

FOR DISCUSSION

The approaching Triennial General Meeting – where officers and branch committee members are elected and scheduled to take place in March 2018 - has meant that issues relating to branch organisation and the branch rules should be considered. Following branch discussion on these issues in January, the branch committee will submit amendments to the branch rules for consideration at the February branch meeting (members can submit amendments to branch rules as well). Then if there are new officer posts these will be elected at the Triennial General Meeting.

In my view, constitutions are there to serve the organization and should be amended to produce a stronger - more effective - branch. Currently, we have an attendance of 30 to 40 at branch meetings, run the monthly song club, have an outdoor street event for the UN day for Older Persons and have well supported social events in the form of a summer outing and a Xmas lunch. Clearly, we can continue to reproduce this year in and year out. We also have started some education courses for branch members.

However, I believe that there is hidden talent amongst branch activists - talent that we should utilize to the full if our union is going to get the greatest benefit. We will be seeing ever more new retirees joining our branch – paying the RMP rate – as free card holders die off. The new members will have capacity to support trade union activity if we give them something to do. If it appears that everything is already being done by existing branch officers and committee members, then “new members” will not bother.

We need to think about what we want our branch to look like in 3 years' time. How can we engage wider layers of members? Furthermore, we need to match the talent of those that are prepared to help with the tasks that the branch needs. There is no point in establishing new posts if no one wants to do them.

The Action Subcommittee was originally established to ensure that the branch did things when the previous branch secretary was unwell. But it has now shown that it has a wider role as it is another forum for member engagement. We do have the benefit of free meeting facilities at John Smith house. If there is interest it would be possible to establish an **Education subcommittee** looking at setting up new courses and promoting existing courses to branch members. This could be headed up by an elected Education Officer who would also be a member of the branch committee.

Similarly, it would be possible to have an **IT subcommittee** looking at developing the use of IT for the branch and helping to train members to cover tasks – web design, e-marketing, video broadcasting etc.

We also know that we need to generate additional financial resources. This could include everything from funding applications, to targeting appeal letters to wealthy branches. It may be appropriate to create a **Fund-Raising Officer** and subcommittee.

We ought to consider what we want to do with the Union Song Club. Does it need to be run as a free-standing body? Do we need more “presenters” and more people who can set up the equipment as I worry about going on holiday (surely an inappropriate thing for a retiree) in case there is no one to run the song club.

There are a number of amendments that we could make to our branch constitution.

IT Officer: I think that we should have an IT Officer for the branch - the sort of thing that James Ito is already beginning to do. We could have an occasional IT sub group meeting as there will be other members who have expertise in this area.

It may be that we should establish an **Assistant Secretary** post as this would be ideal for Maureen and we could see if there is anyone else interested in becoming **Treasurer**.

So the new branch committee might include: **Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary, Vice-Chair, Equalities officer, Education Officer, IT Officer, and Fund Raising Officer** plus an additional 4 **committee members**. The branch committee would be a bit more like a branch executive and with the increased workload of a more active branch might have to meet on a mid-monthly basis to deal with branch business,

Constitution of Unite Retired Members Branch, Glasgow

1. Name

The name of the branch shall be Unite Retired Members Branch, Glasgow

2. Objects:

The Objects of the branch shall be to promote for the benefit of Unite Retired Members by advancing education, relieving suffering, isolation and distress and furthering health opportunities. In furtherance of the above Objects but not otherwise:

- to campaign on behalf of the retired membership for improved pensions and improved housing and to defend and improve all benefits previously gained for pensioners.
- to provide social and recreational activities for members and to provide a meeting point for the membership.
- to organise conferences and gatherings for all members where they will have an opportunity to socialise and raise issues of concern for them.
- to set up educational and training programmes and events which have been identified by the membership.
- to offer support, advice and policies of Unite the Union.
- To promote and support the campaigns of Unite the Union

3. Membership.

Full membership is open to all retired Members of Unite the Union and currently requires a subscription of £26 per annum. Other retired persons may join the branch through Community Membership.

4. Committee and Office Bearers.

The Committee shall consist of up to 8 people elected at the Triennial General Meeting which shall elect a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer and Equalities Officer. The Committee shall meet as required and four members of the committee shall constitute a quorum. The secretary shall be responsible for drawing up the agenda for the meetings and shall be responsible for ensuring that a minute of each meeting is taken. The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that the financial affairs of the organisation are handled responsibly and that proper accounts are kept and produced for audit. (NB the branch committee shall be in a 3 year cycle)

5. Meetings

5.1 Triennial General Meetings

The Branch shall hold a Triennial General Meeting in February of every third year. The membership shall be given at least 7 days written notice of the date and venue of the Triennial General Meeting.

5.2 AGMs

In addition, the Branch shall hold an AGM in the years between the Triennial General Meeting to receive reports on branch activity and a financial statement and to consider any other relevant business.

5.3 The Branch shall meet in ordinary session on the first Thursday of the month excepting the months of July and December when there will be no meeting and January when it will meet on the second Thursday of the month.

5.4 General Meetings

General meetings may be called by the committee or at the written request of 20 members.

5.5 Chairing of Meetings

All Meetings shall be chaired by the Chairperson. In her/his absence, the meeting shall be chaired by the Vice-Chairperson or other member of the committee.

5.6 Voting

All members present shall be entitled to vote. All votes taken shall be by show of hands or by secret ballot at the discretion of the chairperson.

5.7 Quorum 15 members shall form a quorum.

6. Finance

All monies raised by or on behalf of the Branch shall be applied to further the Objects of the Branch and for no other purposes. No office bearer may be paid or given a sum of money or honorarium except insofar as it is a payment to reimburse that member for outlays actually incurred on the business of the Branch. The financial year shall run January - December.

7. Bank Accounts. All bank accounts shall be with the Unity Trust Bank. The bank account shall be operated in the name of the Branch. There shall be three signatories drawn from the committee members and shall include the Treasurer. Cheques require at least two of the three signatories for endorsement.

8. Auditors. The accounts of the Branch shall be audited by two members elected by the Branch

9. Amendments to the constitution. Any resolution to alter or amend the Constitution shall be submitted to and considered by the Branch at a General Meeting. Amendments will be adopted where they are passed by a two thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.

10. Dissolution of the Branch. Any motions to dissolve the Branch will be in keeping with the rules of Unite the Union.

11. Delegations. The Branch may appoint delegates to Constituency Labour Parties, conferences and to represent the Branch on outside bodies as agreed by the Branch.