

# Minutes of University Of Nottingham Branch AGM

March 12th 2024

- The meeting was opened by the Chair Louise Stonard who welcomed everyone and ensured the register had been signed by everyone and explained the need to be quorate.
- A short film supplied by the East Midlands Region was shown, highlighting the good work done in the last year.
- The Branch Secretary Vicki Morris gave a review of the year;
  - Vicki thanked Branch reps, Contacts and committee members for their hard work. She appealed for more volunteers to come forward to help.
  - New HR staff recruited by UoN to look at all policies and procedures, as well as working practice, as it's clear that our HR dept has been less than effective in the past. The new people are clearly wanting input from the 3 unions and encouraging full participation. This appears to be extremely positive at the moment and Vicki is confident that we will see improvements from this development.
  - More participation in these meetings and discussions has highlighted how dismal our facilities time package is. It has not been increased for many years and is not fit for purpose. Vicki and Louise are in the process of negotiating for this to be increased as soon as possible. This will not only enable the branch to be actively involved in all decision making meetings but will give us more time to represent and support members.
  - We have a lot of members requiring support and advice for concerns rather than the usual sickness and disciplinary support that's usually requested. We are unsure if this is because we have done a lot of work this year to become more visible and accessible to the members, or if this is just a trend caused by the current financial worries, personal and within the wider University.
  - Vicki spoke about the University's current financial crisis. The Uni state they will not be making any redundancies this year, but no promises on next, however we believe redundancies are unlikely given the current recruitment freeze.
  - There followed a short Q&A session where the following issues were raised:

**Q. Holiday black-out periods, are they legal or necessary?**

A. These periods are negotiable with managers. Any holiday taken during these times is discouraged because of business needs but can be taken if it's deemed to be necessary or for special occasions. However, we will ask if it is necessary to have quite such long periods blacked out.

- Area of Work - H&S: a short talk on how to contact our H&S Officer by Paula Campbell. No questions asked.
- Area of Work - Welfare: presented by Margaret McPhee who spoke about Unison's "There for You" campaign and the support available to members who are struggling. Contact details were given with information on how to access the help available through the website or by calling region. No questions asked.
- Area of Work - Labour Link: presented by Louise Stonard. This gave a report on the past year's progress and activity as well as the work planned for the next year. Louise informed the branch that she is now Unison affiliate to her CLP, is on the regional Labour Link Committee, and will be attending both National LL Forum and the Labour Party Conference this year. It was also mentioned that this branch had a motion passed at Regional forum which will now go to national, and how she has been campaigning for HE to be higher on the list of priorities than currently. No questions asked.
- The minutes of the 2023 AGM were voted on and passed.
- Jo Ratchford from East Midlands Region explained to members present that if anyone wanted to nominate themselves for any vacant positions in the committee or to be a Rep that they could do so now and we would vote on it today along with the vote for those that had already been nominated. A member asked if we could have a LGBTQIA+ officer and Jo explained that LGBTQ is a Self Organised Group, or SOG, which along with Women's Group, Disabilities, and Black Members comes under the umbrella of Equalities Officer. We need organisers to run these groups though. Three people came forward: Dale Vick for Equalities, Paul Swift for ULR, and Richard Fletcher for Education. These were seconded by Louise Stonard.
- The vote was held for all officer and rep positions and was carried.
- The Financial Report was given by Laura Sun. We are in a healthy position with a good surplus in the bank. Therefore Laura had set next year's budget to be slightly over our expected income, with more money going on social events to recruit, conferences and training. There were some questions raised.

**Q. CRSP pension for levels 1 to 3 is not very good, difficult to understand and the paperwork is confusing. Can we have some training sessions for staff?**

A. Louise explained that the new HR and finance people are proposing to make the CRSP pension a Salary Sacrifice pension, which will make it better as the pension will be taken out of your salary before Tax and NI, which will mean you will get tax relief on your pension contributions. However we will certainly ask if there can be some workshops for staff on how to understand your pension and how it all works.

**Q. Can we have a social event where we invite the Mayoral Candidates and the candidates for the Police and Crime Commissioner? Can we do some more work letting members know why these elections are important and how it affects all of us?**

A. It was agreed that a social event would be a good idea and that we can certainly email all members with info about the upcoming elections, we could also do a postal leaflet. Leonie Mathers volunteered to help organise a social event.

- A vote was held to ratify last year's accounts and approve next year's budget which was carried.
- A motion was tabled to agreed to affiliate with Notts trades council at a cost of 10p per member. It was proposed by Vicki Morris and seconded by Louise Stonard. The vote was held and carried.
- AOB. Louise spoke about the ongoing work being done on the 20% uplift for weekend work being paid to level 1 only and how this is negatively affecting Level 2 who are effectively being paid less on a weekend than those they are supervising.

There was no other business and so the meeting was closed by the chair after thanking everyone for attending.

These minutes are a composite of both morning and afternoon sessions held on 12 March 2024.

47 members attended in total over the two sessions making it quorate.