

UNISON Newcastle City Branch

Branch Committee Minutes – 1st February 2016

PRESENT: L Ashbridge (LA), D Jeffries, A Hamilton (AH), P Barwick, N Bone (NB), E Whitby (EW), M Clark (MC), I Royal (IR), D Muse, J Yugire(JY), T Cook, M Dobson(MD), A Bowron, N Ramanandi, J Bird (JB)-Chair, P Gilroy (PG), T Carr, A Stewart(AS), C Mcguinness (CMcG), D Brown, N Oliver, J Horne

In Attendance: K Loughlin (KL)

APOLOGIES: P Staines, J Liepins-Hall, W Aitman, L Patterson, V Anson, L Hardie, S Hicks, J Nicholson, K Bensley, L Kennedy, A Carson, L McGurk, E Wilson, E Thorp, J Carden

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes for Confirmation

Branch Committee January – AGREED, no matters arising

Branch Education January – Noted

Health and Safety – no meeting

AH requested she raise issues now as she had to leave early.

- Disabled members can request a blue badge as a reasonable adjustment, if agreed they do not have to pay.
- Concerns over withdrawal of flexi system for some disabled staff who have been off sick.

PG, AH and CMcG reviewing sickness absence procedures and their impact on disabled members - will report back to future BC.

JB - Mentioned deadline for shop stewards and branch officer nominations.

3. Branch Membership

JB- Up only by one but up!

4. Financial Report

JB- As Treasurer busy with annual returns there was no financial report available.

PG- NCC have approval from the school's forum for approx. £17,000 towards release costs for Schools Organiser.

- Affiliations, Donations and Correspondence.
 - ACTSA - £40 affiliate **AGREED**
 - Municipal Journal - £140 Re-subscribe **AGREED**
 - Tyne Tunnel Charity Walk Request - £50 **AGREED**
 - AH - wanted her thanks added re Sponsoring 3 students in South Africa.
- Elections - only one nomination received by the branch in each category.
 - Claire Williams – Nominated; Nicky Ramanandi – Nominated; A Dickinson – Nominated
- **National Service Group Election**
 - Tina Roach – General – Nominated; Julie Winn – Female - Nominated
 - Shirley Scott – Reserve – Nominated

EW – Can the branch receive a report from these people? JB- Reports go to Service Groups but we can circulate.

5. Health and Safety

H&S meeting within next week.

NR – Agile working. Two very good meetings, problems discussed, lessons learnt, working now on floors 7 and 8 some H&S issues.

EW – WCL Agile working discussions needed before it affects worker group not when it actually does.

NR – We do have a list, not Children’s Services, every DMT will know when and where they are moving to.

EW – Council should make use of Intranet dispel rumours give timeframe etc.

NR – Work going on regarding digitising.

PG – Communicate with relevant parties asked Chief Executive.

AS - Fairer Housing. Now on 9th floor. Lack of communication until UNISON involved Floor is bright and modern, but is it fit for purpose? Need to keep communications open.

6. Workforce Development and Learning

JY – Bridges to Learning, Health and Social Care Conference on 23.02.2016.

Wednesday 04.02.2016 and Wednesday 11.02.2016 English and Maths Drop in sessions at Civic Centre begins 1:30 to 3:00 pm.

NR – Apprentices and Trainees - Lynda Hardie to share UNISON material with Apprentices, JY can help; located at Stratford House and Allendale Road.

7. Directorate Reports

PG – Staff who are downgraded under Care Services Review have been advised to reject the offer of a new contract as not being “a suitable alternative” if they wish to be made redundant. Still waiting for confirmation of whether the dementia care service provided through Byker Lodge will be ended.

RST – The Council have stated that the service will not now be closed, although there will be some job deletions, these will be on a voluntary basis.

NB - WCL Sickness reviews managers showing a lack of discretion, need a drive to deal with this.

PG – Agreed DJC/CCC minutes need to be shared.

NR – Informal cabinet - 5 years of cuts. We have consultation machine but not being used. Commitment on lack of detail. Message hitting home and echoed by GMB.

EW – Communication to members, process is unclear and uncertain. Things getting worse and we need to inform Labour councillors.

IR- Tyne Tunnel All quiet had meeting last week asked for wage rise between 2.5% and 5%

LA - Last meeting for School worker group cancelled poor attendance.

MC – Riverside Learning Trust. No consultation with staff, Head wants to stay away from multi academy trusts. Head will meet with unions.

MD – Relationship between YHN and Council re Household Revenue accounts. Can any jobs be ring fenced?

PG – Separate employers can’t really be done.

MD - HRA under council control being used to fund YHN. When it is an independent company not an independent company?

PG- Money in HRA is for tenants, my opinion is that it should go there for tenants benefit.

EW – There are specific jobs in YHN linked to NCC. Sort of Preferred Body Status for staff coming from YHN to NCC.

DM - 12 months ago there was an informal relationship I will check any duplication is not funded by council.

8. Branch Officer Reports.

Equalities - Nothing.

Black members – Nothing

Welfare – Written report

NB - Universal Credit rolled out in May big problems on way, need to get info to membership.

JY- Regional meeting last week, members are not accessing Welfare Fund or Branch Welfare.

Deadline for winter fuel grant 23.02.2016.

9. National and Regional Committees and Conferences

NR- Regional report - all councils in same position. Holocaust Memorial Day - Film on Immigration shown produced by Show racism the Red card.

8th to 14th Feb Week of Action TUC heart union's campaign, the Branch has activity lined up. Conference delegates nominations next Branch meeting.

Gayle Purvis and PG went on study visit to Auschwitz and Birkenau, report at next Branch Committee.

PG- General Update. Chris Dugdale distributing GMB direct debit forms to their members in Care At Home, for subs deduction in line with proposals in the Trade Union Bill. UNISON not doing so yet as the Branch is waiting for an instruction from the national office.

JB- Break. (4.40pm) stewards to consider ideas on recruitment.

Part 2. (5:00pm)

1. Recruitment.

EW- Smaller pool now staff left need mapping. Who is not a member? Bad experiences make them reconsider. Expand outside your own area. EW to produce poster.

20-30 new starters per year need access to them.

JB – Explode the subs myth we are not more expensive than GMB, UNITE.

NB – Not sure who members are, different jobs/people different appeal needed best on a 1-1 basis.

PG - I will ask management for the information.

AS - 9th floor agile working, three stewards good. Promotion material, local offers needed.

Target former members get them back in. I moved here from South Tyneside need to ensure transfer of membership when staff move from one council to another.

CM- Make yourself visible, promote training courses and There for You.

IR – Visibility a presence - badges.

2. Budget – covered.

3. General Update – covered.

4. Pay

KL – Consultative Ballot out with members, key to get members to respond.

AS - get across that a pay rise does not mean job cuts.

Part 3.

Any other Business

NB - Stress Survey?

PG - Problems with Branch credit card sorted now, so survey will be sent out.

NB – Industrial relations Framework?

PG - No Progress but pushing for it to be implemented.

JB - Timing of meetings. Same for next but keep looking at attendance possibly change in April – may get more people.

Date of Next Meeting –Monday 7th March 2016, 3pm, Committee Room, Newcastle Civic Centre.