

National Executive Council Report Conference, June 2022

This is a report from Mark Wareham, south-west male seat, of the NEC meetings that took place throughout National Delegate Conference 14th to 18th June 2022. During national delegate conference, the NEC met, as it traditionally does, every morning before conference starts. On this occasion we also met this year on the lunchtime on the Friday.

Positions on motions

During conference we met to consider changing our position on some motions, clarifying any previously deferred decisions and agreeing a position on emergency motions. We also agreed on the first morning to seek reference back of the Standing Orders decision to rule our motion on legal services out of order, although this reference back failed. In the end we only agreed a formal position on the emergency motion on Angela Raynor as other motions were not reached and we did not think they would be.

Vote of no confidence

As delegates will know, the vote of no confidence in the NEC, due to decisions made concerning with the so-called 'October 2021 resolutions', was confirmed after a card vote announcement on the Wednesday morning. The first occasion that the NEC then met to consider this decision was the Thursday morning and at that meeting we were informed that an emergency motion had been tabled calling for the NEC to either resign on the back of the result, or to seek to restore confidence. There was one speaker at the NEC meeting who proposed we immediately resign en-masse, but that position was otherwise overwhelmingly opposed. I spoke to say that I did not agree with resigning in the circumstances, both personally, because I did not support the actions that the NEC took which led us into a no-confidence situation and did not feel personally responsible for this mess, and collectively, because of the cost to the union of running two NEC elections in twelve months and because there is no rule book provision or convention for such mass resignation, even though technically we are all responsible for the decisions made by the NEC, even if we vote against. I said that instead the two motions that had been passed the day the day before did not call on us to resign and that the new emergency motion also gave us an option of signalling humility and contrition and seeking to restore confidence through our actions to make redress for October 2021. The General Secretary also spoke to give advice to the NEC and give an opinion and following discussion it was agreed to deliberate further and that, because of other business on the Friday morning, that we would not be able to give adequate time to this matter at that meeting, but we agreed to convene a special meeting on the Friday lunchtime solely for this purpose.

On the Friday morning we were presented with a draft proposal prepared by the officers of a statement to present to conference. This was a statement which I was largely pleased with and could support as it appeared to contain appropriate apology, recognition of errors and a commitment to take actions in line with the motions that had been passed so overwhelmingly on the Tuesday. However, we moved on to other business and then by the Friday lunchtime the emergency motion from Ulster Community had also been passed with many further strong speeches in condemnation of the NEC's actions and lack of response being made. At the Friday lunchtime meeting we received two further proposed statements and two amendments to the officer's draft statement. In the end, following further discussion, an amended statement in the name of Steve North was accepted by the NEC, although I abstained. I did not feel I could vote in favour of the North statement because I much preferred the draft that officer's had proposed as it demonstrated much more humility, but I also did not feel I could vote against it because it did at least contain a clear apology and a commitment to address concerns. The current NEC only has six months in office before the nomination process for the next elections commences and only eleven months before results are known.

Presidential election

On the Friday morning the NEC elected the following –
President – Andrea Egan
Vice President's – Libby Nolan and Amerit Rait

I voted for Andrea as President, because I believed that she deserved a right to hold that post after serving a year as Vice President and because of some decent Chairing of both NEC meetings and conference. I had also found her co-operative and friendly to work with in recent months. But I voted for Manjula Kumari and Davena Stephens as Vice Presidents because both of them had opposed the October 2021 motions.

In my opinion we really needed a Vice Presidential Team that could bring both the major factions on the NEC together in one team but made up of a majority of those who opposed the October 2021 resolutions. But unfortunately, we now have a Team composed of all of whom endorsed the October 2021 resolutions that led to the NEC losing the confidence of our conference. Although this team is more diverse than the previous one, although we haven't yet reconsidered committee chairs, they have a lot of work to do to demonstrably have been seen to regain that confidence in time for elections in early 2023.

Rule amendment

Currently, I am not aware of the ramifications of the change to our rule on unemployed member status, office holding and the discretion of the NEC on current office holders. We may get an update on this matter at the next NEC meeting, but we were not briefed on any live application changing the right of any current NEC member to hold their current seats by the end of conference.

Next meeting

19th July 2022.

National Report

Here is a weblink to the news about the new Presidential team –

<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/2022/06/unison-nec-elects-the-unions-new-presidential-team/>

and to the NEC statement in response to the vote of no confidence –

<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2022/06/statement-by-unions-nec/>

One of your south-west reps



Mark Wareham

m.wareham@unison.co.uk