

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the South West Retired Members' Branch, held at the UCU Offices, Exeter on February 23rd, 2015

Present: John Daniell, Margaret George, Peter Bailey, Alan Cousins, Jo Corke, Liza Sentance, Pat Mee.

1. Apologies: Ruth Amias, Tom Murray, Bill Tampion, Geraldine Egan, Charles Kite.

2. Minutes of AGM 4.3.14 approved at June 2014 meeting

3. Minutes of meeting 27.10.14 approved.

3.1 Matters arising from minutes of 27.10.14:-

Bill Tampion's letter confirming that he is still actively pursuing his proposal for the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square was read out. He has proposed that statues be dedicated to the place of British women in the STEMM subjects. His soundings have so far been positive.

4. Reports from the Committee

4.1 Chair's report (See Appendix 1)

Matters arising:-

Retired Members' Conference. It was noted that an annual Retired Members' conference is official policy and the branch hoped that this would be implemented.

The sending of copies of our Newsletter by post. This is done by HO just for the January newsletter. Members with registered email addresses receive their three copies a year by email. Occasionally some members receive duplicates.

Jo had written to her MP re. low pay for care home workers and had received a reply from Ian Duncan Smith. A discussion followed on the paying of the living wage, and it was suggested that this issue be raised at the Regional Council. Members could write to their local institutions to enquire about their policy re. the living wage, and whether they also apply it to agency workers.

All members present had received their UCU voting papers and had completed them.

Grace Everson. Jo sent a card on behalf of SWRMB. Liza spoke a little about

Grace, and read out a letter from her daughters, Alison and Heather. It was suggested that an item paying tribute to Grace be included in the next Newsletter.

Membership. It was agreed that Liza contact some former members.

Liza proposed a vote of thanks to Jo for all her hard work. This was seconded by John and passed unanimously.

4.2 Regional AGM report.

Margaret reported that Ruth Amias has taken over as Treasurer for the region. A discussion followed concerning an HE Sector special conference due to be held on February 24th concerning HE pensions.

The Regional Equality conference is due to be held on 20.3.15. No delegates came forward at the meeting, but it is still possible for members to attend.

4.3 Secretary's report (See Appendix 2)

4.4 Treasurer's Report

John Daniell tabled a printed statement of the accounts. It was agreed that the co-signatories of the account - Liza Sentance and Pat Mee would check the end-of-year accounts, rather than organise a full audit, which was not considered necessary.

It was agreed that the Treasurer would contact head office in order to clarify the branch's entitlement to funds, and how these would be transferred in future.

The issue of bodies to which the branch owed subscriptions was raised. Secretary's of TUC branches (see below) need to send a request to John for our subscriptions.

Liza will investigate the claiming of Travel expenses to TUC meetings.

4.5 TUC Report

It was agreed that Liza would attend meetings of the Torbay TUC branch, and Peter would attend the newly re-launched Exeter branch meetings.

Attention was drawn to the People's Assembly March against Austerity in London on June 20th and the Fire Brigades Union strike on Wednesday 25th February. Members were encouraged to show their support.

4.6 NPC Report

The NPC Manifesto was included in the January 2015 Newsletter. The annual conference this year will be from 6th - 18th June in Blackpool.

4.7 Retired Members' conference. Minutes were previously circulated with the agenda for this meeting.

5. Election of Officers

Alan Cousins agreed to be our Returning officer.

The following were re-elected:-

Chair: Jo Corke.

Vice-Chair: Liza Sentence

Secretary: Pat Mee

Treasurer: John Daniell

Regional Representative: Margaret George

Membership secretary: Ruth Amias

TUC delegates: See 4.5

6. Congress 2015

As Liza is unable to attend this year members at the meeting were offered the opportunity to replace her. Tom Murray volunteered and has registered as our delegate. Jo is our reserve.

6.2 Motions for Congress

Three possible motions for Congress were discussed but a final selection was not made, for various reasons.

7. Discussion. It had been hoped that there would be time for members to discuss any of the many documents that we are sent on a regular basis from Head office and from groups to which we are affiliated. There was not time to do more than distribute a TTIP update.

8. A.O.B

Date of Next Meeting: Monday June 8th 2015

Future Speakers: It was agreed that Jo would approach the Prison Education Service

It was proposed that the Branch make a donation of £20 to the People's History Museum in Manchester.

Liza agreed to report to the branch and contribute to the Newsletter on Environmental issues

The meeting ended at 3p.m.

Appendix 1. AGM 2015 Chair's report.

It has been a pleasure to serve as chair and I thank the branch committee and steering group for their support. I would also like to thank Geraldine at HO and Becca & David at Exeter UCU for their support and advice on all matters UCU.

1. *Retired Free members*: the contentious decision taken at UCU NEC (July 2103) to demand that all life members (so called Retired Free) start paying subscriptions in Sept 2103 surprised and angered this branch as it did other RMbs. The following motion was passed at Congress 2014.

" Congress instructs the General Secretary and the NEC to rescind immediately the dishonourable and anti-trade union decision to withdraw membership from life paid members unless they pay and pay again. This is an attack on Retired Members and their Branches."

'Rescind immediately' was interpreted by H O as, 'start in Nov 2015'. HO said that to date (23.1.15) about a third of them have been contacted.

Head Office removed 194 'Retired Free' members from this branch membership. So far 6 have been reinstated in our branch.

2. *Retired Members Annual conference*. Two delegates from each branch were invited to the first RMB conference at Carlow Street HO in Nov 2014. Ruth Amias and Jo Corke attended. Liz Lawrence, President gave an address which was a separate attachment circulated with the AGM agenda. Several branches proposed motions. The minutes were a separate attachment with the AGM agenda. It was at this meeting that it was announced that contacting the Retired Free members had begun that very morning. It seemed like 'Just in time' tactics.

3. Branch Reports have been sent to each *SW Regional Meeting*.

4. *Newsletters*. Three newsletters have been produced in the year. All are sent to those with email addresses. The January copy alone is sent by Head Office staff to those without. This time we have received a few responses asking members for their email addresses, and these have been added. We remain grateful to East Midlands RMB for the opportunity to use some of their material.

5. *Model Local Rules*. The consultation process on new Local Regional & Branch

Rules, begun last year was thrown out at Congress 2014. It was restarted and closed on 23.1.15. We submitted a response. The issue will be debated at Congress 2015.

Jo Corke 21st Feb 2015

Appendix 2. Secretary's Report

The last year has been a positive year for the branch. It is now in its third year, and becoming well-established.

There are a good number of regular attenders at the Exeter meetings and a wide membership who are kept well-informed through the newsletter. Several new members have contacted us and expressed an interest in participating in some way. We have established links with other organisations such as the TUC and The National Pensioners Convention.

Guest speakers or topics for discussion mean that the meetings are more than just the completion of necessary admin.

I'd like to thank John Daniell for taking on the role of Treasurer, which had been a gap in our organisation.

I'd also like to thank Jo again for ensuring that the branch is run efficiently, and everyone is kept informed. In particular I'd like to mention the high-quality newsletter, which she produces regularly. It is becoming much more a newsletter for and by our own branch, with reports and articles by our members.

Pat Mee