



Branch meeting minutes

Thursday 13 June 2024, 6.30pm in-person in Croydon Town Hall and by Zoom

- 1. Present:** Branch Secretary Pete Raven, Branch officers: Matthew Connolly and Megan Dobney; online: Branch officer Jack Ryan; plus 13 Branch members in the room and online
- 2. Apologies:** Branch President Maggie Hughes, members Klara Rychtarcikova and Chris Wongsosputro
- 3. Introductions:** The Secretary welcomed members to the meeting whether in-person or online. He apologised for the lack of agenda but things had been hectic in the branch lately!
- 4. Minutes of last meeting 7 March 2024:** had been circulated to all Branch members and were agreed a true record.
- 5. Branch update:** Pete reported:
 - Membership is still creeping upwards, now 8,166. Some have joined following the campaign in schools, some via Bidfoods reps, and some individually.
 - We've had some of the branch team off sick so apologies if you've had a slow response.
 - Regional officers are visiting some workplaces in south east London and there is possible industrial action. If so, members will receive information and be requested to support picket lines.
 - A member introduced herself as a former Wilko rep of 14 years, now working at B&M. she wants to organise her workplace and will contact Pete by email to progress this. peter.raven@gmbactivist.org.uk
 - Our request for expenditure on promotional materials and for more accompanying rep time has been approved by the regional committee.

- Jack Ryan commented that he had been asked for photo ID by 2 companies. Noted that this is under discussion, but that he needs business cards and the legal authorisation from the Regional Secretary should suffice.

6. Upcoming general election

Pete asked if members had any views or questions about the general election on 4 July. He commented that members had said to him they wanted the Tories out but weren't all that enamoured of Keir Starmer. The main need is to get the Tories out and voting Green won't do that. The Tories have made millions out of Covid and privatisation and we're in danger of losing the NHS if they get back in.

There was a wide discussion on this and the following points were made:

- Both Wes Streeting and Keir Starmer have had funding from private healthcare companies. If Labour gets in we can use GMB influence on privatisation. If the Tories get in we can't.
- A member said if he was in Holborn he would be supporting Andrew Weinstein not Keir Starmer. However he is in Sutton so will be voting Labour!
- A real threat develops from Reform now Nigel Farage is back in charge. Sutton & Cheam Tory MP Paul Scully is now favouring Reform.
- First past the post puts people in a difficult position as you often vote to keep someone out rather than for the candidate/party you want to support.
- Will Labour turn back the clock on workers' rights? The New Deal for Working People, which made it into the Manifesto, promises positive legislation within 100 days – we can monitor this at our next meeting in September – two thirds of the way through.

7. Any other business

- A member asked about the situation with Uber and their push for a particular car for drivers and their focusing grants on it. Pete said to email him with the query and he will push it in the right direction. These "platform" issues remain important.
- Bromley pay scales for Teaching Assistants follow the national pay scheme although they're not signed up to it. The 3 unions (GMB, Unison, Unite) are working together on improvements.
- A member said he'd read and seen the recent St Helier hospital strikes but no information had been sent out. Megan Dobney concurred and said retired

members had also not been informed and were always encouraged to support our in-work members. Pete said the officer was Helen O'Connor and to get in touch.

8. **Date of next meeting** Thursday 5 September, 6.30 in Croydon Town Hall and on Zoom.

Then: 28 November

9. The meeting closed at 19.38