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1. Next branch meeting:

12.00 noon – 2.00 p.m.
Tuesday June 11th 2013

National Pensioners Convention – a presentation from local SW branches.

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

At the June meeting we will be discussing the format of our branch meetings. In addition to union business we will consider possible events the Branch could organise, maybe in different localities. Let us know if you have any ideas.

SW RMB committee

2. UCU Congress May 2013 at Brighton.

I will be in Brighton as our branch delegate and I am looking forward to it. Although I have been a union member all my working life, both in and out of education, and on the UWE Bristol exec and SW Region, this will be my first UCU Congress. Whilst working, I was always on a field trip at the

Email addresses please!

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**

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

Spring Bank holiday; now retired, I can do field trips anytime.

Financial problems have not by-passed UCU and falling staff numbers have resulted in falling membership. As well as attending the sessions with motions put forward by RM branches, item 12, I will be taking part in the discussions on the future of the UCU; item 5, a letter from Kathy Taylor, refers to the 7 models being suggested for the future.

There will be sector meetings of RM delegates to discuss what the union can do for us, and what we can do for the union (JFK'ish). **I will report on this and other issues arising at our June 11th meeting.**

If you have any comments that you would like to me take to Brighton, please send them to:
ucu.swest@gmail.com

3. Minutes of the South West Retired Members' Branch Meeting on 12.3.13

1. Present: Liza Sentance, Helen Gorman, Mike Gorman, John Daniell, Pat Mee, Margaret George and Ruth Amias.

2. Apologies: Alan Cousins, Jo Corke, (received late: Tom Murray).

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 Nov 2012: these were accepted, with corrections to typos on page 2.

4. Matters arising:

2. Andrew Payne had had to withdraw from being secretary. Pat Mee agreed to take on this task. Andrew had been going to set up a website for the Branch, but it was decided to leave this to a later date as members can always access the details of the Branch via HQ. Helen Gorman described the problems she was having contacting members from the list given by Geraldine Egan, and establishing an email list. Ruth Amias agreed to help Helen with this, and Liza Sentance agreed to discuss with Geraldine what steps we should take to contact potential new members. Members were recommended to log in to the UCU website to get updates on campaigns.

9. It was noted that the National Pensioners' Convention has a good website and is very active.

16. It had been planned that this current meeting would have a speaker on the Marketisation of Public Services, but in the event no-one could be found who would be available. It was agreed to have a discussion on this amongst those present, at the end of the business part of the meeting.

5. Regional Report: Margaret George had attended the UCU Regional meeting on 9 Feb 2013. This was Nova Gresham's last meeting as RO. Topics at the meeting included the financial situation in UCU which will need to be met by reduced expenditure and a push on membership. Measures to be taken will be decided by Congress. Nova had reported a good outcome at Exeter University which had threatened to use local bargaining but after local ballots rejecting this the university has agreed to return to the JNCHES national agreements with proper bargaining structures in place. In FE several colleges have restructuring and the threat of (or actual) redundancies.

The next Regional meeting is the AGM on 27 April. As Margaret will be unable to attend, Ruth Amias agreed to go to represent the Branch.

6. Delegate to Congress: we are entitled to one delegate. It was agreed that Jo Corke would be the delegate, with John Daniell as reserve.

7. Motions to Congress: it was agreed not to submit a motion ourselves. We discussed motions from Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands, London, and Eastern and Home Counties. It was felt that the Y and H motion would be improved by the insertion of 'outside Scotland' in the second line after 'UCU Members'. Those present were broadly in favour of all the motions, but realised that they may be changed or composited before appearing on the agenda. It was agreed to ask Jo if she can emphasise the point made in the East Midlands' motion on 'Defending our Pensions' that retrospective changes made to schemes after members have signed up to them are particularly objectionable.

8. Next Branch Meeting: this was fixed for Tuesday 11th June. It was agreed that we would put on the agenda an item to discuss possible events the Branch could organise, maybe in different localities.

The meeting was followed by a discussion on Marketisation of Public Services.

Margaret George and Liza Sentance

4. Membership matters

As a retired members' branch we can consider all union matters, but hope to bring a particular expertise to bear on subjects such as pensions and other age related issues.

We plan to hold meetings up to 3 times a year. We hope that the branch will bring together retired members who still wish to keep in touch with the union and each other.

You will have seen from the emails coming from HO that **increasing UCU membership** nationally is important. We have been asked to contact all our local institutions to ask them to ensure that retiring members are encouraged to remain in the union and join one of the retired members' branches – preferably ours! If you know someone who is

retiring, please send them this newsletter. We have adapted a flyer, given to us by Southern rmb, which is can be found under South West on the ucu national website

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/retiredmemberbranches>

Jo Corke and Helen Gorman S. West
based on the article by Greg Cejer, East Midlands.

5. To all UCU members from Kathy Taylor, UCU President.

UCU's annual Congress will be held in Brighton this year, between 29-31 May. Congress is our sovereign democratic body and it's here that our policies for the coming year are agreed.

Our democracy is important to us, but we know that it can be difficult to find time to read all the documents we produce or to know what the big issues are. That's why the National Executive Committee (NEC) has produced a special Congress bulletin, identifying those motions that they consider to be dealing with critical issues for the union.

Please have a look at this bulletin. The NEC is advising all our branches and local associations to hold meetings to consult members about these key issues, so please try to attend these if possible.

UCU is your union. The more members who participate in our democratic life, the stronger we will be. You can read the bulletin here:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/congress2013>

6. Want a job? UCU are looking for a USS Pensioner Director.

UCU appoints three directors to serve on USS Board of Trustees. One of the four year appointments falls vacant in September 2013. It is the pensioner director and the individual needs to be in receipt of USS pension.

Any USS member interested in being considered for this appointment should contact: phone 0121 634 7387 or email pensions@ucu.org.uk

Closing date for applications is 24th May 2013 at noon.

7. News from the UCU Equality Unit

In the report from the UCU Women Members' Conference in November, I commented that it is not easy to see what happens to the motions enthusiastically supported by the conference. However, exploring the UCU website, I found the Equality Unit Newsletter November Edition. While not answering my specific points, this contains information on various issues of concern and interest:

Government Plans to Repeal the Equality Act 2012

highlight some serious issues such as abolishing the extended power of employment tribunals to put pressure on employers found guilty of unlawful discrimination to reform their practices. They also propose making cuts to the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This is an important, independent body responsible for enforcing equality legislation and compliance with the Human Rights Act. These and other changes are contained in the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill which is currently passing through the Commons, the Lords and committee stages.

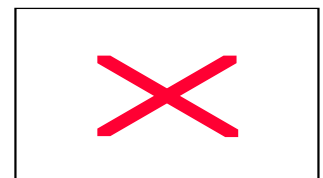
<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2012-13/enterpriseandregulatoryreform.html>

The issue of **Sustainable Working Lives** comes from a motion passed at UCU Congress 2012 and involves the setting up of a UCU working group to look at social sustainability in work. This is felt to be particularly important after the removal of the default retirement age and should help thinking around less traditional working patterns, including access for all to benefits such as flexible working. As for many women, my personal experience was in sometimes working part-time including after official retirement age which was personally and financially beneficial. Equality Reps are being sought to participate in this group and as I felt retired members would have experience to contribute, with the support of the committee I have therefore put my name forward. Watch this space for further news.

The Stephen Lawrence Fund:

The TUC is calling on trade unions and trade unionists to help protect the legacy of Stephen Lawrence in raising the awareness of the wider community about institutional racism and racial injustice in the UK.

Their work is threatened by the lack of funds for voluntary organisations that has resulted from public



spending cuts and the recession. The trust supports young people and aims to combat social injustice, by promoting equality of opportunity, and surely must not be allowed to fail for lack of funding.

Rowena Dawson, Woman's officer East Midlands.

8. A Decent State Pension for All Generations.

A report from the National Pensioners Convention Pensions and Income working party.

This report is attached to this email.

In the South West there are three local NPC groups. We will have a presentation from them on June 11th.

They would welcome our affiliation so if you can't get to the meeting but would like to represent us, please email ucu.swest@gmail.com and we will arrange it. The **Bristol** Branch has a flyer which is also attached to this email.

9. The Crisis in Care of the Elderly

Care of the elderly is in crisis. There is inadequate funding and proper levels of support and care are not being given. One in ten people, at age 65, face future care costs (not including the "hotel" costs) of more than £100,000 (Dilnot Report).

Government policy has put increasing pressure on Council funding and is encouraging the transfer of care provision to the private sector. The problem here is that the public sector care, inadequate though it is, is better than in the private sector. Public sector care staff are better paid and, not surprisingly, stay for longer and are better qualified. The example of Southern Cross shows that a private equity firm, regardless of that sector's undoubted expertise in asset stripping, may - to the amazement of Ministers - not be capable of providing long term care for the elderly. The overseeing of the whole sector by the **Care Quality Commission**, CQC - www.cqc.org.uk/ has been abysmal. The CQC is a guard dog that, when not asleep, merely licks any intruding malefactor. The recent Francis Report gives little hope that regulation will be substantially improved.

There are clear trends which ensure that more resources will be needed for elder care. The number of older people with moderate or severe disabilities is projected to increase by 32%, and public expenditure on social care and continuing health care for older people to rise to £12.7 billion

in real terms by 2022. (Nuffield Trust "Care for Elder People" Dec 2012).

Spend on older people's care stagnated and then decreased between 2005-06 and 2011-12. Yet the number of people aged over 85, the age group who are most likely to need care, has increased by over 250,000 since 2004-05. As a result each year unmet need has increased as people are excluded from accessing services or see their care packages reduced. Councils have cut back on their service provision.

In 2009-10 the total hours of support purchased by local authorities for older people fell from 2 million to 1.85 million. Today of 2 million older people in England with care-related needs nearly 800,000 receive no support from public or private sector agencies. (Age UK "Care in Crisis" 2012).

As a response to this huge problem, the **Dilnot Commission** was set up. Its analysis was often penetrating but its conclusions were modest. A cap on social care costs of £35,000 was proposed and the upper threshold within the residential care means test should be raised to £100,000.

These disappointing proposals were underpinned by a financial model of private insurance. The insurance industry was reluctant to become fully involved in the process of insuring the costs of elder care. The variations in cost were too great. The cap proposed by Dilnot was to entice the financial industry to play a greater role.

The Government response was to shrink modest proposals to virtual invisibility. The means test threshold did go to £118,000 and "hotel" costs capped at £12,000 pa, but the cap on care costs was more than doubled and, after some minute tinkering in the budget, is now £73,000. An analysis by Demos, a think tank, found that a £35,000 cap would have benefited about 3.2 million pensioners. The £75,000 cap (as originally envisaged), would benefit only about 1.4 million. The average single person requiring care has a house worth £160,000 so would not benefit from the means-tested assistance. Claudia Wood, of Demos, concluded: "For the Coalition to consider putting the cap at £75,000 is unambitious, miserly, and will do little to solve one of the most vital social problems facing our generation."

The Minister Jeremy Hunt told the BBC that he hoped insurance providers would offer schemes to allow the elderly to protect themselves against some of the most catastrophic costs. But this has been met with scepticism from the financial industry. Hargreaves Lansdown's head of advice

Danny Cox, said that he did not envisage many insurers stepping up to offer long-term care insurance products.

There is an alternative and far better approach. The TUC and the National Pensioners Convention advocate a taxfunded Health and Care service. The Convention has calculated that an additional £10bn (around just 1% of total government spending) would be needed in order to support a National Health and Care Service and this additional revenue could be funded through a combination of savings from other areas of care expenditure, re-prioritising existing government expenditure and/or increasing taxation. If all the money were to be raised through taxation alone, someone earning £25,000 a year would be expected to pay an extra 75p a day. This figure would be even less if National Insurance and/or Inheritance Tax was used as well.

The NPC also believes in promoting the need to raise the standards of care, improved regulation and monitoring of care services, improve the training and terms and conditions of the workforce, provide greater support for family carers and see the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) Dignity Code put into legislation.

This is a campaign we should all be involved with.
[Julian Atkinson East Midlands](#)

10. Keep the NHS out of the Free Trade Agreement - sign the e-petition.

There is currently a free trade agreement between the US and EU, which is being ratified by the European Union. This agreement would open all European markets to the US and vice versa. This includes all the public sector including health and education.

This means that the NHS would be statutorily opened up to not just British companies like Virgin Healthcare and Sainsbury, but if ratified without amendment, would mean that American companies would have a right to bid. They would be able to bring legal action against any CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) that prevented them bidding. The NHS would become a pay day for American Private health care companies and their lawyers paid for by British taxpayers.

Bear in mind these are the very companies that

fought so strongly against Obama's socialised Healthcare bill as it would hurt their profits. Now these companies want to run our health service as well.

There is a way out. European members apart from Germany and Britain have exempted their healthcare services from the free trade agreement.

Please sign and pass on the petition below to prevent this happening.

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/47102>

Thank you

[Neil Duncan-Jordan National Officer NPC](#)

11. From Andrew Harden, National Official FE, UCU

Some staffing changes at the UCU South West regional office based in Exeter.

The Exeter office covers RMB, HE & FE institutions in south-west England.

Following the recent retirement of Nova Gresham from the post of Regional Official, I will be taking on line management and oversight responsibilities for the South West regional office through to the end of 2013. During this period an additional temporary Regional Support Official post has been created so that together with existing RSO, Philippa Davey, the number of full-time UCU officials working out of the Exeter office remains the same.

I am very pleased to welcome Catriona Scott to the UCU South West office team as she takes up the additional RSO post from 25 March 2013.

First point of contact for the regional team remains with the Exeter office by telephone or email.

exeter@ucu.org.uk 01392 412 525

Regional support official: Philippa Davey

Regional support official: Catriona Scott

Branch development officer: David O'Toole

Regional administrator: Becca Richards

Address: UCU Exeter office, 26b Clifton Hill, Exeter, EX12DJ

**For more information
please contact ucw.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: Pat Mee Patriciamee@sky.com
Treasurer: Andy Gatehouse, AndyGatehouse@hotmail.com
Membership: Helen Gorman, helengorman30@yahoo.co.uk
Regional Delegate: Margaret George, margaretg@gmail.com

12. Motions to Congress 2013 from Retired Member Branches.

SECTION 2: BUSINESS OF THE RECRUITMENT,
ORGANISING AND CAMPAIGNING COMMITTEE

Chapter 7 of the NEC's report to Congress

ROC7 The privatisation of welfare services Southern region retired members

Congress notes with great concern the government's policy of further extending privatisation in all sectors of public welfare provision. This reflects both a flawed approach to the 'modernisation' of services and the extent to which coalition policies are increasingly driven by neo-liberal dogma. Congress believes that privatisation does not produce better welfare services for users and recognises that, for employees, fair wages and conditions of service will often be jeopardised. In particular trades union recognition, membership and representation will be permanently weakened. Congress instructs the NEC to join other trades unions in vigorously opposing the privatisation of welfare services.

SECTION 3: BUSINESS OF THE STRATEGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE TO BE TAKEN IN OPEN SESSION

Pensions, paragraph 4.1

SFC1 Defending our pensions East Midlands retired members

Congress recognises that the attacks upon our pensions have not ceased and there is a need for a continuing and active defence of our rights. Congress is not persuaded that the government intends a settlement that will "last for 25 years".

The current Public Sector Pensions Bill invites this caution. Clause three allows the Treasury to amend any legislation, including primary legislation and to make retrospective changes. Clause twenty allows the government to change CARE arrangements, members' contributions and accrual rates merely if there has been a consultation. The Lords' amendments have improved the Bill but not resolved all the problems.

Accordingly Congress instructs the NEC to campaign, not merely amongst our own members, but together with other unions to defend our pensions. This must involve full participation in campaigns such as "68 is too late" and against CPI indexation.

SFC4 Promoting the debate on public ownership of banking and finance West Midlands retired members

Congress applauds the decision of the 2012 TUC Congress for passing Motion 27 which calls for a TUC-organised enquiry into the banking crisis as well as stating that "the economic chaos and devastation sparked by the major banks and financial institutions should be ended through full public ownership of the sector and the creation of a publicly owned banking service, democratically and accountably managed."

Matt Wrack of the FBU moved the motion and subsequently, the FBU published its pamphlet "It's Time to Take Over The Banks" as a contribution to the debate on public ownership.

Congress calls on the NEC to use the FBU pamphlet to promote a debate at all levels within UCU on the public ownership of banking and finance as a first but necessary step in the battle to put an end to capitalist austerity and to establish the basis for a real alternative.

SECTION 5: RULE CHANGES to be taken in private session

R1 Organisation of members/retired members South East regional committee

Rule 12.4, insert: 'or to a Branch/Local Association local to them' between "Branch" and "unless" in line 1, and add new sentence to 12.4: 'On retirement all members will be contacted by HQ to ascertain their chosen Branch/Local Association.'

Rule 12.4 shall then read 'Members who are retired shall belong to a Regional Retired Members' Branch, unless the member chooses to belong to their former Branch/Local Association instead or to a Branch/Local Association local to them. On retirement all members will be contacted by HQ to ascertain their chosen Branch/Local Association/Regional Retired Members Branch'.

Purpose of Change - Members on retirement are not currently asked whether they wish to remain in their Branch/LA or to be transferred to a Regional Retired Members Branch or have the option of being a member of a Branch/LA more local to them if they move on retirement. Several have been moved out of their Branch/LA without their knowledge and denied certain voting rights as a consequence. Branch/LA Secretaries are also seeing membership decline inexplicably because of this administrative transfer.

This rule change puts into words what was agreed at an earlier Congress.

SECTION 6: BUSINESS OF THE EQUALITY COMMITTEE

Chapter 6 of the NEC's report to Congress

EQ16 Composite: Defence of pensioners' rights, universal benefits, the state pension and social care South East retired members, Northern retired members, Yorkshire and Humberside regional committee, Yorkshire & Humberside retired members

Congress continues to be concerned at the attacks on retired members' standard of living and quality of life, and notes recent attacks from politicians of the three main parties: Nick Clegg, Paul Burstow and many Tories, calling for withdrawal or means testing of pensioners' universal benefits – winter fuel allowance; free bus pass; free prescriptions and free TV licences for over 75's. Meanwhile UK state pensions are among the poorest in Europe, with over 2.5 million pensioners living in poverty, 1.6 million of whom are women.

As means testing of low-cost benefits is not cost effective Congress believes that these proposals are part of a softening up process, leading to more attacks on all pensioners' rights and the welfare state.

Congress also notes that this government is forcing our members and other workers to work longer and pay more in contributions to get less on retirement.

The recent Pensions Bill proposes a flat-rate state pension of £144 pw from 2017. This will lead to an increased pension for some, particularly for women, but all current and future pensioners with no other income will continue to live in poverty.

Congress believes:

1. it is time to campaign against means testing of all pensioners benefits
2. the state pension should be no less than the official level of poverty, which currently stands at £178 per week.

Congress calls on the NEC to:

- a. work with the National Pensioners Convention and the TUC in organising a national demonstration as part of a campaign to defend and advance pensioners' rights
- b. oppose any attempts to restrict pensioners universal benefits - winter fuel payment, free bus travel and TV licences
- c. campaign alongside the National Pensioners Convention, and within the TUC for the state pension to be set at or above the poverty level in the UK and up-rated annually.

The support of transport trade unions is of particular importance, as reductions in pensioners' travel concessions would mean less income for public transport services, resulting in job losses.

Congress also notes that, despite the government's long awaited plans for the reform of the social care system, UCU members will continue to face a retirement overshadowed by the threat of having to pay £75,000 towards their care if they become unable to care for themselves.

This amount will in fact be far more as it excludes "hotel" costs of care, and will only cover the local authority's rate for payment.

Family carers will continue to face increasing pressure to provide free care, with little or no support and/or

pay for care, whether at home or in a care home.

Congress reiterates its support for the National Pensioners Convention policy for an integrated system of health and social care, free at point of use and funded through taxation, and commits NEC to work with the NPC and other unions to campaign for this policy.

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>

Later Life Newsletter The department of work and pensions publishes a newsletter.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/later-life-newsletters>
