

LABOUR CAMPAIGN FOR ELECTORAL REFORM



Report from the Executive to AGM, 25 February 2023



Chair's Report: Sandy Martin

Since our last AGM in February 2022, Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform has continued to achieve. It is no mistake that the majority of our actual campaigning is in conjunction with others – as the Labour Party Clause 4 says “We achieve more [together] than we achieve alone”.

Labour for a New Democracy (L4ND) has gone from strength to strength and enables us to cooperate with the Electoral Reform Society, Make Votes Matter, Unlock Democracy, Politics for the Many and several others, to tap into their large membership resources and extend the reach of pro-PR campaigning within the Labour Party far beyond the limits of our own group. This time last year we were anxiously awaiting the result of major funding bids for L4ND, bids which I am sure you know were successful. Thanks are due to all the L4ND staff for their tireless work, and to all the member organisations that have stuck with the campaign. Particular thanks are due to the Electoral Reform Society and Make Votes Count which supported L4ND through that process.

Building on the success with the Constituency Labour Parties at the 2021 Labour Party Conference, the work done by L4ND and Politics for the Many with trade unions led to the firm commitment from Unison and the storming participation of the Unite delegates to take us to an overwhelming win at the 2022 Labour Party Conference. Passing that motion was a historic moment for the Labour Party, and nothing that happens can take that away from us.

We have won a victory but not the whole campaign. LCER exists to work with the Labour Party to create a better democracy. As our democracy will never be perfect, we will always have a role. But in the immediate future our main focus must remain electoral reform for the House of Commons. One of the actions from previous AGMs is for LCER to affiliate to the Labour Party as a Socialist Society, a resolution which was passed in 2020 and firmed up at our AGM last year, but which we have not been able to implement until now. My intention is to put in our application on the day of the AGM. This will give us a formal role in Labour Party policy-making, and more importantly signal to all members of the Labour Party that we will remain a critical friend, fighting for a better democracy above and beyond the electoral system for the House of Commons.

As Chair, my main responsibility is to ensure that our Executive is working as effectively as possible, not just with other democracy campaigns, but also with you the members, and recruiting additional members from our Party so that we become continually more effective. I am particularly pleased that we now have a vibrant LCER Youth group. The Constitutional changes we present at the AGM this year are aimed at broadening the diversity of our Executive, and indeed of our whole membership, and I hope you will support them.

Several Executive Committee members are standing down this year. I want to thank all my fellow Executive Committee members for their commitment, dedication and hard work over the past 15 months. I feel sure that new incoming Executive members will help us continue to build our reach and influence so that we can maintain our high profile and significantly influence the Labour Leadership during the run-up to the next General Election and beyond.

Sandy Martin, February 2023



Parliamentary and Political Officer: John Doolan

This has been a historic year for our campaign: together we achieved one of our major objectives, with the motion in favour of proportional representation passed on the floor of the 2022 Labour party Conference. I have been proud to play a part in that work. Throughout the year I have worked with our colleagues in the Labour for a New Democracy (L4ND) campaign, developing strategy, talking to MPs and PPCs, and generally doing whatever I can to help further our objectives.

The L4ND team has been based at LCER for over a year now; from my perspective as Parliamentary & Political Officer, it's a relationship that is working extremely well. Having paid staff to work with has enabled us to be far more strategic and wide-ranging in our approach. It has been great to work with such a committed and professional group of people, and this has been as enjoyable as it has been successful. Working with the L4ND team and the other organisations in the L4ND coalition has underlined the importance of a coherent strategy and messages tailored for different audiences as we move towards the next phase in our campaign.

I worked with the LCER and L4ND teams at the Labour Conference, running the stall throughout that time, and supporting our organisations' work on compositing motions and coordinating our volunteers. I enjoy stall work as it allows me to really communicate with a wide range of Labour Party members. There has been a sea change in members' attitudes on electoral reform in recent years. Five years ago at a Conference stall, we would have encountered many questions from people questioning the need for PR (and from some a few people asking what PR was); now, with a large majority of members in favour, the questions are mostly about the details of how we achieve PR in practice. I have also run stalls at the annual conferences of the Fabian Society and the London Labour Party; again, the reception from members has been extremely positive.

As a key LCER speaker I have performed countless guest speaker slots for CLPs and socialist organisations. There is increasingly the feeling of pushing at an open door with the membership when I attend CLP meetings, and although there are still hold-outs for FPTP these are becoming fewer and fewer.

We continue, in collaboration with our partner organisations, to meet with and lobby Labour's elected representatives. There is not space here to mention all the high-profile figures who support our campaign and champion democratic renewal and electoral reform; prominent supporters include Andy Burnham, who will be speaking to our AGM; Mark Drakeford, who has enabled a move towards STV for Welsh councils and confirmed the use of a proportional system for the election of the Senedd; and Clive Lewis and Alex Sobel who are staunch supporters of the L4ND coalition.

Support for PR in the Parliamentary Labour Party is growing but remains divided, with around 33% of Labour MPs having declared themselves in support of PR and around 25% against (either because they support FPTP or because they would favour a move to AV but not a proportional system). The remainder of MPs are undecided or undeclared. The good news is that our work with members who have been selected as parliamentary candidates shows that our new PPCs (including those in winnable seats) are strongly in favour of PR; thus, there is likely to be a substantially increased level of support for PR among the new PLP after the next election.

LCER will be looking to hold another event for parliamentarians event after the local elections this year, to enable them to share their views on the campaign with us. As ever, I and my LCER colleagues are available and keen to discuss electoral reform with any Labour parliamentarian who is willing to do so, either online or at Westminster, at a date and time which is convenient for them.



Report from Labour for a New Democracy

Over the last year, L4ND's work with LCER, Labour members, affiliates and other partner organisations resulted in the overwhelming vote in favour of Proportional Representation at the 2022 Labour Party conference. Our attention is now focused on mobilising engagement with the National Policy Forum process that will determine the party programme from which the next manifesto will be drawn.

Affiliated trade unions

Following Unite's decision to support electoral reform at its 2021 policy conference, we worked with Politics for the Many to build further support across Labour's affiliated trade unions. This work played a crucial role in supporting members of unions like Unison (who succeeded in passing strong policy in favour of PR at their National Delegate Conference) and CWU (who secured support for a motion condemning First Past the Post as "undemocratic" and committing to review policy on electoral reform). Alongside the other pro-PR unions - ASLEF, FBU, TSSA, MU - these changes paved the way for strong trade union support for PR at the 2022 Labour Party conference. We continue to work to consolidate support and build understanding about this issue across the trade union movement.

Constituency Labour Parties

Over 140 CLPs voted to send motions on PR to the 2022 conference, of which 129 were accepted. This made PR by far the most in-demand issue at the Labour Party conference for the second year running - unprecedented for any issue. The total number of CLPs with policy in favour of PR has climbed to 377 - some 60% of all CLPs. More than 96% of CLPs which debated a motion on PR decided to support it. This progress was underpinned by our organising in CLPs and across regions, the continuing speaker programme co-organised with LCER, and momentum built through high profile events (including [Levelling up Democracy](#)) as well as a well-received report on why PR must be part of Labour's democratic reform agenda ([Everything but the Commons](#)).

Labour Party Conference 2022

At conference itself, we organised our most effective operation yet, building an extensive delegate network to whom we provided briefing, guidance and coordination. We brought together a large team of enthusiastic volunteers to help with leafleting, fringe organising and logistical support. The campaign had a highly visible presence, including thousands of lanyards, tote bags, stickers, T-shirts and flyers - ensuring that #Labour4PR was always at the front of conference-goers' minds.

Working with the Electoral Reform Society comms team we delivered an effective media strategy; briefing and liaising with journalists resulting in print and broadcast coverage, including [BBC Politics Live](#). We produced and shared professional videos onsite, with videos of major moments such as [fringe speakers](#) and [Andy Burnham welcoming the vote outcome](#) available in real time.

An exhibition stand co-hosted and staffed with LCER formed a base of operations inside the conference centre - and we put on three well-attended L4ND fringe events, including a discussion of [Everything but the Commons](#), at which First Minister Mark Drakeford spoke, and the ['Make FPTP History' rally](#).

Into 2023 - the National Policy Forum process

With conference committed to PR - and with Labour officially prioritising democratic renewal - our next objective is to secure a commitment to electoral reform in the party programme. In July of this year, for the first time since 2014, the National Policy Forum will agree a policy platform from which the next manifesto will be drawn. We are now focused on engaging with this process and the consultation that proceeds it. This includes informing party members about opportunities to raise the need for PR, mobilising responses to the consultation, and demonstrating support to NPF representatives and other party stakeholders.



Treasurer's Report: Ken Ritchie

The financial year to 30 June 2022 was a breakthrough year for LCER. The first half of the year saw the extraordinary success of the L4ND campaign at the Labour Conference, gaining the support of 80% of constituency delegates, even if a final conference victory was to require another year.

In the second half of the year, LCER became the host organisation for the L4ND coalition. For both LCER and L4ND this was a major, and ultimately successful, development, but it also required a step change in LCER's financial and administrative affairs: it involved LCER taking over responsibility for a project with four staff and an annual budget of around £180k, something that would not have been possible without the support and fundraising skills of the L4ND team.

L4ND remains a separate project, funded by grant income for salaries and other activities, and this is reflected in the accounts presented below. At an appropriate time, separate detailed accounts for L4ND will be prepared for donors and the L4ND Steering Committee.

Although LCER's own accounts show an excess of income over expenditure, LCER's financial performance fell short of expectations. A very strong increase in membership income in the second half of 2020-21 led to the Committee proposing an income budget of £14,000, but actual income was only £11,126 due to problems with payments being taken by our old membership system. In response, Officers are considering new initiatives to benefit from the increase in support for PR and a new system for processing membership subscriptions.

Most of LCER's campaigning activities have been undertaken jointly with L4ND. Although LCER has not yet made a grant to L4ND (as envisaged in the budget), several LCER campaign expenditures were on activities included in the L4ND budget and will therefore appear in the L4ND accounts as LCER contributions.

At the end of LCER's financial year (30th June), L4ND was in a very healthy cash position as a result of many grants being received in advance. It is possible, however, that, in the latter stages of the L4ND project (the autumn of 2023), LCER's financial support will be needed, and although LCER's assets are more than two years' expenditure at the current level, in 2022-23 reserves may need to be allocated to ensure that contractual obligations to staff can be met.

In summary, however, although LCER's own financial performance in 2021-22 was not quite as good as we might have wanted, the organisation remains well funded and with sufficient reserves to meet any foreseeable challenge. Moreover, with the present support for electoral reform, LCER appears to be financially secure for years to come.

Ken Ritchie, Treasurer

February 2023

Annual Accounts for year 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022

Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform

	2021-22	2020-21	Notes
Income			
Subscriptions	13,107.66	14,212.81	(1)
Donations	400.00		
Less:			
Fundraising fees and charges	2,381.75	2,122.17	(2)
Total Income	11,125.91	12,090.64	
Expenditure	8,222.49	2,041.05	
Excess income over expenditure	2,903.42	10,049.59	

Labour for a New Democracy

Income	78,784.53	n.a.	(3)
Expenditure	37,419.93	n.a.	
Excess income over expenditure	41,364.60		

BALANCE SHEET

	LCER	L4ND
Balance at 1.7.21	15,819.86	0.00
Excess income over expenditure	2,903.42	41,364.60
Balance at 30.6.22	18,723.28	41,364.60
<i>Being</i>		
<i>L4ND contingency reserve</i>	<i>12,000.00</i>	
<i>General reserve</i>	<i>6,723.28</i>	

Notes to the accounts

1. These accounts have been prepared for the year 1st July 2021 to 30 June 2022 in accordance with the Financial Standing Orders.
2. In these accounts, charges that are made on receipts by online membership systems have been deducted from gross income to show the net amounts received by LCER.
3. During the year, LCER agreed to take over the role of host agency for the Labour for a New Democracy coalition. As a result, LCER has received income (mainly grants) for the support of the work of L4ND and is responsible to donors for the expenditure of L4ND resources on a programme of work agreed with the L4ND Steering Committee. LCER's responsibilities include those arising from being the employer of L4ND staff.
4. The accounts are presented on a receipts-and-payments basis - i.e. they show neither pre-payments nor liabilities. This is particularly important to note when considering L4ND transactions: most grants have been received in advance of the work being undertaken, and the monies held at the end of the year have been received to support activities in the following year.
5. As the employer of L4ND staff, LCER will have obligations to staff at the end of their contracts. Although it is hoped that end-of-contract costs will be recoverable from donor funds, a separate reserve has been created to enable LCER to meet any liabilities which might arise. Should contracts continue until October 2023, total redundancy costs would be of the order of £7,000 and an additional £5,000 may be needed for salary payments during notice periods. Although it is very unlikely that LCER would be required to meet these costs in full from its own funds, a contingency reserve of £12,000 has been created to cover any obligations.
6. The table below provides an analysis of LCER expenditure.

	2021-22 ACTUAL	2021-22 BUDGET	2020-21 ACTUAL
Campaign materials	1402.31	2,400	0.00
Conferences	4022.61	3,350	1,200.00
Advertising	0.00	0	46.05
Travel	0.00	400	0.00
Website and software licenses	1800.66	2050	511.38
Stationery, Admin, Postage	171.81	300	32.92
Bank service charges	183.10	200	216.40
Other (GoCardless in 2021-22)	642	0	35.30
Support for L4ND (see commentary)	0.00	5,300	0.00
TOTAL	8222.49	14,000	2,041.05

7. The Financial Standing Orders require that all single items of expenditure of more than £400 are reported to members. In 2021-2022 there were 6 such items:

Robin Wilde	1,547.37	Website development
Pellacraft	1,186.32	Campaign materials
GoCardless	642.00	Card processing system (total of monthly payments)
Scottish Labour	1,200.00	* Scottish Labour conference
Welsh Labour	792.00	* Welsh Labour conference
AirBandB	1,221.76	* Deposit accommodation for Labour Conference 2022 (prepayment for 2022-23)

Those costs marked ' * ' were made as contributions to the L4ND campaign.

Supplementary notes on LCER finances

Proposed change in the financial year

The Annual Accounts presented to the 2023 AGM are for the last complete financial year, which was July 2021 to June 2022. The information is therefore nearly 8 months out-of-date.

Now that we have agreed to hold our AGMs in February, it would make more sense to change our financial year to January - December. Elsewhere in the agenda is a formal motion to make that change in our Financial Standing Orders. Should the proposal be accepted, we will provide the 2024 AGM with an audited version of the accounts from July - December 2022 as well as the accounts for January - December 2023.

For this AGM, we are providing the following table which updates the annual accounts to the end of December 2022 (note that these are provisional, unaudited figures).

	July 21–June 22	Jan 22–Dec 22
LCER		
Income	11,126	10,883
Expenditure	8,222	10,520
Excess income over expenditure	2,903	363
LCER funds at year end	18,723	17,899
L4ND transactions		
Income	78,785	139,017
Expenditure	37,420	118,806
L4ND funds at year end	41,364	20,210

Budget 2022-23

The Financial Standing Orders require a budget for the current financial year to be presented at each AGM.

In present circumstances, a budget just for LCER's own income and expenditure is not very useful as a tool for financial planning and management. We anticipate an income of around £12,000 (net of fees), but our campaigning work is fully integrated with that of Labour for a New Democracy which has been working to a budget of around £120,000 p.a., supported by grant income.

The Executive Committee is of the view that LCER's income, beyond what is needed for purposes that are exclusively LCER, should be made available for the support of L4ND (although will not be formally transferred to L4ND until actually required).

The following expenditure budget is therefore proposed:

	2022-23 BUDGET	2021-22 ACTUAL	Notes
Campaign materials	2000	1402	(a)
Conferences	2500	4023	(b)
Travel	400	0	
Website and software licenses	2000	1801	
Stationery, Admin, Postage	200	172	
Bank service charges	200	183	
Fundraising system charges	700	642	(c)
Support for L4ND	4000	0	
	12000	8222	

Notes

- Campaign materials - conference materials etc branded as LCER*
- Conferences - LCER costs in attending conferences in support of L4ND. 2021-22 figures included costs of regional conferences supported before L4ND funds were available.*
- Costs of GoCardless system for collection of membership subscriptions.*

Damien Welfare, Auditor

Annual Accounts for the year 1st July 2021 to 30th June 2022

Auditor's report

I have examined the Annual Accounts for the LCER's financial year 2021-22 (1st July 2021 to 30th June 2022) and associated invoices and receipts (over £200.00). I have also been shown the bank statements for the two Co-operative Bank accounts, and spreadsheets for those accounts and the LCER Membership account covering that period. I have been supplied with explanatory notes and other information by the Treasurer, including in relation to financial arrangements concerning L4ND, and have discussed a number of points with him.

I am satisfied that the accounts are a true and accurate record.

Damien Welfare

Auditor

20th February 2023



Membership report: Maria Iacovou

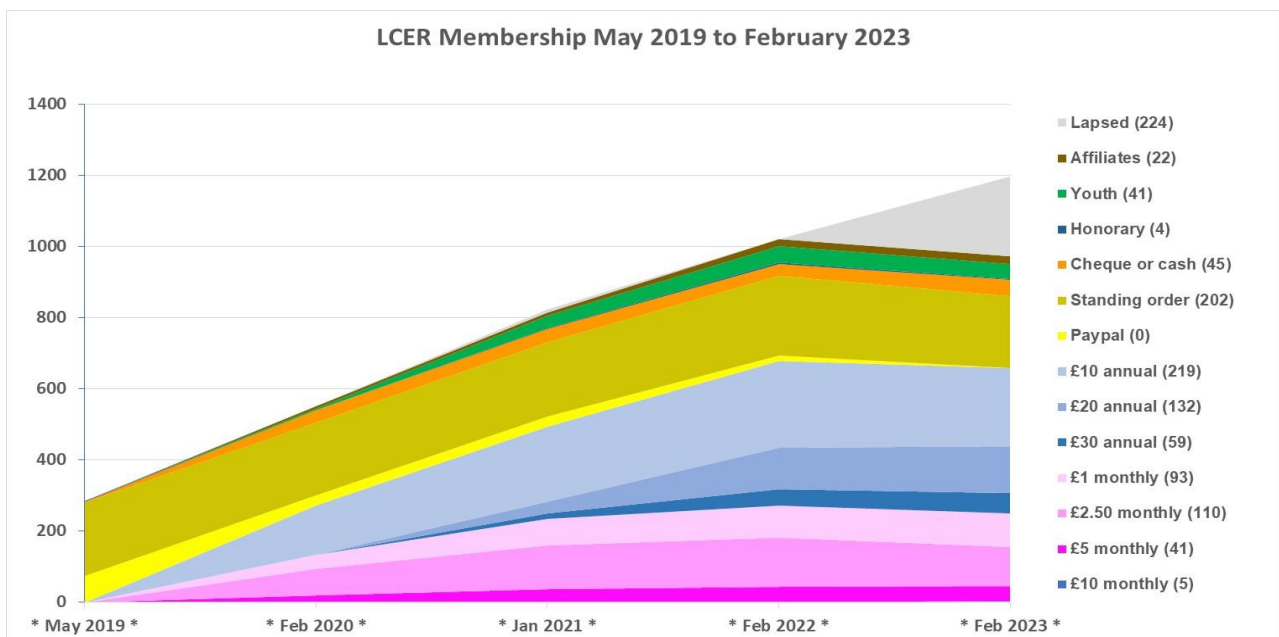
This time last year, I reported that LCER’s membership had increased more than threefold since May 2019, to just over 1000 members. Unfortunately, the news since that last year is rather frustrating. Towards the middle of 2022, our membership system stopped taking recurring card payments from many members. Despite our best efforts, we were unable to resolve this problem or even to establish why it was happening; this issue affected our membership figures and has clearly had an effect on our income. It is particularly galling

that this should have happened in a year when our campaign has seen unprecedented exposure and success.

We have now switched to a new membership system based on direct debits, which should be much more reliable. Most of our existing members have switched over to the new system, but we have not managed to reach all our members, and as a result we have fewer paid-up members than we did last year. Our efforts to re-activate lapsed members are ongoing, but there is still work to do. Of the 224 members shown on the graph overleaf as having lapsed, some will have died or elected not to renew their subscription; I have also removed from our database 12 members who I am aware have died and 45 who informed us that they wished to resign (almost all associated with resignation from the Labour Party). This is offset to a large extent by an influx of 232 new members, leaving us 49 members down on last year.

The Constitution requires that the Executive reports to the AGM each year on subscription rates. Our current rates are on a sliding scale, with no means test and no additional benefits associated with paying the supporting rate. I propose that we maintain the current rates for the forthcoming year, and consider revising them when the cost of living crisis is resolved.

- Youth membership of £5 per annum (currently open to those aged under 25; I propose making this available to those aged under 27, in line with national Labour Party policy)
- Annual membership of £10, £20 or £30
- Recurring monthly membership of £1, £2.50, £5 or £10 per month
- Members who joined before 2019 with a standing order pay a variety of rates.





Youth Officer: Reed James

After being co-opted as Youth Officer in June of 2022 I'm happy to say I've managed to hit the ground running as Youth Officer, primarily by starting LCER Youth in August, a new group within LCER that has been laser-focused on amplifying young people's voices both in LCER's internal structures and in its campaigns.

Since its creation, LCER Youth has grown into an organisation with over twenty active members and done a tremendous amount of work to amplify young people's voices. LCER Youth has met every month via Zoom, and communicates regularly through our WhatsApp chat and email list. If any LCER members under age 27 are interested in joining, please get in touch by emailing me at reedjamesscg@gmail.com.

Below is a list of my and LCER Youth's overall accomplishments from August 2022 until now.

- ❖ Hosting a Youth-focused panel event "Young and Unrepresented" with a list of great speakers from Chair of Labour Students, Ben McGowan, Hertsmere Young Labour Chair, Archie Hadfield and Labour Councillor and Migrants Democracy Project leader, Lara Parizotto. In which, they all discussed the Youth case for electoral reform, with the event being well attended.
- ❖ Writing an article for LabourList about the youth case for electoral reform based on surveys we put out to Young Labour members in which we asked them for their opinion on electoral reform.
- ❖ Contacting every Young Labour and Labour Students Club in the United Kingdom and asking them if they would like a speaker from LCER Youth to attend one of their events and talk about electoral reform, with numerous Labour groups taking up our offer.
- ❖ Publishing an LCER Youth [strategy document](#) to show what LCER Youth's goals and what we are trying to accomplish.
- ❖ Starting an LCER Instagram and TikTok pages and publishing youth focused content for them.
- ❖ Ensuring the minutes of LCER exec meetings are released to LCER Youth, so that any concerns or ideas from young members can be brought to LCER's executive committee.
- ❖ Writing a section on LCER's website, outlining the case for introducing Votes at 16.
- ❖ Contributing amendments to LCER's Constitution relating to youth membership, representation, and engagement.

As Youth Officer, I'm proud of what LCER Youth has accomplished I look forward to seeing what they do next in the coming year!



Mary Southcott: South West Regional Group

Over the past year, the LCER South West core group met on most Friday lunch times. Aileen McLoughlin moved the successful resolution on PR at Unison's 2022 conference in Brighton and was elected to Unison Labour Link. At Tolpuddle we gave out the Chartist trade union supplement, and three of our group campaigned at the Party Conference in Liverpool, where we also contributed to the draft protocol for new regional and local groups.

We participated in the SW Labour Policy Conference at Taunton, where we also ran a stall. Platform speakers were strangely silent on the issue of PR, despite brilliant support elsewhere and/or previously, particularly from Darren Jones MP and Stephen Morgan MP. The Unite the Union SW liaison link with Labour organised a session at which I spoke; the session overran because of the interest from the floor.

The SW group agreed to support the establishment of other regional groups, and worked with Lynne Armstrong on setting up a South East group. Thanks are due to Paul Dunn, President of SWTUC and to Rick Gaehl for their work on this.

Alex le May has been working with Simon Offer, the newly selected candidate for Stroud, and we invited Labour PPCs Steve Race (Exeter) and Jayne Kirkham (Truro & Falmouth) to join a fringe with Simon. Heidi Alexander (Swindon, former MP) sent a message of support. We are working on the more recent PPCs, some of whom we met at the regional conference.

In addition: we held a successful Zoom meeting on the National Policy Forum 2023 consultation as soon as it was launched; recently I phoned lapsed members in the south-west, leading to many rejoining LCER; Aileen and I will be on the new 2023 LCER Executive; and Rick stood for a SW seat on the NPF but lost out to the Labour to Win candidates - we will work on them!



Lynne Armstrong: South East Regional Group

The South East group is LCER's latest regional group. As regional representative for the South East on the LCER Executive, I approached members living in the region, and received 24 expressions of interest; we held an initial meeting on 16 November 2022 with Mary and Rick from the well-established LCER-SW group in attendance for support.

The meeting voted to establish a regional group officially, and we held a planning meeting on 30 November, appointing a Chair (Alan Butcher) and two Vice Chairs (Sheila Tremlett and David Ward). It was agreed that I would act as coordinator for the time being. Our next meeting was held on 11 January, with Duncan Enright and Parmjit Dhanda (NPF CLP representatives for the SE region). Ann Black, a long-standing member of the NEC and NPF (currently on the Safe and Secure Communities commission) explained how the NPF was operating. Joe Sousek, newly arrived in the SE, encouraged members to get their branches and CLPs to respond to the anticipated NPF Consultation document. A second planning meeting was held on 27 January, and Ann Black has accepted an invitation to be our guest speaker at our next zoom meeting on Friday 31 March at 7.30 pm. At subsequent meetings we hope to meet with SE MPs and Councillors.

Any LCER members living in the South East who would like to join our group should contact Lynne Armstrong by email at lynnera@aol.com