

**UNISON**  
**Newcastle City Branch**  
**BRANCH COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**14 May 2012**

**PRESENT:** J Imhoof(JI), J Nicholson, M Foston, E Wilson, E Whitby (EW), D Tree, V Suddes, T Gregory, J Shortt (Retired), A Carson, R Dixon, K Nesbitt(KN), M Wilkinson, W Aitman(WA), L Alderson, R Sheikh(RS), B Oliver, I Mackintosh, L Reeve (LR), M Symington(MS), J Bird (JB-Chair), P Gilroy (PG), L Hardie(LH), C McArdle (CMcA) G Burin, J Kennett, K Harrison(KH), A Hamilton(AH), F Mendelson (FM-Retired),

**In Attendance:** S Praszczalek (Minute Taker)

**Apologies for Absence:** J Liepins-Hall, C Mason, C McGuiness, S Doyle, K Loughlin, N Ramanandi(NR), J Horne, V Anson, J Carden, J Yugire, J Arnold, S Barnes, J Jarvis, L Crosby(LC), D Muse

### **1. Workers Beer Company 2012**

LR – we looking for UNISON volunteers for Latitude Festival, Suffolk, in July and Leeds Festival in August. Briefing at Region on Monday 21 May, 5.30pm – all welcome. Contact LR, or Patrick Kane at Region, if interested. Monies received after events will be distributed to charities – future discussion required.

### **2. Deputy Regional Convenor**

JB – Julie Wynn has stepped down as she is not able to continue her UNISON secondment and hold a lay position. Therefore Nicky Ramanandi, Deputy Branch Secretary, was elected Deputy Regional Convenor at Regional Committee on 10 May.

### **3. Affiliations, Donations and Correspondence**

All circulated requests – **AGREED**

Additional Requests – (a) Donation to Coalition of Resistance T&W re Defend Pay, Pensions and Public Services Rally ,14 June - £100 – **AGREED**

(b) 'Grace Darling-Stage Celebration of a NE Heroine', - Whitley Bay Playhouse – 3 November, local playwright, sell tickets to members at reduced price – **AGREED**

(c) Donation to NE Theatre Co. Precious Cargo, 'When She Went' - £200 **AGREED**

### **4. Local Elections and Mayoral Referendum**

Elections took place on 3 May – FM, Retired UNISON Member, elected Labour Cllr in South Jesmond and gave thanks for support to UNISON and CMcA – Labour Link Officer. Mary Butler, Retired Member, was elected Labour Cllr in Hebburn North. Labour increase of 6 seats in local elections.

In the Mayoral Referendum votes were approx. 40,000 against – 20,000 in favour. Believe regional campaign made a difference.

### **5. Council Budget 2012 – Redundancy Update**

Senior Branch Officers, Chief Exec and relevant managers met to discuss staff at risk. Compulsory redundancy numbers reducing. Chief Exec to hold summit early June to look at situation. We need to monitor the situation closely and consider bringing together a Campaign Group if mass compulsory redundancies look likely. **ACTION – PG**

Chief Execs – 13 at risk, most have transferrable skills; broadly 1 month extension given to those redeployed.

Children's Services – 5 given extensions on redeployment (was 13).

Adults – 10 at risk, some redeployed. Welfare Rights and Asylum Migration Team at risk.

Enviro & Regen – 70 at risk across Enviro Services. N2 grades an issue, awaiting clarification. Leisure – cause for concern, need to recruit in this area.

Protection & Redundancy – Council's x1.75 redundancy scheme ended at the end of April, displaced staff are still covered. Constitutional Committee met last week but redundancy scheme withdrawn from agenda – need to maintain pressure on council and seek a multi year deal. Good collective ideas from last Special Branch Committee, may need to organise another meeting.

## **6. Pensions Campaign**

LGPS 18 Newsletter gives update – still no proposals. UNISON Health rejected offer (less than 1% margin – only 14% voted) – no mandate for further strike. LG members need clear mandate for good voting turnout. LGSG Exec meeting end of May, but not specifically for pensions. Discussion took place about impact on members if they have to work longer; any further action; apathy and timescales. Conference needs to clarify policy beforehand - send information out when received – **ACTION - PG**

## **7. Pay**

Update given – Pay claim has been rejected for this year, employer will not meet unions. Request £250 to be paid to anyone earning less than £21,000 - NCC not paying. UNISON requesting all authorities to pay. NCC implementation of Living Wage – when date known arrange Special Branch Committee to discuss – **ACTION - PG**

## **8. Part Year Working Update – Ballot Results**

Schools low turn out – 198 Accept / 12 Against (1,700 papers distributed). Must maintain Schools Working Group, rigorous recruitment needed in schools - UNISON to become more visible.

## **9. Workforce Development and Learning**

- \* WA informed Adult Learners Week 14-18 May, events on throughout Civic Centre.
- \* Next Shop Stewards training course in August, 5 spaces available.
- \* Learning Journal Issue 1 now published and distributed. Future articles to be sent to WA.
- \* JB informed Public Speaking course, 13 June, TU Ed Centre - Conference Delegates attending, but there are spaces available if other reps wish to attend as well.

## **10. National and Regional Committees and Conferences**

- \* Local Government & National Delegate Conference – Awaiting final agenda; Standing Orders Committee did good work on amendments to motions; delegation issue with NR now attending from Region – further discussions at June Branch Committee.
- \* NEC –meeting focused on Conference business. Guest speakers to include General Secretary of GMB.
- \* PG attended Working Party in London – Co-operative Network of Councils – NCC signed up, but what does it mean?
- \* NR & LH attended Co-operative Mutuals Seminar – updated on latest developments.

## **11. Directorate Reports**

Adult & Culture Services – Mass meeting held for Library members – UNISON campaigning against closures with no increase in volunteers.

Update given on Community Mental Health & Working Time Directive, rotas withdrawn from review process – ongoing issue; shop stewards meeting tomorrow.

Children's Services – LH gave update and informed there is a staff side briefing 23 May on Social Care and Integrated Services

Delay on issue with Res. Care sleep ins and Youth Service enhancements not paid – 5 redeployment outstanding.

Admin – To be dealt within directorate meetings. LH met reps to agree.

Elections for Convenors – Process now starting, discussion took place on how to conduct election. Email votes **AGREED** as best way to maximize turnout.

## **12. Branch Officer Reports**

Women Members – KN meeting Natasha Nicholson (job share Women's Officer) to discuss role.

LGBT Members – LC sent apologies – LGBT conference was held in Durham last week. RS, Equality Officer, informed of IDAHO event (International Day Against Homophobia) on 17 May, 11-2pm, Civic Centre.

Disabled Members – AH – Hardest Hit Campaign, 1 June, Civic Centre – free to UNISON members, branch donated £500 to event. Volunteers required for stand – contact AH. UNISON Disabled Policy Weekend – 8- 9 June, Gateshead Hilton Hotel - Vera Baird QC and Clare Williams, UNISON Regional Convenor, are speakers. Case studies needed re changes to Disability Living Allowance to develop Disability Toolkit – contact AH

## **13. International Report**

KH – Attending meeting in May to discuss Regional priorities. Need to raise more money for mini bus for Cuba. Fuller report to June Branch Committee – **ACTION – KH**

PG – Quarterly International meetings arranged – next 29 May, 4-6pm, Civic Centre – Colombia theme, Clare Williams, Regional Convenor, will give update on regional campaigns.

## **14. Health & Safety**

Nothing to report.

## **15. Membership**

Reduction of 87 members, but this month shows majority of leavers through voluntary redundancy. NR to lead on branch recruitment.

## **16. Financial Statement**

The report was **RECEIVED**. Queries to be emailed to branch office.

## **17. Minutes for Confirmation**

Branch Committee 2 April 2012 – **AGREED**

Health & Safety March 2012 – Not available

Branch Education April 2012 – **NOTED**

## **18. Any Other Business**

Green Festival 2012 – John Reed requested branch support a GPF bid for £5,000 – **AGREED**

**NEXT MEETING – Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June, 4pm, Newcastle Civic Centre.**