

Minutes from the 1st Annual General Meeting of Barnet Alliance for Public Services - 12 June 2012

Present: Bob Jacobson, Barbara Jacobson, Chris Gatty, Christine Breer, Cllr Alison Moore, Daniel Estermann, Dave Ball, David Braniff-Herbert, Dennise Williams, Dipa Shah, Donald Elyven, Fia Czapnik, Frances Briers, Vallery Uzun, Janet Leifer, Jeffrey Leifer, Janet Maddison, Joanne Delos Fryer, John Matthous, John Smith, John Sullivan, Keith Martin, Kim Lee, Lorna Jeans, Louise Keane, Lucy Nowell, Marie Symington, Mike Fisher, Pat Ridpath, Patricia Altman, Peter Ridpath, R. D. Garratt, Ron Cohen, Ruth Hendrick, Ruth Kissin, Ruth Kutner, Silpa Shah, Susan Ridpath, Tirza Waisel, Vicki Morris, Alan Sloam, Poppy, A. Ldu (???), Altman (???)
Amendment (1 July 2013): Present also was Robin Bishop.

Chair: Barbara Jacobson; Minutes: Tirza Waisel

Apologies: Julian Silverman, Keith Martin

introduction: Tirza & Barbara gave short introductions.

Elections of officers: The following nominations presented:

For coordinator: Julian Silverman, Tirza Waisel; **For Secretary:** Secretaries' team: Ruth Kissin & Chris Gatty + Tirza & Shereen as backups; **For Treasurer:** Debbie Scott; **For Non-officer members of the committee:** Ruth Kutner, Marie Symington, Vicki Morris (publicity officer), Barnet Trades Council delegate.

There was a short discussion about whether to have 1 or 2 coordinators, then vote: In favour of 2 coordinators – 6, in favour of 1 coordinator – majority.

Vote for coordinator:

Votes for Julian: 4

Votes for Tirza: Majority

Elected: Tirza

Vote for Secretary: Chris Gatty (To be the named one on paperwork) + Ruth Kissin
Both elected.

Vote for Treasurer: Debbie Scott

Debbie elected.

Vote for Non-officer members of the committee: All nominees voted in.

Elected: Ruth Kutner, Marie Symington, Vicki Morris, Julian Silverman

Non-officer member of the committee:

Permanent member from Barnet TUC – Vallery Uzun

Subscription fee: Resolution to fix members subscription fees as £5 per year.

All voted in favour.

Resolutions:

1) **'Right to Choice' letter to the guardian** – The following letter, which arrived at

BAPS email account with a request for BAPS to add its signature to it, was read:

'Right to Choice' government consultation – letter to Guardian

Dear Sir,

The government is currently consulting on whether to introduce a legal 'right to choice' in public services. This 'right' would put the burden on individuals to research different services they could use. It implies that it's OK for some hospitals or schools to be worse than others, as long as people can choose.

We do not want this emphasis on choice, we want a right to good local services that meet our needs. The government should make sure everyone has easy access to high quality public services, by stopping cuts and privatisation. It should enable communities to work with frontline staff to make public services more accountable and responsive to users.

The reality is that the government's 'right to choice' and its 'community right to challenge' (enabling voluntary groups to force local authorities to open up procurement) are a cover up for privatisation by the back door. If this goes ahead, private companies will make a killing from taking over our services while everyone else suffers.

Readers, if you want a right to good, local, publicly provided services instead of a 'right to choice', you can tell the government how you feel at

<http://consultation.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ops-calltoevidence/questions/>

Signed:

Paul Smith, Atos Victims Group
Pip Tindall, Brighton Benefits Campaign
Alan Gibbons, Campaign for the Book
Ross Saunders, Cardiff Against the Cuts
Philip Leicester, Charnwood Against The Cuts
Malcolm Wallace, Chelmsford TUC
Mark Tyers, Coalition of Resistance, Tyne and Wear
Alan, Darlington Against Cuts
Linda Burnip, Debbie Jolly and Ellen Clifford, Disabled People Against Cuts
Mike Arnott, Dundee Trades Union Council
Dave Morris, Haringey Alliance for Public Services (to be confirmed)
Haringey UNISON
Sarah Hitchings, Lewes Stop The Cuts
John Hamilton, Lewisham People Before Profit (to be confirmed)
London's Local Anti-Cuts Alliances (to be confirmed)
Jim Lowe, John Gulliver, John Harding, Kathleen Harding and Rosie Haworth-Booth, North Devon Anti-Cuts Alliance
Cat Hobbs, Oxford Save Our Services
Bobby Noyes, Southampton and South West Hampshire TUC
Chris Kelly, Southwark Save Our Services
Ian Clark, Voices for the Library

A resounding YES sounded in reply to the Chair's question: 'Should BAPS also sign this letter?'

DECISION: BAPS to sign the letter.

2) Suggested resolution (Alan Sloam): That there will be a **referendum about the One Barnet Programme**.

DECISION: The issue will be discussed in BAPS activists' meeting in order to decide whether to take this on as an action for BAPS.

3) **A FUTURE THAT WORKS** (David Brannif-Herbert). David read the following suggested Motion:

A FUTURE THAT WORKS

- ✦ Barnet Alliance believes:
- ✦ The Government's austerity agenda is starving communities from the vital public services we need to stimulate growth
- ✦ The double dip recession is a clear signal that austerity is not working
- ✦ Across Europe, people are rejecting austerity

Barnet Alliance further believes:

- ✦ The TUC march on 26 March 2011 was the largest anti-austerity demonstration in the UK and had well over half a million people participating.
- ✦ National demonstrations against austerity are a show of public strength against the government's agenda.

Barnet Alliance resolves to:

- ✦ Support the TUC "A Future That Works" campaign for growth, jobs and social justice for all.
- ✦ Mobilise a Barnet Alliance for Public Services section on the TUC "A Future That Works" demonstration on Saturday 20 October 2012.
- ✦ Work with the TUC's Local Organiser pilot project to deliver agreed campaign actions.

Claps.

Discussion:

Vallery suggests to add: 'The National Public Sector strike over pensions 30th November 2011 was the largest UK strike since the 2nd World War and was a further demonstration against austerity.'

Ron objects to the last minute presentation of the motion in this AGM.

Alan Sloam says it has to mention the One Barnet Programme.

Cameron says what we're fighting in Barnet is part of this austerity, so we should adopt it as is.

Poppy asks whether there is a party political hidden agenda here, is this supporting the Labour.

David BH: The TUC is not affiliated to the Labour; some of its unions are, but not the TUC, so this is not a Labour take over. It will be a symbolic act to adopt it in BAPS first AGM.

Shereen: Cuts and privatisation go hand in hand, and BAPS cannot do without the trade unions.

Vallery: The purpose of this motion is to bring the national demonstration to public

awareness and mobilise the public for the next one, same as we had a strong contingent in the previous ones.

Alison Moore: BAPS is a fantastic grass-roots organisation of residents and trade union; The Labour Group is fighting the One Barnet Programme along side BAPS. BAPS is doing a good work.

A shop steward from Unison expressed concerns that the public will see us too closely linked with the trade unions.

John Sullivan: Without the support of the trade unions CADDSS would not have done what it did; it is about practicalities - we need this motion for disabled people.

Bob: We should not make a decision on the basis that we are afraid to be seen as affiliated to the unions.

[Name not identified]: If we make it clear in all the publications that it is a broad based group, then there will be no suspicion that we're acting with hidden agendas.

Barbara read the motion again and the meeting voted.

Vote: Votes for: majority; voted against - 2.

DECISION: A Future That Works resolution was accepted with Vallery's suggested amendment as above.

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The AGM concluded here and the meeting listened to a presentation titled 'Exposing the Commissioning Council' by Prof. Dexter Whitfield.