

Minutes of the Unite Glasgow Retired Members Branch 5th October 2017

Chair suspended Standing Orders to hear our speaker, Phil Wiseman, Chair of the National Retired Members Committee. He detailed his history as an AEU member and his current involvement as Chair of the NHS SOS in Liverpool and observer member of NEC. He pointed out that 28% of retired members voted in recent election for General Secretary, as opposed to 15% of general membership. Delegates at Policy and Rules Conference supported Retired Members but we still only have observer status with right to speak. During questions, he was unaware of the role of the SPF in Scotland.

Members then stood for a minute's silence in respect of Rodney Bickerstaffe and Albert Wheeler's friend Liz.

Chair welcomed 39 members to Branch meeting, including new member Billy Foster.

1. Apologies – I. Graham, M. Cochrane, J. Ito, A. Cameron, G. Kirk, J. Docherty, M. Vass, J. Hughes, L. McEwan, P. Rankin.
2. Minutes of previous meeting accepted as correct.
3. Matters Arising -
 - a) D. Paterson circulated a sheet asking for everyone's postcode for the AFA form.
 - b) D. Sherry had attended the Anti Austerity demo at Tory Party Conference in Manchester. Dave refused any contribution from the Branch towards his expenses. He reported there were about 40K on the march, and large number of postal workers. He said we should watch out for more protests.
 - c) Mick reported on our event in Sauchiehall St re "Hands Off Our Bus Pass". Over 20 branch members turned up, we had appeared on social media. We had singers and our own song club; leaflets were handed out and many signatures obtained on petition; Mick spoke on the PA system and we got lots of attention.
4. Correspondence -
 - a) Age Scotland AGM on 23rd October- John Vail to attend.
 - b) Black History Month – Frank Murphy elaborated on the film shows and lectures.
 - c) Notification of Lecture at STUC from 5.30 – 6.30pm "Organising against Racism"
 - d) Notification of Mandela Web Site and A Fund-Raising Drive from the Mandela Foundation with goal to commission the building of a statue.
 - e) NPC Bulletin
 - f) Demo in Edinburgh on Saturday 7th October in support of Public Sector Pay Increases.
 - g) Invite to affiliate to "Campaign for Socialism" – Branch Committee to look at for next meeting.
5. Reports –
 - a) Christmas Lunch – Tickets were available and Anita would distribute and collect payment at end of meeting.
 - b) Equalities- Anita reported on Age Scotland's Luminate Festival and had copies of programme for distribution. Black History Month publication. Roger McKenzie would be speaking at STUC event on Friday 6th October and "Challenging Racism" on Thursday 12th October. She suggested he could be invited to speak at a future Branch meeting.

- c) Action Sub-Committee – David Paterson reported on the ongoing AWA application; draft leaflet for new members, 11 names for Education Course, and recommendation of a book by Chris Mullin – “A Very British Coup”. Date of next meeting – 12th October.
 - d) Scottish Pensioners’ Forum – Maureen Gardner had submitted a full report of meeting with Jeane Freeman, Social Security Minister. She highlighted that Ms Freeman was not in favour of increasing the Winter Heating Allowance, but as stated in their manifesto hoped to extend support for families with a disabled child. She updated us on progress re funeral poverty. However, she was not in favour of sustaining the provision of concessionary travel to those aged 60, but favoured it being given at state retiral age. Maureen also reported on the SPF lobby of Parliament on the “Hands Off Our Bus Pass” Campaign and that Richard Leonard had spoken in favour both outside and inside the Scottish Parliament.
 - e) Regional Retired Members Committee – Bill Newman had submitted a written report. He stated that Ian Findlay has been refused as delegate from the Area Activists to Scottish Policy Conference. Also, problems with his delegation to “Summer” School in Eastbourne. Unsure whether we have 4 or 5 delegates and Chair asked if he should not attend in solidarity with Ian, but branch recommended that he go and “kick up hell”. UCATT has 3600 retired members who held free cards and they do not wish to pay the £26 to become plus members. With regards to our request that a donation be made by FGP to the SPF this was refused but it was felt that there was a misunderstanding about how SPF is funded. M. Gardner gave notice of motion on this for next meeting. Chair pointed out that UCATT members were still entitled to attend Branch meetings, but could not participate at any other level of the Union.
 - f) Trades Council Report – A written report was submitted. Frank Murphy explained what the Hamish Allan Centre was – a Council resource providing assistance and advice and accommodation to those who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. He felt there was a move towards de-commissioning the centre. Also looking for funding for next year’s May Day Demo. Ian and Bobby said they would raise this at Area Activists Committee and ask that they recommend to their branches that they should affiliate and make a donation.
6. Motion to Branch Sub-mitted by John Vail and moved by him -

“The economic disaster which is plaguing the nation under the rule of the Tories, has led to the most savage cuts in benefits and welfare since the end of World War 2, and are currently hurting the weakest members of society, from the youngest to the oldest. Our eldest citizens have traditionally suffered from poverty in old age, it has been their lot to be squeezed for as little as governments could get away with in state pension payment. As if this perennial problem faced by our elders is not enough, we are now being informed that our miserly pension is becoming a serious burden on the country – because we are “LIVING LONGER!”

In the course of time it’s to be anticipated that such improvements in life expectation will continue to benefit future generations as science and medicine progresses, thus demanding entirely revolutionary redistribution of the resources of life, contrary to what the negative, malicious and dangerous implications contained in the above statement – unspoken as they are – suggest.

We are living in a world which is richer than ever before and with access to an

unprecedented amount of resources on economic terms which make access to them constantly more available.

We should demand alongside stopping the cuts:

- A state pension of £200 per week for all;
- Extended provision of care home provisions;
- Extra funds for local authority support services.”

Jim Inverarity suggested that “Tories” in the first line should be replaced by “Conservative Party”. Sammy Morris seconded motion which was carried.

7. Any other business

- a) Maureen Gardner reported that she had been impressed with the Forth Valley Retired Members Branch Banner which she had seen at the SPF lobby of the Scottish parliament. It contained two iconic images – one of the Falkirk Wheel and one of the Kelpies. We have still to purchase our branch banner and it could possibly follow the same idea – e.g. the Finnieston Crane, La Passionara Statue, the Duke of Wellington Statue with Cone, The Riverside Museum and Tall Ship. Members were asked to consider all possible icons and submit these ideas to Branch Secretary for future Branch consideration.
- b) It was reported that a film has been made about Dennis Skinner and it was felt that if it is to be shown by Unite, then we should try to publicise this.
- c) Mick reported that he had the 50 years membership badges for presentation at Branch Christmas Lunch.
- d) May Plummer’s husband asked for a replacement badge for May, since she had lost hers and this was agreed.
- e) Bobby Brennan asked that we make a donation to the Evening Times Appeal on behalf of the GOPWA who are seeking to renew their mini bus. To be considered at next Branch Committee meeting for a recommendation.

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

Action Sub-committee **Unite Glasgow Retired Members' Branch** **12 October 2017**

11 Branch members in attendance. The Chair particularly welcomed David Edwards who was attending the ASC for the first time.

Awards for All: it's was reported that the Chair and Irene Graham had further discussed our plans to apply for an award under Awards for All and that it should be possible to make a formal application by mid-November, implying that if this were successful then the trip to Manchester and Liverpool could be made next September. Looking at the possibility of 50 attending, as in the previous London trip it should be possible to fill any vacancies with members of other Branches.

Article for Retired Members Journal: Bobby Brennan was thanked for his article to be submitted for inclusion in the Retired Members Journal and it was suggested that an article by Irene Graham on her work in Bangladesh would be excellent for a later issue. Some difficulty had been found in contacting the editor of the Journal, and it was felt that Bob Wylie, the new Scotland press officer could help in making contact.

Phil Wiseman: It was felt that the visit to the Branch by the Retired Members observer on the National Executive had been useful in establishing a sympathetic contact who could facilitate a meeting with members in Liverpool for the Branch's proposed visit.

UCATT: It was pointed out that UCATT had no retired members section and that the merger of the two unions was not complete yet, though UCATT officials were busy in their work in the construction industry. It was felt that it would be useful to approach Pat Rafferty to find out what the current state of play is.

Summer School: It was reported that after the contradictory information given to Ian Findlay, he has now been approved for his attendance at the Eastbourne Summer School and thanks were expressed to the Branch Chair for his intervention.

Union Activity: Some disquiet was expressed at the difficulty in getting information on the Union's campaigns on a continuing basis. More use of social media could be helpful. The Union's organisers' were busy gaining members in the construction industry and preparing for potential industrial action in INEOS, bearing in mind the difficulties in combating anti-union activity by the employer. The senior organiser in Scotland Roz Foyer has agreed in principle to attend a Branch meeting and it was felt this could be useful in getting the Branch more involved in Union campaigns.

AOB:

1. It was noted that 12 members had volunteered to attend another education course. This would be run by Glasgow City Colleges. Once the Course content is agreed David Paterson the Learning Rep for the Branch would be in touch again with the 12 members with the list possibly added to.
2. The proposal to erect a statue to commemorate Nelson Mandela's visit to Glasgow was discussed and it was agreed that the Branch should do what it can to raise funds for the campaign, perhaps through a social event and/or using the Song Club. This subject to be raised at the next Branch meeting.
3. The suggested leaflet identifying members of the Branch Committee and the outline structure of the Union as it affects retired members was discussed and both its content and purpose were discussed. It was pointed out that 'phone numbers of Branch officers would be needed in addition to email addresses, but no agreement was reached on to whom such a leaflet should be distributed. To be discussed again at the Branch Committee.
4. The proposed visit of Dr Steven Mullen to the Branch to discuss Glasgow's involvement in the slave trade was discussed and it was agreed that he should be approached to see if he could attend a Branch meeting at 12.00, or 2.00pm. after Standing Orders. It was accepted that these times could conflict with his work, but an evening meeting would present difficulties for some members.

Date of next meeting: 9 November at 12.30.