

**APPG on Social Integration, Minutes for Inaugural Meeting, Tuesday 3rd March, 12-1 pm –
Room W2, Westminster Hall.**

Minutes taken by Josh Westerling, British Future

Present (parliamentarians)

- Fleur Anderson MP (Labour)
- Virendra Sharma MP(Labour)
- Rupa Huq MP (Labour)
- Holly Lynch MP (Labour)
- Jim McMahon MP (Labour)
- Peter Botttomley MP (Conservative)
- Saqib Bhatti MP (Conservative)

Present (others)

- Sunder Katwala, British Future
- Lucy Buckerfield, British Future
- Josh Westerling, British Future
- James Welham, Holly Lynch’s Staff

Apologies:

- Naz Shah MP, Gavin Robinson MP , Robbie Moore MP.

Agenda Item	Notes	Additional Details
1. Introductions and welcome	<p>Holly Lynch MP chaired the meeting and began by welcoming the group and asking those present to introduce themselves.</p> <p>The purpose of the meeting was to conduct the AGM, elect the APPG’s officers and to discuss the plan of work for the year ahead.</p> <p>HL reflected on the need to reconvene this all-party group, but also to relaunch it - for the work plan to have some new direction going forward, and a wider breadth of members. She thanked British Future for their support so far in making this meeting possible.</p>	
2. AGM	HL signalled the opening of the AGM to the group.	
3. AGM - Election of officers	<p>In order to reconstitute APPG, the group needed to elect officers.</p> <p>i. It was moved that Chair of the APPPG is Holly Lynch MP. All voted in favour.</p> <p>ii. It was moved that Fleur Anderson MP, Virendra Sharma MP, Rupa Huq MP, Jim McMahon MP,</p>	There are plans that in the future the APPG will be jointly chaired by Holly Lynch and a Conservative Member of Parliament, to

	<p>Peter Bottomley MP and Saqib Bhatti MP would be elected as Vice-Chairs.</p> <p>iii. It was moved that Anne McLaughlin MP, Stuart McDonald MP, Robbie Moore MP were elected officers in absence.</p> <p>iv. Review of the income and financial statements: Members were offered to review the statements provided to the chair by the previous secretariat of the previous group. All statements were agreed by the group.</p> <p>v. Review of the secretariat provision: The group was updated on the transition of the secretariat from The Challenge to British Future. This was agreed by the parliamentarians present for British Future to formally take on the role of secretariat.</p> <p>Holly formally closed the AGM.</p>	<p>demonstrate cross-party support.</p> <p>SK outlined briefly how the transition came about - after previous secretariat organisation, the Challenge went into administration in November 2019.</p>
<p>4. Discussion of the APPGs new approach and plan of work for the coming year.</p>	<p>i. Content: Current issues in Social Integration</p> <p>The current context for social integration as a policy area was introduced by Sunder Katwala of British Future. This covered divisions that existed before but were revealed by the referendum, and that have since become more salient. The challenge is to make integration an ‘everybody’ agenda. Currently, integration is on the agenda to some extent, for example, there are some ‘green shoots’ appearing from government and the metro-Mayors consider it also. However this is not true everywhere, and more needs to be done to make the case for social integration. Sunder then outlined British Future’s plans for the Decade of Reconnection, seeking to bring together civil society to reconnect society and heal numerous divides.</p> <p>He then outlined the key new work of the ‘Decade of Reconnection’ with a coalition of civil society groups being apart of this.</p> <p>ii. The Previous APPG and Future Plans</p> <p>Holly Lynch MP summarised how prior to the election the APPG had become bogged down with long reports and had not been a dynamic as it could have been. Holly suggested that the group should aim for two shorter reports a year offering practical solutions to MPs and local authorities.</p>	<p>The possibility of doing a joint report with the APPG on Refugees was proposed.</p>

	<p>The group then ran through and discussed the potential themes the APPG could consider in 2020, with the aid of a ‘themes’ document circulated by British Future.</p> <p>Peter Bottomley MP suggested the APPG could look at the role of social media, with the APPG asking questions to specific social media companies such as Google. This was seen as a timely intervention given the forthcoming Online Harms Bill, but that this should be a one-off intervention not a theme for the group, as this is a busy space for policy work right now.</p> <p>Saqib Bhatti MP highlighted the need to shine a light on good practice and good examples of social integration, as well as pointing out issues. This is something he felt British Future could help with doing.</p> <p>Fleur Anderson MP agreed with the themes outlined in the handout and suggested two other potential areas of inquiry: shared spaces and intergenerational integration.</p> <p>On intergenerational integration, Holly explained that the APPG had published an interim report on this topic prior to the election. The group now inherit the final report for this research on generational divides, and that the group should publish this piece of work. However, Holly was mindful that, whilst the report is of good quality, launching with an ‘old’ report would not be the right decision. It was agreed the report could be released as the second or third piece of work for the APPG, but not as its first piece of work.</p> <p>The topic of ESOL (English as a second language) provision was highlighted as an area of interest for the group and attendees reflected on the numbers of people who do not speak English in the UK in their constituencies. Sunder outlined British Future’s previous work on this area and networks.</p> <p>Jim McMahon queried whether the group would have enough information to write a letter to the Chancellor ahead of the budget, on ESOL provision. Some concerns were raised by Sunder as to whether the tone and content of this would damage cross-party relations, and the group needed to be sensitive to that. It was decided that Jill Rutter of British Future would draft a short letter, for the group, which aimed to highlight the issue to the Chancellor and announce the intention of the group to conduct an inquiry into ESOL provision, with further details to come.</p> <p>Common Spaces and the loss of them, or regeneration of them, was seen by many in the group as a tangible issue for people, that demonstrated the impact of social integration on everybody within a community. Jim McMahon shared the</p>	<p>British Future to outline a clear work plan for the year, following on from this, including dates for such publication launches and events in Parliament.</p> <p>Please see the British Future’s report - ‘Speaking Up’.</p> <p>Jill Rutter to draft letter, to be published with a ‘call to evidence’. The APPG set up an inquiry plan and can hold evidence sessions on the back of that.</p>
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	<p>story of a local mosque in Oldham as a case of good practice, Lucy, of British Future would look into the possibility of organising an APPG visit there or somewhere similar in the year.</p> <p>Virendra Sharma also noted the importance of meaningful interfaith work and the difficulty of discussing examples of social segregation amongst people of different faiths. He emphasises the need for faith and the social groups that build around common beliefs, to unite not divide communities. All agreed this was an important issue, that can be difficult to discuss, and would be a topic the return to in the APPG.</p> <p>Holly reflected the importance of interfaith and community work on holding difficult conversations between different groups in a community needed to actually be between those who do disagree with each other and hold opposing views, otherwise, such work can just become an echo chamber and ineffective. Also, the current importance of ‘place’ and feelings of identity linked to that in the boarder public mood, makes the topic of common spaces, an interesting topic to shine a light on.</p> <p>The group decided to consider ESOL first, and may then consider common spaces as its next theme in the year.</p> <p>Sunder suggested the link of Decade of Reconnection to the APPG, with a pledge to the decade. Holly stated this will be agreed at a future meeting, where members could pose for their support.</p>	<p>Holly Lynch to speak to Thangam Debonnaire regarding call for evidence and working jointly with the APPG for Refugees.</p>
<p>5. Any other business</p>	<p>British Future team agreed to create a work plan for the year will be circulated amongst members after the agreement of the Chair and a date for the first meeting of the year, at the launch of the inquiry into ESOL provision would be found by Lucy at British Future.</p> <p>Lucy mentioned, updates to the website would happen in due course after some technical difficulties gaining access to the old site. All social media channels would also be updated to demonstrate the new members of the group.</p> <p>The meeting was then closed.</p>	

ENDS.

For further information and details of the discussion please contact lucy@britishfuture.org If members would like a copy of the themes document circulated in this meeting please get in touch.

The latest updates for this group can be found at @IntergrationAPPG.