



ABERDEEN CITY BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH 2020
ST NICHOLAS ROOM, TOWN HOUSE
12NOON OR 5PM

Item	Lead Officer	Timings	
<u>BUSINESS</u>			
1	<u>Chair Introductions</u>	Jim Currie	2mins
2	<u>Apologies</u>	Jim Currie	2mins
3	<u>Appointment of Scutineers</u>	Jim Currie	2mins
4	<u>Minute of Previous AGM 13 March 2019</u> (Pages 5 - 16)	Jim Currie	2mins
<u>BRANCH OFFICERS/STEWARDS</u>			
5	<u>Contested Branch Secretary Post</u>	Jim Currie	5mins
5.1	<u>Election Address Kenny Luke</u> (Pages 17 - 18)	Kenny Luke	10mins
5.2	<u>Election Address Les Tarr</u> (Pages 19 - 20)	Les Tarr	10mins

- A hustings will take place allowing candidates to address members and answer any questions.
- Members are requested to vote for their preferred candidate.
- Ballot Papers will be available at both sessions and the votes will be counted during the evening AGM meeting with the results announced at the end.

6	<u>Ratification of Branch Officers</u> (Pages 21 - 22)	Jim Currie	2mins
7	<u>Ratification of Branch Stewards and Health and Safety Representatives</u> (Pages 23 - 24)	Jim Currie	2mins

MOTIONS

8.1	<u>Stress in the Workplace Campaign</u> (Pages 25 - 26)	Les Tarr	5mins
8.2	<u>Alternative Funding of Local Government Campaign</u> (Pages 27 - 28)	Les Tarr	5mins

OFFICER REPORTS

9	<u>Branch Secretary Report</u> (Pages 29 - 32)	Kenny Luke	5mins
10	<u>Service and Conditions Officer Report</u> (Pages 33 - 36)	Brenda Massie/ Mark Musk	5mins
11	<u>Treasurer Report</u> (Pages 37 - 38)	Elizabeth Herlihy	10mins

- Annual Accounts – will be issued separately
- Approval required for Bank Signatories
- Approval required for Auditor(s)

12	<u>Communications Officer Report</u> (Pages 39 - 40)	Steven Dongworth	2mins
13	<u>Education Officer Report</u> (Pages 41 - 42)	Elizabeth Herlihy	2mins
14	<u>Equalities Officer Report</u> (Pages 43 - 44)	Tony Maric	2mins
15	<u>Health and Safety Report</u> (Pages 45 - 46)	George Ferguson	2mins

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|----|--|---------------|-------|
| 16 | <u>Membership Services Report</u>
(Pages 47 - 50) | Karen Finch | 2mins |
| 17 | <u>Recruitment and Organisation Officer Report</u> (Pages 51 - 56) | Les Tarr | 2mins |
| 18 | <u>Welfare Officer Report</u>
(Pages 57 - 58) | Brenda Massie | 2mins |

REFERRAL TO BRANCH COMMITTEE

- | | | | |
|----|---|------------|-------|
| 19 | <u>Election of Delegates to attend Local Government and National Conference</u> | Jim Currie | 2mins |
|----|---|------------|-------|

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|------------|--------|
| 20 | <u>Any Questions from the Floor</u> | Jim Currie | 10mins |
|----|-------------------------------------|------------|--------|

GUEST SPEAKER

- | | | | |
|----|--|---------------|--------|
| 21 | <u>Violence Against Staff - Schools</u> | Ron Constable | 20mins |
| 22 | <u>Announcement of Ballot Results - for evening session only</u> | Jim Currie | 2mins |

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Karen Finch, 01224 522723 or kfinch@aberdeencity.gov.uk

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ABERDEEN CITY BRANCH

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

13 March 2019

COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE

12.15PM (49 in attendance) and 5pm (20 in attendance)

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Item	Discussion
1. Opening Comments by the Chair	The Chair opened each meeting and welcomed members who were in attendance.
2. Apologies	Apologies from Members were recorded.
3. Appointment of Scutineers	Due to there being no contested office bearer seats or motions, the Chair advised that scrutineers would not be required for the meetings.
4. Minute of Previous AGM 2018	The minute was proposed as a correct record by Alexander Ryland and seconded by Elizabeth Herlihy at the lunchtime meeting and agreed at the evening meeting.
5. Transformation	<p>The AGM were advised on the current position of the Transformation Programme which included:</p> <p><u>General</u> We are in year 2 of 5 of the transformation programme with another challenging year ahead. In order to allow a further 270fte posts to go, it has been suggested that moving to digitalisation will help to achieve this even though colleagues across the Council have stated that the digital processes would not achieve all of those posts. 1 in 6 non-teaching posts have gone or will go by the end of March 2020.</p> <p><u>Guiding Principles</u> In November 2018, staff were encouraged to feed into the consultation on guiding principles which will be presented to senior management for them to look at and work out what these will look like moving forwards. Consultation/communication with staff has improved since last year.</p>

Item	Discussion
	<p><u>Budget</u> Last Tuesday the Council set their budget which included cuts of £41.2m. On receipt of the budget papers and after lobbying the Administration Leaders, the Unions had a meeting with them and were successful in getting all potential changes to terms and conditions off the table. It has been approved that a further 270fte posts would go this year.</p> <p>The Unions have not been provided with any information on how the Council plan to achieve the savings at this stage however be assured that branch officers will challenge management where appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members noted the information provided.
6. Branch Secretary's Annual Report	<p>The AGM had before it the Branch Secretary Report. The Branch Secretary spoke to his report and highlighted a number of campaigns and pieces of the work undertaken by the Branch over the past year which included:</p> <p><u>Target Operating Model – Case for Change</u> Cuts and re-organisation in 2018/19 led to the loss of 360 jobs, through redeployment, VS/ER and natural wastage. Posts remain in budgets but not advertised, with no guarantee of being filled going forward.</p> <p>The Branch throughout this difficult time worked tirelessly in representing our members, holding the authority to their promise of No Compulsory Redundancies. The fact that we enter Year 2 of the TOM with this guarantee still in place reflects the hard work done on your behalf by all our Branch Officers, stewards and workplace representatives.</p> <p><u>Mental Health</u> The Branch are leading the way in tackling Mental Health stigma, and have been instrumental in Aberdeen City Council introducing a Mental Health Action Plan. We will work in partnership with Management to implement training, advice, and all other mechanisms to support the mental health and wellbeing of all our members as we face ever increasing workloads as jobs are cut and not replaced.</p> <p><u>Director/Union Meetings</u> The Branch has also been at the forefront of developing a strong working relationship with Management, and along with our colleagues in the other Trade Unions, have been successful in agreeing to meet weekly with Managers at Director and Chief Executive level. In these forums, we can hold Management to account, and to agree/disagree on each issue brought to the table.</p>

Item	Discussion
	<p><u>VS/ER</u> The offer of VS/ER was taken up by many members in 2018/19 – the programme continues, and VS/ER will be available on the same terms as last year. Any member who applies and is turned down should speak to their local steward who will take their case up through the appropriate management channels.</p> <p><u>Pay Award</u> On 19 December 2018, COSLA tabled a revised and improved pay offer for local government workers:</p> <p>The pay offer is for a period of three years and covers the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021. The award for 2018 will be backdated to 1 April 2018 application date.</p> <p>The pay offer and associated elements which make up the package are as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018/19 an increase of 3.5% (capped at £80,000, on or above which a flat rate of £1600 will apply), backdated to 1 April 2018 which will be paid in the March 2019 pay • 2019/20 an increase of 3% • 2020/21 an increase of 3% • In each of these three years the Scottish Local Government Living Wage will rise by the percentage uplift referred to above. • A commitment to re-open negotiations with the Trade Unions in the event of another Local Government bargaining group's total pay offer value being revised such that it becomes greater than the sum agreed between COSLA Employers and the SJC Trade Unions for the SJC workforce for the period of the agreement. <p><u>Stewards</u> We are always looking for new/returning stewards, so if you feel you can contribute and give up your time to help in our support of all our members, please come and speak to a Branch Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members noted the report and additional information provided.
7. Service and Conditions Officer Annual Report	The AGM had before it the Service and Conditions report. The report highlighted various issues they had dealt with throughout the year which included:

Item	Discussion
	<p><u>Target Operating Model</u> The next phase of the Target Operating Model is underway and branch officers will continue to challenge options presented to protect Terms and Conditions of members.</p> <p><u>Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership</u> There have been a few changes to the Health Partnership leadership over the last twelve months, with both Judith Proctor and Tom Cowan moving on. Sally Shaw was appointed as interim Chief Officer before she also moved on and Sandra Ross was then appointed as Chief Officer.</p> <p>Alongside colleagues from Grampian Health branch we continue to have an involvement in the joint staff forum and some project groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACHSCP Conference This year's conference theme was Share, Discover, Grow. Events were held over the first week of October with the main conference event on 2 October, where the city and health branch had a joint stall. The event itself included a whistle stop tour of ongoing projects and several stalls providing information on things like patient foot care, self-directed support and the localities. • Fair Work Survey UNISON surveyed members working under the Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership, including those working in commissioned services. The survey focused on members' experiences of the workplace, with specific reference to the Scottish Government's 5 Fair Work Principles (Security Opportunity, Fulfilment, Respect and Effective Voice). The Executive Summary in relation to the survey is available on request. • Partnership staff on the move Staff from Denburn and the White Zone at the Health Village moved to 1st floor North in Marischal College. The move which included the interim Partnership Leadership team meant that there would be rooms available for training and development in the Stuart Watson Learning Centre. Staff from Summerfield House were expected to be included in Phase 2 of the move.

Item	Discussion
	<p><u>Bon Accord Care</u> The Branch continued to meet regularly with the Managing Director and HR. As Sandra Ross took up the post of Chief Officer with the Health Partnership, Alistair Maclean continues as interim Managing Director.</p> <p>We were part of the group tasked with updating the Supporting Performance document and most recently Mark attended a meeting about the TUPE transfer of employees based at Horizons to Aberdeen City Council.</p> <p><u>Early Years Expansion</u> The branch continued to be involved in discussions around early years education provision in the city.</p> <p><u>Stars in Schools</u> The branch delivered goodie bags to members based in Aberdeen City schools in November.</p> <p><u>Update your Contact Details</u> UNISON are moving more of its communications online and would like to keep in touch with you in the future. Please take time to make sure your details held on UNISON's membership database are up to date (including your e-mail address).</p> <p>This can be done online at https://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/ or by contacting the Resource Centre at Alford Place on (01224) 620624 or by e-mail at GrampianResourceCentre@unison.co.uk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members noted the content of the report
8. Treasurer's annual report and audited accounts	<p>The AGM had before it, the treasurer report. The Treasurer spoke to her report and highlighted the following:</p> <p><u>Income and Expenditure</u> The treasurer presented the annual accounts which had been submitted and approved by Unison Head Office. The treasurer advised that there had been a surplus of £1,734.17 for the year.</p> <p><u>Bank Signatories</u> The following people were proposed as bank signatories: Jim Currie, Elizabeth Herlihy, Brenda Massie and Kenny Luke</p>

Item	Discussion
	<p><u>Auditors</u> The auditors were Anna Jagodzinska and Graeme Snape</p> <p><u>Branch Rules</u> To be amended to allow the Branch to pay an honorarium to the auditors.</p> <p>The Treasurer thanked all those who had assisted with the accounts especially the auditors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members noted the content of the report • Members noted the content of the approved accounts • Members approved the bank signatories • Members ratified the auditors • Members approved the change to the Branch Rules
9. Branch Officers' Annual Reports	<p>The AGM had before it annual reports from the following Branch Officers –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Officer • Education Co-ordinator Report • Equalities Officer Report • Membership Services Officer • Welfare Officers Report <p>The Communications report provided details of the Communications Plan which looked at the different methods of communication available to the Branch and when they might be appropriate to use. It also analysed who the different stakeholders are for the Branch, identified how they should be communicated with, what the key messages are, and when this should happen.</p> <p>The report advised that the main campaigns in 2018/19 focused on the Target Operating Model and Mental Health.</p> <p>The report highlighted that last year the branch website and social media accounts won the Gold Award in the Best Online Presence category of the annual UNISON Scotland Communications Awards and this year the new branch newsletter won the Bronze Award in the Best Printed Publication category of the annual UNISON Scotland Communications Awards.</p>

Item	Discussion
	<p>Members approved the following budgets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual website hosting fees (£72); • Social media advertising using Twitter & Facebook (£1000); • Printing of AGM invitation leaflet for 2020 (£100); • Printing and postage of newsletters in February (£2000). <p>The Chair and Secretary thanked Alexander for the work undertaken over the last year.</p> <p>The Education Co-ordinator report provided details of training available to members and activists during 2018 which included:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><u>Member Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deaf Awareness on 4 May 2018 <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><u>Activist Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with Paperwork on 18 January 2018 • Branch Officer Residential weekend which covers useful training and networking is held in May each year and all Officers are encouraged to attend • Organising Steward Training – all Stewards are required to be accredited which is done following attendance at training over 5 days • Mental Health First Aid on 8 and 9 November 2018 <p>The Equalities Officer report provided details of the cross-branch working in relation to UNISON's contribution to the Grampian Pride event which included having a float as part of the march as well as a stall at the Pride village. UNISON will be taking part in Grampian Pride 2019 event on 25 May and the Equalities officer asked for volunteers to come forward to help leading up to the event or on the day.</p> <p>The Membership report provided details of the new members and the lapsed membership for the period January 2018 to January 2019 wherein 183 members joined and 243 memberships lapsed. The lapsed membership was mainly due to the first stage of the transformation where staff left Aberdeen City Council under VS/ER. The report also provided details of the benefits available to all members.</p> <p>The Welfare report advised that Branch welfare officers were the first point of contact for members who were experiencing personal, emotional or financial difficulties, or for those who needed advice. They also help members apply for help or funding. The branch welfare officer is the local representative of There for</p>

Item	Discussion
	<p>You, Unison's charity.</p> <p>One way you may consider supporting There for You is by taking part in the UNISON lottery, a monthly prize draw which raises money for the charity and awareness about the work that the charity does. Recently re-launched, you can find further details here unison.charitylotteries.co.uk</p> <p>The Chair advised that unfortunately the Health and Safety Officer was not able to have her report available for the meeting due to limited wifi whilst attending a health and safety conference in Belfast and that it would be issued/made available in due course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members noted all of the reports provided.
10. Ratification of Branch Officers	<p>The AGM had before it a list of nominations which had been received in terms of the timescales permitted in Unison rules for Branch Officer positions, and agreed to appoint to these positions as follows –</p> <p>Chairperson – Jim Currie Branch Secretary – Kenny Luke Treasurer – Elizabeth Herlihy Joint Service and Conditions Officer – Mark Musk Joint Service and Conditions Officer – Brenda Massie Communications Officer – Steven Dongworth Education Co-ordinator – Elizabeth Herlihy Labour Link Officer – Valerie Taylor Health and Safety Officer – George Ferguson Welfare Officer – Brenda Massie Minute Secretary – Karen Finch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members agreed to remit the vacant positions to the Branch Committee for them to try and fill.
11. Ratification of Branch Stewards and Health and Safety Reps	<p>The AGM agreed the list of prospective stewards and health and safety representatives as follows:</p> <p><u>Bon Accord Care</u> Mary Coutts</p>

Item	Discussion
	<p><u>Customer – Customer Experience</u> Brenda Massie Mark Musk Alexander Ryland</p> <p><u>Customer – Digital and Technology</u> Leslie Tarr Valerie Taylor</p> <p><u>Governance</u> Steven Dongworth</p> <p><u>Operations – Integrated Children and Family Services</u> Elizabeth Herlihy Tommy Reid</p> <p><u>Operations – Operations and Protective Services</u> Alison Robertson</p> <p><u>North East Scotland College</u> John Slater Elle (Lorna) Watson</p> <p><u>Health and Safety Representatives</u> Mark Musk Tommy Reid</p>
12. Election of Delegates to attend Local Government and National Conferences	<p>The Chair advised that the Branch were not in a position until closer to the events to nominate the delegates for these meetings and requested approval for the item to be referred to the Branch Committee for a decision on those to attend the conferences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members approved the referral to the Branch Committee.
13. Questions from Members	<p>Various questions were put to the Branch Officers, those being:</p> <p>Q1. If teachers are successful and get a higher pay rise than us, do the negotiations re-open? A1. The information that has been received from the Regional Committee is that COSLA have not</p>

Item	Discussion
	<p>made a revised offer to Teachers and that it was a proposal by the Scottish Government. Funding for teacher's salaries is provided by the Scottish Government whereas funding for Local Government is paid by Local Authorities so this may have an impact on future negotiations.</p> <p>Q2. Do UNISON have any views on the Council spending money on projects rather than on workforce issues?</p> <p>A2. Jim advised that we do challenge management on proposals and question spend on proposals against budget decisions and those that affect our members.</p> <p>Q3. Is it true that the pension fund could be used to fund capital projects?</p> <p>A3. Simon Watson. Regional Organiser advised that currently there were 11 different pension funds and that consultation was ongoing to determine if the funds could be managed more effectively if they were amalgamated with local support in place. A report on this would be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary in April 2019. There had been no indication that there would be any impact on members pensions.</p> <p>Q4. Will unethical investments be looked at in the new proposals?</p> <p>A4. Simon Watson advised that the individual Boards oversee the pension fund and investments and always look to get the best interest for members of the Scheme.</p> <p>Q5. Has the Staff Governance Committee been successful?</p> <p>A5. The Staff Governance Committee has been very successful with a fair balance of Councillors and trade union members and looks at staff policies and health and safety issues. This Committee would not receive reports relating to transformation though as they would be discussed at the weekly meetings with Directors.</p> <p>Weekly meetings are held with Directors and Trade Unions as well as meetings with the Chief Executive on a monthly basis. There is also an Establishment Board which meets to discuss all vacancies and they decide whether or not positions across the organisation are filled and the process for them to be filled (internal, secondment, external). There has also been commitment from the Administration Leaders to meet with them on a regular basis.</p>

Item	Discussion
	<p>Q6. What training was put in place to assist those displaced in the new structure to train into other roles?</p> <p>A6. Kenny advised that there were currently only two people on the redeployment list with all others being successful in securing other roles.</p> <p>The Chief Officer for People and Organisation is very keen to look at staff development in more detail.</p> <p>The Council were also taking on Modern Apprentices to give young people an opportunity to learn and will also assist the Council in undertaking some of their duties.</p> <p>Q7. What is the Hub Model for school librarians and technicians?</p> <p>A7. We have had no information on this yet however it is something that we will be pushing with senior management. Until we see the plans we can't provide any guidance to staff but be assured that we will challenge anything that looks like changes to terms and conditions and we will advise you in due course.</p> <p>Deirdre Macdonald, retired member advised that she was looking at setting up an umbrella group of the retired members and that the first meeting was likely to be held in July 2019. Part of this project was to have a closer link back to the branch and to be able to get more involved in events and campaigns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members noted the questions and responses provided.
14. Meeting close	The Chair thanked those in attendance and brought the meetings to a close.

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KENNY LUKE – BRANCH SECRETARY ELECTION ADDRESS

I have been an active Trade Unionist for almost 40 years in the public sector, in various activist roles.

I am currently your ACC LG Branch Secretary and been a Council employee for over 27 years.

I was also **Branch Secretary of the CPSA Union for 5 years**

I **fundamentally believe** in the rights of employees to be protected in the workplace and have spent my career actively defending those who face daily challenges and discrimination in all its forms.

As your Branch Secretary I:

PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF MEMBERS AT ALL TIMES AND PUT YOUR INTERESTS FIRST.

I do this by:

- Ensuring our members are treated fairly under the Council's various policies and protocols;
- Holding management to account on any issues/decisions/discrimination that affect our members;
- Daily assisting members who have issues in the workplace, dealing with complaints and grievances on a regular basis; overturning unfair dismissal cases;
- Ensuring that Management do not cross our "**red lines**" of:

NO COMPULSORY REDUNDANCIES!

NO CHANGES TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS!

NO OUTSOURCING!

If re-elected, I will lead the Branch in any organised Campaign of action on any attempt to breach any of these "red lines".

During my tenure I have....

- **Successfully halted attempts of outsourcing staff and management at the Beach Ballroom;**
- **Successfully stopped the planned outsourcing of catering members at the Maritime Museum;**
- **Met and continue to meet with Senior Management and Directors on a weekly basis, to highlight members issues, and to reach resolution of problems experienced by our members;**
- **Negotiated successfully to remove the 12-week deadline on Redeployment if a member is displaced under reorganisation. Having been on Redeployment a number of times in my career, I know personally just how stressful it can be, so to reach agreement to remove deadlines is something that is very important in supporting members facing the same uncertainty as I and others have experienced;**
- **Worked on various campaigns, including supporting COSLA in seeking another Funding Model for Local Government;**

- **Represented Local Government Pension Scheme members on the ACC Pensions Board, providing full updates to both Branch and members in the areas of Pension Law and pension entitlements.**

I put our members at the forefront of **all** decision making –it continues to be a challenge, with massive increased workloads every year.

The outcome **HAS TO BE** reaching the TOM with **NO COMPULSORY REDUNDANCIES, NO CHANGES TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS, AND NO OUTSOURCING.**

I have represented you at every consultative stage of Service Redesigns, ensuring our “red lines” **MUST NEVER** be crossed.

If re-elected, I will continue to do so, and will support all members faced with unacceptable workloads ever increasing as more staff leave the Organisation.

I take immense pride in representing members in all meetings with management, other TU’s, external Organisations, Regionally and Nationally.

As we reach a critical stage in the move towards the TOM, continuity in negotiation with Management is **vitaly important**, so I respectfully ask for your vote to allow me the opportunity to continue on your behalf.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kenny Luke'.

Kenny Luke March 2020

WHOEVER YOU DECIDE TO VOTE FOR, ITS IMPORTANT THAT YOU ATTEND THE AGM TO EXERCISE YOUR DEMOCRATIC RIGHT TO DO SO!!

A bit about me:

I'm a 60 something and have been working in IT with the Aberdeen City Council since 2013. Previous to that I have been many years working in education and the public sector and also some spells with the private sector in Oil & Manufacturing.

Married for over 30+ years, I divide my time between Aberdeen for work, and my home in Cullen.

Hobbies include reading, watching sports, keeping fit through gym work [a new one] and writing and self-publishing crime and psychological thrillers.

Union Activities:

My union activities go back almost 50 years. Yes, 50 years, I was involved back in the 1970s with a movement called N.U.S.S (National Union of School Students). I graduated to the National Union of Students whilst at college in the mid-1970s, was a full-time official Dundee College of Tech (now Abertay University) as Union President for two years, and a member of the Scottish Executive of NUS.

I've had various spells in and out of UNISON, but joining the City branch 4 years ago and became a steward 3 years ago, partly as a result of the help I had with an issue from Mark Musk. Mark was my mentor when I became a steward, and is a source of guidance for me now in the roles I hold. I am also grateful for the guidance received when I started out as a steward from Deirdre MacDonald, former Branch Secretary.

I currently hold the role of both steward working cases for staff not just in what is now Digital and Technology but any other services, and also Recruitment and Organisation officer.

UNISON Achievements:

In September 2018, I proposed the training of officials as Mental Health First Aiders. This was then delivered in November 2019.

In November 2019 with the help of the Regional Office at Alford Place, I organised and ran a Stress In the Workplace survey, which was reported on in February 2020, gaining some press coverage for the branch.

Both those initiatives came about as a result of attending training courses organised by UNISON and seeing practical applications for the training.

I organised a short-lived stewards forum when experienced stewards could pass on experience and knowledge to newer stewards.

Vision for the Branch:

As a Branch, we have a number of dedicated activists who have reacted to the T.O.M and other issues very well, but we have tended to drift along as a Branch over the last few years. It's time to push on the front foot. I can bring three things to the role of Branch Secretary, that will move us forward.

Experience of developing practical solutions to issues and challenges. This comes from both my day job and also my past involvements with unions. The transformation exercise here is the third time I have faced this in different jobs over the last 10 years.

Organisation skills to bring momentum and focus and to the Branch.

Passion, to bring fight and determination to representing members.

Les Tarr



Aberdeen City Branch

Annual General Meeting 2020 Officer Nominations

Branch Officer	Name
Chairperson	Jim Currie
Branch Secretary - Contested	Kenny Luke and Les Tarr
Minute Secretary	Karen Finch
Service and Conditions - Joint	Brenda Massie and Mark Musk
Treasurer	Elizabeth Herlihy
Communications - Joint	Steven Dongworth and Naomi Gray *
Education	Elizabeth Herlihy
Equalities - Joint	Rachel McFarlane and Tony Maric*
Health & Safety	Alison Robertson *
International	
Labour Link	Valerie Taylor
Membership Services	Karen Finch
Recruitment & Organisation	
Union Learning Rep	
Welfare	Brenda Massie
Young Members	

*Nomination Form received after closing date

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Annual General Meeting 2020 Steward & Health & Safety Reps Nominations

Post	Name	Employer/Department
Steward	Mary Coutts	Bon Accord Care
Steward	Euan Rae*	Bon Accord Care
Steward	Josh Mennie *	AHSCP – Learning Disabilities
Steward	Elizabeth Herlihy	ACC/Operations – Integrated Children’s and Family Services
Steward	Julie Mennie	ACC/Operations – Integrated Children’s and Family Services
Steward	Tommy Reid	ACC/Operations – Integrated Children’s and Family Services
Steward	Laura Snee*	ACC/Operations – Operations and Protective Services
Steward	Leslie Tarr	ACC/Customer – Digital and Technology
Steward	Valerie Taylor	ACC/Customer – Digital and Technology
Steward	Brenda Massie	ACC/Customer – Customer Experience
Steward	Mark Musk	ACC/Customer – Customer Experience
Steward	Maree Hale *	ACC/Customer – Customer Experience
Steward	Karen Quinn	ACC/Customer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment
Steward	Naomi Gray	ACC/Place – City Growth
Steward	Tony Maric*	ACC/Place/Strategic Place Planning
Steward	Steven Dongworth	ACC/Governance
Health and Safety Rep	George Ferguson	ACC/Customer – Digital and Technology
Health and Safety Rep	Mark Musk	ACC/Customer – Customer Experience

*Nomination Form received after closing date

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ABERDEEN CITY BRANCH

AGM 11 MARCH 2020

Motion : Stress in the Workplace Campaign.

“This branch calls on the employer to ensure that when Voluntary Severance and Early Retirement [V.S.E.R] is being applied to reduce staff numbers that:

- Impact Risk Assessments are carried out on the effects on remaining staff where staff numbers are being reduced to ensure that remaining staff are not subjected to increased stress levels.
- Job Changes where staff are being asked to take on extra duties, that job design reviews and job evaluation are carried out to ensure that the post conforms to accepted principles and that staff are being properly compensated for the additional workload.”

Proposed: Les Tarr

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ABERDEEN CITY BRANCH

AGM 11 March 2020

Motion: Alternative Funding of Local Government Campaign

The membership calls on the branch to pursue the ideas and initiatives contained in the report to Unison Scotland named '*Additional revenue streams/sources of funding for the delivery of local government services.*', with the employer.

Proposed: Les Tarr

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BRANCH: ABERDEEN CITY
DATE: 24 February 2020
OFFICER: BRANCH SECRETARY REPORT
TITLE OF REPORT: AGM REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Branch – note contents of this report

MAIN ISSUES:

TARGET OPERATING MODEL – CASE FOR CHANGE

As we enter year 3 of the TOM/Case for Change, I look back and reflect on what has been yet another extremely challenging year for our members.

Yet more Service Redesign in 2019/2020 has led to more displacement of our members, who again bear the brunt of year on year savage cuts through no fault of our own.

Posts go, people leave, but the workload stays the same, creating more work for members already pushed to the limit.

Members displaced who end up on Redeployment face stress and worry as to where their next post can come from. A situation I have been in on a number of occasions, it's an awful feeling.

The Branch has worked tirelessly in representing our members, holding the authority to account and refusing ANY negotiations on the Branch policy of:

NO Compulsory Redundancies
NO attacks on our hard-earned Terms and Conditions;
NO outsourcing of ANY ACC service

The fact that we enter Year 3 of the TOM with these red lines yet to be crossed reflects the hard work done on your behalf by Branch Officers, stewards and workplace representatives.

With more massive cuts to The Council's budget, approx. **£38m** in 2020/2021 confirmed, we face much more tough times ahead.

Be assured that the Branch will continue to work on your behalf, assessing and challenging all potential changes, and will always fight to protect **ANY** attempt to reduce our hard-won terms, conditions, salary grades and pension rights.

With the continuing financial constraints, we must, **more than ever**, be a united and committed Branch, ensuring we continue to get a fair deal, with no erosion of Conditions of Service, or any threat of outsourcing, removal of non-statutory services, or the withdrawal of no compulsory redundancies.

The Branch is leading the way in tackling Mental Health stigma and have been instrumental in Aberdeen City Council introducing a Mental Health Action Plan.

We will work in partnership with Management to implement training, advice, and all other mechanisms to support the mental health and wellbeing of all our members as we face ever increasing workloads as jobs are cut and not replaced.

The Branch has also researched and produced a Stress in the Workplace Survey, the findings of which we will present at AGM.

The Branch has also been in the forefront of developing a strong working relationship with Management, and along with our colleagues in the other Trade Unions, have been successful in agreeing to meet weekly with Managers at Director and Chief Executive level.

In these forums, we can hold Management to account, and to agree/disagree on each issue brought to the table.

We continue to do so on your behalf and look for more positive engagement with Senior Management going forward, and also challenging them when there is disagreement and dispute.

We have a vibrant and proactive Branch Committee working on your behalf. There is a strong engagement of Officers and Stewards, with many of your colleagues giving up limited time in order to protect and promote your interests in the workplace. They don't ask for thanks, it is done with a commitment to protect members in the workplace.

This means that there is proper discussion and widespread decision-making which is greater democracy and a greater representation of our branch members.

It is important to remember that these activists protect and promote **YOUR** interests, so if you have any issues, your Branch representatives are there for you.

We are always looking for new/returning stewards, so if you feel you can contribute and give up your time to help in our support of all our members, please come and speak to a Branch Officer.

VS/ER

The offer of VS/ER continues and will be available on the same terms as last year.

Any member who applies and is turned down should speak to their local steward who will take their case up through the appropriate management channels.

With such swingeing cuts facing us into the next financial year, it should now only be in **exceptional circumstances** that VS/ER is turned down.

PAY AWARD

On 19 December 2018, COSLA tabled a revised and improved three year pay offer for local government workers.

The final year increase of 3% across the board is payable from **April 2020**, and UNISON Scottish Region have already commenced negotiations for the next pay claim. The Branch will keep you updated as this develops.

Finally....

As we go forward as a Branch, it is vitally important that you know you are **fully supported** by your Branch. Any issues you have, don't hesitate to contact your local workplace contact, representative or Branch Officer.

BACKGROUND PAPERS / LINKS: None

REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS:



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BRANCH: Aberdeen City
DATE: 11 March 2020
OFFICER: Service & Conditions
TITLE OF REPORT: Service and Conditions AGM Report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(a) That this report be noted by the branch

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None

MAIN ISSUES:

SERVICE REDESIGN

Transformation continues to loom large, the latest process to take place is service redesign. As expected with any redesign, a number of staff are feeling unsettled. The branch continues to be involved in discussions to address the issues members have and minimise any effect of redesign, also to ensure terms and conditions are unaffected.

EARLY YEARS EXPANSION

The branch continues to be involved in discussions around early years education provision in the city and the changes that will need to be in place.

ACHSCP Conference

This year's conference theme was Connect. The main conference event was on 9 October. The event itself included a short "Meet the Leadership Team" video, a whistle stop tour of a few projects including stepping away from unscheduled care, seamless care provision, Living Well with dementia alongside input from Inspire, SHMU and Bon Accord Care.

CROSS BRANCH STALL

Brenda and Laura McDonald from Grampian Health Branch arranged a cross branch stall on 1st floor North in Marischal College in May. At that time many members of staff had recently moved onto the floor from other locations. We had a short questionnaire for people to complete to gauge how they have felt since the staff from the Health Village and Denburn moved into Marischal College. We need to re-visit this idea more often and make in-roads to resolve any ongoing issues. The most notable of these are basic cultural differences between Local Authority and NHS employees.

BON ACCORD CARE

In May, Bon Accord Care began consulting with the Trade Unions on shift changes. This would become a recurring theme throughout the year as management reviewed the area of provision they had responsibility for. One of the biggest bones of contention between staff and management was be the timing of services to ensure that the assistance they provide users remained person centred.

Following a rigorous (and perhaps lengthy) recruitment process Alexis Chappell, took up her new post as Managing Director in August.

August also saw changes for both Bon Accord Care staff and their NHS colleagues at Whitemyrs with more emphasis on sharing resources, but no changes to line management.

It was a pleasure to be invited to the Bon Accord Award Ceremony in November to see several of our members celebrate success.

MERIDIAN PROJECT

Sandra Ross arranged to bring in Meridian consultants to look at the way the Mental Health and Learning Disability Team at the Len Ironside Centre work. The consistently high sickness levels and workload had been noted and it was felt that processes needed looking at to see whether any of them could be more streamlined to assist both staff and service users.

This proposal had a shaky start as there was a lack of consultation between the Partnership and the Trade Unions. In an attempt to get things back on an even keel the Partnership and Meridian met with the joint Trade Unions in July to explain what they had in mind and what the first steps would be in terms of offering workshops to “senior” clinicians/practitioners. Meridian would subsequently make suggestions on possible different ways of working, flexibility in working patterns and smarter working.

Meridian completed their study in October, although further work would be done in terms of reviewing processes and evaluating. The final report was presented in shortened format to the Joint Staff Forum earlier this year. The report implied that a staffing level reduction was possible, however it has been made clear that this is not the Partnership’s view - they have advised there will be no reductions in staff levels.

ABERDEEN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

One of the largest pieces of work undertaken this year by the Partnership was the reorganisation of the Senior Leadership team following the arrival of the new Chief Officer Sandra Ross the previous year.

The reorganization/redesign would include the disestablishment of the Head of Operations and Head of Transformation posts and the creation of a Digital Lead post

The Public Health, Wellbeing, Transformation and OD teams merged in October. They are looking to have a more self-managing structure.

The Partnership have been looking at simplifying governance, UNISON currently represent the joint trade unions on the Joint Staff forum, the Strategic Commissioning Programme Board and the Enabling Programme Board

It was proposed that more Partnership staff could be move into Marischal College, however this has since been looked at again and other more suitable locations have been found for them meantime.

SELF ORGANISED GROUPS

UNISON Self Organised Groups brings together members from certain groups that face discrimination for example women members, Black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) members. We also have equality groups for young members and retired members.

This is perhaps something that our branch could do better and we would welcome input from members who feel they fulfil the definition of any of the groups mentioned above.

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND UNISON PRIDE (NESUP)

The UNISON branches in North East Scotland (Aberdeenshire, Health and us) currently co-ordinate our activity with Grampian Pride. If you identify as LGBT+ and would like to help the group out, the branch would like to hear from you.

BACKGROUND PAPERS / LINKS: None

REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS:

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BRANCH: ABERDEEN CITY

DATE: 11 March 2020

OFFICER: Treasurer

TITLE OF REPORT: Treasurer Report

RECOMMENDATION:

That the AGM accepts this Report and the Income/Expenditure Report issued separately

MAIN ISSUES:

FINANCIAL YEAR 2019

First off all I wish to thank everyone who helped me with my treasurer duties. The audited Income and Expenditure Account and the General Fund Balance Sheet should be submitted to Head Office on time this year. Printed copies of the audited accounts will be available at the AGM. Requests for copies will be accepted after the AGM. Special thanks to Derek Jamieson and Graeme Snape who are doing a thorough examination of the accounts. The fees paid for auditing the income and expenditure of the branch will be £150 per auditor either as an honorarium or a donation to charity.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

There was a deficit this year of £9,644.53 mainly due to the payment to the Fighting Fund for staff employed by UNISON to assist with recruitment.

In 2020 the Branch will be paying approximately £10,000 as a Dowry payment to the recently set up FE College Branch as members from NESCOL colleges in Aberdeen and Fraserburgh have transferred to the new Branch.

- Income was slightly less than 2018.
- The number of recently retired members reduced from 13 to 9.
- Administration expenses was slightly more than previous year.
- Conference and group meetings was slightly more than previous year.
- Branch Committee expenses decreased as refreshments were only provided for half day meetings.
- Other meetings were about the same.
- Publicity increased slightly. Some of this was for UNISON branded clothing for the activists
- Spending on Education decreased this year. I am hoping this will rise in 2020 with more activists taking advantage of learning opportunities. Training costs are much less when courses are run at the Resource Centre, 7 Alford Place, Aberdeen. ERA accredited steward training is one of the most popular courses with different formats available.
- The branch set a donations policy this year to reflect the aims of the branch. As a result the donations decreased.
- Affiliations remained about the same.

- Spending on Local activities decreased slightly. Spending included local events, flowers and fruit for members who have been sick long term and a donation to the retired members section.
- The £2,000 shown as other expenditure was the top up applied to the PREPAID card held by the Treasurer. Expenditure made using the PREPAID card was audited by two branch members during the year.

EVENTS

The second Grampian Pride event was celebrated in May 2019 in conjunction with other local branches. This included having a well decorated float and a stall inside the charities tent on the Beach Boulevard.

The Branch celebrated Public Champions Day in October 2019. A coach was hired from First Bus for the Event. Goodie bags with promotional items were delivered to members in various locations throughout the city. Large cakes were shared with members and non-members in the Town House, Marischal College and Len Ironside Building.

Earlier in the year, when cleaning products were removed from Council premises, there was a cleaning campaign with Ecover wipes being distributed to members who had signed the petition.

UNISON PREPAID CARD (VISA)

The treasurer has a prepaid card to allow her to purchase hotel accommodation, rail tickets etc. for delegates on authorised journeys and welfare items such as fruit and flowers for members who are off long term sick.

Authorised cheque signatories will be ratified at the AGM.

REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS:

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BRANCH: Aberdeen City
DATE: 11 March 2020
OFFICER: Communications Officer
TITLE OF REPORT: Communications Officer Report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Branch -
Note the contents of this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

At the time of writing, £100 has been spent from the 2019/2020 budget, therefore leaving £150 unspent. I would propose no new monies be set aside for comms, with the residue of last years budget being used.

MAIN ISSUES:

Comms activities have been reduced compared to the previous years. However social media (Facebook) has been kept up to date, with paid adverts used to reach more people when necessary. The Aberdeen UNISON branch website is also kept updated as required.

No newsletter has been produced in the last 12 months. Previously these were produced on 'Microsoft Publisher' however the Branch no longer has access to that software.

Over the next 12 months further training in this area of comms should be taken, with a comms plan agreed by branch.

BACKGROUND PAPERS / LINKS:

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BRANCH: ABERDEEN CITY
DATE: 11 March 2020
OFFICER: Education Co-ordinator
TITLE OF REPORT: Education Co-ordinator Report

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report is accepted and that training of members and activists will be supported.

MEMBER LEARNING

The Branch recognizes the value of training and supports activists and members to take advantage of relevant training.

There were no member learning courses run during year 2019.

Kevin Duguid, UNISON Regional Learning Development Organiser, Lowlands & Uplands will be helping to organise courses this year. In particular the Branch wishes to hold Menopause awareness courses this year. UNISON brought out new guidance on this subject in 2019 so it is hoped that good practice and policies will be developed with relevant departments of Aberdeen City Council.

ACTIVIST TRAINING

The Branch recognises the value of training and supports activists to take advantage of relevant training.

To be accredited new stewards must attend the 5 day Organising Steward course.

The Organising Steward Course is normally held at the Resource Centre, 7 Alford Place, Aberdeen.

Further courses are available to stewards to update and develop their skills including opportunities to shadow more experienced stewards.

The branch recognises that training costs are different depending on location and travel arrangements.

Officers and stewards will be encouraged to complete relevant courses when it suits them. It is noted that if courses are undersubscribed they may be pulled by the trainer.

The Branch Officers weekend (Residential) will take place in Glasgow on the weekend of 15th to 17th May 2020. All Officers will be encouraged to attend this worthwhile training.

REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS:

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BRANCH: Aberdeen City
DATE: 11 March 2020
OFFICER: Equalities Officer
TITLE OF REPORT: Equalities AGM Report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note the review of work done in 2019 by branch Equalities Officer

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None

MAIN ISSUES:

It has been an interesting year for your branch Equalities officer. I took up the post in March after accepting a job with Aberdeen City Council, so I have had to get used to the way that Aberdeen City Council works as well as settling into the role of Equalities officer and learning how the branch functions.

Fortunately, the role of Equalities officer is not new to me as I was the Equalities officer at my previous branch and served on their branch committee. As a disabled member, I am also very active on disabled matters and until recently served on the Scottish disabled Members Committee, with the distinction of being the longest serving member on the committee (11 years' service). However, I took the decision to resign from this committee in May.

However, I have regularly attended National Disabled Members Conference and attended this year's conference in Brighton, where I reminded delegates of the need to ensure that reasonable adjustments were put in place and that trigger-based absence management policies were discriminating against disabled members and those with long-term health conditions. We also discussed issues around mental health awareness and sexual abuse, amongst other topics. We didn't manage to get through the whole agenda but did manage to debate 17 of the 27 motions over the weekend, with good debates on all the motions. A full report on the conference was presented to the branch committee.

I have spent this year providing help and assistance to branch colleagues with cases that have an equalities issue as well as dealing with some case work. I intend to carry on in this role if re-elected at the AGM and hope to work closely

with branch colleagues to raise awareness of equalities issues throughout the branch.

BACKGROUND PAPERS / LINKS:

None

REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS:

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BRANCH: Aberdeen City
DATE: 11 March 2020
OFFICER: Health and Safety Officer
TITLE OF REPORT: Health and Safety Report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 To note the content of the report
- 2 To note that the Branch require to have more Health and Safety Reps trained to support the Health and Safety Officer and to attend cluster health and safety meetings.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None

MAIN ISSUES:

There has been a good improvement within ACC and Union communications. We are being informed regularly of new HSE policy changes and reviews. All Unions are represented on all the HSE committees and have valid status on these committees.

The Asbestos working group has a very open and transparent agenda and proactively seek input and council from all Unions. They have also provided all Unions with access to their live Asbestos data base, Modus.

The Commissioning, Customer, Resource, Growth and Place (CCRGP) Health and Safety group hold regular meetings and actively involve all Union safety and committee members.

The Operations Health and Safety group also meet regularly and involve all Unions.

The Aberdeen City Health and Social Care partnership also hold regular meetings in various sites and actively involve Union representatives from the various organisations. NHS, Social work ACC etc.

As a Union we are also well represented in the various local Health and Safety meetings.

This year we have had reviews and updates to the Asbestos Policy, First Aid policy, COSHH policy and Lone working policies. I think this is a good step forward and was aided by the pressure at various levels from many Unions. The big change I feel since I last held this post is Communication between ACC and Unions has greatly improved. This will lead to a better informed and hopefully safer work force.

One big step forward within the council is the recognition of the Mental Health and Welfare of its work force. With the introduction of Mental Health First Aiders to our First Aid team I feel we are going in the right direction to help understand the stresses of our staff workloads within our reduced staffing environment. We have a great asset in Leslie Tarr who has created a very thought-provoking Stress in the Workplace survey. Which presented some interesting results.

The Branch require additional people to step forward to help with health and safety related activities, whether attending the scheduled meetings or monitoring health and safety practice within their area of work. Full training will be provided. If this is something that you would be interested in, then please get in touch with one of the Branch Officers.

BACKGROUND PAPERS / LINKS:

REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS:

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BRANCH: Aberdeen City
DATE: 11 March 2020
OFFICER: Membership Services Officer
TITLE OF REPORT: Membership Figures and Information

RECOMMENDATIONS:
That members note the content of the report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:
None

MAIN ISSUES:

(1) Membership Figures

Between January and December 2019, the Branch recruited a total of 190 members.

Over the same period the branch had 194 lapsed memberships. As the Council went through transformation and reduced the number of employees via Early Retirement or Voluntary Severance this had an impact in the membership figures.

As you will see for the year, we have been much closer in terms of joiners v leavers which can be attributed to the campaigns that the branch has undertaken throughout the year.

A breakdown of the joiners and leavers is presented in the table below.

Month	Joined	Lapsed
January	19	13
February	15	14
March	17	8
April	19	10
May	18	16
June	24	27
July	15	19
August	10	5

September	8	2
October	21	53
November	15	7
December	9	20
Total	190	194

(2) Membership Benefits

Membership of UNISON comes with many benefits, from free legal services and statutory rulebook benefits to discounted stays at our holiday village and a range of exclusive financial deals.

Visit the website: <https://benefits.UNISON.org.uk/all-benefits/> or
Telephone: 0800 0 857 857

Below is a list of the benefits available for both you and your family.

Travel

- Croyde Bay Holiday Village is situated on the north Devon coast and has been owned and operated by UNISON for more than 80 years. It is a popular addition to the benefits of UNISON membership, offering competitive rates, with special discounts for UNISON members and families. There are additional discounts for low-paid UNISON members.
- Travel Club – exclusive discounts on a variety of holidays home and abroad

Family

- UNISON rewards – shopping discounts
- UNISON protect family protection insurance

Motoring

- Car Insurance with LV
- Breakdown cover with LV
- Vauxhall Associate Partners – Preferential discounts on cars
- UNISON Drive – options for purchasing new or used cars

Wellbeing

- Health plans
- Vision Express
- Dental plans

Financial

- Lighthouse Financial Advice
- Lighthouse Mortgage and Protection Advice
- Pre-paid Plus Mastercard
- UNISON energy
- UNISON Rewards (earn cashback on online purchases)

Insurance

- Personal Insurance, travel insurance
- Family Insurance
- Home Insurance
- Pet Insurance
- UNISON protect accidental death insurance

Learning and development

- Personal and career development courses (main UNISON site)
- Financial support for learning
- Courses for reps and activists (main UNISON site)

Legal services

- Employment law (accessed via your UNISON branch or regional office)
- Personal injury – at or away from work, on holiday or on the roads
- Serious injury at work – including brain injuries and spinal cord injuries
- Industrial disease or illness
- Basic will writing and reduced rates for more complex wills and conveyancing
- Defending work related criminal allegations
- Free initial legal advice on any non-employment issue from UNISON's lawyers. This service entitles you to receive up to 30-minutes of telephone advice.

There for you, UNISON's welfare charity

- Members experiencing financial and emotional difficulties can contact our welfare charity, There for You. For more information on the Charity and the services available either go the website: <https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/> or contact the Branch Welfare Officer for assistance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS / LINKS:

REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS:

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BRANCH: Aberdeen City
DATE: 11 March 2020
OFFICER: Recruitment and Organisation Officer
TITLE OF REPORT: Recruitment and Organisation Officer Activities

RECOMMENDATIONS:
to note the content of the report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None

MAIN ISSUES:

I've been carrying out the role of Recruitment and Organisation Officer since around July 2019 after the last AGM.

I took up the role for two reasons. Firstly, as a Branch, I felt we needed to be more proactive. There are a core number of activists who, when required, have reacted brilliantly to situations and events, but there were issues where we were behind the curve.

Secondly, I attended a workshop on organisation at Alford Place with a brilliant representative from the Unison National Organisation, which was instrumental in making me realise that issues based campaigns, especially locally, are where, as a Branch, we can make a difference.

Having sat on a number of stalls in Marischal College aimed at recruitment, it really became clear that trying to capture people passing on their way in and out of the Lower Ground Canteen was not the best approach. Yes, it provides visibility, but does not grab people or potential members in a way that will encourage them to join.

What became clear through the organisation workshop was that locally-based issues are the key to bringing members into the Branch.

The first campaign which came out of this was the **Keep It Clean** petition campaign. This was the Branch's reaction to the management decision to remove cleaning materials and paper towels from communal coffee points

throughout the Marischal College building. It was a good lesson learning opportunity for me in the role.

The first lesson was the value of a local issue. The reaction from members and non-members to the collection of signatures for the petition was impressive. People taking away signature sheets and bringing them back completed showed that an issue that is affecting staff locally can be a powerful campaigning tool.

The second lesson was in maintaining momentum. This issue was taken up by representatives at the Directors / Trade Union meetings. The Unison position was put forward, and the response from management was that illness levels were falling. Without being properly prepared with facts and figure, we lost the initiative.

There was a valuable third lesson that to be successful in campaigning, we need to have groups of activists and interested members working with Branch officers to spread the load. Campaigns need to have groups behind them.

At the moment, we have three campaigns under way at various stages.

Stress in the Workplace

This campaign has passed its first stage. We ran a very successful survey over November 2019, which provided information on the level of stress being experienced by members as a result of the T.O.M [Target Operating Model] changes.

The report has been produced, and the Branch received valuable [press coverage](#) as a result. The next stage is to propose a motion for the Annual General Meeting, which will empower the Branch to push forward with the recommendations of the report.

The key recommendations from the report are:

- **Impact Risk Assessments**
The effect of the release of a member of staff must include in its decision-making criteria an assessment of the impact this will have on remaining staff in the light of increased work demands.
- **Job Changes to be formalized**
The revised job roles which will incorporate additional tasks have to be formally recognized through job design processes, job descriptions updated to reflect the changes and processed through the job evaluation process to ensure that the proper rate is being paid for the revised role.

Menopause Awareness Being led by Susan Kennedy, Area Organiser

This is part of a national initiative within Unison to promote understanding amongst employers of the condition.

Susan Kennedy, Unison Area Organiser, has set up a working group of members who are meeting to build a campaign to promote better understanding and a more robust approach to menopause awareness.

Statistically, eight out of ten menopausal women work, A recent survey of women in work showed that 59% of those affected stated that the condition does have a negative impact on their work.

This campaign is geared to address the situation by calling on employers to develop robust policies to support workers, develop practical adjustments that can be applied to working conditions and routines. It is also seeking to create greater understanding and wider cultural awareness.

My role in this campaign has been to provide support where possible. The great thing about the work Susan and others are doing is that it is being led by those most affected and supported by the all the Branch committee.

Alternative Funding Models for Local Government - Jimmy Reid Foundation / UNISON

Much has been made of this growing initiative by Unison and the Jimmy Reid Foundation. The Council is trying to address its funding crisis and the effects of the policies of austerity adopted by both the UK and Scottish parliament political forums, the effects which have been to reduce numbers. The model adopted has been one of promoting Voluntary Service and Early Retirement [V.S.E.R]. We know from the results of the '*Stress in the Workplace*' survey that this policy of staff reduction is impacting the staff who remain in post, through the uncontrolled and unplanned additions of the extra workload.

The Unison/Jimmy Reid initiative seeks to adopt a different approach to the funding crisis. It is proposing a range of solutions to the problem in three ways.

Nationally, there are proposals around changes to the fiscal powers devolved to the Scottish Parliament. Currently, Holyrood has devolved powers around aspects of the tax system, welfare and social security provisions, but there are a number of others that are held under the control of Westminster. Figures released by the Scottish Government showed that 57.9% of taxes raised in Scotland remain under national government control.

The initiative seeks to promote changes to give greater fiscal control and a fairer share of the tax revenues raised in Scotland back to Scotland.

In this area, the role of the Branch and Unison is to seek to lobby MP's of both parliaments to bring about change.

Regionally, the initiative proposes changes to how local government is funded. The focus of the initiative is on the increasing of tax-raising within Scotland and a fairer distribution between the two governments of income raised.

This includes looking at the Council Tax policies and procedures and also and more importantly revising the Non-Domestic Rates system, which is years old and could be used to generate more income for local authorities.

For the Branch, there is a role in lobbying for change.

The third area the initiative looks at is in raising income at a **Local Authority** level. Protecting statutory provisions seeking to raise income from charging for non-statutory services.

Other aspects of controlling finances such as redistributing staff to work in areas where income recovery has been poorly carried out, and there are bad debts or income has not been collected.

One of the big moves by the Council has been in the area of automation and digitisation. More often than not, facilitated by outside agencies and consultancies rather than asking the staff who do the jobs, how can this be done better. Although not explicitly defined in the initiative, but suggested more as an implicit approach as a Branch, we can and must through our promoting of this campaign be looking to drive the authority to look to employees who do the jobs to say where and how improvements can be made.

Conclusion

As a Branch and membership, we have a huge role to play in bringing about change and having an impact on the work of the Council.

Whether it's ensuring that proper stress impact assessments are carried out when jobs are being changed through the TOM and VSER process to reduce stress in the workplace, making the authority more aware of the impact of menopause, or looking to change the authority's approach to combating austerity and the devastating impact it is having on local government staff and the citizens of Aberdeen.

We need to focus on the use of campaigns to bring about change, move away from simply being reactive and step forward and lead the challenge against poorly designed changes.

Finally, thanks to several stewards and officers who have helped with stalls and the survey in 2019. Special mention to Ann McAvoy, from Alford Place, who was an almost ever-present at the stalls held in Marischal College.

BACKGROUND PAPERS / LINKS:

REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS:

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BRANCH: Aberdeen City

DATE: 11 March 2020

OFFICER: Welfare Officer

TITLE OF REPORT: Annual Report

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Branch – note contents of this report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: None

MAIN ISSUES:

Branch welfare officers are the first point of contact for members who are experiencing personal, emotional or financial difficulties, or for those who need advice. They also help members apply for help or funding.

If you are aware of a colleague who has been on sick leave for a period of six weeks or more or they have recently lost a family member, please let the branch know so we can arrange something to let them know they are in your thoughts.

There for You

The branch welfare officer is the local representative of There for You, Unison's charity.

If you haven't heard of There for You before, they provide support a confidential service for members (and their dependents) over the phone or in person

- debt advice;
- listening and support;
- financial assistance;
- breaks and holidays;
- personal advice.

You may have financial problems for reasons including:

- relationship breakdown;
- loss of income;
- being off work/suffering from a long illness/recovering from surgery;
- needing to buy equipment because of a disability;
- caring for someone with additional support needs or an illness.
- living on the breadline and needing to pay for a major bill or vital item

All There for You grants and activities are paid for by donations from UNISON members and UNISON itself.

One way you may consider supporting There for You is by taking part in the UNISON lottery (unison.charitylotteries.co.uk), a monthly prize draw which raises money for the charity and awareness about the work that the charity does.

Winter Fuel Grant/School Uniform Grant

There for You also run annual grant schemes for Winter Fuel and School Uniforms, further details can be found using the link below.

Grampian Credit Union

All members of UNISON who live or work in Aberdeen and Grampian can join Grampian Credit Union for savings and financial services, including a current account and a range of flexible loans.

BACKGROUND PAPERS / LINKS:

<https://unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/>

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