

UNISON
Newcastle City Branch
BRANCH COMMITTEE MINUTES
MONDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2010

PRESENT: N Nicholson, D Gormley, R Sheikh, M Brown, L Newton, L Alderson, J Yugire, R Neale, J Kennett, J Reed, L McGurk, M Hardcastle, D Tree, J Horne, N Proudlock, C Graham, J Musham, S Lee, A Cousins, P Gilroy, J Bird, K Bell, M Henderson, R Sheikh, J Hall, S Mulligan, J Bird, L Mcdonagh, K Ameli, P Gilroy, B Gates, C Ash, T Murray, J Young, M Temperley, E Whitby, A Gilks, M Haddon, K McCormick, D Stoker, V Suddes, F Mendelson, S Hicks

IN ATTENDANCE: C Hodgson

1. Apologies: M Henderson, A Ibbetson, F Haynes, L Scorfield, B Oliver, J Dunlop, G Sawkill, C Cooney, M Symington, T Connell, T Kirby, G Haggerston, E Shipley, G Carr, L Grainger, A Dobson, M Oliver, L Rogers, H Rocke, L Ashbridge, S Bond, P Brown, M Hall, C Mason, R Nelson, P Keenan, J Liepins-Hall, D Kane, J Flood, R Flannery, N Ramanandi, C Stevenson, N Bone, A Carson

2. Minutes for confirmation:

(i) Branch committee 5 July 2010 – **Agreed**. No matters arising.

(ii) Health and Safety 14 June – **Noted**. No matters arising.

(iii) Branch education 21 July 2010 – **Noted**. No matters arising.

3. Membership

July 2010 and August 2010 – **Noted**

4. STEP

JB asked tables to discuss step meetings which have been attended and the letter from John Collings.

LA advised communications are essential. JN highlighted that the CXO meeting was good and highlighted the importance of middle management.

EW was not happy that STEP meetings had been organised during school holidays due to the amount of staff absent.

JY gave an outline of STEP and shared some of the reps which have been identified in representing worker groups affected by STEP.

EW – ITS Early years needs more than 1 rep as this is a vast area with varying roles.

JB advised group that there had previously been agreed fortnightly meetings, but would directorate specific meetings be more helpful? It was **agreed** to continue to meet an hour prior to Branch Committee and hold fortnightly Directorate specific meetings.

PG requested agreement for the branch to use Dexter Whitfield for research purposes and to do a fast analysis of implications STEP proposals, this is especially important given Kenny's current illness. This was **agreed**, ongoing costs will be reported to future Branch Committees.

5. Single Status

Employee support programme:

PG delivered a power point presentation on the employee support programme although we have not yet seen a demonstration. A demo should be given at the appeals training.

ULR's will be involved in the support programme.

Learning was raised – not everyone has access to on-line facility – ULR's to be trained – people allowed time to access on-line facility – ULR's to be trained and staff allowed time to access package if they are a red circle. If members can't get access in work hours feed back should be given to branch.

Clarification was given on preferential/guaranteed interviews for red circles:

PG advised that Red circles will be given a guaranteed interview provided they meet all essential criteria – not a preferential interview for a post of same or lower grade than the protected grade. The council would not agree to giving red circle staff a preferential interview following an equality impact assessment.

If Jobs are advertised externally the directorate must present a strong business case for reasons why.

The numbers of red circles have dropped significantly due to reviews, but the branch has not been advised of the total number of remaining red circles.

EW – Issue regarding consistency – great when managers follow policies, but often this is not the case.

JB advised appeals can be submitted from 1 November – training for non school based reps will be 30 Sept and 1 Oct, date to be finalised for school based staff but aiming for 21 or 22 October.

Following training a system will be in place to monitor each appeal, and this will be explained to reps.

When submitting an appeal the branch will allocate a rep from the same directorate, unless this is impossible. If a sole job holder is appealing that is fine, but if you are part of worker group 50% of the workers must agree to the appeal.

Back Pay:

Paula Saul operations manager for payroll/admin was introduced to discuss back pay.

5,000 staff affected by phase 2 – before staff can be moved onto the new structure job codes need to be signed off and job history confirmed.

Approx 2,500 staff should receive a change in pay in September. These staff should begin to receive letters from week commencing 13 September.

An information pack was given to managers in August to inform members.

Paula then asked for questions and comments:

SL – many managers do not see this as a priority.

EW – it would be helpful for figures to be worked out and calculations shown.

Paula Saul – no breakdown will be automatically given as we won't know the exact figure (due to deductions) until pay day, therefore we would not be able to issue the letters during September. We are hopeful that a further 1,000 staff should be implemented in October.

Staff who are implemented will receive one of three letters:

- 1) Full implementation – staff will be placed on new grade and receive back pay in Sept.
- 2) Staff put onto new grade – no change to pay
- 3) Partial implementation – Staff put onto new grade – no back pay yet as history not signed off.

6. Staff Survey

PG asked tables to look through copy of staff survey – asked how we can encourage staff to fill out survey?

LA – feedback from staff survey would be useful.

JR – following previous survey YHN managers invested £22,000 for a work place assessment.

EW – a breakdown of returns by directorate would be useful.

FM – time off should be arranged by management and supported.

RS – this survey is more extensive than previous surveys – feedback would be nice.

AH – Often complain about LA not communicating but this works both ways – staff should be encouraged to respond.

WA – if staff are worried about confidentiality a hard copy is available.

7. Academies

NN advised leaflets given out at Gosforth High Street last couple of Saturdays also volunteers needed for leafleting of pupils.

JK – All Saints is a national challenge trust school – head is waiting to hear what happening as the school was set up under Labour.

8. Public Services Alliance

Staff who attended advised the meeting focused on academies as Gosforth High is due to become one in January 2011.

Also a mention of the community and voluntary sector that employs 5,000 FTE in Newcastle. Branch would like to commission a piece of work to find out the impact of cuts in the LA will have on the Community and Voluntary sector. This would be

followed by a conference in December to show findings. Committee were asked to provisionally agree to fund this piece of work. The branch will also submit a GPF bid. This was **agreed**.

The Community Organiser post will be advertised from Tuesday 7 September.

AG advised there is a NCVS electronic newsletter which presently has a cuts survey. EW advised of the east end alliance, and that they are kept informed of PSA meetings.

9. Workforce Learning and Development.

WA advised 2nd workstream meeting held – informed of a new learner management system and have asked for further info at next meeting.

Info on how course are advertised were discussed and info of bridges to learning courses start w/c 13 Sept.

JY advised of Care support Staff conference.

2 days: 11 Oct – Newcastle 9.30-3.00 and 12 Oct in Durham

RS – Hope not Hate leaflet there is a training session on 21 Sept 6pm at regional office. Open to all members – more info on work against far right groups.

FM advised that through B2L 13 people have completed the K101 course, 11 passed first time including Jane Yugire – congratulations given.

10. Directorate Reports

Adults and Culture – Mike Symington now in branch, over the next few months he will take more of a lead on the directorate and we should be able to give ACS more of a focussed approach.

Children's services – NN gave overview of reviews in ITS (play, connexions and EWS)

CXO – PG informed of Strategic, Property and Asset Management (SPAM) review. Expected restructure of IT. Manager looking at regional services review of posts.

E&R – PG advised Security service at risk of losing jobs due to re-location.

Admin – LH – working with Steve Evans regarding how Admin posts are advertised.

No update from Community & Voluntary sector.

11. Health and Safety

UNISON campaign – workplace abuse and violence, being trialled in YHN – often staff don't report abuse.

12. Affiliations, Donations and correspondence

TUC appeal for the Pakistan floods victims for food, medicine, water etc. – £150 **Agreed**. Potential to make a further donation at a future Branch Committee depending on the situation.

ACTSA – £50 **Agreed**

Re-affiliation to Abortion Rights – £40 **Agreed**

Total cost for James Imhoof to go to Cuba is £1,500 – **Agreed** that the branch will pay any remaining costs following fundraising by James.

NE unites against BNP – £150 **Agreed**

13. AOB

PG would like to take delegation to Tolpuddle Martyrs next year and in coming months will gauge interest level.

Branch Committee wished to send best wishes to Kenny Bell and that he successfully recovers from cancer.