with Steve on Wednesday. We had a long meeting during which time we talked about last Monday and the Branch exec tomorrow. My feeling was we needed to ensure our Branch Exec does not suffer in any way as a result of all that. We have been working very hard to build a strong local party and I think are doing well. Ironically, we were described as “an exemplary Branch” by the Regional Officer. We have very important issues to discuss on Monday and need to do that collegiately.

Steve will be making some statement right at the start to close down any possible discussion on the events of the closed CLP executive meeting on Monday - as someone who had not been involved. He is happy doing that. It will be a little strange though! I just didn't want people to be wondering what was going on and where the elephant in the room had gone!

This was a difficult call because we do need to clear the air given we will have people who were positioned differently on Monday. However, my gut feeling was, and still is, we need to get on with building the party. Sorry if you don't agree, but that is where I think both Steve and I are.

I hope you have had a good weekend, and look forward to seeing you on Monday.

Peter

Peter Gates

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 13 March 2016 17:18
To: Nadia EW <nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk>; Jean Stansfield <jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com>; Bill Logan <william.logan3@ntlworld.com>; alistair macinnes <alistair.macinnes@googlemail.com>
Cc: stevecalvert39@gmail.com
Subject: Fw: Monday's Branch Exec

Nadia, Bill, Jean, Alistair,

(CC Steve)

I just wanted to pass on to you a part of the conversation between myself and Steve Calvert on Wednesday. We had a long meeting during which time we talked about last Monday and the Branch exec tomorrow. My feeling was we needed to ensure our Branch Exec does not suffer in any way as a result of all that. We have been working very hard to build a strong local party and I think are doing well. Ironically, we were described as “an exemplary Branch” by the Regional Officer. We have very important issues to discuss.

Steve will be making some statement right at the start to close down any possible discussion on the events of the closed CLP executive meeting on Monday - as someone who had not been involved on Monday. He is happy doing that. It will be a little strange though! I just didn't want you all to be wondering what was going on and where the elephant in the room had gone!

This was a difficult call because we do need to clear the air given we will have people who were positioned differently on Monday. However, my gut feeling was, and still is, we need to get on with building the party. Sorry if you don't agree, but that is where I think both Steve and I are.

Peter

Peter Gates
Branch Secretary

Finally, as a backdrop to this, I received, out of the blue, a rather confusing letter from Emma Foody on 9th February 2016 with a heading "*Complaint about intimidation and uncomradely behaviour and data protection*" (See pages 29-30 of the Charges Pack)

I tried several times to call Emma to discuss this but was never able to be put through to her. The content of that letter made little sense to me. It seemed to refer in the first paragraph to the complaint over hostile and uncomradely behaviour that was raised with Finbar Bowie by me (and referred to above in **Section 2.8**), and which had been resolved:

I'm writing to you regarding alleged complaints that have been raised with the Regional Labour Party regarding recent behaviour and actions within Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party (CLP) by you.

As I have been at pains to point out several times in this Response, no one had given me any indication that any aspect of my own behaviour was anything other than exemplary. Certainly, there was no suggestion of any complaint of hostile or uncomradely behaviour on my part. To my knowledge *at that time*, no complaints or allegations had been made against and none were communicated to me by West Bridgford BLP, Rushcliffe CLP or the East Midlands Region as one would have reasonably expected from a reading of the Labour Party Rule Book. I was quite unaware of the four coordinated emails that had all been sent to Finbar Bowie three weeks previously (see **Sections 3 & 5.3**). Thus, quite reasonably I maintain, my reading of Emma's letter was that the final floating indirect object "*by you*" refers to the verb "*raised*" and therefore to my complaint some while ago.

Furthermore, the letter went on to talk of misuse of membership information (see **Section 15**). I knew I had not misused any Labour Party membership lists, but the letter did not carry any details of any specific misuse nor by whom. Hence it was impossible for me to understand or interpret Emma's comments.

Eventually, I gave up trying to get in touch with Emma to clarify the letter, and left the matter, presuming it was of an informative nature for some administrative reason. Throughout all my dealings with the Labour Party, my own behaviour has always been inclusive and professional, including the fateful meeting on 7th March 2016 (as can be seen from the detailed minutes in **Section 9.3**). My behaviour has never been in question.

There is an important lesson to learn here, especially important since Emma Foody is now the East Midlands Regional Director. There would have been a much better way of dealing with the matter at this point: to invite me in to the Regional Office for a chat over a cup of tea, as comrades. Rather, all details were withheld from me, and presumably this led to the 7th March 2016 meeting, at which I was still singularly ignorant of any of the complaints. That cannot be an appropriate way of running the Party. The decision to send this letter was, in my view, an error of judgement.

6. Email Evidence Relating to Charge 2

6.1. Evidence 1

Email Correspondence between Peter Gates and Finbar Bowie

Email 1

From: Finbar Bowie
Sent: Friday, 19 February 2016 14:32
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Cc: Emma Foody

Dear Peter,

CC: Emma Foody, Deputy Regional Director.

On Monday 7th March the Chair of the East Midlands Regional Board has been invited to attend a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP. I'm writing to request your attendance at this meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally.

The details of the meeting are **8.00PM Monday 7th March at St Giles Church Hall, Stratford Road, West Bridgford, NG2 6BA.**

If you should have any further questions about this, feel free to get in touch.

With thanks,

Finbar Bowie
Regional Organiser
East Midlands Labour Party
Tel: 0115 943 1777

Email 2

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Sent: 23 February 2016 07:01
To: Finbar Bowie
Subject: Rushcliffe CLP meeting

Dear Finbar,

Thank you for your email of 19th February in which you request my attendance at a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP. First of all our CLP Meetings start at 7:30 pm and are on the 3rd Monday of the month. So I am not sure what meeting you are referring to. However, you ask at the end of your email that if I have further questions, to get in touch. Please see this email totally as an attempt to support unity and a common sense of purpose within the CLP. So my questions for clarification are:

1. Just what CLP meeting is this?
2. To whom did this email go to? Has it gone to all GC members in Rushcliffe for example, or just me?
3. Who will be at the meeting?

4. Could I ask you to clarify the purpose of this meeting? Is this an open discussion about the CLP, or a meeting in which individuals are to be criticised? If worryingly it is the latter, will it include the substance of the complaint I made to you in November 2015, and other complaints made about the procedures at the November GC Meeting?

5. If the meeting is to be an open discussion why is it not taking place at a CLP GC meeting and am I genuinely being invited to a meeting to contribute to an open discussion about the situation in Rushcliffe?

6. Who is the Chair of the Regional Board that will be attending? Is it Andy Furlong?

7. What is the intended outcome of this meeting?

I refer you to your email to me on 7th December about my complaint to you:

"The points you raised have been read and considered and although the situation is regrettable, it is felt no further formal action on behalf of the party is required. However I would like to make the following points, all of which that relate to points in your email.

- *These disputes are best resolved at a local level.*
- *All members should act in a comradely manner towards each other at all times.*
- *The upcoming AGM will be an opportunity for everyone in Rushcliffe to begin the process of building the structures of the CLP.*
- *As such I have suggested to the Secretary of the CLP that the current Standing Orders are considered ahead of this event.*
- *I will be meeting with both Vice-Chairs of the CLP to discuss the proper process for the election of officers at the AGM.*
- *On further investigation, I understand the CLP has completed a Development Plan in the past. I have asked for this to be provided to me, and I will circulate to other relevant officers in the CLP and branches.*

Please let me know if you have any further questions on this matter."

The tragedy here is that the CLP has, under the new chair, been trying to put behind us all that incident in October-November - and any differences that surfaced then, so we can unite, move forward and work together on the EU campaign and other activities to support Labour. I would be concerned if this meeting in any way undid any of that work. Let me add Finbar, that I am very happy to engage in an open and frank discussion on the CLP, and its development plan, in the right forum - which feels to me to be the full CLP GC meeting; yet I gather few delegates know of this CLP meeting on 7th. In addition, I am very happy to meet the Regional Director, Andy Furlong, at a mutually convenient time and at a location of his choosing so I can offer my take on the CLP if that is indeed what he wishes. I do not feel however that any of this should be undertaken in an atmosphere that damages a sense of collegiality and unity in the CLP GC. At the moment that is of the utmost importance to the local Party.

Best Wishes,
Peter

Peter Gates
Branch Secretary
West Bridgford Branch

Email 3

From: Finbar Bowie
Sent: Monday, 29 February 2016 11:19
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Cc: Emma Foody

Peter,

Many thanks for your email. I share your priority of wanting to move forward with Rushcliffe CLP and am glad to hear the situation has somewhat improved since complaints were made.

The meeting is intended to be an opportunity to move forward on some of the issues made in the complaints that have been made by members in Rushcliffe, yourself included. As we reached a point where by several members had made several complaints relating to several different issues in the CLP, it was felt a critical mass had been reached and I therefore asked the Chair of the Regional Board (Andy Furlong) to attend a meeting to help the CLP in resolving some of these.

To my understanding this had originally been planned as a meeting of the CLP Exec, it is not a meeting arranged separately from existing CLP meetings. It was felt it was important however that those who has made complaints were also invited to attend, as per my email of Friday 19th February.

As I mentioned, I am pleased to hear the situation has improved somewhat in Rushcliffe. This meeting will hopefully be an opportunity for the Chair of the Regional Board, and therefore the Regional Board in general, to be reassured of this.

I hope this answers your questions, if you have any further please don't hesitate to get in touch.

With thanks.

Finbar Bowie
Regional Organiser
East Midlands Labour Party
Tel: 0115 943 1777
Mob: 07872417225

Twitter: @eastmidslabour
www.eastmidslabour.org.uk

Email 4

From: peter.gates3@btoopenworld.com
Sent: Wednesday, 2 March 2016 09:34
To: Finbar Bowie

Finbar, thanks ever so much for the telephone conversation, and this email. I appreciate the difficult position you might be in. Also happy we see eye to eye on moving positively forward.

Let me say first of all until your conversation, I had spoken with no one regarding complaints. I am still not sure if complaints have been made against me, and if so by whom, and what these might be about. I am rather at a loss since I consider my own activity in the party to be rather exemplary and of a high professional standard. Of course in politics we get passionate, but we have to be adults and accept political differences without these sinking into personal attacks and abuse. I think in the main we are now working on that in Rushcliffe. I think basic procedures here would expect such issues to be raised locally first before escalation. I think basic decency has been overlooked here. My own issue of complaint was over procedures – which I contacted you about - and which was a public event albeit at GC level.

Secondly, I understand that Trish Whittome - who was a GC delegate until recently - also lodged a complaint about the procedures in the November GC and in the election of the CLP secretary. Yet she has apparently not been invited to the meeting. I think that needs putting right. Now because of her new job she is unable to attend political meetings but at least she might be contacted by you or Andy. At the moment the event on Monday has the feeling of a kangaroo court with several lined up against me.

Now I understand invitations and the agenda for the GC Exec meeting only went out very late last night. So at least the secretary knows something is afoot, yet no one in the CLP Exec has thought it appropriate to just talk to me and maybe invite me along. I think that is telling.

Now you have to remember something Finbar. At the November GC meeting I experienced the most vitriolic and sustained hostile attack I have ever experienced - and I've been around some. It had been systematically planned and orchestrated. Three of those who orchestrated it are on the invitation list for the meeting on 7th. I do have to say the hostility I have faced has not stopped, though it has reduced largely by my avoiding it - but I just get on with building a strong branch and local campaigning party. I do appreciate some find it hard to accept there are changes afoot in the party. But taking this out on new and returning members is in no way comradely. My view is that underneath all this, the issues are deeply political.

I am certainly not going to attend a meeting where I am again subjected to some Spanish Inquisition. I have gone out of my way to make overtures to people and put things into perspective. I am not convinced everybody else has, but I will continue to do that. I think before I agree to enter the lion's den, I need to be convinced of the constructive nature of the event, and that this time it will be competently chaired and managed.

The real issue for me in the CLP is organisational and structural; these are the things we need to sort out. The role and working of the executive is one case in point. As a Branch Secretary, I would think I ought to be on the executive, or at least know something about it- but again last night was really the first I had heard much about an executive. I've certainly never seen an agenda or minutes nor do I know who is on it. And I am a GC delegate!

Let me finish by saying I am more than happy talking to Andy about my perspective on this, and I am very happy going over to Leicester on Monday morning to meet with him. I am not convinced just turning up on Monday night will be a fruitful exercise. For example, most GC delegates know nothing of any of this and are still perplexed what it is all about. I would be only too happy if I could be convinced it was going to be worthwhile, constructive, comradely and forward looking.

By all means, please forward this series of emails onto Andy so he is aware of the situation. I very much appreciate and respect the desire to come and try to solve a situation. I fully share that aim. I didn't come back into the Party and become very active to spend my time being attacked by other party members. I hope my position is clear - but if not do please feel free to get back to me.

Best wishes,
Peter

Email 5

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Sent: Sunday 6th March 2016 14:45
To: Finbar Bowie

Finbar,

I've given the meeting some considerable thought and spoken to a large number of people including CLP GC members and NEC Members, on how to respond. I have also waited for Andy Furlong to call – you said you would facilitate that. Andy has not called.

I remain unclear of the purpose or outcome of the meeting, and where it fits within the Party Rules etc. It seems very odd. However in the spirit of the unity and harmony that I feel is so vital in the party at the current time, I will be prepared to come along and support the CLP in moving forward. In your email you identified two things this meeting would be for:

- to move forward on some of the issues in Rushcliffe
- do discuss the situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally

I know you are concerned for Rushcliffe - on a number of counts. So am I. However, I remain committed to continue to work toward pulling things together and moving forwards as I know a number of GC Delegates are. I cannot however speak for all those who will be at the meeting on Monday - indeed I have no idea who else will be there as I am completely in the dark as to all these "complaints" - as nothing has come my way. I can only presume therefore that no complaint has actually be made against me, since there are proper procedures for those to be raised and resolved -if nothing else through just decent ways of treating each other in a comradely way. So it will be important to look to restricting discussion to those two points. I will not get drawn into looking back, reopening complaints or responding to, or indeed making, personal attacks and I hope whoever chairs the meeting will ensure that is not allowed to distract from the intention of resolving issues and moving forward. Let me remind you of your comments to me in December:

- *These disputes are best resolved at a local level.*
- *All members should act in a comradely manner towards each other at all times.*
- *The upcoming AGM will be an opportunity for everyone in Rushcliffe to begin the process of building the structures of the CLP.*
- *As such I have suggested to the Secretary of the CLP that the current Standing Orders are considered ahead of this event.*
- *I will be meeting with both Vice-Chairs of the CLP to discuss the proper process for the election of officers at the AGM.*
- *On further investigation, I understand the CLP has completed a Development Plan in the past. I have asked for this to be provided to me, and I will circulate to other relevant officers in the CLP and branches.*

I believe these remain in place
Best Wishes,
Peter

Email 6

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 03 March 2016 16:56
To: alistair macinnes <alistair.macinnes@googlemail.com>
Subject: Re: Rushcliffe CLP meeting

Apparently an email has gone out (though not to me) from Lizzie about the meeting on Monday.

I am not decided yet whether to go - I'm not going for it to become another Spanish Inquisition and shouting match. There is no point in that, it only moves us backward, though my fear is that might be what some want. I don't.

So .. are you going? What's your advice?

Peter

Peter Gates

From: alistair macinnes <alistair.macinnes@googlemail.com>
Sent: Sunday, 6 March 2016 20:26
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]

Peter,

I hope the meeting is about reconciliation rather than accusation and recrimination? Although its a bit late in the day. A replay of the previous discussion around the subject will be counter productive. I am in two minds about attending. I might make it my last executive meeting and then resign.

Alistair

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 06 March 2016 20:37
To: alistair macinnes <alistair.macinnes@googlemail.com>
Subject: Re: Rushcliffe CLP GC EC Monday 7th March 7:00pm

Hi Alistair, I have been in exactly the same place as you, in fact I have told Finbar that is the only condition for my attending. Here is part of what I wrote to him:

"However in the spirit of the unity and harmony that I feel is so vital in the party at the current time, I will be prepared to come along and support the CLP in moving forward. In your email you identified two things this meeting would be for:

- to move forward on some of the issues in Rushcliffe
- do discuss the situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally

I know you are concerned for Rushcliffe - on a number of counts. So am I. However, I remain committed to continue to work toward pulling things together and moving forwards as I know a number of GC Delegates are. So it will be important to look to restricting discussion to those two points. I will not get drawn into looking back, reopening complaints or responding to, or indeed making, personal attacks and I hope whoever chairs the meeting will ensure that is not allowed to distract from the intention of resolving issues and moving forward."

And here is what I've told Jean:

"I will go but have told Finbar I will only go on the understanding we are building and looking forward. Building bridges and working together."

So I hope you do come, I know there will be several arguing for exactly the same thing.

Hey, I've got a photo with John McDonnell!!

I hope to see you Monday

Peter.

6.2. Evidence 2

20th November 2015 – Original complaint and Email correspondence with Finbar Bowie over complaint

Email 1

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 20 November 2015 14:20
To: Finbar Bowie
Subject: Complaint Regarding Rushcliffe CLP

Hi Finbar,
I have attached a formal complaint about events at Rushcliffe CLP.
I would appreciate some idea of whether this is an appropriate avenue to go down and what might happen next.
Peter

Email 2

From: Finbar Bowie
Sent: 20 November 2015 14:28
To: 'peter.gates3@btopenworld.com'
Subject: RE: Complaint Regarding Rushcliffe CLP

Hello Peter,
I can confirm receipt of the attached and will respond in due course.
With thanks,
Finbar Bowie

Email 3

From: Finbar Bowie
Sent: 07 December 2015 16:23
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Cc: Emma Foody
Subject: FW: Complaint Regarding Rushcliffe CLP

Peter,
The points you raised have been read and considered and although the situation is regrettable, it is felt no further formal action on behalf of the party is required.

However I would like to make the following points, all of which that relate to points in your email.

- These disputes are best resolved at a local level.
- All members should act in a comradely manner towards each other at all times.
- The upcoming AGM will be an opportunity for everyone in Rushcliffe to begin the process of building the structures of the CLP.
- As such I have suggested to the Secretary of the CLP that the current Standing Orders are considered ahead of this event.
- I will be meeting with both Vice-Chairs of the CLP to discuss the proper process for the election of officers at the AGM.
- On further investigation, I understand the CLP has completed a Development Plan in the past. I have asked for this to be provided to me, and I will circulate to other relevant officers in the CLP and branches.

Please let me know if you have any further questions on this matter.
With thanks,
Finbar Bowie

6.3. Evidence 3

Email to EC delegates about EC on 7th March

From: Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>

Date: 1 March 2016 at 10:18:28 GMT

To: l.edge@me.com, alistair.macinnes@gmail.com, gill.aldridge@btinternet.com, s.coker@ntlworld.com,
liz.plant2@btinternet.com, robertcrosby43@gmail.com, mandfedwards@talktalk.net,
nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk, chrisjkemp@btinternet.com, kchewings@me.com,
william.logan3@ntlworld.com, richard.crawley2@gmail.com, harry.curtis01@ntlworld.com,
jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com

Subject: Rushcliffe CLP GC EC Monday 7th March 7:00pm

To all Rushcliffe CLP General Committee Executive Members

Dear Friend

Please find attached the minutes of the last GC EC, which was held on Monday 1st February 2016, and the agenda for the coming EC, which will be at 7:00 pm in St Giles Church Hall, West Bridgford.

Please note the earlier start time. This is because we need to conclude business by 8:00 pm, as the Chair of the East Midlands Regional Board, Andy Furlong, is attending our EC to discuss recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe generally.

I look forward to seeing you on Monday.

Best wishes

Lizzie

Lizzie Edgerton

Rushcliffe CLP Secretary

8 Wordsworth Road

West Bridgford

Nottingham

NG2 7AN

t: 0115 981 3361

m: 07479 608922

6.4. Evidence 4

Agenda for EC meeting 7th March 7:00pm-8:00pm

RUSHCLIFFE CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTY

Monday 7th March 2016, 7:00 pm, St Giles' Church Hall – please note earlier start.

Agenda for Executive Team

- E1.** Introduction, confirmation of agenda, apologies for absence.
- E2.** Minutes of previous meeting (1st February 2016)
- E3.** Matters Arising (EU Referendum campaign update/Glenis Willmott event/PCC elections)
- E4.** Finance
- E5.** Correspondence requiring Action
- E6.** AOB
- E7.** Date of next meeting: Monday 4th April (if needed)

6.5. Evidence 5

9th March - Email from Keir Chewings, Branch Secretary, Cotgrave and Rushcliffe CLP EC member to EC expressing concern

From: Keir Chewings
Sent: 09 March 2016 10:33
To: Elizabeth Edgerton
Cc: alistair.macinnis@gmail.com; gill.aldridge@btinternet.com; s.coker@ntlworld.com; liz.plant2@btinternet.com; robertcrosby43@gmail.com; mandfedwards@talktalk.net; nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk; chrisjkemp@btinternet.com; william.logan3@ntlworld.com; richard.crawley2@gmail.com; harry.curtis01@ntlworld.com; jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com; Peter Gates; John Walsh; Finbar Bowie
Subject: Monday's Special Exec Meeting

Friends,

I write to you this morning concerned at the state of our party on a local level. I joined the Labour Party as I believe in social justice, equity for all and most importantly that we should live in a society where people need not go hungry, people get the care they need and live a life where they can provide for themselves and where they are not capable either through illness, disability or unemployment the state assists to ensure that they still have a quality of life.

We have seen over the last 6 years these principles and securities eroded by the Tories, with the creation of the bedroom tax, severe cuts to public services and public spending whilst tax cuts for the rich have been plentiful.

Last May we had a crushing defeat and as a result of that defeat the Tories believe they have a mandate to further their erosion of the public sector. And whilst this is crushing, we have a duty to the public to pick ourselves up, challenge the Tories, hold them to account and fight to bring back a Labour administration. And whilst these events are disappointing, we should take some positives.

The defeat at the general election brought about our leadership contest, which was one of the most open leadership contests in our history. It created much debate within the party as to our then direction and where our future direction should be. This debate invigorated the public and caused en-mass people rejoining the party, with membership nearly doubling in size. We ourselves have seen our GC meeting numbers increase from what was invariably between 10-15 attendees, to the numbers seen at January's meeting where we had 30 delegates and 8 observers. This excites me to see so many enthusiastic people interested in how we as a party at the grass roots want to work for a better society.

With this growth in party membership, it was inevitable that it would bring change to the party both on local and national levels. We have seen the embarrassing headlines from the disagreements within the PLP.

And unfortunately we have seen some local fall out as well. The truth is we should embrace each other's views, discuss our differences in a civilised manor and let the CLP and branches decide how we move forward in a democratic way.

This brings me to Monday night's events at the Exec meeting. I tried to raise my concerns and queried the process but I do not believe this was done to a satisfactory standard. This statement is not an attack on any individual, but I do need to raise my concerns and have my queries answered.

Calling of the special meeting

I have concerns as to the process this meeting was called:

Who called the special meeting to be attended by Andy Furlong. The email notice for the GC Exec stated:

"Please note the earlier start time. This is because we need to conclude business by 8:00 pm, as the Chair of the East Midlands Regional Board, Andy Furlong, is attending our EC to discuss recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe generally."

- Whose decision was it for Andy furlong to attend?

- Was this requested by the CLP, if so I can see nowhere within our minutes or agenda where this has been presented to either GC or exec delegates.
- Was this requested by an officer of the CLP if so by whom?
- Was this requested by regional office or the regional board, if so;
 - Who made the request?
 - Who did they contact within the CLP and when was they contacted?
- Was consideration given as to whether GC delegates should be consulted on whether this should take place in the realm of the exec?
- Had the 4 individuals involved in the complaints been spoken to, to ensure that they were happy for this to be discussed at the exec?
- Who was invited to the meeting, my notice was only to the exec delegates, yet other individuals were invited privately as they were involved within the complaints. This disjointed the process as no one knew for certain who was attending.
- Why was the special meeting not dealt with by one notice send out to all persons invited?
- Was this meeting intended to be held as part of the exec as I have had sight on Peter Gates email inviting him to a CLP meeting, nowhere does this email state that it is part of the exec meeting, this may have contributed to the confusion at the meeting as to who was allowed / required.
- What exactly was the purpose of the meeting, was this an informal conversation. If so why was this not set out in the notices sent out?
- Andy Furlong stated that he would be reporting back to the regional director. But in what context?
 - Action against the CLP?
 - Action against individuals?

The meeting

I believe that the meeting was set to be difficult if not impossible to work from the offset. Myself as a delegate and not a person subject to, or having made a complaint felt uncomfortable with the meeting taking place without adequate information as detailed above. But also the nature of the complaints received and some back ground history.

It is my belief that if we had structured the meeting properly with full and frank information available to all parties. Plus consultations with the 4 individuals as to how best to discuss the situation we may have been able to have had a discussion in some form, either at the exec or in another manor that would have encouraged dialogue so that we as a CLP can move forward, work together and fight the Tories.

I also have difficulty in how the exec meeting was a closed meeting. Whilst I personally believe that we should not "air our dirty washing out in public" our exec meetings have traditionally always been open to observers and if this exec meeting was to not be open to others then this should have been made clear in the notices sent out with the rationale behind the decision.

I found the disruptive behaviour of the observers untenable and do not condone this behaviour. I also accept that this made Gill's position as chair difficult. However just before the Gill decided to suspend the meeting there were delegates including myself wishing to speak. It may have been that these delegates could have suggested a way forward for the issue at hand to be dealt with to ensure that we can work as a constructive and united CLP.

What is clear to me is that we as a CLP need to work hard to deal with these difficulties so that we as a group can work together, respecting different opinions and form our decisions democratically.

I am happy to speak to anyone about these matters and will be speaking about this at our next GC.

Kind regards,

Keir Chewings

6.6. Evidence 6

10th March - Email to EC seeking mediation and local party unity.

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Date: 10 March 2016 at 21:20:55 GMT
To: gill aldrige <gill.aldrige@btinternet.com>
Cc: Alistair MacInnes <alistair.macinnes@gmail.com>, Sandy Coker <s.coker@ntlworld.com>, Liz Plant <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>, "robertcrosby43@gmail.com" <robertcrosby43@gmail.com>, "mandfedwards@talktalk.net" <mandfedwards@talktalk.net>, Nadia EW <nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk>, Chris Kemp <chrisjkemp@btinternet.com>, Bill Logan <william.logan3@ntlworld.com>, Richard Crawley <richard.crawley2@gmail.com>, Harry Curtis <harry.curtis01@ntlworld.com>, Jean Stansfield <jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com>, "john.walsh@designforpurpose.co.uk" <john.walsh@designforpurpose.co.uk>, "umaarkazmi@gmail.com" <umaarkazmi@gmail.com>, "janevcaro@yahoo.com" <janevcaro@yahoo.com>, "marcgibson@hotmail.com" <marcgibson@hotmail.com>, Btmail <mariacolley314@btinternet.com>, LUCZYNSKI Z <zbysek.luczynski@ntlworld.com>, "rachel.scudamore@designforpurpose.co.uk" <rachel.scudamore@designforpurpose.co.uk>, "lindamburdett@gmail.com" <lindamburdett@gmail.com>, "brentabbott@hotmail.com" <brentabbott@hotmail.com>, Keir Chewings <kchewings@me.com>, Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Subject: Monday's Special Exec Meeting

As some Executive members are aware, John Walsh and Peter Gates went along on Monday evening with a genuine desire to bring the local party together and to look to a future where we all worked together to defeat the Tories. This had been discussed with the Regional Organiser who was left in no uncertain terms what the agenda needed to be. We were encouraged that there was a significant number of local Party branch officers and GC delegates who shared that position sufficiently strongly to want to come along and contribute to that process at a meeting described by the Regional Office as “a meeting of the CLP”. Whilst we are fully supportive of Keir Chewing’s analysis, we would also reject his assertion that we were “disruptive”. At that meeting we had a Branch Secretary, a Membership Secretary, a Trades Union Liaison Officer, A Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Officer and member of the Regional Board, a Communications Officer, a Political Education Officer, Newsletter Editor and three GC Delegates. Each one of us behaved impeccably, and professionally. If there was disruption, it came from elsewhere.

However, it is also clear there were major procedural flaws with how that meeting was envisaged as unfolding, as planned *in camera* before 8pm. Keir has made this clearer. Whereas we had hoped for positivity, and unity, the CLP Executive was not permitted to take this route by what appeared to be autocratic management from the region.

We would respectfully suggest that the CLP ask the Regional Office and the Regional Board to postpone any action or indeed any involvement with Rushcliffe CLP until after the forthcoming Rushcliffe CLP General Committee meeting on 21st March. Several Members have concerns about the functioning, role and makeup of the Executive Committee. In particular, it is clear that the recent decision to re-form the Committee was apparently taken without the knowledge of the General Committee and that the makeup of the Executive does not appear to follow that agreed at the CLP AGM on 18th May 2015. Keir, John and Peter have requested the make-up of the Executive be placed on the next GC agenda along with the CLP Development plan. That needs to be a first step forward for us.

As for the meeting on Monday it was never clear what it was about. At this point in time, no one has raised any complaints or issues with Peter or John, and we are all completely in the dark as to what might be going on or indeed what the meeting was actually about or intended to achieve, in spite of asking several times. John and Peter had both offered to meet Andy Furlong to talk this through before Monday, but he declined to respond. In December, the Regional Organiser advised Peter Gates that the difficulties we experienced in November needed to be sorted out locally.

In the spirit of unity, we would like to suggest we resolve any issues there might be amongst ourselves locally, comradely and professionally. Such a resolution would need to accept where the party currently is, and where we want our CLP to go. Do we want to go down the route some other CLPs are taking of local parties falling apart in internecine, factional arguments or do we want to take a more productive and positive path? Of course, not everyone will have voted for Jeremy Corbyn, but he is the leader of our Party, like it or not. One

thing Jeremy stands by very sincerely is to not get involved in personal attacks or abuse; that gets us nowhere other than in opposition. This is something we all feel very strongly.

We would like to suggest that if anyone feels it would be useful that we get together with a couple of mutually agreed neutral facilitators to iron out any disputes or disagreements, and treat each other as comrades not opponents; warmly not with hostility. We are after all in the same party.

It's time to move on; if we have differences we need to talk them through together. Last Monday evening we allowed our local party to be potentially damaged. It's up to us to pull it back. The special Executive Committee meeting, which did not allow observers on the instructions of the representative from Regional Board, Andrew Furlong, has been potentially very damaging, we need to put it right ourselves.

Peter Gates, John Walsh, Zbyszek Luczynski, Mia Colley, Rachel Scudamore, Marc Gibson*

*Peter Gates, Branch Secretary and GC delegate, West Bridgford Branch

John Walsh, GC Delegate, Keyworth Branch

Zbyszek Luczynski, Political Education Officer and GC Delegate-elect, West Bridgford Branch

Mia Colley, Newsletter Editor and GC Delegate-elect, West Bridgford Branch

Jane Caro, Trades Union Liaison Officer and GC Delegate-elect, West Bridgford Branch

Rachel Scudamore, Membership Secretary and GC Delegate-elect, Keyworth Branch

Marc Gibson, Communications Officer and GC Delegate-elect, West Bridgford Branch

6.7. Evidence 7

16th March - Email to Gill Aldridge arguing for greater unity

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 16 March 2016 15:13
To: gill aldrige <gill.aldrige@btinternet.com>
Cc: janevcaro@yahoo.com; Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>; stevecalvert39@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Suspension from the party

Gill,

I'm not really sure of what Lizzie mean in her first paragraph about letters - maybe Lizzie knows something I don't?

But let me say something I think is important.

- When I communicated to Finbar, I made it clear we would only attend the CLP meeting on 7th if it was designed to be a constructive and bringing together meeting rather than one focussing on negatives. Finbar never responded. Some Exec members asked us to attend on that basis.
- At the CLP meeting on 7th I proposed we look to working together in a positive and constructive way. This seemed to be rejected by Andy Furlong.
- After the CLP Meeting on 7th several of us wrote a letter proposing we all look to working together in the CLP. We received no response.
- In my reply to Jane I offered support to a member placed in very difficult circumstances.

What I genuinely don't understand is why repeated attempts to pull the CLP together and work constructively keep being resisted and rejected. Someone seems to have an agenda and I don't know who or what that is.

If indeed this is all happening outside of the CLP then I think it would be helpful for people to know. It would be helpful to know who is responsible for re-creating all this hostility which does none of us, least of all the Rushcliffe Labour Party, much good at all. It is surely time we took control of the situation.

Peter

Peter Gates

7. Submissions by Suspended Members

*Unfortunately, the Charges Pack only includes a very one-sided and partial set of four submissions, plus one from Richard Crawley in which he indicated he was not at the meeting and could add nothing. In the interest of fairness, I have included here the submissions of eight others from West Bridgford BLP. I include in **Section 8** the statements of three members of the EC who attended the meeting on 7th March: Cllr Keir Chewings, Cllr Alistair MacInnes and Jean Stansfield. These all give a quite different story from that portrayed in the Charges Pack*

7.1. Mia Colley

Dear Emma,

Thanks for your letters. I was bemused by the first letter and waiting to see how things unfurled.

You will perhaps know I am a fairly new member, attending as many meetings as I could (as a full time working professional but lone parent household), door knocked to ensure people didn't go missing off the electoral register and stood in West Bridgford town centre talking to people about why EU membership was still relevant, if not more relevant than previously and recently started a new format newsletter, which was well received, designed to engage the local membership which I am told has doubled. My previous political campaigning has been via social media or via consultations, whether local council budgets or police commissioner focused, alongside some work with domestic abuse survivors.

Thus is my background, so now onto the particulars of the lead up to the meeting on March 7th- every meeting has been described as open and I was encouraged to attend any meeting and understand the workings of the party by a very few welcoming members, and this seemed good advice even more so when I was to be a delegate from May. I heard about a special meeting, called a meeting of the CLP, that was to discuss difficulties, and was keen to see how difficulties were dealt with.

When I arrived there was clearly a lot of tension, a feeling of general hostility. I took a chair in and sat against the wall and didn't say a word to anyone during the meeting. I observed people speaking, questioning the validity and purpose of the meeting, and some around the committee table indicating to speak but not being given an opportunity. It was stated that the meeting was not an open meeting, which seemed by expression, to be a surprise to some around the room. The chair did not seem in control and the meeting was closed without a vote or agreement of those around the table apart from the regional rep. He described the region as sovereign. It struck me as a strange phrase in a democratic party, irrelevant and misplaced in the circumstances, so stuck in my mind. I continued to stay because what I was seeing did not look or feel like a meeting to discuss difficulties. It did not look or sound democratic like I expected the Labour Party to be.

Having gone in as an observer, just as in a range of other meetings, I left with a different frame of mind, on this occasion, perturbed.

The subsequent letter of suspension has seemed disproportionately heavy handed and unjust. I don't know what I have done. I have heard that I have been described as being part of an unruly mob, which is completely untrue. I was quiet, composed, as were others I saw entering. Some people have been suspended for standing outside of the room, and people explicitly invited have also been suspended, but one who entered and left has not been suspended. If I have done something wrong in my naivety, then would not information and education answer the purpose?

If you would like any particular further information please let me know. I look forward to matters being resolved speedily in an appropriate manner. I have to say the whole matter, in which I am not presumed guilty but treated as if I am, has been very upsetting.

Many thanks
Mia Colley

7.2. Umaar Kazmi

Mr Umaar Kazmi
(address)

Ms Emma Foody
Harold Wilson House
23 Barratt Lane
Attenborough
Nottingham
NG9 6AD

22 March 2016

Re: Notice of administrative suspension from holding office or representing the Labour Party

As you know, I was recently administratively suspended from holding office or representing the Labour Party, based on ‘Allegations that [I] may have been involved in a breach of Labour Party rules’. So serious are these allegations, apparently, that I ‘cannot attend any party meeting including [my] own branch meeting and Annual Conference’.

I am not in a position to deny any of the allegations, since I have no idea what they could be. What I can say, however, is that my behaviour at branch meetings has been exemplary and my conduct towards other members has been nothing but comradely and amicable. It is for this reason that I was elected as my branch’s BAME officer in January of this year and why Young Labour members entrusted me to be their representative on the East Midlands Regional Board in the recent Young Labour elections in February.

The first point that I would like you to consider is the fact that I have just mentioned. I was only elected by Young Labour members in February of this year and so, prolonging this procedure for any longer than is necessary is plainly wrong. It is unfair to the Young Labour members who elected me.

Furthermore, as a law student, the element of justice interests me greatly in this whole procedure. The basic tenets of natural justice are:

- 1) *Audi alteram partem* (lit. hear the other side): an accused person shall not be condemned unless given full chance to prepare and submit his case and refutation to the opposing party’s arguments;
- 2) Administrative decisions must be based upon logical proof or evidence. Investigators and decision-makers should not make decisions based on mere speculation or suspicion;
- 3) The evidence (arguments, allegations, documents, and so forth) presented by the accusing party must be disclosed to the accused party.

I simply ask you to consider whether any of that has been done. Clearly, it has not been and so, the suspension is *prima facie* unjust, whether the suspension has been construed on some technicalities of the party rulebook or not.

Let me explain it, for example, as if I were the person making the allegations. One could imagine a scenario where I had personal grudges against another party member holding office, I then complained to the Regional Office with my own biased allegations, and *purely* on the basis of my own allegations, that party member was suspended for months without redress. This is unjust without doubt.

Nevertheless, as a loyal party member, I am willing to fully cooperate with your procedures for dealing with these allegations. I mentioned the above to give you some food for thought as to how you wish to proceed and within what time frame. For clarity:

- 1) I was only recently elected by Young Labour members to represent them on the Regional Board, it is unfair to them to drag this out longer than necessary and so, I call on you to provide me an opportunity of redress within the coming weeks, not months;
- 2) The entire procedure is devoid of natural justice, it can only be just once I know what the allegations are, have the chance to prepare my rebuttal and once I have been given the opportunity to make my case known.

I do hope that this can be resolved as quickly as possible. I have found it to be a rather frustrating and wholly unjust experience.

UMAAR KAZMI

7.3. Zbyszek Luczynski

1. I am one of the members of West Bridgford branch who has been administratively suspended by the General Secretary under delegated powers of Clause V111.5 of the constitutional rules of the party. This relies on use of the party's Disciplinary Rules Clause 6.11A and Clause 6.1.3. These refer to member's conduct at party meetings. So I assume my conduct at party meetings has necessitated the actions of the General secretary and that of the subsequent meeting of the NEC of the Labour Party. Can I have a copy of the minute of that NEC which agreed my suspension?

2. I have nothing in writing from you or the NEC or the Enquiry Panel which outlines the conduct which I have allegedly been accused of and that was reported to the General Secretary and then the NEC which was used as evidence of that conduct. So how can I defend myself against that which I have not been told I have done? I have been presumed guilty on others evidence without the chance to defend myself before a decision to suspend me was taken. This goes against all natural justice.

3. I have heard verbally from other Rushcliffe Constituency members that my suspension was sought by the East Midlands Regional Chair Andy Furlong who was present at a meeting of Rushcliffe Constituency Committee Executive Committee members on the 7th March 2016 and that officers of the Rushcliffe Constituency did not want me and others to be suspended but instead dealt with at the Constituency level through the rules of the Rushcliffe Constituency Party, whereby they investigate any allegations of the conduct of their members at any local level must be investigated by a panel of Constituency members. Are you acting as the secretary for such a panel now? Why did not the Constituency set up such a panel before the moves to report these allegations to the General Secretary and NEC were made by the Regional Committee Chair Andy Furlong and others?

4. Does Andy have delegated powers to over-ride the Labour Party rulebook that gives the Rushcliffe Constituency the role in investigating members conduct at their meetings. After all he was merely an invited guest at the 7th March EC Constituency meeting. I have been told by members of the Constituency EC who were present at that meeting that the subsequent reported minutes submitted by the Constituency Secretary Lizzie Edgerton and used as evidence in my suspension have been questioned as not being a true record of what happened. Therefore I am putting forward my version as an alternative to clarify my own conduct at that meeting.

5. But first some background of what had led up to this Constituency EC meeting in the politics of the branch and Constituency.

On the morning of March 7th 2016 Lizzie Edgerton Rushcliffe Constituency Secretary told me that the Constituency Executive Committee (EC) that evening meeting was to be a mediation style meeting, where allegations made by some Constituency delegates over the conduct of Peter Gates and Jon Walsh were to be discussed. Now I had been invited as an observer at a meeting of the Constituency General Committee in Autumn on November 16th 2015 when allegations over the behaviour of Jon and Peter as Rushcliffe Constituency Officers were made by Sandra Coker the then Chair of the Constituency and Liz Plant Vice-Chair. At that meeting Jon and Peter were confronted by allegations which were discussed at the meeting without warning of what was to be discussed before the meeting. Consequently they seemed somewhat unprepared to answer them properly.

However the allegations were discussed, Sandy resigned as Chair at that meeting. Peter who had resigned as Constituency Secretary previously stood for the post of Constituency Secretary again, but was defeated by Lizzie Edgerton all at this same general Committee meeting. I had observed all this with some incredulity and vowed to myself that I would work to try to unite the members of the Constituency and our West Bridgford branch through my role as joint Political Education Officer of West Bridgford branch and a branch delegate to the Constituency from the AGM in May 2016.

6. That too was my motivation when I heard of the 7th March 2016 Constituency EC meeting from Lizzie. That was why I attended the 7th March Constituency EC meeting along with others who had been invited as observers by Peter and Jon. I went along because I thought I would be allowed to attend as I had been allowed to previously, at the above mentioned Autumn 2015 Constituency General Committee meeting, when allegations against Jon and Peter had been discussed.

7. When we arrived with Peter and Jon we were invited to accompany them as observers into the meeting they had been asked to attend by the Constituency Secretary. The Chair of the meeting then asked us to leave on the advice of Andy Furlong East Midlands Regional Chair, who had apparently been invited to the meeting without the knowledge of Jon and Peter or ourselves. Peter and Jon had not been told what was to be discussed in their invite to the meeting. This was their motivation for asking for observers to be present.

Straightaway I and others who had come to act as observers noticed that a number of EC delegates present had their hands up to speak but were not being called by the Chair. I assumed that these delegates wanted to put a motion to ask that we observers should stay to observe the meeting with Peter and Jon.

The only people to speak at this point were Jon and Peter as they asked that the meeting allow the observers to stay. However the Constituency Chair instead closed the meeting on the advice of Andy Furlong the invited Regional Chair. The Chair did not call the EC delegates who were still indicating they wanted to speak, nor did she put any motion to the meeting that the meeting should be closed. Delegates were left high and dry and mystified. Clearly the rules of Constituency meetings state that delegates must agree to a motion to close a meeting.

Surely you agree that the Chair could not act to close the meeting without the agreement of those delegates present? At that point the meeting broke up I and other observers assisted in clearing the room and we left the building.

8. I am ready to give evidence to the Enquiry and look forward to answers to the questions I have posed in this email. I have attached a Protocol I have prepared and which I sent to our Branch officers before I was suspended which if adopted would avoid the confusions of the present case arising in future. I look forward to once again becoming an active member of my branch and Constituency and to working with comrades to mend differences and work together as a united West Bridgford branch and Rushcliffe Constituency of the Labour Party.

7.4. Linda Burdett and Brent Abbott

65 Byron Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 6DY

May 4th 2016

Dear Emma

Submissions

Further to your letter dated 20th April, this is my submission to the enquiry regarding the meeting on Monday March 7th and matters surrounding it. As you are aware my partner, Brent Abbott and I are amongst those from the Rushcliffe CLP who have been suspended following complaints about our behaviour at the meeting on 7th March.

I would very much like to know what these complaints are as I can see no reason whatsoever for our suspensions and feel that this suspension is totally unjustified. The sequence of events from Monday 7th March is below and I believe clearly shows the injustice of our suspension

- Monday 7th March a.m. I received an email from Peter Gates, about a CLP meeting called for that same evening by Finbar Bowie to discuss recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe CLP. Peter said: 'If you were able to come down tonight at 8 - it would be nice to see you and to see what was going on.'
- On Monday afternoon I left a message on Lizzie Edgerton's phone to ask her, as secretary of the CLP, if it would be appropriate for Brent and I to be there. We were elected new delegates to the GC of the CLP at January's Branch meeting and were due to take up these roles this month. We had been told that we were welcome at CLP meetings prior to this month, as observers
- As Lizzie didn't respond to my message I rang Steve Calvert, my local County Counsellor, for his advice. He said he thought it would be fine for us to attend this meeting and suggested we arrive at 7pm when it was due to start.
- Just before 7pm we arrived at the meeting and were told it was not appropriate for us to be there as it was a 'special meeting.'
- We were surprised and decided to go for a drink at our local
- When we arrived there Peter Gates was sitting alone and called us over. We joined him and he showed us the email he'd received which invited him to attend a CLP meeting at 8pm to discuss complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe. He explained that John Walsh had also been asked to attend and that several other GC delegates were hoping to observe this meeting.
- Between this time (around 7.15) and 7.50 other GC delegates arrived: John, Rachel, Mia, Mark, Zbszek and Jane. Someone quoted from the Rule Book that observers were allowed in CLP meetings
- I was quite confused by this time but felt that this 8pm meeting may be a separate meeting from the Special Meeting we had been turned away from.
- Having heard various rumours about complaints I was keen to find out for myself exactly what was going on and decided to join the others present in observing the 8pm meeting.
- Shortly after we arrived at the venue, Umaar joined us. We waited in the corridor and I believe it was around 8.10 when someone knocked on the door of the meeting room and we began to enter. Whilst some of the group took in chairs, Brent and I who were at the back of the group chose to stand

in the doorway to see if we were allowed to observe. We were unable to see who was present apart from our group, but clearly heard someone (I believe it was the chair, Gill Aldridge), ask us to leave. Rachel Scudamore queried this request, quoting from the Rule Book. We were then told that if we didn't leave the meeting would be abandoned. Brent and I left

- As we left the building we bumped into Gary Edgerton. We told him that we had not been allowed to observe proceedings and he was clearly upset saying that he'd come back from visiting his mother especially to attend the meeting. He clearly felt that rules had been broken. We were unaware of this and still are. We talked briefly suggesting that it was a pity conciliatory talks weren't suggested locally. Gary then went into the building, while we went home.

Subsequent events:

- A week later on March 14th Brent and I were asked to feed back to the CLP Executive regarding our door knocking experiences. This was an interesting meeting where Jane Caro also reported on her actions as Trades Union liaison.
- The next day we picked up an email telling us that Jane had returned home from that meeting to receive a letter suspending her
- On that Friday 18th March we attended a CLP social event for St Patrick's day.
- On Saturday 19th March we received letters of suspension

Finally I would like to add that since being suspended I have felt extremely upset, distressed and discouraged. I feel I have been punished for no good reason. I feel fortunate that I was not alone in all of this and that Brent and I have been able to support each other. We have nevertheless had several sleepless nights over it.

It was made clear in Emma's letter of 4th April that we are not allowed to discuss the suspension with other Labour Party members, which includes many close friends. This has put a huge strain on me and led to further sleepless nights. After complaining that we were not receiving details of canvassing and social events I was told by Emma that these decisions were up to the CLP executive. I am distressed that someone in the CLP Exec. decided to exclude us from these activities. I expressed my disappointment in this to Emma and I am now receiving that information. However I have lost faith in some members of that Committee and feel uneasy about future relationships.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Burdett



7.5. Marc Gibson

From: Marc Gibson [mailto:M.A.Gibson@lboro.ac.uk]

Sent: 01 May 2016 20:14

To: Emma Foody

Subject: RE: Rushcliffe LP suspension

Dear Emma

Thank you for your explanation, though I'm still not much wiser, but I appreciate you are perhaps unable to say more.

I'm not aware of anything prior to the meeting of the 7th March that I should address, so I'll keep to that meeting.

I'd been elected to an executive officer position, both at branch and at CLP – though the CLP position (I think) was not effective until after April (I'm still learning about this, so may well get much about procedures and timings wrong).

I'd heard that there was to be a meeting on 7th March, so I went along, unsure as to whether I should or shouldn't be there, unclear as to the purpose or provenance of the meeting. I had tried a number of times to obtain information from the branch and from East Midlands Labour Party (Attenborough) but without success, in particular access to the party software 'Contact Creator' for example – to which I remain without access, I should note.

Returning to the meeting of 7th March, I waited outside the meeting with a number of other people, and then entered the room, carrying a chair (as there weren't enough in the room), sat on the chair, and did not speak or otherwise vocalise until the meeting ended, at which point I left the meeting, again without speaking (taking the chair with me to put it back on the stack – I can't imagine that I was holding the chair in an aggressive manner, but I could see that that might be possible?)

During the meeting some questions were asked about the purpose and provenance of the meeting, and, I believe, under what aspect of the labour party rules the meeting was constituted. The answers I heard I did not understand, but the answers given did not, in my view, answer what felt like legitimate questions – with the benefit of hindsight, had I realised it was a closed to meeting, to which I had no proper purpose in attending I would, of course, have left immediately without question, or better still not attended in the first place.

My experience of the meeting was that all those present behaved and spoke in a respectful and courteous manner – although there was some frustration robustly expressed.

It's unfortunate that the issues (whatever they might have been) could not have been resolved at a much earlier stage, as my experience as a union representative at Loughborough University over many years suggests that it's by far better to nip issues in the bud where that is possible, whilst recognising that sometimes that simply isn't possible.

I hope this can be resolved at the earliest opportunity, and I look forwards to hearing from you in due course.

Kind regards
Marc Gibson

From: Emma Foody [mailto:emma_foody@labour.org.uk]
Sent: 29 April 2016 12:08
To: Marc Gibson
Subject: RE: Rushcliffe LP suspension

Dear Mr Gibson

Thank you for your email.

The suspensions were in response to the disruption of the Executive Committee meeting on Monday 7th March.

As mentioned in the letter sent out to you –‘Members of the East Midlands Regional Board sitting under the auspices of the National Executive Committee are conducting an enquiry into what took place at the meeting and matters surrounding it, including both the run up to and aftermath.’ Submissions for the panel should therefore be with regard to this.

Kind regards,

Emma

From: Marc Gibson [mailto:M.A.Gibson@lboro.ac.uk]
Sent: 28 April 2016 15:00
To: Emma Foody
Subject: Rushcliffe LP suspension
Importance: High

Dear Ms Foody

Thank you for your recent letter, dated 20th April, notifying me that I may make a submission to you about my suspension (administrative) from the party.

I would be very happy to do so, but it seems a bit difficult to know what to write, as I don't know what I have or haven't done (other than 'behaviour towards another member' as per the previous letter to me notifying me of suspension), would you be able to provide me with any more details?

Kind regards
Marc Gibson

7.6. Jane Caro

Tel: 0115 982 6927

Emma Foody
Deputy Regional Director
East Midlands Labour Party
Harold Wilson House
Barratt Lane
Attenborough
Nottingham
NG9 6AD

16 May 2016

Dear Emma Foody,

Thank you for your letter of 21 April 2016 inviting submissions to the enquiry panel.

I will try to help the panel regarding what happened at the meeting on 7 March.

On the morning of 7 March I was informed by my Branch Secretary Peter Gates that there was a CLP meeting taking place that evening at 8pm.

I was able to attend, so that evening I went along for the meeting. I arrived prior to 8pm and was advised that there was a closed EC meeting currently taking place which would end at 8pm when the CLP meeting was due to start. I waited quietly with other party members outside the meeting. At around 8.10pm I went into the meeting room as the others waiting outside went in.

Inside the meeting I sat quietly throughout and said nothing at all. It became clear to me that the presence of some of us in the room was controversial. There were some heated exchanges. Andy Furlong from the Regional Office was arguing that some of us should leave, others were arguing that we should not leave. After 10 minutes of heated exchanges the meeting was suspended and everybody departed.

You may not be aware that I have not been informed what the allegations are about my conduct. I have written to you on 21 April requesting details about the allegations and would appreciate your response as it would be helpful to know.

I am keen to help build support for the party and play an active role in it and hope for a speedy resolution to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Caro

7.7. Peter Gates

Emma Foody
Deputy Regional Director
East Midlands Labour Party
Harold Wilson House

Dear Emma,

Submissions

Thank you for your letter of 20th April, asking for written evidence on the events of 7th March. I very much welcome that, but do regret it took 6 weeks to reach that point – and another 6 before you want it submitted.

I can provide you with much fuller written information and evidence should you require it, but you asked for submissions that were concise and to the point. This letter is as concise as I think is appropriate – for the events to have resulted in the suspension of 10 committed Party activists at such a critical time for the Party indicates the situation is naturally rather complex. Hopefully, this will be sufficient to resolve matters amicably. However, I still do not know what I am accused of, nor how this enquiry will be undertaken, nor by whom. This is not the case for those making complaints however, who are making accusations of which I am unaware and to which I am not therefore able to respond. This is highly improper, and indeed more so if the Chair of the East Midlands Regional Board were to be both accuser and arbiter. I do know some officers of the Rushcliffe CLP Executive Committee have been contacting Party members giving their accounts of the events leading up to the suspensions - which itself seems very improper. Particularly since those accounts seem to lack substantiating evidence.

I do have to admit I have no idea how the events of 7th March led to any suspensions whatsoever; they could so easily have been avoided. I do believe the way events unfolded was a surprise to everyone. I certainly had not expected that to happen, neither I suspect did Andy Furlong, nor the members of the Executive. To be honest, I had expected us to all sit down together and discuss amicably the situation in Rushcliffe as my invite had suggested - even though I had no indication of what had led to such a meeting being necessary. I have no idea where any animosity has come from – but I am confident it has not come from me. I think Gill Aldridge, our CLP Chair, was placed in a very difficult situation having to respond to unexpected events not of her making with a lack of clarity over the nature of the meeting, and a lack of clarity on who was actually in control.

Your original letter refers to my "*behaviour toward a member*". However, I consider my own behaviour on the 7th March to be highly professional, very respectful and impeccable. Indeed, as experienced and committed professionals some in very sensitive occupations, we all acted with a great deal of integrity that evening. Having reflected on the events of 7th March, I believe, the events were the result of miscommunication between different groups of people, which led to misunderstanding of the nature of the meeting, compounded by some procedural irregularities. My own actions were taken with the best of motives. Clearly though, to have got this far someone else must see this differently. I do not know who that is and so I am not in a position to respond. I do know many EC members were confused as to the purpose and nature of this meeting. Some miscommunication may be down to the inexperience of the CLP Secretary, whom I understand has been provided with no induction into the role. Indeed, from a previous communication with Finbar Bowie, there seems to be no formal induction into the Party and its structures and procedures for new members or officers. Some miscommunication may have been down to a lack of communication between the Regional Office and the Regional Board; this has had unintended and unfortunate consequences. This will be something no doubt for the Regional Director to consider in due course. We ought to remember this action has been taken against new or returning, enthusiastic and committed members of the Party.

A brief summary of events on that evening is as follows:

- I received an invite to *"a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP to discuss complaints and the situation generally in Rushcliffe"*;
- The request to attend a meeting on 7th March came completely out of the blue with no indication of why I had been invited nor what had led up to it;
- In spite of several requests for clarity, the nature and purpose of the meeting was never made clear to me;
- I had no information of any complaints other than the single complaint I made to Regional Office back in November – which I presumed had been dealt with locally;
- Finbar Bowie assured me he would arrange for Andy Furlong to ring me before 7th March to explain what the meeting was about. This never happened;
- I offered to go to Leicester, or wherever else was convenient, to talk to Andy Furlong before the 7th March meeting. No response was received to that offer;
- Previously all Party meetings in Rushcliffe were open and all members were welcome;
- I had told Finbar Bowie that I would only attend the meeting on 7th March if it were a meeting about moving forward positively in the CLP. I did not receive a reply;
- Whether the meeting was to be open or closed was never discussed by the EC and was not in any meeting notification. We were never told why members were not welcome;
- Members of the EC were not told of Andy Furlong's attendance until a few days before the meeting, even though I was invited and informed two weeks previously;
- The closed nature of the meeting appears only to have been decided after 8pm but it is not clear by whom or why;
- The existence of an EC in Rushcliffe was not common knowledge in the CLP GC.

I will now go into more detail of these events. I received an email on 19th February from Finbar Bowie, the East Midlands Regional Officer, saying:

"On Monday 7th March the Chair of the East Midlands Regional Board has been invited to attend a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP. I'm writing to request your attendance at this meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally."

I initially queried the date, since our CLP GC meetings are on the third Monday of each month, so I asked what meeting this was. I was told (again by Finbar) that:

"To my understanding this had originally been planned as a meeting of the CLP Exec, it is not a meeting arranged separately from existing CLP meetings."

I was surprised by this as I have never heard of the CLP Executive Committee and, since I joined the CLP GC in June 2015, the Executive has never been mentioned, neither has the GC received reports or minutes from an EC. This explains my query over the status of the meeting I was being invited to. I then exchanged several emails with Finbar Bowie in which I tried to make it clear what I felt was important. My reading of Finbar's email was that whilst the meeting *"had **originally** been planned as a meeting of the CLP Executive"*, it was not that any longer. It is not clear either *who* invited John Furlong to attend and for what purpose.

A few days before 7th March, I spoke with 6 GC delegates whom I suspected might be members of Rushcliffe CLP EC. It became clear that the EC had not been fully informed of the purpose of the meeting. Indeed, the agenda for the EC meeting on 7th only went out very late on 1st March and had no detail of the subsequent meeting at 8pm.

"Please note the earlier start time. This is because we need to conclude business by 8:00 pm, as the Chair of the East Midlands Regional Board, Andy Furlong, is attending our EC to discuss recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe generally."

There is no mention here of this being a closed meeting, nor any indication of who else had been invited, nor for what purpose the meeting was being called. There is no agenda for the 8pm meeting, no explanatory paperwork, no attempt to explain the topic and issues to be discussed. It is almost as if information is being deliberately withheld from EC members, or more worryingly, maybe the CLP Secretary herself had no knowledge.

Since business was to be concluded by 8pm, then the subsequent discussion appears not to be a formally constituted meeting of the CLP EC. I had no communication from the CLP Secretary,

I received no invitation from her to attend, I was provided with no agenda, indeed no paperwork whatsoever. Indeed, I received nothing which might have informed me of the nature of the discussion that was intended – all of which I would have expected had it been a properly constituted meeting of an EC. All of this seems very odd and rather unfortunate.

I later discovered serendipitously that John Walsh of Keyworth Branch also received the email from Finbar on 18th February. I was never informed who else had been invited nor why I had been invited even though I had specifically asked.

At this point, given the lack of clarity over the nature of the meeting and its purpose, I do have to admit with hindsight it would have been better for me to decline the invitation, as the meeting does not appear to have been appropriately constituted. The original invite talks of “*recent complaints*” yet the nature of these complaints, who they were complaints about and who by was not addressed and has still not been clarified. If the meeting was to have discussed complaints, it does not appear that the correct complaints procedures had been put into place as provided in **Labour Party Rules 2016, Chapter 6 Clause II, Para 1**. There it stipulates that complaints should be put in writing to the Secretary of the CLP (A) and passed onto the Executive (B) or the General Meeting (D). From there an investigation should have been undertaken with three members (G, H). Similarly, **Chapter 8, Clause VII, Para 3** suggests complaints at a Branch level should also be made by reference to the CLP to be dealt with under the aforementioned procedures. It is not clear whether any of these complaints had been made by members of the CLP EC – which would have been quite improper. Indeed, it was for this very reason I made it clear to Finbar, I would not attend the meeting to discuss “complaints”. I am not sure this was adequately communicated to Andy Furlong or to members of the Rushcliffe CLP EC – though I did make this clear to those EC members with whom I had spoken.

I then spoke to several colleagues who were all GC delegates or delegates-elect on the Rushcliffe CLP GC about this meeting to discuss the situation in Rushcliffe, and quite understandably they felt they wanted to come along to the meeting, as observers, to hear about the issues they might face as GC delegates. Up to this point all meetings of Rushcliffe CLP have been open to members as observers. Consequently, 10 of us turned up to this meeting at 8pm. We knocked on the door and were asked to wait outside, which we did. During this time, the Youth Officer, Nadia Whittome, came out to use the toilet and indicated we could be heard in the room. I thanked her, we waited and knocked again at 8:10pm, and believing we were invited in, we entered the room and most sat down, though two remained outside the room (Brent Abbott and Linda Burdett). At this point we were still under the impression this was an open meeting. Indeed, another local Party member – the spouse of the CLP Secretary – came into the meeting at 8:10pm (though he has not been suspended). Further suggesting we were not alone in considering this to be an open meeting – even the CLP Secretary presumably thought so.

We remained calm, quiet and polite – and why would we not? We all thought we were in “*a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP*”, set up to discuss “*the situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally*” and to which we had a right to attend as observers. It was a surprise then when 8 were asked to leave, and that if they did not, the meeting would have to be abandoned. I raised my hand, and was allowed to speak by the Chair. I proposed that we had a good opportunity now to move forward together and work for a united Party. Four EC members had their hands raised to speak but were ignored by the Chair and by Andy Furlong, who stressed that everybody would need to leave except myself and John Walsh; the reason for that was never clarified.

I explained that I was not comfortable staying if other members were to be excluded. At that point, Andy Furlong instructed the Chair to close the meeting at roughly 8:20pm with EC members having had no opportunity to speak or vote on the closure, although we know some wanted to propose that the observers should stay in accordance with well-established custom and practice in Rushcliffe. We had never been informed this was a closed meeting. It has never been made clear *who* decided the meeting was closed to members and on whose authority that decision was made. I am not clear *when* it was decided, or most importantly, *why* on earth it was decided that members would be refused entrance thereby breaking all tradition in Rushcliffe CLP. That has still not been clarified – and if I may be so bold – was the error that led to this matter being blown out of all proportion.

This process for closing a meeting feels at odds with the spirit of the Model Procedural Rules provided in the **Labour Party Rule Book 2016** which says in **Chapter 15, Clause 1**,

Paragraph 2 O (ii) which says “any member acting in an unruly or disruptive manner, in contravention of the standing orders, may be removed from the meeting by action of the chair”. The point here is that several people, including all those of us who attended, wished the meeting to continue with observers present. This is important because it also appears to contravene the CLP Standing Order 17 - which is consistent with the **Model Procedural Rule 15.2.N.i** in the **Labour Party Rule Book 2016** – suggesting that such actions as closing the meeting should have been put to, and voted on, by the members of the EC.

Two days after the 7th March events, Cllr Keir Chewings, Branch Secretary of Cotgrave Branch and member of the Rushcliffe CLP EC, sent an email to all EC members expressing his grave concerns over the events of 7th March, and his disagreement over the organisation and status of the 8pm meeting. One day later, several of us felt sufficiently concerned at the potential damage done to the CLP by the events of 7th March that we wrote a joint letter to colleagues on the EC to outline the need for mediation and unity. This illustrates our concern for the Party to be united and working together, but also identified our concerns over the nature of the events of 7th March. To date neither Cllr Keir Chewings, nor the rest of us, have received any acknowledgement or reply to any of our correspondence.

I do not want to argue that any one version of events is privileged over another. There are, however, various versions of events. Yet one version seems now to be the official version that led several days later to all 10 members receiving a suspension letter. Such a process raises serious questions about fairness and natural justice within the Party processes - where unsubstantiated allegations lead, without question or investigation, to suspension of Party members thereby seemingly violating the basic legal principle of *audi alteram partem*- listen to the other side. My version of events has not been taken into consideration which seems very unjust and improper. Suspending 10 party members seems a hugely disproportionate response to merely attending a meeting for 10 minutes.

I do not want to dismiss the events of 7th March because someone seems to feel it significant enough to suspend 10 committed Party members. I cannot respond to that as I have no idea who that was, or what this is about. However, I would like to suggest this needs to be resolved properly by the local Party with a sense of conciliation and mediation and with openness and trust fully abiding by Party Rules. Such an opportunity seems to have been missed on 7th March.

There are then a number of questions that arise over this incident.

- What was the status and purpose of the 8pm meeting on 7th March, given there was no agenda circulated, and the purpose was never communicated to members of the EC?
- On whose authority, and when was it decided that the meeting was to be closed to members, and to whom was this communicated?
- What justification is there to use this as a reasons for suspending 10 Party members?
- Why was the standard procedure for dealing with any complaints as outlined in the Rule Book not adhered to?
- Who referred this matter to the EC which, without the knowledge or agreement of the CLP GC, had only just reformed after its suspension in April 2015?
- Who referred the matter to the Regional Office, thus bypassing the procedures laid out in the Labour Party Rule book?
- Why was there no vote to close the meeting when I had asked for it to continue and four members of the EC had their hand up to speak?
- Why were 8 elected Branch Officers and GC delegates not welcome at the 8pm meeting?
- Why two members were suspended who never entered the room (Abbott, Burdett)? Why five were suspended who never said anything (Colley, Caro, Gibson, Kazmi, Luczynski)? Why one was suspended when she only spoke when given the floor by the Chair (Scudamore)? And why two were suspended who had been invited (Gates, Walsh)?

I feel these nine questions highlight what I believe to be the error and subsequent injustice made in suspending 10 active Party members for attending a meeting that does not appear to have been properly constituted or appropriately communicated, and who merely questioned the justification for their being refused attendance.

It has been recently suggested to me that the meeting had been intended to be a small meeting for mediation that we somehow disrupted. First, I hope I have dispelled the suggestion that we were in any way disruptive. Second, why would we want to disrupt a meeting that we knew so

very little about? As I have indicated above, it has never been clear just what needed "mediating". Finbar's email came totally out of the blue, with no previous communication coming from the CLP Secretary about this meeting or indeed any prior issues or difficulties raised within the CLP. On the contrary, the CLP appears to have been running relatively smoothly with a new Chair in place whom I had supported. Indeed, at the GC Meeting where elections were held, I proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chair – which no one else had thought of doing. I felt that was the comradely thing to do for someone who had committed so much of her time to the local Party. At that meeting, I was nominated as CLP Vice-Chair by the Secretaries of two other Branches – Cotgrave and Radcliffe-on-Trent. Furthermore, Finbar had described my organisation of West Bridgford Branch as "exemplary", and I was re-elected unopposed as Branch Secretary in January, at the same well-attended Branch AGM that 8 of the suspended members were also elected to their posts.

So, if there was to be "mediation" – what was it that needed mediating, and why was I invited? What indeed did it have to do with me? I have absolutely no idea. Surely, it is not asking too much to expect that someone might have communicated that to me and to John Walsh. Furthermore, I have to ask what had gone on recently that was so significant that it required the Chair of the Regional Board to attend a meeting held *in camera*? I am still none the wiser. I was under the impression any local issues should be dealt with locally – as Finbar had suggested back in December. There had been no attempt to raise any issues, let alone resolve them in the CLP.

I would like to finish on the humanitarian aspect of this. Ten people come into the Labour Party committed to "*straight talking honest politics*". We enthusiastically took up positions of responsibility, worked hard and took initiatives. We now find ourselves suspended – though we still have not been told why - when all we have done is sit quietly in a meeting at which we thought we were welcome. I do hope this helps you to resolve this unfortunate matter as soon as possible so we can get on with fighting the real enemy – the one outside the Labour Party.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Gates', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Gates

8. Submissions by EC Members Acting as Witnesses

8.1. Statement by Jean Stanfield, Member of Rushcliffe CLP EC, Vice Chair - West Bridgford Labour Party, Women's Officer - Rushcliffe CLP

7TH MARCH 2016 GCEC MEETING.

(1) Meeting due to commence at 8pm. But Andy Furlong needed to explain to EC members the nature of the meeting as we were all in the dark except that we were to discuss "complaints". He said it was not a disciplinary hearing but there would be an airing of grievances and he hoped to conciliate between parties. EC members asked questions about this and other related issues which took up time so it was around 8.15pm before the invited people were asked in.

(2) The delay seemed to have aroused suspicions as the two invited members seemed to think they were facing a disciplinary situation. Peter Gates said that if anyone had complaints about him why hadn't they tried to sort it out with him directly because he didn't know what they were.

(3) The Observers had also come into the room. Observers are encouraged to attend meetings in Rushcliffe - to observe but not speak. Gill Aldridge in the Chair asked them to leave and they were asking why when it is normal for Observers to attend meetings.

(4) There was no indication on the notice of meeting that on this occasion it was a closed meeting with Observers not allowed. Nor was this issue discussed before inviting in those waiting outside the meeting room. Gill in the Chair and Andy Furlong were announcing this to the Observers as they came into the room.

(5) Several EC members were indicating that they wanted to speak. Nadia Whittome wanted to suggest that the Observers be allowed to stay. (She said that then justice would be seen to have been done whatever the outcome.) I wanted to put a motion that they stay, but Gill, sitting opposite to us, had her eyes on the Observers who were behind us, telling them that they must leave or she would close the meeting, so the views of the EC were not considered. (Nadia was angry that she had been ignored and addressed this grievance to Gill after the meeting closed down.)

(6) Peter Gates, still on his feet, suddenly announced that if these people couldn't stay then he wasn't going to stay either. Then Andy, also standing, lost patience and said that he was closing down the meeting. There is a difference amongst EC members about who actually closed the meeting. Only Keir Chewings from Cotgrave agrees with me that the meeting closed down with Andy's statement. All the others say that it was closed down by Gill. Certainly there was much confusion as all this was happening.

(7) Re **Linda Burdett and Andy Brent** from West Bridgford. Initially these two asked Steve Calvert, Chair of West Bridgford Branch if they could attend the meeting. He said he wasn't on the EC but thought they could. They arrived early on 7th March and Lizzie Edgerton, GC Secretary, said they couldn't attend. Then they saw the others in the pub and thinking perhaps they could attend, went back to the meeting, but when Gill said Observers were not allowed, they immediately left. Their suspension is extremely unfair, kept them awake for several nights, and should never have happened. They are Labour stalwarts we should treat better than this.

EVENTS LEADING UP TO MARCH 7TH GCEC MEETING.

(1) New members, having been elected to officer positions, keen to get things moving, concerned that activities needed to be arranged for a membership waiting for something to happen, went ahead and arranged events without consulting other officers, especially the Treasurer. This annoyed some of these other officers (but not the Treasurer).

(2) An email was circulated last September, alleged to contain a serious threat to the recipient which was actually taken to a Solicitor for advice. I wasn't able to obtain wording of this email.

(3) Peter Gates (Secretary of the GC at that time) had a copy of the email and arranged a meeting to discuss it with Sandra Coker (Chair of the GC at that time) and Liz Plant (Councillor for Rushcliffe and Notts County Council). It seems this meeting did not go well and Sandra and Liz became hostile towards Peter Gates, who subsequently submitted his resignation saying he could not work with Sandra. John Walsh (GC Education Officer) recipient of the email, also sent in his resignation. I understand that Peter Gates had been seeking advice from the Regional Office about problems he was having and had been told to try and resolve things at local level.

(4) I thought it was stupid of Peter to resign and told him so. Sandra is a special friend of mine, but neither she nor Liz would tell me what happened at their meeting with Peter. Peter agreed to withdraw his resignation and stood again for the GC Secretary post.

(5) Sandra had also been in discussion with the Regional office and had also been told to resolve problems at the local level. Unfortunately, this was not done in accordance with the rules whereby a small Committee of neutral people is appointed to conciliate and report back. I think it was lack of knowledge that induced Sandra to table a list of complaints which Liz then presented to, I think it was, the October GC. It was a long list and difficult to listen to. Accusations and comments bordering on insults were exchanged after which hostilities seemed to get worse.

One of the items on the list of complaints about Peter was that Sandra had told him to cancel the meetings he had arranged for members without consultation but he had only cancelled one where 11 people were signed up. Where 30 were expecting to meet, he had still decided to go ahead and she thought this should be cancelled too. Financing had already been arranged without affecting Party funds. The GC members voted on whether this event should be cancelled, but voted for it to go ahead because there were 30 people involved. The contentious email was not mentioned and many GC members said afterwards that they still did not understand what it was all about. Unfortunately I had been ill and only knew of Sandra's intentions the day before the GC, so my appeal to her that she should deal with things differently came too late. After that meeting, Sandra resigned too and wouldn't listen to my pleadings to stay on in the Chair. Subsequently we elected Gill Aldridge.

(6) When Peter Gates stood again for election to the GC, Richard Crawley nominated Lizzie Edgerton who was seconded by Gary Edgerton. Peter has a disability, dystonia (writer's cramp) which makes writing a problem and needs help taking minutes. When Lizzie was also nominated she was asked if she could take minutes to which she replied "yes". This must have felt like a slap in the face for Peter - a bit like implying that someone in a wheelchair can't run up some steps. Voting resulted in 12 votes for Lizzie and 10 for Peter. Subsequently Peter was re-elected as Secretary for the West Bridgford Branch. (I understand he is now having treatment with injections that help him deal with his problem.)

(6) At the January GC, Richard Crawley and I were there early and I asked him about the wording of that email. Richard told me that it was something taken from a film meaning "I know where you live, I will seek you out and kill you". Richard said it was sent as a joke and he wished he hadn't interpreted it. I was saying I wouldn't consider an email like that to be much of a joke when others entered the room and our conversation ended.

(7) After that, both at the GC and at the West Bridgford Branch, everyone seemed to be working together well. Peter Gates is an excellent organiser. Nadia Whittome, Youth and Student Officer, praised the help and guidance he gave her in setting up the Young Labour group. The February West Bridgford Branch meeting had a total of 57 people in attendance, discussing the Global Economic Crisis, austerity and possible alternatives; also plans for canvassing, campaigning for a yes vote for Europe, visiting registered supporters and recruitment. And we collected over £60 to pay for a meeting costing £40. Everyone seemed to be very enthusiastic. I had begun to think that all the unpleasantness had been put behind us but then that 7th March meeting happened with the suspensions bringing me right back down to earth with a very nasty bump. Some of our best people have been suspended and I worry about it all becoming known in the W.B. Branch.

(8) Also, since the suspensions, other unpleasant things are happening. I received some emails where people may not have realised that I had been copied in. Robert Crosby says that a request from Peter Gates to Gill Aldridge for information re how to help with campaigning was a tactic to destabilise the CLP as Lizzie was claiming that Peter should have asked her, not Gill, and Peter was not recognising her as Secretary. An email from Peter to Lizzie corrects this incorrect assumption. Robert's email ties me in with the allegation. I have yet to tackle him about it. I don't know what happened to Robert; we both supported Sandra for the Chair, we worked together on the Collins report and other things, I can't understand why he now has this hostile attitude towards me. Then at our recent West Bridgford EC some people were saying they would find it difficult to work with the suspended people in canvassing and Lizzie said she was uncomfortable organising a social event where suspended people might attend; we have to find ways to overcome all this. Lizzie has told me that constant petty complaints about minutes and her had been sent to the Regional Office. Peter Gates assured me it wasn't him when I told him that I deplored such action. He said that he deplored it too. That email, interpreted by Richard from some film where it was used for sinister purposes, has been part of all this sorry business which cannot be allowed to damage the Party any further if we are to get over all this pettiness, work together, and present a united front to win the next General Election. I hope the suspensions will be lifted and very soon.

8.2. Statement by Cllr Alistair MacInnes, Member of Rushcliffe CLP EC and Leader of Labour Group of Rushcliffe Borough Council

Summary of key points

- clash of expectations, cultures and personalities
- a wide range of misunderstandings
- the emergence of two loosely formed unofficial groups
- accusations and counter accusations
- a lack of transparency, openness and information
- complaints/allegations to East Midlands Labour Party (EMLP)
- a question about why the EMLP official who took the complaints from the complainants didn't refer the complaints back to the Constituency Party for investigation?
- a failure / breakdown by those charged with maintenance of party discipline and rules of procedure, at branch and constituency level, to enforce the Constitution
- untimely intervention of East Midlands Regional Labour Party
- unwarranted and unreasonable suspensions

Alistair MacInnes Party Background

- Joined the Labour Party in 1979 when I moved to West Bridgford
- GMC delegate for about 26 years, Executive member for 22 years
- Chair of Campaign Group from 1984 until 2010
- Rushcliffe Borough Councillor for 21 years, Leader of Labour Group for 17 years.

Background to suspensions

Many welcomed the influx of new and returning members. They saw it as an opportunity to rejuvenate, rebuild and refresh the Party and the constituency.

Although there was a healthy membership, albeit declining in numbers, the organisation had relied heavily on a handful of hardworking, committed dependable and experienced members. This grouping over time had built up their own way of doing things and perhaps resented the sudden and momentous change. The group is ageing and tiring, the oldest is 88, and there is a requirement for new blood.

There had been no succession planning and the new members arrival offered that opportunity. The number of branches is declining. With new members there was the prospect of revitalising them.

The number of new members attending the first West Bridgford Branch meeting following the Leadership Election was a bit of a shock with over 70 new members present. The majority were very excited about the result of the Leadership election, clearly energised by Corbyn's success. Furthermore, very keen and enthusiastic about getting involved in activities. Amongst that group there were a handful of people who were intensely keen to move things along- very quickly. Being West Bridgford all the people attending were articulate, knowledgeable and skilled people-all with something to offer. Furthermore, the age range was from 18 to 60 with the average age being below 50.

At the second West Bridgford branch meeting a number of speakers spoke up about transforming the party and the constituency by adopting a new way of working. This involved the following:-

- creating a more flexible, responsive and inclusive organisation by reducing bureaucracy and changing the style of meetings, creating opportunities for more members to be involved, particularly in policy making
- Improve engagement with members (newsletters) and the community/public or community meetings and campaigns, newsletters and leaflets
- political education, skills training (canvassing, contact creator etc.)
- and much more.

Ironically a programme that was remarkably similar in objectives to the previously written and forgotten about Rushcliffe Development Plan. 2013.

In the following weeks working groups on a range of activities were established. This included:-

- a fund raising group
- a new campaign strategy group
- training and political education group
- skills audit
- membership group
- communications group

My view is that many particularly, those in executive positions as well as some who were just members of the executive, were resentful/piqued by the changes and the speed with which the programme was being introduced and driven forward and furthermore, the increased amount of work this generated.

A number of members were concerned about the influence and growth of Momentum on the party and saw it as a threat to the Constituency and possibly themselves. A few went as far as saying that some of the new members were "up to no good."

The antagonists divided into two camps, both quite small in numbers.

There were stories, rumours and mutterings about allegations and complaints to East Midlands Labour Party and un-comradely emails being sent. There were charges that some in the Executive were blocking and frustrating developments.

There were suspicions that things were being transacted by key members of the Executive behind closed doors and discussions with EMLP that were not being reported to other members of the Executive. Additionally, rules and procedures were not being correctly followed.

There was a hardening of positions and a breakdown in communications followed by resignations.

Trust was in short supply, suspicion and rumour thrived. Relationships were very uneasy.

However, all this action was taking place amongst perhaps ten or twelve people. The fall-out was a very much a localised affair with the majority of members totally unaware there was a problem. Others sensed the antagonism but weren't sure what the disharmony was about. Information and clarification was in short supply.

By March things had moved on for the better, particularly in West Bridgford. Combatants tired of the wrangling and increasingly aware of the damage it was doing to the unity and effectiveness of the party, on their own accord drew back from the infighting. People started working together and political activity resumed.

The intervention by East Midlands Labour Party Regional Office through its Chair was ill timed as it had the potential to re-ignite the previous disputes and disagreements, which it did. To be fruitful the meeting should have taken place a month or six weeks earlier when there was scope for the complaints to be resolved.

Briefly on the suspensions:

There are procedural questions about: -

- information sent out to delegates i.e. a) it failed to specify that observers were not entitled to attend and b) the meeting notice did not specify the full nature of the agenda item put on by EMLP
- the way the Executive Meeting was conducted, controlled e.g. a) a motion to remove the members from the meeting was not put to the vote.

The majority of those suspended at the meeting did not participate or speak during the agenda item and left quietly at the end of the item when the meeting was suspended.

I hope there will be contributions to the enquiry from people on both side of the issue. It would be helpful and instructive to know what was going on, what was the nature of the allegations and complaints and who was making them - as members do still not know what was going on?

Alistair MacInnes

8.3. Statement by Cllr Keir Chewings, Member of Cotgrave Council and Chair of Rushcliffe CLP (from June 2017)

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NG12 3PQ

Tel: 01159893110
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7th May 2016

Emma Foody
East Midlands Labour Party
Harold Wilson House
Barratt Lane
Attenborough
Nottingham
NG9 6AD

F.A.O. Emma Foody

RE: Submission re Rushcliffe CLP EC 7th March 2016

Thank you for your letter requesting a submission for the above meeting.

I am making the following statement of my own free will and am happy for this to be used in any subsequent investigation / hearing. I would also like to point out that I am willing to attend any hearing in person to give a true account of what took place.

I include in this email an email invite from Lizzie EDGERTON dated 1st March 2016 and agenda which I shall refer to as KRC1.

I found the meeting on the 7th March 2017 to be unusual to say the least. I noted from the email invite (KRC1) that the regional chair Andy FULONG was coming to discuss complaints within the CLP. There was no details in the email of who the complaint was against or even a mention within the agenda about his attendance. This announcement came as news to me, as although I knew personally that there were issues within CLP between members. I had not known that they had been escalated to any complaints.

I would like to point out that as a member of Rushcliffe CLP exec I would expect that any complaint made would follow the complaints procedure and would have been detailed at a previous exec meetings, which firstly I can not recall in any of the meetings that I have attended, and secondly on reviewing agenda's and minutes found again no details of any complaints.

The meeting started 30 minutes earlier and normal business was transacted. After which FURLONG spoke to the exec and announced that he was here to

discuss recent complaints and a way forward. I asked him for terms of reference for this meeting, what were the complaints and also what was the purpose of the meeting. FURLONG seemed unimpressed with my questions and refused to go into detail stating that all would be apparent as the meeting unfolded. I raised my objections in the lack of clarity and information being provided and again asked for my queries to be answered. However he refused.

A short while later Peter GATES, John WALSH and several others attended the meeting. There were questions asked about the legitimacy and purpose of the meeting.

FURLONG stated several times to the members present that Only GATES and WALSH were invited and the rest had to leave. Both myself and Jean STANSFIELD raised objections to this, as our meetings had always been open to members to observe. FURLONG continued remonstrate that the meeting was being unruly and had to be ended.

I recall at this point GATES stated words to the effect ***"I am willing to discuss the matters in a hope that we can resolve these issues and find a way forward, however I will not remain if these witnesses can not stay."*** FURLONG continued to try and stop the meeting at which point he stated that he was closing the meeting. I pointed out to FURLONG that he was a guest at this meeting and he had no authority to terminate the meeting. At this interjector the Chair Gill ALDRIDGE closed the meeting based on unruly behaviour.

FURLONG then told EDGERTON that he wanted sight of the minutes for this meeting before they were sent out to members, again I raised an issue with this as he had no right to interfere with the minutes of the EC.

FURLONG then stated that ALDRIDGE and EDGERTON were to stay behind to discuss what needed to take place next.

I have been a Labour Party member for years and have also sat on the exec for many years. However I found this meeting to be completely alien to what I am used to. We were to discuss matters that we were not given back ground information on. A guest (FURLONG) was present at the meeting, yet seemed to be in control of the meeting, when he had no power or control of this meeting. I also found that the expulsion of members from observing to be completely at odds with my experience. As I have already stated, I have been a member of the Exec for many years, the exec meetings have always been open to members to observe. They have never been closed meetings. I also note that the invite and agenda (KRC1) make no note of the meeting being a closed meeting and could not have observers present.

I found that the persons who attended the meeting to be inquisitive and concerned as to what was going on. Which I personally believe to be understandable due to the lack of information for what the meeting was about and also the irregular conduct of how our meetings are held.

I found the behaviour of the persons who entered the meeting (GATES, WALSH and others) to be respectful and professional. At no point did anybody present behavior that I would class as disrespectful.

I am happy to provide information on any points of this meeting, if you could provide particulars for which you are investigating.

Kind regards,

Keir Chewings
Cotgrave and Cropwell Branch Secretary

9. The Events of 7th March

9.1. Introduction

On 7th March 2016, several officers within Rushcliffe CLP attended a meeting that had been described by Finbar Bowie, an 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 apparently to discuss “*recent complaints and the situation in Rushcliffe CLP generally*”. It was not stated why I had received the invite, nor whether anyone else had received a similar invite. I brought this meeting to the attention of a number of new GC delegates, who were interested in the development of the CLP and eight attended. Prior to this meeting I had not been told anything about why the meeting was called, or 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 call me before 7th March to explain what the meeting was about. This never happened. I informed Finbar Bowie that I was happy to go to Leicester, or wherever else was convenient, to talk to Andy Furlong before the 7th March meeting. No response was received to that offer.

9.2. Background

After attending the meeting on 7th March, all ten members received letters informing them they were “*administratively suspended*” by the Labour Party for their “*behaviour toward a member*”. All ten were Branch delegates to the CLP GC and held officer posts in their respective BLPs. This suspension banned us from attending all Party meetings and from undertaking any elected roles. No further information was provided as to the reasons for suspension. After eighteen weeks, eight of the suspended members received letters lifting their suspensions, but this failed to inform them of the reason behind the suspensions; they still do not know. However, an apology was given by Gordon Pattison, the former East Midlands Regional Director, at a West Bridgford BLP meeting on 24th October 2016. I remain suspended, having had no indication of any allegations and no evidence of any wrong-doing presented to me until 28th July 2017.

There are then a number of questions that arise from this incident.

- What was the status and purpose of the 8:00pm meeting on 7th March, given there was no agenda circulated, and the purpose was never communicated to members of the EC?
- Who referred issues to the EC which, without the knowledge or agreement of the CLP GC, had only just re-formed after its suspension in April 2015?
- Why was the standard procedure for dealing with complaints, as outlined in the Rule Book, not adhered to?
- Who referred the matter to the Regional Board, thus bypassing the procedures laid out in the Labour Party Rule Book?
- Who decided that one of the complainants should take the minutes and why; surely this is very unusual and inappropriate?
- On whose authority, and when was it decided, that the meeting was to be closed to members, and to whom was this communicated?
- Why did the spouse of the CLP Secretary appear at this meeting if it was known to be closed, and why was his attendance not minuted?
- Why were eight elected BLP officers and GC delegates not welcome at the 8:00pm meeting?
- What justification is there to use their attendance as a reason for suspending ten Party members?
- Why was there no vote to close the meeting when I had asked for it to continue and four members of the EC had their hand up to request observers be allowed to stay?
- Why were two members suspended who never even entered the room (Abbott, Burdett)? Why were five members suspended who never said anything (Colley, Caro, Gibson, Kazmi)? Why was one member suspended when she only spoke when given the floor by the Chair (Scudamore)? And why were two members suspended who had been invited (Gates, Walsh)?

Lastly, and an overarching concern is this: a number of people come into the Labour Party committed to “*straight talking, honest politics*” expostulated by its leader. They enthusiastically took up positions of responsibility, worked hard and took initiatives. They then found themselves inexplicably suspended when all they have done is sit quietly in a meeting at which they thought

they were welcome. This seems a strange way for any organisation to treat its new members. Distortions of the events at this meeting have been circulated in emails at both a regional and a national level which claim the members “*attempted to take over*” and “*broke up*” an EC meeting and it shows “*the full details of what took place is in the minutes from the CLP secretary*”. The following minutes indicate that this is far from the truth.

What follows on the following pages are my annotated minutes of that meeting, which were passed onto members of West Bridgford BLP in October 2016 by the then CLP Secretary, Lizzie Edgerton, and which are included in the Charges Pack on pages 57 – 61.

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9.3. Minutes of 7th March Meeting (Pages 57 - 61 of the Charges Pack)

Minutes from GC EC (from 8:00pm) Monday 7th 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 Whittome¹ 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 meeting² 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 complaints³ 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 perspective⁴. 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)⁵ 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.

Andy Furlong said this is a special meeting⁶ 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 participate⁷, Chaired by Gill Aldridge. He said when the invited members⁸ 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 Board⁹

There is no documentation clarifying the re-establishment of the EC and it appears the CLP GC was unaware it had started meeting again. Sandra Coker was present but not on the attendance list. However, if she had resigned as Women's Officer she should not have been attending.

1. Request by Nadia for observers to attend.

2. So attendees do not know what the meeting was about - avoidable had agenda and the purpose been circulated to all those attending ahead of the meeting. But **"it is not a disciplinary meeting in any way"** Why then has this file of evidence now apparently been the basis for my suspension? But **"implode"** suggests greater issues.

3. Why was this **"rash of complaints"** not raised before? Why were complaints not addressed through the GC as outlined in Chapter 6 of the Rule Book? Why had nothing been said to, or been raised with, the invited members or to the GC?

4. All of this might seem a very reasonable procedure had it been made clear to all concerned before the event. It was not. There is no reference at any point to previous information circulated and it appears that this is the first time the EC has been made aware of the situation.

5. Later on, at point 18, it is clear Lizzie Edgerton is one of the two EC members making complaints. To have her taking the minutes would, therefore, seem to be inappropriate and a conflict of interests.

6. There is no documentation stating that this was a **"Special Meeting of the Executive Committee"**. Invited members were informed it was **"A meeting of Rushcliffe CLP"** by Finbar Bowie. Why have a "special" meeting? Is it mediation, investigative, evidence gathering or general discussion?

7. So it was the EC that invited the Regional Board. Why? This is contradicted in the minutes of the next EC meeting.

8. We must remember the "invited members" had been provided with no information as to what would be discussed here. So, how would they be expected to talk for minutes about something they had no prior knowledge of and been quite unprepared? There was no prior documentation provided.

9. Where is the correspondence and why has it not been shown to those attending the meeting? It becomes clear at this point that even members of the EC have no idea who called this meeting or what its purpose was. This suggests they might also be unaware of this **"rash of complaints"**. This does not here answer Keir Chewings's question.

(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 thing¹⁰ 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 correspondence¹¹ 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 individuals¹² (or indeed an administrative intervention against the constituency) is necessary. He said it is on the record because the Secretary¹³ 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 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 before¹⁴ but primarily should be about the Constituency Development Plan and how we move forward¹⁵ – 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 hand¹⁶. 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 each¹⁷, followed by Lizzie Edgerton and Sandy Coker, because they were the people who have put something on the table¹⁸. 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 complaint¹⁹, 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.

10. It is still not clear what this "*sort of thing*" is – though later admitted that two of the EC did know – Lizzie Edgerton and Sandra Coker. But why would it not be appropriate for the GC to be involved and informed?

11. Why was the existence and content of this correspondence not identified? Who is the correspondence between?

12. This contradicts what happened with my being suspended. But why the need for **further** disciplinary action when we are told this is nothing to do with disciplinary action?

13. Later, at point 18, we hear that the CLP Secretary is one of the two complainants. It is highly improper for her to be taking minutes and puts her in a very difficult and invidious situation.

14. At no time has it been clarified "*what has gone before*".

15. This is indeed a legitimate point of discussion for the GC.

16. It would only be at that point those present would be told what the "*matter in hand*" was.

17. I had no idea what the meeting was about (along with most of the EC) so what would I be expected to talk about?

18. The two EC members who had submitted material unbeknownst to the EC, GC and the two invited members presented complaints would know and be prepared

19. At this point I had no knowledge that any complaints had been submitted. This is the first mention of "complaints", though the distinction between formal and informal is unclear. I do know a complaint had been made in November by a further member which appears to have been ignored as that member was not invited. No procedure of resolution of these complaints had been explored (as laid out in the Rule Book) before involving the Regional Board, which must be unusual and improper

At this point several people (10)²⁰ 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 observers²¹. 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.

Andy Furlong said he would address them²² 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 complaints²³. 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 Committee²⁴, 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 grouping²⁵. 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.²⁶

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 Committee²⁷, 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

20. This is incorrect. In fact, only eight people came into the room, two stayed outside then left the building. They were still suspended.

21. At this point, Gary Edgerton entered and sat next to Zbyszek Luczynski. This is not mentioned in the minutes. If this was previously known to be a closed meeting, why did the spouse of the CLP Secretary apparently not know, and why was he not asked to leave immediately?

22. Although the Chair had asked people to leave, before they could do so, Andy Furlong asked to address people, which is why people did not leave at that point.

23. This appears to contradict point 18, where only two people had submitted material. It has never been made clear whether I am a complainant or the subject of a complaint. That was still unknown up to 28th July 2017.

24. Meetings in Rushcliffe have never been closed. Indeed, two observers had been specifically told by the Chair of West Bridgford Branch, Steve Calvert, who was also the previous CLP Secretary elected at the last AGM, that they could attend since meetings were open. This was standard practice.

25. The re-establishment of an EC was not known to the GC.

26. Illustration of a desire for positive moves forward.

27. Indeed, some had not been elected, since the previous EC meeting had been in April 2015: before the CLP AGM.

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 complaints²⁸. He stressed that this was not a disciplinary meeting in any way, that there would be no disciplinary action arising from the meeting²⁹ 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 said³⁰ 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 to³¹. 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 7th 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.³²

28. I had made no complaints other than one resolved by Finbar Bowie. I had not been informed I was the subject of complaints. However, I had informed Finbar Bowie that I would not attend the meeting to discuss complaints as he felt this contravened the Party's rules. It appears this message was not communicated to Andy Furlong.

29. In which case, why were ten people suspended and why am I still suspended?

30. Here I politely raised my hand and asked for permission to speak, which was granted by the chair. It is difficult to see this intervention as anything other than a positive statement on working together.

31. It is unclear whether Andy Furlong had been told before Monday that I had emailed Finbar Bowie indicating I would not attend if the meeting was to deal with complaints as this contravened the Rule Book. It is also unclear whether Andy Furlong had been asked to phone me over the previous weekend as promised by Finbar Bowie, or told that I had offered to go to see Andy Furlong on Monday morning to clarify the purpose of the meeting. (All this correspondence is in writing as between Peter Gates and Finbar Bowie).

32. At this point, the observers were prepared to leave.

Andy Furlong asked the Chair to adjourn the meeting³³. 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 amicable³⁴ 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 invited³⁵, 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 there³⁶ 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 disrupted³⁷ by ten people who had not been invited and was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

33. The minutes do not make it clear that, at this point, four members of the EC *had their hands raised* (Jean Stansfield, Alistair MacInnes, Keir Chewings, Nadia Whittome) and were going to propose the observers be permitted to stay. This is important because it appears to contravene **the CLP's Standing Order 17** - which is consistent with the **Model Procedural Rule 15.2.N.i** in the **Labour Party Rule Book 2016** – suggesting that such actions as closing the meeting should have been put to, and been voted on, by the members of the EC.

34. By this point, it is surely clear this is neither fair nor amicable and could have been dealt with much more professionally.

35. Why would this include me, who had no idea why I had been invited?

36. This has still not been explained or clarified.

37. This is a disingenuous comment. The meeting in total lasted 14 minutes. However, it was not disrupted by people who had not been invited – as it was stated at 32 that they would all leave. Two had been invited (Peter Gates and John Walsh). Six of the observers' names do not appear anywhere in the minutes; they neither spoke, nor interrupted nor did they involve themselves in any way. Two of these members never even entered the room but left the building. This final sentence shows a degree of partiality that is unhelpful in the minutes of a meeting.

9.4. Minutes of the Rushcliffe CLP EC

Monday 4th April 7:30 pm, St Giles.

Those present: Stuart Brodie, Keir Chewings, Richard Crawley (Chair), Robert Crosby, Harry Curtis, Lizzie Edgerton, Bill Logan, Liz Plant, Paul Reedman, Jean Stansfield, Nadia Whittome.

Apologies: Gill Aldridge, Peter Brodie, Steve Calvert, Sandy Coker, Chris Kemp, Alistair MacInnes.

RUSHCLIFFE CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTY EXECUTIVE MEETING

Monday 4th April 2016, 7:30 pm, St Giles Church Hall, West Bridgford

Agenda for the Executive Team

E1: Introduction, confirmation of agenda, apologies for absence – Richard Crawley took the chair and asked if there were any items to be added to (or removed from) the agenda. Jean Stansfield asked that the NEC Elections be added, Lizzie Edgerton asked for the next Social event to be added and Paul Reedman requested Ruddington's Motion on Fracking be added. Bill Logan asked for a discussion on the Development Plan and Standing orders, and Richard Crawley added an item about West Bridgford Branch Officers.

E2: Minutes of previous meeting (Monday March 7th) – There was a discussion on the accuracy of the minutes. Nadia Whittome wanted it noted that under item E4 she has suggested that we send two delegates to Conference and that they should fulfil the criteria of one being a woman and one a young person. She also said the article she had written about Postal and Proxy voting would be for wide circulation, and not just within the Constituency (E6) and that she had sent it to Flinbar Bowie for circulation to all members. Jean Stansfield had some amendments that she wanted to put forward on item E7 as she did not think it was a true record of what had happened – the first was about questioning why observers had not been allowed and the other was that she believed Andy Furlong had closed down the meeting, not Gill Aldridge as Chair. Robert Crosby said he thought what was in the minutes was what happened in the meeting. Keir Chewings said he recalled Andy Furlong making the statement. He also said there was a statement made by Andy Furlong that was not in the minutes regarding the sovereignty of the meeting, that he made it very clear that it was a CLP meeting and that he was there as a guest and he requested that it be added to the minutes. Also he recalled that a request had been put to Lizzie Edgerton by Andy Furlong that he wanted sight of the minutes before they were distributed to members of the Executive. He asked why 'ideally united' was in brackets, and questioned whether Andy Furlong had said it. Lizzie Edgerton clarified that he had, and could remove the brackets. Keir Chewings also questioned the use of the word 'dissent' as it is a subjective term and was open to interpretation. Richard Crawley said that as people were there who were not invited, what they said was not relevant. Liz Plant questioned the statement that Andy Furlong had been invited to the meeting, as she said he had not. She clarified that Regional Office had decided that they were going to have a presence at the meeting and would send Andy Furlong.

The minutes of the 7th March meeting were put to the CLP EC on 4th April. It is clear from the discussion that there is considerable confusion and disagreement over the nature of the meeting and the outcome.

Only Items E1 and E2 are relevant here. Items E3, E4 & E5 are campaign matters not pertinent to suspensions and have been deleted.

Keir Chewings said he had asked that question six weeks ago in an email that had not been answered. Lizzie Edgerton said we had been told that someone was going to come to a GC but that it hadn't been thought it was appropriate because there would be other members there who would not know what was going on. Keir Chewings asked 'who is 'we''. Lizzie Edgerton said 'we' was those people who had been approached to be told Andy Furlong was coming to the meeting. Keir Chewings asked why it had not been thought appropriate to bring that to a meeting of the Executive, and that this was a key point for him. Lizzie Edgerton confirmed that all that had been done was to inform Andy Furlong the meeting he originally said he was coming to was a GC, and that Regional Office had decided to send a representative to an EC meeting. Richard Crawley said he had had the conversation with Finbar Bowie, who had asked for dates of GC meetings and Richard Crawley had suggested to him an Executive Meeting might be preferable to keep the issue more contained. Robert Crosby said the meeting was initiated by Regional Party officials who approached the CLP because they had been in receipt of a lot of correspondence. He said that in his view, Regional Office had been concerned about the situation and the way it was evolving and had approached the CLP to say that a Regional Office representative would attend to discuss complaints that had been made with the main people on both sides of the dispute and would see whether there was scope for the complaints could be resolved. Technically it was our CLP Executive meeting but it was convened with the guidance of Regional Office. A vote was taken on the proposed amendments. The inclusion of a line to say those not invited were questioning why observers were not allowed (proposed by Jean Stansfield and seconded by Keir Chewings) failed by 4 votes to 3. Jean Stansfield asked that it would appear in the minutes that way. At the end of the paragraph at the end of the minutes it was proposed to delete everything after 'leave' and insert 'with Executive Members indicating that they wished to speak, Andy Furlong announced that he was closing down the meeting'. This failed by 4 votes to 2. Jean Stansfield asked that it be recorded in the minutes. Keir Chewings put forward an amendment to include the sovereignty of the meeting as said by Andy Furlong, for it to be recorded that Andy Furlong had requested to have sight of the minutes before they were sent out, to remove the brackets around 'ideally united' and to replace the word 'dissent' with 'disagreement'. A vote was taken on all the above and in each case the motions were carried. Paul Reedman questioned a point of accuracy, that the number of complaints that Andy Furlong had said there were was different on two occasions. Lizzie Edgerton confirmed that this was correct, Andy Furlong had mentioned two different numbers.

Richard Crawley then read a statement that had been authorised by the Regional Director of the East Midlands Labour Party, Gordon Pattison:

'The suspension of the members of Rushcliffe CLP is now being dealt with by East Midlands Labour Party. The Rushcliffe Constituency Party or its officers have no jurisdiction on this matter. Please direct any queries to Gordon Pattison at the East Midlands Labour Party'.

Keir Chewings said he still wished to raise some issues under 'Matters Arising'. He said he had sent an email on March 9th to all the Executive Members, to which he had only had one response, from Robert Crosby, which was to pass it on to Regional Office and Andy Furlong. Keir Chewings said he had raised concerns about the arrangement of the meeting. He said he had received the answer tonight but it had not been made clear before the meeting, nor was it answered in any response to his email, although it was now clear some other members had known the answer, which he found disappointing.

He said he had other questions that he had set out in his email and asked whether they were going to be answered at this meeting or were they to be referred to Regional Office. Richard Crawley said that one of the reasons that Keir Chewings' email had not been answered was that some members of the Executive knew that letters had been issued suspending people and it was not clear whether they had arrived or not. One had arrived after a few days and some days later, so people did not know what they were allowed to say or not say during that time. Keir Chewings asked for clarification as to who those people were, as he is an Officer and did not know. Richard Crawley confirmed he meant those who Keir Chewings had written to. Keir Chewings asked who in the room was aware that the notices of suspension had been sent. He said there is a suspicion that things have been done behind closed doors. He said his issue was that procedurally things have not been going correctly, that complaints had not been dealt with correctly, that he now found out that people were aware of suspension notices going out and again asked who those people were. Richard Crawley confirmed that he was aware and Lizzie Edgerton was aware. Robert Crosby said that he was, and that Gill Aldridge was. Keir Chewings asked if anyone else was. Bill Logan said that although he had not been included in the original email he did subsequently learn that there were suspensions. Keir Chewings said another matter arising for him was that as a result of that meeting ten individuals had been suspended, and wanted to know whose decision it had been to make a formal complaint to Regional Office – did it come from Andy Furlong or did it come from someone within the CLP. Richard Crawley said he believed it came from Andy Furlong. Keir Chewings said he was not happy with what has been taking place, that he felt it is a disgrace that we are not being open and transparent and that there have been some serious omissions from the Rule Book, that any complaints should be sent to the Secretary in a letter, which should then be taken to the Executive, then to the GC, where a vote should take place. He said that then three individuals should be appointed to investigate and report back to the GC, at which point a vote should be taken by the GC as to whether it is happy that there are grounds for a complaint. It is only at that point in time, he said, that it should be taken to Regional Office. Robert Crosby said he would urge people around the table to pay heed to the content of the statement that Richard Crawley had read out and to say that at this stage if people have got any comment or criticism to make of any aspect of this they should direct that to the Regional Director. He said he didn't think we are in a position to discuss some of these issues and did not know why we would want to embark on a discussion at this meeting that we couldn't possibly complete. Richard Crawley said that letters have been sent to the members making it much clearer what they could do and not do, because the first letter was not clear, that we can't do anything about the suspensions now and we cannot get any further with this discussion so he would like to move on to discussing the business of campaigning. Keir Chewings said he had one further issue under 'matters arising' and that was had Andy Furlong made any amendments to the minutes that Lizzie Edgerton had taken. Lizzie Edgerton said she had had no contact with Andy Furlong about the minutes, that he had just requested a copy of them and had not changed them. Keir Chewings asked that this be minuted for clarification.

E6: Date of next meeting – Richard Crawley said it is 2nd May but this is a Bank Holiday and asked if that mattered. He also pointed out that that is the week of the PCC Elections and suggested it would be better to have it the week after, so that we could then be just concentrating on the EU Referendum. This was agreed and the meeting was closed.

9.5. Summary of Events on 7th March 2016

What the minutes and subsequent discussion do seem to indicate is that that the treatment of the observers was heavy-handed and unwarranted, that was no "*bursting in*", there was no "*disruption*"; there was no "*barracking*"; There was no "*refusal to leave*". The minutes of the EC meeting on 4th April 2016 appear to show several members of the EC had no idea why Andy Furlong was invited and by whom, nor what the meeting was for. The minutes clearly indicate there was no attempt to "*break up*" or "*disrupt*" the meeting as has seemingly been reported and which apparently led to the suspensions of ten local Party officers. We had been led to believe by the Regional Office that this was an open meeting of *Rushcliffe CLP* as no information to the contrary had been provided. All observers were prepared to leave before the meeting was closed by the Chair of the Regional Board; it is very clear there was no disruption by observers.

There are a number of apparent improprieties here:

- **First**, it appears this became a meeting of an *Executive Committee* of Rushcliffe CLP, but no such body had met for almost a year, and no meetings of an EC had been reported to the CLP GC; this was not described as a meeting of the EC in the invitation to attend.
- **Second**, it appears that some complaints or allegations have been made, but neither the nature or existence of these complaints have been made transparent, nor have they been dealt with according to Labour Party Rule Book (i.e. by an independent subcommittee of the GC).
- **Third**, the taking of the minutes of this meeting by one of the apparent instigators of allegations (the CLP Secretary) has to be improper.
- **Fourth**, the quite aggressive and uncomradely way the observers have been treated at the meeting and subsequently is both unjust and unbefitting a democratic socialist party.

This leaves the suspicion that there may have been other agendas - and such suspicions have not been alleviated by the silence over the reasons behind the suspensions and, furthermore, the reasons behind the meeting taking place in the first instance - exacerbated by the very different accounts of the meeting. This silence remained for sixteen months after this meeting.

9.6. Fall-out in the West Bridgford Branch

The suspensions in Rushcliffe have not only affected those particular individuals who were inexplicably suspended, but have had considerable negative fall-out in the Branch and the CLP. When Branch meetings reconvened after the elections in September 2016, new members, enthused by Labour's new energy, were confronted with the revelation that Branch Officers, elected by members at the AGM, can be suspended without evidence, without being made aware of their "crime", and with no transparent procedure in place, for months on end. Members were, for the first time since March 2016, able to express their anger, which is very clear from the minutes of the West Bridgford Branch meeting on Monday, 26th September 2016 (see end of **Section 18**). The particular minute – **Item 7** – is reproduced over the page. Cllr Liz Plant describes the process as "*excruciating for all concerned*", pointing out (see **Sections 6** and **9**) that "*the agenda and purpose of the meeting on 7 March was not clear*", a claim supported by Cllr MacInnes.

Some new members have voted with their feet, wanting nothing to do with such an organisation that treats its membership in such an unjust way. Indeed, one makes that very point:

"One member said this was the first meeting he had attended. It gave a very bad impression of the party."

It was this level of members' anger over the injustice of the suspensions, that resulted in the Branch demanding the Regional Director attend a Branch meeting to explain the rationale for suspensions, leading to the exchanges in **Sections 1.2** and **14**. How a series of mendacious and undisclosed allegations, ostensibly from just two individuals, can be allowed to cause so much damage to the Party, is something which should give cause for serious reflection at both Regional and National levels, especially given the acceptance of the recommendations of the Chakrabarti Report at National Conference 2017.

7. MINUTES OF BRANCH MEETING held on 27 June: Agreed.

Matters arising – Suspensions:

Several members wanted to raise the issue of the members who had been suspended.

(Some speakers did not give their names and I was not able to identify them.)

In response to questions Steve Calvert said eight members of the branch were suspended in

March and seven were reinstated in July. Richard Crawley said the seven had been suspended for disrupting a meeting of the CLP Executive Committee on 7 March. Both of them said they had not been at that meeting so they were relying on reports from people who were there.

Linda Burdett said she was one of the members who had been suspended. She did not disrupt the meeting on 7 March and the meeting had not been described accurately. She was still unhappy with the process. She said we need a better mediation system which does not lead to confrontation. (Several members stood to support her and she was applauded.)

Peter Knott said he was not happy about the suspensions.

Brent Abbott said he was also one of the members who had been suspended. He was never told what he had done wrong. All members were prevented from discussing the suspensions. The procedures need to be changed.

Jane Caro said she was also one of the members who had been suspended, and the reason was not made clear. Her daughter had been put off the Labour Party.

Joe Blomefield said the treatment of suspended members should be reconsidered. Nationally some members had been suspended on legitimate grounds, but other members feared there had been a purge.

A member commended those who had already spoken. We had all suffered from this.

A member expressed disbelief. We should be given the evidence.

Zbyszek Luczynski said he was also one of the members who had been suspended. The response was not proportional to the original incident. Warnings would have been more appropriate. The issue should not be brushed under the carpet. Some members of the Executive Committee had wanted the observers to stay at the meeting. Disputes like this should be kept within the branch or CLP.

Another member endorsed what previous speakers had said.

Alistair said agendas for meetings should be clear. The agenda for the meeting on 7 March wasn't.

A member said there should be time limits on suspensions.

Another member said we should move on.

Liz Plant agreed that the agenda and purpose of the special meeting on 7 March was not clear.

The whole issue had been excruciating for all concerned.

Several members suggested that the Regional Director should attend the next branch meeting to explain the suspension procedure.

Richard Crawley said the consensus appeared to be that he should send an email to Gordon Pattison demanding that he or one of his officers should attend the next branch meeting to explain the disciplinary procedures, the reasons for the suspensions, the reasons for the delays, and the unclear letters that were sent to the members concerned when they were suspended and when they were reinstated. This was agreed.

A member said this was the first meeting he had attended. It gave a poor impression of the party.

10. Response to Material in the Charges Pack Relating to Charge 2

The evidence for Charge 2 consists of two sets of documents:

- submissions from a select number of individuals;
- the minutes for the meeting on 7th March.

10.1. Submission from Lizzie Edgerton

Pages 39 - 41 (Page missing between 40 and 41)

I will do my best to provide a response to this series of assertions and allegations. However, the document contains a large number of unsubstantiated and false allegations.

I know you have my original complaints about John Walsh and Peter Gates so this is in response to your letter inviting those involved to supply and further comments or supporting evidence with regard to the Administrative Suspensions in Rushcliffe CLP.

As you can already know from the original complaints, I contacted Regional Office as a new member back in September, having had a bizarre reply to an email I sent to John Walsh not long after I joined the Party and wanted to get involved. I subsequently emailed him to say I was not happy about the way he engaged (or didn't) with me, I didn't like his dismissive attitude to anything suggested and felt disrespected. I told him that I intended to seek advice from the Party about how colleagues should expect to be treated but Peter Gates asked if I would meet with John Walsh to discuss things and I agreed. A meeting was arranged in September 2015 but on the morning Peter Gates 'phoned me to say John Walsh had resigned from the Party. The rest, as know you has become worse and has led to the situation we are now in.

At Regional Conference 2015 Peter Gates was hostile towards me because I voted for Nicki Brookes to the NEC (as I had been mandated to by the CLP) instead of Adele Williams, who he had been promoting with leaflets in the foyer as delegates arrived. He said that the whole thing was a 'fucking farce', and it was at that point that I was clearly out of favour with him.

I have to say it seems very unusual that someone finds it appropriate to contact Regional Office over the tone of an email. However as this is not related to me I shall not comment further.

This was in the middle of the chaos caused by the feud between Lizzie and Gary on the one hand and John and Rachel on the other. I felt the best way forward was through some mediation, which I organised. I even bought the biscuits! This is all discussed elsewhere.

This is discussed elsewhere and is quite a distorted even false account of events. Adele and I both knew we could not vote for each other. We merely produced a joint leaflet.

At no time did I say this.

As I have indicated elsewhere, at this point I felt relations between us were positive and constructive. This story seems to have arisen much later on.

After I was elected as CLP Secretary last year (following Peter Gates' resignation and then his subsequent bid to be re-elected) I received no support in my new role from him. He did not offer any sort of handover, and did not release the CLP printer to me until Richard Crawley acted as intermediary and collected it. Both Peter and John have been openly hostile to me in meetings and via emails, and both have spread malicious rumours and untruths about me to other Party members, both within the Constituency and further afield. We (Gary and I) have had our financial records disclosed in an attempt to make us look dishonest (we had to put a company we were directors of into liquidation after Gary was diagnosed with cancer in 2013 and couldn't work for a year). I am aware that I have been the subject of complaints to other officers, to Regional Office and to the NEC about my conduct and professionalism as CLP Secretary. John Walsh took an issue to the NEC that I did not circulate the agenda for a CLP GC seven days ahead of the meeting, as I sent it after 8:00pm the previous Monday for a meeting starting at 7:30pm the following one, so it was over an hour short of the full seven days. Given that we are all volunteers, with jobs and lives this is ridiculous and is indicative of the extent to which John Walsh goes to try to bully and intimidate me and waste people's time.

Peter Gates and John Walsh have worked in tandem to try to discredit me. After the Keyworth AGM which I attended as CLP Secretary (I went to all AGMs) Peter Gates (although he was not present at that meeting) told Jean Stansfield, (a respected but somewhat gullible member of the West Bridgford Branch) that I had been sent by Regional Office to make John Walsh look foolish so that he would not be re-elected as a delegate to the CLP

As a result of that Jean withdrew her support for me to be a National Conference delegate in 2016. At that meeting I spoke only once, and was shouted down by John Walsh. The Chair, Kevin Fitzgerald, had to tell John Walsh that he

Peter Gates has spent CLP funds on pointless self-aggrandising meetings without contributing toward fundraising. Since we joined the Labour Party last September, Gary and I have organised three successful social events and raised over £2000, but it has been disheartening to see CLP and branch funds (which should be used for campaigning and fighting elections) use to organise meetings that contribute nothing other than having us all talk to ourselves.

I did not "bid" for re-election, I was minded not to accept the nomination after the bullying I had been subjected to.

I have also responded to this in Lizzie's previous email. I had little to tell Lizzie and at no time did she ever ask for any advice or information, which, had she so done, I would have been only too willing to provide.

I am afraid I know nothing about this: the only knowledge I had of Gary's condition was from an email Lizzie sent to several members of the CLP GC and an inflammatory post Gary put on Facebook.

None of this appears to refer to me

I am afraid I know nothing about this allegation. It is ludicrous.

I have to say, as I have said elsewhere, this is an appalling thing to say about one of our most respected members. Jean is razor sharp, having been a Trade Union organiser all her long life. It is uncomradely.

This is a rather astonishing allegation. I had no access to CLP funds and organised no meetings other than GC meetings which are hardly "self-aggrandising" but which were funded in the way GC meetings were funded. I cannot understand why the Treasurer, Bill Logan, is not making this allegation of misappropriation of funds. I discuss this in full elsewhere.

We (Gary and I) have been approached by two members from other CLPs offering to 'mediate' and asking us to drop our complaints against Peter and John. I don't believe (to the best of my knowledge) that any other Rushcliffe CLP members who have made complaints have been singled out in such a way. Those offering to mediate have been led to believe that Peter and John are being hounded out of the Party (by us) because they are on the left or involved with Momentum, but this is not the case. I have been subjected to constant criticism by John and Peter. My Trade Union has advised me that it is classic bullying and has offered to represent me if this goes any further. My professionalism has been undermined, I have been the subject of smears and lies and I have only remained in the role because of the support from some other officers in the CLP. It has affected my life in ways that being a volunteer in a political party should not. I have chosen to avoid certain places e.g. supermarkets in case I bump in to either of them, it has restricted my willingness to campaign and canvass for the Party, sometimes it has made me feel physically sick.

At the meeting on March 7th I felt especially vulnerable when a significant number of people (around ten) came into the room uninvited and refused to leave. Andy Furlong and our Chair, Gill Aldridge, asked them several times to leave the room and there was no option but for Gill to close the meeting (with support from Andy), which she did. Members who were seated with their backs to the door I was facing it) have said they felt threatened and intimidated. Andy Furlong came to that meeting with the intention to try to resolve a difficult situation and he was faced with hostility and bad manners. I was taking the minutes for that meeting. These have subsequently been challenged by Jean Stansfield and Keir Chewings as not being accurate, which again makes me feel undermined, as I try hard to be as fair as possible and to take accurate minutes. Both Keir and Jean have been particularly hostile towards me in meetings following March 7th and appear to be progressing complaints about the administrative suspension process on Peter's behalf in particular

I don't know what hope there is going forward to unite the CLP while ever Peter Gates or John Walsh remain involved. Peter refused to take minutes at Branch meetings and ECs even though he was Secretary, and then amended those taken by other members to reflect what he wanted. For example, at a Branch EC there was a discussion about how to conduct Branch meetings. It was agreed that we would look to have a speaker for the first hour and then to conduct Branch business for the second (so that people who didn't want to take part could leave).

I do not know anything about this. As I have said, I knew nothing of the allegations until 28th July 2017. But, as I have said elsewhere, my impression is mediation and talking usually helps.

I am not aware of subjecting Lizzie to "*constant criticism*" or indeed any criticism. This seems to be another fabrication.

I would have thought a Trade Union would have wanted to see evidence of any bullying before offering to represent a member.

I would say I do agree here that no one in the Party should suffer intimidation. I certainly know what that feels like, having been the subject of a suspension over unsubstantiated allegations and having been banned from Party meetings for eighteen months. I do know Gary Edgerton and Lizzie Edgerton made a phone call to a Cllr Steve Battlemuch, a Nottingham City Councillor, to tell him he did not know how bad we were but, when pressed, could only claim I had sworn at Lizzie at Regional Conference – which of course I had not! I never imagined this was the only conversation they had.

The evidence I have provided in this Response demonstrates that it was not the case that we refused to leave. It is possible that the anxiety Lizzie and Gill were subjected to came as a result of heavy-handed and ham-fisted organisation from the Regional Office.

Andy Furlong was faced with neither of those. He was faced with civility.

The following day Peter emailed all Branch members to say we had decided to drop all formal business. I asked for the minutes from the person who had taken them and they did not record that. I asked Peter four times why he had altered the minutes but he gave me no reply

This is only one example of unilateral decisions that Peter makes and passes them off as democratic decisions. He has shoe-horned people who support him into roles and co-opted them to the EC meetings so that going forward anything he wants he gets. These are (largely) the same people he rallied to interrupt the meeting on March 7th and who now are also suspended.

I know that the Party at Regional and National level expects CLPs to manage their own affairs as far as they possibly can, but I hope it will be able to rule on intimidation and harassment, which I know are not only perceived by me but also specifically by three other females within the CLP (one of these resigned her post as CLP Chair and now cannot face meetings or other Party activities) and a number of other members.

Again, this is a distortion and is all documented elsewhere.

Again, this is untrue. I worked very well with Lucy James, the BLP Minutes Secretary. All minutes were approved, and only one meeting had small changes made with the agreement of the person who took the minutes, Zbyszek Luczynski (see below).

This is all complete nonsense. The minutes have all been approved and are there for all to see. This is so patronising and uncomradely. "Shoe-horning" can hardly be an appropriate description of the democratic elections process that the EC implemented. The only co-option onto the EC I proposed – and which was passed – was our BAME Officer. I think that was justified. Of course, they were the same people! The people who want to play a part in the organisation of the BLP wanted to attend what was believed to be an open meeting about the future of Rushcliffe CLP

There is an unwarranted insinuation here that I intimidate and harass women. This is without foundation and is quite scandalous.

In her allegations, Lizzie Edgerton claims on page 41 of the Charges Pack:

"Peter refused to take minutes at Branch meetings and ECs even though he was Secretary, and then amended those taken by other members to reflect what he wanted."

A remarkably similar allegation is made by Gary on page 45 of the Charges Pack:

"Peter refused to take minutes as Branch Secretary as he said he has a condition which makes it difficult for him to write. Others took the minutes but they were subsequently altered by Peter to reflect whatever he wanted."

What is most remarkable is, were I to have been fabricating all the minutes of meetings, that no one other than Lizzie and Gary ever noticed or made any comment. When I was elected BLP Secretary, we also elected a Minutes Secretary - Lucy James — with whom I worked very well and between us we produced what I think were excellent minutes. On one meeting on 15th February 2016, Lucy could not attend and notes were taken by Zbyszek Luczynski. He circulated his notes, from which I pulled together the minutes, which I circulated. Almost immediately we began receiving "nit picking" emails from Lizzie Edgerton implying I had been changing the minutes. I decided not to engage in these excessive emails, but we received one from Zbyszek:

From: LUCZYNSKI Z [mailto:zbyszek.luczynski@ntlworld.com]
Sent: 20 February 2016 20:07
To: wb.labour <wb.labour@btopenworld.com>; Elizabeth Edgerton <l.edge@me.com>
Cc: liz.plant2 <liz.plant2@btinternet.com>; stevecalvert39 <stevecalvert39@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Agenda for Branch Meeting + minutes

Comrades,

I have not seen enough difference in the two sets of EC minutes for 8th Feb. There may have been differences of interpretation.

I think Steve Calvert's reply is useful in clarifying any differences.

The Agendas of branch meetings need to reflect current issues events and changing priorities and so will always be flexible.

I feel that as branch officers we we need to get on and work together.

So can we go with the Agenda as it is as it has space for reports from officers and Councillors?

Zbyszek

The allegation that I was fabricating minutes is clearly without foundation.

Furthermore, in her allegations on page 41 of the Charges Pack, Lizzie states:

"Peter Gates has spent CLP funds on pointless self-aggrandising meetings without contributing toward fundraising. Since we joined the Labour Party last September, Gary and I have organised three successful social events and raised over £2000, but it has been disheartening to see CLP and branch funds (which should be used for campaigning and fighting elections) use to organise meetings that contribute nothing other than having us all talk to ourselves."

This is quite an astonishing allegation with absolutely no basis in truth. First, I did not organise any CLP meetings other than the November GC meeting at which I resigned. I hardly think that constitutes "*pointless self-aggrandising*". I believe I only made one claim to the Treasurer, Bill Logan, (and this can be checked with him), and that was for photocopying papers for the GC. I gather Bill Logan has made no allegations of any financial impropriety.

As for the West Bridgford BLP, I am not aware of one single person - other than Lizzie here - having anything other than positive things to say about BLP meetings. These were engaging and exciting and much appreciated by members - I received many praises for that.

Between September 2015 (before I was BLP Secretary) and February 2016, we had regular speakers at BLP meetings talking on topics that members had requested in a survey of members. Top subjects requested were: homelessness, refugees, austerity and Trident.

Monday 28th September

Guest Speaker, Stewart Halfordy (Nottingham People's Assembly)

Stewart gave a rousing speech on the origins of Austerity and explained how the Coalition Government had succeeded in giving a firm base to the myth that the crisis was caused by the previous Labour Government overspending rather than weak regulation of international banks. He said that the Tories are continuing their cruel and cunning response to the deficit by hitting the weakest in society. Issues raised in questions included

- The failure of the Labour Party to challenge the myth
- SH's presentation gave an excellent economic analysis of the banking crisis and how it was inappropriate to compare a household economy with that of a nation. Governments can borrow money to invest and create growth.
- The Shadow Chancellor's Conference speech gave hope and it was encouraging that some internationally respected economists were on board.

We need to get the message out to the general public.

Monday 23rd November 2015

Speaker: Louise Regan, The Refugee Crisis or Humanitarian Disaster

Addressed common myths surrounding refugees, eg nobody chooses to become a refugee, refugees are unable to work or claim social housing while their claims are being processed.

- There are @900 refugees in and around Nottingham, of which approx. 500 are destitute.
- Nottingham City and County will resettle 100 vulnerable persons before Christmas.
- Discussion around why refugees have to leave war-torn and economically stricken areas.
- How can Branch members help? Challenge myths at every opportunity; donate to Refugee Forum (www.nottsrefugeeforum.org.uk); apply for mentoring/support schemes.

Connection made between refugee crisis and escalating Syrian conflict. Motion passed to forward to the NEC: *"This Branch calls on the Labour Party NEC to campaign against further bombing of Syria, and to encourage all parties to focus their efforts on a diplomatic resolution."* Action: **Peter Gates**

Monday 25th January 2016

Alexander Rae – Board Member, The Friary Drop-in. Homelessness (20+25 mins)

The Friary on Musters Road (www.the-friary.org.uk) exists to assist local disadvantaged people who are homeless, living in temporary accommodation or vulnerable from long-term unemployment.

Alex has been a Friary board member since 2010 and is a Labour Party member. He spent over 30 years working as a lawyer in central government and his particular interest is access to justice - or more accurately the lack of it. Many of The Friary service-users have chaotic private lives. Legal aid cuts have meant that it is now very difficult for them to challenge relevant authorities, e.g. DWP or local councils or gain access to children living with an ex-partner.

This talk will present a brief history of The Friary, but also some thoughts to the possible causes of homelessness etc. how do people end up coming to The Friary. What the Labour Party might do, and what its members might do? How can we do something practical to help some people's lives? What political pressure might we bring to bear, what campaigns we might consider locally.

There will be a collection for The Friary at the end of the meeting

Monday 22nd February 2016

Speaker: Andreas Bieler - Global Economic Crisis: Austerity and the Possibility for Alternatives

We are often confronted with the argument that in times of economic crisis and high levels of public debt, austerity is the only possible economic policy. I will challenge this understanding and assert that there is always a range of possible policy alternatives. Looking at austerity policy from a political economy perspective, we can unmask austerity as a project by powerful interests of capital, who use it in order to justify further restructuring. Against the background of a crisis of over-accumulation, capital attempts to open up the public sector for private investment and undermine trade union power further. By contrast, viable alternatives around an agenda based on social justice may include a strengthened public sector, a more progressive income tax regime, a better enforcement of corporate taxation and the scraping of costly and outdated defence projects such as Trident.

Andreas Bieler is Professor of Political Economy and Fellow of the Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice in the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Nottingham. He is currently also the Vice President of the local University and College Union.

Discussion: After Andreas' talk and Q/A, we will divide into break-out groups for discussions on campaigning and policy issues, including member engagement, Energy, Defence, Europe, Economic and any other topic members want to discuss.

10.2. Submission from Gary Edgerton

Pages 42 - 46

This document is largely a repeat of the document on pages 11 - 14 of the Charges Pack and makes largely the same allegations made on pages 11 - 14. I have responded to these already in this Response and I see no reason to repeat that here as I have been able to totally dismiss the allegations elsewhere. I will only cover the main issue as far as I can make them out that are made.

There is no evidence of harassment on my part or of "*systematic misogyny*". Indeed, far from it. I have gone out of my way to encourage women members to participate and take up positions which Gary Edgerton describes as "*shoe-horning*".

I do not know where the specific quotes come from about "*The Edgertons*" or "*...determined to hound out left wingers...*" made by Gary Edgerton on page 43 of the Charges Pack.

I admit to being friendly towards Gary and Lizzie as claimed on page 44 of the Charges Pack; I am indeed generally friendly to most people. I am not sure that is a failing or a characteristic to suspend me from the Labour Party.

The minutes of EC meetings are included here. All reports I was given were included. If Gary made no contribution, nothing can be added. Apart from the skills survey and Political Education ("PE") plan, which were both largely undertaken by Zbyszek Luczynski, I am not aware of any other PE activity Gary undertook, something which Zbyszek Luczynski has confirmed, that the work of the survey and the political education plan was undertaken by Zbyszek Luczynski not by Gary Edgerton. I would say however, that the social events that Gary and Lizzie organised were phenomenally successful.

On page 46 of the Charges Pack, Gary Edgerton talks of BLP meeting structure. That is something I have dealt with at the CLP level elsewhere in terms of the false allegation made by Lizzie Edgerton on page 41 of the Charges Pack. Gary claims on page 46:

"Peter Gates attempts to run the West Bridgford Branch as if it is a CLP, has plundered the funds to put on meetings that, without any formal business (which was NOT agreed by the EC) makes it nothing more than a debating society."

Gary may not like the desire of the membership to debate politics and party policy (which I have shown here actually was agreed by the EC), but, when members decide democratically to do something, then it is not up to Gary Edgerton to act in a somewhat authoritarian fashion to deny them that opportunity. To claim, with no evidence and no financial statement, that I "*plundered the funds*" is quite simply a ludicrously false allegation as the Treasurer will bear out. No money ever went through me. I merely organised BLP meetings according to the programme agreed with the EC.

I think this refers to a decision by the West Bridgford BLP EC to change the structure of BLP meetings from a fundamental "*Minutes, Matter Arising, Reports*" structure (criticised by Tom Watson at the Regional Conference) to one where members could engage in Labours' political programme through discussion of key policy areas. Gary was not able to attend this meeting. The particular issue in discussion is reported in the minutes as follows:

B7. STRUCTURE OF BRANCH MEETINGS

- After some discussion we endorsed a structure of having two parts to branch meetings. The first with a speaker followed by discussion in break out groups for the first hour, followed by reports on activities/business. These Officers reports would need to be written and reproduced in our on line Newsletter.

Action Mark Communications Officer.

B8. COUNCILLOR REPORTING TO BRANCH

- After some discussion it was agreed that Councillors produce written reports to Branch meetings. Major issues could be raised for discussion when needed.

Action all Councillors

However, this was not a new feature of BLP meetings. Indeed, at the BLP meeting on 26th October 2015 (before I was BLP Secretary), Liz Plant (Chair) and Steve Calvert (Secretary) organised break-out groups for members in the first part of the meeting before formal business — as can be seen from three minutes in **Section 18**.

1. Introductions and Apologies

Apologies

2. Breakout Session.

Members formed themselves into four separate groups to discuss why they joined or rejoined the Labour Party and what they wished to get from the branch meetings. After a 35 minute session each Group gave a brief feedback. Notes of each discussion were taken and these will be summarised at the next Branch meeting.

Action SC

3. Minutes and matters arising from the previous Branch meeting (28th September 2015)

Minutes agreed.

4. Minutes of Branch Executive Meeting (12th October).

Minutes agreed

Indeed, this is *still* the structure in West Bridgford BLP meetings, as can be seen in the agenda of the meeting on 25th September 2017 in **Section 18**. It seemed Gary did not agree with a democratic decision. What transpired was a rather aggressive and hostile pair of emails from Gary Edgerton to members of the West Bridgford BLP EC, which might have been cleared up much more comradely. Noticeably, no one reported Gary to the Regional Office for hostile and intimidatory excessive correspondence. We tried to resolve it in a much more comradely fashion.

From: Gary Edgerton

Sent: Thursday, 18 February 2016 22:58

To: Liz Plant, stevecalvert39@gmail.com, Bill Logan, Elizabeth Edgerton, Sandy Coker, peter.gates3@btopenworld.com, LUCZYNSKI Z, Colin Gibson, Richard Crawley, Gary Edgerton

Dear Executive Officers and Delegates

Sending this to the WB Branch Officer and Delegate addresses I have.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the Executive Committee WB Branch meeting on Monday 8th February but I have seen the e-Newsletter which was sent out on Thursday 11th, before the minutes were written up (I believe by Zbyszek), distributed or agreed, and I'm astonished that our executive apparently has decided to no

longer have Branch business discussed at the Branch meeting - 'We felt too much time was spent on routine business and reports, and have agreed to drop that from the Branch meetings moving it to electronic means and the Executive meetings'.

It is an essential component of our Party's democratic decision making process that we do discuss business with the membership. This is one of the fundamental differences between our party, groups like the Communist Party of Great Britain and, for example, the SWP, that we don't decide things by executive committee and that the information that goes to support the decision making process is made available to and discussed by the membership.

Is this really what we've decided to do, unilaterally as a Branch, go against our constitution?

On the WB Branch Agenda, 'Campaigning, Policy and Member Engagement'. I don't remember anybody being assigned to put together plans or operate in this role in anyway.

Again on the WB Branch Agenda, when did we decide to 'divide into break-out groups'? I know from experience exactly what syndicate groups can be used to do - divide opinion and produce selective outputs which can then be subject to control and worse manipulation in order to arrive at predefined results. Have we decided that this is how we are going to proceed?

Regards

Gary

On 18 February 2016 at 23:42, PETER GATES <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com> wrote:

Gary, as you say, you weren't at the meeting, and seem to be misinterpreting what went on. The purpose of the changes we discussed was entirely to engage the membership in political discussion. Something we all agreed was central to the democratic socialism of the party. The break-out groups is widely felt to be one of the most positive things we have done in branch meetings - something which is often referred to in positive terms. The quote you have copied talks not of "branch business" but "routine business and reports". Those two are different. That's what you seem to be misinterpreting.

We are still working this all through and it's important I believe we all remain united in bringing the members back into the party structures and activity. That's what it is all about. I've copied more people in who were at that meeting.

Peter.

Peter Gates

On 19-02-2016 08:41, Umaar Kazmi wrote:

Dear Gary,

I think what Peter said pretty much sums this up: you seem to have entirely misinterpreted what happened at the meeting. Perhaps it would have been better for you to seek clarification first, but never mind.

As far as I observed, no *actual* decisions were made about this. We had an inclusive discussion about how we *may* go forward with our branch meetings. I think we can agree unanimously that the meetings are not structured very well at the moment and are not particularly engaging for members.

We discussed a range of proposals, all of which were interesting, and there were many who agreed and disagreed. That is all it was from my perspective. I also do not for a moment believe that anyone has any intention—whatsoever—of following a Communist Party/ SWP model for branch meetings. I could be wrong, but I highly doubt it.

The majority are also of the opinion that break-out groups are helpful, allow more people to have a voice and are not divisive. Again, this is a *proposal*: one that I believe we should strongly consider. Your description does not resonate with me and I am sure it would not with most people.

Sorry to be blunt, but I just think what you wrote was neither representative of what transpired nor helpful. As I said, clarification is the key.

Yours sincerely,

Umaar Kazmi

On 19-02-2016 11:19, Marc Gibson wrote:

Hi Gary

I'm sorry you feel astonished (perhaps 'alarmed'?) about what appears to have been a diminution (rather than extension of) the say of the membership.

I entirely agree that it's terribly important that the business of the party is open and transparent to members, but I think my understanding of this was that it was about increasing the say of the membership (rather than handing over that say to the CPGB or SWP central committee somewhere). The point of it being, as Mia notes below, to increase the participation and involvement of the membership in the decision making process - and really not the opposite.... so it's really good to see that we're all, really (imho), singing the same tune and on the same page - quite clearly.

Kind regards

Marc

From: Btmail [mailto:mariacolley314@btinternet.com]

Sent: 19 February 2016 08:39

To: PETER GATES

Cc: Gary Edgerton; liz.plant2@btinternet.com;

stevecalvert39@gmail.com; william.logan3@ntlworld.com; l.edge@me.com;

s.coker@ntlworld.com; zbyszek.luczynski@ntlworld.com;

c.gibson12@ntlworld.com; Richard.crawley2@gmail.com;

iandmmunro@sky.com; Umaar Kazmi; marcgibson@hotmail.com; Lucy James;

jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com; nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk

Subject: Re: WB Labour Newsletter Feb 2016 and WB Branch Agenda

Thanks for copying me in. My understanding as an observer at that meeting was that people can read reports, leaving more time for discussion of the issues. It seems obvious that so much time is taken up going through reports, that meetings either overrun or eliminate time for discussion, debate, and decisions on the ways forward. The latter part seems to me to be a strong part of what democracy is about.

Break out groups give everyone a voice, in a discussion that can't be managed in one group. Ultimately this leaves voting as a larger group activity. This is a way of ensuring that everyone who wants to be engaged can be. Alternative suggestions I expect our welcome to the chair, but response has indicated that the break out groups are seen as useful.

We are also providing alternative means of communicating, as I know that meetings are not something every member can get to, I have already a response to that effect) but it doesn't mean all members wish to remain without influence. For example, it is intended that very shortly files will be kept on the closed Facebook site. The newsletter invites views of the wider membership that should be considered at branch.

I hope this viewpoint allays some of the fears you voice.

Regards

Mia

From: Gary Edgerton [mailto:gary@two-edge.com]
Sent: 20 February 2016 08:01
To: Umaar Kazmi <umaarkazmi@gmail.com>
Cc: PETER GATES <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com>; liz.plant2@btinternet.com; Steve Calvert <stevecalvert39@gmail.com>; william.logan3@ntlworld.com; l.edge@me.com; s.coker@ntlworld.com; zbyszek.luczynski@ntlworld.com; c.gibson12@ntlworld.com; Richard.crawley2@gmail.com; iandmmunro@sky.com; mariacolley314@btinternet.com; marcgibson@hotmail.com; Lucy James <lucyajames@hotmail.com>; jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com; Nadia EW <nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk>
Subject: Re: WB Labour Newsletter Feb 2016 and WB Branch Agenda

Dear All

Thank you very much for your responses over such a remarkably short timeframe. Sorry I was unable to get back sooner.

Building the membership is an objective I absolutely share. I am also of a mind that as we build membership people are able to join a democratic party that has in place viable apparatus and structures for actually getting things done.

Things may not be as perfect as people may like in all instances but again the Party has processes and policies for changing things if necessary. I feel strongly that getting behind mere enthusiasm is too high a price for ditching structures that have been built up for over a century, structures that we have inherited, structures to which we as officers and delegates have been entrusted.

As I pointed out, I wasn't at the EC so I can only base my view upon what appears in the minutes and what went out to members via the 'e-Newsletter'. The minutes I originally saw were the minutes as drafted by the minute taker and these are at odds with the minutes put out by the Branch to EC officers and delegates. This I cannot account for. It seems to me that the EC minutes have been put out not as an accurate record of what was said but rather an interpretation of what should have been said.

Further, although a different version of the minutes to the one I originally saw has been circulated to officers and delegates - with the caveat that they have not yet been agreed - the members of the Branch were told in the 'e-Newsletter' that we have agreed to drop formal business.

Something else we do, or rather did (as it now seems), was to agree minutes of meetings at the beginning of the meeting. This happens for a reason. I see that according to the agenda for Monday this won't be happening and again I don't see anywhere in the minutes (either version) where that was agreed.

I would like to thank Umaar for pointing out, in relation to the EC, '...no actual decisions were made about this', i.e. changes to Branch structure, 'We had an inclusive discussion about how we *may* go forward with our branch meetings.' So there was no agreed (voted upon) course of action yet still the entire structure of the Branch meetings has been changed (again, to your point Umaar, this wasn't a misinterpretation on my part and this was the point upon which I was seeking clarification. Thank you once again).

With specific reference as to the efficacy of debating policy et al in syndicate groups or as a single entity, we can (and do) have differences of opinion and this is an example of just that. Even if I disagree with a particular approach, point of policy or strategy, if it is a democratically agreed position then I will completely get behind it but if it's not then it's still moot.

To reiterate, if we arrive at a democratic decision then I am behind it all the way, however, if we start to make decisions unilaterally by fiat at an executive level then we set a very dangerous precedent. Unfortunately this does seem to be a growing tendency within our Branch but, again, that might just be my interpretation.

Regards

Gary

From: PETER GATES [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 20 February 2016 13:10
To: Gary Edgerton <gary@two-edge.com>
Cc: Marc Gibson <marcgibson@hotmail.com>; Btmail <mariacolley314@btinternet.com>; liz.plant2@btinternet.com; stevecalvert39@gmail.com; william.logan3@ntlworld.com; l.edge@me.com; s.coker@ntlworld.com; zbyszek.luczynski@ntlworld.com; c.gibson12@ntlworld.com; Richard.crawley2@gmail.com; iandmmunro@sky.com; Umaar Kazmi <umaarkazmi@gmail.com>; Lucy James <lucyajames@hotmail.com>; jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com; nadiawhittome@yahoo.co.uk; jane caro <janevcaro@yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: WB Labour Newsletter Feb 2016 and WB Branch Agenda

Thanks Gary. I note the points you make but I have a different understanding. We have procedures in the branch for dealing with such things and I intend to follow those.

Peter

Peter Gates
Branch Secretary.

I decided not to engage in what was becoming unnecessary correspondence but to make it clear that we have democratic procedures through which decisions are made. It is quite ironic, therefore, that it now becomes me who is accused of sending excessive emails out of hostility.

I did not want to engage in this, especially with Gary Edgerton's use of passive-aggressive language. I instead referred the issue to Jean Stansfield who would be chairing the West Bridgford BLP meeting, given the absence of Liz Plant.

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 19 February 2016 18:12
To: Jean Stansfield <jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com>
Subject: WB Branch Agenda

Jean,

I'm writing to you as Vice-Chair of West Bridgford Labour Party because both Steve (Chair) and Liz (Vice Chair) are away on holiday and I think they deserve a break. Also I understand you will be chairing the Branch meeting on Monday.

I feel I have to say, Jean, that Gary's email (below) was quite improper and uncomradely. I would go further and say it was rather unnecessarily hostile. I notice you were not copied in to the email which went to a rather select group of officers. I did however grant you the courtesy of copying you into my brief reply.

I do not want to make a big thing of it Jean as some other officers have already responded. It does however give a very bad impression of the party to new members if people are allowed to get away with such unacceptable behaviour. I am working very hard to bring the local party together and bring in new people excited by the possibility of Labour victories. Gary's email does nothing to help that process. Part of me is suspicious that this is the intention; I am at a loss to understand the motivation but this is not the first time.

I also do not want this to cause trouble at the branch meeting just as we are looking to engage members in political debate. Gary is, when all said and done, only one member of a 10 person executive.

I am happy with you circulating this message to whoever you feel appropriate. I will forward it to Steve and Liz when they finish their holiday.

My best wishes, and I'm sorry to have to write to you on a matter like this; it ought not to be necessary in today's Labour Party.

Peter

Peter Gates

From: jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com [mailto:jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com]
Sent: 20 February 2016 10:02
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Subject: Re: WB Branch Agenda

Yes Peter, I did see that stuff and other people's responses. Don't worry, it can be dealt with if it comes up on Monday.

Cheers, Jean.

From: jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com
Sent: 21 February 2016 12:21
To: PETER GATES [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Subject: Re:

Hello Peter,

I will be at the meeting early tomorrow so we can discuss the order of business. It seems there will be extra items and timing needed to be carefully arranged to fit in to the two hours. Do you have any idea of the title of the groups arising from the speakers talk? And how many there will be?

Jean.

From: PETER GATES [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 21 February 2016 15:18
To: jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com
Subject: Re:

Hi Jean. I don't think there will be groups arising from the talk. That will be just Q/A.

After that I'll introduce the next part which will be the group discussions. I've asked Lizzie to talk about the EU from the CLP position and Ian wants to talk about campaigning. Both will be part of the introduction to group discussions.

I think members should be encouraged to get into a group to discuss a policy area of their choice to feed back. I think we need :

1. Engaging members. Visiting members and supporters.(IAN and Linda Burdett)
2. EU Campaign. (Maybe 2 or more groups)
3. Affordable housing.
4. Defence and trident
5. Energy and fracking
6. Anything else ??

I will prepare some questions for each group and they will feed back on issues, campaign strategies, briefings. We will circulate these to all members and look to set up. Policy groups in those areas.

We want an EU coordinator for the branch.

Then we move into the "business " part" of the meeting for 15-20 mins?

Minutes of branch meeting which I'll bring.
Report if exec meeting which I will do verbally
Councillor reports.

Ok?

Peter Gates

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com [mailto:peter.gates3@btopenworld.com]
Sent: 21 February 2016 17:57
To: Jean Stansfield <jean.stansfield1@ntlworld.com>
Subject: Tomorrow.

Jean, here are the documents for tomorrow. Don't worry, I will have copies etc.

1. The agenda
2. A task sheet for discussion group with questions. (I might go on thinking about questions! so I might change a bit)
3. Branch Minutes
4. Gary wants the PEO report to go - but since it ties in well with the activities it fits well
5. My notes of the exec meeting - I will verbally report
6. A sign-up sheet that I have done for the Discussion Groups

I hope that is ok.. feel free to make suggestions, but I will be copying these before lunch tomorrow. I think it's all about members talking politics!!

The issue for the chair is timing - but I'll leave that to you to judge at the time. Be good to finish at 9:30

I hope you are well Jean. I spent a bit of time with Ian yesterday at the Rally, and Rosa in Specsavers!!

Peter

Peter Gates

Over the page is the feedback sheet I designed for the structure of the discussion between members and to help the BLP move forward. Sadly, none of any of this came to pass as, two weeks later, we were all suspended.



Branch Meeting 22nd February

Group Discussion Questions & Feedback

- 1. What are the key issues around this policy area?**
- 2. What should the Party policy be on this area?**
- 3. What are the challenges in campaigning on those policy positions?**
- 4. On what and how should the Branch campaign?**
- 5. What resources might be needed?**
- 6.**
- 7.**

Feedback

10.3. Submission from Robert Crosby

Pages 47 - 48 (A Page is missing between 48 and 49, which I requested)

Only the first two paragraphs affect me so I will just address those.

Three, in particular, of those who were suspended following the meeting on 7 March - namely Peter Gates (West Bridgford Branch), John Walsh (Keyworth Branch) and Rachel Scudamore (Keyworth Branch) have, in my opinion, sought to exploit the dramatic expansion in membership in Rushcliffe to disrupt the operation of the CLP and pursue their own particular personal/political agenda(s). They have sought to intimidate and bully and sap the energy and enthusiasm of a number of other Party members. These include the former CLP Chair and current CLP Secretary (both of whom are women) for sustained periods and the current CLP Chair (also a woman) when they and others disrupted the planned meeting of the Committee, Regional Chair and suspended members on 7th March

I have concluded that Peter Gates is a: dishonest and highly manipulative individual. He has, from the outset, sought to use Party's Rule book as a weapon to disrupt meetings and unsettle other members. He has continually attempted to undermine our CLP Secretary, Lizzie Edgerton — largely but not exclusively by e-mail - since her election (in succession to him after he resigned) and following, I understand, an unsuccessful attempt by him (that she thwarted) to ignore the CLP's mandate to them both as delegates to the Party's Regional Conference charged with casting the CLP's vote for particular candidates standing for election to the Regional Board. He has sought to create division and encouraged particular members of the CLP to express disquiet and become suspicious of other members and Party officials without justification.

Peter has cynically used Party meetings before his suspension and social media since (he has continued to post on the West Bridgford Branch Facebook page as if nothing has happened) to try to persuade some members that he only wants to behave in a "comradely" manner and work with others for the good of the Party but those sentiments have been conspicuously absent throughout his relentless e-mails to and pressure that he has visited on successive CLP officers and in his attempt to manipulate the circumstances surrounding both his own and others' administrative suspensions when he encouraged recipients of letters to refuse to accept them (presumably in the expectation that those actions would somehow render the suspensions invalid).

I am not aware that I have ever given Robert any reason to be so vitriolic. This paragraph appears to be based on second-hand information, rather than based upon observation as he points to no specific incident, or evidence to support his allegations here – all of which I naturally reject.

I am unaware of any intimidation, and no one has been able to point to any such act or behaviour to me at any time.

I think this is quite an uncomradely thing to say to a party member especially on the basis of no evidence. The claim here is unsubstantiated and surely if I were to have been "*continually*" undermining Lizzie Edgerton, surely someone would have noticed and said something, if not at a meeting then to me privately. No one ever did.

As I have discussed elsewhere, this is untrue. Yet, Robert is acting on false information without bothering to check it out. Someone appears to have been feeding Robert false information.

It is not me who has been creating division. Far from it. Even when I call for us to work together in campaigning, I am accused of "*grandstanding*" or seeking to "*undermine*" the CLP.

Yes, I have posted on social media – these were all photographs of a campaigning session during Police and Crime Commissioner ("PCC") and EU canvassing (see below). In fact, it was not stipulated in my suspension letter that I should not post on Facebook or campaign. During the whole of my 17-month suspension I have actively campaigned most vigorously for the PCC, EU Referendum, Liz Plant, Nadia Whittome, the General Election in various wards of the constituency. I do not think I have to "*try to persuade some members*" that I only want to work for the good of the Party. Most people are well aware of that.

Where are these "*relentless emails*"?

Again, this is ridiculous. I did not even refuse to accept my own letter of suspension.



**Campaigning in Cotgrave in the EU Referendum:
Peter Gates (West Bridgford), Keir Chewings (Cotgrave),
Stuart Brady (Radcliffe), Steve Calvert (West Bridgford),
Kathy Topping (Ruddington), Beryl Whitehead (West Bridgford).**

Is this such a heinous crime? Wanting to work with other members
to support Labour in a comradely manner.

Robert claims on page 48 of the Charges Pack:

"[Peter] has, from the outset, sought to use the Party's Rule Book as a weapon to disrupt meetings and unsettle other members."

Firstly, I am not aware of what this refers to, as I have never personally used the Rule Book, nor any other tactic to disrupt and unsettle members and no such event is apparent in the minutes of any meeting. But, worryingly, this is the first time I have heard that referring to the Labour Party Rule Book might be contrary to the operations of the Labour Party. It does, however, raise questions about the cavalier way the Rule Book might be perceived by some CLP officers — an issue recognised by the East Midlands Region.

Thereafter on the missing page Robert claims:

"[Peter] misused membership data for the purpose of canvassing support amongst CLP members and to promote suspicion of CLP officers and Regional Party staff. The three of them synchronised the sending of an e-mail from their respective e-mail accounts around 10pm on the evening of Thursday 17 March to different lists of members that they had assembled specifically for this purpose."

Robert is very wrong here and I do not know where he might have received this false information as I have absolutely no idea what he is talking about. I sent a message to some West Bridgford BLP members of the Rushcliffe CLP GC, all of whom were friends and whom I knew personally, pointing out the re-establishment of the CLP EC all of which is discussed in **Section 5.2**.

Furthermore:

"I believe that Lizzie Edgerton in particular has now been subjected to a sustained and completely unacceptable barrage of harassment."

This again appears to be second-hand information ("I believe..."), and I have not been made aware of any harassment of Lizzie Edgerton, particularly a "sustained and completely unacceptable barrage". I have certainly not engaged in any harassment of any members, and would condemn such behaviour — as someone who has been harassed myself.

Lastly:

"[Peter has] campaigned, lobbied and misrepresented the actions of CLP officers to EC members, GC delegates and members in Branches, some of whom have clearly been taken in by their deception."

I personally find this quite an unacceptable and patronising comment to make about Party officers — indeed EC members, GC delegates and members. I am not sure I have that power, charisma or influence. I feel I might retort by suggesting that it is possibly Robert who has been taken in by deception. I find Robert's submission very strange, as my own exchanges with Robert have always been characterised by professionalism and politeness, for an example of this see **Section 25**, where I engage with Robert over the 16th November 2016 GC. At that meeting, I particularly welcomed how Robert tried to calm proceedings down and pull the GC together. I notice in his submission that Robert provides no personal accounts but merely second-hand reports. I do believe Robert has been provided with false and distorted information and has drawn the wrong conclusions in the absence of evidence.

10.4. Submission from Richard Crawley

Pages 49 - 50

As Richard was not at the meeting on 7th March meeting, he has nothing to contribute.

10.5. Submissions from Linda Burdett/Brent Abbott

Pages 51 - 53

It is rather difficult to see why only a submission from Linda Burdett and her partner, Brent Abbott, is included in this Charges Pack, when none of the other submissions from suspended members or EC members have been included. To rebalance that, I have included other submissions in this Response (See **Sections 7 and 8**).

Linda and Brent are stalwart Party members, and I do not think one will find a single person who has a bad word to say about them. I have already outlined the work they did for the Party. What has happened to them has been a travesty over which the Party needs to seriously reflect.

What is clear from this submission is the understanding that meetings were open to all members. Indeed, Linda had been informed by the previous CLP Secretary, Steve Calvert, that it was fine to attend. This matches my own understanding - as indeed I was told at previous CLP GC meetings where I was welcomed to attend even before I was a GC delegate. At no time was it ever stated that such a meeting was not open. However, as Linda makes clear, she and Brent **never even went into the meeting!** Yet they were administratively suspended for seventeen weeks and now have warning letters on their file. That surely cannot be right.

Furthermore, it appears from what Gary Edgerton told Linda, he had deliberately intended to attend the meeting even though he was not invited, making a special journey to do so. This contradicts what he claims himself on page 63 of the Charges Pack, but indicates even he thought the meeting was open to observers.

Linda's final paragraph is just heart-wrenching, indicating the damage done to loyal and committed Party members by this whole business:

"It was made clear in Emma's letter of 4th April that we are not allowed to discuss the suspension with other Labour Party members, which includes many close friends. This has put a huge strain on me and led to further sleepless nights. After complaining that we were not receiving details of canvassing and social events I was told by Emma that these decisions were up to the CLP executive. I am distressed that someone in the CLP Exec. decided to exclude us from these activities. I expressed my disappointment in this to Emma and I am now receiving that information. However I have lost faith in some members of that Committee and feel uneasy about future relationships"

The Party should hang its head in shame over what it has done to such loyal and dedicated Party members.

10.6. Submission from Andy Furlong

Pages 54 - 56

I very much welcome the report by Andy Furlong as it clarifies a number of points. What is still unclear from his contribution is how it came to pass that someone thought it appropriate to invite me to a meeting without clarifying the purpose of that meeting beforehand. This was a question asked by both Cllr Keir Chewings and Cllr Liz Plant in GC EC meetings. It was never answered. In the minutes of the CLP EC meeting on 4th April 2016:

"Liz Plant questioned the statement that Andy Furlong had been invited to the meeting, as she said he had not. She clarified that Regional Office had decided that they were going to have a presence at the meeting and would send Andy Furlong."

It therefore remains unclear just who was communicating with the Regional Office. Andy Furlong outlined his purpose in attending the meeting as follows:

"I joined the EC meeting at 7.50 pm and made a short statement re the approach that I intended to take. I emphasised that the primary focus would be on the constituency development plan and I wanted to discuss objectives, actions and targets for the CLP in the lead up to the Nottinghamshire County Council elections in 2017. It was my intention to talk about membership development, increasing member participation in campaign activity, fundraising and the important role that Rushcliffe needed to play in maintaining political control of Northamptonshire County Council; Good governance and organisation is a necessary part of this process, hence the need for mediation by a Regional Board Representative with the aim of resolving the conflict between several members of the CLP that had been ongoing since the autumn of 2015. I made the point that I had deliberately avoided dialogue with any of the complainants in the interests of fairness."

What is not clear is why there is a confounding of a discussion of the CLP Development Plan with an attempt to deal with what he describes as a long-running conflict within the CLP. I was not aware of an ongoing conflict and, as I have been at great pains to discuss elsewhere, at this point I had no idea any complaints were being made. There had certainly been no mention at meetings nor any attempt to resolve any difficulties. It may well be that Andy Furlong had been poorly informed as to the actual situation and was acting under what he felt was reliable information; it turns out that it was not, as the majority of the members of the EC were not even aware of the reason for Andy Furlong's attendance. I am now very suspicious indeed of the purpose behind deliberately keeping me in the dark.

I do believe that Andy made an error of judgement in not talking to the complainants before the meeting. Given only two of the complainants knew anything about complaints (Lizzie Edgerton and Sandra Coker), this only exacerbated the unfairness with the resultant confusion on 7th March 2016.

There are two aspects of Andy Furlong's comments that I think need to be analysed: the claims he makes and the language he uses to frame those claims. To quote Gerald Seymour from his 1975 book, *Harry's Game*: "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter".

I will tackle the second first, as it is important to position the stance Andy Furlong takes. However, before I do this I want to state that I very much sympathised with Andy. It appears he had been thrust into a situation of which he had only partial knowledge, and I suspect he had not been party to an objective presentation of all the issues. The response he experienced will be coloured by the picture that had been painted — but it was a partial picture painted from one perspective only and one that appeared to have deliberately distorted the situation. It is not surprising that Andy felt threatened and did not take the most constructive path of mediating; I think he had already been told we were the terrorists. But by whom, I know not.

Language used

I will go through and pick out the various forms of language, in terms of words and phrases that Andy Furlong uses in his report because I feel this provides a particularly tainted one-sided account. I notice that Andy wrote this report at 11:00pm on 7th March 2016, and I think it is

perhaps not surprising his perspective may have been tainted; he was most likely frustrated and angry.

1. This was a properly constituted meeting of the EC

The use of the word "properly" may be intended to counter the claim there was some doubts over the provenance of the meeting. There is however clear evidence of confusion over this as can be seen in the minutes of the meeting provided on pages 57 - 61 of the Charges Pack. The meeting had been described by Finbar Bowie as "*a meeting of Rushcliffe CLP*".

2. Resolving the conflict between several members of the CLP that had been ongoing since the autumn of 2015

I was one of many who was unaware that there was indeed a conflict at CLP level. The issues of November had been dealt with and resolved and we had all moved on - at least I had. The "conflict" appears to have come from a very small number of people and has been dealt with earlier on in this Response.

3. Peter Gates attempted to enter the room

The use of "attempted" may be intended to suggest this was inappropriate and harassment. In fact, the minutes indicate that Andy is wrong here. It was *John Walsh* who entered the room because it was 8:00, the time that we were invited and John wanted us to show we were prompt. There is no mention of chairs in the minutes, which are very detailed.

4. confronted by a small crowd of people

The use of the word "confronted" sets up a conflict situation when, in fact, a number of local officers were waiting quietly outside in order to observe a meeting.

5. The chair attempted to call order....

The word "attempted" suggests Gill Aldridge struggled in the face of conflict which is untrue - indeed, the minutes state that she merely asked. (I discuss the position Gill was placed in below in **Section 10.8**).

6. She was immediately challenged in a hostile manner

The use of "challenged" and "hostile" again provide a false representation of a perfectly legitimate question about why observers were not allowed - as was normal practice and as we had been informed by Steve Calvert. It was actually never explained why observers were not allowed if indeed it was a properly constituted EC meeting.

7. I attempted to take control

Control was not lost and at this point it would have been very easy to have mediated and resolved the situation of misunderstanding.

8 This prompted a modest amount of barracking

"Barracking" suggests that people were interrupting, which the minutes do not suggest. They do suggest one comment about the legitimacy of the closure of the meeting, which hardly constituted barracking.

9. ...a grandstanding speech from Peter Gates in which he challenged the legitimacy of the meeting

The use of "*grandstanding*" may be trying to give an impression of me wanting to appear as some people's champion. I merely spoke when invited by the Chair. Indeed, as the detail of my comments makes clear, at no point did I actually challenge the legitimacy of the meeting.

10. ...the rest of his statement was lost in the confusion...

Actually, there was no confusion at this point. I spoke calmly and lucidly, so much so that Lizzie Edgerton, the minute-taker, who was sitting further away than Andy Furlong, managed to record virtually all of my comments as can be seen from the minutes and which I discuss below.

11. Rachel Scudamore started to barrack the chair demanding to know... John Walsh joined in the shouting but was incoherent

I think Rachel merely asked about the constitution of the meeting as indicated in the Party Rule Book. "*Barracking*" and "*demanding*" are strong negative terms which could be replaced with "*asked*". The minutes show a reasoned exchange between Rachel and Andy with a final question from John Walsh which, again, is in the minutes and was certainly not incoherent to the minute taker.

12. *No-one showed any intention of withdrawing*

Let us remember, at this point as the minutes tell us, we were invited into the meeting at 8:12pm and we left at 8:26pm. That is a full fourteen minutes during which time everything happened very quickly. Andy has the timings slightly wrong in his account. Indeed, we did show a willingness to withdraw but, at that point, as the minutes very clearly indicate – "*[I] said if those people didn't stay, [I] would not stay*". It was only after that "*Andy Furlong asked the Chair to adjourn the meeting*" at the very point we were about to leave.

13. There are a number of other uses of language by Andy which are an attempt to vilify us: *Placate, animated and aggressive, clearly hostile, invasion, refusal to leave, invaded, firmly but politely*. These do not reflect our calm, professional demeanour as evidenced in all the submissions in **Section 7** and **8**.

14. More seriously "*it seems this was an organised attempt to disrupt and subvert*"

Far from it. This was an attempt to engage and participate in the development of the CLP, which we were refused access to

Overall, it would appear that we have been portrayed as one man's terrorists, whereas a different description might have led another man to see in quite a different light. I recognise that the situation Andy was placed in would understandably have made him angry – a reasonable response I think under the circumstances. His notes were written up three hours later at 11:00pm, after a long and angry drive back to Leicester.

The claims

Throughout this Response, I have indicated that there were different ways to represent this meeting – in fact fourteen minutes of a meeting – and I have offered a different interpretation. I very much regret that someone in a room full of talented people did not just say, "*Hold on guys, let's just sort this out amicably*". Well at least I tried.

I have discussed the main issues elsewhere, but will summarise again here. There are doubts over the provenance and legitimacy of the meeting – this I think is clear regardless of what Andy claims. I have discussed at length in **Section 5.3** the lack of transparency of the re-establishment of the EC. We believed, and were told, meetings were open. None of us had any idea about any complaints that seem to have been made behind the scenes and which had not been brought to the attention of the CLP. I think there are legitimate questions to be asked about that. There appears to have been a one-sided distortion of this meeting presented to the Labour Party, which has not benefitted from a full and fair consideration of the evidence. For example, the Charges Pack has no submissions from the other eight suspended members nor three of the EC members who offered a different interpretation from the one given. There is no submission from Liz Plant or Sandra Coker.

I will finish with my "*grandstanding speech*" taken directly from the minutes, and I invite you to consider whether this sounds like a ranting, hostile and abusive attack, "*challenging the legitimacy of the meeting*" or rather a request for unity and collegiality.

"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 7th 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."

I remain proud of that intervention and I stand by every word.

10.7. Minutes of Meeting on 7th March

Pages 57 - 61

These minutes have been discussed in **Section 9.3** and I see no need to go into more detail here. The issues raised in the minutes have been discussed elsewhere. There is merely one issue that I raised previously in this Response. On the attendance list, Sandra Coker is not listed as attending, which she did for the whole meeting starting at 7:00pm. I am not aware of the role she had as a member of the EC since she tells us in her earlier submission that she resigned as Women's Officer (see page 18 of the Charges Pack). The list of GC and EC members in **Section 5.2** clearly shows Sandra Coker as **Women's Officer**. If she did stand down, and if the EC meeting was closed, surely, she should not have been attending as there is no mention of Sandra being specifically invited. If she had stood down, then surely her situation would have required an invite to the 8:00pm meeting in exactly the same way as I did. If she did not stand down, (and I am not aware of there being an election for a new Women's Officer) then it casts doubt on her claim that she stood down because of my behaviour. This is another example of the improprieties surrounding that meeting.

10.8. Submission from Gill Aldridge

Page 61

I have to say, I feel very much for Gill Aldridge throughout this whole episode. She is, in my opinion, a loyal, dedicated and committed Party member who I believe felt very bad about losing the Chair of the CLP to Sandra Coker the previous year. Gill's role in supporting the Party is very important to her and to the Party; she is a stalwart of the CLP. I do feel, however, that she might not have been given the full information behind the meeting — though, of course, I am unsure. In her report on page 62 of the Charges Pack, Gill writes on the purpose of the meeting:

"The second part of the meeting (starting at 8.00pm) was to be an examination of complaints against two individual members of the Constituency Labour Party with guidance from Andy Furlong. The aim of the meeting was to consider the issues involved in the complaints and to seek to resolve these issues in order for CLP members to work together more effectively and concentrate their efforts on promoting Labour Party policies and winning elections."

This is at odds with Andy Furlong's description of the primary focus, and I do wonder just how much she had been involved in the planning of the meeting, because the evidence from the minutes is that Andy had merely turned up at 7:50pm. There is no mention of any prior discussions with the Chair over the meeting and, as Liz Plant had pointed out, Andy Furlong had been sent by the Regional Office, *not* invited by the EC. As I have said earlier:

"Indeed, many of the EC were quite unaware of the purpose of the meeting. A couple of days before the meeting I contacted the following EC members to ask them what

they knew about the meeting because I could get no information from the regional Office, and Andy Furling had not contacted me as Finbar had promised he would: Alistair MacInnes, Jean Stansfield, Keir Chewings, Nadia Whittone, Bill Logan, Chris Kemp. Not one of them knew anything about the purpose of the meeting."

Gill goes on:

"The two individual members had been invited to attend the meeting. However, they had organised a large group of supporters who insisted on attending the meeting and speaking in their support. I pointed out that observers were not allowed to speak without the permission of the chair or participate in any other way. When they continued to disrupt the meeting, I asked them to leave the meeting, which they refused to do. On the advice of Andy Furlong, I therefore closed the meeting."

Now again this is quite untrue. Yet, I have no doubt that Gill believes it is true, based on what she was told. She was not, however, told the full story. At the risk of repeating what I have said elsewhere, people came out of interest over a discussion on the CLP, they had no intention of speaking in my support, as I was not aware I needed any support.

10.9. Unsigned Statement

Pages 63 - 64

This is an unattributed contribution, yet I will presume from clues within it that it is from Gary Edgerton. As I understand it, Gary Edgerton was not invited to the meeting on 7th March so his attendance was somewhat of a surprise. If it were previously known that this meeting would be closed "*by invite only*", why did the husband of the CLP Secretary not know that? Or more seriously, turn up knowing that to be the case.

Gary's submission is already on pages 43-46 of the Charges Pack, so it is difficult to see what the provenance of this document is; it appears to be a random document inserted as an afterthought. This is a difficult document to respond to, given its incoherence and its weak literary style; it reads more like a diary entry by Adrian Mole than a serious contribution to an investigation. It contains merely an opinionated series of comments, the purpose of which is unclear other than to cast aspersions and slander. It is again peppered with unfathomable untruths.

In particular, Gary's claim that he was waiting in the car until he "*saw a phalanx of people*" does not concur with the claim by Linda Burdett and Brent Abbott in their submission on page 53 of the Charges Pack, that Gary told them "*that he'd come back from visiting his mother specially to attend the meeting*".

However, since this document is a collection of invective and tendentious unsubstantiated allegations that do not warrant serious consideration, consequently I will spend no further time on it. Everything I would want to say has been covered elsewhere in this Response.

11. Response to Material Relating to Charge 3

Charge 3

Since the matter was last considered by the NEC Disputes Panel on the 17th January 2017, you are alleged to have acted in a bullying, intimidating and otherwise hostile manner towards a number of other members of the CLP including, but not limited to excessive correspondence in breach of the Labour Party's Bullying & Harassment policy.

11.1. Allegations from Keri Dutczyn-Howe

Page 65

I first met Keri Dutczyn-Howe on 23rd June 2016 when she turned up to canvass support for Remain as part of the EU Referendum campaign in response to an email to members. I believe Keri only joined the Labour Party in June 2016 and, because of the various cessations of Party meetings in 2016 – 2017, has attended very few Branch and CLP meetings. It is possible she is unaware of the history and procedures within the Party.

On 23rd June, I took Keri to meet Beryl Whitehead, the Women's Officer of West Bridgford BLP, to introduce her and encourage her to get more involved with the Party. I have only seen Keri a couple of occasions since, once when she hosted a Momentum meeting at her house. She has not, however, attended a meeting since.

Keri Dutczyn-Howe alleges there is "*misogyny and uncomradely behaviour amongst some members of the West Bridgford Branch*". She does not identify which members this is, so it is difficult to see what it has to do with me. If she has a concern, there are appropriate ways of addressing those. It is possible Keri is not aware of those.

I have to say I am not aware of any misogyny within West Bridgford BLP and Rushcliffe CLP. It is widely understood that misogyny is a hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against females and I have seen no evidence of that.

Keri Dutczyn-Howe alleges that she has spoken to "*a few highly talented, motivated women*" who share her concern, but does not identify what the concern is, or who these women are, or what this has to do with me.

Keri Dutczyn-Howe "*believes Peter Gates is manipulating a group of people he has collected*" — which is a very patronising way to refer to a large number of Party members. I am afraid I do not have the charisma to "collect" a following. I was deliberately rather on the periphery of informal gatherings of enthusiastic Party members.

Keri Dutczyn-Howe alleges she has "*suggested other women for officer roles and has been concerned at how quickly these have been dismissed in their absence by Peter Gates*". This is quite untrue. I do not know what process Keri is referring to, or which women she is referring to. As BLP Secretary — and Keri will not know this only having joined the Party in June 2016 — I particularly encouraged the engagement of women in the Party. Here is but one example:

From: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com <peter.gates3@btopenworld.com>

Sent: 10 March 2016 15:38

To: janclaire@outlook.com

Subject: West Bridgford Branch Labour Party

Jan,

In recent discussions we have been having about member engagement in the Labour Party, your name has come up a couple of times as someone who might be interested in taking a role somehow. I agreed to write to you. We are keen to get new people involved and moving the Party forward. There are some possibilities that you might care to think about...

We have a space on the West Bridgford Executive. This consist of a number of officers plus four elected members. It meets usually once a month at the moment and covers some strategic stuff plus more routine matters It is really important. because it looks to structuring the branch meetings and overall direction of the branch.

We have a space as a West Bridgford delegate to the Rushcliffe CLP General Committee. This also meets monthly - and consists of delegates from all branches in Rushcliffe. It focusses on constituency level matters but is really important too in directing activity and campaign.

Finally there is a Vice-President in West Bridgford. Now we have two but Liz Plant took it on, only on the understanding we would look for someone else in due course. At the moment this has to be a woman because of the make-up of the rest of the branch officers. You might think it is early to take a post at this level, but I'm sure you'd manage - or would do very quickly with the support of the other officers.

If you are at all interested to know more, let me know and we can meet up and talk it through.

Peter

Peter Gates

From: Jan Clare [mailto:janclare@outlook.com]
Sent: 12 March 2016 14:48
To: peter.gates3@btopenworld.com
Subject: Re: West Bridgford Branch Labour Party

Hi Peter,

Thanks for your email. I have to say first of all that I do wonder if you have me mixed up with someone else!?

I did put on my "skills survey" that I am interested in being a delegate on the Rushcliffe CLP General Committee so yes, I do hope that I can get onto that.

The WB Exec. sounds interesting though I am not really sure how useful I might be. I am, as you know, a 'recently rejoined member' with little knowledge of the labour party structure/workings and I would certainly appreciate a bit more info on that. That is if you have emailed the right person.....!

I think the vice chair role is definitely out for me.

Jan

Keri Dutczyn-Howe alleges "*I have never seen any credible instance when any active women have been encouraged and/or supported by Peter and a close inner core of his supporters*". This is a fantastical allegation. The fact that she has not seen it does not make it the case and why, indeed, would she know? There are a large number of women I have encouraged and supported to become involved at BLP and CLP level, including my partner and both our daughters — one of whom was the Rushcliffe Young Labour Campaigns Officer. That Keri might not know this is because Keri might not be particularly engaged. I can, here, name two women in particular I have encouraged: Keri Dutczyn-Howe and Gill Taylor.

I cannot comment on the allegation that she has an email from an unnamed woman whom I allegedly "*discouraged ... from volunteering*". The allegation is completely without any foundation.

One discussion I did have with some colleagues — drawing on my own experience reported toward the beginning of this pack — is that people should seriously consider the level of experience they had before standing against established long-standing officers for their positions. I am not at all convinced that standing for the purpose of publicity or political capital is advantageous. Neither should people be putting themselves forward for core leadership positions, such as Branch or Constituency Secretary or Chair, without some knowledge of and

experience within the Party; it is not the same as volunteering to do the tombola stall at the local school fête. People, men and women, should be considering standing for posts in which they can contribute but at the same time seeing this as a part of building capacity in the Party.

If I, or indeed anyone else, were to discourage a woman from standing for any particular position, it would not, in and of the fact that the discouraged person is a woman, necessarily display an example of “*a hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against females*”. On the contrary, it might well be part of a wider strategy to build capacity in the Party.

11.2. Allegations from Gill Taylor

Pages 66 - 69

I have only met Gill Taylor on a very small number (three or four) of occasions. She sent an email in February 2016 asking for a lift to a Jeremy Corbyn event at the University of Nottingham and I happily gave her a lift in an effort to support her and encourage her to become more involved. Gill came to two Momentum reading groups organised by Beryl Whitehead because, at that time, she was a member of Momentum.

From page 2 of her submission (pages 67 - 69 of the Charges Pack), Gill is referring to meetings and encounters outside of the formal Labour Party structure.

Gill Taylor alleges on page 67 of the Charges Pack:

"September 2016. I was copied into email exchanges between a woman Labour party member/Momentum supporter and PG, in which PG publically disagreed with and dismissed her views. I was concerned and uncomfortable about this."

It is not clear what to make of this; we do not know who this woman is, what the exchange was about, what I disagreed with or how I am supposed to have dismissed her views. Hence, I am in no position to respond. Were a disagreement to take place between two people which made Gill feel “*concerned and uncomfortable*”, this does not necessarily make the disagreement wrong in any way. If it were a disagreement between a man and a woman it also does not provide evidence for misogyny. I have serious disagreements with lots of women — Theresa May and Amber Rudd to cite just two — but that does not make me or anyone else misogynistic or prove that my disagreements with them are *because* of the fact that they are women.

Paragraphs 1 - 2

These are about Gill Taylor’s membership of the Labour Party and my attempt to help Gill become involved.

Paragraphs 3 - 8

These seem to refer to Momentum and so are not relevant to the Charges. I am not in a position to comment on any activity, meeting or exchange between Labour Party members who are also members of Momentum.

Paragraph 9

I can respond to the allegation on page 67 of the Charges Pack: that I informed a woman Labour Party member that “*she would have no chance of becoming Branch Secretary*”. I have no recollection of any such exchange, and no idea who this woman was and so am unable to comment. It could of course be that I might consider it unlikely that someone could be elected Branch Secretary but it is unrelated to one’s gender.

Paragraph 10

It is also improper for me to engage in a discussion of any disagreement between Beryl Whitehead, the West Bridgford Women’s Officer, and Gill Taylor — and this should not have been included in this pack.

Paragraphs 11 - 17

Again, these refer to encounters between people who were members of Momentum and so are not relevant to the charges. I am not in a position to comment on any activity, meeting or

exchange between Labour Party members who are also members of Momentum as I have no official capacity to do so. However, I can clarify one thing in **Paragraph 11**. My name and address were at the bottom of the email as this is a requirement of the Data Protection policy of Momentum, since I am the Data Manager of Nottinghamshire Momentum. The email referred to was from Nottinghamshire Momentum.

Indeed, this does not seem to fit well with an earlier communication from Gill Taylor which I received along with around twenty other members on 22nd September 2016, as part of a discussion over the Leadership election:

Hi, Thanks for this,

I think it's key that we participate and gain 'leadership' positions at CLP and councillor level, to bring about fundamental change in the party's structures, processes and direction. I intend to go to my first CLP meeting on Monday.

I'm aware I may be very disappointed/shocked by how it is. I aim to have an open mind to all on Monday. Best wishes to you all. Here's to a great result on Saturday!

Gill

Hypotheses

Gill Taylor offers four “hypotheses” on page 68 of the Charges Pack. All of these are without any foundation.

Concerns to be investigated

Again, these concerns are not specific to me, and this is not the correct way to proceed with any concerns that a member might have.

- **Concerns 1 and 6** are related to West Bridgford BLP, not to me. As such, they should not form part of the Charges Pack. Gill appears to be questioning the democratic procedures within the West Bridgford BLP AGM. That is a serious allegation and should be made through procedures laid down in the Labour Party Rule Book and referred to the CLP GC.
- **Concern 2** is factually incorrect.
- **Concerns 3, 4 and 5** are all factually incorrect, and are related to lists of Momentum members which Gill Taylor was a member of. Being the only member who has signed to abide by the DPA 1998, I am the only person who has access to that data.

I am surprised that the Regional Office have not given Gill Taylor appropriate advice on how to deal with issues and concerns that she might have. This is not way to do so but Gill Taylor may be unaware of the Labour Party’s Rules. This is quite an unhelpful way to respond to a member’s concerns.

12. Conclusions

I make no apologies for the length of my Response. My reputation is important to me; social justice and fairness is central to how I live and the Labour Party is a significant part of my political and personal life. I am proud of my work within the Party, in particular in engaging members, particularly new members and women.

What I have tried to do in this Response - supported by the Further Material and Witness Statements - is to demonstrate the falsity of the allegations and therefore the charges made against me.

I stand by all I have written here, and by my comment at the 7th March 2016 meeting reported in **Section 9.3**. I have strived to draw people into the party to fight for Labour Party victories. I have encouraged women to take positions and participate and have a voice. Yes, I freely admit to that allegation - described, extremely patronisingly, by Gary Edgerton as "*shoe horning*". It is very frustrating to face resistance to engaging, enthusiastic new members from longstanding officers who may feel threatened by the idea of rapid change. I completely understand that sentiment though. This whole divisive episode, came as a result of some vendetta between four new members (John Walsh, Rachel Scudamore, Gary Edgerton and Lizzie Edgerton) and all the spurious allegations in the Charges Pack have come from new members of the Party (including Keri Dutczyn-Howe and Gill Taylor), some of whom have barely participated in Party campaigning activities and who come without knowledge of the traditions and personalities.

In the Charges Pack, I am criticised for being hostile and for being too friendly; of sending excessive emails and not replying to emails. I am accused of shoe-horning members and excluding members. My reputation has been slandered as *disgusting*, described as "*disruptive*", and I have been excluded for twenty-one months at a time when the Labour Party so desperately needed to campaign for more Labour Councillors, a Labour PCC, a Remain vote and a Labour Government.

I have never bullied, harassed or intimidated anyone in my life. Indeed, no evidence has been provided in this Charges Pack which demonstrates this - with good reason. *There is none*. I have in this response provided much evidence of my considered, professional and polite approach to members. *That* is the sort of person I am.

This is not to say that meeting on 7th March 2016 was not intimidating; it certainly was. I was certainly intimidated as I think were all those officers who turned up hoping to observe a discussion on the development of Rushcliffe CLP - particularly the women members. I think the setup of the 7th March 2016 event was unfortunate and short-sighted, even ham-fisted. Information has been concealed. Surreptitious collusion has gone on in the shadows.

This is indeed a very bizarre set of events, in which I have been treated appallingly badly and in contravention of the Bullying and Harassment Policy and the Labour Party Rule Book. Interminable delays (see **Section 13** for step by step details) have stretched what could have been resolved very easily, into almost two years of inactivity, characterised by a repeated lack of response, failure to inform, and a refusal to acknowledge the humanity of our social life.

Lessons have to be learned at all levels. I have learned the power of solidarity, through such incredible support and encouragement from comrades in the Party, especially when I felt like giving it all up. These are the people who make the Labour Party what it should be; an open, transparent, comradely Party of Democratic Socialism, *for the many, not the few*. It should not be a party of malicious and vexatious allegations, made in secret behind closed doors, and intended to take the place of legitimate debate.

Mistakes have been made, but it is time to move on.