

Chair suspended Standing Orders to hear our Speaker, Elinor McKenzie, SPF EC member but speaking as an individual on pensioners' issues. Elinor spoke in great depth on Concessionary Travel, State pensions and Free health and Personal care.

Chair welcomed 33 members to Branch meeting including new member Margaret Cochrane.

1. Apologies – S. Morris, J. Friel, C. Tayler, D. Paterson, T. Collins, J. Conroy, G. Convery, J. Docherty, D. Edwards, H. McLuskey, Bob McKenna, J. Patrick, P. Rankin.
2. Minutes of previous meeting accepted as correct.
3. Matters Arising
 - a) Bill Newman stated that he was circulating a sheet for members to indicate whether they wished to attend the new Education Courses
 - b) Anita Shelton asked that we add someone from “Action on Hearing Loss” to our list of future speakers
 - c) Although Ian Findlay had been elected by the Area Activists Committee as a delegate to the Scottish Policy Conference, he has now been informed that he cannot attend (see Rule 6.2). This to be raised at Regional Retired Members Committee.
 - d) Mick Rice reported that Jim Ito had updated the Branch web site. Jim said that comments and suggestions would be appreciated.
 - e) Peoples Assembly Scotland bus to demo at the Tory Party Conference in Manchester on Oct 1st against the Government’s Austerity Policies. Agreed to pay for 4 places at a cost of £17 per head. Dave Sherry and John Vail to attend, so rest is donation.
4. Correspondence
 - a) Age Scotland – Regional Network Event, 10th October in St Stephens, Bath St. Glasgow. John Rogers to attend.
 - b) Special Hearing Aid Advice late September. Circulate round table and members can take note of who to contact.
 - c) Notice of Anti-Fascist Demo in Perth on Sunday 10th September – assemble at Railway Station.
 - d) Notice of SPF demo at Scottish Parliament on Thursday 28th September. Agreed to pay train fares of those who attend.
 - e) “Belonging”, the truth behind the headlines will be showing in Grangemouth.
5. United Nations Day for Older Persons – Mick reported that our event will be held in Sauchiehall St at Boots the Chemist from 11.00am until 1.00pm. We will be reproducing our Pensioners’ Leaflet and have a petition on concessionary travel. There will also be speakers and musicians and The Song Club Choir may sing “The Branch Song”. We want to promote Intergenerational Solidarity. Community Branch Will help and Jamie Caldwell will provide umbrellas and Gazebo.

6. Reports

- a) Mick Reported that the Branch Christmas Lunch will be held on Thursday 7th December in the Roderick Dhu Pub on Thursday 7th December. Cost will be £10 for members and £15 for one guest. He will collect money at October and November meetings and circulate a sheet for choice from the menu (which was enclosed with our paperwork). Also, there will be a Christmas event for the song club on 14th December.
- b) Anita commented on the UN report on UK Disability Rights. UK was regressing and although Britain's signature was added in 2007, but little has been done. In Scotland number of wheelchairs adapted has decreased as well as the provision of sheltered housing. She also referred to the problems of funeral poverty and what the Scottish Government has proposed to tackle this problem.
- c) Action Sub-Committee. Bill reported that they are working on an information leaflet for new members. Also, Irene requested some comments from members on the last trip and what they got from it.
- d) Union Song Club – Mick announced that Maureen Gardner had produced a New Solidarity Song for the Song Club (copy attached to our paperwork).
- e) Treasurer's Report – Brief Report given

Total Income	£9, 398.97
Total Expenditure	£3,840.80
Balance	<u>£5,558.17</u>

7. Any other business

- a) Irene was asked if the recent flooding had affected the area in which she had been volunteering. She stated that the college and village was Ok but the area surrounding it is badly flooded. Also, there were lots of refugees from Myanmar.
- b) Chairman Jake Mcleod thanked Bobby Brennan and Bernie Beagan for helping him at the Sports Direct Demo in Sauchiehall St. In their main depot, where warehouse is, they asked workforce to elect person they thought was the nicest manager and this person was then made their "Shop Steward". When the sops close, staff are expected to put stock back in order but they don't get paid for this time. At AGM 62% supported the chairman who had told a Parliamentary Group that they would give staff set hours of work. This has yet to happen.
- c) Chair announced that there was a "Marxism in Scotland 2017" event on Saturday 28th October St Stephens Centre, Bath St Glasgow
- d) Intimation of a Boycott of Cineworld where Picture House Cinema Workers are on strike.
- e) John Vail gave notice of motion for next branch meeting.

Meeting closed at 2.30pm with a vote of thanks to the chair.

**GLASGOW RETIRED MEMBERS BRANCH
ACTION SUB COMMITTEE
MINUTE OF 21st SEPTEMBER 2017**

1. Attendance: D. Paterson (Chair); J. McLeod; I. Woodward; B. Brennan; R. McKenna;

2. Apologies: B. Newman; I. Graham; M. Gardner; H. Hutcheson; I. Findlay.

3. Matters arising from Branch minute of 7th September 2017

The following was noted: -

- a) There has been involvement by Branch members at the demo to Tory Party conference and The Anti-Fascist demo in Perth.
- b) There will be involvement by Branch members at the following: - The Scottish Pensioners Forum demo at Scottish Parliament and
- c) It is hoped there will be members attending the "Marxism in Scotland 2017" event on the 28th October; and that we will support the boycott/strike of Cineworld workers.

4. Branch Committee meeting: it was noted that it meets tomorrow the 22nd September to finalize arrangements for UN Day for Older People in Sauciehall Street on 30th September. The Community Branch is also involved.

5. Awards for All application: The Chair mentioned that preparations are underway for the Trip to Blackpool etc. I. Graham has met Dr Stephan Mullen regarding Glasgow's Slave Trade and a possible talk by him at the Branch. It may be advantageous if we have the "talk and walk" on the same day separate from a Branch meeting day, possibly in January. It was thought this should be done prior to the application submission to show our involvement and commitment to AfA. D. Paterson and I. Graham to meet to work more on the application.

6. Branch Learning Course: B. Newman had circulated a form at the Branch for those interested in this course which is open to everyone. 7 names were noted however a course run by Unite requires 10 attendees. Two more were added at today's meeting and members will be asked again at the October Branch meeting to append their name.

7. AOB: J. McLeod mentioned he has had meetings with Unite staff regarding death benefits and the differences within Unite.

B. Brennan recommended for reading the book called "A Very British Coup" which can be obtained from Waterstones.

8. DONM: Thursday 12th October at 12.30pm.

Report of meeting with Jeane Freeman, 13th September 2017

The SPF were represented by Rose Jackson, Maureen Gardner and Elinor McKenzie and the SSA by Bill Johnstone and Dorothy Murray. Civil Servants Ian Glover and Lesley Irvine also in attendance. A joint letter had previously been sent listing the items we wished to discuss. The SSA raised the issue of "A Minister for Age, Ageing and Older People's issues". We were told it was up to the First Minister to decide which Ministers she wants to have and then who she would ask to do it. She advised that her Ministerial portfolio covered older people. The next issue raised by the SSA was the re-instatement of "The Older People's Consultative Forum". Bill gave a potted history of the development of SOPA and we were informed that they received funding to have one assembly meeting and one reception per year. Ms. Freeman indicated her support for a Consultative Forum which could deal with such issues as Heating Allowance and Fuel Poverty and other issues to be devolved from Westminster. The Civil Servants were charged with consulting relevant parties and to prepare suggestions for further consultation in October. Her intent is to have first meeting in November and that the Forum is a government group and does not replicate the work of the cross-party group chaired by Sandra White.

The issue of Fuel Poverty and the Winter Heating Allowance was raised by myself on behalf of the SPF and facts and figures were produced in support of our request to increase this allowance. The Minister replied that 11 benefits had been devolved to the Scottish Government, including the Cold Weather Payments and Winter Heating Allowance. She advised that the transfer of funds from Westminster in 2019 would be based on the spend in 2018, so there will be no new monies linked to the transfer. She also raised her concerns about child poverty. The only benefits to increase will be those mentioned in their election manifesto- carers' allowance, extending winter fuel support to families with a disabled child.

The next issue raised by the SPF was the issue of Funeral Poverty. Maureen Gardner welcomed many of the recent statements made by the Government Minister. Ms. Freeman acknowledged the disparity of charging throughout the country and the problems of poor practice. Any harmonization of costs should be downwards and not increasing of prices. The Government is encouraging a social enterprise approach re funeral directors and we were advised of such a partnership in East Ayrshire. At the moment many people have pre-paid funeral plans, and they think they have put enough money aside to cover costs, but it is only when you look at the small print that those left behind find they still have a lot to pay. Angela Constance is working on Social Security payments to be affected in 2019. An additional payment of £700 at the moment is subject to intrusive questions. If someone is eligible based on the qualifying criteria then the money will be released immediately. And if someone is on a low income then they will know when making arrangements what they are entitled to. Most of the things like Funeral Bonds are not currently covered by the FSA. She also stated that Social Enterprise was the likely way forward rather than "Nationalization".

On the issue of concessionary travel, the Minister pointed out that their manifesto was to extend this to other groups. The SPF restated its policy of retaining the concessionary travel scheme for those aged 60 and argued that it should be extended to cover rail and ferry travel, and that there should be an improvement in rural services to help combat loneliness and isolation. The Minister said she would pass our comment on to the Transport Minister, although she herself believed that the age for concessionary travel should be increased to 65/state pension age?

There was no time to raise other issues, but the Minister did say that Government wished to hold an event connected to but not on United Nations Day of Older Persons. They wanted to celebrate the contribution made by older people to society. It would be an afternoon event with SPF/SSA involvement but planning and costs would be managed by the relevant Civil Servants, possibly in November or December.

Maureen Gardner

Glasgow Trades Council
20 September 2017

A small but lively meeting which began with an appeal to Trade Union branches for funds for next year's May Day Rally. No support has been given for some time from the City Council or the Glasgow Labour Party and reserves are approaching rock bottom. Unfortunately, few Glasgow trade union branches now attend Trades Council meetings and membership fees and donations are therefore small. I would suggest our Branch considers a modest donation. Research continues to find a suitable venue for the 2018 Rally.

The speaker for the evening was from the Hamish Allan Centre, a Council resource providing assistance, advice and accommodation to those who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. He pointed out that although the Council has stated that the number of homeless is falling, visible evidence shows the problem is increasing. It is intended to close the Centre on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, referring those in need to a multidisciplinary hub. There are fears that ultimately the Centre will be decommissioned. There seems to be a progressive move to shift the responsibility for the homeless to the private sector. The speaker said that the responsible councillor seemed to be sympathetic to the plight of the homeless but out of her depth in dealing with the problem, allowing harsher responses from Council officials. It was admitted that the Hamish Allan Centre is not fit for purpose as it has been starved of funds by the Council. The Clyde Centre has 54 beds but is not adequate for the needs.

In dealing with current disputes, it was mentioned that Glasgow University had plans for 20 redundancies at its Sports and Recreation Service and that of its 65 staff, 60 would have to reapply for jobs. This seems to be symptomatic of cost cutting at the University as savings are being made to help meet the cost of developing the Western Hospital site.

Finally, there was a discussion on the legal pressure on Glasgow City Council to belatedly tackle the equal pay fiasco. There seems to be a willingness by the new administration to meet with trade unions to deal with this immense crisis.

Bill Newman

Regional Retired Members' Co-ordinating Committee
20 September 2017

Ian Findlay who had previously been a reserve member has been elected to a full member to attend the Eastbourne education course.

UCATT had 329 branches with 3600 retired members who all held free cards. To become full members of Unite Retired Members' branches they would have to pay, like existing Unite members the £26pa cost to become + members. They had shown unhappiness at this, not least as the transfer of UCATT members to Unite had been more of a take-over than a merger. It was felt that Unite members needed to be tactful in coaxing UCATT members to join our branches.

In response to a request for a grant to the Scottish Pensioners Forum proportionately to that given to the English based National Pensioners Convention, the Union' Finance and General Purposes Committee had approached the Scottish TUC who had said that in its view the SPF was adequately funded. The request was therefore declined. It was pointed out that the grant given by the Scottish Government to the SPF was administered by the STUC for specific purposes only. The Chair of the Coordinating Committee said that the NPC actually had a presence in Scotland and he was on the Scottish Committee. However, their presence seems to be purely nominal. It was thought it might be worthwhile making a further attempt to get support for the SPF if the full facts were given to the F and GP Committee.

Bill Newman