

## **Minutes of the AGM of the European Movement, held at the Birmingham Midland Institute, 12 September 2009**

**Present:** Matthew Ambler, Janet Aram, Alan Armitage, Jenny Banks-Bryer, Tim Baynes, Alan Beasley, Terry Bishop, James Bovington, John Brand, Lawrence Brewer, Gillian Briggs, Alan Bullion, Hugh Burton, David Candler, Roger Catchpole, Soon Yeng Chiam, John Churchill, Peter Connor (student), David Cronyn, Hywel Davies, Christopher Denne, Brendan Donnelly, Richard Duployen, Lennox Edwards, Graham Facks-Martin, Petros Fassoulas, Paul Fearn, Lawrence Fullick, Devendra Gadgil, Alan Gardiner, Bob Gower, Jaimie Grant, Liz Gregory, Collis Gretton, Kevin Hannon, Graham Jones, John Jones, Claude Kauffmann, Charles Kennedy, Roger Kercher, Richard Laming, Janet Laurence, Nick Lowe, Peter Luff, Ian Magrath, Ben May, Claire Michelotti, Niccolo Milanese, John Murray, William Murray, Lee Parkes, Les Parkes, John Parry, Ben Patterson, Cyril Pohl, Bill Powell, John Preston, Stephen Quigley, Piers Register, Richard Robinson, Philip Rowett, Graham Russon, Tomas Ruta, Sean Schneider, Veronica Stiasny, Derek Stroud, Stuart Sweeney, Thomas Sykes, Martin Taylor, Maureen Tomison, Keith Tunstall, Jenny Toomey, Martin Toomey, Peter Valentine, Mary Wane, Richard Wassell, John Whitton

**Apologies:** David Appleton, Anna Arki, Philip Bagley, Richard Balfe, Peter Bancroft, Bruce Calver, Bryan Cassidy, Lord Cobbold, Anthony Cook, John Cowan, Douglas Dale, Wayne David MP, Glyn Ford, Jeremy Hargreaves, Hugh Holland, Del Hosein, Sarah Leigh, Thomas Mason, Robert Moreland, Bill Newton Dunn MEP, David Nicolle, Lina Ohlmann, Sir Michael Palliser, Alison Parry, John and Pauline Pinder, Lord Plumb, Marie-Louise Rossi, Catherine Royce, Karl Ruge, Robin Scott, James Siddelley, Ruth Stride, Charles Stuart, Ian Taylor MP, Graham Watson MEP, Sarah Watson, George Wedell, Stephen Woodard, Andrew Zsigmond

**In attendance:** Anne Were

**1. Minutes of the previous AGM (8 June 2008):** the minutes were approved, and it was suggested that they should be posted on the website.

### **2. Reports**

**2.1 Chairman's report:** Peter Luff reported that the main task had been to bring back into contact with the European Movement lots of people whose support was needed. This included journalists, commentators and politicians in both houses of parliament. He had found that it was relatively harder to engage younger parliamentarians, but there was a welcome from more senior figures that the European Movement still existed.

There was a lot of work being done behind the scenes to brief the media: it was good to see the European Movement explicitly quoted but just as important were those occasions when it was not but a background briefing had been provided. Peter Luff said that he had visited a lot of branches and developed contacts with NGOs and civil society. He had also written a lot of fundraising letters, but without much success so far. It was important, though, to reach a new generation: Jaimie Grant had started work on an educational project funded by the EERT that he thought looked very promising. It would be great to organise more meetings for members but they are expensive.

There had been an attempt to raise interest in the European elections, centring on encouraging EU citizens resident in the UK to vote. There had been a disappointing take-up from branches on this project, however.

The membership database was now in much better shape, thanks to a tremendous amount of work done by Sarah Watson. Other people who deserved thanks for what they had done were Estelle Rouhaud, Julie Langevin, Anna Arki, Brendan Donnelly, Richard Laming and of course Anne Were.

**2.2 Treasurer's report:** Brendan Donnelly circulated a cashflow projection and explained that it represented the disposable funds available to the European Movement, i.e. not including the educational funds. At the present rate of activity, the funds would run out in 2011. This assumed that the rent would remain at its present very modest level. There was a funding gap of about £10,000 per annum. Brendan Donnelly said he did not think that the European Movement could go below its current level of expenditure without a considerable reduction in its level of activity and a substantial change in its nature: it would lose its office and its national presence. He suggested that a fundraising appeal should be made in advance of the general election. On the subject of the working party on branch subscriptions and services proposed by the Branches Forum meeting that had taken place previously, he suggested that it should produce a rapid and simple proposal so that the question could be finally settled. IT was suggested that the audited accounts could be circulated to branch chairs.

**2.3 Secretary's report:** Richard Laming reported that his work had included organising the statutory meetings, setting up events for members such as the conference on euro held in January, assisting with the administration of the membership system, providing information for members via e-news and the website, and taking part in media work and external communications on behalf of the European Movement.

**2.4 YEM report:** Sean Schneider, YEM vice-president, reported that YEM was rebuilding itself after a difficult time. He thanked Estelle Rouhau and Becky Luff for their help in getting things restarted again. A new board had been elected including students and young professionals, and YEM intended to act as a feeder for the EM and its activities, and to cooperate with a range of academic institutions and think tanks. He understood that money was in short supply and so YEM will be sensitive in its requests for funding, focusing on some specific priorities and not on supporting events which ought to aim to cover their own costs.

**2.5 Education report:** Jaimie Grant introduced the education project, saying it was aimed at young people who were not hardcore political activists but who were interested in single issues such as environment and development. Young people were active on issues like this and he wanted to connect this interest with Europe. There would be a website – Patchwork Press – which would have a range of media on it, to address these interconnected issues. The aim was to put the EU in a global context.

**2.6 Branches Forum report:** Alan Bullion said that he had tried to make the Branches Forum a conduit between the branches and the centre. There were still some unresolved administrative matters, some of which were a legacy of the transition and the difficult financial situation nationally. He thought that there was a need for an active centre of some sort: there would be little point in having a set of local associations without central momentum and purpose. He said that he was happy to work with Brendan on the working group on branch services and subscriptions.

**2.7 International report:** Veronica Stiasny reported on the recent Federal Assembly and the election of a new Secretary-General for the EMI, which she thought was very positive. A temporary settlement had been reached on the UK membership subscriptions, so that we paid a symbolic amount, but she did not think that this situation could necessarily persist indefinitely.

**3. Election results:** Ben Patterson, returning officer, announced that the following had been elected to fill the 12 directly elected places on the National Council:

Peter Bancroft, Alan Bullion, Christopher Denne, Jeremy Hargreaves, Claude Kauffmann, Richard Laming, Peter Luff, Robert Moreland, James Siddelley, Veronica Stiasny, Maureen Tomison, and Stephen Woodard.

The following had been elected as regional representatives:

Christopher Denne (South West), Petros Fassoulas (London), Peter Freitag (North East), Graham Jones (East Midlands), Les Parkes (Yorkshire and Humberside), James Siddelley (North West) and Maureen Tomison (South East).

The three people who had been elected both as directly elected representatives and regional representatives, namely Christopher Denne, James Siddelley and Maureen Tomison, had all agreed to serve in the directly elected capacity, and that new regional representatives would be found. In particular, there would be a by-election to fill the vacancy in the South East.

#### **4. Resolutions**

**4.1 Amendment to the constitution:** Richard Laming introduced the resolution, which was then approved as follows:

In section 14.2, insert the underlined section:

“The Chairman shall be elected by the National Council using the Alternative Vote System and according to such rules as may be approved from time to time by the National Council.”

**4.2 A manifesto for the European Movement:** Claude Kauffmann introduced the resolution, and in the debate that followed, numerous amendments were suggested, some of which he accepted into the text. Two arguments were advanced against the resolution: that it ought to be discussed further among the members before being adopted; and that it should not be so explicit about the euro and Schengen because it might deter potential members. In a vote, the resolution, including the amendments accepted by the proposer, was adopted as follows:

In a globalised world, with major countries increasingly demonstrating their political and economic power, and with international threats, as well as opportunities, increasingly apparent, we believe the European Union offers an enlightened beacon of good governance and civilised values which are largely shared by Britain.

We believe that Britain should be at the heart of the European Union, working closely with our partners on the whole range of issues that can best be dealt with on a trans-national basis. These include all aspects of trade in goods and services, financial and business regulation, migration and asylum issues, cross border crime in its many forms, climate change, energy supplies, defence and international peace. We are not uncritical of the workings of the Union but we believe that Britain should at all times play a constructive part in its development.

We believe in more than merely a free-trade agreement with our European partners. We believe in the Common Market with mutually agreed, enforceable, high standards of quality control for goods and services, restrictions on anti-competitive behaviour, and the free movement of people, services, goods and capital.

As part of the Common Market we believe in a single currency. We believe that Britain should join the eurozone sooner rather than later and that the government should take all necessary steps to make that possible at the right time.

As part of our belief in free movement of people, we believe that the countries in the Schengen area enjoy benefits which Britain should share. We call on the government to pursue the opportunity.

As part of our belief that the EU could be more democratic and more coordinated in its actions, we believe the Lisbon Treaty is an important step forward and we will campaign for a Yes vote if a future government were to put Britain's support to a referendum.

We are a non party organisation with members from the three main political parties and from none.

Since those parties all agree that Britain should be in the European Union, we will campaign to get them to explain to the British public why they think that way. We believe in the importance of this to balance the misleading propaganda of the eurosceptic press and the anti-EU political parties.

**4.3 Membership recruitment:** Christopher Denne introduced the resolution, saying that opinion against Europe was hardening in his region, the South West, and that it was necessary to rebuild the membership base of the European Movement. Peter Luff spoke of his experience in recruitment by direct mail and suggested some ways in which this might be done, drawing on information and experience provided by branches. Some small amendments were suggested to the resolution, which was then adopted as amended:

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Seeing the low turnout in the 2009 EP elections as evidence of voters' lack of interest in the EU, and ignorance of the role of its institutions;

Noting the vulnerability of the electorate, for these reasons, to the vigorously expressed eurosceptic message;

Concerned by the failure of the national press, broadcast media or political parties to make the case for Europe;

Convinced that there is an urgent need for a national voice to put the case for Britain's active and constructive engagement in the EU;

Resolves between now and the 2010 AGM to give the highest possible priority to the recruitment of new members, with the aim of increasing the Movement's membership base, authority and income, and thereby strengthening the support available to the office holders and members who present its public face, at the centre and in the branches.

**4.4 Motion on reported findings of the German Constitutional Court supplementary to their verdict on the Lisbon treaty:** Cyril Pohl explained that his resolution was intended to provide a response to the criticisms of the Lisbon treaty made by the German constitutional court, by establishing a new economic and political basis for the European Union. A number of members argued against the resolution, for a number of different reasons, and in a vote, the resolution was defeated.