



Blaenau Gwent County Branch



TUESDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2021

12.30 - 1.30pm

via Microsoft TEAMS

AGENDA

Welcome

Apologies

Minutes from 2020 AGM (for accuracy)

Chairman's Report

Treasurer's Report

Auditors' Report

Honoraria

Election of Officers

Branch Assessment

Motions

Guest Speakers: tbc

Closing Remarks

County Borough of Blaenau Gwent
Burdeisdref Sirol Blaenau Gwent

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
ON THURSDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2020**

PRESENT: Sian Beard, Ian Robins, Nazia Akhtar, Dave Rees, Isabel Jukes, Phil Diamond, Simon Key, Mike Jackson, Dan Perkins, Rhys Pearce, Allyson Roberts, Louise Rosser, Simon Spree, S Thomas, Jonathan Morgan, Rosalind Moyle, Alison Probert, Nicola Wyburn, Darren Grubb, Yvonne Tovey, L Turner, Joan Davies, AJ Fry, S Jones, J Snell, Michelle Jones, Lynne Gardner, Damian Assinder, S Martyn, Shaun Hughes, Clare Rogers, Mike Price, K Stokes, Karen Vaughan, D Davies, M Fielding

Caragh Hogan (Thompsons Solicitors)
Rachel Price (Regional Organiser)
Eva Clarke (Guest Speaker)
Mark Fisher (NEC)

APOLOGIES: Nicola Smith
Janice Collins
Leanne Roberts
Kelly Padfield
Ashley Brace
SJ

Dave Rees, Chairperson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone thanking them for their support at this difficult time, especially the environment team during these challenging weather conditions.

Dave went on to introduce our guests:

- Eva Clarke BEM who would be giving her speech later in the meeting.
- Stephanie Thomas, Assistant General Secretary
- Rachel Price, Regional Organiser
- Mark Fisher, NEC member representing Wales
- Caragh Hogan, Thompsons Solicitors

Minutes of AGM Meeting 21st February 2019 – (Accuracy)

The Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record

Moved: Damian Assinder
In favour: 23

Seconded: Simon Key
Against: None

Chairman's Report

The chair explained that the successes and failures during the past year were worth noting as it had been a difficult year in Blaenau Gwent. Unison led the campaign in the Leisure Trust and had won a 2% pay rise for the staff. Thanks to Allyson Roberts the relationship between the branch and the Leisure Trust has improved, with the change of Chief Executive we expect this relationship to go on strengthening,

Unison was not recognised in Silent Valley and staff were being paid less than the minimum wage. This position has changed and Unison now has a recognition agreement and has negotiated a pay increase for staff who are now on the living wage

Pay – the chair explained that the employers had made an initial offer of a one-year pay increase of 2% across all pay points from 1st April 2020. The union's starting position was 10%, less hours and more holidays. Negotiations are continuing. The chair asked for a show of hands as a quick survey of those in the room to gauge the feeling and asked:

- Should we accept 2% - 1 person accepted
- Would everyone be willing to take industrial action – 19 accepted / 1 against

He went on to explain that Unison has 65% density across Blaenau Gwent and the branch will continue to work to recruit and retain members.

The financial settlement for this year will mean there will not be any redundancies, but in year three there may be problems.

The chair thanked the truly remarkable executive, he said he felt this is the strongest executive the branch has ever had, with the only position still not filled being the Young Members Officer, he asked that we please encourage them to get involved.

Treasurers Report

The treasurer explained that last year's accounts were included as a comparison.

General Fund Income and Expenditure Account

The total income for 2019 was £44,918.77. The online accounting system branches use is the Olba system and all expenditure amounts have to be allocated, these total £42,373.30 meaning a surplus for the year of £2,545.38

Consolidated Balance Sheet

The total funds at the end of the year was £45,016.44, this is made up of £15,507.34 in the Industrial Action Fund which has restricted use and cannot be used for day to day running costs.

There being no questions from the floor, the Chair asked the meeting to endorse the accounts.

Moved: Mike Jackson
In favour - 30

Seconded: Phil Diamond
Against – None

Auditors Report

Nicola Wyburn confirmed there were no errors in the accounts and congratulated our Treasurer, Jonathan Morgan on another year of excellent accounting. Nicola is retiring so on behalf of the Executive the Chair thanked her for her meticulous attention to detail and as Carol Fry had been unable to attend asked Nicola to pass on his thanks to her also.

Honoraria

Honoraria are discretionary one-off payments made to elected branch executive members to recognise their voluntary work for the branch.

Allyson Roberts said that everyone on the presented list to receive honoraria had worked hard over and above their day jobs which deserved recognition. The Chair then asked the meeting to endorse the honoraria proposals.

Proposed: Allyson Roberts
In Favour – 23

Seconded: Michelle
Against – None

The honoraria payments were endorsed unanimously.

Election of Officers

The list of Officer Nominations was presented, the Chair advised that since this booklet was printed the branch had elected three further Executive members:

- Lifelong Learning Rep – Claire Gardner
- Women's Officer – Oriel Price
- Auditor – Helen Sullivan

The only position currently available is the Young Members Officer, the Chair explained that to be classed as a young member, individuals have to be under 27 years old.

Proposed: Allyson Roberts
In Favour – 30

Seconded: Sean Hughes
Against – None

Branch Assessment – Rachel Price

Now known as the Digital Organising Framework this is to determine the branch objectives for the following year:

- Recruitment of young members and a young members officer
- Mapping where the employees may be

- Activist development and engagement – ongoing with the Branch Development for 2020 already organised for 28th and 29th February.
- Recruitment of reps in the 3rd sector

Completed:

- Branch communication – Rhys Pearce, Communications Officer was recruited last year and has undertaken excellent work on the branch website and social media sites.
- Recruitment of Women's Officer

Michelle Jones asked what regional support the branch can expect moving forward, Rachel explained that she had taken over the branch in August 2019 and she and the branch were in the process of building a relationship. Her job was to find out what support the branch wants and needs and she explained that this relationship was still bedding down.

Allyson Roberts asked Rachel for her commitment to the branch and this was forthcoming.

Rachel explained that a meeting had taken place with the Chair, Branch Secretary and Treasurer to adopt a way forward and discussions had been very positive.

Guest Speakers

Caragh Hogan – Thompsons Solicitors

Caragh outlined the services they offer to Unison members and their families – she emphasised that in personal injury cases members received 100% of any compensation won for them against only 75% from high street solicitors.

Free information leaflets were available and she would be available to answer questions at the end of the meeting.

Stephanie Thomas – Assistant General Secretary

Stephanie explained that there are 5 AGS's responsible for all 12 regions. She also covers Unison's Charity 'There for You', the Professional Services Unit and Croyde Bay Holiday Resort.

She explained how Unison had advanced her career through their training courses enabling her to get where she is now and that there is an opportunity for all members to undertake any of these free courses.

Welfare support – there is a fast track system in place for all families who've suffered in the latest storms which can be accessed through Branches.

The day to day work undertaken by local government is very important as we seem to be the hidden workers as the NHS gets all the attention, but she said that Unison is very proud of the work we do.

Eva Clarke – Holocaust Survivor

Clarke was born in Mauthausen Concentration Camp, Austria, in April 1945. She and her mother are the only Holocaust survivors of their family, 15 members of whom were killed in Auschwitz.

In December 1941 Clarke's parents were sent to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp, later onto Auschwitz, and ultimately to Mauthausen, where Clarke was born in a cart with no medical assistance. If the gas chambers had not been blown up on the 28th April 1945 and the American Army had not liberated Mauthausen three days after Clarke's birth, Clarke nor her mother would have survived.

Clarke and her mother returned to Prague in 1948, and in the same year they emigrated to the UK. Clarke has lived in Cambridge since 1968.

Presentation

Neville Southall, International Officer presented the Blaenau Gwent, International Award for Outstanding Contribution to Learning and Equalities to Eva Clarke. (The award was a 'Tree of Life' piece of metal artwork).

Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked Eva for the inspirational job she does for the Holocaust Educational Trust sharing her testimony with thousands of young people each year, for which we are very grateful.

He also expressed his grateful thanks to the Branch Executive and stewards without which his job would be very difficult. He also extended his appreciation to those who attended especially because of the very bad weather conditions.

Prize Draw

The prize draw took place and Dan Perkins won the vouchers – Dan asked that they be donated to the Mayor's Charity.



County Borough of Blaenau Gwent Branch Honoraria Proposals 2020

Honoraria are discretionary one-off payments made to elected branch committee members to recognise their voluntary work for the branch.

POST	Name	2019 £	Proposed 2020 £
Secretary	Ian Robins	800	800
Welfare Officer	Simon Spree	200	200
Social Services Convenor	Mike Jackson	200	200
Chairperson	Dave Rees	-	-
Equalities Officer	Louise Rosser	200	225
Treasurer	Jonathan Morgan	750	750
Leisure Trust Reps	Alison Roberts Hayley Wright	- -	- -
Women's Officer & Black Members Officer	Nazia Akhtar	-	100
Communications Officer	Rhys Pearce	200	225
Schools Convenor	Simon Key	350	325
Health & Safety Officer	Damian Assinder	350	350
Education & Training Officer	Phil Diamond	250	225
International Officer	Neville Southall	200	200
Minutes Secretary	Janice Collins	200	200
Auditors (2 Posts)	Carol Fry Helen Sullivan Nicola Wyburn	150 - 150	150 150 -
LGBT Officer	Ashley Brace	-	-
Home Care Convenor	Izzy Jukes	200	200
Young Members Officer	Vacant Post	-	-
JNC / Chief Officers Lead	Claire Gardner	-	-
Tai Calon Reps	Gill Barnet Brenda Annand	- -	- -
Environment & Waste Rep	Rob O'Neil	-	-
	TOTALS	£4,200	£4,300

Total for 2019 £4,200
Total for 2020 £4,300

General Fund Income and Expenditure Account
For the year ended 31st December 2020

	2019	2020
	£	£
Income		
Branch Funding	44,858.77	43,890.95
Retired Members Subscriptions	60.00	0.00
Other Income	0.00	3,211.60
Regional Pool Income	0.00	1,000.00
Income total	44,918.77	48,102.55
Expenditure		
Staff Salaries	4,754.73	12,770.20
Other administration	9,970.13	6,735.44
Honoraria	3,700.00	4,200.00
Conferences and group meetings	6,587.60	584.54
Branch Committee	4,700.99	2,400.95
Other Meetings	1,241.73	1,046.51
Publicity	2,697.34	3,731.10
Education	5,609.28	1,480.70
Donations	349.01	100.00
Local Activities	2,762.58	361.68
Expenditure total	42,373.39	33,411.12
Surplus for the year	2,545.38	14,691.43

Consolidated Balance Sheet
For the year ended 31st December 2020

	2019 £	2020 £
Fixed Assets		
Equipment, Fixtures & Fittings	5,129.57	5,600.44
Total Fixed Assets	5,129.57	5,600.44
Current Assets		
Third Party Debtors	435.00	0.00
Current Account	41,123.07	56,739.54
Prepaid Card	1,476.41	2,706.45
Total Current Assets	43,034.48	59,445.99
Current Liabilities		
Branch Funding	76.31	0.00
Third Party Creditors	3,071.30	5,338.56
Total Current Liabilities	3,147.61	5,338.56
Net Current Assets	39,886.87	54,107.43
Total Assets	45,016.44	59,707.87
Accumulated Funds		
Accumulated General Fund at year beginning	26,963.72	29,509.10
Brought Forward Balance Adjustment	0.00	0.00
Surplus/Deficit	2,545.38	14,691.43
Accumulated General Fund at year end	29,509.10	44,200.53
Accumulated Industrial Action Fund	15,507.34	15,507.34
Surplus/Deficit	0.00	0.00
Accumulated Industrial Action Fund at year end	15,507.34	15,507.34
Total Funds at End of the Year	45,016.44	59,707.87

JM

Auditors Report January 2021

The audit of the accounts has been completed. There were a few queries which were answered satisfactorily and a few recommendations which will be addressed by the Treasurer. There is a healthy balance of funds and we thank the Treasurer for keeping the accounts in good order.

Carol Fry.

Helen Sullivan.

UNISON
County Borough of Blaenau Gwent

Officer Nominations

Post	Nominee
Secretary	Ian Robins
Chairperson	Dave Rees
Treasurer	Jonathan Morgan
Women's Officer	Louise Rosser
Schools Convenor	Simon Key
Social Services Convenor	Mike Jackson
Health & Safety Officer	Damien Assinder
Communications Officer	Rhys Pearce
Education & Training Officer	Phil Diamond
Equalities Officer	Louise Rosser
Welfare Officer	Simon Spree
International Officer	Neville Southall
Sports & Social Secretary	Dan Perkins
Young Member's Officer	
Minutes Secretary	Janice Collins
Auditors (2 Posts)	Carol Fry/Helen Sullivan
LGBT Officer	
Black Members Officer	Nazia Akhtar
Regional Home Care Convenor	Izzy Jukes
Labour Link Officer	Dave Rees
Retired Member / Pensions Champion	John Wright

The above-named Officers are nominated unopposed and are deemed elected, subject to AGM approval.



We still have vacancies for Stewards across all workplaces so any nominations or volunteers would be very welcome. Full training will be offered to anyone volunteering.

Officers of the union take the lead on specific areas of activity and work in close liaison with our Stewards and Workplace Contacts to ensure that we deliver effectively for our members.

Specific training is available for many of these positions so don't feel that you will be on your own if you stand, or persuade a colleague to stand. There is only one qualification for officers, they need to be a member of the union; having an interest or experience of the specific areas of activity would of course be welcomed.

Stewards are the backbone of UNISON; they act as a link between members and the union in our workplaces. All new stewards have the right to paid time off for training which UNISON provides. New stewards also have the backup of more experienced officers should the need arise.

Your workplace will be a much stronger place should you nominate someone to act on your behalf, and remember different stewards get involved to differing degrees, so don't worry if you feel you don't have that much time, just being a presence in the workplace is often enough.

If you are interested please contact the UNISON Office:

**General Offices
Steelworks Road
Ebbw Vale NP23 6AA**

Tel: 01494 355252

Email: UnisonOfficeAdmin@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Website: www.unisoningwent.org.uk

THE ADDED VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP



Great deals for everyday life

Unison is always looking out for you when you're at work,
but there's much more to life.

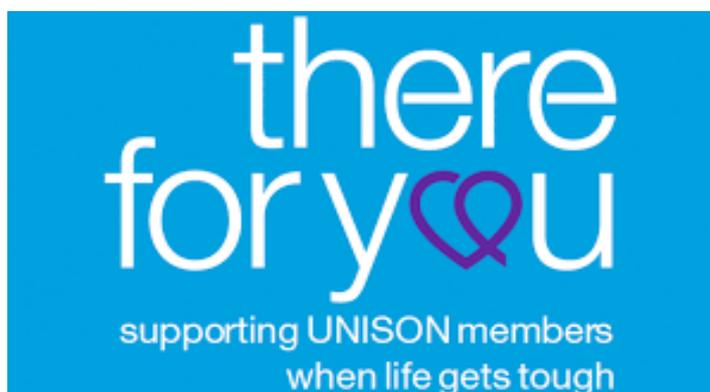
So UNISON Living is here to help you get the most from your own time too. From family healthcare to a family car, from fun days to holidays, UNISON Living can connect you with a trusted partner who can help. We've used the huge power of our 1.3 million members to secure some of the best deals exclusively for you.

For more information on UNISON Living and links to our providers websites visit **benefits.unison.org.uk**

For general enquiries on UNISON member benefits, services and UNISON Living contact UNISON Direct on **0800 0857 857**

Alternatively contact your branch office on **01495 355252** for a brochure.

UNISON WELFARE



(Charity registration number: 1023552 / SC038305)

UNISON's registered charity provides a unique confidential service just for UNISON members and their families. They offer:

- debt service
- advice and support
- financial assistance
- wellbeing breaks

Telephone: 020 7121 5620

Email: thereforyou@unison.co.uk

www.unison.org.uk/thereforyou



***Eligibility** - To be eligible to apply for financial assistance, you must have been a member of UNISON for at least four weeks and up-to-date with your subscriptions. Also, that the financial difficulties that led you to apply occurred after you joined. Partners or dependants can also apply.*



It's been a tough year for people right across the world, as COVID-19 has swept around the globe - and with no sign of it disappearing any time soon.

UNISON members have been among those facing the daily battle with the pandemic - not just in their work keeping our vital services going, but also on a personal and domestic front.

There for You is UNISON's unique welfare charity and, in the summer, introduced a new fund to help members who were struggling financially as a direct consequence of the new coronavirus.

The first round of the COVID-19 response fund ran from May to July and distributed over £250,000 in grants to individual members in financial difficulty due to the pandemic.

Such grants have made a massive difference.

The charity is now delighted to be announce it has re-opened its COVID-19 response fund from 16 November.

Grants of up to £500 will be made to help members in financial difficulty as a result of coronavirus. Grants can support with day-to-day living costs: for example, if you or your partner are furloughed or shielding and relying on statutory sick pay.

To apply on line visit Unison's website: www.unison.org.uk and follow the links for the COVID Fund, alternatively you can request an application form from the Branch.



THOMPSONS
S O L I C I T O R S

STANDING UP FOR YOU

UNISON works in partnership with Thompsons Solicitors to provide comprehensive legal support for its members. Members also benefit from employment law advice and a range of services for family members too.

- Personal Injury
- Serious Injury
- Industrial disease or illness
- A free initial assessment in clinical negligence cases
- Basic will writing
- Reduced rates for conveyancing
- Employment law
- Criminal law advice

Proud to only act for
unions, their members
and working people



THOMPSONS
S O L I C I T O R S

STANDING UP FOR YOU

www.thompsonstradeunionlaw.co.uk

Essential legal cover

when you need it most


UNISON
the public service union

0800 0 857 857

Follow the Branch on Social Media
Join the conversation and keep up to date with all the latest Unison news.



Find us by searching **UnisoninBG** on Facebook and Twitter



www.unisoningwent.org.uk



Blaenau Gwent County UNISON
General Offices
Steelworks Road
Ebbw Vale NP23 6AA

01495 355252

UnisonOfficeAdmin@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Website: www.unisoningwent.org.uk

**ESSENTIAL COVER IF YOU
WORK IN PUBLIC SERVICES**

Worried about your job in public services? At a time of cuts, redundancies, restructuring and outsourcing, **now is the time to join UNISON.**

