

Minutes of UCU SW RMB meeting held at Old School Rooms, St Michael's Church, Bristol, on June 16th 2016

Present: Barbara Segal, Ruth Amias, Jo Corke, Pat Mee, Rafael Pepiol, Tom Murray, Bevis Miller, John Daniell.

Apologies: Alan Cousins, Mike Broussine, Liza Sentance, Margaret George, Paul Sandy, Mike Nicholson, Anna May Timpson, Peter Bailey.

1. The Chair welcomed the Guest Speaker, Nigel Crossley, who spoke about the TUC action in opposition to new Anti-Trade Union Laws. This was followed by questions and an interesting discussion.
2. Matters Arising from Minutes of previous meeting on February 15th:-
 - Closures of OU Regional centres. Barbara Segal reported that the proposed agreement between OU Branch of UCU and the Open University, facilitated by ACAS and with the intention of bringing about an end to the industrial action regarding the locations project review /SRSC consultation was sent to OU staff in April; 88% voted in favour of acceptance.

3. Reports

3.1 Chair's Report: (Appendix 1)

3.2 Treasurer's Report: Summary of Accounts. (Appendix 2)

This Branch has raised some questions on Survivor's benefits in Occupational Pension Schemes. It was agreed that John Daniell will send the issues to Head Office and ask for a response.

3.3 Membership Secretary: Membership now stands at 211. Exeter Office to be consulted to help with Access to Membership website.

3.4 Congress: Ruth Amias gave her report on this year's Congress. (Appendix 3)

3.5 S.W. Region: Report from Margaret George. (Appendix 4)

3.6 Trades Union Councils:-

- Gloucester – Ruth Amias (Appendix 5)
- Bristol – Barbara Segal reported on recent meeting, which was lively and interesting. The branch has a good website. Recent achievements include re-instituting the May Day rally. It was agreed that we will

affiliate. Treasurer to send forms and fees. Barbara Segal and Bevis Miller to be our representatives.

- Exeter – Tom reported that Exeter seemed much less active than Bristol, but was taking steps to improve and involve more Unions. He will be happy to continue as our representative.

4. South West TUC Pensioners Annual Conference. 20th October 2016.

Weston-Super-Mare. Jo Corke and John Daniell to go as our delegates. We can have a third, so if you are interested email Jo Corke.

ucu.swest@gmail.com Registration and travel expenses will be paid by SW Region.

5. Date of Next Meeting: As the TUC Pensioners Annual Conference coincides with the date suggested in the Agenda, **Thursday, 27th October** was suggested (and later agreed) as a possible alternative. Venue Exeter. Possibility of holding a branch meeting on the same day as SW Region meetings was mooted. We will consider this when Region dates are decided.

Appendix 1. Jo Corke Chair.

1. Geraldine Egan. Geraldine has retired as UCU Pensions officer; Geraldine was instrumental in encouraging Retired Members branches to establish. We sent a card and a donation for her present.

2. UCU strike Wed & Thurs 25th 26th May. This was part of the rolling program of action authorized by congress on Pay and conditions. We received this from the Severn Junior Doctors' Pressure Group (1600+ members)

"We would like to express our solidarity with UCU members on strike. Austerity and cuts to health and education affect us all, as do the government's attacks on workers' rights. We have been wonderfully supported by workers' unions during our ongoing dispute and would like to offer support in return in your dispute. We wish you luck and hope you reach a speedy resolution".

3. NEC FE report 4th March. Pensions. The FEC was told that some colleges are setting up 'companies' to employ staff. This, we were told, will impact some in that they may not be auto enrolled into a pension scheme and this will also mean that

entitlement to join the Teachers' Pension Scheme will be removed. Both these potential changes are bad.

4. The Public Service Pensioners' Council, PSPC, was established almost fifty years ago with the aim of protecting the interests of retired public servants. It brings together the various organisations of retired public servants and the retired members' sections of public sector unions in order to provide a united voice to Government and the main political parties on issues of concern to public service pensioners. The AGM 2016 for PSPC is Appendix 6.

Appendix 2 Treasurer's Report John Daniell

UCU South West Retired Members' Branch Ledger 01 Sept 2015 to 31 Aug 2016	Food, Provision Accommodation	Subs	Other expenses	Income
30 Sept Cash in hand	0	0	0	159.14
17 Nov Transfer from 20179416	0	0	0	152.25
18 Feb The Sandwich Bar 300051	70.2	0	0	0
11 May St Michael's Church Centre Ltd 300052	70	0	0	0
06 June Torbay & South Devon YUC 300053	0	22	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	140.2	22	0	311.39
Grand totals expenditure/income				
Amount in hand and in Unity Trust Bank Account				
Bank Balance @ 18 Feb	241.19			
Cash available @ 16 June 2016	149.19			

Having inspected the Bank statements, cheque and paying in books we agree that these accounts are accurate.

Mrs Patricia Mee

Signature

Date

Mrs Victoria Sentance

Appendix 3. Congress 2016 Report Ruth Amias

Congress was held in a sunny Liverpool and opened with an address by our President Liz Lawrence. She started by reminding Congress that UCU, formed from NATFHE and the AUT, is now 10 years old.

Membership is 120,000 but 68% of members are over 50. Young lecturers on casual contracts are not joining and work needs to be done to recruit this group to ensure the financial future of UCU. The president welcomed the success of the NUT in fighting baseline tests and academisation and suggested that the increased effectiveness of the NUT has been due to the insertion of a political element that has added strength to campaigns. She hoped to see UCU retain the same kind of political element in its work and celebrated the fact that "The Guardian" has called UCU Britain's foremost education lobby. UCU has been prominent in the fight against Prevent duties, funding cuts in post -16 education and has played a leading role in constitutional changes in Scotland to make HE governance more democratic and accountable. UCU and the NUS together organised the biggest education demonstration the UK has ever seen.

Key themes for UCU in the year to come are the threats of further marketisation in the post-16 sector, fighting to end casualisation and closing the gender pay gap. Congress met against the backdrop of the Trade Union Bill and UCU will be joining any future TUC action to resist this attack on the trade union movement. Another development since Congress last met has been the landslide victory of Jeremy Corbyn on a wave of support for anti-austerity policies. The President hoped to continue supporting public service unions opposing Government cuts giving the example of the Junior Doctors and the PCS museum workers in Wales on all out strike. After 30 years of marketisation there is a whole generation of workers in the public sector who cannot successfully do the job of helping and supporting people they originally entered their profession to do.

Sally Hunt made several commitments to Congress in her General Secretary's address. She pledged £1 million funding to recruit young lecturers on casual contracts. UCU will join the TUC demonstration outside the Conservative Party Conference on 2nd October in Birmingham. There will be another joint UCU/NUS Saturday demonstration in the autumn to "Save our Futures"

The Further Education Sector Conference discussed the Government's "Area Reviews in FE". The recommendations from these ongoing reviews are that FE Colleges merge or close. In London it is suggested that the 40 existing Colleges will be reduced to 5 or 6 "super colleges" with a massive increase in competition. It was stressed that UCU must continue to raise the profile of the variety of routes and provision that FE provides. Politicians need to be convinced of the vital role that lifelong learning plays in social inclusion. The FE Sector agreed to launch a series of national campaigns to oppose closure of Colleges and promote the provision of properly funded local

Colleges providing inclusive education at the centre of their communities. A vote was passed to call for a national ballot for strike action if the employers (AOC) refuse the current pay demand for an increase of £1 an hour for all teaching staff. There were calls for a ratification body to be set up by UCU to ensure local agreements on pay and conditions conform to a national standard.

In the Higher Education Sector Conference the conclusion of the HE “White Paper” (Success as knowledge economy) that “insufficient competition and a lack of informed choice” are the main weaknesses of the HE system in England was rejected. The analysis that private, for-profit providers and increased tuition fees are the best way to drive up quality was a cause for concern. The Paper contains proposals for a “Teaching Excellence Framework” (TEF) which allows an increase in tuition fees if a series of quality criteria are met. TEF was criticised by Congress for containing “flawed, proxy metrics as indicators of teaching quality” HE in England was compared to Scotland where there are no privatised Universities, no tuition fees and HE is seen by the Scottish Government as a motor for economic growth. If HE in England is to deliver high quality education then academics must be at the centre of the process and the Government and Universities must address underlying issues such as casualisation, workloads and career progression. Congress endorsed a new campaign, aimed at students, entitled “My working environment is your learning environment” The sector voted to take more industrial action in pursuit of their pay claim and ending casualisation. There will be strike action over the summer alongside the NUT and rolling strikes in the autumn.

The Retired Members’ Branch Meeting at Congress started with a tribute to Russ Bowman (East Midlands Branch) Geraldine Egan, who has played a leading role in the formation of RMBs, told us that RMBs are now well established and have “come of age”. She suggested we should now decide what to do in the future with our allocation of meeting time at Congress. It was proposed that we might like to invite our own expert speakers on subjects of specific interest to retired members. It was noted that in 2013 RMBs had a combined membership of 5,406 but in 2016 it is 3,285. NATFHE *Retired Free* members have been returned but progress is slow on AUT *Retired free* members. Our Branch report was submitted.

How to encourage members to join UCU at the point of retirement was discussed. Branch secretaries could play a key role in both identifying individuals considering retirement and distributing promotional literature explaining the activities of RMBs. Geraldine reported on the progress of motions carried at the Retired Members’ AGM 2015. She has initiated a colour coding system for written reports to ensure

members are kept informed of work completed, in progress and not yet started. She emphasised her feeling that it is important that Union Officials are seen to understand the intentions of Branch motions and inform members of progress in action they have taken. The meeting ended with cards and gifts for Geraldine and many good wishes for a happy retirement.

Congress was addressed by Sheila Coleman from the Hillsborough Justice Campaign. During her powerful speech she thanked UCU for giving a voice to justice campaigners. Malia Bovattia the NUS President was also invited to address Congress and received a standing ovation. Congress ended with thanks to our outgoing President Liz Lawrence who has worked hard to protect union democracy and put defence of education at the forefront of UCU's campaigning work.

Appendix 4. Report from South West Region Margaret George.

Report from Regional Committee, 16th April 2016

I attended this meeting as the Branch Delegate. Liz Lawrence the UCU President was there and answered a number of questions as well as being there to chat to over lunch.

These were the questions and answers (taken from the minutes):

1. What have we learned from the HE and FE disputes?

Clear negotiating position and objectives including fall-back position. Employers tend only to take notice when there is a live ballot. Importance of getting the vote out for many reasons including a stronger negotiating position with employers. When to end the dispute. Linking educational and industrial issues. Challenge both regionalisation of pay and pay aspirations.

NV said he felt there was inconsistency in the sectors as there is no national employer in FE and that members feel that 'national bargaining' has not affected them in a beneficial way. In HE, there is still national bargaining and it is crucial to maintain that.

2. We are one union; what support can be given from one sector to another in disputes?

There is a difficulty around union laws but in the Defend FE campaign, many HE colleagues spoke in support of FE. Joint political lobbying especially harnessing the retired members.

3. What is our response as a union to the increasing crossover between HE and FE?

We need to map provision. Be aware of the growth of private providers. FE members teaching HE work. We can demand better terms and conditions for all members. Problems in demanding HE pay for HE work: many members teach both FE and HE, lack of funding, disunity among members. Many casualised members across both sectors.

4. How can we ensure that officers in branches are not undermined and demoralised?

Defend facility time and improve on it. We need to raise the right to have your work covered to pursue trade union duties. Support branch officers to attend training, regional committees etc. Important to engage with the wider movement. Challenge members' lack of engagement. Empower members (succession planning).

LMc asked why **LL** felt that members could become disheartened through changes in the dispute mid-way. **LL** responded that there was sometimes a lack of understanding about why decisions had been taken and also an issue of whether something was worth fighting for. Strike action is about more than just the increase in pay. What is the general impact on the union in that workplace. There is a need to defend what one already has.

CS is interested in the role of TU education in re-invigorating interest in trade unions. **NV** said that when he used to deliver these courses the local agenda was important. This has now changed with the TUC determining content and the political dimension has been stripped out. State funding for this is coming to an end. This will mean that Unions will have much more say in the content. His perception is that despite the training, there is a confidence deficit in the workplace. Regional Office now tries to phone new reps. to support them within a month of appointment.

LL added that all workers should have the opportunity to have trade union education. Sheffield Hallam run lunch time sessions about employment rights to inform members which have proved very successful. Important to have Equality Reps on the bargaining committee.

AC said a centrally-produced leaflet for new entrants to the profession would be very useful to highlight the diminution in terms and conditions over a long period so that they are more aware of the role of the unions. **NV** suggested that this could be done collectively. The Regional Office now has powerful software to compare institutions across the region. **NV** said in his view that comparisons across the region would be

more helpful, especially to try and show that workplaces with strong branches have better terms and conditions.

LL said one other way to draw members in would be to organise meetings around issues to show the union at work. We also need to re-gain the educational vision, especially in FE. An alternative white paper is being written.

Other points:

HE Balloting for action on pay.

A successful inaugural meeting of a Black Members network was held in Bristol.

Discussion re delegates to National Congress. It was agreed to contact Branches which had not yet got delegates registered.

There were reports from the NEC and from colleges represented at the meeting. The NEC report included the information that UCU would remain neutral in the EU Referendum debate.

The next meeting on the Regional Committee is on 2 July in Plymouth and will be followed by a summer social.

Appendix 5. Gloucester and District Trades Council - Ruth Amias.

Around 12 Union reps attend each monthly meeting. Delegate reports have proved a good vehicle for solidarity and supporting each other in campaigns and disputes.

A good example is the Unite dispute at RR Donnelley in Tewkesbury. Delegates have been present every Wednesday on the picket line outside this printing company. Workers inherited good terms and conditions from Barclays Bank but the new owners have dismantled their terms and conditions. RR Donnelley have derecognised Unite and changed conditions of service for staff transferred under TUPE. They are making 20 workers redundant and plan to pay them statutory redundancy pay ignoring their more favourable existing redundancy agreement.

The Trades Council has organised coaches to the People's Assembly march of 16th April and to this July's Tolpuddle festival. On Workers' Memorial Day (28th April) a stall was organised in Gloucester with literature from local Unions. A very successful public debate on the EU was held in Gloucester with 2 speakers for out and 2 for in, including Clare Moody. It was interesting that the entry and exit polls showed that only 1 out of 50 people changed their minds as a result of the debate! Members of the Trade Council have organised a weekend of events in Stroud to highlight what is

happening in the NHS (17-19 June) Unite activists have organised a “why don’t we know” photographic exhibition to expose the stealth privatisation of the NHS. There will be films, comedy and a public debate with Caroline Malloy who is editor of “Keep our NHS public”

Trade Council members have also been supporting Junior Doctors and have been on the picket lines at Gloucester and Cheltenham Hospitals. Support is offered for any organisation fighting cuts and privatisation of the NHS. The emergency ambulance service in Gloucestershire is now run by Aviva and Cheltenham A and E is still under threat of closure with reduced opening hours and an end to all emergency care for children who now need to be taken to Bristol. Unison workers are particularly concerned about the future of mental health services in Gloucestershire as they receive only 10% of the shrinking health budget.

Unison home care workers are under increasing pressure and are unable to deliver the service they would wish. Members say they would like to ask politicians if they could get up/washed/dressed and fed in 15minutes. The horror stories of abuse and insufficient time for care continue. Members report they are forced to increasingly give out incontinence pads as food and medication are the priority and assistance to use the bathroom low on the agenda. Unison staff feel guilty and feel like they are working on a conveyor belt. There is little dignity for staff or recipients of care. Fragmented care provision means clients may not see the same care workers each week and Unions do not have an identifiable central company to negotiate with. Unison and Unite are fighting to promote increased uptake of their ethical care charter and for compulsory training for care staff. It is reported that many care companies in the area keep staff on limited-hours contracts to avoid paying National Insurance.

PCS have successfully fought off the privatisation of the Land Registry in Gloucester but the Government are making a second attempt to move 4,500 civil servants to the private sector. PCS say the proposal is based on political choice not economic necessity. It will not increase efficiency.

Appendix 6. Public Service Pensioners’ Council. Brief Report on AGM 2016

To: Secretaries of Constituent Organizations :

I am writing to give a brief report of the AGM which was successful and speedily conducted. It was a pleasure to see representatives of so many constituent organisations present. I hope that even more representatives of constituent organisations can attend next year.

Two constitutional amendments were carried to deal with (a) the distribution of funds to constituent members should the PSPC disband in the future and (b) the appointment of officers should a vacancy arise between AGMs. The 2016 constitution will be circulated to constituent members in due course.

A Motion moved by the Executive Committee to make permanent the arrangements for the PSPC Secretariat was carried. During his financial report, the Treasurer reported that subscription income was not covering the charges for the Secretariat. It was agreed that there would be no increases to subscriptions this year (in line with public pensions increase (CPI) but that in future increases would be considered to ensure that the PSPC could continue to afford its administrative functions.

The Financial Report and Audited Accounts were agreed and adopted. Mr. W.G.H. Tickner agreed to continue as independent examiner and to audit the accounts for the following year, 2016-17.

The Officers and Executive Committee members for the coming year were elected unopposed and are as follows:

Officers

Chair: Brian Sturtevant (Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance)
Vice Chair: Carole Regan (National Union of Teachers)
Treasurer: Steve Edwards (National Association of Retired Police Officers)
General Secretary: Lisa Ray (Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance)

Executive Committee

Mike Duggan (Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance)
John Pitt-Brooke (Forces Pension Society)
Ian Potter (National Association of Retired Police Officers)
Nick Kirby (National Union of Teachers)
Andrew Ruffhead (Prospect)
Philip Burgess (UCU)

The PSPC Manifesto remains very relevant. The AGM heard that the following campaigns would continue: single-tier pension, universal benefits, indexation, pensions for dependents who remarry or cohabit, and rights for overseas pensioners. The EC had also agreed to support the WASPI campaign during the year. WASPI is taking action to protest on behalf of those women affected by the increases in state pension age, giving them insufficient time to prepare for a reduced income.

The AGM also heard that despite promises made before the last General Election, pensioner groups could not be complacent about the threat to universal pensioner benefits. Transfer of responsibility for funding free TV Licences for over 75s from central government to the BBC would happen from 2019. Groups such as the Taxpayers Alliance and Intergenerational Foundation and enquiries being conducted by the Work and Pensions Committee into “intergenerational fairness”, were all putting forward the view that pensioners were not taking their fair share of austerity.

The AGM heard that the prospect of a return to RPI as the index to be used for increases in State Pensions, both Basic and Additional was still looking remote. A motion put forward by the Prospect Retired Members Group that the Executive Committee should consider supporting a new Household Inflation Index, was carried unanimously. The EC will await the decision flowing from the consultation: Measuring Consumer Prices, before formulating next steps on this area of policy.

Under any other business, the AGM also heard about concerns that rail companies were intent on introduction of virtual tickets which would mean the end of paper tickets. PSPC is primarily there to protect public sector pensions and unfortunately does not have the resources to expand into other policy areas. It was agreed however, that the EC would consider this issue when it next meets, and pass on to constituent organisations information on digital exclusion campaigns already underway.

Business at this year’s AGM was dealt with especially swiftly, and it was suggested that next year the EC consider also inviting a speaker to the AGM to lead discussion on a relevant issue.

We have a busy year ahead. Please feel free to contact me if you have any issues that you would like to raise.

Lisa Ray General Secretary <http://publicservicepensioners.org.uk/>