

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE USS – NATIONAL DISPUTES COMMITTEE

Held at UCU Head Office Carlow St. London

March 8 2019

ATTENDEES:

Elected Members:

Bruce Baker (Northern)

Andrew Chitty (South East)

Deepa Govindarajan Driver (South)

Jo Grady (Yorkshire and Humberside)

Susanne Hakenbeck (Eastern and Home Counties)

Gholam Khiabany (London)

Linda Moore (Northern Ireland) on the telephone,

Rebecca Richards (West Midlands)

Tim Wilson (Scotland)

Karen Evans

Standing Committees

Shalini Sharma (Black MSC)

Themesa Neckles (Disabled MSC)

Sam Morecroft (Anti-casualisation committee) –Attended only some segments due to attendance at another meeting

Dialling in part of the meeting SWG members Marion Hersh, Carlo Morelli and Sam Marsh

Apologies

Ryan Prout (LGBT + MSC)

Megan Povey (Women's)

Douglas Chalmers (President-elect)

Dennis Leech SWG guest

Observer:

Matt Waddup (National Head of Policy and Campaigns)

Officials

Paul Bridge (Head of Higher Education)

Christine Haswell (National Pensions Official)

Proceedings:

Chair welcomed new member Shalini Sharma

Minutes

Draft minutes circulated and agreed

Opening comments

Chair expressed solidarity on behalf of NDC to all women on International Women's Day

Chair will also send solidarity on behalf of NDC to UCU FE branches currently in dispute. In future, to allow quick transmission between meetings it was agreed that the Chair suggests a solidarity messages on behalf of the NDC and if members do not reply otherwise, then this will be taken as agreement.

Congratulations to Jo, Bruce, Deepa, and Carlo on election to NEC and national officer positions.

Matters arising

PB had extended open invitation to Trustee Board members to come to NDC for the March and April dates. Chair said she would like to try to stay two meetings in advance, so requested that PB check on them so that we can arrange dates.

The expansion of the NDC to include the pay, equality and casualisation dispute was discussed. It was confirmed by PB that as the ballot fell short of the 40% threshold HEC had decided that the dispute could no longer be prosecuted and the NDC would therefore not be expanded. DD suggested going go back to Oxford branch that proposed the motion establishing the NDC to consider putting a similar motion if they are anticipating a dispute on pay, equality and casualisation this year. PB confirmed that the terms of members elected to NDC continue until pension dispute is finished.

AC commented on recent emails sent to PB in regards to the ongoing tidying up of the NDC website. Some improvements had been made; others were to follow. A spreadsheet was requested of email list members. **Action** PB to resolve urgently.

The next meeting of the SWG and JNC were discussed. It was advised that SWG typically organises meetings up to 2 in advance as it needs some flexibility to respond to changing events. Next

meetings include an informal meeting with UUK on 14 March and 21 March, SWG meeting 21 March, and the next JNC meeting 3 April.

A discussion on the NDC chair observing the SWG took place. CM said this was discussed by SWG but not resolved one way or the other. CM mentioned that SWG could do with clearer guidance from NEC or HEC on its structure and role and decision-making process. It was requested that the SWG is approached and agreement sought to have the chairs of both committees added to each group's mailing lists, with an assumption that information may be shared with other members of the committee unless stipulated as confidential. **Action** for SWG observers and PB

Update on the template NDC motion circulated to branches: Sheffield had passed it, Glasgow had ruled it out of order, [Keele](#), Dundee and Sussex had passed it but were not quorate ~~and Keele~~ and Goldsmith would consider at branch meetings later in the month

In regards to the NDC co-chair, it was proposed that Bruce Baker should replace Douglas as co-chair as he is more available and is joining HEC immediately. This was seconded and the vote was unanimous in favour of the proposal. NDC expressed thanks to Douglas Chalmers.

The latest situation with TPS was discussed. The scheme has imposed employer increase of 7.2% up to 23%. Employers can't afford it and are making job cuts to pay for it. The NDC considered how best the NDC could help the campaign and build activism based on the USS experiences. Submitting motions through branches and region was considered.

A discussion took place on critical accountancy and the importance of UCU having a greater understanding of HEI finances. A motion for congress from Southern Regional Committee was discussed.

The NDC considered Mike Otsuka's latest blog on the TPR annual statement which says they don't evaluate prudence of valuations by measuring discount rates against gilts; this undermines a central plank of the argument about what is acceptable in the 2018 valuation document. NDC view is that the USS executive is acting in bad faith and misrepresenting TPR.

Action – the NDC to draft a note to branch pension officers on this matter

The NDC discussed the role of the trustee board in this context and the role of directors in regard to their rights and powers. CH gave an update on the Master Trust changes and the new skills and competency requirements and the impact this will have on the selection and appointment of UCU nominated directors. NDC expressed their grave concerns about this new legal requirement. Actions of Board of Trustees over last few years were discussed and criticised.

Action – the terms of office of all directors was requested for the next meeting.

The NDC discussed JEP phase 2 and the need to make submissions by 15 March

JG reported that following an informal meeting with Derek Benstead from FA, a proposal with a costing was made for a NDC SWG session with Derek.

Action – PB to liaise with SWG on a date and share with NDC.

The NDC discussed the open invitation to the UCU directors and also the trustee board to meet with the NDC.

Action – PB to follow up in writing with USS on the invitation he made to the board on 22 February.

NDC discussed the cartoon sent yesterday by Aisling which was welcomed by the NDC. Agreed to hold off on other cartoonists because of expense.

Action - to engage with Aisling and develop cartoons

There was a discussion about the idea of a national strike committee in a future dispute, with reps from every branch, and the relationship between this and what NDC does.

The NDC disused a pensions modeller based on an overpayment calculator. TW agreed to investigate further.

The NDC discussed developing a motion for congress and the CBC deadline for motions. It was agreed that an NDC motion would need to be adopted by a branch, as HEC was not meeting until 12 April, after the motions deadline.

The motion developed was:

2018 USS valuation

Congress notes:

- the multiple failings of the USS 2018 valuation consultation document
- the fact that USS has imposed large 'cost sharing' increases in contributions, in April 2019, October 2019 and April 2020, whose rationale has been extensively debunked.

Congress resolves:

- to call on USS to implement in full the JEP proposals for the 2018 valuation
- to reject any increase in member contributions, including 'trigger contributions', or reduction in benefits, arising from the 2018 valuation
- to call on USS employers to support the above two positions.

Dates of next meetings

Friday 5 April

Friday 17 May