

The UCU SW RMB AGM 2017 UCU Exeter Office

Monday 20th March **2017** 12.00pm – 2.30 pm

Present: Liza Sentance, Pat Mee, Paul Grosch, Alan Cousins, Charles Henderson, Tom Murray, Peter Bailey, Barbara Segal, Margaret George, John Daniell.

Appologies: Ruth Amias, Eunice de Vere Thorne, Jo Corke, Bill Tampion, Rafael Pepiol-Vercher, Bevis Miller, Lynn Shorthouse.

1. Chair's Welcome
2. Minutes of previous AGM 15/02 2016
Matters arising: Appendix 6 should read Appendix 7.
OU Closures. It is understood that the closures have now gone ahead.
Minutes passed.
3. Branch Reports
Chair's Report (Appendix 1). Matters arising:
Head Office Support. This is an issue that needs vigilance.
There was a discussion about how to recruit newly retired UCU members to the RMB. Suggested answers were through SW Region meetings, local branches, local TUC branches, getting on the mailing list of local branches. Suggested we express our willingness to help by lobbying MPs, through our links with TUC branches etc. It was agreed that all local branches be contacted by ourselves on a yearly basis (proposed MG, seconded AC)

Treasurer's Report. JD circulated statement of annual accounts and gave a report. There was a discussion about TUC affiliation fees: Torbay and South Devon TUC fee is 20p per 100 members; Bristol, Exeter and Gloucester are 10p per 100 members. JD agreed to find out whether Ruth Amias was still able to be a delegate to Gloucester TUC. Affiliation to Taunton TUC was mentioned as a future possibility.

Secretary's Report. Appendix 2. PM expressed her willingness to continue to take the minutes.

Membership Secretary's Report. There are currently 214 members.

5. Torbay TC delegate's report (Appendix 3) LS reported on the recent closure of hospitals and the total lack of Care in the Community.

6. Elections. The meeting moved to this item because of concern for time. The following were elected as officers:-
Chair: Tom Murray (Proposed LS, seconded Alison Griffies)

Vice Chair: John Daniell (proposed LS, seconded AC)
Secretary: Charles Henderson (proposed TM, seconded AC)
Minutes Secretary: Pat Mee (proposed AC, seconded LS)
Membership Secretary: Jo Corke (proposed Vyv Salisbury, seconded JD)
Treasurer: John Daniell (proposed Mike Broussine, seconded Vyv Salisbury)
Returning Officer: Alan Cousins (proposed PM, seconded JC)

Charles Henderson agreed to act as **Equality Officer**
Jo Corke will continue to produce the newsletter.

7 Delegates and Representatives

Region: Margaret George
TC Torbay Liza Sentance
TC Exeter: Peter Bailey and Tom Murray
TC Gloucester: Ruth Amias (see Treasurer's report)
TC Bristol: Barbara Segal and Bevis Miller
NPC (W) Ruth Amias
Environment Rep: Liza Sentance

4. As the Regional Delegate had to leave prior to this item the meeting moved to item **5.6** (Environmental Report, Appendix 4).

LS drew attention to the final paragraph. To be discussed at the next meeting, June 12th.

The meeting ended at 2.35pm

Appendix 1. AGM 2017 Chair's report. Jo Corke

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 Egan, who retired in the summer from HO, and Becca & David at Exeter UCU for their support and advice on all matters UCU.

Branch membership remains steady at over 200 with 7 Honorary members, including John Daniell. Newly retired members transferred from their work branches, from other RMBs, or from Central, are welcomed. Condolence cards are sent when we hear of a member's death.

Retired Members Annual conference. Two delegates from each branch were invited to the second RMB conference at Carlow Street HO in Nov 2016. Separate report on agenda.

Head Office Support. Since Geraldine Egan retired, there is no one covering all of the many activities that she did for us, such as Newsletter postings and forwarding of material from other institutions. The regular circulation of RMB general info, which branches submitted directly to Geraldine, no longer occurs. This may be because Geraldine did these as 'extras'. HO have advised us that the new job descriptions within HO Pensions are different & that Regional Office, Exeter, should be approached for help.

Model Local Rules.

The consultation process on new Local Regional & Branch Rules, begun in 2013 was thrown out at Congress 2014. It was restarted and closed on 23.1.15. We submitted a response. The issue was due to be debated at Congress 2015. A proposed set of model local branch rules for submission to Congress in accordance with rule 12.6. The motion was remitted. Congress 2016 agreed new proposals which were circulated to branches.

In September 2016 I circulated members with the draft of the proposed model rules for our branch, asking for comments. It was also put on the South West Region website.

<http://tinyurl.com/swrmb01> The current branch proposals are there too.

In Nov 2016 we received from Region this: *Please note specifically the need to ensure that branches have approved the model rules and informed both regional office and also head office that this has been done. As part of the trade union act there is a need for the compliance office to have this information.*

Shortly after I received (UCU766) an on-line survey asking for an explanation as to why we had not complied. This I completed & returned.

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Newsletters. Three newsletters have been produced in the year. All are sent to those with email addresses. The January copy used to be sent by Head Office staff to those without. This year Rebecca at Exeter Office organised the printing and posting of the 85 paper copies for us.

Each year we receive some responses from our members for their email addresses, and these have been added to the circulation list. We remain grateful to East Midlands RMB for the opportunity to use some of their Newsletter material.

Region Branch Reports are requested for each SW Regional Meeting. Region supported two delegates, John Daniell & Jo Corke, to attend the TUC SW Annual Pensioners Conference in October 2017.

Jo Corke 3.3.17

Appendix 2. Secretary's Report for AGM of SWRMB, March 20th 2017 Pat Mee.

I have enjoyed my time as Secretary of this branch. I came to the first meeting in 2012, when the branch was being established, and agreed to act as Secretary at the 2nd meeting. I would like to reiterate my gratitude to Jo and Liza for their hard work, and for making my job a relatively easy one. I've enjoyed working with them. I'm now standing down as Secretary, and I would be willing to talk about the duties to anyone who would be interested in taking over. The task has not been an arduous one, but one of the most important elements has been communication and cooperation. I'd also like to thank other members of the steering group for their feedback as delegates to TUC meetings, conferences and other union activities. One of the benefits of a Retired Members Branch is that it is now possible to devote more time to focussing on wider issues in the world of politics, rather than workplace business.

Appendix 3. Torbay and South Devon Trades Union Council Report: Liza Sentance

NHS services and local, community hospital closures have dominated the meetings during the past year.

The Junior Doctors strikes: delegates demonstrated alongside staff at Torbay hospital. A 'junior doctor' addressed a meeting of the TSDTUC explaining why they were striking and the complexity of their contracts.

Proposals by Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group to close the hospitals in Paignton, Ashburton, Dartmouth and Bovey Tracey: Following a period of consultation and public meetings, The CCG has stated that these closures will go ahead. TSDTUC delegates attended the meetings; held a separate meeting to gauge public opinion, and also helped with the organisation of a march through Paignton. They met with Nick Roberts, the CCG Chief Clinical Officer; Sarah Wollaston, MP for Totnes, Chair of the Health Select Committee and Kevin Foster MP for Torbay. The TSDTUC also formed The Community Health and Welfare Alliance with local councillors and Health Watch. Emphasis is to be placed on care in the community; although as yet there is no evidence that improved services are being put in place. In addition Torbay hospital bosses have announced the closure of the 14 bed McCallum women's ward. The unions at the hospitals are meeting with members of staff who are concerned about losing their jobs as a result of the closures

January 2017, Kevin Foster became the first elected Conservative MP to attend a TSDTUC meeting in 105 years. He updated the meeting with the proposed plans and expressed his concern at the closure of Paignton hospital; the difficulties patients would experience with travel to, and the resulting pressures on, Torbay and Newton Abbott hospitals.

Other issues of concern, which were discussed:

Brexit: the lack of any coherent exit strategy and the increase in the level of hate crime after the Referendum.

A real Living Wage

The lack of a public enquiry for the Orgreave miners.

Supported:

The USDAW Freedom from Fear Campaign, to end abuse and violence towards retail staff.

The Campaign against Climate Change.

Continued....

Appendix 4. Environment Rep's Report : Liza Sentance

UCU has committed to four key areas:

The transition to a low carbon strategy:

UCU is a member of **Trade Unions for Energy Democracy** and the **Campaign against Climate Change**.

Following the endorsement of the Paris Agreement, countries now have to develop strong, low carbon strategies. Unions will play a vital part in this to ensure that it leads to 'green and decent jobs'. The Government has failed to address this with no reference to sustainability in their apprenticeship policy.

Investment and Divestment:

In supporting the **People and Planet Fossil Free Campaign** UCU is encouraging universities to move their endowments and other funds into more responsible funds. More than 20 have done so, the latest being King's College London. UCU members have expressed concern over USS's failure to address a number of ethical investment issues and this has been raised with their staff.

Education and Skills: There has been an increase in the number of environmental reps from 110 in 2014 to 142 in 2016.

Universities and colleges are being encouraged to commit serious resources to embedding Education for Sustainability across their curricula.

Research and Development:

Highlighted by the Paris Agreement, research was seen to be a vital part of making the energy transition. Education funding cuts must be reversed and a strategic framework on sustainability put in place to ensure institutions deliver for students, staff and their communities. Some institutions are performing well but overall the position is not encouraging.

Graham Petersen retired as UCU's Environment Co-ordinator in July 2016 and his post was combined with Health and Safety; since then UCU has not published a bi-monthly E newsletter. I now receive information from the **Greener Jobs Alliance**, which is forwarded to our members. Graham's work on environmental issues within the Union has increased awareness, it is hoped this will continue.