



## South West Retired Members' Branch

### **Minutes of an Ordinary General Meeting held on WEDNESDAY 20 JUNE 2018 at the Church of Christ, 298, St Johns Lane, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 5AY.**

**1 Present:** Tom Murray (in the Chair), John Daniell, Charles Henderson, Bevis Miller, Barbara Segal, Rafael Pepiol. The Chairman welcomed members.

**Apologies for absence** were received from Ruth Amias, Hedley Bashforth (Bath Retired Member), Mike Broussine, Jo Corke, Alan Cousins, Margaret George, Jane Hopkins, Pat Mee, Paul Sandy and Lisa Sentance.

#### **2 Minutes of the OGM held on 23 March 2018**

Agreed

#### **3 Matters arising**

##### **Minute 3 Survivors' pension benefits**

There is no evidence that the motion from the branch (adopted by the national meeting of RMBs in November 2017) is being processed through the UCU committee network as indicated by senior officials. This must be pursued.

**ACTION Secretary, delegates to the next national Meeting**

##### **Minute 4 USS dispute and industrial action**

It was noted with gratification that the outcome had been the suspension of industrial action, the setting up of a Joint Expert Panel by Universities UK and UCU to examine many aspects of USS and a review by UUK and UCU of the machinery for determining changes. This was an outstanding result for UCU.

##### **Minute 5 NEC review of retired membership**

The Chairman reported that at UCU Congress there was only a brief report of the survey conducted earlier this year. The matter would be on the agenda for the National Meeting of RMBs in November.

#### **4 Minutes of the AGM held on 23 March 2018**

Agreed.

**Matters arising** minute 5 [see minute below on Treasurer's report]

#### **5 Branch Reports**

**Chairman** Tom Murray referred to several items below.

**Treasurer** John Daniell referred to his two reports sent with the agenda and attached hereto. He explained that he had been unable for technical reasons to send the donations to the three UCU Hardship Funds as agreed at the March meeting but would do so shortly. To avoid similar problems, he proposed that he be authorised to use on line banking on the Unity Bank account.

**This was agreed.**

John reported that the National Pensioners' Convention now had two branches in the south west, one for Gloucester, Avon and Somerset and one for Devon and Cornwall. **It was agreed** to send an affiliation fee to each of £20.

On travel expenses payable to branch members since the last meeting, the Treasurer reported that he was able to recover any overspend on the branch account directly from UCU Finance Office. It was expected that this topic would arise at the National Meeting of RMBs in November.

**Secretary** Charles Henderson proposed that a survey be conducted among branch members to ascertain their views on matters such as its relevance, organisation, meetings, deterrents to involvement, venues, distribution and content of information. Several open ended questions would be needed. Bevis Miller agreed to help with the content and design. It was **agreed** to settle the format at the October meeting and to distribute the questionnaire in the autumn to members with email and to others on the postal mailing of the January Newsletter.

**ACTION Secretary, Bevis Miller**

**Membership Secretary** A report from Jo Corke was received as attached below.

## **6 Trades Councils**

**Exeter** Tom Murray reported that the TC had been very active on campaigns and demos in support of the TUC on health services and the UCU strike action on USS in Exeter.

**Torbay** In the absence of Lisa Sentence, no report.

**Gloucester** In the absence of Ruth Amias, no report

**Bristol** Barbara reported good attendances at meeting with more working members turning up. The new Chairman was a GMB member. In view of his involvement with Mendip TC Bevis Miller stepped down as a second delegate. It was agreed to seek a replacement in the Bristol area.

**ACTION Secretary**

**Taunton and West Somerset** Charles reported that 14 unions were affiliated and that attendances were good. Campaigns against austerity cuts by local authorities were a major activity. He and the TC Secretary had had a meeting at Somerset County Council with the Cabinet Member for Transport and a second tier Director for economic development. Topics included alternatives to curtailed bus services, the increasing isolation of the elderly and the young without cars in rural communities, the commercial use of residual space at the two Park and Ride centres in Taunton and the absence of a county wide Transport Forum.

**Mendip** It was agreed to affiliate to the newly reconstituted TC for Mendip and to appoint Bevis Miller as delegate. He is the Secretary of the TC and reported a lively start to its program.

## **7 South West Regional AGM and Social on 7 July 2018 at Plymouth**

It was **agreed to** appoint Tom Murray and Bevis Miller as delegates (with Charles Henderson as an alternate) and to seek a third delegate from members.

**ACTION Secretary**

## **8 Report on UCU Congress 2018**

Tom Murray presented a full report – **attached** below. The meeting of Retired Members Branches had gone very well. A brief account was given by a HO staff member on the NEC survey of retired membership. No major changes in the structure were supported but stronger links were urged between retired members attached to their former work places and those in regional groupings. The assistance of Regional office staff was sought to make this easier to achieve.

The rest of the Congress had quickly descended into chaos and was abandoned as result of the Unite branch of UCU employed staff withdrawing service at the Congress on account of their opposition to the debating of two motions critical of the conduct of the General Secretary in the industrial action over USS. Unite took the view that this was an employment issue to be dealt with by the NEC in proper employment procedures, not by the Congress. The opposing view of the Congress Business Committee and many delegates was that the General Secretary, uniquely, was elected under Trade Union law every 5 years by the membership and that it was in order for her to be held to account at Congress.

The report of delegates to the Congress from Warwick UCU had been circulated to SW retired members because it was the only full account available and it was an intelligent and level headed account of a very heated Congress.

It was noted that the Congress would be recalled on either 15 July or 15 October with no new business listed. It was **agreed** to appoint Tom Murray as delegate with Charles Henderson as alternate on either date. The meeting was fully of the opinion that the two motions from Exeter and Kings London

critical of the General Secretary should be debated. In the absence to date of a statement from the General Secretary (on her conduct complained of at the time of ballots of members on USS issues in March), it was not thought appropriate to mandate the delegate who would be to expected to form a view in the light of the debates. The matter would be discussed at the SW Regional meeting on 7 July.

**9 National Pensioners Convention** No reports.

**10 Environmental - Greener Alliance** No reports.

**11 South West TUC Pensioners's Committee**

Charles Henderson as a committee member reported continued squabbling over procedural issues. Leadership was weak and the committee was unfocussed on diversity issues. He had proposed changes to the structure of the committee to allow for two constituencies of 11 men and 11 women to sit on the committee, with unfilled places being made available to the other constituency rather than being left vacant. This had won limited support but was not put to the vote due to vociferous and unreasoning. opposition from some men. The matter would be revisited at the July committee meeting in hope of putting a resolution to the regional conference on 25 October. Irrespective of the outcome, he was not prepared to spend time on this Committee which could be more usefully spent elsewhere. The meeting supported his stance.

It was **agreed** to appoint Tom Murry and Barbara Segal as delegates to the Conference on 25 October with John Daniell as alternate.

**ACTION Secretary**

**12 National Meeting of Retired Members' Branches** **November 2018**

It was **agreed** to appoint Barbara Segal and John Daniell as delegates.

**ACTION Secretary**

**13 Local affairs and concerns**

Charles Henderson reported that he was involved with the formation of a Chapter of Citizens UK in Taunton and West Somerset. National details are at <http://www.citizensuk.org>

**14 Date and venue of next meeting**

It was **agreed** to meet at 12 noon on Monday 15 October at the UCU Offices in Exeter. This date avoided half terms.

**ACTION Secretary**

**Appendices 1 – 4 follow.....**

## **Treasurer's Report June 2018**

## **Appendix 1**

Please see the ledger showing income and payments to date shown separately.

It was agreed at the AGM that £60 be sent to Universities of Bath, Bristol and Exeter hardship funds but by the time I was about to seek addresses for this purpose the dispute had entered a new phase which did not involve industrial action. I seek further guidance and propose that an address list of all college and university branches be obtained and retained to allow a more ready response in the future as well as making communication from time to time about the existence of RMB SW which may be helpful to members approaching retirement or early retirement.

In the case of the National Pensions Convention we have to date been paying £25 annually to the GAS section of the Region omitting Devon and Cornwall which appears to also have an active section of NPC. I propose that (subject to providing an RMB SW representative) that £20 be sent to each of GAS and Devon and Cornwall groups of NPC; but if unable to provide a representative simply continue to send £25 to GAS (Gloucestershire, Avon and Somerset section of NPC)

## Treasurer's ledger listed

## Appendix 2

UCU South West Retired Members' Branch Ledger 01 Sept 2017 to 31 August 2018	Food, Accommodation Provision	Subscriptions	Other expenses	Income
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
Mar Charles Henderson Travel Expense 300070	0	0	16	0
Mar Alan Cousins Travel Expense 300071	0	0	8.85	0
Mar Liza Sentance travel Expense 300072	0	0	5.15	0
Mar Barabara Segal Travel Expense 300073	0	0	19.55	0
Mar Thomas Murray Food Expense 300074	48.56	0	0	0
Mar Gloucester & District T U Council 300075	0	11	0	0
Mar Torbay & S. Devon TU Council 300076	0	11	0	0
Mar Exeter & District TU Council 300077	0	11	0	0
Mar Taunton & W. Somerset TU Council 300078	0	11	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>48.56</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>49.55</b>	<b>352.2</b>
<b>Due to be added by June 2018</b>				<b>379.62</b>
Balance in bank at 31 May 2018	199.09			

Having checked the bank statements cheque and paying in books we agree that these accounts are accurate.

Signature

Date

Mrs Patricia Mee

.....  
Mrs Victoria Sentance



## **Membership Secretary's Report Appendix 3**

Membership updates. The Head Office database allows us to check for Joiners and Leavers as often as we wish. For this branch it is done on a monthly basis. New members with emails are sent a 'welcome' and the most recent edition of the newsletter. New members who are without emails on the Head Office database are sent a 'welcome and please send us your email' and the recent newsletter by post; Pat Mee does this. Most of those recently retired respond; some do not.

Our current membership (26.5.18) is 227.

Jo Corke

## Chairman's report on UCU Congress 2018

### Appendix 4

#### Meeting of Retired Members

#### Notes of meeting held at Congress 31 May 2018

1	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>1.1 Apologies were received from a number of members.</p>
2	<p><b>Chairs business</b></p> <p>This is an informal meeting. The formal Annual General Meeting takes place in November. A report from the meeting is forwarded to the NEC and the chair is invited to speak at the NEC.</p>
3	<p><b>Notes from the meeting held at congress 2017</b></p> <p>The meeting received a copy of the notes take at the meeting in Brighton 2017</p>
4	<p><b>Unconfirmed minutes of the AGM held on 15 November 217</b></p> <p>4.1 <b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>8.3 last years (2017) were a motion climate change, airport expansion, and Frocking moved by Peter Murray on behalf of the London RMB. A question was asked re progress on this matter and the continued importance of the issue of airport expansion in London. Reference was made to the alleged number of jobs that might be at risk as a result of attempts to reduce air pollution in airports.</p>
5	<p><b>Results of survey arising from motion 73 to Congress 2017</b></p> <p>As a result of a motion 73 last year (2017) the NEC was instructed to carry out a review of the arrangements, rights and support of the retired members and to bring any proposals to congress 2018.</p> <p>The meeting received a preliminary report of this survey. The results showed that most members believe that the current option of remaining with their work place branch, or joining a retired member's branch should be retained. A significant number of members would support the creation of a single national retired members group. This was discussed and it was noted that it need not be either a national group or regional branches; it would be possible to continue to have regional branches and an overarching national coordinating group. There was discussion of the question of what the UCU wants retired members to do.</p> <p>There was also discussion of the voting rights that retired members should have, and their right to stand for elected roles.</p> <p>It was not clear to where the report is destined. Needs to go to NEC, perhaps to RM AGM in November.</p> <p>It was considered to be important to keep the matter on the agenda and to perhaps bring proposals of rule changes to next year's Congress.</p>

6	<p><b>Pension scams and how to recognise them</b></p> <p>Chris Marson and Garry Potts from First Actuarial, (the firm that advises UCU) gave a presentation on how to recognise and avoid pension scams, The presentation addressed the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• would you recognise a pension scam ?</li> <li>• Top tips</li> <li>• Recent developments</li> <li>• What First Actuarial can do to help</li> </ul> <p><u>Would you recognise a scam?</u></p> <p>It seems 70% of people surveyed were convinced they could recognise a scam but in fact only about 12% could</p> <p>In the order of 10.5 million people have received some form of contact from a potential a scammer. Several members gave examples.</p> <p><u>Top tips</u></p> <p>If you receive contact out of the blue, be suspicious</p> <p>If you are offered a scheme with more than 8% return, don't believe it</p> <p>Beware of offers to access pension pot before age 55</p> <p>Don't be pressurised</p> <p>Beware of extravagant offers overseas.</p> <p><u>What UCU can do to help</u></p> <p>Adhere to TPRS guidelines</p> <p>Exercise robust diligence</p> <p>Proactive enquiries</p> <p>Refer members to TPAS Pension wise</p> <p>Contact Action fraud.</p>
7	<p><b>Report of branches (circulated)</b></p> <p>Reports that had been received were circulated and delegates unable to have sent reports provided verbal reports. All branches were generally functioning well, some very well. Two branches mentioned the problem of achieving a quorum with such a wide spread membership in large counties. Most meet 3-4 times a year including AGM, one only meets twice a year, There was also some discussion re contacting people who do not use email. Another problem area mentioned was arrangements in countries with devolved government. In Scotland UCU represents only HE because of EIS.</p>
8	<p><b>Reports from external representatives</b></p> <p>The meeting received reports from delegates who represent UCU retired members on external bodies such as NPC, public services pensions committee, and health and care working party.</p>
9	<p><b>Discussions of Congress business</b></p> <p>There was a brief discussion re relevant items on the Congress agenda</p>
10	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>There was no AOB</p>
	<p>In the event there was no discussion of any of these items at Congress due to a crisis concerning certain items resulting in Congress being suspended and ending prematurely. See separate report(s)</p>

Tom Murray Congress delegate.

## Notes of Congress 2018 meeting in Manchester

Wednesday (Day 1)

The meeting opened in the usual way with opening business including

	The meeting opened in the usual way with opening business including
1	Welcome and address from Joanne de Grout, President.
2	Appointment of tellers
3	Adoption of the report from the congress Business committee
4	Adoption of the minutes of Congress 27-29 may 2017
	Section 1 Business of the Strategy and finance committee in private session. The first 6 items were formalities
1	Report of the Commission on effective industrial action
2	Appointment of auditors
3	Financial statements
4	Budget
5	Subscriptions
6	Review of subscription rates and bands
7	Rulebook to include procedures for the conduct of statutory ballots at the University of Oxford.
8	UCU structures and decision making: democracy, transparency, and plain English University of Leeds.

The following items led to conflict and confusion and finally a crisis

9	<p>Union transparency and accountability during disputes City University London</p> <p>The USS branch delegate and HEC ballot have produced member anger around issues of transparency and accountability within UCC</p> <p>Congress resolves that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The role and purpose of branch delegate meetings during disputes should be clarified, including voting rights (per branch or weighted by membership and when and how votes can be called.)</li> <li>2. During a dispute any HEC/FEC members can call for a reconvened meeting of HEC/FEC, within two weeks to progress the dispute.</li> <li>3. HEC/FEC must agree contextual information accompanying national ballots of members. Ballot text will be circulated to branch officers at least one working day in advance of the ballot going live.</li> <li>4. A means of members/branches to connect to HEC/FEC and agenda items is published.</li> <li>5. Information re upcoming HEC/FEC meetings</li> <li>6. Mechanisms for HEC/FEC/NEC meetings to consider relevant branch motions are determined.</li> </ol> <p>This motion was discussed and voted in parts</p>
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10	<p>No confidence in UCU General Secretary Sally Hunt    Exeter University</p> <p>Congress notes that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the conduct of the USS dispute raises serious issues of accountability and process on the part of the national leadership</li> <li>2. the General Secretary claims a majority support taking the un-amended proposal to a membership ballot despite refusing to allow a vote on such measures.</li> <li>3. The UUK statements were presented as victories and recommended to members.</li> <li>4. Repeated requests for documentary evidence for a tally of branches have been refused.</li> </ol> <p>Congress believes that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) this is representative of a democratic deficit in the union affecting members across sectors, manifested as a continuous pattern of unilateral, undemocratic action by the leadership.</li> <li>b) Our leaders should pressurise employers to accept the will of members, not the other way round.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;">Congress resolves to call for the resignation of Sally Hunt as General Secretary with immediate effect..</p>
11	<p>Censure of the UCU General Secretary    Kings College London</p> <p>Congress notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The decision by the higher education committee chair not to give branch representatives a vote on the UUK proposals of 28 March 2018 meeting held at Carlow Street.</li> <li>2. The subsequent claim made by the General Secretary (GS) that the majority of branch representatives wanted an immediate ballot of members</li> <li>3. The failure of the GS to provide verifiable evidence to support this claim.</li> </ol> <p>Congress believes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A membership led union requires, clarity, transparency and accountability of its decision making processes</li> <li>b) The GS failed to meet these criteria in reporting the 28 March meeting.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;">Congress resolves</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. To censure the GS for relaying branch positions at the 28 March meeting whose accuracy, in the absence of a vote, or the provision of a detailed list of positions could not be verified .</li> <li>II. To ensure that in future branch representatives' positions are reported in a clear and verifiable manner.</li> </ol>

I have attended some previous UCU Congresses and NATFHE conferences, but have never seen one quite like this.

Delegates saw the spectacle of members of staff walking out of Congress in protest at motions that had been democratically voted by their respective branches and submitted to the CBC, in accordance with the rules and accepted and included in the agenda published in the official Congress booklet issued to delegates.

The UCU Branch of UNITE, the union that represents UCU staff (including the General Secretary) objected to both of these motions on the grounds that they believed that they constituted a threat to their members' terms and conditions of employment of their members - primarily the GS, and that the concerns raised in the motions were in effect employment issues and should be dealt with by the employer using due process.

There was much bitter wrangling; Congress was suspended twice on Wednesday and then again on Friday, resulting in the early closure of Congress. Congress was finally brought to a standstill on Friday afternoon by a third walk out of staff.

The anger of the majority of members was palpable, and there was a spontaneous meeting of those remaining in the hall to try to continue to discuss some of the remaining motions. This was not possible because the UNITE members would not allow the use of the equipment (microphones etc). A group of members remained and produced a statement with many signatures to be sent to the UCU leadership.

This is an on-going and developing situation, and will have moved on by the time of the meeting.

Tom Murray