

ASHLEY HALSTEAD
LGBTQ+ REP,
CO-OPERATIVE PARTY NEC

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NEC AGM Report

This NEC is remarkably fresh - with around half the members only being elected for the first time this year. I was grateful for plenty of networking time with the rest of the NEC to get to know them and to highlight the priorities I have as the LGBTQ+ representative.

Jim McMahon MP (Parliamentary Rep) was re-elected as Chair unopposed and Ruth Hall (Scotland Rep) was re-elected as Vice Chair unopposed.

I was placed on both the Policy Subcommittee, where Abigail Marshall Katung (North of England Rep) was elected as Chair and Jamie McMahon (Midlands Rep) as Vice Chair, and the Audit Subcommittee. I am intending to have a big push for more LGBTQ+ friendly policy as part of the party policy process, one of the pledges I made when standing for NEC. I will continue to do reports as my term goes on so members can track the progress of the promises I made and hold me accountable.

As the Co-operative Party, we have 2 representatives on Labour's National Policy Forum. Jamie McMahon (Midlands Rep) and Lucy Naylor (South of England Rep) were elected as our representatives and I sounded them both out of LGBTQ+ policy and have confirmed they are on board with making the Labour & Co-operative movement friendly and open to the LGBTQ+ community.

Due to large numbers of rule changes in recent years, we decided to give the rules working group a rest for the year, to allow the current rules to settle in properly. When the rules working group re-opens again, I intend to push for definitions of LGBTQ+ discrimination, namely, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and acephobia.

Joe Fortune, Emma Foody and Emma Hodinott took us through an overview of how the membership looks. Currently, LGBTQ+ people make up 7.1% of our membership (and 14.9% of our new members) and 15%~ of our Councillors are LGBTQ+, with the same figure for candidates too.

The election for the LGBTQ+ rep on NEC was the 2nd highest constituency turnout at 35.4% (behind only Northern Ireland at 48.9%). This was really heartening to learn! I will be liaising with party councils

and regional organisers in the coming months to understand what can be done to keep that number steady and even increase it.

My NEC email is now set up. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me at: ashley.halstead@nec.party.coop