

**UNISON**  
**Newcastle City Branch**  
**BRANCH COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012**

**PRESENT:** J Shortt (Retired Member), L Patterson, S Doyle(SD), J Reed, T Cook, A Gregory, V Suddes, C Graham, N Oliver, M Symington(MS), E Wilson, P Gilroy(PG), W Ndlovu, R Kain, M Wilkinson, J Liepins-Hall, L Jackson, R Fenton, A Watt, J Arnold, W Aitman(WA), J Yugire(JY), P Gregory, I Mackintosh, S Hazel, A Hamilton(AH), C McGuinness, L Hardie, N Ramanandi (NR) - Chairing, C McArdle, E Whitby, AJ Kennett

**APOLOGIES:** R Nelson, B Oliver, N Bone, A Carson, V Powell, S Hicks, I Royal, L Ashbridge, A Armstrong, N Nicholson(NN), M Dobson, J Carden, K Nesbitt(KN), D Tree, L Hannon, I Royal, L Crosby, J Bird (JB), K Harrison(KH)

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

NR would Chair meeting – gave JB's apologies.

**2. AFFILIATIONS, DONATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Kirklees UNISON and War on Want - **AGREED**

Medical Aid for Palestinians - £50 – **AGREED**

**Correspondence** - 'An Introduction To Pensions' Distance Learning Course – contact Branch if interested.

**3. MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION**

Branch Committee 11 June 2012 – **AGREED**

Matters Arising – **NONE**

Health & Safety May 2012 – No minutes – **NOTED**

Branch Education 13 June 2012 – **NOTED**

**4. COUNCIL BUDGET 2012**

**Staff still at risk:**

**Chief Exec** – now only 1 at risk.

**E&R** – has reduced substantially to less than 20, but has also increased with school closures.

**Leisure** – N2 hard to find vacancies, although we are still hopeful.

**Children's Services** – 5 staff on redundancy list plus another 8 who could go into posts.

**Adult & Culture** – 6 staff still going through the process

\* Need to obtain updated total list – **ACTION PG**

- Managers comfortable extending timeline.

**5. REDUNDANCY SCHEME**

Council offer was x1.4, now increased to x1.5 until end August 2015.

**Employee Relations** – Trade unions not agreed anything as yet, need more discussions.

'Wider HR Package' paper distributed to meeting and feedback given. Comments received - concern over 2016 date; changes in disciplinary and grievance procedure; would directors/councillors have time to do investigations; x1.5 plus 3 year deal better than year on year; YHN – 2016 issue, Employee Relations changes completed.

Children's Services should remain on existing scheme (x1.75) as they are behind on the budget timeline.

\* Arrange a Special Branch Committee re Employee Relations – **ACTION PG**

**6. PENSIONS CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

14 briefings have been held with 5 more to take place - have covered every major workplace. Contact branch if further briefings required. Ballot 31<sup>st</sup> July – 24<sup>th</sup> August to home addresses.

Branch does not have officers to cover schools. Feedback is that majority would accept offer. Need good turnout for vote.

- Regional Pensions Briefing on 16<sup>th</sup> July, feedback will be given from branches. Report will be given to National Service Group in 2 weeks time – recommendation may then be made.

- Pensions issue discussed at Conference, informed no pension calculator – believe disservice to members.

\* OUTLINES with info to be emailed and posted out this week – **ACTION PG**

\* Resource Centres would like more briefings – **ACTION MS**

\* Request pensions calculator facility to be made available to members – **ACTION PG**

\* Enquire if text facility available for ballot – **ACTION PG**

\* Clarification about benefits of leaving scheme before 20 years – **ACTION PG**

## 7. **WELFARE REFORM**

To discuss at September Branch Committee – **AGREED**

## 8. **TUC DAY OF ACTION – 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2012**

TUC is chartering a train for this event – ‘A Future That Works – Austerity Isn’t Working’ - departing Newcastle 5.30am to London. Branch will purchase a limited number of tickets - want members to support. Discussion took place re individuals to make contribution towards cost; group bookings make it cheaper on another train; possible coach travel; open up to non UNISON members; take into account low-paid workers; retired members etc.

\* Information to go out to all members – **ACTION PG**

## 9. **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING**

Free NCFE level one courses at Newcastle College TUC Ed Centre – Mentoring, Mental Health Awareness, Alcohol Awareness and Sexual Health and Substance Misuse.

- Articles for next Learning Newsletter to be forwarded to WA

- Equality Diploma – online in September; ULR Forum next Thursday; 12 June Public Speaking Course.

PG presented Award certificates at the meeting to those who cannot attend on Thursday.

**Bridges to Learning** – Informed of various workshops across the city re Stress Awareness, English, and Communication Skills. Enquiry from centre manager requesting course for young people to learn to cook on a budget. For further information on Open University courses and Back to Learning Study Skills contact JY.

## 10. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT & NATIONAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE**

A brief overview was given from NR. Informed 9 branch delegates attended, as well as 2 from Service Group Exec and NEC, also the Regional Young Members officer attended from the branch. All delegates spoke at conference, including first time delegates; branch moved some motions; some were composited. Pensions debate was very active. Information will in the next Outlines – **ACTION PG**

## 11. **DIRECTORATE REPORTS**

**Adult & Culture** – At the Community Mental Health meeting the Working Time Directive (WTD) and rotas were discussed – this to go to management. A&C DJC is scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> July.

**Children’s Services** – Consultation ended 29<sup>th</sup> June, 8 staff at risk - awaiting answers from Director.

**Chief Exec** – Does not exist now, 3 divisions – Finance & Resources, Policy Strategy & Communications, and Corporate Services.

**Enviro & Regen** – Reviews have not moved forward. Budget cuts are having impact on maintenance and repairs re recent floods.

**CVS** – Nothing to report.

**YHN** – Concierge service a major issue.

**Newcastle College** – Informed of TUPE transfers last Friday and discussed what this meant i.e. college becoming a private one.

**12. BRANCH OFFICER REPORTS**

**Women Members**– Women’s Policy Weekend, 14/15 September – email out – **ACTION NN & KN**

**LGBT Members** – No information.

**Disabled Members** – AH - Lack of support from HR; looking at best way to use budget; update given on Regional Disabled Members weekend; aware of increase in disability cases.

Motions to be submitted to Disabled Conference – **ACTION AH & ADMIN**

Propose 4 delegates to conference –

L Gregson, C McGuinness, L Cawkwell and S Lonergan – **AGREED**

A Hamilton & M Temperely attend from National Committee.

Contact Thompsons Solicitors to attend a future Branch Committee – **ACTION**

**Black Members** – SD – Black Members Forum, 25 June at Regional Office – report distributed. Next Black Members Conference 18-20 January 2013, in Sheffield; to promote Black History month using SOG budget; also 2 motions submitted at NDC from Black Members.

Black Members Residential Policy Weekend 28 & 29 July, Durham – info to all members -

**ACTION – ADMIN**

**Young Members** – Nothing to report.

**Welfare** – Confidential service available to all, includes advice and financial help.

School Uniform grant deadline 6 July – forms to be returned to national.

Winter fuel grant available for next year.

**International** – Meeting to be re-arranged on Cuba – **ACTION KH/PG**

**13. HEALTH & SAFETY**

Ongoing issue with security vans – new vans should have arrived last year, letter going to Head of Service in Procurement.

Lack of heating in Civic Centre – Management doing everything required to ease situation.

Block 3 toilets – H&S rep chasing up issue of number of toilets available to members – informed provision is adequate in the Civic Centre.

**14. INFORMATION**

June Membership – Down, leavers due to redundancies/budget cuts.

Financial Statement – **NOTED**

**15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Durham Miners’ Gala, Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July, Durham – few places still available on coaches.

**16. Next Branch Committee Meeting – Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2012.**

Minute Taker: S Praszczalek