



*Monmouthshire County Branch
Cangen Sir Fynwy*



Tuesday 5th February 2019
Room 5, @Innovation House, Magor

Wednesday 6th February 2019
Mardy Park Resource Centre, Abergavenny

Thursday 7th February 2019
Conference Room, The Rhadyr, Usk

All meetings start at 12.30pm

AGENDA

Apologies

Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Officer Reports

Honoraria

Approval of the Accounts

Election of Branch Officers and Stewards

Mental Health & Wellbeing



mentalhealth
MATTERS

UNISON
the public sector union

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

6th February 2018

The Talent Lab, @Innovation House, Magor

8th February 2018

Mardy Park, Abergavenny

13th February 2018

Conference Room, County Hall, Usk

PRESENT

Jan Davies (Branch Secretary)
Liam (Chairperson)
Marie Bartlett (Treasurer)
Sian Stockham (International / Welfare Officer)
Richard Garner (Health & Safety)
Sandra Rosser (Assistant Branch Secretary)
Tracy Finnis (Equalities Officer)

Robin Grant - Steward
Kevan O'Dwyer - Steward
Stephen Griffiths - Steward
Carwyn Davies - Steward
Joanne Davies - Steward
Deserie Mansfield - Steward

Rosie Lewis (Unison)
Karl Gauden (Unison)
Laura Doel (FFO)
Karen Vaughan (Branch Admin)

TOTAL - 59 Members of the Branch

APOLOGIES

Lynda McIndo
Emily Bransom
Geraldine Morgan

Liam Perry opened the meeting by welcoming members and introducing the officers and Unison personnel present.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2017

These were received and approved.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

No matters arising.

Officer reports

Officer Reports were received and approved: officers would be available to answer any questions on their individual reports at the end of the meeting.

No reports were received from the sub-branches.

Honoraria

Honoraria in the first table were debated and approved. It was pointed out that there has been no uplift in these payments for a number of years, all payments are calculated as a percentage of the Branch Secretary's amount. The branch intends to make payments to 2 stewards in recognition of the extra support they've given to the branch this year.

The second table indicated what the branch intends to do next year, it is proposed that all payments are halved leaving an additional amount which can be apportioned on the basis of the workload of each individual, officer or steward. The arrangement for these payments will be decided by the Regional Officer and cannot be decided by anyone who is in receipt of honoraria.

The method of calculation of honoraria was explained as a discretionary one-off payment to elected members of the Committee in recognition of their voluntary work for the Branch, and it was made clear that no person who received a payment could vote on this item.

Honoraria were approved unanimously. No potential recipient took part in the vote.

Approval of the Accounts

The Treasurer then presented the Annual Statement of Accounts to the meeting.

Income and Expenditure Account

The deficit in Expenditure has now been reduced, Marie explained that as we've paid for the FFO for 2018 out of the 2017 budget that is the reason it's still showing a slight deficit.

Balance Sheet

Marie explained that although our reserves look healthy £61K came from Gwent County Council and is in the Industrial Action Fund and we're not able to use it. This leaves £14K which is quite low so means the branch will be able to get an increase in their funding from Unison.

Budget

Due to entering into the collaboration with Blaenau Gwent to share the admin facility the budget for 2018 is balanced.

The accounts were unanimously approved.

Election of Branch Officers and Stewards

Nominations had been sought and all returned nominations to date were presented for approval.

At the time of printing we had received two nominations for the position of Welfare Officer, Laura-Jane Marchrones had since decided to withdraw her nomination.

Liam Perry explained the need for more stewards in the Branch and explained that Unison offer training courses to all new stewards and anyone interested would be allowed paid time off to attend. He went on to explain how much stronger a workplace would be if there was someone acting on behalf of members and urged those present to become involved in whatever capacity they felt comfortable with. The Branch offers full support to any new stewards.

We are also looking to recruit young members and get them more involved, the Branch can support with organising a young members group. To be part of a young members group you should be 27 or under.

All nominations for Officers and Stewards presented were elected by the meeting.

The AGM granted the Branch Committee the ability to fill any vacant posts and approve new officers and steward nominations throughout the year.

Mental Health (Sandra Rosser)

Sandra introduced herself and explained that she has been a steward for just over 5 years, and was fortunate to be on the second group of stewards to become Mental Health Champions - a new initiative at Cymru Wales UNISON.

At National Delegates Conference in June 2017, a motion was passed to roll out this initiative across all of UNISON. It was recognised that every single member can be affected by Mental Health in some shape or form, whether it be through work or home life, so we learn as Champions where to signpost people dependant on what help they need. Postcards with useful helplines have been produced which we can circulate - a handy size to keep in the back of a diary (for those of us that still use one!).

There is an opportunity for members to go on a free one day course in Cardiff UNISON office on the 28th April to do a one day Mental Health Awareness course, which Sandra and 3 other officers have attended and can recommend to everyone - whatever your interest in mental health may be. To apply to go on this course, please email the office for the application form, and then return it to Branch for authorising for attendance.

Sandra explained how important our mental health is. She has suffered with poor mental health herself, and has worked with many others who have either suffered themselves or been affected by people close to them suffering with this. Sandra was given the opportunity to speak about what being a Mental Health Champion means to her at the 1st Mental Health Unison Conference on 10th October last year, something she never thought she would do but to speak about something as important as this was a great privilege. Being a Mental Health Champion does not make her a Counsellor, but we hope that it will encourage people to ask for help, and access services which are there for everyone when they need them most.

Welfare (Sian Stockham)

Sian is a member of the Cymru/Wales NEC and also the Chair of the Board of Trustees for UNISON nationally.

Sian explained that UNISON is the only union to have a charity - There For You.

We recognise that UNISON Members experience many pressures in their lives affecting both home and work. There for you offers a unique confidential advice and support service just for members of UNISON and their dependants. Whether it's just a chat and a listening ear, advice or more concrete help you're seeking they may be able to help you. At a glance they provide: financial assistance, debt advice, wellbeing breaks, support and information. The service is provided by experienced and professional staff. They can help you with the application process, give information and advice or suggest another organisation that can help.

Sian Stockham as the Branch Welfare Officer will also be able to assist you.

Supporting There for You

Join the UNISON lottery for as little as £1 a month and you could win cash prizes of up to £1,000. At least 50% of the proceeds from each draw goes towards prize money, and every entry includes a donation to There for You. UNISON members and branches can play.

Winners are selected at random each month. When you join you'll be sent your lottery numbers, which will automatically be entered into every draw. And the more people that play, the bigger the prize fund becomes!

You can also volunteer to help at fundraising events and take part in promoting the charity to **UNISON** members. If you want to find out more about volunteering please email thereforyou@unison.co.uk or call 020 7121 5620.

Any Other Business

NJC Pay Claim 2018/20

UNISON NJC Committee's view on the pay offer

The UNISON NJC Committee is recommending that members reject the two-year 2018/20 pay offer. The Committee believes that the offer falls short of their claim. However, the Committee is clear that the offer is the best achievable by negotiation and that nothing short of substantial, all-out strike action could have the potential to improve the offer.

Branches have been asked to consult members on this basis, setting out clearly the recommendation of the UNISON NJC Committee. The UNISON NJC Committee will be meeting on Friday 16 March 2018 to consider the results of the consultation and agree the next steps in our pay campaign.

Consultation should be through branch ballots in as many workplaces as possible - following face-to-face discussions with members and workplace meetings, in accordance with the consultation procedures. This will ensure the maximum possible vote on the offer and allow the UNISON NJC Committee to get a clear picture of members' views on it. Any decision on the next steps needs to be informed by the clear views of members.

Leaflets outlining the proposals were available to be taken away and everyone was urged to take copies for their colleagues also.

Service Group Executive

The SGE represent members, negotiate and bargain on **their** behalf, campaign for better working conditions and pay and for public services.

Jan Davies told the meeting she was standing for the National SGE and explained that members will be receiving ballot papers shortly and asked that they vote in support of her nomination.

Questions were invited from the floor, there being none and all matters having been dealt with, the meeting closed.

Chairperson's Report

I may be at risk of repeating myself from previous reports but it has been a busy year for Unison Monmouthshire. By nature, our union is never at rest and there is always something on the table that needs our attention. 2018 has been no different with the ongoing debacle of Brexit, continued underfunding of Local Government and sustained squeeze on living standards all taking their toll.

Whatever your inclination regarding the EU, nationally, Unison is leading the campaign to protect our members and their communities. We simply cannot countenance an outcome to these negotiations that imperils our members' jobs and standard of living. Whatever the end point is, rest assured that Unison is fighting on your behalf to make sure you don't suffer as the result of the childish squabbles of the government.

Locally, Unison Monmouthshire has been working extremely hard in the face of budget squeezes and service changes to ensure our members' jobs and wellbeing are protected. If, like me, you are an alumni of that old monolith County Hall, you would be forgiven for thinking that Local Government is rapidly becoming unrecognisable. With shrinking departments, services in flux and a bewildering corporate ethos, you might feel disconnected or have a feeling of being overwhelmed.

I want to assure you that while we cannot halt change, we can help and support our members and we are unafraid to tackle your issues head-on. Our priority is our members' dignity and security and whatever challenges are ahead, we will do what we can to protect your interests. There is only one thing we ask of you: talk to us.

No matter how big or small the problem, we want to hear about it. You don't have to be on the verge of instigating formal procedures, if you simply want to get something off your chest or bring something to our attention, please get in touch.

On a similar note, if you want to be more involved with your union, please don't hesitate to let us know. A union is only as strong as its members and there is always room for new stewards in our ranks. Our officer team have a wealth of knowledge and experience to help you, and Unison offer a comprehensive training package for new stewards. If you've ever thought about becoming more active in your union, or simply want to know more, don't put it off, drop us a line!

Liam Perry

Branch Secretary's Report

It's the start of a new year and a challenging one for UNISON members, the services they provide, and for the union. The severe financial pressures that continue to hit local government have inevitably led to restructures, collaborations, shared services & various pilot schemes and this is set to continue. The hype may say the end of Austerity is nigh, but in reality there's no change. All of this continues to run alongside the usual representations and advice /support.

With such a difficult financial position, the Authority is continually looking at different ways of working to improve efficiencies and achieve the necessary savings. If there are proposed changes to your sections / departments please contact us. We are not always aware of changes and rely on your help to keep us informed.

We are still no clearer as to the effect the UK's departure from the EU will have on employment law. We can only hope that employment legislation remains robust. The government has set out its intention in a white paper to transfer all existing health and safety protections from EU law to UK law, however, there are no guarantees for what happens afterwards.

The only way to guarantee all health and safety & employment protection would be to put workplace rights at the heart of any Brexit deal. Sadly this does not appear to be the case. UNISON will continue to fight / campaign to ensure that we retain as much of the protection we currently have under EU Employment & Health & Safety legislation as possible.

We now hold regular drop-in sessions at Usk and Magor, we are open to suggestions if anyone would like to see these sessions in different workplaces. Our recent session concentrated on the free will service offered by Unison and was very well received. Future themes will include free training, stress management and well-being.

Our membership figures are holding steady, but more needs to be done to ensure that those who work for Monmouthshire and are not members, join up! This is not a time to be fighting alone, with all the changes on the horizon there has never been a more important time to be a Unison member.

I have also had the privilege of representing Monmouthshire Unison at Local Government Committee, Joint Council for Wales and at the South East Wales Joint Consultative Committee.

I am a member on the LGPS Board. Unison fund board members are there to represent the interests of all scheme members' not just Unison members.

Previously LGPS scheme members have not had representatives on the board, it is important to open up a dialogue on issues that are important to the effective functioning of our fund. Keep an eye on the Monmouthshire Unison website for regular updates.

We are still desperately short of stewards. If anyone is interested please contact me. There is plenty of training available and I would be happy to provide any advice / guidance / support you may need.

PLEASE COME FORWARD - YOUR BRANCH NEEDS YOU !!

Jan Davies



**CHECK OUT
OUR NEW
WEBSITE!**

Website: www.unisoningwent.org.uk

Assistant Branch Secretary's Report

Hello Everyone!

With my first year in the role of Assistant Branch Secretary coming to an end, I was faced with writing up a report on how that year has been. For those that I haven't met before, I have been a steward for 6 years, and have been fortunate to assist members with all sorts of issues and situations. Supporting our Branch Secretary was something I had not ever anticipated taking on, and I am indebted to my Unison Family for giving me the opportunity to "give it a go"!

One of my first jobs was to prepare for National Delegate Conference in June, which involves going to Brighton and making sense of over 130 proposed motions that have been put forward by branches from all over Britain. I am astonished how they get whittled down and prioritised, so that Conference can debate, discuss, and vote on what we as members want to take forward to make a difference in the following 12 months. Being able to openly discuss and debate issues across the whole union in this environment is amazing, but what makes the week even more memorable, is listening to the inspiring stories that members are brave enough to get up and share with all the delegates in attendance. I admit to shedding a few tears at some of the stories we heard, which made me even more proud to be part of such an inspiring movement. I haven't got up to speak at Conference yet, but watching two colleagues (including one from our own branch) get up in front of 3000 people was incredible!

I try to engage in as much training as I can, and have been fortunate to complete the Mental Health Champions training the previous year. I have found this invaluable, as it has given me the skills to be able to actively listen to people when they want to talk, to signpost them to organisations who can offer appropriate support and advice, and to look out for those who may just need a friendly face to say hello and make a cup of tea.

I have discovered I am not great with I.T., so trying to help get the Unison in Gwent website off the ground has been quite the learning curve! Facebook is something I do understand, so I have tried to keep those of you who follow us on this platform up to date with where we are, when we have our drop in sessions, and post about news items which may have an effect on us all as Unison members.

We have tried in 2018 to get out in the community more, and we had a great day out in September when we attended the Usk Show. Teamwork was tested to the max when, midway through the morning, our gazebo decided to take off along with half our leaflets and freebies, and we were indebted to our neighbouring exhibitors who dashed to our aid! I am pleased to report no-one was hurt, and nothing was damaged, and we hope Caerphilly Branch will lend us their lovely gazebo again when we next venture out in to the community!

Please come up and say hello when you see me out and about - I can make a mean cuppa, and am always happy to go for a walk if anyone ever wants to have a chat!

Here's to fantastic 2019!

Sandra Rosser

Welfare Officer's Report

Last year I became the branch Welfare Officer and since then I've supported branch members to access the services of UNISON's own charity, There for You.

They provide many services for our member such as, school uniform grants, the winter fuel grant programme (this runs from 3rd December / 15th February 2019), wellbeing breaks, hardship grants and confidential debt advice etc.

I am also on the National Executive Committee representing the Cymru/Wales region. From the NEC I'm a Trustee of the National Welfare Board and also its Chairperson.

I have also had the honour of being elected Junior Vice President of UNISON.

Sian Stockham



Telephone: 020 7121 5620

Email: thereforyou@unison.co.uk

www.unison.org.uk/thereforyou



Health & Safety Officer's Report

The last year has been busy both in work and without especially with Mon Life taking shape. As with previous years, I am still mainly involved with queries from members and being a representative on the Health and Safety Working Group.

We are always on the lookout for new UNISON Health and Safety reps to help in the prevention of health and safety issues around the county. If you would like to know more please let me know. Alternatively just taking 5 minutes to look around where you are working and seeing any problems and helping fix them makes a big difference, whether it's the chair that everyone avoids because it can't be adjusted, a wire trailing across the floor, or a pile of boxes.

Finally, don't become another figure in the health and safety report: laptops users, please make sure you take regular breaks, that your workstation is set up correctly and has the right equipment, especially if working for more than a couple of hours in one place, there is potentially access to some sit down/stand up workstations. If you don't have the above or would like further information, initially discuss this with your manager, failing that, contact me or the UNISON office where we can help put you on the right track.

Richard Garner



Officer Nominations

At the closing date the following nominations had been received:

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Branch Chairperson | Liam Perry |
| Branch Secretary | Jan Davies |
| Assistant Branch Secretary | Sandra Rosser |
| Branch Treasurer | Marie Bartlett |
| Health & Safety Officer | Richard Garner |
| Equalities Co-ordinator | Tracy Finnis |
| Welfare Officer | Sian Stockham |
| Young Members Officer | |
| Education Co-ordinator | Undertaken by Branch Admin |
| International Relations Officer | Sian Stockham |
| Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator | Undertaken by Branch Admin |
| Communications Officer | Undertaken by Branch Admin |
| Membership Officer | Undertaken by Branch Admin |
| Retired Member's Secretary | |
| Labour Link Officer | |

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

Steward Nominations

Monmouthshire County Council

Michelle Kear

Kevan O'Dwyer

Joanne Davies

Robin Grant

Laura-Jane Marchrones

Helen Cox

Caldicot Comprehensive School

Grounds Maintenance

Museums Services

Children's Services

Adult Services / Revenues

Deri View Primary School

Capita Symonds

Carwyn Davies

Monmouth School for Girls

None received

Monmouth School for Boys

None received

Monmouthshire Housing Association

None received

The above nominations have been received and are therefore elected.

The Branch reserves the right to fill any vacant posts and approve new officers and steward nominations throughout the year.



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 Karen in the UNISON Office:

UNISON Office
18 Maryport Street
Usk NP15 1AE

Tel: 01291 675502
Email: unisonmon@btconnect.com
Website: www.unisoningwent.org.uk

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- UNISON credit union network

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More for members

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(Charity registration number: 1023552 / SCO38305)

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

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Email: thereforyou@unison.co.uk

www.unison.org.uk/thereforyou



Croyde Bay
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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.

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Look out for the Member Learning Programme January - June 2019

LEARNING GRANTS

UNISON wants to help members realise their potential. We offer financial support to members taking part in various educational and learning opportunities, as well as learning discounts from a number of providers.

The number of grants is limited and they are awarded on a first come, first served, basis. Contact the branch office for further information.

Open University awards

Open University awards are available to UNISON members undertaking 30 and 60 point Open University courses up to and including undergraduate level at their own expense. Awards are made as follows:

- 60 point courses: £300
- 30 point courses: £200

Learning grants

These grants of up to £200 are intended to help members studying at levels up to and including undergraduate at their own expense on the following types of courses:

- Trade Union and Labour Studies (where an applicant has not received a bursary)
- non-vocational education up to and including undergraduate level (e.g. GCSE maths or English)
- vocational education relevant to public service work up to and including undergraduate level

Grants for School Support Staff

To help you get on at work and develop your career, UNISON is offering personal learning development grants for members who are school support staff.

A limited number of awards of up to £300 each are being offered to help towards course fees.

Grants for Care Workers

To help you get on at work and develop your career, UNISON is offering personal learning development grants for

- members who provide social care in residential homes or individuals' own homes

A limited number of awards of up to £300 each are being offered to help towards course fees.

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