

**ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON POLITICAL LITERACY Minutes**  
**For Meeting on 17.05.2022**

**Attended on 17.05.2022 (Parliamentarians):** *Lord Iain McNicol (Co-Chair), Lord David Blunkett, Rachel Hopkins MP, Owen Thompson MP.*

**Apologies from those who could not attend (Parliamentarians):** *Simon Fell MP, Tracey Crouch MP, Nickie Aiken MP, Lord Bird MP, Ben Bradley MP, Caroline Lucas MP, Yasmin Qureshi MP, Helen Hayes, Andrew Bowie MP, Lord Lansley, Lord Wooley, Kate Green, Afzal Khan, Marion Fellows MP, Emma Hardy MP.*

**Attended on 17.05.2022 (Secretariat):** *Matteo Bergamini, CEO (Shout Out UK), Spencer Caminsky, Head of Campaigns and Parliament Relations (Shout Out UK), Shima Langan, Communications Officer (Shout Out UK).*

**Summary of Purpose, Voting Decisions and Attendance**

***Purpose of the APPG***

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Political Literacy will aim to provide an all party forum to discuss the current provision of citizenship and political education (in schools, further and higher education) and to explore how best to further strengthen political literacy education so that young people regardless of background, can play an informed, active role as citizens in our democracy. The key aim of this APPG will be to provide evidence for the importance of political literacy education in promoting youth participation in democratic life. The ultimate goal of this APPG will be to ensure that all young people become politically literate by the time they finish their secondary education.

On the 17th of May 2022, the APPG held its meeting.

**Detailed Minutes**

**Introductory Messages**

Lord Iain thanked everyone for coming to the event, and recognised the difficulty at the moment for APPGs to achieve high attendance, particularly amongst Parliamentarians, given the current political situation.

Lord David Blunkett agreed with this, saying that he will need to leave the APPG meeting slightly early in order to attend another meeting.

Lord Iain said that this was absolutely fine. He then proceeded to read out the apologies from Parliamentarians, and passed onto Jordan Dilworth of the Orwell Youth Prize, to give a short speech on the work of the organisation.

### **Speeches from the Orwell Foundation, Youth Policy Development Group**

Jordan Dilworth described the Orwell foundation and the work of the youth fellows, explaining that the organisation hosts a prize which uses the writing of George Orwell as a starting point to inspire young people to write about their own ideas and experiences. He mentioned that they have seen an influx of young people and writing, and he encouraged people to read their research report which was just published on attitudes to various political subjects, and specifically the trends in language that they observed when discussing these topics.

Lord Iain followed up by asking if the prize was national or local, and Jordan replied saying that the prize was a national one.

Lord Iain thanked Jordan for his speech and answer to his question, and encouraged the Orwell Youth Prize to share the report Jordan mentioned. He then passed onto George Bundock, a member of the Youth Policy Development Group, to give his speech.

George described that the Youth Policy Development Group is a group of diverse young people advising the government on English policy, and described the different events in each cycle - from the training session, to the roundtable and feedback sessions. He described the different topics they have participated in, such as looking at the reasons for low vaccine takeup amongst young people, the Rights of the Child and Gene Modification, and his personal development.

Lord Iain thanked George, and requested that the Group extend further beyond monthly discussions. The Group should publish regular papers responding to debates happening in and around parliament, on a wide range of issues.

Lord Blunkett thanked George, and wanted to know why he didn't know about this already.

Rachel Hopkins MP asked a question the extent of the diversity in the Group, and how members were selected

George stressed the diversity across the country as well as the diversity of backgrounds in the Group. To underline this he explained that the group holds training sessions in different areas of England, in order to reinforce regional diversity. He then explained the application process, whereby candidates answered a range of questions about their political interest and past experience, and also submitted a short video of themselves answering some of these questions.

Rachel thanked George, and left the meeting after this.

Lord Iain thanked Rachel for attending the meeting, and introduced the next phase of the meeting; the APPG were to hear three presentations from youth representatives from both the Orwell Youth Prize and the Youth Policy Development Group, on the teaching of Political Literacy and three different topics.

### **Presentation Stage: The Teaching of Political Literacy and Consent, Climate Change and Tolerance**

The group presenting on Consent (composed of Laurence Hayward and Ruby Alexander) started by discussing what they saw as the current state of consent education, where consent is covered briefly

in KS3 (through a single video about 'tea') but rarely afterwards. They believed there was a fear of scaring young people and hence less discussion around certain topics, and that there was little education on consent and the LGBTQ+ community. They discussed the importance of adapting and expanding consent education as students got older to eventually cover good conduct in relationships, the importance of LGBTQ+ education and consent in the later years but beginning in KS3, a hybrid approach of both recognisable reps in-school and the bringing in of experts outside of school in providing a versatile consent education offering, the importance of smaller group discussion where all genders are present, and creating a supportive school culture. They then passed onto the Climate Change presentation group.

The Climate change group (composed of Isabella Rew and George Bundock) said that climate change learning as it stands is very STEM-focused, and we need to go beyond the greenhouse effect in our learning. They described how important it is to discuss current discourse surrounding climate change, and encouraging debates about this. They stressed that there is a lot to learn from Politics A Level; it involves current examples, which should be used earlier on in school. They stressed the importance of honesty when discussing climate change with young people. They said how important it is to teach from all perspectives, including small scale and movement-based approaches in order to build a connection with young people. They highlighted the importance of a cross-curricular approach when teaching climate change, because there are more roles in the climate change movement than just being a scientist. They said that partial and impartial discussion is important - a balance, so that students can form their own opinions. They then passed onto the Tolerance group.

Lord Iain highlighted that questions can continue to be asked via the chat function, and they would be addressed after all of the presentations had been completed.

The Tolerance group (composed of Jemima Parasram and Faith Falayi) discussed the importance of equipping students with the knowledge they need, in order to avoid misinformation online. They said that racial, sexual and religious tolerance should be integrated into the curriculum, and stressed the importance of showcasing successful case studies when teaching these topics. They discussed the importance of media literacy training. Jemima touched on the importance of open discussion and debate in order to encourage students to form their own views and also respect others. They then discussed how vital it is that students research and present their own work, on areas that interest them around this topic. This gives students the agency to look further into the topics that interest them.

### **Questions and Discussion Portion**

Lord Iain stressed the importance of acceptance as a term rather than tolerance, and framing this discussion in a more positive and proactive way through language.

Rebecca Deegan of the organisation I Have a Voice asked a question about the interest schools would have about teaching tolerance, and if the young people had reached out to schools about this.

Jemima Parasram said that, whilst her group did not reach out to schools, she did have experience of this in her school. Teaching through debate and open discussion, encouraging people to speak from and therefore understand different perspectives, was extremely effective in helping students respect one another and their views.

Faith Falayi echoed this, and said that there was a thread across all three presentations encouraging open classroom discussion and a safe space where people can voice their views.

Lord Iain agreed with this, whilst also stressing the importance of doing and not just talking.

Lord Iain then highlighted a question asked in the chat from Charlotte Baars (student) question who asked about the Consent groups' thoughts on consent education in same sex schools.

Ruby Alexander said that as someone who studied in a same sex school, consent education really varies between institutions. At her school, there was a tendency to forget that students will always be interacting with those of other genders, and you have to teach consent from both sides in order for it to be effective.

Lord Iain said there was no consent education when he went to school, and this should be integrated in all fields.

### **Closing Remarks and Brief Summary of Activities**

Lord Iain thanked everyone for participating, and given that we had a few minutes of extra time, he invited Dr. James Weinberg, Head of the APPG's Academic Advisory Group, to summarise the work of the APPG since the past meeting.

James thanked the presenters, saying one of the takeaways is the teaching of skills as well as knowledge, going back to the report that the APPG published on political literacy last year called *The Missing Link*. James said that the AAG has been continuing to meet quarterly, and that the APPG received funding to do a follow-up presentation, where we will be engaging with young people and civil servants to get responses and practical solutions to the report we published, and the findings should come out in the autumn.

Lord Iain thanked James for the summary, and invited Matteo Bergamini to briefly discuss the work of Shout Out UK in the realm of Political and Media Literacy education since our last meeting.

Matteo thanked everyone for the presentations, saying that SOUK have received funding to determine the teaching of CPD on political literacy, which will be published on Political Literacy Day. He discussed taking the recommendations forward in a follow-up report.

Lord Iain thanked Matteo, approved the minutes of the 5th meeting, and thanked everyone for participating - especially those who prepared presentations.