

UNISON
Newcastle City Branch
BRANCH COMMITTEE MINUTES
2nd September 2013

PRESENT: N Bone (NB), E Whitby (EW), E Wilson, M Symington, D Gormley, L Hardie, C McArdle, P Gilroy (PG), N Ramanandi (NR), R Dixon, P Barwick, A Gregory, D Tree, V Suddes, W Aitman (WA), L Kennedy, J Shortt, J Yugire (JY), J Kennett, L Patterson, M Wilkinson, M Harrison, L Ashbridge, A Stewart, R Fenton, B Oliver, R Sheikh, L Reeve (LR)

In Attendance: D Atkinson, S Praszczalek

APOLOGIES: T Cook, L Jackson, J Horne, J Bird, S Hicks, A Carson, A Hall, J Liepins-Hall, T Carr, P Gregory, K Bensley, A Hamilton, L Crosby, N Oliver, J Carden, R McGrath, D Muse, A Hall

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Noted Chair on maternity leave – NR would chair the meeting. All welcomed to meeting and apologies acknowledged.

2. AFFILIATIONS, DONATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Donations – Newcastle Ravens - £150; War on Want - £50; Rochdale UNISON - £250 – **AGREED**

Correspondence – Noted

3. MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION

(a) Branch Committee 1st July 2013 – **AGREED**

(b) Matters Arising – School Support Secondment advert to be emailed out again – originally sent out July, concerns raised about timing due to school holidays.

(c) Branch Education August 2013 – Noted.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

(a) Noted. Any questions/queries to contact Branch Treasurer.

(b) Xmas Party – Explanation given about costing of members' party. Branch and lottery funds subsidise this event. Shop Stewards to encourage members to attend, will look at again at this expense/event next year – **AGREED**

5. WORKERS BEER COMPANY REPORT

Report given by LR on Glastonbury, Latitude and Leeds festivals – article on branch website. Approx. £920 raised – donate 50% to 'Tiny Lives Fund' – local organisation and 50% to another cause, recommendation from Senior Branch Officers to next Branch Committee.

6. MEMBERSHIP

Decreasing – due to redundancies, few resignations. Region allocating branch further organisations from the C&V sector – increasing branch membership. Will increase workload in this area – possible secondment in the future.

7. PAY

Circulated 2014-15 NJC Pay Claim – Branch Consultation.

Option 1 – The Living Wage hourly rate to be the minimum pay rate, with an equivalent percentage increase on all other spinal column points (would mean 15% pay increase) OR

Option 2 – A flat rate increase of £1 an hour on all pay points, which would achieve the current Living Wage as the bottom NJC spinal column point.

Discussion took place – Option 2 recommended. Extra meetings to be arranged and consultation vote to go out to all members.

Motion – NB submitted a motion (against the cuts) to the meeting. Floor discussed working with other unions and the TUC to organise a campaign to take effective protest action collectively within the next year – at the end of the campaign, not the beginning. Senior Branch Officers support this, need to canvas views on general strike. National perspective given next week at TUC Conference.
Floor vote – 25 Support, 1 Against, 0 Abstentions

8. SENIOR MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Update given – still some director positions to be filled; reviews on-going; further cuts in Year 2; Year 3 cuts more significant (i.e. Sure Start); increase prevention work – additional income in supporting services. £1m savings have been achieved.

9. SENIOR MANAGEMENT PAY

63 UNISON members balloted – low return of 22, majority accepted.

10. NHS RALLY – 29th SEPTEMBER

Encourage distribution of flyers. Social event at The Cluny raised £130 towards coach costs. Seats still available – contact EW or Branch Office to book.

11. BUDGET 2014/15

Details to be shared soon on the merger of Libraries, Leisure and Custom Services. Motion to full council on Wednesday; £10m further budget cut placed on local authorities; discussions on-going with government. Cuts in Year 3 – need to support Sure Start (some money given through lottery bid). Members to be updated in branch monthly newsletter.

12. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

- (a) Update given on accessing free courses to members, Return to Learn courses and informed Learning Journal will be produced monthly. NE Equality Award Event – informed of nominations – further info from WA.
- (b) Bridges to Learning - List of courses given; drop-in session 19th September – contact JY for further info.
- (c) Informed of £5,000 Learning Support Fund available to members – will promote through Learning Journal.

13. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND CONFERENCES

Regional Council – reports given, including NHS march and rally; presentation was given around Thompson Solicitors – more detailed case forms to be completed; further debates took place around cuts in region.

Regional Service Group – meeting 3rd September, will report back to October branch committee.

NEC – Nothing to report.

14. DIRECTORATE REPORTS

Wellbeing, Care & Learning – Adults: Update given on redeployment list; review of CMH Social Workers – not budget driven; consultation on-going at Cherry Tree. Children's: Awaiting info from Cheviot View; provider engagement event on 16th September – fit for short breaks, decision end September. Schools: Thomas Walling - moving towards academy status – TUPE proposal; Letters sent to Head Teachers about future courses; Schools Working Group to meet 16th September. UNISON booklet about medical procedures in schools handed out.

Resources – Nothing to report.

Chief Executives – Nothing to report.

Communities - Consultation on Libraries, Leisure and Customer Services begins on Monday – will be a reduction in staff. Briefings next week, more meetings to be arranged. DJC to be held soon.

Investment & Development – DJC next Thursday; Fairer Housing Unit – on-going issues – meeting next Thursday.

YHN – Nothing to report.

Community & Voluntary Sector – Nothing to report.

Newcastle College – Nothing to report.

15. BRANCH OFFICER REPORTS

Equalities – How austerity affects LGBT members – RS informed of access to link on intranet; Mela very successful – UNISON Region had stall; Black Members Policy Weekend 20-21 September – encourage members to participate; Black Members meeting – 9 September to discuss conference and motions. NE Equality Awards, 4 October – nominated Community Organisers Project – urge members to vote.

Women Members – Women’s Policy Weekend – 13-14 September, Durham; next lunchtime meeting 27 September – will discuss motions to conference (deadline 17 October).

Welfare – National Welfare Committee gave some guidance in relation to working with Credit Unions. PG met with Chief Exec of Moneywise (Newcastle Credit Union). Discussed advance loans (alternative to using loan sharks), possible investment with branch funds and recruitment. Need incentive for new members to join credit union; promote through branch newsletter; more work to be done - survey to all members to include Retired Members.

International – CMcA will submit Colombian report to Regional Committee on Friday, meeting to be arranged and will give feedback next Branch Committee.

Include international info in next newsletter – Colombia and Cuba; to arrange meeting re Supporting Miami 5.

16. HEALTH & SAFETY

Discussed moving H&S up agenda.

(a) Outstanding issue on 10th Floor – to follow up. (b) Hazards Conference held in Stoke – many legislative changes. (c) Changes to smoking area in Civic Centre grounds – will look into restrictions. (d) Highways meeting – HSE informed about correct procedures in cutting flagstones, could result in personal prosecutions – would be held on record. (e) No guidance on electronic smoking – need to follow up.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Budget Cuts – Year 2 – To discuss with HR changes to selection matrix re sickness issue.

(b) Discussed future of leisure facilities, asset transfers and integrated services review.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 7th October, 3.00pm, Committee Room, Civic Centre.