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Next branch meeting:

12.00 noon – 2.00 p.m.

Tuesday 12th March 2013

Marketisation in the Public Sector: Health & Education

UCU Office. Labour Party Rooms

26b Clifton Hill, Exeter EX1 2DJ

A buffet lunch will be provided if you let us know a week in advance. ucu.swest@gmail.com

1. Inaugural Meeting.

In October UCU Head Office sent out information to South West retired members with the notice of the inaugural meeting at Exeter on 13.11.12; 11 of us came to the meeting. The minutes of that meeting are part of this mailing.

Geraldine Egan from Head Office guided us through the start-up procedure which required certain posts to be allocated; you can see who came and what we volunteered for. Proper elections next time!

Standing L-R: Michael Gorman, John Daniell, Pat Mee, Andy Gatehouse (treasurer), Andrew Payne (secretary), Helen Gorman (membership secy).

Email addresses please!

- * **Inform us changes to your email address**
- * **If you receive this newsletter by post, please inform us of your email address.**

We encourage retired members to use their home email when you give up your work email address. We hope to send out a quarterly newsletter by email but only an annual newsletter by post. This is to save money on post and the effort of stuffing over 300 envelopes.

**Please inform us of
change of address or email at
helengorman30@yahoo.co.uk**

Seated: Alan Cousins, Liza Sentence (vice-chair), Jo



Corke (chair), Tom Murray, Margaret George (regional delegate).

Andrew is looking into a website for our group. Tom offered to organise a speaker for our first meeting, 12th March 2013. We hope that the time and venue – Exeter at midday, will allow lots of us to attend – and we are assured of an excellent buffet lunch, for which we will need catering numbers by 5th March ucu.swest@gmail.com Tom offered to organise a speaker for the meeting. Geraldine told us that 45 of us had returned the Preference form indicating which issues we

believed should be prioritised and Helen Gorman, our membership secretary, now has these. In this newsletter you can several informative articles on some of the more popular priorities.

This newsletter is substantially that of the East Midlands group who unselfishly share their expertise with all the Retired Members Groups (RMB). Your contributions for the next newsletter welcome. Email them to ucu.swest@gmail.com

Jo Corke and Liza Sentence S. West

The National Pensioners Convention NPC

is currently running several campaigns which seek to address many of the issues in our priority list. <http://npcuk.org/> This is where you can join the campaigns or sign NPC petitions against the cut to winter fuel allowance, the call for dignity in care and the freeze on tax allowances.

Fair Care. The campaign will raise the arguments in favour of a National Care Service funded through general taxation, like the NHS. The campaign will also call for improved standards, better training and pay for care staff and the introduction of a Dignity Code to give rights to all older people in receipt of care.

Universal benefits. The campaign to defend universal pensioner benefits such as the bus pass and winter fuel allowance. NPC recognise the serious problem of fuel poverty in this country amongst older people faced with rising energy bills, believe that the excess winter death rate amongst pensioners is a national scandal and call on the government to reverse its callous decision to cut the winter fuel allowance, and instead increase the allowance to £500 for every pensioner household.

Fair Pensions For All The NPC is supporting a joint petition with the ATL, NUT, PCS and UCU trade unions which calls for decent state and occupational pensions for all.

National Pensioners Campaign

2. Public sector superannuation schemes-

- Teachers whose spouse belongs to other superannuation schemes such as NHS.

I came into teaching in 1962. In 1966 I was given the option of purchasing dependants pension from either 1966 (or by paying more start of service 1962) which (although single at that time) I did. Failure to do this would mean (I assumed) that a spouse would have benefits only from 1972 - widow in my case and widower in the case of a female teacher an equal arrangement.

I was indeed surprised when my late wife died suddenly and tragically to learn that the date of 1972 is 1988 under the NHC scheme but only applies to a widower. In the case of a male employee in the NHS his widow would receive half of his pension. This would appear to amount

to sex discrimination in the case of a widower. Ref. NHS Pensions Revised February 2006. Members at present in employment should be advised to study carefully the regulations where a spouse is also in public sector employment.

However members would also be interested to know about the present negotiations and the extent to which progress (if any) is being made to remove these apparent anomalies which when concluded should lead to the production of a broadsheet of information for general guidance pending the production of revised regulations for the various schemes.

John Daniell S. West.

3. Updating on pensions

Increase in RPI and CPI. In the year to September 2012 the RPI had risen by 2.6% and the CPI had risen by 2.2%. In the year to July 2012 total pay (including bonuses) had risen by 1.5% and regular pay (excluding bonuses) had risen 1.9%. Public sector pensions and the Second State Pension are to rise by 2.2% from April 2013. Under the Government's "triple lock" we can expect the basic state pension to rise by 2.5% from April 2013.

Fiddling the formula. The indexation of benefits and pensions is intended to at least moderate the impact of inflation upon their value. It is also a political hot potato.

This is indicated by the dizzying series of changes and their accompanying apologies and arcane statistical assertions. But these variations in indices reveal a common and easily understood thread: the reduction of the social wage.

There has been some kite flying about relating the indexation of benefits to the rise in average wages. Mr Cameron speculated: "It might be better to link benefits to prices unless wages have slowed – in which case they could be linked to wages. Benefits were linked to earnings until 1980, at which the point the Thatcher government changed the link to prices in order to save money And money was saved. In 1980, unemployment benefits were a fifth of average earnings; today they are a tenth." (Oxfam UK Poverty Post 9th November 2011). Such a change back to an average wage indexation is indeed highly speculative and would only be attempted if there were clear evidence that price inflation would be higher than wage rises over a

significant foreseeable period. And that would buck the clear trend since the Second World War. Perhaps the PM knows something that we do not, but in any case the reasons for such a putative indexation change are clear.

We are well aware of the implication for our occupational pensions of the change of indexation from [Retail Price Index \(RPI\)](#) to the lower [Consumer Price Index \(CPI\)](#). Pensions Minister Steve Webb argued that the [CPI](#) was more appropriate for pensioners which is a nonsense in that any of the specifically constructed pensioners' indices emerge with a far higher value even than the [RPI](#). The Government's own Office of Budget Responsibility has estimated CPI being 1.4% less than [RPI](#) on average over the next period. Smaller estimations still indicate a cut in public sector pensions of over 20%. Legal challenge to this change failed, but an appeal Judge did accept that the motivation for the change was to reduce the pensions being paid. However, a majority of private sector pensions, albeit sometimes small schemes, had RPI specifically inscribed as their mode of indexation. They could not be touched.

The hunt is now on to change the [RPI](#). The Office for National Statistics has launched a consultation on changes to the Retail Prices Index formulae, following an investigation by the statistical body's Consumer Prices Advisory Committee into the "formula effect gap". The consultation is likely to be watched closely by the pensions industry, as even a small change to the way [RPI](#) is measured is likely to have a significant impact on scheme funding.

There is now concern that the way [RPI](#) is calculated keeps it higher than [CPI](#). The national statistician Jill Matheson launched a consultation on 8th October with four reform options on the table. These range from keeping the formula effect in place, reducing its effect, removing it to a minimum, or removing it entirely. Any of the three latter options would bring [RPI](#) more in line with [CPI](#), meaning it would be lower. The consultation will close on 30 November, with any changes to be announced in January and come into effect in March 2013.

For most pension schemes the decrease in their inflation-linked liabilities would far exceed the decrease in their assets. If [RPI](#) were to converge with [CPI](#) it could reduce pension liabilities by up to £80bn. One pension fund executive

(Professional Pensions 27th September 2012) summed up the likely changes: "For the members it's bad news because if you drop [RPI](#) and your pension is linked to [RPI](#) you're going to get less money and the things you want to spend your money on food and electricity and all that kind of stuff are not affected by this change. So you could say that if the change goes through it will be bad for the pensioners but it will be quite good for the pension funds and their financial health." This will not come as a total surprise to UCU members.

[Julian Atkinson \(East Midlands\)](#)

4. Next attack on pensions?

A major piece of work from the prestigious [Centre of Policy Studies \(CPS\)](#) backs up our worst calculations: the impact of the coalition changes to public sector pensions is to reduce them by more than a third. Those unions who have recommended the deals are awkwardly placed.

The CPS report by research fellow Michael Johnson found the funding shortfall for schemes is projected to reach £15.4bn by 2016-17. Public sector pensions need further reform before 2020 to avoid an annual £32bn liability for UK taxpayers. When added to the £17.2bn employers' contribution this amounts to an annual taxpayer liability of more than £32bn - or £1,230 for every UK household. By this point, £4 of every £5 paid to pension members will be funded by the public purse.

Johnson argued further significant reforms are needed before 2020 as those included in the Public Sector Pensions Bill will not produce significant savings for between 20 and 30 years. He called on the coalition government to publish its modelling assumptions for the reduction of liability of public sector pensions, as well as moving to a cash-balance structure in preparation for a fully defined contribution framework.

CPS director Tim Knox said: "Why should future generations pick up the bill for the pensions of public sector workers, people who on average are likely to be far better off in their retirement than their wealth-creating private sector peers?"

Public sector unions and government representatives have rejected the proposals made in the report, with the TUC dismissing it as "scaremongering". A TUC spokesman said: "This is yet more meaningless scaremongering from a right-wing think-tank committed to slashing the

pensions of dinner ladies and nurses whatever the evidence. "Studies from independent experts like the Office for Budget Responsibility show that the cost of public sector pensions is set to fall as a share of GDP in the coming decades."

A spokesman for HM Treasury said government reforms would almost halve public service pensions' cost, saving £430bn and delivering long-term sustainability. He added: "Fairness is also at the centre of our reforms, for instance increased member contributions will save around £3bn a year by 2015. At the same time we have been able to protect the accrued rights of those who have dedicated their careers to public service."

The Public Sector Pensions Bill passed its second reading in the Commons and will be debated by the Public Bill Committee from Tuesday 6 November.

from Centre of Policy Studies (Nov 2012)

5. TUC rally: Saturday 20th October

East Midlands branch banner had a high profile on the TUC-organised march and rally in London that took place on 20th October and members who were there took away very positive views of the event. The TUC estimated some 250,000 people attended from all ages and sections of civil society alongside the trade unions.

The banner was carried amongst the other UCU contingents from FE & HE branches across the country. This section stretched for at least 100m in the march and was made very visible by the balloons which Head Office had provided. Not only could we see people interested in our presence and taking photographs, there was the added encouragement of discussing the role of retired members' branches with several university and college older UCU members who were interested in how they could participate.

We began the march from the Embankment at around 1200 but it was after 3pm before we reached the crowds in Hyde Park. We therefore missed some of the leading speeches, but on the way were heartened by the range of organisations that had come behind the united demands for a different, credible way of tackling the economic crisis – one which puts our health & welfare services, pensions, education, housing and employment at the heart of the recovery.

All who joined the march and rally came away heartened by the potential breadth of support for a better way of doing things, but in no doubt that this needs much more work in the way of active work and campaigning nearer home. It is perhaps not for us as retired trade unionists to ask others to join the call for a general strike, as was a common theme of the day, but

we should continue to ask ourselves in our branch, "what is to be done".

With the exception of the Daily Mirror and the Morning Star, the silence in the media was deafening - that's what happens when it's peaceful and there are no battles with cops or shops being bashed in. Even the Guardian and Observer declined to report at all. After all, what's the news in 250, 000+ in London and more in Glasgow and Belfast calling for a change to government policies of making the working class pay for the crisis in capitalism?



UCU General Secretary Sally Hunt and Barry Donlan

Mirror report –very good with lots of nice photos.
<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/a-future-that-works-march-this-was-the-march-of-the-people-1391718>

Angus McLardy East Midlands.

6. Pensioners should do free work!

You may have missed this gem in the media. It shows just how out of touch many government figures are.

The former head of the benefits agency provoked uproar by suggesting the retired should be encouraged to undertake community service – or have their pensions docked. Lord Bichard said older people had to make “a more positive contribution” to reduce the burden they place on the state. He made the comments during a session of committee investigating the impact on public services of an ageing population. Lord Bichard, 65, asked fellow members: “Are there ways in which we could use incentives to encourage older people, if not to be in full time work, to be making a contribution?” He argued that the pension system should incentivise recipients to do more to help look after the “very old”. He said: “It is quite possible, for example, to envisage a world where civil society is making a greater contribution to the care of the very old. And older people who are not very old could be making a useful contribution to civil society in that respect, if they were given some incentive or some recognition for doing so.”

Lord Bichard retired from the civil service in 2001 (54 years old), when he stepped down as the Permanent

Secretary of the Education Department. A study four years ago concluded the average retirement income of former permanent secretaries was around £100,000 a year. He also gets £300 a day for sitting in the House of Lords – **hypocrisy** comes to mind. He has not offered to do free charity work himself!

Russ Bowman (East Midlands)

So, Lord Bichard thinks it would be a good idea if we were to earn our keep in future or have our pensions “docked”. It appears that this is to be based on age, the “old” to look after the “very old”. Have I missed something here? How many retirees look after elderly relatives already without any government incentives, saving the Chancellor millions of pounds in care costs? Not to mention childcare costs when we look after grandchildren in order that their parents can work and contribute to the economy. Are we, in future, to pay for doing so by having our pensions cut?

Haven't we already earned our keep, paid our dues and contributed to society when we were working? To do voluntary work is of our choosing and judging by the charitable organisations and the Olympic Games Makers we're doing “community service”. Will we have to register the work we do with some new, government department and how will it be calculated in monetary terms? And how are the “old” and the “very old” to be defined: purely on age or will it cover physical and mental ability?

Not only will future generations have to work longer before retirement, but under this madcap scheme they will then have to continue to work in order to receive their pensions. We are used to bully boy tactics, and taking from the most vulnerable in society appears to be this government's mantra, but it doesn't mean that we have to accept them. Lord Bichard thinks it could be a difficult idea to sell to the public but in his words “so were tuition fees” and we know what their introduction led to.

Liza Sentance S. West

7. Age Discrimination Regulations

On the 1st Oct 2012 protection from harmful discrimination on the basis of age was extended from employment and training to cover services. There will be exceptions allowed.

Useful exceptions include the following:

* **Concessions:** The regulations allow any service provider in the public or private sector to use age as a criterion to determine the eligibility for

concessions or benefits. This applies where the purpose of the concession is to benefit a specific age group such as a discount for over 65s. This also applies to age based concessions in private clubs or associations.

- * **Age specialist holidays:** An exception allows specialist holiday providers to continue to provide holidays for people in particular age groups, provided that the eligible age range for the holiday is clearly stated in the promotional material. Age 'challenges' or verification: applies to shops when selling age restricted goods (e.g. alcohol)
- * **Residential park homes:** applies to owners of sites where static caravans and the like are used as permanent places of residence. The exception covers the arrangements for deciding who should become a resident.
- * **Sport:** This exception allows continued use of age limits and age bands which are necessary for fair competition, the safety of competitors or to comply with rules.

Positive action for an age band (young or old) will be allowed to prevent or compensate for disadvantages experienced by an age group or meets special needs. It will also be legally justified to treat age groups differently if this can be “objectively justified” i.e. is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. This will qualify both direct and indirect discrimination, but **not** harassment or victimisation.

The **unjustified** exception is the financial services industry. This shows the influence of this sector. Despite massive evidence to the contrary, the Government chooses not to believe that there is significant discrimination in this area. Financial service providers will be given wide exceptions to discriminate on the basis of age. The industry has given, in return, a “concession”: insurance providers will put in place a **voluntary** signposting scheme. When a provider refuses to give insurance cover it will refer the failed person to another provider who **might** be able to offer coverage. The generosity is humbling. However, according to the Mystery shopping survey conducted by GfK Mystery Shopping on behalf of Age UK, 21% of people aged 80 or above are not given phone or online quotes for motor insurance because of their age. A further 85% of those are not directed on.

We also have to remember that, like much comprehensive legislation, there can be problems as well as gains. For example, the coverage of

employment by Age Discrimination Law produced problems for the unions in that automatic progression up extended salary scales (over eight points) was found to be unlawful since it discriminated against younger people. Sadly this along with Sex Discrimination Legislation gave an excuse for bad employers to move away from scales towards spot point salaries.

Some advances have been made but we need to keep up the pressure.

Julian Atkinson (East Midlands)

8. Dignity Code for Older People

There have been a number of shocking scandals recently relating to the treatment of older people, in residential care homes, in hospitals and in their own homes. Each of us will have our own experiences in this area. These experiences may relate to a relative or a friend or to ourselves. At some time in all our futures we may find ourselves increasingly less able to care for ourselves or to properly conduct our own affairs independently.

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) is aware of this and has produced a **Dignity Code** which identifies practices and actions that are unacceptable to older people AND sets out standards of behaviour, care and support which every older person should be entitled to receive.

For the full Dignity code look at the NPC website at: <http://npcuk.org/publications>. Look under 'Publications' and 'Health and Social Care'

Ann Donlan (East Midlands)

9. Women: activists united

UCU National Women Member's Conference 2012: *"Getting our activism together"*

It was at this Conference that I met Rowena and Lucretia from East Midlands RM; I was the only retired member listed from the S.West. Rowena encouraged me to attend the inaugural SW branch meeting and here I am, pleased to be chair of the new S. West RMB. Rowena and Lucretia have written this report and I cannot better it.

Jo Corke S.West

This year two members from our branch, attended the conference where the agenda included keynote speakers, workshops, the election of standing committee members and debates on motions. The chair was Pauline Collins (OU and Chair of the

Women's' Standing Committee) and we were welcomed by Kathy Taylor (President of UCU).

Her thoughts on being president as a woman, reminded us of where we come from and how much progress has been made towards equality of opportunity for women. She warned us not to be complacent *"...as we all know, we have a long way to go"* including the need to convince younger women they should challenge unfairness and injustice. Women are currently being attacked disproportionately with unions being at the forefront of the fight. *"Sisters, the price of progress is being vigilant"* she concluded.

Keynote speaker Cath Elliot, writes in the Guardian and is a stalwart UNISON activist in her area. She declared herself an unapologetic feminist, asserted that the face of trade unionism is no longer male (e.g. NUJ and UNISON) and stressed that women have to be seen in powerful roles to know that *'you too can do it'*. She talked about the need for proportionality, for the number of women representatives to be related to the number of women members and the value of "self organised" groups participating in specialist training such as Women's History, assertiveness and women's groups etc. She suggested that UNISON is now officially a feminist union taking a feminist perspective in all activities.

We were both also very impressed by the second contributor, Clara Osagiede, a very strong woman who modestly and quietly explained the background of her life. This was a moving, salutary and brave story leading from her childhood struggles to gain access to equal secondary and university educational opportunities with boys, to her involvement in 'radical' student political movements in Nigeria where she was born. Her disappointment in moving to England (for safety) and finding the situation for migrants so difficult, was a huge shock with the only work available being very poorly paid. She is a cleaner on the London Underground, but a fierce activist who spoke of the great hardships faced by her fellow workers and the need to motivate them to take action. She reminded us that they are an unseen and largely unacknowledged workforce but with great determination, she has managed to mobilise them and make some gains in recognition and improved working conditions.

She elicited a powerful reminder that not only do women still lag behind men in terms of gender

equality in the workplace, but that immigrant women workers are likely to find themselves a most exploited group of the working class. That she had fought for gender equality from an early age in Nigeria, gaining professional qualifications in a male-dominated culture is highly commendable. As Lucretia says, we and all the delegates, at the conference, must be proud to be in the company of a woman who had clearly fought her own corner and that of fellow women workers by becoming active in her union, in a 'strange' land.

At the workshop on "Practical Activism", I found the focus was mainly on how to get things done within the union or an organisation, to bring women's issues to the surface. The workshop Lucretia attended was entitled 'Journeys to activism'. Two UCU women members related how they had become active in their union branches. As a retired member, with a long personal journey, she was interested to learn of the journeys of fellow women UCU members. The first activist's journey, which took place in Northern Ireland, discussed at length how she had decided to fight alongside her union colleagues at her college, the bullying managers who were inflicting a climate of anxiety and intimidation there. This interesting journey was started by a union member who had no previous history of taking on management, or indeed challenging bullying in the workplace. It was an intriguing story of the development of personal and group confidence through facing up to disciplinaries and various forms of intimidation and eventually achieving cultural changes at the college which improved the working terms and conditions of all the teaching staff.

The second activist's journey targeted racism in her workplace. Again, at first this was a union member with little experience of activism, but by sticking to her guns courageously and with the support of her union branch, she was able to demonstrate clearly to management that discrimination was indeed taking place and to eventually identify ways of combating this and gaining promotion which had previously been denied.

A third visiting speaker, Janet Newsham is a project worker doing research into gender inequalities both in the union and the workplace. She is based in HE/FE in the NW region and presented an interesting report concluding that "*women continue to be disadvantaged and*

underrepresented in positions of power, in terms of job security, in terms of training and promotion opportunities, academic or skill recognition and remuneration". A fringe meeting was held at UCU 2012 Congress, where these themes were raised.

We enjoyed hearing the positive views and concerns expressed and meeting the interesting women who attended, but as we and others wondered and asked, what happens to these motions that have been passed so enthusiastically? Progress through several other committees before possibly being incorporated into more general motions for a full UCU Conference, is not very clear or easy to follow and neither is any resulting action. More transparency is needed to enable us to track the issues raised, on the UCU website, through agendas and minutes of relevant meetings and at the very least through clear feedback at the next conference.

We were both able to network usefully with members from other areas and again as she says 'the conference inspired me as a retired member; it reminded me that there is a lot of work for us to do together, being active and supporting activists in and out of the work place.'

Rowena Dawson (Women's Officer) and Lucretia Packham (East Midlands)

10. Pension updates:

TPS In early 2012, the government imposed new, detrimental arrangements on members of the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS). As part of the package of public sector pension scheme reform, the government is now consulting on an increase in contributions next year. This represents the second of the three year increases imposed by the government on all public sector pension schemes with the aim of increasing the overall contribution made by members.

What this will mean for TPS members still working

Following limited consultation (which close on 21st Dec) with the trade unions the Department for Education (DfE) is proposing the following revised arrangements for 2013:

- * Staff earning under £26,000 or full time equivalent will pay no more than currently.
- * Staff earning £26,000 but under £32000 will pay 0.6% extra a month

- * Staff earning £32000 but under £45000 will pay 1.2% extra a month
- * Staff earning more than £45,000 will pay between 2.1% and 2.4% extra per month

For an up to date briefing on TPS see the UCU website at: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/tps-underattack>

USS: A national meeting of branch delegates is due for 5th Dec in order to decide on the way forward.

11. UCU S.West Retired Members Branch

The branch has just started, the start-up group is enthusiastic and hope you will join us. There are 348 members in the South West. The aims are diverse, but include bringing together retired members of UCU in the South West, giving advice to branches on pension and retired members' matters, campaigning on issues relating to retired members and representation to the UCU national congress, National Pensioners Convention, Local TUCs. If you previously worked outside the South West, but now live in our region please join our branch.

Meetings: We aim to hold meetings three times a year, in places of interest to make part of a day and lunch out. The meetings centre round important issues for UCU and give a chance to chat to other retired members.

Newsletter: This newsletter was prepared by the East Midlands RMB, but they generously allow other branches to use their material which we have done. UCU Main office has sent this edition to all retired branch members in SW for whom we have addresses. Because of the cost of postage, members will be generally be contacted by email.

Email addresses: We encourage retired members to use their home email for when you give up your work email address. **Please let us have your email address.**

**For more information
please contact ucu.swest@gmail.com
or contact the officers here:**

South West Branch officers and committee

Chair: Jo Corke jo.corke@blueyonder.co.uk
 Vice Chair: Liza Sentance, lizasentance@hotmail.com
 Secretary: Andrew Payne, apaynedevo@gmail.com
 Treasurer: Andy Gatehouse, AndyGatehouse@hotmail.com
 Membership: Helen Gorman, helengorman30@yahoo.co.uk
 Regional Delegate: Margaret George, margaretg@gmail.com

Thanks to the East Midlands Newsletter: Russ Bowman
dorothy.russ.bowman@ntlworld.com

12. Minutes of the South West Retired Members Branch Meeting on 13.11.12.

1. Present Michael Gorman, Helen Gorman, Andrew Payne, Pat Mee, Andy Gatehouse, Alan Cousins, Liza Sentance, Jo Corke, Tom Murray, Margaret George, John Daniell and Geraldine Egan. Apologies were noted.
2. The following officers were elected:

Chair	Jo Corke
Vice-Chair	Liza Sentance
Treasurer	Andy Gatehouse
Secretary	Andrew Payne
Membership secretary	Helen Gorman
Regional Delegate	Margaret George
3. It was agreed to establish an account with unity bank and that the signature holders would be Andrew Gatehouse and Tom Murray, and that one could sign.
4. It was agreed that Andrew Payne would act as communication officer and undertake to establish a website for the branch.
5. Jo Corke and Liza Sentance would draft a short explanation of the branch intentions and circulate to the group for amendment etc.
6. It was agreed to write a page on the new branch and included the photograph and asking for email addresses as well as attaching a East Midlands newsletter, to be circulated to all branch members.
7. The meeting noted that at present there were 348 members of whom 65 had email addresses. There were 43 retired members in other branches 5 in Exeter University, 1 South Glamorgan, 14 Plymouth University, 1 SCAT, 1 Strode, 18 West of England and 1 in Weston College. It was agreed to check if these members wished to join SWRMB.

8. It was noted that within the region Wiltshire and Dorset FE was with SW region and HE was with Southern Region. It was agreed to let retired members in these areas to decide on which retired member branch to join.
9. It was noted that UCU elected 4 representatives to the National Pensioners' Convention, one was the Vice President and served on the executive Norman Jemison and the others on the council, Phil Burgess, Pat Roche, Paul Russell. It was noted that UCU representative on the national TUC Pensioners Committee was Norman Jemison.
10. It was noted that UCU supported the campaigns of the National Pensioners' Convention and TUC and encouraged regional branches to join their regional NPC, and Regional TUC and serve on their pensioners committee. The branch could also send delegates to local Trades Council. Many RMB used these routes to ensure they were abreast of regional and local activities.
11. It was noted that retired member branches needed to develop ways of communicating with members differently that at workplace branches and therefore newsletters and use of websites and emails were important. To reduce the isolation that can face members in retirement particularly were they are caring for others, a visit would be very welcomed. It was agreed to consider this further.
12. It was noted that the branch would wish to support other regional branches engaged in action and would wish to send messages of support and if possible visit the picket lines.
13. It was noted that 45 members had indicated which issues they believed should be prioritised.

Memory land	
NHS changes	
Residential care (elderly) act as a political pressure group	
Anomalies between public sector schemes eg widowers	
Insurance facilities	

14. It was agreed to circulate the email addresses to each other
15. It was agreed to send Margaret George to the next Regional Meeting
16. It was decided to hold an 'Open Meeting here on Tuesday 12th March 2013 at 12o'clock and to arrange a lunch on 'Marketisation of Public Services' focusing on health and education, it was agreed to seek an outside speaker possibly from UNISON, Tom Murray agreed to do this. It was agreed to ask for questions in advance. At the end of the meeting to briefly talk about the RMB and invite everyone to a business meeting following.
17. It was noted that the RMB could send one delegate to Congress and an observer with its present membership.
18. There were discussion about contacting ex-members who had not remain members as this branch had not been an option, and that returning members would be referred to Geraldine Egan at pensions@ucu.org.uk to sort membership out.

More information

A lot more information and news can be obtained from these websites. We recommend that you have a browse.

UCU National Website: <http://www.ucu.org.uk>
Keeping you informed <http://www.ucu.org.uk/henews>

Retired members' area on the UCU website:
<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5436>

UCU South West Region websites:
<http://southwestregion.web.ucu.org.uk/>
<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3366> .

AgeUK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

68 is too late: www.68istoolate.org.uk

National Pensioners Convention: <http://npcuk.org>

Issues	Priorities
Increases to state pension	51%
Free transport	35%
Health care	55%
Accomodation needs	15%
Access to educational facilities and courses	28%
Disabled access	24%
Support services such as home helps etc.	31%
Reduction in TV license	13%
Cost of fuel	35%
Other issues	
Marketisation of higher education	
Education & national training in social care for elderly	
Focus on issues affecting retired members	
Talks (local history)	
walks	
Sports events	