

UNISON
Newcastle City Branch
BRANCH COMMITTEE MINUTES
7 April 2014

PRESENT: J Liepins-Hall(JL-H), L Patterson, S Cooke, J Imhoof, D Mead, L Taylor, E Whitby, L Ashbridge(LA), M Wilkinson, P Gregory, E Wilson, C McArdle, A Steward, T Cook, V Suddes, A Hamilton(AH), C McGuinness, T Carr(TC), L McGurk, J Yugire, P Cobb, L Hardie, J Nicholson, AJ Kennett, P Gilroy(PG), N Ramanandi(NR) – Chair, C Smith(CS)

In Attendance: D Atkinson, S Praszczalek

APOLOGIES: J Horne, S Rounthwaite, A Carson, R Hutchinson, D Gormley, J Dunlop, A Hall, A Coleman, J Bird, W Aitman(WA), L Kennedy, N Oliver, J Shortt, N Bone, A Green, D Tree, L Crosby, J Carden(JC), M Symington, A Martin, M Dobson

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

NR to chair the meeting – apologies noted.

2. MINUTES FOR CONFIRMATION

Branch Committee 3 March - **AGREED**

Health & Safety March – Noted

Branch Education - Noted

3. BRANCH MEMBERSHIP

Stewards to discuss union with work colleagues, encourage to join. Possible to increase membership in schools and CVS. A Senior Officer is overseeing recruitment and membership.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

OLBA has limitations – require better breakdown (in depth) of branch spending, will bring to future meeting.

5. HEALTH & SAFETY

Asst. H&S Officer(CS) informed that main issue is facility release time. Construction activity to increase within the Civic Centre – how is money being spent, detail to be shared, and personal safety to be looked at. Shieldfield – poor conditions, JC to consult with J Reed and report back.

6. JOINT BRANCH ASSESSMENT REVIEW

CVS secondment – advert to go out after Easter. Schools Support Officer(LA) in place and recruiting - JL-H delivered 2 pension presentations to schools.

PG meeting with National Officer this week re changes in pension scheme. Questions taken from the floor – need to relay information/changes to members, update in next Outlines.

7. NCC CHANGE PROGRAMME

TC informed not a great deal of activity at the moment – had short meeting with Change Team. Difficulty getting into DMTs and meeting the theme leads. Will update meeting accordingly.

8. PAY NJC 2014 UPDATE

Branch held pay meetings, emailed, hard copied and floor walked re consultative ballot, closing date 16 April 2014. Although bad timing with Easter holidays, encourage members to vote. PG to send a reminder email out with strong message to vote. Discussed that action should be required now for pay campaign 2015 (election year) think longer term, can union influence Shadow Cabinet, meet NCC on a regular basis, and various forms of action that may be taken. Results of consultative ballot will be released in 2 weeks' time.

9. LGPS 2014 UPDATE

Human Resources held 3 sessions to update employees – branch requested copy of presentation although it is available on intranet. Questions were taken from the floor re Rule 85, taking early retirement through redundancies etc. Any comments/queries should be directed to branch officers. Branch to send out info including website address of LGPS 2014 www.lgps.org.k and T&W Pension Fund www.twfpf.info

10. CONFERENCE 2014 UPDATE

Change of delegation required – I Syed to replace R Shiekh for LG & NDC - **AGREED**
Motion amendments to both conferences tabled - **AGREED**

11. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Apologies noted from WA – Branch Education Co-ordinator - future courses tabled.
JY informed of forthcoming regional workshops.
Funding has been secured until July 2014 for Community Organisers project.

12. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND CONFERENCES

Informal Cabinet meeting took place 17 March – discussed Leisure Staff transfer to North Country Leisure (NCL). Re-opening (in a different capacity) of certain libraries was celebrated – even though NCC closed them due to budget cuts! Should union arrange an informal meeting for elected members, who are trade unionists, to discuss such issues?

Regional Council AGM 2014 – Elected C Williams – Regional Convenor, N Ramanandi – Deputy Convenor and A Dickinson – Treasurer. Speakers included UNISON President, Maureen Le Marinel and Archibald Sibeko, a founding member of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, and the ANC. Branch to request him to speak at a future Branch Committee meeting. A strong branch delegation attended the meeting, congratulations to WA for receiving the ‘Kenny Bell Memorial Award’ for Involvement in Education.

13. DIRECTORATE REPORTS

Apologies for late report. PG explained individual Branch Officers have been tasked to oversee various topics i.e. campaigning, recruitment & communications, schools etc. and that an annual report will be compiled for next year’s Branch AGM.

- Industrial Relations Framework – how trade unions are to interact with NCC. Draft to be brought to branch committee (to include basic issues of facility time) when available.
- Financial Health Check Survey – through NCC and trade unions, please complete, completely anonymous. Support and help to benefit staff in future when results are known – via NCC and trade unions where possible (Welfare Officers, Debt Management, Credit Union etc)
- Publicity and Communications – ‘Outlines’ should be published more regular, stewards can submit articles – schedule deadline needed, communication through twitter accounts, social media, Facebook etc - to be co-ordinated by designated Branch Officer.
- WCL – Children’s Services - LH gave update on Sure Start campaign (petition, postcards and events). Email shop stewards with petition sheet. Decisions will be made at full council meeting in June.
- Adults – CMcA – Progressive update given.

14. BRANCH OFFICER REPORTS

AH – ‘Wellbeing at Work’ booklet by NCC distributed at meeting. Disability leave not mentioned – will chase up.

LA – Change to Schools report – reschedule of meeting.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None