# ND Labour annual report 2020

- 1. Labour Party
- 2. Campaigns
- 3. Online activity
- 4. Organisation

**Appendices** 

# 1. LABOUR PARTY

# 1.1 General Election 2019

# ND Labour:

- publicised the commitment given by John McDonnell that Labour in government would implement our Manifesto
- published quotes from neurodivergent people about why they were voting Labour
- circulated graphics highlighting Labour manifesto policies that particularly benefit ND people
- published quotes from Labour candidates about how their election would benefit neurodivergent people
- produced a leaflet encouraging ND people and allies to vote Labour
- published video clips advocating voting Labour in the interests of neurodivergent people
- asked Labour candidates to endorse our Manifesto Appendix A is a list of those who did
- issued a statement after the general election defeat, which is included in Appendix B

# 1.2 Labour Party policy review

We submitted a summary of our Manifesto to the Labour Party policy review. It received a lot of support and boosted our profile. While the policy process is long, and has been further delayed and complicated by the pandemic, we are working on ways to build on the support we have received so far.

# 1.3 Internal Labour Party elections

The Executive took the view that ND Labour is not yet developed enough to endorse specific candidates in internal Labour Party elections.

We wrote to all candidates for Leader and Deputy Leader of the Labour Party asking them to commit to supporting our Manifesto and working with us.

None of the candidates for Leader replied. Appendix C contains replies from three of the five candidates for Deputy Leader.

# 1.4 Labour Party affiliation

We aspire to affiliate to the Labour Party, but need to have existed for at least three years and have over five hundred members, so this remains an aspiration we are working towards!

# 1.5 Patrons

The Executive appointed two Labour MPs as our patrons – John McDonnell and Nadia Whittome.

John has been supporting our work right from the start, and Nadia is a newly-elected Labour MP who is a committed socialist and active campaigner. We have spoken with them regularly and their efforts on our behalf have been invaluable. Both patrons have been very helpful in advancing the campaign to the stop the deportation of Osime Brown, which we have been active in supporting.

Our constitution allows us to appoint one further Patron.

# 1.6 Speaking at Labour meetings

Our Executive members spoke at various Labour Party meetings, both in person before lockdown and online since, including at Rugby, Isle of Wight and Leeds West. We also have a model motion for Labour Party branches and CLPs.

If you would like a speaker for your CLP or other Labour meeting, please get in touch.

# 2. CAMPAIGNS

# 2.1 Supporting workers

We have supported trade unions taking industrial action, in particular in RMT, PCS and UCU unions. We have offered advice on making union action accessible to neurodivergent people.

Our plans for stalls and fringe meetings at trade union conferences were unfortunately scuppered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have been developing our policy materials about work, and supporting campaigns against anti-union laws.

# 2.2 Policy submissions

In May, we submitted evidence to the Parliamentary enquiry on human rights implications of the government's Covid-19 response. Our submission is on the ND Labour website.

# 2.3 Osime Brown

ND Labour has taken a leading role in the campaign against the unjust conviction and threatened deportation of Osime Brown.

A report of this campaign is in Appendix D.

# 2.4 Opposing abuse of neurodivergent people

We ran an online campaign during April (Autism Awareness/Acceptance Month) against the abuse of autistic and neurodivergent people.

We have also campaigned on this issue during the rest of the year.

More details are in Appendix E.

# 2.5 Statutory Training for NHS staff

Following intensive campaigning by autism advocates, especially the Oliver McGowan campaign, the government has agreed to introduce mandatory training for NHS staff about autism and learning disability. We have been monitoring the development of this training, and will take available opportunities to press for this training to be led by autistic and learning-disabled people and to take a social-model approach.

The roll-out of the training is timetabled on page 11 of this document here, and the next significant stage is March 2021, when the government will publish an evaluation of the training package.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachmen t\_data/file/844356/autism-and-learning-disability-training-for-staff-consultationresponse.pdf

# 3. ONLINE ACTIVITY

# 3.1 Statements

We have issued statements:

- supporting RMT strike on South West Railway (December)
- deploring the comments of Sally Hart, Tory candidate (now MP) in Hastings and Rye that learning-disabled people be exempt from the minimum wage (December)

- supporting PCS strike at the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (December)
- supporting vaccinations in the wake of the rise in mumps cases (February)
- criticising Oliver Letwin (March)
- outlining our concerns about responses to Covid-19 (March)
- local council 'easements': cuts due to Covid (May)
- marking Learning Disability Week (June)
- opposing police brutality; supporting Black Lives Matter (June)
- supporting Osime Brown (June)
- responding to nadia Whittome's removal from her shadow minister post (September)
- responding to the Yew Trees scandal (September)

Each was published on our website as text, and as a designed graphic for circulation on social media.

Some of the graphics of these statements are in Appendix F

# 3.2 Website

Our website is at www.ndlabour.co.uk

We have continued to develop it, and are currently working on various ways of improving its content and accessibility.

# 3.3 Social media

We run a:

- Facebook page,
- YouTube channel
- Twitter account (@NeuroLabour)

We have posted throughout the year on relevant issues.

We plan to set up a private Facebook group for ND Labour members.

# 4. ORGANISATION

# 4.1 Executive

The 2020 ND Labour Executive has been:

Chair - Janine Booth

Vice-Chair - Callum Heckstall-Smith

Secretary - Monique Craine (replaced by James Denny in November)

Vice-Secretary - Joseph Redford

Treasurer - Jan Gray (replaced by Margaret Corvid in November)

Vice-Treasurer - Mark Stokes (replaced by Nikki Hughes in November)

Publicity and Communications Officer - Emma Dalmayne

Training and Education Officer - Louise Wildon (replaced by Will Murray in November)

Trade Union Officer - Gilaine Young

Manifesto and Policy Officer - Andy Forse

Website Editor - Graham Hanks

Non-Executive posts

Website Administrator (Technical) - Billie Jo Gibson

Safeguarding Officer - Abi Moorcock

After one hybrid physical / online meeting in February, the Executive has met several times online.

We also have a Facebook group in which the Executive discusses issues and makes decisions.

# 4.2 Ethnic diversity

From the start of this year, we recognised that our founding AGM was very white, and resolved to make efforts to involve more black and ethnic minority people.

To this end, we established a BAME working group, a report of which is in Appendix G.

# 4.3 Local groups

The Executive is helping with the establishment of local ND Labour groups in Merseyside and in Wales.

Our agreed rules for local groups (and the workplace/union groups that we are proposing to add to the constitution) are in Appendix H.

If you would like to set up a group, we would love to hear from you!

# 4.4 Membership

We currently have 183 members and one registered supporter.

# 4.5 Finance

We have established a bank account and a robust system for managing our finance.

The statement of income and expenditure for the year is in Appendix I.

# 4.6 Merchandise

We are preparing an online sales outlet for a range of ND Labour merchandise.

# 4.7 Preparing for the AGM

The Executive is organising the AGM, including drafting proposals to amend the constitution and appointing Joseph Redford to run our elections.

# 4.8 Safeguarding

Our Safeguarding Officer has dealt with a number of enquiries.

# **APPENDIX A**

# "We support the Autism and Neurodiversity Manifesto drafted for the Labour Party and look forward to its implementation by a Labour government."

- John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington) reelected
- Clive Lewis (Norwich South) reelected
- Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) reelected
- Stephen Twigg (Liverpool West Derby) did not restand
- Tonia Antoniazzi (Gower) reelected
- Debbie Bannigan (Rugby) defeated
- Nadia Whittome (Nottingham East) elected
- David Drew (Stroud) defeated
- Kate Green (Stretford and Urmston) reelected
- Bill Esterson (Sefton Central) reelected
- Sharon Hodgson (Washington and Sunderland West) reelected
- Danielle Rowley (Midlothian) defeated
- Nick Thomas-Symonds (Torfaen) reelected
- Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) reelected
- Kerena Marchant (Basingstoke) defeated
- Ian Murray (Edinburgh South) reelected
- Margaret Beckett (Derby South) reelected
- Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) reelected
- Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley) did not restand
- Jonathan Reynolds (Stalybridge and Hyde) reelected
- Ruth George (High Peak) defeated
- Lisa Forbes (Peterborough) defeated
- Peter Kyle (Hove) reelected
- Seema Malhotra (Feltham and Heston) reelected
- George Howarth (Knowsley) reelected
- Imran Hussain (Bradford East) reelected
- Mike Davies (Bath) defeated
- Lucy Burke (Bury South) defeated
- Joanne Ainscough (Wyre and Preston North) defeated
- Emma Hardy (Hull West and Hessle) reelected
- Sandy Martin (Ipswich) defeated
- Helen Russell (Mid Worcestershire) defeated
- Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven) reelected
- Samantha Charles (West Worcestershire) defeated
- Rory Shannon (Bromsgrove) defeated
- Felix Ling PPC (Stratford-on-Avon) defeated

- Richard Quigley (Isle of Wight) defeated
- Chris Ruane (Vale of Clwyd) defeated
- Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) reelected
- Dinah Mulholland (Ceredigion) defeated
- Rebecca Jenkins (Redditch) defeated
- Greg Marshall (Broxtowe) defeated
- Dr Coral Jones (North Thanet) defeated
- Wes Streeting (Ilford North) reelected
- Lucy Caldicott (Dudley South) defeated
- Kim Snape (South Ribble) defeated
- Dr Adam Thompson (Amber Valley) defeated
- Rachel Eden (Reading West) defeated
- David Morgan (Aldridge-Brownhills) defeated
- Ruth Jones (Newport West) reelected
- Sue Aitkenhead (Poole) defeated

# APPENDIX B - STATEMENT FOLLOWING GENERAL ELECTION DEFEAT

# **Neurodivergent** Labour

# After the general election

The general election result is a huge disappointment to us, and brings a bleak political situation for neurodivergent people and our allies. But our fight for our rights goes on.

Many of you have told us that you feel worried, even frightened. Neurodivergent Labour is here for you.

Together, we can be strong, and we can and will resist prejudice and injustice.

Our Manifesto is not just a document and not just for a general election. It is a set of policies that we fight for all the time.

With your support and involvement, we will push back cuts and attacks, and drive forward our agenda of acceptance and equality.

Please join us.

Janine Booth
Chair of Neurodivergent Labour

www.ndlabour.co.uk

# **APPENDIX C**

Neurodivergent Labour wrote to all candidates for Deputy Leader (and Leader) of the Labour Party, asking them to confirm:

- that they endorse our Manifesto and commit to Labour implementing it in government
- that they will engage with Neurodivergent Labour (the newly-formed representative organisation of neurodivergent Labour Party members) on issues concerning neurodiversity.

You can read the replies from Deputy Leader candidates here, posted in the order in which we received them. If a candidate is not mentioned here, then s/he has not replied.

# 1. From Angela Rayner

1. that you endorse our Manifesto and commit to Labour implementing it in government

I think the Labour Party Autism and Neurodiversity Manifesto is excellent. As the party of equality, should be championing neurodiversity and making sure everyone can participate everywhere in the Labour family. The manifesto sets out clearly that cuts to services made by the Tories was a political choice; it makes the case for real action led by members of the neurodiverse community alongside MPs and Labour leaders to oppose these cuts. I wholly support Labour implementing the manifesto when we get into government and I commit to loudly championing it whilst in opposition.

2. that you will engage with Neurodivergent Labour (the newly-formed representative organisation of neurodivergent Labour Party members) on issues concerning neurodiversity.

Engaging with Neurodivergent Labour on policy issues and other issues concerning neurodiversity is something I would be proud to do. As Deputy Leader, I want to be the voice of the members around the Shadow Cabinet table and I hope that ordinary members, including those in the neurodiverse community, will know that they can talk to me, write to me and come up and say hello at conference. I also want people to know that I'm committed to making sure our expert members, those people who live the lives we make policy to change, are consulted as we build and shape our manifesto in the future and that includes those in the neurodiverse community.

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# 2. From Ian Murray

That you endorse our Manifesto and commit to Labour implementing it in government

I am proud to have already signed up in support of Neurodivergent Labour's Autism and Neurodiversity Manifesto last year.

I believe we must first make the Labour Party a more accessible environment for people, before going into government with clear plans to transform society for everyone. The Tories' austerity program has gutted services, adult social care and education provision, and the Labour Party must continue to fight for better, targeted investment to take into the next election. We must also do much more in educating politicians, policy makers and the public on the issues presented within the Autism and Neurodiversity manifesto; as Deputy Leader I would ensure that the voices of autistic and neurodiverse people are heard in our policy making.

That you will engage with Neurodivergent Labour (the newly-formed representative organisation of neurodivergent Labour Party members) on issues concerning neurodiversity.

Yes.

As Deputy Leader, I would ensure that we regularly involved Neurodivergent Labour in the conversations and debates that lead to the creation of the manifesto as well as general policy making, and I would work with the group to ensure that the Labour Party becomes a more accessible party for all. The most effective way of ensuring our decisions and directions are well informed is by engaging with representative organisations who are frankly best placed to know what aspects work well, and where we need to step up and improve.

# 3. Dawn Butler

I believe that neurodiversity is a hugely important issue and more must be done to support neurodivergent people to live full and independent lives on their terms.

I see from my own advice surgeries that public services are ill equipped to support neurodivergent people from education, welfare, workplaces and more. I support the Neurodivergent Labour manifesto and your call for neurodiversity to be accepted and for public services better configured to support you.

I believe that DWP work capability assessments are not fit for purpose because of a lack of understanding, on the part of assessors and the DWP, as to the specifics of neurodiversity. This often forces neurodivergent people through mandatory reconsideration and lengthy lower and upper tier tribunal appeals. They must do this too without legal support due to Tory cuts to legal aid.

I see first-hand families struggling to support neurodivergent children, such as with autism or ADHD, through the education system. Inclusion is vital and these children have the right to stay within mainstream education. However so often schools lack resources to meet their needs and adopt a one-size fits all approach; this leads to parents keeping children outside of school.

Furthermore, I regularly see families in my constituency struggling to navigate the challenging process of getting an Education, Health & Social Care Plan (EHCP) in place with the Local Authority.

This is unacceptable.

As the Shadow Minister for Women & Equalities, I have pledged that Labour will equality proof all legislation to ensure vulnerable people are never negatively impacted.

We cannot however tackle these issues without a Labour government.

I will be a campaigning Deputy Leader ensuring we prepare our party for power. I will ensure we have Organisers working at the heart of communities from the South-West to Scotland and am determined this be the last time we lose.

I will ensure all members have the resources they need to lead the fightback.

I also believe the Leader and Deputy must work together to deliver a Labour government. I have served under two Labour Prime Minister's and proudly served in the Shadow Cabinet. I never have, and never will be part of a coup because divided parties do not win elections. I understand the pressures of being in government as the first elected black woman in the UK to be a Minister. That inclusivity and experience is vital in Labour's top team.

As Deputy Leader, I will ensure we have the right strategy, vision and plan to prepare for power and am committed to working with Neurodivergent Labour to deliver a Labour government.

# APPENDIX D - OSIME BROWN CAMPAIGN

ND Labour has played an active role in the campaign to stop the deportation of Osime Brown. This has included:

- organising an Early Day Motion and asking questions in Parliament through our MP patrons
- promoting the online petition (<u>www.bit.ly/osime-b</u>) which has over 300,000 signatures
- co-organising demonstrations outside the home office
- producing a viral video about Osime's situation
- contributing to the significant social media campaign
- producing a motion for CLPs, union branches and union executives and promoting it through networks of activists - leading to two national unions (RMT and UCU) so far supporting the campaign
- working collaboratively with other organisations, eg. Autistic Inclusive Meets (AIM),
   Labour Campaign for Free Movement (LCFM), Another Europe Is Possible (AEIP)
- getting articles published and working with journalists to raise awareness of the campaign

The general approach of ND Labour to this campaign has been to unite and co-ordinate different parts of the labour movement and unite them with the neurodiversity movement.

As well as to fight for Osime, as political activists we have sought to highlight the political issues that surround his case: ie. the treatment of immigrants, racism and the justice system.

# **APPENDIX E - STATEMENTS**

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Neurodivergent Labour joins other disabled people's organisations in objecting to the sweeping new powers that the government has given itself and the potential impact this will have on our rights and our lives.

The new measures in the Coronavirus Act limit the rights of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), remove councils' duty to provide social care, and restrict the rights of people in mental distress.

The government's slowness in responding to the crisis has already endangered the lives of the most vulnerable people, and this legislation increases that danger. It undoes some of the main steps forward in our rights over recent decades.

We ask the Labour Party to thoroughly scrutinise government proposals and to oppose those which restrict our right to the care we need and put us in danger.

We ask local councils to commit to maintaining social care and the government to fund them to do so.

ND Labour is promoting campaigning action to defend our rights. Please follow our social media and check our website for details and updates.



www.ndlabour.co.uk

# 

Deaths of autistic and/or learning-disabled people in England have increased by 134% during the coronavirus pandemic.



Between 10 April and 15 May there were 386 deaths, half of them with confirmed or suspected Covid-19,

compared with 165 deaths in the same period in 2019. This is a 134% rise, four times the 34% rise within the general population. (Source: CQC)

This wide disparity can not be wholly due to clinical vulnerability to the virus: it is also caused by social factors and governmental failures, which leave learning-disabled and autistic people without the support and opportunity to understand and communicate their needs.

The government is prioritising tests in care homes for older people, but not those for for learning-disabled and/or autistic people.

Neurodivergent Labour is demanding urgent government action to reduce this shameful level of excess deaths.

# 

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15 - 21

Week

Disability

Learning

2



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# **Neurodivergent**RLabour

The number of cases of the unpleasant and contagious illness mumps passed five thousand in 2019, more than four times the previous year's number.

Most of these cases were in young adults whose parents did not give them the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccination due to unfounded fears that MMR causes autism. This bogus claim was made by the discredited former doctor Andrew Wakefield, and has been thoroughly debunked.

The MMR vaccine had made mumps relatively rare until Wakefield's scaremongering caused a drop in vaccination rates.

Not only is this fear campaign anti-scientific, it also illustrates the deep-seated and unjustified fear of autism that persists in our society. Thousands of parents were

willing to risk their children developing painful, debilitating and even fatal diseases rather than 'risk' them being autistic.

Neurodivergent Labour will continue to campaign against irrational fear of autism and of vaccinations, in defence of science, and for acceptance of neurological diversity.



February 2020

# Dear Nadia Whittome MP

This is to advise you that Neurodivergent Labour has no intention of stepping you down as our patron MP.

You are doing a fantastic job in representing the interests of neurodivergent people in Parliament, especially on the issue of discrimination in the justice system.

We know of your support for autistic and other neurodivergent people in your constituency and across Nottingham, and of your campaigning work outside of Parliament as well as within it.

You have our solidarity and support for as long as we have yours.





# -earning Disability Week 15-21 June 2020

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# eurodivergent%Labour

# APPENDIX F - APRIL AUTISTIC ACCEPTANCE CAMPAIGN

Publicity Officer Emma Dalmayne reports:

On the second of April, I launched ND Labour's social media campaign to raise awareness and educate our followers on the many abuses that we as autistic people are subjected to.

We had some brilliant graphics submitted to us from Lily Styles aka Sally Cat promoting autistic acceptance.

Bright and eye catching, the messages among them stated that we were against 'light it up blue', and warned of the many dangers of quack cures. Another urged the reader to allow us to communicate for ourselves and not speak for us.

I posted news articles on some of the fake cures that are touted to parents of autistic children and to autistic people themselves. Among them were two on MMS, Chlorine Dioxide bleach.

I also posted articles on the DNR (do not resuscitate) orders that were sent to three services for autistic people including Voyage Care, and lastly an article on the ableist history of puzzle pieces.

All graphics and news pieces were well received and widely shared. I believe the campaign was successful.



# APPENDIX G - REPORT FROM BLACK / ETHNIC MINORITY WORKING GROUP

Our BAME working group met in July and agreed this plan, which was then endorsed by ND Labour Executive. There are eight members of the working group, of whom three are members of the Executive. It has since held a further meeting

We set up the working group to improve ethnic diversity among ND Labour members. We emphasise that we don't just want bureaucratic measures or token representative – we need active involvement in anti-racist campaigning., which concentrated on taking this plan forward.

# Diversity among ethnic minorities

We discussed in some detail the ways in which neurodivergent members of different ethnic minorities have some common, but some different, experiences. Issues included:

- the importance of this working group having a diverse composition currently, it includes white, European, Romany, Black African, Black Caribbean, mixed Irish-Grenadian, Jewish and Indian members
- the unsatisfactory situation of some CLPs electing BAME officers who did not have the experience of racism that BAME people have
- that some ethnic minority people are regarded as 'white', which can obscure the racism they experience eg. GRT (Gypsy, Romany, Traveller) people would be more accurately described as Indo-Aryan instead.
- that, for Jews to feel welcome, they need to know that they will not be interrogated about Israel/Palestine as soon as they walk in the door!
- the need to listen people will mess up and say the 'wrong thing' we need to help people learn.
- dynamics between men and women in ND and BAME communities.

# Issues facing ND BAME people:

• Immigration, detention, deportation – the system is difficult and hostile enough as it is; it is even harder if you find it near impossible to navigate because of neurodivergence eg. dyslexic – forms

- Crime and justice similar difficulties
- Access to SEND, diagnosis, social care extra barriers for ND BAME people teachers may be less likely to notice ND traits in BAME children more likely to assume they are naughty, aggressive etc due to stereotypes; dyslexia may be missed in families where parents speak a foreign language; particular difficulty in getting neurodivergence recognised in BAME women and girls; many black families do not trust the system because of experiences of hostility and racism; exclusion and absence of traveller kids from schools, seen as 'not worth educating'
- Problems within minority communities of accepting neurodivergence many families don't want a diagnosis, they would rather believe that their child is stubborn or naughty rather than disabled; in some countries and communities, disability or difference is seen as a curse; ignorance about vaccination within the black community, partly because lack of confidence that the system has our interests at heart; culture of not talking about 'personal' matters

# Immediate plans:

- overall approach: unity against racism and for neurodivergent rights, with strong focus on the labour movement
- schedule another meeting soon due to take place in October
- set up Facebook Messenger chat
- keep supporting campaigns eg. BLM, Osime Brown

# **Further Ideas:**

- investigation/report into some of these issues eg. missing ND in BAME schoolkids
- testimonies, presented as: written story. video clips; graphics with picture and quote
- get our Manifesto translated into different languages
- 'letter to my community'
- webinar / online public meeting on neurodivergence and racism
- discuss safeguarding
- conduct a survey of ND BAME people's experiences
- consider training
- add others to the group, especially LGBT+ BAME people

# APPENDIX H - RULES FOR ND LABOUR GROUPS

Rules for local (and union/workplace, if the AGM agrees the proposed rule change) groups:

'ND Labour' means the national organisation.

'Executive' means the national ND Labour Executive.

'The group' means the local, union or workplace group.

- 1. All ND Labour members in that area/workplace etc are automatically members of the group.
- 2. The group can not charge any additional membership fee but it may ask for voluntary donations or subscriptions. ND Labour may make a grant to a group. Procedures for managing the finances of the group will be agreed with the ND Labour Executive.
- 3. The group must have a chair and secretary, and may have whatever other officers and/or committee members it chooses to (with the Executive's agreement). The officers and committee members will be the group's committee, and will be elected annually at a group AGM. The first and founding AGM will be chaired by a member of the Executive.
- 4. A member of the Executive will attend the AGM and may attend any other group meetings.
- 5. The group will hold decision-making meetings open to all members at a regular interval agreed with the Executive.
- 6. The group will present an annual report to its own AGM and to ND Labour.
- 7. Rules for storage and use of personal data by groups will be agreed by the Executive and specified in the ND Labour policy on data.

# **APPENDIX I - FINANCE**

Margaret Corvid, ND Labour Treasurer, reports:

Provisional Finance Snapshot, Neurodivergent Labour, November 2020

Current assets:

£526.17 (memberships and donations)

Outstanding payments to be reimbursed from account to EC members:

- a lifetime subscription for the Stripe contact form plug-in for website £102.44 paid to WPPro
- website hosting: £15.90
- postage and correspondence: £5.58

We have also received a donation in kind of £1.64 postage.

Once the outstanding payments are paid, we will have £402.25 in the account.

We are currently in the process of amending the bank account and online payment authorisations to reflect the change of Treasurer, and once this is complete I will be able to provide more detailed monthly reports.