### Briefing note - Branch Exec meeting on Thursday 17th November

1. Attendance:
2. Apologies: Marie Riley, Allison Clark, Dean Harper (RO)
3. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20th October.
4. Matters arising – Covered on the agenda
5. **Branch Secretary Report including:**
6. ***Disputes updates:***

**i.** ***Welfare facilities at Knaresborough courthouse museum.***

A meeting has now been arranged for 7th December.

1. ***Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)* –**

* UNISON members at NYCC have voted 98% to accept against 2% to reject the new NYC terms and conditions. DH updated members here at Harrogate on 10th November by email. Roadshows have been arranged in works time, with the ones at Harrogate scheduled for Monday 21st November as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Location** |
| 21st November | 6.30am – 7.30am | Claro Road depot |
|  | 8.00am – 9.00am | Claro Road depot |
|  | 10.30am – 12.30pm | Queen’s Suite, Harrogate Convention Centre |
|  | 2.30pm – 4.30pm | Queen’s Suite, Harrogate Convention Centre |

DH will be at all four sessions.

A follow up session may also be scheduled for December – Provisionally, 12th December - TBC.

The key elements of the new NYCC t’s and c’s are:

* 28 days annual leave, increasing to 34 days’ after 5 years’ continuous service
* 8 public holidays (plus any additional public holidays where confirmed by the NJC)
* 2 additional days paid leave for volunteering and personal development
* Up to 10 days paid compassionate leave
* Increase in flexi-time allowance to take up to 24 days per year, subject to line manager approval
* Compulsory Unpaid Leave to be replaced with voluntary purchase of additional leave
* Sickness to be removed as a criteria for incremental pay progression
* Changes to the pay scale for grades C/D and J/K
* The Regional Officer has written to the CEX of NYCC (soon to be NYC) on behalf of the Branch secretaries advising that UNISON cannot support the Senior Management restructure which is going ahead pre-transfer (i.e. before vesting day).
* The Regional Officer is responding to the TUPE consultation on behalf of the Branch secretaries. The letter will be shared with members once it has been sent.

The two TUPE roadshows on Wednesday 26th October at Harrogate Convention Centre (HCC) at 10.30am to 12.30pm and 14.30 to 16.30 pm were not as popular as the earlier ones . DH and VD were unable to attend but there was UNISON representation from Regional Office.

A video version of the roadshows is now available. Contact DH for info.

* DH undertook two TUPE drop in sessions on 3rd of November, one at the Civic Centre and one at HCC.
* Pensions – There will be a ‘window’ to transfer other pensions into the LGPS for staff who will TUPE transferred across.

Also people who have a final salary element of their pension might want to consider ‘merging their pots’ when they move to the new council but this does depend on circumstances. The window is likely to be 12 months and Pension members will be written to. UNISON priority here is for an FAQ’s/info sheet, further advice from Regional Office and possibly some further briefing sessions.

* The next ‘all NY branches’ H&S meeting is scheduled for 14th December.
* DH reminds members that the Branch is continuing to receive a lot of enquiries around LGR. He will respond to all enquiries but it may take a little longer than normal.

1. ***General update***

* **Covid-19** – The coolphase air circulation system at the Civic Centre is up and running and behaving how it should. All the filters have now been changed so are all fresh. Workplace support are looking at CO2 levels in the building to see if they can look to start relaxing the open window policy for the winter so the building isn’t as cold as it was last year.
* DH received confirmation and emailed members on 24th October of HBC’s guidance relating to COVID booster vaccination and FLU jabs where eligible…..

- If you are offered an opportunity to have COVID booster vaccine or Flu jab,  go online and try to choose wherever possible a time and date that would be outside of your working hours e.g. weekend, evening appointments.

- If this is not possible, then you should speak to your manager before booking an appointment as soon as you can and in agreement  reasonable time will be given for you to attend your appointment.

* **Holiday Pay – Election duty**. DH has yet again chased this up but is is still waiting on the report from the Head of ODI who advises that she is waiting for a response from Legal. DH had hoped this would be sorted and paid prior to Christmas but this is not going to happen. A meeting has now been arranged to discuss further later today (17th November).
* **Annualised Hours** – DH has raised concerns relating to issues around:
* Notice period for rota’s are unclear.  What is ‘reasonable notice’
* The process around B/H’s is unclear
* The wording around Christmas Day and New Year’s Day is unclear and contracts also seem to be unclear.
* It is unclear what position HBC would take at HCC if staff have, through no fault of their own, not fully worked their annual hours.  Staff should not suffer any financial detriment in such circumstances
* **Conferences** – A reminder that we are seeking a Delegate to represent the Branch at the National Women’s Conference in February 2023, which is in Bournemouth (Delegates need to be registered by 24th November). Contact DH. LA showing an interest.
* **Retired Members Conference –** Keith Watts attended the Conference in Telford on the 18th and 19th October as delegate for the Branch. His report is attached at appendix 1.
* **Tree Planting** - SP to give further update but the date has been set to plant 8 trees on Wednesday 30th November. DH sent out update prepared by SP to members on 14th November. DH to check that members can do this in works time.
* **COP27 –** Email issued on 10th November in relation to UNISON position
* **People Strategy** – Nothing to report
* **Free UNISON courses** circulated to members on 10th November.
* **Pensions** – DH circulated his report on 21st October to members in relation to hisattendance at the North Yorkshire Pension Board meeting on 6th October.
* **TU/ HR meeting** - The next meeting is scheduled for 24th November.
* **Corporate Employee Forum –** DH circulated the minutes for the 12th October meeting on 20th October. The next (and probably final) meeting is scheduled for 17th January.
* **Cost of Living crisis** - DH circulated details of UNISON’s Energy Support Fund Phase 2 on 15th November.

Richmondshire District Council is to give all staff a £350 bonus for Christmas to help with cost of living. Total cost, with on-costs, is £93k so just below the £100k cap that would have had to go to NYCC for section 24 approval. DH discussed with CEX at regular meeting on 16th November and it as made clear no plans to do similar here at Harrogate.

* **Untaken flexi leave and TOIL –** DH has raised the issue of ‘banked’ flexi and TOIL and what happens to it as at 31st March. Head of ODI has responded that this is being looked at across the Council’s and it may be addressed differently to what is usually in place. Members are advised to mske sure they can evidence any TOIL they have built up
* Are we to order any diaries? We ordered 32 last year. Price is £2 each

1. **Standing items**
2. **Pay**
3. ***NJC***

* The 2023/2024 pay claim was discussed at the latest NJC Committee meeting on 8th November.
* It was agreed that a quick and coordinated time table is needed. UNISON, Unite and GMB unions have agreed to consult with members on submitting the same claim RPI plus 2%, this has been agreed by all the unions. UNISON’s position remains the same that the preference is for claim focussed on pay, however the other unions are likely to want conditions to form part of it.
* It was agreed the priority is to get a quick turn round so Head office have been asked to make preparations for a possible indicative ballot should this be required early next year.
* It was agreed that UNISON’s consultation will be completed by the end of the year and this will be communicated with the other unions to push for a coordinated time table. So look out for the Branch consultation on this, likely in December.
* The 2022/23 payscales were sent out by email to members on 4th November and are on our UNISON Branch intranet site on the Hub.
* Further information received from National office relating to impact of back-dated pay on Universal Credit. DH to send out email update.

1. **North Yorkshire Branches re-organisation – post vesting day**

There is a meeting of the North Yorkshire Branch Secretaries on 13th December to discuss this but the agreed way forward currently is that Branches will remain separate during 2023 with the aim for a merger in January 2024.

1. **Corporate reviews / other reviews**

* Nothing to report

1. **H & S**

* There was a fire evacuation drill at the Civic Centre on 10th November. Everyone evacuated safely but there were a few issues. Unfamiliarity seems to have been the main issue. There is a short [evacuation procedures](http://thehub.harrogate.local/team/CorporateWorkplaceFacilities/CorporateFacilitiesMangement/Building/Evacuation/Procedures/FireEmergencyProcedures.doc) video that staff should familiarise themselves with. This is being updated slightly as it was originally made in relation to working at the Civic during the Covid pandemic but it is still recommended that members access the video.
* DH attended the Brimhams meeting on 20th October. No big issues.
* The Claro Road ‘walkaround’ went ahead on 8th November. No big issues. Need to schedule in a further ‘walkaround for February/March.
* The next HBC Corporate meeting is scheduled for 22nd November 2022.

1. **Branch Treasurers Report**

We have had an offer by someone to be our second Branch auditor to help with the audit of the Branch accounts early next year (2023).

Recruit-a-Friend cheques went out thisweek and members names have been forwarded for the NY Branch prize draw.

We have 18 new members this month.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TOTAL MEMBERSHIP | 612 |  |  |
| FINANCES |  |  |  |
| **Bal b/fwd End Oct** | £35,200.94 |  |  |
| **Income** | £1,232.37 |  |  |
| **Expenditure** | £5,561.15 |  |  |
| Balance c/fwd | £30,872.16 |  |  |

**Income**

Branch Income (October) £1,145.37

Quiz raffle income 05.10.22 £55.00

Whitbby trip 0n 23.07.22 – Guests £32.00

**Expenditure**

D Houlgate travel x 9 £132.25

K Watts - Conference attendance £211.15

J Johnson - Conference attendance and travel x 1 £553.70

Labour Research Magazine subscription £138.75

Recruit -a–friend payments x 20 £400.00

Indulge Deli bar – Quiz catering 05.10.22 £442.50

Panto tickets – Balance x150 £3,682.80

**Note:**

£7,678.17 in the Industrial Action Fund (2022 to transfer in)

1. **Social**

150 tickets are booked for Aladdin on Saturday 3rd December. DH has publicisd and there has been a high level of interest. DH to start sorting tickets w/c 21st November

Christmas quiz is now booked in for Wednesday 14th December - There will be 2 free drinks on offer for UNISON members. DH to publicise.

Appendix 1

**RETIRED MEMBERS CONFERENCE 18/19 OCTOBER 2022**

I attended the Retired Members Conference on behalf of the Harrogate LG Branch. The Conference was held at Telford, a strange modern town. The Conference was the first fully fledged one since 2019. Last year had been an online conference which was regarded as not been successful as members generally were not able to do anything but listen.

Unsurprisingly the Conference was dominated on 19 October by agreed motions concerning:

* Cost of Living Crisis and Impact on Older People, including energy
* Need to reform Social Care, need for Integrated Care system
* NHS privatisation, threat to free prescriptions, widespread disruption to NHS due to pandemic and funding and staffing crises
* Poverty for older people, shouldn’t need to choose between eat of heat, threat to triple lock pension rises
* Cuts to public transport, especially buses
* Need for Commissioner for Older People in England (already exist in N Ireland and Wales)
* Lack of coverage in U magazine of Retired Members (Yorkshire and Humberside issue)
* Lack of representation of Retired Members on NEC, can only take part in votes for electing General Secretary but no other positions.

Retired Members Conferences tend to be non-controversial and consensual in comparison to my experience of National Delegate Conference. No card votes were held. Nevertheless 2 motions supported by the National Committee were lost on standing orders and tax allowances.

On the 18 October there was a meeting of Yorkshire and Humberside members to discuss our stance to conference motions etc, as well as a social for us on 17 October, both proving to be useful.

There were also Discussion Groups. I chose to attend a Group discussing how to foster greater understanding between younger and older people – we looked at practical examples from around the world, including campaigning regarding the climate crisis, abortion rights, social housing.

We undertook a myth busting quiz which included the following facts:

* 18% of older people live in poverty
* 22% of young people 16-24 live in poverty
* 21.4% of older people rent
* 1.3 million in UK in absolute poverty
* Private rents are on average 50% more than social rents
* In 1983 incomes to house price ratio for buying a home was 3.5%, today it is 7%
* 36% of 16-24 year olds are on zero hour contracts
* 1 in 20 of 16-24 year olds have caring responsibilities
* 10% of 65+ are carers.

In general members are being urged to contact their MPs and join in the TUC lobby of Parliament to highlight the need to inflation proof increases to public sector pay, the minimum wage and universal credit, the need to maintain the triple lock for pensions and take greater action to resolve the energy crisis amongst many pressing issues.

Unison has produced a series of billboard adverts and branches are asked to consider funding some.

Yorkshire and Humber Unison members are taking a leading role in the TUC Better Bus campaigns. Each council now has responsibility for developing improved bus services but cuts to government funding have already resulted in around 20 services being bus removed in West Yorkshire. Currently the West Yorkshire Mayor subsidises bus travel. Whether the new North Yorkshire Mayor (from 2024) will have monies and the desire to subsidise the cost of bus travel, never mind retain or improve bus services, remains to be seen.

There is now a newly formed Yorkshire and Humber Retired Members Committee and I will represent the Branch at meetings.

If you wish to raise any issue please do not hesitate to contact me.

Keith Watts

Retired Members Secretary

Harrogate Local Government Branch

Contact: email: watts.rae2@gmail.com