



## **South West Retired Members' Branch**

### **Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting held on Friday 23 March 2018 at the UCU Offices, Exeter**

**1. Present:** Tom Murray (in the Chair), Peter Bailey, Alan Cousins, John Daniell, Charles Henderson, Lisa Sentance, Bevis Miller, Barbara Segal

The Chairman welcomed members.

**Apologies** for absence : Jo Corke, Mike Broussine, Pat Mee, Margaret George, Eunice de Vere Thorne, Susan Hammond-Lovatt. Lynn Shorthouse, Bill Tampion, Paul Sandy

**2 Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2017**

Agreed

**3 Matters arising not listed elsewhere**

**Minute 3 Recruitment leaflet** No action required

**Minute 4 Survivors' pension benefits**

It was noted that Linda Newman, head of National Resources of UCU would investigate progress of our previous resolution through the UCU committee system and report back.

### **Minute 5 USS Service Standards**

The Secretary reported that the matter of excessive delays and poor service experienced in 2016 had been taken up with Mr Dave Guppy, Pensioner Member of the USS Board, Mr Bill Galvin, Chief Executive of USS, and Mr Kevin Smith, Chief Service Delivery Officer of USS. The upshot is that currently response time for dealing with enquiries is about 4 days. Elaborate mechanisms have been put in place to monitor all aspects of service delivery resulting in quarterly reports to the main Board. The bulk of enquiries to USS are from active members and come via employers. Regular meetings with employers deal with delivery. No special measures deal with enquiries from pensioners but a record is kept of the age profile of enquirers. As yet, USS is not willing to publish a set of service standards but may do so in future with the agreement of employers. Meantime, the Secretary advised any retired member experiencing more than a week's delay to bypass the on line complaints system and write directly to Mr Kevin Smith at USS by mail or email to [Kevin.Smith@uss.co.uk](mailto:Kevin.Smith@uss.co.uk) .

### **Minute 6 Branch Secretary job description**

The Secretary reported that he had completed a JD with detailed information on the mechanics of communication with members. He agreed to send it to the Committee and to enquirers who may wish to stand for the post next year when he will not wish to continue.

**ACTION Secretary**

### **Minute 7 SW Regional Committee /Executive**

The Secretary reported on correspondence with Steve Allen, Regional Secretary. Under the UCU Standing Orders for Regions each branch could send 1 delegate per 100 members or part thereof. This RMB could thus send 3 delegates. Then Executive was elected at the Regional AGM in July when a RMB delegate is encouraged to join in some capacity. [see below for appointments].

## **4 Report from Exeter UCU on current industrial action on USS**

The meeting welcomed Dr Luke Pilling of the Exeter UCU Committee who gave a report on the current industrial action at Exeter and in particular on the 14 days of strike action. This had attracted considerable support on the picket lines from UCU members, students and other trade unions. Tom Murray and Peter Bailey had joined the picket lines

on occasion. Exeter UCU membership had gone up from 650 to over a 1,000 and there was a good balance in the Hardship Fund. Similar remarks apply to the action at Bristol and Bath. Luke explained how the first offer negotiated in the first week of strike action between UUK and UCU had been swiftly and firmly rejected. Plans were being laid for the second phase of strike action in the May/June/July period. The mandate for industrial action did not currently cover withholding of marks.

During discussion attention was drawn to the unsatisfactory nature of the machinery set up between UUK and UCU to deal with USS issues, in particular the so called Joint Negotiating Committee of 5 UUK and 5 UCU members with an independent chairman having a casting vote. It was the exercise of the casting vote in favour of the UUK plans in January by Scottish lawyer Sir Andrew Cubie which had precipitated the crisis. A significant number of Vice Chancellors had since broken ranks with the hardliners in UUK and many criticisms had been made of the conduct of its President and its Chief Executive. It became clearer each day that there had been some measure of misrepresentation of the views of a number of colleges at Oxford and Cambridge (included in the total of 350 employers represented by UUK vis a vis USS).

The Chairman thanked Dr Pilling for joining us. He in turn thanked the RMB for its most welcome moral and practical support. It was **agreed** that the meeting should send a letter of support for UCU action to the VCs of the relevant universities in the region.

**Action Chairman/ Secretary**

*[ afternote : in the light of recent developments leading to a ballot of active USS members action after Easter, this action was not taken]*

## **5 Review of Retired Membership and organisation of RMBs**

The meeting received the comments sent to the UCU National Executive which had been circulated with the agenda and are attached hereto. It was hoped that at the least the NEC will make it easier to send information about RMB meetings and business to the retired members who are attached to local branches. If this results in increased attendance at meetings, consideration will be given to holding more meetings in the “north” and “south” of the south west to reduce

travelling or even to splitting the region formally. It is likely that the NEC will present proposals to the Congress in May.

**Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
held on Friday 23 March 2018 at the UCU Offices, Exeter**

**Present and apologies as for the OGM**

**1 Minutes of the AGM held on 20 March 2017**

It was noted that these minutes had been agreed at the OGM in June 2017 with no matters arising.

**2 Branch reports**

**Chairman**

Tom Murray reported that it has been a busy year for the RMB. Our Secretary, together with a number of other branch officers have been busy taking up issues with HQ and with the Regional Office, especially concerning pensions, branch funding, and union rules. These will be mentioned under relevant topic headings in the agenda.

The branch has where possible sent a delegate to the various other organisations with which the branch is affiliated, and to Congress and other meetings organised by the CU. The branch has supported various other unions and an organisation; principally those concerned with the NHS and other public sector areas, and are currently actively supporting the UCU branches taking action re pay and pensions. We have a speaker from UCU Exeter University today.

## **Treasurer**

The spreadsheet from UCU HO circulated with the agenda was received **-attached** hereto. The Treasurer tabled a projection of income and expenditure for the current year, also **attached** hereto. The meeting formally adopted the ledger account for the year to 31 August 2017 received at the OGM on 20 October 2017.

It was noted at, after several exchanges with Linda Newman, UCU Head of Resources, following her statement the Annual Meeting of RMBs last November, it had been established that members attending meetings of the RMB and campaigns, could claim reasonable travelling expenses. These would be handled by the branch Treasurer. He was enabled to seek subvention from HO if the regular income based on capitation fees was likely to be exhausted. It is important for members to know that their attendance at meetings need not be constrained by travel costs. However, the process may need to be reviewed by Head Office in the light of experience over the year.

The Meeting agreed to offer support to the branches engaged in industrial action over USS changes by sending £20 each to the UCU Hardship Funds at Bath, Bristol and Exeter.

**Action Treasurer**

## **Secretary**

The Secretary had nothing to add to earlier remarks.

## **Membership Secretary**

The report circulated with the agenda was received and is **attached** hereto.

## **3 Trades Councils**

### **Exeter**

Tom Murray reported that it has been a busy year for EDTUC. A delegation was sent to Tolpuddle in 16 July and participated fully. Throughout the year the Exeter group has been active in supporting a variety of unions and other campaigning groups including Unison when taking action in Paignton and Yeoville, the various unions involved in the

NHS campaign to scrap the cap, the CWU, and most recently the UCU action. A delegation was sent to the picket lines on the first day of action with the TUC banner.

In terms of other organisations the committee was actively involved supporting the Keep our NHS Public Campaign, the Red line Group opposing hospital closures, and other changes to the local health service, and attending scrutiny committee meetings of the County Council. The committee has also been monitoring important issues concerning the City Council such as the plans for the new bus station and accompanying facilities of various kinds.

### **Torquay and District Trades Council**

Lisa Sentance reported that the main topic for the TC this year has been the hospital closures and care in the community. In March, a rally took place in Torquay, following a march through the town, supported by Save Our Hospitals, Trade Unions and other interested parties. Its success was in the press coverage; although there is a general apathy in the area as people see it as, “job done”. Whilst this is the case with the hospital closures, loss of beds and closure of the gynaecology ward in Torbay hospital, care in the home is a major issue. The TC has been collecting evidence from those who are suffering through lack of care in their homes and the increasing levels of day surgery for what in the past would have been seen as major operations. The Herald and Express wrote a full page article, including interviews with people the TC had highlighted. The fight continues.

Speeding on the South Devon Highway between Newton Abbot and Paignton has been raised and letters sent to the police and local councils. The response was there had been no serious accidents, and as there were no funds for cameras nothing would be done. The problem lies in the variable speed limits from 40mph to the national speed limit, the lower being ignored by drivers. This will continue to be monitored.

Collection of rubbish has been a problem during the last year. Tor2, who the local council have a 19% share in, collect household rubbish and recycling materials. They state that a shortage of drivers is creating difficulties for them and that they are hoping to resolve this in the future. The Trades Council has been supportive of the UCU strikes and Union representatives have said they would be donating to the strike fund. Trade Council reps attended the Tolpuddle Festival in 2018, joined by union members, and it is the intention to go again this year.

## **Gloucester**

In the absence of Ruth Amias there was no report.

## **Bristol**

Barbara Segal and Bevis Miller reported that the new Chairman of the Bristol TC may raise its political profile. Currently the People's Assembly was the main focus for protest and action against cuts in local authority services.

## **Taunton and West Somerset**

Charles Henderson reported on two meetings of the TC for Taunton and West Somerset. It has 12 unions affiliated. It is energetically led on several fronts. In particular, it is active in campaigns against local authority austerity cuts by both Somerset CC (reductions in libraries, childrens' centres) and Taunton Deane BC which is to merge with West Somerset DC with a loss of about a third of staff and major reduction in services. The TC is also active in opposing the privatisation of NHS services and pressing for coordination of transport policies in the area. The meeting agreed to affiliate to this TC.

**Action Treasurer/Secretary**

## **4 South West Regional Committee of the UCU**

The Chairman and Secretary attended a meeting in February of the Regional Committee to plan action for the strikes at Bath, Bristol and Exeter.

## **5 National Pensioners Convention (W)**

In the absence of Ruth Amias there was no report.

## **6 Environmental and Greener Jobs Alliance**

Lisa Sentance reported that a recent circular had been sent to all members with email addresses.

## **7 South West TUC Pensioners' Committee**

Charles Henderson, as a member of the committee, reminded the meeting of the very positive reports on the Annual Conference October 2017 from himself, Jo Corke and Ruth Amias. He reported that, sadly, the majority of time at two meetings had been given over to procedural wrangles about the composition of the committee elected at the annual Conference. Five candidates who were GMB members had been disqualified from standing by the Standing Orders Committee as they were absent due to attendance at a national GMB conference. Complaints were made by GMB branches to the SW TUC Committee which despatched the Regional Secretary, the Chairman and Vice Chairman to the last meeting of the pensioners committee. The five GMB candidates were promptly invited to join the committee. It was urged to put significant changes in its constitution to the next Annual Conference to prevent this mishap reoccurring and also to tackle the issue of poor representation of women ( currently 4 out of 22).

## **8 Travel Expenses**

See minute under the Treasurer's report.

## **9 Election of officers for 2018/2019**

Alan Cousins, Returning Officer, took the chair and declared the following as elected under Rule 9.4 ;

<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	John Daniell (proposed by Jo Cork, seconded by Henry Parry)
<b>Treasurer</b>	John Daniell (proposed by Jo Corke,seconded by Mike Broussine).
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Jo Corke (proposed by Mike Broussine, seconded by Alison Griffies)

He then called for nominations for the following posts and declared elections as follows :

<b>Chairman</b>	Tom Murray (proposed by Lisa Sentance, seconded by Barbara Sentance)
<b>Secretary</b>	Charles Henderson (proposed by Tom Murray, seconded by John Daniell)
<b>Equality Officer</b>	Barbara Segal (proposed by Lisa Sentance, seconded by Bevis Miller)

Reporting to UCU HO and Region

**Action Secretary**

## **10 Other branch posts**

**Minutes Secretary** agreed to leave vacant pro tem

**Newsletter Editor** agreed to appoint Jo Corke

**Returning Officer** agreed to appoint Alan Cousins

**Examiners of accounts** agreed to appoint Lisa Sentance and Pat Mee

## **11 Appointment of delegates**

The following were appointed :

### **Trades Councils**

Exeter Tom Murray and Peter Bailey

Torbay Lisa Sentance

Gloucester Ruth Amias if willing

Bristol Barbara Segal and Bevis Miller

Taunton Charles Henderson

### **South West Regional UCU**

Margaret George if willing

Lisa Sentance

Barbara Segal

### **UCU Congress May/June 2018**

Tom Murray subject to availability

### **National Pensioners Convention (West)**

John Daniell agreed to seek clarification of the regional structure which appeared to have changed. Subject to this, it was agreed that Tom Murray and Lisa Sentance would attend meetings in the southernmost area and Barbara Segal in the northernmost. It was agreed to send £25 subscription to the NPC.

**Action Treasurer**

### **Environmental- Greener Jobs Alliance**

Lisa Sentance

It was agreed to defer to the June meeting nominations for the South West TUC Pensioners Conference and the Annual meeting of RMBs, both in November.

[Note ; since all branch meetings are open to all members, it has become the practice to regard the Officers and all the above as constituting the Committee under Rule 7.3]

## **12 Rule changes**

12.1 It was agreed nem con to amend para 1 of Rule 9.2 - Nominations – by the insertion of a third Sentence namely, The Returning Officer may accept nominations and consent of nominees by email.

12.2 At the request of UCU HO it was agreed nem con to amend Rule 4 to read as follows :

### **MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1 Members of the Branch shall be those assigned to the Branch in accordance with national Rule 12. Normally, this will include all UCU retired members in the region who have not chosen to belong to their former workplace branch.
- 4.2 In accordance with national Rule 12.2, retired members who live in the region but who have been assigned to a different Branch may attend meetings of this branch. They are eligible for membership of the committee of this

Branch, but may stand for election as a local officers only in their designated Branch/LA. In relation to national office and national elections, they shall be entitled to stand for office and vote in national elections only in their designated Branch/LA. National elections includes all elections for General Secretary, Officers, Trustees, NEC representatives and Congress delegates.

(Paragraph 4.3 is deleted.)

The rule changes will be notified to HO.

**Action Secretary**

**13 Circulation of election addresses by national UCU candidates**

As recommended in the report of the Membership Secretary (minute 2), it was agreed to discontinue the practice of sending election address to branch members. These are included in ballot forms and are on the UCU web site.

**14 Next meeting**

It was provisionally agreed to hold the next OGM at the Church of Christ, Bedminster, Bristol on Friday 22 June 2018. *[Secretary's after note – the provisional date has proved unsuitable. The meeting will take place at the same venue on Wednesday 20 June]*

**Several attachments referenced in the minutes follow.....**

## **South West UCU Retired Members' Branch**

### Comments to NEC from the RMB Committee on Retired Membership

#### **1 Membership Options**

We do not propose changes to the options available at present under National Rule 12.4. It is perfectly understandable for retired members who do not move away from the location of their institution to wish to take maintain links to their LA. We do, however, see considerable merit in making practical use of the interchanges envisaged by National Rule 12.5, namely,

*"12.5 Retired members assigned to a retired members' branch may attend meetings of their former local association/branch, and retired members assigned to a workplace local association/branch may attend meetings of a regional retired members' branch, but in either case they may hold office and vote in national elections only in their assigned branch/local association."*

Retired members attached to LAs may find that the concerns of the retired are not catered for. They may well find benefit from receiving up to date reports on the many things which RMBs deal with. Members of RMBs may likewise appreciate the opportunity to take part in LA meetings close to them. There is also an important social aspect to improving interaction among the retired.

The trick is to get the information exchange working in both directions. We hope that UCU HO will be able to suggest ways for this to happen. With the advent of a new regime for data protection this year, it would seem sensible for communications beyond each LA/branch to be handled by, say, Regional Offices who, presumably, have access the membership database for all their LAs/branches.

For example, the Secretary/Membership Secretary of an RMB could ask the Regional Office to forward emails to all the retired members attached to LAs. And vice versa for an LA Branch Secretary. LA attached retired members would be very welcome at RMB meetings and we would happily share modest hospitality (though not travel expenses).

## **2 A single UCU retired members' group or association as in Unison**

Those of us who work with Unison retired members in TUC Pensioners' Committees and in local Trades Councils will have seen how effective the Unison model is on the ground. Unison draws its considerable retired membership from many sectors with widely differing cultures and experiences. UCU members have a greater degree of commonality which we feel is best served by the current UCU system (with some changes as aforesaid).

## **3 and 4 Voting and standing for office**

We have recently explored with UCU HO staff the issue of ballots available to RMB members for elections to the NEC. It appears that retired members attached to an HE or FE LA/ branch can vote in the UK-elected HE or FE sectors. This option is not available to retired members assigned to an RMB. We cannot see the case for this unequal treatment. This compares very oddly with the provision for all RMB members to take part in ballots for the Vice President from both the HE and FE sectors (in alternate years), for women members from both the FE and HE sectors and for reps from land based education. We ask that all retired members be entitled to vote in all UK-elected ballots for the NEC and in all ballots in their geographical area.

We believe that all retired members in LAs or in RMBs should be able to take part in all the offices and functions set out in para 4 of the on line questionnaire as appropriate to their LA/RMB.

## **5 Other comments/suggestions**

In essence, we are of the view that retired members should have the same rights in union governance as serving staff subject to the following. There is a long standing principle that retired members do not vote in matters which concern industrial action. However, we remind NEC of motion 6 passed at the Annual Meeting of RMBs in November, namely,

*“The Retired Members’ Conference reiterates its full adherence to the principle that Retired Members should not be involved in decisions relating to industrial action.*

*However, there have been occasions when the UCU has been involved in areas which have had a direct impact on Retired Members. An example would be the last revisions of both USS and TPS pensions that coincided with the reduction of indexation of existing pensions down to the CPI marker.*

*The current campaign to defend the provisions of the present USS settlement has been marred by some irresponsible, and probably highly unlikely, discussion in the Financial Times that suggests that part of the supposed difficulties of the USS might be mitigated by lowering payments to existing pensioners.*

*We request that the NEC consider methods of consulting with the RMBs when threats cover both serving and pensioner members.”*

RMB are basically self-managed structures requiring minimal support from Regional Offices. However, we have felt keenly the lack of a support officer at UCU HO since Geraldine Egan retired and urge that this function be restored and performed by a staff member with appropriate skills and sympathy with retired members.

The financial demands made by RMBs on UCU coffers are modest. We welcomed the assurance given by the National Head of Resources at the Annual Conference of RMBs last November that " that the union would provide central resources for travel costs to support retired members' attendance at branch/campaigning meetings. " Since then confusion has arisen when our RMB Treasurer raised the issue with the UCU Finance Staff. We urge that the policy as outlined at the Annual Conference is given full effect and that capitation income is preserved.

Charles Henderson  
Secretary  
For and on behalf of the Committee of the SW RMB

1 March 2018

**Attachments continue.....**

## Treasurer's reports

UCU South West Retired Members' Branch Ledger 01 Sept 2016 to 31 Aug 2017	Food, Accommodation Provision	Subscriptions	Other expenses	Income
01 Sept Cash in hand	0	0	0	101.19
08 Sept Bristol Trades Union Council 300055	0	11	0	0
02 Nov Sandwich Bar 300058	62.4	0	0	0
22 Nov Transfer 20179416	0	0	0	160.5
01 Feb Gloucester & District Trades Council 300059	0	11	0	0
19 April TASTE Sanwiches 300060	90	0	0	0
24 May Transfer from UCU 20179416	0	0	0	214
31 May National Pensioners Convention 300064	0	25	0	0
02 June Torbay & South Devon TUC 300063	0	11	0	0
22 June Jo Corke postage 300061	0	0	14.52	0
29 June Bristol Trades Union Council 300065	0	11	0	0
10 July Gloucester & District Trades Council 300062	0	11	0	0
14 Aug Exeter & Devon TUC 300066	0	11	0	0
18 Aug John Daniell Refreshments 300067	32.07	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	184.47	91	14.52	475.69

Balance in Bank

185.7

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

Signature

Date

Mrs Patricia Mee /Mrs Victoria Sentance

<b>UCU South West Retired Members' Branch</b>		<b>Food, Accommodation Provision</b>	<b>Subscriptons</b>	<b>Other expenses</b>	<b>Income</b>
<b>Ledger 01 Sept 2017 to 31 August 2018</b>		0	0	0	0
01 Sept Cash in hand		0	0	0	185.7
10 Nov Transfer from 20179416		0	0	0	166.5
Feb Bristol Trades Union Council	300068	0	11	0	0
<b>Totals</b>		0	11	0	352.2
<b>Due to be added May 2018</b>					379.62
Balance in Bank		341.2			

**Attachments continue ....**

## **Membership Secretary's Report**

The number of members in the branch remains steady at over 200. Head Office refers retiring members living in the SW to our branch unless they wish to remain in their workplace branch. Some new members are those who have retired to the SW region.

There are a number of members without emails. These receive only the January newsletter which is printed and sent by post. As the cost of sending by post is considerable we ask people to send their emails in order to receive all the branch and Head Office information. This year several members responded positively to the request. There are some members whom we know have vision loss; we can send printed copies of the newsletter by post. Let me know if that is a facility that you would like.

In October 2017 Head Office launched **My UCU**, a portal where members can complete their information on-line to be added to the database. There were some initial problems as they had not included an entry for Retired status, but I am assured by Head Office that this has been fixed.

**NEC elections:** in past years we have received a few requests to circulate to branch members the election addresses of candidates; this is encouraged by Head Office. However, this year there were a lot of requests, not all relevant to retired members. The decision to circulate these manifestos is a branch one – we circulate all or none\*. I propose that we do not circulate next year.

\*First paragraph of point 8 of the election guidance notes:

“The use of email lists held by branches, for contacting all branch members, is a matter for branches. Use of them (or not) for election campaigning must be a decision of the branch, not of an individual who has access to such a list because of their role within the branch.”

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8755/Election-guidance-notes-2018/doc/Election\\_guidance\\_notes\\_2018.doc](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8755/Election-guidance-notes-2018/doc/Election_guidance_notes_2018.doc)

**For information:** the [ucu.swest@gmail](mailto:ucu.swest@gmail.com) email is one administered by me, as membership secretary, from which I send newsletters and occasional missives to all our branch members who have an email. I also use it to communicate with new members (a welcome, etc) and for all my official union emails.

Charles Henderson, our Secretary, has a separate email for union secretarial matters. The list of members that we both use is that held by Head Office, available to the Secretary and Membership Secretary.

Jo Corke

28.2.18

**END**

