



**Minutes of the Branch Meeting held on Tuesday 15 February, 2pm,
Monet Room, St Clements Hospital Main Building**

**Present: John Cripps, Ian Talbot (Chair), Arthur White, Ray Hill, Mark Hillis,
Linda Durrant, Cheryl Godber, Steve Cook, Lin Brereton and Sharon Warner**

**Apologies: Julie Harrison, Wendy Arbon, David Edginton, Julie Hammett,
Philip Bloyce, Liz Potter, Margaret Goddard and Ken Abbott**

Ian welcomed to the meeting, Linda Durrant, Regional Women's Officer,
Sharon Warner and Lin Brereton.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 January were agreed as a true
and accurate record.

2. Matters arising

a) Page 1 2.g

12 reps have confirmed their attendance for the Branch Planning Development
Day to be held at G Block Meeting Room, Bury on 14th March. Annette will email
a reminder to those who have not yet replied.

Action - Annette Petty

b) Page 2.3.a

Steve Cook is attending the Nursing & Midwifery Council Hearing Day on 25th
February. Annette will email a reminder out to the reps.

Action - Annette Petty

c) Page 2 3.b - NEC Elections

Ian did not receive any recommendations for nominations from branch officers
or stewards. The deadline closed last week.

d) Page 2 3.c - Tsunami Disaster

A cheque for £500 has been forwarded to the Disaster Emergency Committee
and a locally produced poster has been emailed out to the reps for distribution.

e) Page 2 3.d - UNISON Welfare

The branch donates annually to the welfare fund (£100 approx). Ian has
received paperwork from London in order that the branch can donate on a
monthly basis (£20 per month) and will arrange to be paid monthly. Following
an application made to welfare by one of the members, a one-off award has
been granted and the cheque was received yesterday, and the branch has
made contact with the member. Mark suggested if a sum of money could be
segregated for any future members who are in financial difficulties as
suggested last month as this would make financial distribution more workable.
Ian will speak to the Treasurer to work a distribution breakdown for more
workable funding in the future. The accounts are presently being audited to
beat the March accountancy deadline under national rule G7.

f) Page 2 3.e - Tax relief for UNISON member subs in Health

No feedback has been received. UNISON nationally is putting a case forward as
it argues many health members are more of a professional body rather than
just a trade union which would receive tax relief on subscriptions.

g) Page 3 2.g - General Secretary/Political Fund Ballots

All members should by now have received their voting papers. Posters have been circulated countywide publicising these ballots. UNISON campaigns hard to defend jobs and services and to promote equality, defend pensions, and protect the health and safety of members. These campaigns would not be effective without our political funds.

h) Page 3 2.h - NHS Pension Scheme

The Government is set to raise the national retirement age to 65. Presently these changes are affecting Local Government members with the NHS to follow in 2006. Three unions are balloting members to ascertain a recommended course of action. National Pensions Campaign Day is Friday 18th February. Information has been circulated and everyone is encouraged to support regional events taking place locally in respect of Local Government colleagues. If members can't attend the public lunchtime events taking place, please write to your local MP. Linda Durrant, Regional Women's Officer attended briefings last week-end. Friday 18th February is constituency day for MP's. An "early day motion" has been signed by 113 MP's to date but over 200 signatures are required overall. If support is not successful in defending Local Government's plea then the NHS Pension reversal will be unsuccessful. Annette to email out information/links again to remind reps as this is an important issue affecting the future of the local government and NHS Pension Schemes.

Action - Annette Petty

i) Page 3 3.j - National Delegate Conference

If any one is interested in attending (21-24 June, Glasgow) please contact Ian Talbot: unison-shc@ntlworld.com

j) Page 3 3.k - Steward Nominations

Annette will write to Ana Mower and Mary Morris inviting them to attend a Branch Committee Meeting so that her nomination can be accepted/ratified.

Action - Annette Petty

k) Page 4 3.o - SMHPT Policy Negotiations

A working policy meeting takes place on Wednesday 16th February, 10am to 12 noon, Suffolk House (attendees Jan Togher Deputy Director of HR, Paul Taylor, Cliff Dawson, Steve Cook and Ian Talbot) to discuss the SMHPT Disciplinary Policy (meeting 10th Feb at Regional Office discussing/amending) Smoking Policy and a series of dates to be confirmed to work through these policies.

3. Urgent Correspondence

a) Branch AGM 15th March 2pm

Ian has emailed out the nomination forms to the reps and the AGM has been advertised. Reps need to be re-nominated if they have been elected for over 12 months. New reps within 12 months need not be re-elected. Please can reps let Ian know if they plan to hold local AGM's during week commencing 14th March. New reps can be nominated at the AGM but they need to be an existing member for 13 weeks. The Branch Rules have been amended over the past few weeks (Draft 5 additions include expenses/how to ratify reps etc) and National Rules are attached, which have also been emailed out to the reps. Comments etc please to Ian. Existing stewards can be nominated by members, but officers need to be nominated by other existing officers. Health & Safety reps are appointed by the branch and don't need re-appointing. Currently the branch has no APF Officer and "no voice", no Young Members Officer, and no Education Officer. Anyone wishing to be nominated for the APF Officer must be a paid up member of the Labour Party. The branch has 2 reps who are labour party members. Ian will email a reminder out to the reps for the AGM/posters.

Action - Ian Talbot

b) Retired Members

Ted Moore ex Nalgo Branch Secretary and East Suffolk and Ipswich Retired Members Secretary will be retiring in April. Ray Hill (ex steward, APF Officer) is shortly taking over and will replace the "Link Up" monthly magazine with "Your Magazine" which is sent out monthly to 170 retired branch members.

c) Steward Nominations

Lin Brereton's nomination representing Suffolk House was accepted and ratified at the meeting, and will forward her contact details to Ian. Sharon Warner declined nomination as a branch steward but was ratified for Agenda for Change Staff Side.

d) Hotel Services Staff at St Clements Hospital/Bartlet Felixstowe

Ken Abbott referred a query in respect of ancillary staff at the Bartlet who are on new contracts (paid double time normally). They were told double time would be paid for Christmas and Bank Holiday working but the statement was retracted by management. There were similar queries from staff at SCH and the Hotel Services Manager apologised to all the staff for the mistake. Philip clarified the situation by emailing the following: Christmas this year was slightly complicated (on the week-end), if staff were booked to work on Saturday/Sunday it was treated as bank holidays i.e. double time and a half for Saturday and Sunday treble time. If they worked Monday/Tuesday instead this is normal bank holiday rates i.e. double time for both days. The UNISON Legal Brief has guidance notes on grievance procedures if followed up by individuals.

e) Questionnaire to PCT Staff - Integrated Management Structure

Over 700 questionnaires were emailed to staff in Central, Coastal and Ipswich PCT's by Kevin Nunn and Philip Bloyce (closing date 28th February). To date 110 have been returned. Philip and Ian will be meeting with Gary Theobald on 23rd February to discuss the findings. So far, the majority of the returned questionnaires are from non-members. Ian will email Kevin and ask him to "flood" application forms to non-members.

Action - Ian Talbot

f) Barbara Gutowska

Due to health reasons, Barbara is standing down as steward/Health & Safety rep for the time being. Hopefully, she will contact the branch in a few months time to assess the situation. She was thanked for the support and help she has given to the branch and members over the past months and Annette to send a letter on behalf of the branch.

Action - Annette Petty

g) Membership

Ian reported that there is just under 2150 branch members and growing. 20 new members on average are joining monthly. Membership packs are sent out to Central/Coastal/Suffolk West/Waveney/Ipswich PCT's in respect of new starter induction days. The branch holds its own database which it is argued as being more accurate than the Regional Membership Services which the branch uses in conjunction with UNISON's RMS membership system.

h) Spring RoadShows

Annette has organised with Debby Tedder from Britannia Building Society another 6 roadshows to be held Countywide in April from 11am to 2pm respectively. Annette will email details out to reps in due course and order posters for distribution.

4. Steward/Officer reports

a) John Cripps - John asked if he could have a branch member database list of members for his area.

Action – Ian Talbot

- b) **Steve Cook** - Steve reported that there are a "flood" of policies on the intranet which did not exist a month ago. Ian has spoken to Philip and he reported they are more of the clinical type. However, Jan Togher, SMHPT Deputy Director of HR is keen to get policies negotiated with UNISON and other accredited unions (currently have been working on Disciplinary Policy and Staff Dress Code). Ian has written to Andrew Evans, Chief Executive, Waveney PCT stating that management are not negotiating with UNISON in respect of all new policies as well as recognition and facilities agreements. Ian to raise with Mark Halliday, Chief Executive, Suffolk Mental Health Partnerships Trust at the meeting next week (minuted), and included on the March agenda for Trust Council. This will affect staff morale and patient care under the Improving Working Lives agreement. We argue there needs to be a change of management structure as better working partnership is required. If this is not achieved, the membership will have to be informed seeking support for a possible dispute to be lodged as UNISON are unhappy with the situation at present. Region have helped sort out the problems with the Re-working of the SMHPT Disciplinary Policy (meeting held at Region on 16th Feb) as it doesn't fully comply with the October 2004 resolutions and is also completely unworkable. Coastal/Central/Ipswich PCT's together with Gary Theobald and Philip Bloyce to influence staff in the individual PCT's and improve this situation. In summing up, the branch as a whole really needs more commitment and involvement from some quarters, especially those working for the PCT's despite there being so few in numbers.
- c) **Linda Durrant** - Linda, Regional Women's Officer came to speak to the meeting about the Women's Development Programme "Pathways into UNISON" which is a pilot programme in the Eastern Region which is designed to encourage new women activists. It is a two part linked programme (8 weeks apart) including events and attracting National Funding which has been awarded for the project. Suffolk HealthCare Branch has been selected as the first health branch to be involved partly because we have too few women stewards. The aim is to encourage more women to get involved in UNISON and hopefully become stewards. The programme focuses on confidence building, workplace issues, collective problem solving etc. There is funding for 16 women's places, and there will be 2 week-end events (1 week-end will be residential). The Branch Committee agreed it would be a good idea for Linda to write to the women members and stewards in the branch and to reply back to her directly (Ian to supply database) to ask if they express an interest in participating (expenses to be funded by the branch). Flyers and specific literature to be organised by Linda and dates will be advised in due course.

5. **AOB**

Brochures/Membership Packs

The Croyde Bay Spring/Autumn holiday brochure has arrived and been distributed via stewards to members and retired members. Please contact the office if you need any more copies or membership packs

6. **Date/Time next meeting**

The AGM will take place on Tuesday 15th March at 2pm, Monet Room, Main Building, St Clements Hospital (Lunch from 1.15pm). David Kitchen (Frizzell) will be attending. In-house training for Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Rights will be lead by Cheryl Godber, Regional Organiser from 9.30am to 1pm. Please can you confirm to Annette if you are able/unable to attend both the training/meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4pm
ADP/IT 180205/250205

