**Minutes of the Committee Meeting**

**22nd August 2024**

**County Hotel, Carnforth**

1. Present

Don Forrester – Chair (DF), Fran Butler - Secretary (FB), Alan Bradley (AB), Ian Driver (IRD)

1. Apologies for Absence

Yvonne Hargreaves and Luis Eckersley

The secretary was asked to pass on our best wishes to Yvonne and hope she will be well enough to join us again soon.

1. Minutes of Committee Meeting (24th August 2023)

The minutes were approved, and accepted as a true record.

1. Minutes of General Meeting (25th April 2024)

The minutes were approved, and accepted as a true record.

1. Nominations for 2024/25 Officers & Committee members (Subject to Members’ Ratification at AGM)
2. Chairman – Don Forrester
3. Vice Chairman – Ian Driver
4. Secretary – Fran Butler
5. Committee Members - Don Forrester, Ian Driver, Fran Butler, Alan Bradley, Luis Eckersley, Yvonne Hargreaves
6. Nominations for 2024/25 National Committee & RMG ADC (Subject to Members’ Ratification at AGM)
7. Committee Member – Don Forrester
8. Deputy Committee Member – Fran Butler
9. Delegates to RMG ADC – Ian Driver, Fran Butler & John Jenkinson (Deputy)
10. Report from the Prospect Biennial Conference June 2024

The 2024 Biennial Conference took place at Birmingham’s International Convention Centre (ICC) from the 8th to 11th June 2024, with the RMG represented by David Harding, Andrew Ruffhead, Arthur Bavister, Fran Butler, Paul Danneau, Ireen Goulding, Peter Hedgcock, David Mills, Mike Moriarty, Bryan Puxley, Tom Smyth and John Wright.

On Sunday afternoon, a talk was given by Paul Nowak, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress. He was vocal in his condemnation of the Conservative Government for its attacks on working people; rights of trade unionists, individual and collective representation, the Civil Service, etc. He noted Labour’s promised ‘New Deal for Workers’ and, although keen to stress the non-political stance of the TUC, his views on the upcoming General Election, were clear.

On the following morning, the Labour peer, Lord Ray Collins, chaired a panel debate. The future of trade unions was discussed, with guests from the CBI and other trade unions.

Motions & Decisions Taken

Of the 100 motions debated, 74 were Carried, 6 were Not-carried/Lost, 3 Fell (2 consequentials and 1 not moved), 16 were remitted to the NEC and Next Business was moved on 1 motion (Motion 73).

Details of all motions can be found at <https://library.prospect.org.uk/download/2024/00389>, and a full list of 2024 Conference Decisions at <https://library.prospect.org.uk/download/2024/00509>. Location of the full Actions Taken, will be made available as/when it is published.

RMG Motions to the 2024 Biennial Conference

Two motions were submitted, 69 and 73. Motion 69 called for the re-nationalisation of the failing English Water companies. The motion was moved by David Harding, who argued that company executives were more interested in profit than preventing pollution. Although the National Executive Committee (NEC) opposed the motion, saying it was outside the scope of the union, Conference agreed to remittance.

Motion 73, the only motion to suffer ‘Next Business’ was moved by Andrew Ruffhead. Following the minor improvement achieved (2022 Biennial Conference) in the RMG’s card voting rights, Motion 73 asked for a rule change to permit card votes, on a wider range of issues. Though still limited to 25% of the RMG membership, this would allow for a fairer representation by members.

The NEC opposed the motion but there was some support. However, one delegate chose to end the debate by moving ‘Next Business’, meaning that Andrew was unable to reply to the dissenters. The RMG delegates were extremely disappointed, not least because the delegation would not have been able to vote on their own motion, had it gone to the vote. The debate was not handled very well, and the delegation demonstrated their views by leaving the hall.

Following a meeting of the full delegation, an email outlining the RMG’s concerns and asking for the matter to be reviewed, was sent to the Presidential team and General Secretary. The request was denied, but the delegation returned for the remainder of the conference. Should the RMG decide that the issue be revisited, this will have to be subject to another motion, and debate at the 2026 Biennial Conference.

1. Motions to the RMG ADC 2024

The NWRMG submitted four motions to the RMG ADC 2024:

Motion 2 – REMITTED - HS2 and provision of a modern, efficient and future-proofed transport network for the UK

NC Action Taken - Prospect Aviation Group has long advocated an integrated transport policy for the UK. It is likely that the rail unions will submit motions on rail transport policy to the TUC, and Prospect will consider its position in terms of support, and any proposed campaigning work.

Motion 19 – GUILLOTINED - Renationalisation of the failing UK electricity generation and distribution industries

NC Action Taken – Prospect Rules do not allow the RMG to submit a guillotined motion. The NC has been advised that Prospect will be able to provide a comprehensive update, on what is being done to support investment in low carbon energy generation, and the distribution network. FB to ask the NC for an update.

**Action CM2401** – FB to contact Andrew Ruffhead to request an update.

Motion 20 – REMITTED - Formulate a campaign for Electoral Reform to enable a system best suited to the UK, and its democratic processes

NC Action Taken – Prospect is already committed to pursuing electoral reform. The NC is to ask the NEC to investigate the electoral systems employed outside the UK, as sought in the motion.

**Action CM2402** – FB to contact Andrew Ruffhead to request an update.

Motion 21 – CARRIED - Renationalisation of the failing (failed) water industry.

NC Action Taken - Motion submitted to Prospect BDC where it was remitted.

1. Motions for the RMG ADC 2025
2. HS2 – Although the northern section of HS2 was cancelled by the previous government, implications are significant as the trains have already been purchased, many of which will actually be too long for current stations. Houses etc, which were subject to compulsory purchase remain empty, and resources are lacking with regards to improving the current infrastructure. In addition, there have already been suggestions that plans may yet be reinstated by the new Labour government. Submission of another motion may not be prudent, but the issue will be raised at the AGM, should members wish to discuss further.
3. Energy – Since our motion was guillotined, IRD agreed to update and prepare another, for discussion at the AGM.

**Action CM2403 –** IRD to prepare a draft motion for review by the committee, ahead of the AGM

1. FPTP – Notwithstanding Prospect’s current policy, the committee believe there is still good reason to look at the systems used by other European countries. AB agreed to research and send any relevant details to the secretary. FB to add this as an item for discussion at the AGM.

**Action CM2404 –** AB send any relevant information to the secretary

**Action CM2405 –** FB to add a discussion item to the October AGM agenda

1. WASPI – YH kindly forwarded an article from the 17th August 2024 edition of the Daily Mail. The article, by Jessica Beard decries the failure of successive governments, to propose a ‘fair remedy’ (see <https://www.pressreader.com/uk/daily-mail/20240817/281758454606682>). FB to add this as an item for discussion at the AGM.

**Action CM2406 –** FB to add a discussion item to the October AGM agenda

1. Winter Fuel Allowance Payments & National Insurance Taxation Net – The Labour Chancellor’s intention to means test WFA and, suggestions that The Treasury may soon subject pensioners to 8% NI, have been perceived as a ‘quick fix’, and a total disregard to the likely effect on upwards of ten million pensioners. Once again, the UK’s pensioners are being targeted, and this on the back of a reduction in pension indexation rate from RPI to CPI.

Further discussion, including reference to letters sent by the Chairman to his local MPs, resulted in a suggestion by FB to prepare two template letters, for distribution through the NC. The secretary was actioned to draft the two letters and, distribute to the committee members, for comment. Agreed templates would then be forwarded to the NC, for their ratification (assuming that the letters are not seen as political). To make the ‘protest’ even easier for members, IRD agreed to send online details of local MPs, to the secretary.

**Action CM2407 –** FB to draft two template letters and add a discussion item to the October AGM agenda

**Update**: The two template letters have been sent, by email, to David Harding and Andrew Ruffhead, along with the URL - https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP

1. Matters Arising:
2. Guest Speaker for General Meeting (25th April 2024) – Unfortunately other commitments, by Neil Walsh and Jez Stewart, meant we were unable to secure a guest speaker from H/Q or NO. FB to contact Northern/Head Office to ask whether Neil Walsh or Jez Stewart are available, for our next General Meeting in April 2025 (date to be confirmed).

**Action CM2408** – FB to liaise with Northern/Head Office regarding a Speaker

1. Meeting Dates (Avoid School Holidays) – With reference to a UK-wide breakdown of school term times, the committee propose the following:
* General Meeting (GM) – Thursday 10th April 2025
* Committee Meeting – 21st August 2025
* Annual General Meeting (AGM) – Thursday 16th October 2025 or 23rd October 2025.

Since we were also asked to consider the dates for the Heysham Retired Members’ Meetings, AB agreed to check and confirm.

**Action CM2409** – AB to confirm dates for Heysham meetings

**Update**: AB has checked and confirmed that Heysham will be meeting on 31st October 2024 and, for 2025, the third Thursday each month. All proposed dates should be acceptable, but are subject to ratification at the AGM (17th October 2024).

1. AOB
2. Change in Government & the Political Impact for Pensions – FB to add this as an item for discussion at the AGM.

**Action CM2410 –** FB to add a discussion item to the October AGM agenda

1. Possible Restrictions in the use of The County carpark – Following the recent installation of a security camera by a third party, and likely control of parking, AB agreed to contact/visit the hotel. It is assumed that, since we use the hotel, parking will not be an issue but, we need to confirm this ahead of the October meeting.

**Action CM2411 –** AB to investigate and liaise with the secretary.

1. Proposed Dates of 2025 Meetings:

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1. 10th April 2025 (General Meeting)
2. 21st August 2025 (Committee Meeting)
3. 16th October 2025 or 23rd October 2025 (AGM)

Fran Butler

Secretary Prospect NWRMG

31st August 2024