

Section C: 27. Witness Statements

In this section, I provide witness statements to support my Response to the charges. Given the complexity of the charges, and there being three charges, witnesses will be called related to each charge.

27.1. Cllr Keir Chewings

Currently Chair of Rushcliffe CLP

27.2. Cllr Alistair MacInnes

Leader of Labour Group Rushcliffe Borough Council

27.3. Mia Colley

Vice Chair West Bridgford Branch LP

27.4. Marc Gibson

Chair West Bridgford Branch LP

27.5. Umaar Kazmi

Young Labour Representative, East Midlands Regional Board

27.6. Beryl Whitehead

West Bridgford Branch Women's Officer

27.7. Cllr Adele Williams

Nottingham City Councillor

27.8. Zbyszek Luczynski

Secretary West Bridgford Branch LP

27.9. Lucy James

West Bridgford Branch Minutes Secretary

27.10. Jean Stansfield

Women's Officer and Vice Chair West Bridgford Branch LP

27.11. David Morgan

Member, West Bridgford BLP

27.12. Mike Scott

Member, West Bridgford BLP

27.13. Linda Burdett

Rushcliffe CLP GC delegate

27.14. Brent Abbott

Rushcliffe CLP GC delegate

27.15. Eve Cina

PEO Officer West Bridgford BLP

27.16. Cllr Steve Battlemuch

Nottingham City Councillor

27.17. Jake Jackson

TULO, West Bridgford BLP

27.18. Jane Caro

TULO, West Bridgford BLP

27.19. Chris Williamson MP

Shadow Minister for Fire Service

27.20. Ben Grey

Membership Secretary, Rushcliffe CLP/West Bridgford BLP

27.1. Cllr Keir Chewings

Membership No. L0112821	Statement of Keir Ronald Chewings	Date 25/10/2017
----------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------

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 have been a Labour Party Member since September 2008, during that time I have been active, holding the following roles:

- Branch Secretary for approx. 7 years,
- Branch campaign co-ordinator for 1 year
- Rushcliffe CLP chair since June 2017

Due to these positions I have been a GC Delegate and CLP exec member for over 8 years and have vast experience on the way the CLP has been run over this time.

I first became aware of Peter Gates in the summer of 2015 after his selection as CLP Secretary. I worked with and communicated with Peter from then on for Party business and found him to be a very active and dedicated member of the party. He implemented great change within the party starting education workshops, increasing member participation and vastly increasing memberships information and correspondents.

I can offer the following evidence in relation to the charges levied against Peter:

Charge 1:

I have never witnessed Peter conducting behavior that is bullying, harassing or intimidating. Far from it, I have always found Peter to be polite, friendly and very professional. I have never heard him raise his voice or attack any person at all. I myself have had many discussions with Peter and have always found him to be willing to discuss different opinions and agree to disagree.

In relation to emails from Peter I can confirm that Peter had increased correspondents from the CLP, however this was welcomed, I have always found Peter's emails to be useful, informative and polite. I do believe that Peter's email correspondence assisted the party and improved membership participation.

Charge 2:

I can state that in all my time on the GC and Exec (Over 8 years) These meetings have always been open for all members to attend and observe and at times participate. The CLP has never held closed meetings at all and members have always been welcome. In fact I can recall at the CLP AGM on Monday 17th October 2016 the then Regional Director Gordon Patterson tried to impose changes to CLP standing order's to only allow observing members to All Member meetings, with the normal CG and exec meeting being closed to delegates / officers. This is something that I felt strongly against and moved an amendment to these alterations at the AGM to allow all members to attend all GC and exec meetings. My amendment was carried and has formed part of the CLP's standing orders ever since. I attach to this statement copies of the minutes for this AGM which re-

Membership No.
L0112821

Statement of
Keir Ronald Chewings

Date
25/10/2017

affirms my submission that meetings have always been open to all members to attend.

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 FURLONG 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 escalated to formal complaints. I also noted from the invite to the GC Exec that there was no mention that this meeting was to be held in private thus would have formed part of the standard procedure of being open to any member to attend and observe.

I would like to point out that as a member of Rushcliffe CLP exec I would expect that if any complaint had been made it would follow the complaints procedure and would have been discussed at previous exec meetings, I can not recall in any of the meetings that I have attended this taking place, and after reviewing agenda's and minute again have found 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. I found that the Peter and the others present were behaving in a professional and polite manor, there was clearly some apprehension as to what was happening, however those that attended behaved themselves and did not cause be any alarm. I would also like to point out that I shared the apprehension on what was taking place as I found the whole business bizarre and tracking away from how we normally run our meetings in an open and transparent manor.

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.

Membership No.
L0112821

Statement of
Keir Ronald Chewings

Date
25/10/2017

I recall at this point GATES said 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 interjection 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 was that concerned about the conduct of the meeting that on the 9th March 2016 I emailed all members of the exec and included the regional organiser Finbar Bowie into the email. I have attached the email to this statement and stand by the email as to my concerns.

I have been a Labour Party member for over 9 years and have also sat on the exec for many years. 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 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 have felt that the CLP has deviated from standard practice set out from with the Party Rule book, as a result of this and other incidents I found myself putting myself forward for the position of CLP Chair to ensure that the party follows procedure and adheres to this to ensure that all members are treated fairly. I can state that I have continued to work with Peter on party business through out his suspension until the present day I have found him to always be professional and polite. I class Peter as a true asset to the party and recognize that he is one of our most committed activists within the party and is at the vast majority of Street stalls and canvassing sessions. This is truly remarkable especially when you consider that he has been administratively suspended for the last 19 months.

RUSHCLIFFE CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTY
Minutes of AGM 7:30 pm Monday 17th October 2016,
Methodist Church Hall, Musters Road, West Bridgford.

Attendance: Brent Abbott, Gill Aldridge, Joseph Blomefield, Linda Burdett, Peter Brodie, Florrie Calvert, Steve Calvert, Hayley Chewings, Keir Chewings, Sandy Coker, Mia Colley, Richard Crawley, Robin Crinage, Harry Curtis, Adrienne Davis, Martin Edwards, Colin Gibson, Marc Gibson, Peter Knott, Bill Logan, Kev Lowe, Zbyszek Luczynski, Alistair MacInnes, Jamie McMahon, Shelley Millband, Cathy Munro, Ian Munro, Liz Plant, Helen Powers, Paul Reedman, Pam Thompson, Patrick Walsh, Beryl Whitehead, Nadia Whittome
(there may have been others who did not sign the register).
Guests: Gordon Pattison, East Midlands Regional Director
Finbar Bowie, Regional Organiser

A1. Introduction, welcome to new delegates, apologies for absence, confirmation of agenda:

Gill Aldridge took the chair. Apologies received from Trish Archer, Bob Burlton, Robert Crosby, Keri Dutczyn Howe, Lucy James, Matt Prior, Dan Roberts, Jean Stansfield. Agenda agreed.

A2. Approval of List of Delegates: Agreed.

A3. Minutes of AGM held on 16 June 2015: These were agreed as a true record.

A4. Introduction to proposed Standing Orders and Procedural Rules (Gordon Pattison):

Gill Aldridge introduced Gordon Pattison. He distributed copies of the proposed Standing Orders and Procedural Rules. Gordon Pattison said these were part of the process of moving forward from the difficulties in Rushcliffe as the Standing Orders were no longer fit for purpose and that he had recommended that they be updated. He said there has been a massive influx of new members, they would like to be included but with such large constituencies he recommended that a delegate structure would be best, appointed by branches to the Executive and Campaigns Team. Each branch would appoint two members, and along with the eight Executive Officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, two Vice-Chairs, Women's Officer, Youth and Student Officer and BAME Officer) and the affiliated delegates this would make an ECT of 21, which would deal with most of the general business of the CLP.

He recommended that we have an all-member meeting alternating with a GC meeting. Over the past 18 months as CLPs have expanded in size new members are turning up and being turned off as we discuss business. The GC meetings will deal with the business and the other meetings can be used to discuss policy and come up with ideas for campaigning.

He said in order to make sure all branches have a say he wanted to introduce a balance (West Bridgford branch has 61% of the membership) with a maximum of three executive officers from any one branch. The next stage would be to trickle down the same Procedural Rules to the branches.

Gordon Pattison proposed that there should be no observers allowed at the GC and EC meetings, as in Rushcliffe we need some stability and get on with business at business meetings. There is no provision in the Rule Book for observers to be allowed. Minutes would be provided at all-member meetings, so this would allow for transparency.

We are an outward-looking Party moving forward, Jeremy Corbyn said we should be on the alert for an election, so with that in mind we need to be constantly thinking about campaigning and how we take the word out.

Questions from delegates:

Richard Crawley said he thought the titles of the documents were the wrong way round.

Gary Edgerton said that if these are changes that the Party wants us to adopt but we choose not to what happens? Gordon Pattison said if that happened he would suggest we elect officers and he would revisit the Standing Orders and agree with the Officers in further consultations.

Keir Chewings said it was long overdue to be looking at the Standing Orders and agreed they needed to be changed. He was concerned that there had been changes made to the document that had been circulated and he was being asked to vote on things that had been bounced on him. He said we should not be excluding observers at meetings, and that this had been included without due notice to delegates. He proposed an amendment to allow observers to be admitted, which was seconded by Linda Burdett.

Linda Burdett asked what the justification was for not having observers. She said new members should be allowed to observe to see what is going on and to deny them the right to observe is stopping democracy.

Zbyszek Luczynski said he had already asked about the lack in the Standing Orders of a Grievance Procedure within the CLP. Gordon Pattison said Chapter 6 of the Rule Book covered this, and he is currently in the process of writing up his recommendations for the East Midlands with training for officers.

There was a further discussion about observers, with concerns raised about transparency, whether observers should be at the discretion of the Chair, the need for a period of calm, putting a cap on the number of observers from each branch.

Keir Chewings raised a point of order that he had proposed an amendment which was that the proposed standing orders moved forward with a statement that all members are allowed to attend all GCs, AGMs and ECT meetings as observers unless a vote was taken by all GC delegates to say they can't.

A vote was taken by show of hands and the amendment was carried by a vote of 16 for and 15 against, with 2 abstentions.

Jamie McMahon asked that in future voting on such an issue should be by secret ballot in order to allow people to feel comfortable.

A secret ballot was held to vote on the adoption of the Standing Orders and Procedural Rules, with the amendment to allow observers. The tellers were Jamie McMahon and Marc Gibson. The result was to adopt and was carried by 34 for and 3 against.

A5. Officer Reports:

Gill Aldridge gave her report as Chair, thanking Lizzie Edgerton, Sandy Coker, Richard Crawley, Bill Logan, Gary Edgerton, Robert Crosby and Stuart Brady for their contributions to the CLP throughout the year, and emphasising the need to work to return Labour County Councillors at the elections in May 2017.

The report was unanimously accepted.

Lizzie Edgerton gave her report as Secretary, which was accepted.

Bill Logan gave his report as Treasurer. Two issues had dominated since the last AGM, the General Election, which had cost the CLP just over seven thousand pounds. Almost four thousand pounds had been raised by members. The increase in membership has increased our revenue from subscriptions, we have had some successful social events and the income from the Christmas raffle has increased. Offset against this has been the increased costs of room hire. Good progress has been made in fundraising but this must continue as we have a forthcoming election. He thanked Colin Gibson and Ian Munro for auditing the accounts.

Richard Crawley gave the Membership report. He said that membership had increased from 427 on 31 December 2014 to 931 on 31 December 2015, and 1,351 on the day of the AGM.

Colin Gibson commented that the West Bridgford branch is now too large to be manageable and dominates the CLP. Gordon Pattison said that if West Bridgford branch wanted to bring a proposal for dividing the branch to a Constituency Meeting and then to him he would be happy to consider it.

Nadia Whittome had circulated a written report as Youth and Student Officer (written in July) and added that there had been successful street stalls during the Summer. As she has been selected as County Council Candidate for West Bridgford West she was stepping down as Youth and Student Officer.

Steve Calvert gave the County Council report. He spoke about political control and the difficulties facing Councillors due to the budget cuts, with the forecast being grim. He updated the meeting on the Fracking situation, as there is potential for Fracking applications to come in from Rushcliffe and this will be a hot political topic in the coming year. The County Council is a key partner in the HS2, looking at the benefits it can provide for the area, with a proposed station between Birmingham and Leeds which is likely to be at Toton (on the border between Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire). The report was accepted.

Borough Council Report – this had been circulated as a written report.

Branch Reports had been circulated with the exception of Cotgrave. Keir Chewings said there had been no meetings for a considerable amount of time due to elections, but that a meeting would take place in a week's time. He said that he is standing down as Secretary as he is too busy for the role. Gill Aldridge said that she was the only officer remaining in South Rushcliffe. She has communicated with all members electronically but received few replies.

A6. Election of Executive Officers:

Nominations had been invited in advance of the meeting.

Chair: There were three nominations for the role of Chair: Gill Aldridge, Keir Chewings and Keri Dutczyn Howe. Richard Crawley took over as Chair for this item and invited the candidates to make a statement to the meeting. Gill Aldridge and Keir Chewings made their statements.

Keri Dutczyn Howe was not present but had sent in a statement to be read out.

A secret ballot was held. Result: Gill Aldridge 20, Keir Chewings 13, Keri Dutczyn Howe 4.

Gill Aldridge was declared elected and returned to the chair.

Secretary: Only one nomination, so **Richard Crawley** was duly elected.

Treasurer: Only one nomination, so **Bill Logan** was duly elected.

BAME Officer: Only one nomination, so **Umaar Kazmi** was duly elected.

Vice Chairs: Under the rules that had just been passed, we were only allowed three people from any one branch, and so West Bridgford had reached its quota, which meant that some of the nominations for Vice Chair (Steve Calvert, Lizzie Edgerton, Keri Dutczyn Howe) were no longer valid.

The only valid nomination was **Jamie McMahon**, who was duly elected Vice Chair (Membership).

Women's Officer: The only nomination was no longer valid.

Youth and Student Officer: No nominations.

The roles of Youth and Student Officer, Women's Officer, and one Vice Chair roll over to the next General Committee meeting. All of them must be women and all must be from any branch other than West Bridgford.

A7. Election of Functional Officers

The following members were elected

100 Club Promoter:	Richard Crawley
Auditors:	Colin Gibson, Ian Munro
Fundraising Officer:	Richard Crawley
Information Technology Officer:	Harry Curtis
Membership Secretary:	Richard Crawley
Political Education Officer:	Zbyszek Luczynski
Social Secretary:	Gary Edgerton
Social Media:	Marc Gibson

Trade Union Liaison Officer:

There were two nominations: Robert Crosby (who was absent) and Kev Lowe (who made a statement).

A secret ballot was held. Result: Robert Crosby 19, Kev Lowe 14, 1 abstention.

Robert Crosby was declared elected.

The roles of Disability Officer, Equal Opportunities Officer and Minutes Secretary remain unfilled.

(One of the new standing orders was suspended to allow the meeting to continue for 10 minutes)

A8. Election of Executive & Campaigns Team:

Ex Officio: Chair, 2 Vice Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, BAME (Black Asian Minority Ethnic) Officer, Women's Officer, Youth & Student Officer, Leader and Secretary of Rushcliffe Borough Council Labour Group

- **Branch Delegates:**

2 to be nominated by each branch, one to be branch campaigns officer

• Trade Unions	(4)	Sharon Howard, Kev Lowe, Dan Roberts
• Other Affiliates	(1)	Jean Stansfield
• Rushcliffe Women's Forum	(1)	Liz Plant
• Young Labour	(1)	vacancy

A9. Election of Delegates to Nottinghamshire Local Campaign Forum:

Gill Aldridge and Jamie McMahon were elected.

Nominations for Officers of Nottinghamshire LCF and Observers to Labour Group

Gill Aldridge is Vice Chair of Nottinghamshire LCF and we nominated her for this post again.

Jamie McMahon proposed Ray Fielding from Bassetlaw as Secretary again. Agreed.

A10. Dates of next meetings:

Executive & Campaigns Team:	Monday 7 November
All Member Meeting:	Monday 21 November
General Committee:	Monday 16 January 2017

Richard Crawley suggested a short meeting of the Executive & Campaigns Team with a social gathering on Monday 19 December so that the winning numbers for the December Prize Draw and the 100 Club could be drawn. *(date later changed to Tuesday 20 December)*

From: **Elizabeth Edgerton** Ledge@me.com
Subject: **Rushcliffe CLP GC EC Monday 7th March 7:00pm**
Date: **1 March 2016 at 10:18**

EE

To: Ledge@me.com, alistair.macinnis@gmail.com, gill.aldrige@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

To all Rushcliffe CLP General Committee Executive Members

Dear Friend

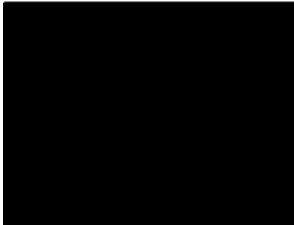
Please find attached the minutes of the last GC EC, which was held on Monday 1st February 2016, and the agenda for the coming EC, which will be at 7:00 pm in St Giles Church Hall, West Bridgford.

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



Minutes GCEC
Februa...6.docx



March Agenda
for Exe...m.docx

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)

From: **Keir Chewings** kchewings@me.com

Subject: Monday's Special Exec Meeting

Date: 9 March 2016 at 10:33

To: **Elizabeth Edgerton** ledge@me.com

Cc: alistair.macinnnes@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 peter.gates3@btopenworld.com, John Walsh john.walsh@designforpurpose.co.uk, Finbar Bowie finbar_bowie@labour.org.uk



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 them selves 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 our selves 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 nights 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 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 no where 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, no where 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 with out 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 rational behind the decision.

I found the disruptive behavior of the observers untenable and do not condone this behavior. 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 any one about these matters and will be speaking about this at our next GC.

Kind regards,

Keir Chewings

27.2. Cllr Alistair MacInnes

Statement from Alistair MacInnes: Administrative Suspension of Peter Gates Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party

Background Information

I joined the Labour Party in 1979. I was elected onto Rushcliffe Borough Council in 1995. I became the Leader of the Labour Group on Rushcliffe Borough Council in 1999. I have been the Official Leader of the Opposition at Rushcliffe BC for over 5 years.

I have been a Member of Rushcliffe Constituency Party for over 38 years and a member of the GMC and GMC Executive for approximately 28 years. This included the role of Campaign Co-ordinator for 24 years and acting as a Parliamentary agent.

I am neither a Blairite, a Corbynite or supporter of Momentum. I am basically a parliamentary socialist. I include this information as it seems that these kinds of matters are important in the current political climate within the Labour Party.

I have known Peter Gates for 15 years previously as an interested, but a less active member of the Labour Party. More recently, since the last election, Peter upped his interest and became a very keen, enthusiastic and active member and worker for the party. He always arrives prepared and is willing to take on responsibility. Although he was inexperienced in local branch and constituency operations and procedures, for example in campaigning, he was committed, keen to learn and asked for help when appropriate. He was inclusive when talking and keen to involve others; I welcomed his involvement because he was energetic, productive and congenial to work alongside. I did not observe when working with Peter, any evidence of the charges laid out against him.

This submission should be read in conjunction with my statement made to East Midlands Labour Party on 30th May 2016 following a request from EMLP for statements on the above investigation. I welcome the opportunity to amplify my original statement.

The constant bickering at meetings between the factions diverted member's interests and energy away from re-building the Constituency and its branches into an effective, campaigning force which was very important given that the party was heading towards a crucial County Council election.

There were calls for harmony, constraint and appeals for people to work together, mainly from the protagonists, however, the briefings, informal and formal complaints to the officers of the EMLP continued as far as I was aware-but was never certain about. There were lots of rumours and very few hard facts and this situation continued until I saw a letter from the Labour party head office dated 27th July 2017 setting out the charges against Peter.

Only the small unrepresentative self-selected section of the EC, directly involved and communicating with the officers of EMLP knew what the complaints were about and who was making them and subsequently what action EMLP was going to take. Other regular members of the EC, including myself, were not aware that this small self-selected group of EC members

existed and were “working closely with the Regional Office to ensure they were better prepared to organise and engage members” (see page 1 of 69 pages Peter Gates NEC evidence Bundle). I was also surprised to note that EMLP officers were working with and advising this small group when they knew that:-

- the arrangement was never put too or approved/authorised by the Constituency or EC
- the remaining members of the EC and members of the constituency were not aware of the arrangement
- they were unquestionably aware the people they were working with were the complainants and probably all held executive positions in the local party.
- furthermore, that this arrangement was at odds with the Labour Party Rule Book on Disciplinary Rules –Chapter 6 Clause 1. national action by the Party

This unhealthy situation created even more distrust and uncertainty amongst Members, particularly new Members attending meetings for the first time. This in turn affected moral and attendance at meetings and participation in activities like canvassing, street stalls and fund raising events.

Members, who thought they had some knowledge and understanding of the Constitution and the role of the Executive/EC in disciplinary matters, including myself, became puzzled as to why these complaints to the EMLP were not being referred to the EC by for attention and resolution by EMLP?

Although I was not sure who was making the complaints I had a good idea that it might include the Chair of The Constituency and the Chair of West Bridgford Branch and my assessment /evaluation of their knowledge base was they were not very familiar with the contents of the Constitution and therefore new little about the disciplinary section. Others in the group might have but given I didn't know who was complaining then it was difficult to know.

There was a significant failure of leadership at the constituency level during this period, although it was still functioning; issues were not being addressed, with some executive members operating individually or in small groups without the knowledge of the rest of the EC.

The invitation to attend the special meeting of the EC came right out of the blue and arrived only 48 hours before the meeting was due to take place. I didn't receive an agenda, papers or supporting information explaining the purpose of the meeting. I wasn't aware that Andy Furlong, Chair of EMLP was attending or that Peter Gates and John Walsh were joining the meeting. I therefore had no time to prepare for what was a very important meeting. This was very unsatisfactory, irregular and unacceptable. It also became clear that others in the meeting had received much earlier notification of the meeting which served to strengthen my view that not all members of the EC were being, cold shouldered, and not informed of what was going on.

My main comment on the outcome of the Special Meeting held on 7th March 2017 was that things had moved on for the better and the intervention of Andy Furlong on behalf of EMLP was ill timed, it should have been much earlier and always had the potential to reignite the previous discussions and disagreements, which it did.

The approach and style adopted by Andy Furlong when addressing the EC membership was inappropriate for the type and nature of meeting. The stated purpose of the meeting was to mediate and reconcile differences. There was very little mediating or drawing together. As the meeting progressed he became increasingly more combative, confrontational, forceful and coercive until he finally stopped the proceedings when he instructed the Chair to close the meeting. The Chair then closed the meeting without a vote of those present.

I would also like to comment on the notes of the meeting produced by Andy Furlong and the minutes of the meeting taken by Lizzie Edgerton. They differ markedly both in style and tone.

Lizzies minutes are in my opinion are accurate, full, measured and coherent set of minutes that accurately capture the mood of the meeting and satisfactory record all the important points.

Andy's notes and accompanying recommendations are presented in very similar manner and style to that he adopted when addressing the Special Meeting-forcefully and unrestrained. His use of emotive language was excessive and disproportionate and included the use of impassioned words like grandstanding, burst, surrounded and subvert to list a few. I think it would have been better if when he arrived home at 11 am that he had a mug of cocoa and then went to bed and slept on the outcome of the Special Meeting- then did his notes.

Furthermore, his recommendation to administratively suspend the 10 observers who attended the meeting was an unnecessary and inflammatory decision stirring further discussion and division. My view is that it is indefensible that members should be suspended for long periods of time without charges, dates of hearings and /or reinstated without being properly exonerated or receiving an apology. It is at odds with the justice and fairness we pride ourselves on to treat Members in such an unfair and reasonable way.

Alistair MacInnes

Labour Group Leader Rushcliffe Borough Council.

27th October 2017

27.3 Mia Colley

18th October 2017

Martin Lee & Co. Solicitors
12 Queens Street
Mansfield
Notts
NG181JN

Dear Mr Lee,

Charges against Peter Gates

After so many months waiting for a prompt investigation and outcome, I had expected some sort of "big reveal", and have seen nothing of embarrassment, as indicated by Gary Edgerton, or of substance, to indicate why the investigatory process should take so long.

I have started with Charge 2, as it led to the suspension of Peter Gates.

Peter was invited to the meeting March 7th, 2016, and I do not see how he can be held responsible and accountable for the decisions and behaviours of others who decided to attend.

This meeting was of the CLP, and not advertised as an executive committee. I had not even heard that such a group existed, how it was formed, or who was chosen to be a member.

I was not corralled into attending, there was no planning to steer how individuals would act as a group and Peter Gates was not a leader of any such group. There were certainly one or two more assertive individuals, who chose to express a view at the meeting, but that was their decision. On the Saturday prior to March 7th I was informed of the meeting by Jean Stansfield, and I went with the intention of observing, as did most others, and the record corroborates this.

None of the above can justly be attributed to Peter Gates.

This is part of my statement sent to Emma Foody when asked for a submission:-

"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 false. 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?"

After the event, when it seemed that it was now being called an executive meeting, and its stated intentions were conciliation, I was more puzzled. How can a table of members, with one complainant being designated the minute taker, be an appropriate way to approach conciliation? It was, unfortunately, an intimidating and bias set up, that created more tension and disarray, and an upsetting outcome, not just for those involved, but throughout the CLP.

Charge 2, which led directly to the suspension of Peter Gates, does not seem to have sufficient grounds for validity, and neither does it explain the lengthy wait for resolution.

In relation to charges 1 and 3 and implied misogyny, bullying and harassment: -

Less than a year after the suspension I was working with Jean Stansfield and Beryl Arbery to produce posters for international women's day, and a few months after this event when visiting Jean, she showed me two sets of minutes which had surfaced, both relating to the March 7th meeting. She commented that one set painted a more "damning picture" than the other.

She also told me that in working with Sandy Coker as women's officer she had not seen or experienced any of what Sandy was talking about, that it seemed to her quite made up, and that in fact quite the opposite was true, with Peter always encouraging the women's group. She was obviously upset by this, and this upset me as I knew that she was increasingly in decline and wanted to ensure her hard work and commitment to the party was carried on after her lifetime. The fact that she is subsequently described as gullible by one of the complainants is extremely offensive, as Jean is admired, respected, and looked up to as a shining example of what action can achieve, and even though she has become more and more ill, her mind is as bright and quick witted as ever.

I appreciate that the above is third party information, but it leads me to acknowledge that in my two years of working alongside Peter, whether in informal or formal meetings, on the streets campaigning, door knocking or in general communications, he has been constantly aware of gender dynamics and the issues that can arise. I have always been personally encouraged and seen him encourage women, to be heard, to be fully participative, to take on roles, to chair, and even to curb the enthusiasm of men in a comradely manner when it has been obvious that women were being overwhelmed with the views of men. It seems odd to me that in his many dealings with many people that only a handful would experience a very different and misogynistic approach.

There seems to be a danger in the charges pack of two sets of evidence being presented as the fault of Peter, who should be judged on his own merits and failings. Firstly, all matters relating to John Walsh, which should be discarded, and secondly the anonymous letters, which I was also in receipt of.

The anonymous letters by inclusion infer Peter's involvement. It wouldn't be difficult to notice the general unintelligible and ungrammatical approach, in fact, a nasty, impulsive, off the wall attack, which cannot be suggested to be the work of Peter Gates- there is no evidence to support the inference. I have seen more aggression from one of the complainants than I have ever seen from Peter Gates, who has never lacked control or let emotions or beliefs determine his manner of communication. All of Peter's communications

have been well considered, organised, certainly demonstrating a high level of literacy and comradely appeal in his use of language.

With regard to general non-specific complaints, presented with very little evidence- it was clear in 2015 that things couldn't go on as they had, as new members wanted to participate, be heard, take action, be useful. Liz Plant and Steve Calvert acknowledged that themselves when faced with huge increases in attendance, necessitating a room change, different layouts and break out groups. Peter's enthusiasm to progress party values and member involvement did meet with resistance, he certainly wanted to go faster than structures could allow and was learning "on the hoof" about what was acceptable. Was he mentored, politically educated on rules, procedures and structures to work within, or inducted, were roles handed over? No, it seems he was met with irritation, and as the complaints seem mainly to comprise of opinion rather than evidence, some of which are simply judgemental statements, from a handful of people out of the hundreds Peter has worked with, not just across the constituency, but across the region, I suggest that they are, if not malicious, then they are overblown vexations. This may be how people feel, but on examination may not be supported by fact.

Additional notes regarding later charges:-

Keri Howe was part of what she called in an email a talented and diverse set of people who met informally, but subsequently calls them manipulated. She hosted a meeting for this group herself, and was excited, but when subsequently she did not meet with consensus, decided to seek out views that women were excluded purposefully. In fact, contrary to anyone being manipulated, she was advised to act and vote as she saw fit.

You may look back at records and note that many positions remained unfilled, or alternatively sometimes several positions were filled by the same person, and in fact at the AGM January 2017, there were not many nominations and several positions remained unfilled- hence the encouragement to come forward before the AGM. These same informal meetings where Keri declares women to be excluded are the same meetings where I was asked to consider standing as chair, where Penny was asked to consider being secretary, where several women were in fact asked if they, or a woman they were in contact with, would consider being nominated for a wide variety of positions. There was certainly no misogyny- in fact quite the opposite.

It should also be noted that Peter was not present at all of these meetings, was not the leader of these informal gatherings, or the administrator of the google email groups described (which no longer exist) and again, can't be held responsible for the behaviour, actions and words of others.

Gill Taylor was sought out as part of Keri's decision to conduct her own investigation into misogyny. I conversed with Gill myself, because she assumed one informal group was the same as another and that if she was left out of informal communications or gatherings it was by design. She calls it a conspiracy and pins it all on Peter Gates and assumes it is because she is a woman or an independent thinker that she has been left out, not because of human error. (I don't recall a psychometric test being conducted to find out which of us would be easily led!) Even being left out of informal discussions by accident, it cannot be against the rule book considering the nature of *informal* groups of people socialising or meeting with or without purpose, means there is no obligation to invite anyone.

Her other allegation is specifically about the validity of the AGM. It was an open AGM, with everybody free to make nominations, second, to stand for any posts, and vote exactly how they preferred. The AGM ran according to its own procedures, the only peculiarity being to allow Keri to share the chair, although she was clearly out voted, in order to ensure sufficient women in roles. I think this disproves both Keri's and Gill's points.

Yours sincerely
Mia Colley

27.4 Marc Gibson

September 24th 2017

Dear Mr Lee

Thank you for your request in relation to Peter Gates.

I have been a lifelong trade unionist and currently I am branch secretary Loughborough University, University and Colleges Union (UCU), having held a variety of positions over the years. I have also been the chair of a small, but national, charitable organisation, the British Association for the Person Centred Approach – and am still on that organisations board of trustees.

I am currently 'chair' of West Bridgford Branch Labour Party.

I have worked with many different people throughout my career, starting off down the pit as a miner aged 16, to the present, where now a senior IT manager at Loughborough University, and firstly I would like to say that I have found Peter Gates very easy to get along with, and that at no time have I experienced him as intimidating or disrespectful.

I have examined the charges pack and I am disappointed that this material should have been treated seriously, containing what appears to my eyes to be unfounded assertions and language that is less helpful than it could have been in coming to an understanding of the facts in this matter.

In order:

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.

As I stated above, I have never experienced Peter as anything other than respectful and courteous in all my dealings with him. Furthermore, I have at no time heard from any other person any accusations of such behaviours from Peter. I have also not seen excessive correspondence or anything that could be construed as excessive correspondence from Peter. Peter has been measured disciplined, in my view, in his use of communications – as you may well know, most people do not open or read party material sent to them, and will quickly stop and consign to junk mail anything they consider 'excessive'.

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.

I was present at the above meeting, and both I and the other people present left the meeting when asked to do so – I would also like to point out that the purposes and provenance of the meeting had not been communicated as I believe they should have been. When the officers and regional representative were respectfully asked under what processes or procedures that meeting had been convened, they point blank refused to answer the questions. In all my years as a Trade Union representative, I have never seen such disrespectful treatment delivered to attendees at any meeting. Had the officers and regional representative taken the time to answer the questions with respect to process and procedure we would not now be so far down this path.

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.

Keri Dutczyn, was for a time elected as co-chair of the branch, but did not regularly attend meetings and with whom I found it difficult to communicate in a way that was sufficiently timely and responsive in order to smoothly run the branch. Keri subsequently resigned as co-chair, but did not communicate reasons to myself or to any other officer of the branch, so far as I am presently aware.

Keri's statement:

... believe Peter Gates is manipulating a group of people that he has collected. I have suggested other women for officer roles and have been concerned how quickly they have been dismissed in their absence by Peter Gates and others in this group. I have never seen any credible instance when any active women have been encouraged/or supported by Peter and a close inner core his supporters

asserts that Peter Gates was somehow capable of what seem quite extraordinary feats of manipulation and control. At the time of writing I am 58, and whilst many years ago I might have at times been inexperienced enough to have been fooled for a period of time, the idea that I and a number of other unknown people have been 'collected' and then 'manipulated' is, frankly, laughable.

Gill Tayler has not attended meetings regularly and has played little part that I am aware of in the active life of the branch. In her email Gill Taylor makes a number of assertions and quite a few hypotheses (Gill's words).

The assertions are simply that: 'assertions' and should, in my view be treated as such, e.g. 'opinion'.

With respect to the hypotheses raised by Gill Taylor, whilst taking her points seriously, the picture painted is not one that I can easily recognise without twisting and distorting (in my view) my recollection of the events and the persons involved. I stress that the persons and officers with whom I have worked in the, have at all times been concerned to ensure that processes were followed, and that we were seen to be as transparent as possible.

Finally, I further note the submissions by Gary Edgerton and Lizzie Edgerton construe Peter Gates as a Machiavellian character, themselves cast in the role of 'victims', with claims of intimidation and bullying.

In my view, nothing could be further from the truth.

To re-state, Peter has, in my experience, and at all times conducted himself in an adult, responsible and respectful manner, and has always sought constructive and open solutions through dialogue.

Kind regards

Marc Gibson

27.5. Umaar Kazmi

UMAAR KAZMI

Martin Lee & Co Solicitors
12 Queen Street
Mansfield
NG18 1JN

Tuesday, 24 October 2017

Dear Martin

Thank you for writing to me about Peter Gates' ongoing suspension case. I am not only happy to provide a witness statement but also grateful for the opportunity to do so. I hope that this plays a small part in helping to redress the great injustice that I feel has been committed against Peter.

There are parts of the Charges Pack ("the Pack") that I feel are totally irrelevant to Peter's case; specifically, any parts that reference John Walsh and the anonymous letters. As an aspiring barrister who takes a great interest in matters of procedural and natural justice, I have to say that I am astonished to see these included in the Pack. They would be inadmissible as evidence in any legal hearing or trial in this country. Their inclusion suggests that Peter is somehow connected with, or responsible for, John Walsh's actions and the anonymous letters. There is no evidence at all to support this and their inclusion in the Pack enormously prejudices the case against him. I cannot overstate the importance of that latter point; on that basis alone, this entire case ought to be dropped as the bias of the investigators is now irreparably compromised. I am sure as a legal person yourself that you would agree, Martin.

I will also not comment on any of the internal affairs of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party ("the CLP") prior to Monday, 7 March 2016. At that time, whilst being an active party member, I did not hold an elected Officer position at a constituency level. I had been elected as both the BAME Officer and a General Committee ("GC") delegate from my Branch, West Bridgford, but I was not due to take up the latter role until the next Annual General Meeting of the CLP.

I will focus my statement primarily on the allegations that state that Peter Gates deliberately organised eight uninvited members to come to the meeting on 7th March ("the meeting") with the intention of disrupting it and breaking it up. That is expressed less dramatically in Charge 2 but, having read the Pack, I have worded it to reflect the emotive and nonsensical language about the meeting used in the Pack by several people. All of these words, and their connotations, could easily build up a picture of the meeting which could not be further from the truth. So, I have written the charge in this way in order that I can tackle it more intensively.

Before specifically quoting and refuting the allegations, I will explain how I came to be at the meeting. In the run up to this entire scenario, Peter told me that he had been invited to the meeting in order to discuss "complaints" and the general "situation" in the CLP and that he thought it was unusual to deal with complaints in this way. I thought that was rather strange and, curious to learn more about the CLP, I told Peter that I may come along. At that time, I had been a party member for less than a year and was not really acquainted with all of the acronyms and processes. However, having recently been elected as my Branch's BAME Officer and as a delegate to the CLP GC, I thought that I ought to start taking a more proactive role in the constituency and attend as many meetings as possible.

At that time, I had no idea that an Executive Committee (“EC”) was in operation in the CLP, nor did I know what one was. It later transpired, of course, that most people had no idea that the EC was in operation. In any case, I had been welcomed at every other meeting of the CLP that I had attended and, with my ‘portfolio’ of new roles, I expected that I was pretty much welcome everywhere in the local party. I had no personal issues with anyone and I only attended the meeting because I thought it was a meeting of the CLP that I was allowed to attend. It was never made clear to me beforehand that any meeting of the CLP was closed, and the nature of the meeting was not made particularly clear, either. So, in reality, my motivation for attending was a desire to contribute more to the workings of the CLP. Peter had not even encouraged me to come, let alone coerce me to come as part of some sort of militant guerrilla faction in the CLP.

To elaborate on that further, I distinctly remember why I finally decided to go, having earlier told Peter that I *may* go. The circumstances were so coincidental that I could hardly forget them, which is why I remember them in vivid detail. Since my childhood, I have had a friend who is also called Peter (who I shall refer to as “Peter R”). He is a Conservative, but a good friend of mine with a lot of history, and so I make sure to meet with him now and again. It just so happened that, on the day of the meeting, I was also going to be seeing Peter R for coffee on West Bridgford Avenue, which is near to the church where the meeting was held. Incidentally, Peter R could only stay until around 8:00pm, as he had to catch a train back to Norwich where he was (and still is) studying at the University of East Anglia. As I was going to be on the Avenue anyway, and since Peter R would be leaving just before the meeting started at 8:00pm, I thought that I may as well go to the meeting as I was not exactly going to be putting myself out by doing so. After all, the venue was about a two-minute walk away from the coffee shop that I was at.

I do not say any of this for myself, as I have already been vindicated. In fact, the former East Midlands Regional Director, Gordon Pattison, apologised to me and the seven others who were suspended for the way we had been treated by the Regional Office. In his words, it was an “overreaction”. The reason I say all of this is because it utterly and demonstrably shows that Peter did not organise for people to break up the meeting. I attended the meeting with good intentions and because coincidental circumstances made it easy for me to go, and I am sure that the others who also attended have their own similar motives for why they did so. To me, it almost feels like some of those present at the meeting were coached into telling this narrative of rage and destruction — a retelling of history — perhaps to cover-up for the deeply improper way that this “closed” and off-the-books meeting had been arranged and handled.

I will now proceed to quote and refute some of the allegations in the Pack, although much of them have already been refuted by my above account.

Allegation 1

On page 41 of the Pack, Elizabeth Edgerton writes:

“[Peter] has shoe-horned people who support him into roles and co-opted them to the EC meetings... These are (largely) the same people he rallied to interrupt the meeting on March 7th and who now are also suspended”.

- A. This statement is entirely fictitious and there is no evidence for it. The idea that Peter could have “shoe-horned” anyone, especially me, into Branch roles implies that anyone who stood in the West Bridgford Branch 2016 AGM was forced to do so (I was most certainly not) and that Peter could have somehow controlled who won a democratic election at the AGM (which he certainly could not have done).
- B. I have already addressed the issue of myself and others supposedly being “rallied” to attend the meeting; it is simply untrue.

Allegation 2

On page 45 of the Pack, Gary Edgerton writes:

“Peter Gates has also taken to the floor at Momentum meetings denouncing the ‘right’ within the Rushcliffe CLP...”

And on page 46:

“The choice [Peter Gates and John Walsh] made was to turn up in a threatening, bullying (by its very nature) mob...”

“...and the ‘protestors’ had been rallied in order to violate the rights of fellow members to have their legitimate grievances heard.”

- A. I remember attending a couple of Momentum Rushcliffe meetings. I distinctly remember the first one, in which half of the attendees at the meeting were people who had not actually supported Jeremy Corbyn during the 2015 leadership election. I also remember their feedback at the end of the meeting, saying that they were “impressed” with it, something I doubt they would have said had they been denounced for their political leanings in the party. I have also been an active member of Nottinghamshire Momentum. At none of these meetings have I ever seen Peter “denouncing the ‘right’”. I can attest to the fact that his contributions at these meetings have focussed on how more and more people can become active members of the Labour Party. He has taken a proactive and positive approach, rather than a reactionary and negative one, so I find Gary’s allegation alien to Peter’s actions; it is false.
- B. I have already addressed the issue of myself and others supposedly being some sort of a “mob”. As a potentially future barrister and as someone who has always shown impeccable behaviour at every meeting that I have been to, I take great offence at being called part of a mob. I take great pride in being professional and preserving my integrity. Gary’s comments are not only untrue but also deeply hurtful.
- C. Gary’s language is befitting of a farcical Oscar Wilde play. I was not a “protestor” and I certainly did not want to “violate” anyone’s rights.

Allegation 3

On page 55 of the Pack, Andy Furlong writes:

"This prompted a modest amount of barracking and a grandstanding speech from Peter Gates in which he challenged the legitimacy of the meeting..."

"I made a further attempt to placate Peter Gates and John Walsh in the corridor outside the meeting. Both individuals were animated and aggressive. The conversation was joined by Umar xxxxxx who was silent but clearly hostile towards me. I was not prepared to continue the conversation in his presence and I was relieved when the crowd dispersed..."

"It seems clear that this was an organised attempt to disrupt and subvert the efforts by regional office to bring all parties together with myself acting in the role of mediator... Action must be taken against Peter Gates, John Walsh and all of those individuals (who can be identified) who invaded the meeting and refused to leave when firmly, but politely asked to do so."

- A. I remember being quite moved by Peter's speech, which I felt was conciliatory and constructive. Having looked over the minutes of the meeting on page 60 of the Pack, his speech is minuted almost verbatim. I cannot see how anyone could call that "barracking" or a "grandstanding speech". If anything, I felt that Andy was acting in that manner himself, domineering over the meeting and essentially ordering Gill Aldridge to close it without anyone voting on the matter.
- B. At this point, I was with Peter in the corridor just outside the meeting room. He was politely offering to give me a lift home and Andy approached Peter whilst I was already standing there. I was neither "animated" nor "aggressive"; rather, I was still quite stunned and intimidated by how the whole meeting had been conducted and shut down. This was not an attempt by Andy to "placate" anything. I remember the conversation proceeding pretty much as follows:

Andy: *"[Speaking to Peter, but referring to me] Who is this?"*

Peter: *"He's a member of the Regional Board, you should know him."*

Andy: *"Yes, I know he is (a member of the Regional Board)"*.

Andy then walked back into the meeting room without saying anything further. So, the idea that Peter and I were both being uncooperative with his supposed attempts at placation is simply untrue.

- C. Here, we again see more emotive and hyperbolic language being used. There was no "organised attempt to disrupt and subvert" anything. Furthermore, nobody "invaded the meeting". Myself, along with everyone else, had no idea that this was a "closed" meeting until we were actually in the meeting room. The only reason why I stayed was because the nature of the meeting being "closed" was still in the process of being established. Had it been so established that the meeting really was closed, I of course would have left and I am sure everyone else would have, too.

Allegation 4

On page 62 of the Pack, Gill Aldridge writes:

"However, [Peter Gates and John Walsh] had organised a large group of supporters who insisted on attending the meeting and speaking in their support."

A. I have addressed this already. Peter did not organise for anyone to attend the meeting.

Allegation 5

On page 65 of the Pack, Keri Dutczyn Howe writes:

"I believe Peter Gates is manipulating a group of people that he has collected. I have suggested other women for officer roles and have been concerned how quickly they have been dismissed in their absence by Peter Gates and others in this group. 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."

A. I can confirm that I have not been "collected" by Peter. I find that remark incredibly insulting, and it is also untrue.

B. I am not sure who exactly Keri is referring to when it comes to women she was supposedly suggesting for Officer positions, that were apparently dismissed by Peter. What I do know is, however, that Peter has continually encouraged women members to stand for positions and to become more involved in West Bridgford Branch and the wider CLP. I know that he, ironically, even encouraged Keri to get more involved and I can attest that he provided her with lifts home from meetings on at least two occasions. Beyond that, I can also attest that Peter has been supportive of Beryl Whitehead, Eve Cina, Jane Caro, Linda Burdett, Mia Colley, Maureen Harms and Penny Gowland. Those are just the names that I can remember, but I have no doubt that there are more.

To conclude, I hope that this is useful in helping to play a small role in having the charges against Peter dropped, and having Peter fully reinstated as a member of the Labour Party as is his right. He has been the target of a campaign of false allegations and untruths and he desperately deserves justice.

I await the outcome of this case with every expectation that these charges will be dismissed.

*Yours sincerely
Umaar Kazmi*

UMAAR KAZMI

Mr Martin Lee

27.6. Beryl Whitehead

Beryl Whitehead
Women's Officer
(June 2016 -present)
West Bridgford Branch LP

20 September 2017

Martin Lee



wblpwomen@gmail.com

|
Dear Mr Lee

Complaint against Mr Peter [Gates](#)

Charge 3. Overview.

I got to know Peter Gates in 2016 and 2017. He was a member of a group who were inspired by the ideas of Jeremy Corbyn.

I have never seen any example of Peter Gates acting in an intimidating, hostile or bullying manner and I have no knowledge of excessive correspondence.

Charge 3.1

'Misogyny and uncomradely behavior amongst some members of the West Bridgford Branch.

Peter Gates was suspended from the Branch following a special meeting in March 2016.

Keri joined the Party in June 2016. Peter was not present at any Branch Meetings during this time.

Charge 3.2

'highly talented motivated women who share her concern'

As Women's Officer elected mid-year 2016, I included Keri in a planning group for International Women's Day, which took place in the Lady Bay area. She attended one meeting as far as I remember. She remained on this list until 2017 when she asked me to remove her. I have been communicating with women members using mass email (Mail Chimp) to women members early in 2017. Keri unsubscribed on 30 July 2017.

As women's officer, I aim to promote women within the branch. I have done this by organizing events like the one for International Women's Day.

I have always found Peter supportive of having more Women in the branch and for women to hold office.

Charge 3.3

'believes Peter Gates is manipulating a group of people he has collected'

I first met Keri on June 23, 2016. She explained she was brand new member and her first action was to join in with the EU referendum canvassing. On the day of the Referendum. We both joined in with a group of the 'IN' campaigning for that day. Peter Gates was part of this group where he met Keri for the first time. We both welcomed her and encouraged her to join in with the LP.

I was a member of a group of Labour Party members who were inspired by the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. This was part of a nationwide surge of membership who shared Jeremy Corbyn's vision.

Keri was invited to join this grouping as a new member and a person very recently moved to the area. I was attending group meetings from around Easter 2016. I was keen to develop the party and increase the participation of its growing membership.

Members were knowledgeable about the Party, many were experienced TU ~~organisers~~. There was a general agreement in the group that the current branch officers were not embracing the new Leadership or the huge increase in membership.

Whilst Peter was an active member of this group he was not controlling or manipulating. I would not have tolerated being controlled and neither would other members. The group was participative and everyone shared their experience skills and knowledge.

Charge 3.4

'suggested other women for officer roles and has been concerned at how quickly these have been dismissed in their absence by Peter Gates'

I cannot comment on this other than by citing an email Keri wrote to me and copied other women into it.

WOMEN for PPC.

Keri emailed me on April 21 2017 with a suggestion for women candidates for our PPC. I did not reply to her – I was remiss not to do.

She named a few local women as far as I know without discussing the possibility with them. Some women who were mentioned on the list did reply saying that they were not interested in becoming MPs.

Charge 3.5

'I have never seen any credible instance where any active women have been encouraged / supported by Peter Gates and a close number of inner supporters'

I can say that Peter has been supportive towards me. He supported Liz Plant and Nadia Whithome in their campaigns to become local councilors by canvassing and delivering leaflets on several occasions.

Gill Taylor.

Gill was part of an informal group of women who were meeting in a local neighborhood, Lady Bay. Gill was on the mailing list and attended once. We had met at Spokes and I called the group Spokes Women. At Gill's suggestion, we changed the venue to Butterflys for the next two meetings and the name of the group. She never attended again as far as I remember. She remained on the mailing list.

I did not reply to the email, I was remiss not to do so. She asked me not to circulate the email to anyone else.

Her last sentence was that she would see us all the following Wednesday. Housing and refugees was our topic, but she did not attend.

I have not witnessed bullying or misogynistic behavior by Peter Gates. He has tried to build the party. The first time I saw him (I did not know his name at that time.) he had organised a branch meeting as Branch Secretary, with small group discussions, there was a full room it was buzzing.

Peter Gates believes in the Labour Party and wants to build it.

Sincerely,

Beryl Whitehead

Position

Women's Officer

27.7. Cllr Adele Williams

Dear Martin,

Thanks for your invitation to give a witness statement in relation to the suspension of Peter Gates.

I'm happy to do so and hope that this matter can be dealt with swiftly and fairly.

Peter and I both stood in the 2015 Regional Board elections. We'd been separately nominated by our CLPs. Our understanding at the time was that we as CLP delegates had to vote for the candidates nominated by our CLPs. In any case, according to my recollection, our other Nottingham East delegate used the CLP's vote. I think the same was the case for Rushcliffe - so as I recall, neither Peter nor I voted anyway.

We produced a joint leaflet as we had a broadly similar approach to party policy and party democracy. We spoke to delegates as they arrived at conference and I can attest to Peter doing this, as I think I did, in a friendly and open manner.

Peter also asked me in November 2015 to help deliver a workshop for new members. It was a good event and Peter was inclusive and welcoming of other people's contributions. Chris Williamson also attended the event.

I was surprised to hear of Peter's suspension along with the nine others in the Spring of 2016. I have not seen anything to suggest that Peter is of a disposition towards other members that would lead him into situations that would warrant suspension. What I have seen is a committed activist who has worked hard to get Labour into power.

Later that year, Peter asked me to be a 'silent friend' at a meeting with Gordon Pattison, the then regional director, which George Carr-Williamson also attended. I took detailed notes at that meeting, but we were not given a clear indication as to what the 'charges' were, or what evidence was to be presented at a future formal hearing. As usual, Peter was cordial and respectful. However, we were told that that this was an informal process to get some 'clarity before the final decision'. I left with the strong impression that the suspension was likely to be lifted soon - in fact I recall saying that to Peter.

Frankly, I'm appalled that this has taken so long to get to a decision. I think the party would benefit from Peter being fully included again, and I hope this matter can be expedited whilst ensuring that a fair and transparent process is observed.

Thanks for the opportunity to contribute to this process.

Yours sincerely

Adele Williams

27.8. Zbyszek Luczynski

Z. H. Luczynski

20th September 2017

A Witness Statement to Panel of the National Coordinating Committee in the case of Peter Gates a member of West Bridgford Labour Party Branch by Zbigniew Luczynski Branch Secretary of West Bridgford Labour Party Branch.

I first saw the conflict between Constituency Officers at the Executive Committee of the Constituency at their meeting in November 2015 when I attended as an observer.

At that meeting Chair Sandy Cocker and Vice Chair Liz Plant set out complaints on the Agenda about Peter Gates and John Walsh behaviour: namely what they considered a barrage of emails they had received from them concerning arrangements for two Constituency training days for new members of Rushcliffe Constituency Labour Party.

I was told by the Constituency Secretary Lizzie Edgerton that she had tried to get advice from Finbar Bowie Regional Officer on a number of occasions about her complaints about the way Peter Gates was carrying out the duties of West Bridgford Branch Secretary and that Finbar had told her "to sort it out locally at Constituency level."

However these complaints were not shared with the Branch membership.

Instead complaints were made by Lizzie Edgerton she had told me to Finbar Bowie about a) a Newsletter and b) some minutes of a Branch Executive Committee which I had done and Peter amended.

I had taken the minutes in my role at the time in the post of Joint Political Education Officer of West Bridgford Labour Party with Gary Edgerton.

In previous informal planning meetings with Gary and Lizzie in our roles as Joint Political Education Officer, Lizzie had also told me that Richard Crawley our Branch Membership Secretary had also complained to Regional Officers about Peter Gates behaviour.

I was supportive of the direction our branch had taken, instigated by Peter Gates and felt that discussions at Branch meetings were moving in the right direction following a restructuring of branch meetings. This included the reduction of time for Officer's reports at branch meetings in order to allow discussions with outside speakers on policy issues followed by a discussion in groups. This approach had been discussed and agreed at our Branch Executive Committee

This was a popular move and was endorsed by members at Branch meetings in November 2015 January 2016 and February 2016.

Indeed since we were elected as Joint Political Education Officers in October 2015. I was working well with Gary Edgerton on an Action plan I formulated in November /December 2015 and on a Members Survey which I had drafted and which Gary amended in January 2016.

We then sent it to Peter for his advice, as he had a lot of experience in carrying out surveys in his job.

There was a delay in getting Peter's approval as he wanted to make additions. This resulted in some frustration for Gary and I. But this was resolved to my approval and Gary accepted the changes

Then there was a delay in getting it out to the membership on Peter's advice. He argued it was too much to bombard members with the survey at that time, as it clashed with a Newsletters and meetings, so Gary I were a bit miffed but I was not as antagonistic about this as Gary. The survey was circulated two weeks later in mid-January. However only twelve were returned.

Late in February Jean Stansfield told me that Peter Gates and John Walsh had been asked to attend a Constituency meeting on 7th March 2016. When I spoke to Peter, he said that he had not been told what was to be discussed but asked me to consider attending to act as an observer as he was not being informed what the meeting was to discuss.

It was on the morning of 7th March before that evening meeting and after the Survey questionnaires had come back in, that I met Gary to discuss their analysis, and arrangements for the upcoming Rushcliffe Constituency Social they were organising.

It was at this morning meeting that Gary and Lizzie told me complaints were to be discussed against Peter Gates and John Walsh at the evening meeting of the EC members of the Rushcliffe Constituency that day.

I argued with Gary and Lizzie that if they had complaints they should refer them to the Constituency Secretary for investigation using Constituency procedures, so they could be investigated at that level in accordance with the rule book on Constituency disputes and Disciplinary procedures.

They said that Andy Furlong Regional Board Chair had been invited to the meeting that evening and that it was not possible to reverse the approach they had chosen.

Lizzie said it would be a conciliatory meeting. However as I continued to ask them to revert to Constituency procedures to investigate the issues Gary said he wanted to remove Peter from the Branch through this process. He said that he wanted that statement to remain confidential.

After that I left determined to attend the evening meeting.

I did not keep Gary's statement confidential.

Following the meeting I formulated a protocol of dealing with such conflicts and had emailed our Branch Chair Steve Calvert with it, asking him to intervene, but this apparently was not possible because the Chair of the Regional Board had referred the matter to the National Secretary who had authorised administrative suspensions.

I am sad that this situation concerning allegations the detail of which has not been communicated to me has developed in our Rushcliffe Constituency party.

It could easily have been avoided if the Labour Party rulebook had been followed by Officers of our West Bridgford Branch, the Rushcliffe Constituency the East Midlands Party Regional Chairperson, and had full time Regional officers advised those lay officers to do just that.

I would like to know why the Regional Office did not advise the Rushcliffe Constituency that by the rule book allegations by constituency delegates must be investigated by a group of members of the constituency before any disciplinary action is taken.

I have been an active trade unionist Senior Steward in NALGO/UNISON IN Notts for over thirty years and the methods used within the Labour Party in this case would never be allowed in employer/employee disputes nor would they conform to natural justice or employment law

27.9. Lucy James

20th September 2017

Dear Mr Lee,

Re: Peter Gates

In September 2015 I joined the Labour party and began attending West Bridgford Branch meetings. A new set of officers had been elected, including Peter Gates as Secretary. In October a request was made for a Minutes Secretary, as Peter found it difficult to write due to a medical condition. I was happy to take on the role, and recorded Branch minutes from November 2015-February 2016. I had an informal meeting with Peter before the first meeting, to go over what was needed. It was a general discussion, and at no point did I feel he was probing or pushing me to agree to a certain agenda. There was a sense of trying to “place” me politically but this didn’t feel uncomfortable in any way, and just seemed to be part of the process of finding out shared concerns. He was clearly becoming more active in the party as he felt more affinity with the new leadership, and was keen that the local party reflect the thinking of the new leadership. But I never experienced this as excluding all other perspectives. The party was going through a huge shift and there were bound to be differences of opinion. However, at no point did I witness any bullying, misogyny or harassment. In all our encounters he was supportive and appreciative of the work I was doing.

I took minutes for the subsequent Branch meetings and the January AGM. After February the Branch entered pre-election purdah; during this time family commitments meant that I would no longer be able to attend the Monday evening meetings, so I stopped being Minutes Secretary. Also, by this point Peter had been suspended so I thought that there was less need for a Minutes Secretary. I did not attend or minute the meeting when the alleged altering of the minutes took place. I feel confident that the Branch Minutes that I compiled – which I don’t think are contested - were accurate. I have my original draft copies, which you could compare to the final minutes edited by Peter, should you wish to.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Lucy James

27.10. Jean Stansfield

Your ref: MKL/SW

From Jean Stansfield.

West Bridgford Branch Vice-Chair until January 2017.

Previously West Bridgford Women's Officer

Still involved in the Women's Planning Group I set up.

Previous Fulltime Organiser for NALGO.

Re Peter Gates

INTRODUCTION.

I am finding it very hard to write this witness statement. I have always liked, admired and respected Liz Plant; I have always considered Sandra Coker to be a good friend, helping to set up the first Branch Women's Group with Baroness Ruth Lister and Liz as speakers - a group which continues to be so successful and taken over as the Rushcliffe Women's Forum. Lizzie Edgerton was a new member I thought would become another friend. However, although it makes me feel uncomfortable, I am finding myself in disagreement with them and I cannot go along with a view that Peter Gates is misogynist (i.e. hating women).

Mia Colley, Beryl Whitehead, Lucy James, Linda Burdett, Jane Caro plus others are all examples of women he has supported and promoted. My own experience has always been that Peter is supportive and helpful. I have never witnessed any bullying and harassment. Peter is outspoken and can be stubborn which may be misunderstood sometimes, but that is quite different from the claims being made against him.

PETER'S DISABILITY.

Steve Calvert, owing to pressure of work, had to stand down from the Secretaryship of the Branch and the GC. No one else wanted the job so Peter, calling himself "a Newbie", volunteered, saying he thought he could do the job with support from the other Officers. He has a disability, Dystonia, which makes it impossible for him to write for long periods or to take minutes, so he asked for a minute taker. Lucy James agreed to do it with support from Peter. When Peter stood for re-election to the GC (having foolishly resigned) some of us did not know that Lizzie was prepared to do it. Just before the vote for Lizzie or Peter, Lizzie was asked if she could take minutes to which she replied "yes". It must have felt like a slap in the face for Peter who told me later that he had found it very hurtful. It had been put around that Peter refused to take minutes, so Lizzie was elected with two more votes than Peter. (Could Peter have a case for discrimination?)

OTHER CLAIMS THAT CONCERN ME.

LIZZIE makes claims that are not true.

*She says that I withdrew support from her as delegate to the 2016 Annual Conference. After she had been elected as GC Secretary I asked her if she would like to go to Conference, receiving an enthusiastic "yes". After that I put her name forward, generally and in the Women's Group. I never did withdraw that and didn't understand why she didn't go to the Conference. (In 2016 I was emptying my house in August/September prior to moving to live with my daughter, a very stressful time; also there were no meetings so I was not in touch with Conference arrangements.)

*About the Keyworth thing. I am vague about the details, but someone said that Lizzie had made trouble at a Branch meeting. I emailed Lizzie to ask if it were true. Lizzie denied that problems were caused by her and offered to send me the minutes of the meeting. I said I believed her and didn't need to see the minutes. This is the opposite of Liz's claim about that event.

*Lizzie says I became hostile towards her (also that I am gullible - an interesting comment). I do not understand why she thinks I am hostile. When she and Gary organised the Irish event, I lent books and pamphlets to them; also for the Spanish Civil War event, I lent, not only books, but all the papers connected with the Notts County Council re-erecting the Plaque for Nottinghamshire Brigade volunteers that had been removed by the Tory Administration.

*I took round books to Lizzie's house to sell when the Christmas Women's Social was held there in 2015. I think I have been supportive, not hostile, towards Lizzie and I can only feel disappointment that she should be making these claims.

*I do not understand Lizzie's remarks that I criticise her minutes. Minutes are placed before the next meeting to agree their accuracy. People agree or disagree with an amendment or addition and it is voted on. It is no criticism of the minute taker if an amendment is proposed. The aim is to ensure accuracy or avoid misunderstanding. I have had minutes of my own in previous occupations amended. Proposing amendments, which I rarely do, are not aimed at the minute taker. In fact I have argued for more support for Lizzie on the GC as minute taker - it can be a thankless task.

ROBERT CROSBY, a one-time friend, also sent an email saying that Peter was trying to destabilise the Party. This was because Peter had asked Gil, now he was suspended, how he should help with campaigning and Lizzie had said he should have asked her, not Gil. I was implicated in the destabilising claim. I emailed Robert and asked why he wasn't my friend any more. Robert said he could never agree with my politics. Robert and I had worked together at the GC, producing info (and attending Conference) on the Collins report. We had also put forward other ideas and had supported Sandra for Chair of the GC. I very much regret the loss of Robert's friendship and am sorry that we now seem to have ideological differences that prevent an exchange of views. (I experienced clashes of ideas when I was a full time organiser for NALGO, but with discussions and agreeing to disagree it did not prevent comradeship in a common cause as now seems to be the case in the Labour Party here.)

OTHER ISSUES CONNECTED TO PETER'S CASE.

By January 2016 the problems, claims and counterclaims seemed to have been put aside, both at the GC and at West Bridgford Branch, everyone was working together well. (See West Bridgford Branch and Branch Executive minutes January to February 2016.) Peter Gates had been re-elected as West Bridgford Branch Secretary and especially the February Branch meeting with Andreas Bieler speaking on alternatives to austerity and the breakout groups enabling fuller members' participation, was inspiring, received enthusiastically, and a pointer to future organisation. Then came that 7th March GC Executive meeting.

The 7th March meeting was a disaster, damaging, destructive, with the suspensions of West Bridgford Officers resulting in losses not yet recovered. Jane Caro had set up a network with Trade Unions like UNISON and I think it was the GMB. Other Officers, all new members, energised and having worked on programmes of activity, were suspended and all the work they had done was lost.

The meeting itself, to say the least, was unusual.

(1) Members are encouraged to attend meetings as observers and there was no indication prior to the 7th March meeting that observers were not allowed. We never knew who gave authorisation for such a ruling.

(2) Also, when indicating to Gil in the Chair that we wanted to speak, we were ignored. I don't think anyone on the Executive spoke although they were indicating that they wished to do so. Nadia and I both wanted to move a motion to put to the vote that the Observers be allowed to stay.

(3) Then again, Lizzie was a complainant at the meeting yet Andy Furlong said she should take the minutes, surely this was improper.

(4) Two of the suspended members were not even in the room. Why were they suspended? Also, most of the suspended members did not speak when they were in the room. When Peter said that if they could not stay neither would he, Andy announced that he would close the meeting, thus the Observers had no time to leave the room as they had been told they must.

(5) The closure of the meeting was not put to the vote which I think is what should have happened.

(6) The lengthy suspensions of such keen activists facing charges they did not understand seemed to me to be improper.

WHY WERE THERE TWO SETS OF MINUTES FOR THE 7TH MARCH MEETING?

It seems there were two sets of minutes of the 7th March meeting circulated. The copy included in Peter's pack (stating after 8pm - see page 125), most of which I would agree with (BUT NOT ALL) was never placed before the 4th April meeting. The 4th April minutes (page 130) do not match the 7th March minutes. My amendment on 4th April reads **"At the end of the paragraph at the end of the minutes...delete everything after LEAVE and INSERT with Executive members wishing to speak, Andy Furlong announced that he was closing down the meeting."** This is not reflected in the end of the March minutes contained in Peter's pack. It is not in the para commencing Rachel Scudimore, nor in the penultimate para commencing Andy Furlong. So why did we have different minutes before us on 4th April to those much fuller minutes being considered at the Hearing for Peter Gates? I do not understand.

FINALLY.

I hope this witness statement helps the members of the NCC to understand the issues and concerns regarding Peter Gates. I don't think he has been treated fairly and that the complaints made against him are misguided and untrue. He is an excellent organiser and has go-ahead ideas. Justice should mean that he returns as a full member of the Labour Party.

27.11. David Morgan

Dr David A L Morgan
Consultant Clinical Oncologist

To: Mr Martin Lee
Solicitor

12 August 2018

The letters from GM and KH that form part of the charges against Peter Gates ("PG" hereafter) relate to events that took place in December 2016 and the early part of 2017, and in which I was involved, my name being mentioned several times. This is my account of these events as I remember them - I have not saved much in the way of relevant documents, so this is primarily an account from memory.

One evening in December 2016, I met some friends, all Labour Party members, -and all local (i.e. living in West Bridgford or nearby), for a pre-Xmas drink in a pub. I emphasise that this was a purely informal get-together of like-minded friends; there was no pre-set "agenda", nor any thoughts of one as far as I was concerned. I can't remember how many people were there, nor who everyone was and, in keeping with the entirely informal nature of the gathering, people arrived and departed at different times. During the time I was there, I would estimate from memory that there were never more than about 10-12 people present at any one time. Most of the conversation that took place was between small groups (often one-to-one) within the larger group, as far as I can remember there was not at any point any discussion that involved all the people there at once, all of which is typical of a meeting of friends in a pub.

If this general description of the occasion gives a rather more detailed account than seems quite necessary, I do so in order to emphasise the informality of the occasion and the absence of any prior planning of subsequent actions. That people should feel "excluded" from this "meeting" ("get-together" might be a better term), strikes me as manifesting an extraordinary sense of "entitlement".

For much of the evening I was sitting next to "Jake" Jackson. At some point, Jake and I started to talk about the forthcoming AGM of the West Bridgford Labour Party Branch. We felt that the upsurge of membership of the Branch that had occurred at the time of Jeremy Corbyn's election as Leader suggested that efforts should be made to ensure that this was reflected in the political stances of the main Officers of the Branch. We noted that elections for these posts were scheduled to take part at the imminent AGM and agreed that it would be desirable to try to put forward candidates for the various positions. In order to do this, we thought that an informal meeting should be arranged as soon as possible to include the most active people and that we should write an email to those people most likely to support such an initiative to arrange a meeting at which-agreed nominations could be drawn up.

My recollection of the exact sequence of events is hazy, but I think that it was at this point that Jake turned to PG, who was sitting on the other side of him, to ask his opinion and for his support - "support" particularly in the sense that PG was Manager of the "Nottinghamshire Momentum" database. We wanted this email only to be sent to people who were members of the West Bridgford Branch (the "Nottinghamshire Momentum" database contains members from a wider area), Jake and I drew up the content of the email which was sent from the Nottinghamshire Momentum Database using their "Mailchimp" account for Data Protection reasons; the letter was signed by Jake and myself.

A meeting was held, as planned, soon after this (I can't remember exact date or venue), and nominations agreed. A further email was then sent out again signed by Jake and myself but sent from the Nottinghamshire Momentum Database through "Mailchimp", again to names on the "Nottinghamshire Momentum" database, but only those with W Bridgford addresses. This email advised its recipients of the nominations hoping they would attend the AGM and support it.

I am not aware of PG having taken any further action relevant to these events. His involvement ceased with the sending out of the second email.

The charge has been made, in relation to these events, that there has been "manipulation" by Peter Gates. The above account shows this NOT to be the case.

At all times, those involved were conscious of the need to maintain a gender balance in the Officer posts in the Branch, so any charge of "misogyny" is hard to understand.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D A L Morgan', written in a cursive style.

(Dr) David A L Morgan

27.12. Mike Scott

September 18th, 2017

Dear Mr. Lee,

Peter Gates – Hearing

Thank you for your request in relation to the impending Hearing for Peter Gates. In relation to this, I am able to make the following observations and you are welcome to use them as you see fit:

I am a lifelong trade unionist and have recently retired after 20 years working as a fulltime Organiser for Unison.

As you will be aware, 70% of Unison's membership are women and I was appointed on the basis of the work I had done as a Branch Officer to further the cause of equality for women in particular. My reputation in Unison, in the Trades Council and as an activist in such organisations as Keep Our NHS Public is founded to a significant extent on my ability to encourage and mentor members of disadvantaged groups. I am proud that at least two female senior Unison fulltime officers continue to state that I "taught them all they know".

I am also proud that I have been able to work with a wide range of people in my union career and was instrumental in enabling members with differing political views to work together in the interests on the union. My motto has always been that I will work with anyone who will work with me.

I rejoined the Labour Party after a long break when Jeremy Corbyn was elected as leader, but have not until very recently begun to get heavily involved in the activities of either the West Bridgford or Rushcliffe party, mainly due to time constraints. I was previously acquainted with a small number of local members via other organisations, but had never met Peter Gates.

I do not believe that my name has been mentioned in any of the allegations and my only involvement until now has been to express concern about the length of time it was taking to progress the matter, rather than the specifics of the case. However, there are some points I feel I can usefully make in relation to the charges:

1. I have not seen any evidence of gender-discriminatory behaviour on the part of either Peter Gates or those he is accused of manipulating. Indeed, it was my view that the newly-elected officers of the West Bridgford branch and their supporters were if anything being too cautious in their interpretation of the rules on gender representation at the ward AGM, almost to the extent of trying to force any woman present to stand for various positions!

2. Misogyny is discrimination against women because they are women, not because they hold different political or other views. No organisation believes that men can never disagree with women under any circumstances, so it is essential that allegations as serious as misogyny are fully backed with evidence.
3. It was noticeable to me on first joining the ward party that there was a split between various groups, which seemed to be more based on length of membership and personal issues than politics. My personal impression was that the long-standing officers and members resented the new influx and were unhappy that their traditional way of operating was suddenly open to question. The differences covered such areas as the organisation of meetings, attempts to involve as many new members as possible, accountability of officers and Councillors to the membership, etc.
4. Most of the new members did not appear to be from backgrounds that had given them much experience of Constitutions, Rules, Standing Orders or the organisation of meetings and there was inevitable confusion over what could and couldn't be done. Mistakes, most of which I believe to have been honest, were inevitably made and there were frequent queries and disagreements about process.
5. There was also a great deal of confusion (on all sides) about the status of Momentum, which was of course initially an entirely separate organisation consisting of both Labour and non-Labour members and subsequently an organisation of Labour members only, but distinct from the Labour Party itself. This resulted in some lack of clarity as to whether particular debates were taking place under the auspices of one organisation or the other, which was not helpful but not in my view intentional.

It is my belief that most – if not all – of the issues and allegations are a result of misunderstandings, personal and political disagreements and the tension between older and newer members. This view is supported by the lack of specific examples of discriminatory behaviour in the case against Peter Gates. As a Trade Union Organiser, I would have been surprised to see a case against a member based on such statements as:

- “exactly to what extent, what I believe to be controlling behaviour, is being exerted I don't know”
- “I believe Peter Gates is manipulating a group of people that he has collected”
- “I do think that some people's behaviour needs to be investigated that may have been anti-democratic”
- “I hypothesise that I have been intentionally excluded from communications”
- “I hypothesise that I have been excluded as a woman”

There is a clear lack of evidence as to both intention and outcome – this is speculation at best and cannot be used to prove any sort of case.

Yours Sincerely,

Mike Scott

27.13. Linda Burdett

2nd October 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

Witness Statement for a potential hearing with Labour Party NCC regarding charges against Peter Gates

Background:

I am a Rushcliffe Constituency Party GC Delegate from the West Bridgford Branch, who was suspended following an attempt to observe a CLP meeting on March 7th 2016. I sent my account of that meeting to Emma Foody at the Regional Office, as requested and it is included in the Charges Pack (Pages 52/53). I was offered no opportunity to discuss these events prior to being reinstated in July 2016 and have been uneasy knowing that Peter, who has worked hard during all election campaigns since March 2016, is still suspended after 19 months.

As I said in the attached statement: "I was keen to find out for myself exactly what was going on "in the CLP and I also had understood that the Constituency's policy was for all meetings to be open to observers. I am still keen to understand why such unjust treatment has been handed out to Labour party members keen to support the Party in winning the next general election.

When Peter Gates asked me to act as a witness should a hearing be called by the NEC I finally had sight of some of the charges against him and in particular charge 2 regarding the above meeting, along with some of the 'evidence' which includes Gary Edgerton's submission, which contains one inaccuracy and far too much emotive, aggressive language, which I consider unhelpful and disrespectful of myself and others present. I therefore agreed to write this statement in the hope of helping both the Branch, Constituency and National Party to move forward.

Inaccuracy:

Pages 63 and 64 of the Charges document are Gary Edgerton's description of his involvement in the CLP meeting on 7th March, which in some areas are completely different to mine and to Brent's. We are clearly "the couple of other members" he refers to in the doorway (p63), but both have no memory of him being in that doorway with us.

I should explain that at some point prior to this meeting I had chatted to Lizzie, who had told me that Gary's mum was ill and he was visiting her, I believe on that day. I had sent my best wishes to him. When Brent and I left the church hall, as I said in my submission, we bumped into Gary and had a conversation. He made it clear that he'd come back specifically to be at the meeting. When we told him that they were threatening to close the meeting should the would be 'observers' not leave, he was quite angry and went inside. By the time the meeting was closed Brent and I were some way down Stratford Road and had no further discussion with him.

In reading through parts of the charges bundle I note that Andy Furlong refers to a crowd bursting into the room, to barracking from members, to silent hostility. He concludes that action must be taken against "all those individuals who invaded the meeting and refused to leave." This aggressive language is not helpful in my opinion.

My overview is of a worried man, Peter Gates, feeling very threatened and wanting some witness to a meeting he was unclear about. Brent and I and 5 other West Bridgford Branch members were keen to support Peter, find out what was happening and observe the meeting. We walked from the end of the road to the church hall chatting, along with Peter and John Walsh and his partner, and tried to observe proceedings, some people taking in seats as they entered. At no point did I feel bullied into going to the meeting, just uneasy as to what it was about. The whole affair has been made into some sort of attempt at a coup.

With reference to Lizzie Edgerton's submission (page 40) I have to complain at her reference to Jean Stansfield as a "gullible member of the West Bridgford Branch." Jean is an extremely devout member of the Party who has been highly active for many years both at Branch and Constituency level. Indeed she founded our Women's Forum some years ago and gave an excellent presentation to the group last year. I am appalled to see her described as gullible.

Finally I have to say that I am particularly concerned at the language used by Gary Edgerton on pages 63 and 64. To suggest that I and others "fell for a trick, a ruse" and that we behaved with "misguided vulgarity" demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of myself and others present. Unfortunately since my reinstatement I have witnessed at first hand extremely un-comradely behaviour from Gary, which I have chosen to ignore, rather than add fuel to an already overheated fire.

My personal overview of the situation:

- I believe that the Branch and / or Regional officers should have acted more quickly to set up a mediation process to avoid this long, drawn out upsetting and unsettling process of suspensions
- I fail to understand why GC delegate observers were not allowed to attend the meeting on October 7th. According to the minutes of that meeting (Page 57) Nadia Whittome even asked if "those outside should be invited in" and "Andy Furlong requested to address the Executive first." This implies that we observers might have been invited in later, but clearly we were not. If there were good reasons for this meeting to be a closed meeting and if these had been explained to us in a coherent way, I'm sure we would have been happy to leave.
- I feel that too many of those involved have become overly sensitive and quite paranoid about events. I understand that these emotions and reactions are not surprising considering the amount of stress some of the individuals concerned have been under.
- I have been encouraged by the interest and response of Branch and Constituency members who have shown a lot of support for Peter and who are keen for this situation to be resolved.

I hope that the hearing will resolve all outstanding issues quickly so that we can all get back to working together to get a Labour government into power as quickly as possible.

Linda Burdett

27.14. Brent Abbott

Having read the charges against Peter Gates from the Charge Sheet I feel I am only able to comment on Charge 2 the incident of which I have direct knowledge.

I believe I have covered many of the points regarding the CLP meeting on 7th March in my previous submission statement to the Labour Party.

I would like to comment on the witness statements made by Gary Edgerton. Unfortunately the submission dated 21 April has pages missing notable 2,4, and 6 which makes it very difficult to gain a full picture. There are two final pages in the NEC evidence bundle that by their content appear to be written by Gary Edgerton. I can only assume they are but without a heading or signature this is not clear. I will also make some comment on the submission of Robert Crosby which has clear inaccuracies.

The submission by Robert Crosby states that in receiving the letters of suspension we had been encouraged to “refuse to accept them “ by Peter Gates. My partner and I initially refused to accept the letter but had no contact with Peter before making this decision. This refusal was based only on the sense of injustice we felt. We knew it was likely to arrive as another suspended member had received hers several days earlier. I would like to see evidence that he actively encouraged members not to accept the letters. In our case this was untrue.

Comments on Gary Edgerton’s submission page 46: This extract relates directly to the events of the 7th March. I would contest the use of emotive expressions like mob. All the participants in the group supporting Peter would have their own reasons for going along to that meeting. The expression mob implies a single purpose and an unthinking group intent on disruption. The aim was not to disrupt the meeting but act in an observational role. For my part I was going to support Peter and enlighten myself about the reasons for the complaints. I cannot speak for others in the group but feel that a more considered approach by some of those in the room would have led to less conflict and an outcome suited to all parties.

The final contradiction to the evidence lies with page 63 which I am assuming is from Gary Edgerton. The second paragraph says “ The door was open so I stood there with a couple of other members” My partner Linda and I were in the corridor outside the meeting room and when we heard that the meeting would be suspended unless people left the room we turned to go. We met Gary as we left. He chatted to us about the rigidity of the Labour Party rules. He was heading into the building at that point. As he pointed out later in the paragraph Peter did not know the nature of the complaints and neither did we. That was one of the purposes of us attending the meeting – to find out what the complaints were. As observers we hoped to gain a clearer understanding of how this situation had arisen.

As a closing statement I would like to comment on the nature of the language used in some of the statements given by the witnesses. There is far too much in the way of conjecture as regards motives. Many of the statements seem to deny there was any individual self-will on the part of those who were suspended. The reference to Jean Stansfield in Elizabeth Edgertons statement as “ gullible “ is the most ridiculous. This is an insult to the intelligence of a much valued and long standing active member of the CLP. I believe we all acted in good faith. The support provided in the situation was understandable given the lack of transparency and clear direction from some of the parties involved. In my opinion the reaction by the Regional Party was heavy handed and disproportionate in relation to the perceived intrusion into the meeting.

27.15. Eve Cina

Re Peter Gates

Dear Mr Lee

I am happy to provide a statement regarding my contact with Peter Gates who I have known since resuming an active role in the Labour party in October 2015. I have had sight of pages 1 and 65-9 of the NEC evidence bundle.

I do not feel able to comment on how other women have experienced Peter's behaviour but can state categorically that I have never found Peter to be anything other than supportive and encouraging of my involvement in the Labour party. He held the post of Branch Secretary at the point of my joining the West Bridgford branch and I always found him welcoming and keen to facilitate my engagement with the party (and that of others who joined at the same time). This was in fact in somewhat stark contrast to the "welcome" (sic) I received from some other branch members who appeared to be somewhat less welcoming of myself (and other "new" members who, like me, came (back) the party as a result of Jeremy Corbyn becoming party leader) .

It was because of Peter's welcome and encouragement that I chose and was keen to meet with him and other West Bridgford suspended members post suspension (March 2016). These meetings enabled me to continue to explore and understand the workings of the Labour party and policy issues, in addition to trying to offer support to people who I felt had been treated unjustly. This became particularly important to me after a very upsetting Branch meeting (26/10/16) attended by Gordon Pattison and my subsequent unsuccessful attempts to gain clarification of the situation as it affected Peter.

I resent and would dispute the suggestion that I was in any way manipulated by Peter: I have worked with male colleagues both professionally and as a volunteer for over 40 years and believe that I would have recognised and challenged any attempts at manipulation.

I met with Keri Dutczyn on 3 or 4 occasions (labour party meeting and a film night), although I was not able to attend either of the two meetings at her house to which I was invited. At no time did I discuss concerns about any aspects of Peter Gates behaviour with her: Peter's behaviour has never prevented me from volunteering or made me feel "disenfranchised", on the contrary he was the most encouraging of the branch officials /officers. I am also aware of him adopting a similar attitude towards other women, including encouraging us to consider standing for branch positions.

I have met with Gill Taylor on a number of occasions. One of these was a brqnch meeting when, correctly in my opinion, she challenged the way in which her contributions were dismissed by an official other than Peter Gates. I note that her letter (to Finbar Bowie, dated 13th Feb 2017) refers to concerns about officersu and wonder, therefore, why, to the best of my knowledge. Peter is the only person under investigation in relation to allegations of misogyny. I also attended the book group meetings in July and September 2016 referred to in Gills letter. The “gender dynamics” in those meetings, most particularly the September one, were I believe, a consequence of the behaviour of two participants other than Peter, one of whom was a woman I believe it was Peter’s attempts to subsequently address this that Gill refers to in point 6 (Events from my perspective) and I did not feel this was inappropriate.

I hope this information is of assistance in addressing a situation which has pertained for far too long. If anything requires clarification, please feel free to contact me. I am happy to give evidence in person if this is required and /or helpful

Eve Cina

21/9/17

FAO Martin Lee

Re the NCC investigation into Peter Gates.

I have been asked by Peter Gates and his legal representative if I wanted to comment on the allegations against him. Having considered the matter I can offer the following comments on an area covered in the report about a meeting I was present at.

An allegation is made about a Rushcliffe momentum meeting. No date is mentioned but I attended a meeting in December 2015 as a speaker to talk about the launch of momentum both nationally and locally.

I remember seeing Gary Edgerton at the meeting. I had met him twice before at the inaugural meeting of momentum in October that year and subsequently at a committee meeting of momentum where he and Lizzy Edgerton were the Rushcliffe momentum delegates to the first committee meeting.

I have absolutely no recollection of Peter talking about email addresses and breaking the DPA or of Gary speaking about it either.

From memory the main discussion at the meeting was a debate with a couple of other attendees about if momentum was needed and how it differed from other organisations like progress or CLPD etc. I do remember Gary speaking later in the meeting and saying that once the left was in control of a CLP the work of a group like momentum was done, whilst others argued that it was a useful forum for informal discussion which wasn't always possible at LP meetings given its formal nature etc.

To recap I have no recall whatsoever of a discussion about emails and the DPA at that meeting.

My only other comment is one about working with Peter in other campaigns- in March 2016 a number of us helped organise a 400 strong conference which included John McDonnell MP as guest speaker. I worked closely with Peter on this event and found him very easy to work with. The organising committee was gender balanced and I witnessed no inappropriate behaviour from Peter in any of these forums.

Cllr Steve Battlemuch
Nottingham South CLP.

27.17. Jake Jackson

To Martin Lee and Co
Solicitors
12 Queen Street
Mansfield
Nottinghamshire
NG18 1JN

Sunday, 12 August 2018

Your Ref: MKL/SW

Dear Sir / Madam

re Peter Gates

Further to your letter of 25/09/2017 I am writing to confirm my willingness to act as witness for Peter Gates at the hearing of the Labour Party NCC. To support my appearance as witness I can confirm that I will make the following statement:

I have read the Charges Pack and have identified a number of pages in which my name is mentioned. On page 67 of the NEC Evidence Bundle, Gill Taylor states that she felt she was being manipulated by an email which was sent to her by me and by David Morgan on 11th January 2017. The email itself is not submitted in the Evidence Bundle. However I can confirm that I did arrange with David Morgan to send this email. It was sent by us to all members of Momentum in Rushcliffe at the time. The list of members was held by Peter Gates. David Morgan and I composed the email and then sent it to Peter for distribution to Momentum members in Rushcliffe. I believe Gill Taylor's name was on that list.

As Gill Taylor states it did contain a slate of names for Officer positions at the forthcoming Rushcliffe CLP AGM. On page 67 para 11. Gill Taylor states that she was "taken aback" by receiving this email. On page 68 she states that she felt this support for a slate was "undemocratic" and as a result she decided not to attend the AGM.

I confirm therefore that I was acting as a correspondent to those Momentum members in as far as they have a legitimate interest in its contents and are also members of the Labour Party. Momentum is not a prescribed organisation and the discussion of "slates" by whatever means amongst Labour Party members of candidates for elections is a wholly legitimate activity and is not contrary to Labour Party rules as far as I know.

I do not accept that she was "manipulated." or that other Labour Party members were being "manipulated". She was free to attend and cast her vote in these elections as she wished since it was to be done by secret ballot. I fail to understand the relevance of Gill Taylor's letter to Finbar Bowie in regard to the suspension of Peter Gates which occurred 11 months previously.

My experience of Peter Gates during the short time he was Secretary of the West Bridgford Branch is that he performed that role in an open, democratic and inclusive manner. If anything, the meetings changed to become more inclusive and friendly to members compared to the practice before his time in office. I know of no instance of complaint that arose at Branch meetings where Peter officiated that members, especially women members, were being in any way excluded from debate or from contributing otherwise to these meetings.

page 1 of 2

Gill Taylor mentions my name again on page 68 para 17 of her letter to Finbar Bowie of 13th February. She asks me to supply the details of all other members of Momentum that were emailed. Quite clearly this is a breach of data protection. She then decides not to join the Google group concerned and goes on to “hypothesise” later that she has been excluded and that this amounts to “bullying”. To say the least I find this contradictory and, in as far it refers to my actions, unsubstantiated.

Yours faithfully

Peter (Jake) Jackson

27.18. Jane Caro

Jane Caro was West Bridgford BLP TULO and a member of Rushcliffe CLP GC. Jane preferred responding to specific questions that were put to her by Martin Lee, my solicitor. Jane's responses are included in the email exchange below.

From: jane caro [<mailto:janevcaro@yahoo.com>]

Sent: 19 October 2017 21:14

To: Martin Lee

Subject: Re: Letter dated 25 Sept 2017

Hi Martin,

Please see my answers below.

Hope that helps!

Kind regards,
Jane

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

To: 'jane caro' <janevcaro@yahoo.com>

Sent: Thursday, 19 October 2017, 17:27

Subject: RE: Letter dated 25 Sept 2017

Dear Jane

Further to your e mail I wondered if you could respond to the following questions:

1. Have you in any Labour Party meeting witnessed Peter Gates acting in a “*bullying, intimidating and otherwise hostile manner towards other members of the CLP*”, especially women?

No, I have neither experienced this from Peter Gates personally, nor witnessed him behaving in this way towards other members including women.

2. At the Rushcliffe CLP GC meeting in November 2015, where Peter Gates resigned as CLP Secretary, do you feel Peter was treated appropriately and with due respect by the Chair or other Officers in the meeting?

It's a long time ago, and I don't remember the exact details, but I felt uncomfortable enough to e-mail Peter after the meeting to say I felt he had been treated in a 'shabby and un-comradely manner'. I did not feel he had been treated with due respect.

3. At the Rushcliffe CLP meeting on 7th March 2016, following which you were suspended, did you witness any hostile behaviour, including “*barracking the Chair*” by Peter Gates at this meeting?

No, I don't remember Peter behaving in this way at all.

4. How would you describe Peter Gates' behaviour at this meeting?

I remember Peter trying to reach out to the party members present. He spoke forcefully, but respectfully, didn't raise his voice and implored all present to try to find a constructive way to go forward working together.

5. Did you feel it is fair to say you were part of a “mob” intent on disrupting this meeting?

No, not at all. In retrospect I can see there was definitely some misunderstandings about what the meeting was about, who was and wasn't invited etc. But I attended with the intention of wanting to contribute positively to the future of the party, and I have no reason to think the others had any intent to deliberately disrupt.

6. Did you, Peter Gates or any other observer at the 7th March meeting “refuse to leave”?

We didn't refuse to leave. We felt we had a right to be there as party members. We stayed while some debate took place about who was/wasn't supposed to be there and then the Chair prematurely (in my view) declared the meeting over, despite several people still indicating they wanted to contribute to the discussion.

7. Have you been aware personally, or been made aware of Peter Gates discouraging the participation of women members in Rushcliffe or West Bridgford Labour Party?

It's not something I've experienced personally and have no knowledge of Peter doing this to other women members.

8. Have you any experience of Peter Gates “manipulating a group of people that he has collected”? Did you participate in such a group?

No. I'm not open to being manipulated by anyone. I find that suggestion quite insulting.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Martin Lee

Martin Lee & Co

The information contained in this e-mail and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended for the addressee only. If you have received this e-mail in error please notify the originator or telephone 01623 651 886. The e-mail and any attachments have been scanned for viruses prior to leaving Martin Lee & Co. Martin Lee & Co. will not be liable for any losses as a result of any viruses being passed on.

Martin Lee & Co., Solicitors of 12 Queen Street, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG18 1JN

DX: 10354 Mansfield

Fax: 01623 651 887

Authorised and regulated by the Solicitors' Regulation Authority [SRA registration number: 351341] whose code of conduct can be accessed at www.sra.org.uk

27.19. Chris Williamson MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Martin Lee
Murlin Lee & Co Solicitors
12 Queen Street
MANSFIELD
Notts
NG18 1JN

5 October 2017

To whom it may concern

PETER GATES

I am very happy to provide a supporting statement for Peter, who I have known for several years.

He is an outstanding Labour activist and is an effective campaigner for the party.

Peter invited me to speak at an event organised by his local branch before his suspension from the party. The meeting was for new members and was incredibly positive and very well attended by new members who had been inspired to join the party.

Peter chaired the occasion and after I and other speakers had addressed the meeting, he divided the attendees into smaller groups to discuss campaigning ideas. This was then followed by a plenary session.

It was a thoroughly positive and enjoyable occasion, which had been facilitated by Peter, and all those who had turned out found the event very useful and made them feel welcome into the party.

In my view, Peter is an exemplary party activist who should be encouraged not spurned.

I do therefore sincerely hope that his suspension is lifted as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Chris Williamson
Labour MP for Derby North

27.20. Ben Gray

Dear Mr Lee,

I am writing this witness statement in support of Peter Gates. Having read his charges pack it would appear to make out that his actions might have a negative effect on membership of the West Bridgford Branch and Rushcliffe CLP. At the time of receipt of Peter Gates' emails in his role as Branch Secretary, I was an inactive member of the party. Peter's communications were as if the branch (and CLP) were all of a sudden active and I became interested in attending meetings. Previously the time and place of meetings were obscured within lengthy, dull and dusty email attachments.

Unfortunately by the first meeting I attended he and nine others had been suspended for the incident detailed in the charges pack. As an aside from the witness statement I'd like to say that this reads as the convening of a kangaroo court and it's sickening to me that the Labour Party would consider functioning in this way to be in any way normal. The fact that the Chair of the Regional Board was present makes this even worse in my opinion. At the pub after my first meeting, I was told that the suspended members had crashed a meeting "pissed up and mob handed". This is one of the first slanders that I heard about the suspended members. In my opinion the Labour Party, at all levels, has failed in a duty of care to its members allowing them to be excluded, slandered and drenched in innuendo.

The other comment I wish to make is on one of the complainants, Gary Edgerton, to my knowledge I've only met Gary twice. At my first meeting he was one of the only people to welcome me, most people just asked how long I'd been a member then stopped talking to me. The second time was at the County council election count, when he introduced himself again and told me it was taking all the will power he had not to "take a swing" at the tory party members present and that he really wanted to "lamp" one of them. This wasn't only odd of someone who had thought they'd only just met me, but also really rude and aggressive. In the charges pack Gary seems to play the victim, but in my admittedly limited experience, he would definitely be the aggressor.

I believe that in his time as Branch Secretary Peter breathed some much needed life into the branch and CLP. He is responsible for my initial involvement and has been encouraging of new members. Since becoming active I have taken on the roles of Membership Secretary at Branch level, Vice Chair of the CLP and even conference delegate. It is apparent that there are members who do not want things to change in this moribund set up. Taking any action whatsoever will cause certain members to report you to Regional Office and I am amazed to read that just having a discussion, among friends and like-minded individuals can get you "reported" and add to the "evidence" dossier to count against you at times like these.

Surely if there were any substance in any part of the charges pack (which, let's face it, there isn't!) Peter would have been expelled by now. Can you please just lift Peter's suspension so his energy and enthusiasm for the Labour Party can go back into building a better CLP?

Best Regards,

Benjamin R. Gray MChem(Exons) Ph.D.