

South East Cambs CLP | Conference Report

Notes:

- CAC = “Conference Arrangements Committee”. They produce a report each day with a timetable and list of motions, and the first action each morning is to vote to accept or reject the report.
- Debates are held on all motions before a vote – this is an opportunity for the proposer and seconder to introduce the motion, and for delegates from the floor to request to speak. Delegates from the floor are chosen at random by the chair. There were several complaints throughout conference that this was not a fair way to select speaker, with delegates suggesting alternative systems such as electronic devices.

Sunday 23rd Sep 2018 – Day1

At conference, you sit with your region, so everyone from East of England was together. We had a pre-conference training session a week before and a briefing first thing on Sunday morning where we received our voting cards.

Conference opened with a performance by Grimethorpe Colliery Band, followed by a welcome, merit awards, obituaries, a speech by Jennie Formby and best practice awards.

CAC Report 1 Vote

CAC report 1 had many rule changes and was very long – because of the last-minute NEC vote the previous night, delegates only received the report at 8am, giving delegates very little time to read the report, which contained rule changes relating to the Democracy Review. Several delegates spoke to ask for the CAC report to be rejected to allow more time to read the rule changes. CLPs almost unanimously voted to reject the report, but the trade unions supported it, and at the vote it was accepted with 53.7%. It's unclear what would have happened had the report been rejected – this is something we asked for clarity on in our post-conference feedback.

Debate – Democracy Review Rule Changes

We debated the following constitutional amendments which had been proposed as part of the Democracy Review (much of which was not brought to Conference and which is to follow later on).

1. Individual Members' Rights
2. Local Structures: CLPs
3. Regional Structures
4. National Structures: NEC
5. National Structures: National Conferences
6. National Structures: Leadership Elections
7. National Constitutional Committee
8. Westminster Elections (parliamentary candidate selections)

Consequentials

If certain motions here were carried, then subsequent motions from CLPs would fall. We were not exactly sure what this meant, but it seemed that by voting to accept a motion now, we would be closing off the opportunity for further discussion at a later point.

Card Votes 1-5 and 7

Amendments 1-5 and 7 were generally (although not universally) supported by speakers, who welcomed the positive changes they bring, such as better representation of women and BAME members. However, some speakers suggested they did not go far enough.

6 and in particular 8 proved more controversial.

Card Vote 6

Currently, a member of the Labour Party can only go on the ballot paper as Party Leader if they receive nominations from 10% of the combined commons members of the PLP and members of the EPLP. Card Vote 6 proposed the following additional clause: a member also required nominations from 5% of CLPs or 5% of affiliated members from at least three affiliates (two of which must be Trade Unions).

Reasons for: It gives more of a voice to CLPs and Trade Unions

Reasons against: It makes it harder for a candidate to get nominated, especially a candidate like Jeremy Corbyn who is not a mainstream candidate. Delegates argued that to increase party democracy, it should be as easy as possible for a member to be nominated as a leadership candidate, and many believed that the original 10% threshold should have been lowered to 5%.

Voting: We voted to reject Card Vote 6 for the above reasons. Conclusion: It passed.

Card Vote 8

Currently, a sitting MP is able to stand again at the next general election unless they receive a majority vote (i.e. 50%+1) against them from within their CLP. Card Vote 8 proposed that only a **third** of branches need to vote against them to trigger a reselection process.

Reasons for (from speakers): It increases party democracy and allows CLPs to remove MPs who are not accurately representing their CLP for whatever reason.

Reasons against (from speakers): It is not democratic enough (does not go far enough), and there should in fact be open selections (aka mandatory reselection). Some proponents of open selection argued that we should vote against the motion (even though it is an improvement on the current rule) because this would open up an opportunity for further debate on a later motion on another day of conference. We were ourselves uncertain of the consequences of voting something down because members want the chance to debate further, and said so in our post-conference feedback.

Voting: We voted against Card Vote 8 (as did the Eastern Delegation members around us who we consulted with) for the reasons above.

Summary: We were disappointed that Card Vote 6 and Card Vote 8 had not offered more in the way of party democracy. Card Vote 8 was a step back.

Women's Conference motion

The motion on "Women and the Economy" which was passed at Women's Conference was brought to the Main Conference and was passed unanimously.

Priorities Ballot

Many motions were brought by CLPs, and we had to vote on which 4 we wanted to prioritise. The top 4 from CLPs and the top 4 from Trade Unions were going to be debated and voted on later in conference, and the rest would not have an opportunity to be debated this year.

The options were: An Economy for the many, Brexit, Climate Change and Fracking, Combustible Cladding, Government Contracts, Housing, In-work poverty, Justice for the Windrush Generation, Local Banks, Local government funding, Palestine, Schools system, Social Care, Tenant's rights, The NHS, the Welfare System, Yemen.

We were advised that Brexit, In-Work poverty, Government Contracts and An Economy for the Many would be voted for by the Trade Unions and affiliates, so we voted for:

Housing and Schools System (as we believe these to be really big issues that are currently worsening inequality), Justice for the Windrush Generation (as we believe this to be an outrageous problem created by the Tories and made possible by the legislation of previous Tory and Labour governments, which must be addressed), and Palestine (as we believe that are key steps that the country can and should take to address the injustices perpetrated by the current Israeli government against the Palestinian people, and that it was important internally for the Party to have a debate on this matter).

Result: The 4 topics we voted for passed.

Monday 24th September – Day 2

This morning's CAC report was accepted.

Wales Report from Carwyn Jones.

Carwyn's final speech as he will be stepping down as Wales leader at the end of the year. Says a woman must be on the ballot paper for his replacement, and he will lend his vote to secure this if needs be. Also contains best joke of Conference: the B word that has divided the nation, communities and even Carwyn's own family is... his beard

Local Government Speaker - Rokhsana Fiaz, Mayor of Newham

Debates on Private Investment and Ownership

Opened by John Healey, Shadow Secretary of State for Housing

Included the following motions:

Contemporary Composite 1 – Housing - tackle housing crisis with measures such as 100K social rented homes annually, ending right to buy, end no fault evictions, earmark appropriate land returned to local authorities through nationalisation for house-building, rebalance government budget towards social housing and end the bias in favour of private developers in the planning system.

Contemporary Composite 2 - An Economy for the Many - covered renationalisation, Ministry of Labour, reforming corporate governance and expanding worker ownership, overhauling regulatory regimes

Emergency Motion – Grenfell Fire - demanding that Kensington & Chelsea Borough Council immediately withdraws the letters it sent to evacuated residents from near Grenfell instructing them to move back into their homes by end of Sept. Also demands that landlords and owners across UK immediately remove all flammable cladding, and that central government funds this for publicly owned properties.

Emergency Motion – Industrial Crisis in the Car Industry - Honda and BMW recently announced that in the event of a no-deal Brexit they would close factories following Brexit, and other car manufacturers have issued similarly gloomy statements. This motion calls for the Government to engage with Unions and industry to develop a strategy for the transition to electrification. It also calls for Labour to put workers at the heart of its opposition to Tory Brexit

These were all voted through, almost unanimously.

Speech from John McDonnell, Shadow Chancellor

Amazing speech. Starts with a touching acknowledgement of how Jeremy Corbyn has worn the abuse levelled at him by the media this summer with dignity. Goes on to announce some of the amazing policies we will deliver in government including workers' cooperatives, giving workers TU rights from day 1, ending the gender pay gap, legislating for one third of board members to be workers, set up workers' funds which issue dividends to workers, enabling wages to be determined by collective bargaining, and more. "The greater the mess we inherit, the more radical we will be". Receives rousing standing ovation - a real moment of unity!

[Speech from Richard Corbett MEP who spoke about the European Parliamentary Labour Party Report](#)

[Debates on Social Security and Skills](#)

Opened by Margaret Greenwood, Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

Contemporary Composite 3 – In-work poverty - min wage of £10/hr, right to min contract of 16 hrs per week and which reflects normal working hrs, right for equal pay for agency staff, halt rollout of Universal Credit and fundamentally reform the system

Contemporary Composite 4 – Schools System - bringing schools back under local democratic control including academies and multi-academy trusts

These were both voted through, almost unanimously.

NPF Report - Early Years, Education and Skills Policy Commission Annual Report – was voted through, subject to (a) reference(s) back.

NPF Report - Work, Pensions and Equality Policy Commission Annual Report – was voted through subject to (a) reference(s) back. We (i.e. Jane and Jamie) voted against passing the latter as we felt it was too vague and didn't address how we would deal with Universal Credit in sufficient detail. However, it was passed decisively by Conference.

[Speech by Angela Raynor, Shadow Secretary of State for Education](#)

Another incredible speech to close the day. She pledges to give LAs powers to bring academies and free schools back to local democratic control, fund nurseries for 2-4 year-olds, introduce free further education, fund biggest school-building programme in history. This will form the backbone of our National Education Service. Conference loves it!

[Ballot for National Auditor](#)

Steve Jennings and Chris Kitchen

[Fringe Events, Policy Seminars, The World Transformed](#)

- Rural housing (chaired by Hywel Lloyd, who is coming to our CLP soon)
- Workplace equality (with Diane Abbott & Naz Shah)
- Justice & Home Affairs (policy seminar)
- Health & Social Care (policy seminar)
- Trans equality panel (The World Transformed)

Tuesday 24th September – Day 3

This morning's CAC report was accepted. Amongst others, we debate and vote through motions on supporting the rights of the Palestinian people, winning justice for the Windrush generation, calling for the government to bring the contract for Royal Liverpool Hospital back in house after repeated failings by the private sector, and ending other damaging government contracts with the private sector. We supported all of these motions.

Debate – Constitutional Amendments

Note that some of these had already fallen because of the rule changes that were passed on Sunday.

Debate - Brexit and the Economy

Opened by Keir Starmer

Comprised the following motions:

- Contemporary Composite 5 – Brexit
- Contemporary Composite 6 – Government Contracts
- Contemporary Composite 7 – Government Contracts

Conference votes to push for a General Election in the event that the Tories' Brexit deal is voted down in parliament. Labour will only support the deal if it meets each of Keir Starmer's 6 Tests. If the Government refuses to grant a General Election, we will push for a referendum on Brexit. We voted in favour of the motion.

Speeches

- Rebecca Long-Bailey, Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Speech by Emily Thornberry
- Speech by Diane Abbott
- Guest Speaker - Lord Alf Dubs – spoke movingly and touched on his experiences coming to Britain as a child refugee

Debate on Security at Home and Abroad

Opened by Emily Thornberry, Shadow First Secretary of State

Comprised the following motions:

- Contemporary Composite 8 – Justice for the Windrush Generation
- Contemporary Composite 9 – Palestine

NPF reports:

- NPF Report Environment, Energy and Climate Change Policy Commission Annual Report - was voted through (subject to (a) reference(s) back)
- NPF Report – Justice and Home Affairs Policy Commission Annual Report - was voted through (subject to (a) reference(s) back)
- NPF Report – International Policy Commission Annual Report - was voted through (subject to (a) reference(s) back)

Ballot Votes

We were asked to vote for people for the following roles:

- National Constitutional Committee - Division III (we voted for Daniel Blaney, who won the vote)

- Conference Arrangements Committee - Division I

Fringes and other events:

- Interview with Emily Thornberry by The Times Red Box.
- Jane went to training on doorknocking, building relationships and an introduction to the Doorstep app.
- We ended Tuesday with an incredible rally at The World Transformed. Speakers included Diane Abbott, John McDonnell, Chris Williamson, Richard Burgen, Emma Dent Coad and Rebecca Long Bailey (amongst others). The mood in the room was electric. One of the most energetic and exciting rallies we had ever been to and certainly a highlight.

Wednesday 26th September – Day 4

This morning's CAC report was accepted.

Debate - Tackling Inequalities

Opened by Jonathan Ashworth

This comprised the following:

- Emergency Motion – Build Our Royal Liverpool Hospital
- National Policy Forum Report – Health and Social Care Policy Commission Annual Report- was voted through (subject to a few sections being developed)

Speech by Dawn Butler, Shadow Secretary of State for Health

Leader's Speech - Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party

Excellent uniting speech, well-received, even the media quite liked it! Jeremy's entrance on stage was preceded by a moving video featuring "You Will Never Walk Alone". You can view the speech here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJO1iiOXWr4>

Appendix: Democracy Review

Here are some notes on some changes for individual members and CLPs made as part of rule changes relating to the Democracy Review. These relate to Sunday's proceedings. We've adapted these from Clare King's (Cambridge CLP) report on Conference.

Individual Members Rights

- 12 months membership at a freeze date for candidates for councils and Parliamentary seats and a requirement to be a TU member.
- 6 months membership at a freeze date to be a national or regional Conference delegate or to vote in selection meeting for local/national candidates.
- 8 weeks membership at a freeze date for Young Labour members to be delegates to Young Labour national or regional conferences.
- 8 weeks membership to vote in branch and CLP meetings or vote in NEC, national, regional OMOV elections
- Members moving to another CLP have all rights immediately except in selection meetings and the NEC will issue further guidance on that aspect.
- BAME and Disabled members can self-define and also join the Party's BAME or Disability national structures without cost.
- The NEC will bring further proposals for a charter of Members Rights to the 2019 Conference.
- Membership fees will be reviewed and can be implemented before next Conference.

Local Structures (CLP and Branches)

A branch or affiliate can request the CLP to consider changing from an All Member Meeting Structure to a Delegate Structure (or vice versa). In that instance the next GC but one must be a special meeting (either AMM or Delegate depending on current structure) and the proposal require a simple majority to be carried (a change from current 2/3rds required). The NEC will issue guidance on limits to 'frequency' - how often the proposal can be put (i.e. they don't want every third meeting debating the same proposal to change a CLP structure so will limit how often the proposal can be put).

The quorum for delegate structures remains 25% but for AMM structures becomes 5% of members or 75 members (or a number agreed with Region).

New rules for CLPs in special measures will be made.

New rules to be made for the establishment, officers, structure, organisation, communication rights and delegate entitlement for Women, BAME, Disabled and LGBT structures. Provision to self define. Also OMOV elections for relevant CLP officers for these groups to the extent allowed by the law (i.e. if allowed by law BAME members vote for BAME officer etc - this remains something to be clarified). All to be brought to 2019 Conference, Young Labour similarly but to come into effect as soon as NEC sets out the rules for them.

The Executive Officers are: Chair, Vice Chair, Vice Chair Membership, Secretary, Treasurer, Women's Officer, Policy Officer, and - where established - BAME Officer, Disability Officer, LGBT Officer, Youth Officer, Trade Union Officer (must be a TU member), Political Education Officer, Communication & Social Media Officer. Please note the last is a volunteer officer role if established not as to be confused with the paid staffing role in Cambridge. At least half of these must be women.

EC composition: EC will consist of the officers listed above PLUS either branch secretaries or other representatives elected by each branch AND (x number) of members on a proportionate basis for the CLP as it agrees. Note this is a further change to current Cambridge EC structure. Branches can add a Women's Officer to the existing 4 key branch officer roles

Jobshares: The NEC will set out when jobshares can be used, including the roles they cannot be used for, nomination requirements, gender balance requirements and rules to prevent multiple votes. The guidance can come from NEC in this year ahead of 2019 Conference.

Publishing EC minutes: All EC minutes/decisions and branch minutes, plus Standing Orders and branch rules will be required to be available on a website (electronic platform) for members. Labour will provide the platform.

Other changes:

- The NEC will issue new rules for multi constituency CLPs- and they can come into effect immediately when made.
- There will be pilots for staggered meetings, digital attendance and online voting with new rules coming out of them.