

Minutes of the Unite Glasgow Retired Members Branch 2nd November 2017

Chair suspended standing orders to hear our speaker Rosie Dickson of WASPI. She spoke passionately and in detail of the plight of women born in the 50's who suddenly find that the age at which they receive their pension has increased, without any notification from the DWP (in her own case she expected state pension at 60, but it will not be paid until she is 66). 240,000 women in Scotland are affected, and some will lose out on up to £40,000. They are seeking fair transitional arrangements and they have a 2-prong campaign. They have the democratic route of demonstrations and other campaigns and the legal route where they are challenging the DWP.

Chair Jake McLeod welcomed 33 members to Branch meeting.

1. Apologies – C. Screed, J. Ito, J. Bell, B. Beagan, A. Shelton, J. Convery, J. Ferguson, J. Hughes, H. Hutcheson, H. McLuskey, M. McGhee, M. McGrath, L. McGuire, J. McLaren, D. Morland, J. Murray, B. Robb, S. Stewart, J. Thomson, M. Vass.
2. Minutes of previous meeting accepted as correct.
3. Matters arising
 - a) STUC March against Racism on 25th November from Glasgow Green assemble 10.30am
 - b) Secretary Mick Rice reported that the 50-year membership badges will be handed out at Xmas Lunch. Also entitled were Jim Ito and John Rogers.
 - c) Re design for Branch Banner, Bobby Brennan had produced an “Art Nouveau” style which will be considered along with other suggestions next year.
 - d) Agreed to donate £50 to the GOPWA appeal for funds to buy new bus.
4. Correspondence –
 - a) Letter of thanks from Phil Wiseman and returning cheque for travel expenses.
 - b) STUC March against Racism, from Glasgow Green to Adelaide's in Bath St.
 - c) Scottish Labour History Society Conference.
 - d) Information from RMT campaign to renationalise the NE Route and asking us to sign petition available on line.
 - e) Stand Up to Racism – concerned about the formation of new right-wing party.
 - f) Notification of web site re Nelson Mandela Statue – mandelascottishmemorial.org
 - g) Our own web site is going well
 - h) Newsletter from Lighthouse Financial Services.
 - i) Copies of “Shake the Magic Money Tree” with introduction by John McDonald - £1.50
5. Reports –
 - a) Ian Findlay and Jake McLeod both attended Summer School in Eastbourne.
 - b) Mick reported that next year will be the triennial general meeting of branch. Irene Graham asked that committee consider a letter for inclusion with official Unite letter to all members and Mick will update the list. Next Song Club is on Wednesday 15th November and the Xmas Song Club will be on Thursday 14th December. We will be joined by members of the Community Branch on that date.
 - c) Action Sub-Committee - David Paterson highlighted several items from written report. Bobby Brennan had submitted an article about the work done by the branch and its members which was sent to Amanda Campbell. The article will be put on our web site. He has 12 names for learning Course and will be meeting Jim Aitken on this. Also got advice from a Senior Manager at Awards for All and will work on application.

- d) **Unite National Retired Members Education Course, Eastbourne.** Ian reported that there were various speakers covering such issues as the State pension and the Triple Lock, State Pension Inequality, Defence of the NHS, Youth Co-ordination and the need to encourage younger people to join Trade Unions, and how to tackle going into schools to discuss this. Also watched the film “I – Daniel Blake”
- e) **Scottish Policy Conference –** Mick reported that none of the motions were controversial, all were passed. Maureen had moved motion on Funeral Poverty. Speakers included Jeremy Corbyn, Len McLuskey, and a speaker from The Steel Workers of America. Free bar provided by Thomson’s Solicitors on the Saturday night.

6. Treasurer’s Report:

Balance rom 2016	£4,886.11	
Income	£5,080.18	£9,966.29
Expenditure		£4,480.25
Balance		<u>£5,486.04</u>

Maureen reported that we still had to pay for Christmas Lunch and the Song Club Party.

7. Motion to Branch -

“This branch re-affirms its support for the Scottish Pensioners’ Forum (SPF). It notes that when it was set up under the auspices of the STUC in 1992, Jack Jones recognised it as the campaigning body for pensioners in Scotland. We recognise and support the work done by the NPC on the issue of state pension provision. However, the responsibility for other issues relevant to pensioners, such as the NHS, Health and Social Care, Winter Heating Allowance, Transport and Funeral Grants, have been devolved to the Scottish Government. The SPF is one of the pensioner organisations which meets with Scottish Government Ministers and lobbies on these issues and the NPC has never been involved with these meetings.

We note that the Scottish Government granted funds to the Forum Administrator to carry out research on the issue of “Loneliness and Isolation” as workers move from the working environment into retirement. However, these funds are for this research and do not extend to the ongoing campaigning issues with which the SPF is involved. For this work of the SPF to continue, it still needs the financial support of individual pensioner members and affiliated organisations’ membership and donations.

Following the donation of Unite to the NPC nationally, this branch once more requests that Unite Scotland makes an appropriate donation to the SPF to help it continue its campaigning on behalf of pensioners in Scotland.”

This was moved by Maureen Gardner and Seconded by Dave Sherry.

8. Any other business

- a) **Jim Friel** informed us of the death of Chris Barter of Unison and asked that the branch send a letter of condolence to his partner Doreen Kean.
- b) **Sammy Morris** referred to a recent play attended by him and Jim Friel and its relevance to the Post Office Workers dispute and how an injunction had been taken out against them.
- c) **John Veil** reported that he had been unable to attend the Age Scotland AGM
- d) **Dave Shery** reported that the BA cabin staff have ended their strike.
- e) **Mick** reminded us that next Song Club is on 15th November and Dave Sherry will speak on Paul Robeson and Elinor McKenzie will provide an exhibition.
- f) **Next Action Sub-Committee** on 9th November

Meeting closed at 2.00pm with a vote of thanks to the chair.

Unite Glasgow Retired Members' Branch
Action Sub-Committee
9 November 2017

10 members in attendance. Apology from Frank Murphy.

Nelson Mandela Memorial: The proposal to fund the erection of a statue to celebrate Nelson Mandela's trip to Glasgow was discussed and it was suggested that the Branch could best help in this venture by participating in other fund-raising collective efforts. The Branch should consider the possibilities.

Awards for All: It was reported that Pauline Kerrigan of the Big Lottery had suggested that in its current form a submission as currently formulated for a grant would be unlikely to be successful. In response to her comments, it was felt that we could adapt our application to augment our black history ideas not least on Glasgow's record. In addition we need to emphasise that the proposal is member-led and could both note our development of links with fellow branches and incorporate narratives of our members' extra-Branch activities. In this context it was agreed that a questionnaire asking members for their community activities would be useful.

If the Branch felt that the concept of a visit to Liverpool and Manchester emphasising our shared history in black exploitation is not viable, then alternatives need to be explored by the Branch. It was suggested that a submission incorporating the Song Club could be considered perhaps featuring progressive singers and songs and/or the preparation of play lists of help to those suffering from dementia etc.

Branch Constitution: It was agreed that the formal name of the Branch should be *Glasgow and Renfrewshire*. It was further agreed that the Triennial meeting should consider increasing the number of Committee members to 10, possibly increasing including education and media officers. The Treasurer is to be asked whether the Branch's financial year should remain as the calendar year.

School Education: Arising from discussion at this year's Eastbourne Education Course, the importance of informing school children of the work of trade unions was discussed. It was emphasised that anyone getting the opportunity to address school children needs to be well prepared and authorised by the appropriate Union officials. It was pointed out that the STUC already had a programme for school children entitled *A Better Way to Work In Scotland*. It was agreed that Jim Aitken and perhaps Pat Rafferty should be approached to ascertain what Unite is doing to approach school students in their upper years.

Glasgow's Black History: Dr Steve Mullen had responded to our request to speak to the Branch by suggesting a 45 minute address followed by questions at 17.30. It was pointed out that this time would present problems and that the Branch should be asked if it would be happy if such an hour were made available either before a Branch meeting or immediately afterwards. Clearly, if this were agreed, Dr. Mullen would have to be asked if this were convenient for him.

Demonstrations: There is to be a demonstration in Edinburgh on 6 December culminating in a call to Holyrood to ban contracts given by the Government to firms guilty of blacklisting.

Gold Badge: It was agreed that Jimmy Friel would be a worthy recipient of the Union's Gold Badge and that we should make an application for the award.

Date of Next Meeting: 18 January commencing at **10.30.**