



Branch meeting minutes

Thursday 4 June 2026, 6.30pm in-person in Croydon Town Hall and by Zoom

- 1. Present:** there were 7 people in the room and 10 on Zoom. *In the room:* Branch Secretary Pete Raven, Branch President Maggie Hughes, Branch Officers Matthew Connolly, Megan Dobney and Adam Hughes, plus 2 branch members; *on Zoom:* Branch Officers Andrea Gilbert, Jack Ryan, Charlaïne Nkum, plus 7 branch members.
- 2. Introductions:** the Branch President welcomed members to the meeting.
- 3. Apologies:** Yasser Ali Khan and Chris Wongsosaputro. Maggie said that as Chris had written a fantastic report of the Regional Equalities Conference and wasn't able to be at the meeting we should defer it until the next meeting. This was agreed.
- 4. Minutes of last meeting 5 March 2026:** agreed with no matters arising.
- 5. Branch Update** Pete reported:
 - As of 1 June we had 7,710 members, down from 7,762 and called on members to build the union in their workplaces.
 - Charlaïne said that there were a few people in Stagecoach in Catford who wanted to join and asked how we move forward on this. Pete said that Unite has formal recognition so this is a bit difficult. He will find out which officer has responsibility and have a discussion with them.
 - Adam asked what resources are available to support such a campaign. Pete said we are a unique branch with a high workload. We can get support from the Education department and the Regional Organising Team when appropriate.
 - A member agreed and said it was difficult with one member in a workplace. Pete said he occasionally puts out a call for support for particular actions but often gets little response. When we had bigger in-person meetings members would take membership forms with them to recruit. It can be difficult to get our Accompanying Reps team together and we currently have no senior officer supporting us. Adam said he thought that Nick Day (officer) was supporting us, and Pete pointed out that yes he is but he's not in the regional office.

- We have some problems at Bidfoods – the main rep has stepped down due to ill health. He's done a great job to build the membership there. Now Craig Prickett (officer) is working on it and doing a lot to regain recognition at Bidfoods in Paddock Wood.
- The region now has a new Legal Officer who will be full time in a few weeks. He's agreed to do some training for the team on the new employment legislation and we hope he can come to the September branch meeting.
 - Maggie said he is looking into Unionline as there have been many complaints. Pete agreed and said that Unionline is run as a separate entity and said that if anyone has issues with them to email him with the details and he will push it to the Legal Officer and Regional Secretary. Peter.raven@gmbactivist.org.uk
- Adam raised the issue of the branch accounts. He thought they should be available at branch meetings. Pete said he brings a summary to most meetings and that it isn't necessary for the whole accounts to be shared. Adam is a branch auditor and wants to bring them to the meetings.
- Pete reported that he had support from the Regional Committee for his request that disputes and picket lines in the branch should be circulated to all officers and reps, and particularly that the Retired Members Association has indicated that they would like to circulate such information to their members who may be able to help our working members.
- Pete informed the meeting that he is in dispute with the GMB along with 2 other branch secretaries in the region. They are claiming pension justice, fair pay, and job security. They will be taking a second day of strike action tomorrow and are supported by Unite. They have registered with ACAS and submitted an ET1 to the Employment Tribunal. The national union has employed Leigh Day solicitors to oppose their claims. Pete emphasised that it's about fairness – a reasonable wage and access to a GMB pension.
 - Charlene asked if it was just in our region. Pete said yes, it is him, one in Hove and one in Wiltshire. Most branches are local authorities so secretaries are on release and still employed by the LA. 4 of the regional officers supported them on their last strike day.
 - Megan indicated that she will be joining their picket line to show support for their claim.

6. Any other business

- Maggie said she wanted, as a mum, to highlight the tragic case of Henry Nowak. The family made their position clear about the political abuse of their son's death and we should all stand together at this time.
- Andrea said she would be our delegate at GMB Congress next week and her report will be ready for the next branch meeting. Pete wished her a good and enjoyable week.

- Adam said he had been elected as a delegate but would not be attending and that our motion on neurodiversity would be moved by Wales. Pete said it was unfortunately too late for Adam to be replaced. Charlaine suggested we might put forward additional delegates who could attend the regional briefing (a requirement to attend Congress) in case this happens again.
- Charlaine said she has recently been appointed to the G15 Housing Group and if any members want to discuss housing issues with her she will be very pleased to try and help.
- Matthew said he is involved in the Southern Region Schools Reps Conference and there is a possible vote for industrial action. One of the arguments against the TAs' claim is that it comes out of the school budget. This doesn't seem to matter with the high salaries of the CEOs. He added that if the vote goes for a YES for a teaching assistants strike but people cross the picket lines he understands there is no sanction. Is this true he asked. If so it is appalling if strikers pay the price of loss of pay and no sanction on strike breakers.

7. **Next Branch meeting** Thursday 10 September at 6.30 in Croydon Town Hall and online

8. **Meeting closed** at 19.55