

UNISON Newcastle City Branch

Branch Committee Minutes - 7th December 2015

PRESENT: T Cook, P Barwick, P Keenan, D Tree, M Harrison, A Hamilton, C Mcguinness, D Muse, J Yugire, W Aitman, A Carson, E Whitby, V Suddes, J Nicholson, L Ashbridge, N Oliver, L Jackson, J Imhoof, D Mead, J Horne, P Gilroy, L Hardie - Chair, N Ramanandi - Chair

APOLOGIES: P Staines, U Kaferawanthu, J Bird, N Bone, E Wilson, L McGurk, E Thorp, L Patterson, J Carden, J Kennett

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

As Josie, the Branch Chair was on jury duty, Nicky will chair first part of meeting and Lynda the second part.

2. **Minutes for Confirmation**

Minutes agreed no points of order.

Point raised regarding Font Size of PDF and order of papers requesting that the collected papers follow the agenda.

3. **Branch Membership**

Comment that leavers were in the most part, staff who had left the Authority and not unhappy with service that UNISON provide. All leavers contacted as a matter of course.

4. **Financial Report.** – Treasurer not present. This year budget on track to deliver what is required

Affiliations, Donations & Correspondence – received two messages of thanks after mailing. There for You and Young Members event.

1 late donation request – Joan Flood Xmas appeal for local refuge. Cash donation agreed at £500. Make payment from Branch Welfare Fund - **AGREED**

It was explained that the Welfare Committee had met recently and there is to be work on the 'rules' regarding the Branch Welfare Fund.

Also discussed possible changes to payments to Welfare Fund in light of the proposed Trade Union Bill. It may be necessary to request yearly payments of the contributions at £0.20p per month at the start of the year also noted that existing Direct Debit payers do not contribute to the fund.

Calais Delegation- it was agreed in Branch Committee a donation of £250 we will pay this agreed sum after the delegation report.

5. **Health & Safety**

Notes of last meeting included in papers and it was stated another meeting due to take place. Survey to reps sent out will give details of responses when collated for January Branch Committee.

6. **Workforce Development & Learning**

Report included in papers, book bins will be put in place in Civic and outside soon.

Preparing next year's course guide – some requests already received will try to deliver.

B2L –Information out to reps on B2L regarding what it's like to be trans. in workplace.

Workshop in Darlington to take place only open to reps.

Next year's workshops available on B2L website and can sign up there.

7. **Directorate Reports**

Communities & Investment and Development – Agile Working – all moved onto 9th floor.

Some difficulties regarding hot desking, reasonable adjustments. Shop Stewards integral to this. Lessons learned – noise impact on those staff on 8th floor. 2nd floor will be emptied and

used as necessary whilst work taking place. IT support critical to this working – feedback positive.

Resources & Chief Executives- Revs and Bens to be relocated to Higham House – to be picked up with management.

YHN- Biggest review and restructure since formation of YHN to take place.

Nothing further to add from other areas all details within reports.

8. **Branch Officer Reports**

Disabled Members- Angela and Cath both elected back onto National Disabled Members Committee.

9. **National & Regional Conferences**

Regional Conference at beginning of November – very well attended. Discussions regarding Trade Union Bill, and key threats. Impact of Devolution, Negotiating and Bargaining Agenda, Using key legal challenges as an organising tool.

Request for nomination from Edwin Jeffries for NEC - Committee **AGREED**

Nominations forms for Branch Officers and Shop Stewards included in paperwork sent out.

Part 2 – Specific Business 4.00 pm – 5.30 pm

1. **General Update**

- Flexi-PG gave update on HR's policies and procedures; HR had decided to change wording in flexi procedure that caused some confusion with managers. PG has spoken with HR and this issue has been rectified. There was a query regarding the introduction of the flexi system in areas with no clocks. PG to meet with worker group/steward to speak specifically about their issue
Action: PG advised all Shop Stewards to check the new wording to familiarise themselves with it.
- Sickness - PG trying to set up a meeting with HR to discuss letters that accompany a sickness warning. Sometimes the letter generated says a person 'will' have a sickness hearing if there is a continued absence, other times it states 'may'. We wish for the letter to state 'may' and for there to be a training process so that the message is clear.
Action: PG wants reports on how employers outside of NCC deal with this issue, e.g. Schools
- Equal Pay-the vast majority of people who were successful in their claim has been paid. There are only a few left and they are being resolved as quickly as possible. March is the last possible time to submit a claim.

2. Council Budget 2016 – Discussion-PG gave a short presentation on how UNISON membership in the Branch has been impacted by Council budget cuts. Although membership has decreased, largely due to staff reductions, our density of membership has gone up.

PG then went over the Council's Budget proposals. A significant number of job losses are not being shown and the committee was requested to check the IIA's covering their service. Branch Officers are trying to attend each budget briefing but short notice of some of these meetings has been an issue. Some cuts still aren't specific enough. Managers are asking people to express interest in VR then deciding where job cuts will be made.

PG spoke of possible campaigns dealing with the closure of Dementia Care Services at Byker Lodge and Recovery Support.

Schools – Future budgets situation unclear, but introduction of the National Living Wage will have an impact.

Communities – NR gave update; there is little detail being provided.

Customer Culture & Skills – Already lost 24% of staff; new proposals are dire. NR gave update on the reduction of hours the City Library and other libraries will be open in the future. There was also an update on Customer Services, Local Services and Highways and the proposal to have one universal job description across local services.

Investment & Development – no detail.

Leisure Staff – don't yet know decision on transferring staff. Theatre Royal will be taking over City Hall. There are several areas of concern. We have sought advice from Thompson's and seeking to meet. There was some discussion around union recognition.

LH gave update on Children's Services (WCL). Briefings started last week. Again, not much detail has been given.

CAMHS – Funding has been cut; hoping Health will pick up.

Fostering/Adoption – looking at a new way of working; a regional approach.

YOT & 16+ - Vacant posts haven't been recruited; staff have been asked for VR interest

Council is considering charging parents for places at Bedeburn Centre

Contact Services – Service to be reviewed. No detail or IIA yet. Staff have a number of ideas for savings.

Family Services – limited changes expected

Social Work Caseload – no statutory targets, further meetings have been organised.

Pay Justice – (not on Agenda) – KL gave update of new pay campaign. Consult with members on employer's final offer.

3. Branch Budget 2016-two budgets sent out. Small underspend this year. CVS - unlikely to extend secondment due to cost. However, alternative funding options are being considered.

Also, see Financial Report

Action – Draft Branch Budget 2016 agreed

4. Election of Shop Stewards – held over to a future meeting.

5. Branch Committee Format - held over to a future meeting.

Part 3 – Additional Business 5.30 pm – 6.00 pm

1. Any Other Business

January Branch Committee will be held at a different time to the usual arrangements.

Paul spoke on the loss of one of our activists, Rizwan Sheik, detailing Rizzi's contribution to the union and our members. He was one of a kind and will be greatly missed.