



Branch meeting minutes

Thursday 6 March 2025, 6.30pm in-person in Croydon Town Hall and by Zoom

- 1. Present:** there were 9 people in the room and 12 on Zoom. *In the room:* Branch Secretary Pete Raven, Branch Officers Matthew Connolly and Megan Dobney, plus 6 Branch members; *on Zoom:* Branch Officers Andrea Gilbert and Jack Ryan, Lisa Edwards who is seconded to work with the Region's organising team, plus 9 branch members.
- 2. Introductions:** the Branch Secretary welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Matthew Connolly for improving the Zoom facility.
- 3. Apologies:** Branch President Maggie Hughes, Branch Officer Adam Hughes.
- 4. Minutes of last meeting 28 November 2024:** were approved.
- 5. Honoraria and Uplift for Accompanying Reps:** Pete said that Accompanying Reps receive a (smallish) Honorarium for their work. Members pay tax on these Honoraria. He proposed the following:
 - Laura Miller will be joining us for 2 days a week and will receive £1,600 every 3 months.
 - Megan Dobney (1 day a week) will receive an uplift of £100 per quarter taking the Honorarium to £800 per quarter, and Jack Ryan (2 days a week) will be uplifted to £1,600 per quarter.
 - Lisa Edwards is working with schools via the Regional Organising Team (ROT) and will receive £100 per quarter for her appointment as an Auditor for the Branch.
 - All the above was approved by the meeting.
- 6. Complaint against the Branch Secretary:** Pete reported on the complaint received against him from a member. The last Branch meeting had referred this to the Regional Office and it had been investigated by the appointed full time officer. He had been interviewed and accompanied by Megan. The Regional Committee had reviewed the officer's subsequent report and did not uphold the complaint.

7. **Branch update:** Pete reported

- More and more members were coming to the Branch with issues that we have to refer to their contracts. He advised all members to ensure they have a copy of their contract – however old it is. A key problem can be ensuring the correct start date – important to be clear on continuity of service. The contract is a legal document and he emphasised that members should ensure they have theirs, and if not to seek to get a copy now, not when they have a problem at work.
- The transfer of about 500 members working via various platforms (Bolt, Uber, Deliveroo etc) to the Uber Branch in Southampton is complete. They will now receive better and more appropriate support.
- We have gained 50+ members from Yodel including 2 reps. They should be more or less self-sufficient. This means that our current membership is 7,899.
- The Southern Region Secretary has now retired and the Region is going through the process of interviews so we should be notified of the successful candidate in due course.
- Pete had hoped to get Sarah Jones MP (Croydon West) but she couldn't attend. He will definitely arrange for a speaker at the next meeting.

8. **Any other business:**

- **Disabled members:** a member asked what the union does for disabled people. Pete replied that we support them through grievances etc in the workplace, and Lisa added that there is a Disability Network, with information on the website. <https://www.gmb.org.uk/gmb-disabled-workers/get-active>
- **Getting more reps:** a member asked what the branch is doing about getting more reps now that Terry Douglas has retired saying he felt that the Branch is stretched providing support to members. Pete responded that he now has the "branch phone" for members to contact us and he is not aware of missing any requests for support. Getting more people on board is not an easy job! Last year we contacted around 3,500 retired life members in the Region and had one response. The member wondered whether a subs increase would help, but Pete said money is not the key problem, but getting experienced people with an understanding of rights at work.
- **Lisa Edwards:** Pete invited Lisa to tell the meeting about the work she was doing. She said she is in place supporting the ROT team and through the Welling office, appointed via the national union's GRASP initiative – GMB Race Achievement Scholarship Programme.

- **Volunteering:** a member said he was always willing to attend demonstrations to support members if he is told about them. Pete said he had received no information recently and that it would be circulated when received.
 - A member raised further issues to be picked up by Matthew.
 - **Unionline:** a member asked what the situation was now with Unionline as there had been some uncertainty. Pete said it was, as far as he knew, business as usual. The Region still has no Legal Officer but he hoped this would happen soon, and reminded members that criminal matters, if you are in a police station for instance, can be supported by Blackfords (criminal defence, GMB member assistance) 08700 107007.
 - **Employment law:** a member asked if we can have an update on changes to employment law at a future meeting.
9. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 19 June at 18.30 at Croydon Town Hall. Pete reiterated that e would be looking to organise an additional meeting or two outside of Croydon – possibly at Bromley Town Hall.