EAST MIDLANDS REGION

REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS, PHARMACEUTICALS, PROCESS AND TEXTILES SECTOR

2A Wentworth House, Vernon Gate, Derby
Friday 26 March 2010

COMMITTEE

Attendees:

Committee
Jackie Williams, Regional Officer
Mark Bennett
Sandra Harrison
Rob Sanderson

1 Apologies for absence

Ian Hawley; Colin Bourne; Ishvar Chauhan; Christopher Margett and Julie Spencer.

2 Minutes of last meeting

Agreed

3 Matters arising

Minute 3 – Election of Delegates to National Industrial Sector Conference

Sandra Harrison advised the Committee that she wished to step down from her position as Delegate to the National Industrial Sector Conference and Committee.
The Secretary advised that this should be confirmed in writing.

4. Regional Industrial Report

Jackie Williams gave an up-date on her report in relation to Nylatex where in conjunction with Job Centre Plus and Connections we have written to our members to advise them of an Open Day that has been arranged in Long Eaton for 20th April 2010 whereby we will provide information about alternative jobs in the labour market, help members to draw up a CV, assist with job search skills and support with interview techniques and applying for jobs, help to identify any skills gaps and provide support for job focus training and help with money matters.

Following a call from an individual member seeking assistance having received notification from Trelleborg that she was at risk of redundancy, I represented the member and as such raised some concerns with the process being adopted. The Company agreed to review the process and have made some changes.
The membership density at this Trelleborg site is extremely low and there is no elected Shop Steward in place. I have since visited the site to talk to the workers whilst on their breaks to assess what issues we need to focus on and to encourage the election of a Shop Steward.
The issues range from lack of sanitary wear in the ladies toilets to a ban on hot drinks being consumed at workstations where it would appear that there is no relevant reason as to why this should be the case.
I am hopeful that we will soon have a Shop Steward elected and I am meeting with the Company shortly where we can start to address the issues raised.
As a result of my visits several new members have been recruited and hopefully more will follow.

5. Delegates Industrial Reports

Rob Sanderson, Reckitt Benckiser, Derby reported that the agency on site is currently recruiting new workers which appear to be all Polish speaking employees. We have tried to find out what rate of pay they are on but this is proving difficult.
We have had issues with the toilets and showers being dirty and at times not working, however this issue has now been resolved and facilities have been refurbished.
The Site Director has put out to tender for the business of catering on site and is looking to install new food vending machines giving a greater range of products.

Mark Bennett, Reckitt Benckiser, Nottingham reported that a bonus of 3.5% was paid to employees; the levels of waste have impacted upon the bonus as there has been issues getting the

process right.
The manufacture of Nurofen has slowed down and there are concerns that as a result there could be further redundancies.
Notice has been given that as from 12th April 2010 those not previously on annualised hours will be changed to that system of working and there is mixed feelings towards the change.
There remains to be some difficulty in attending courses, however a meeting has been arranged with the Company to discuss this further.
Membership numbers remain stable and whilst carrying out a survey of Mantechs three people have mentioned issues around bullying and one person has chosen to take the matter further.
We previously had issues with the toilet facilities but this appears to be slowly improving.

6. Regional Industrial Strategy for Growth

With the issues coming to light at Trelleborg and potential for growth at this site, a discussion took place with a view to looking at companies where we are organised and whether or not there are any unorganised sites within the same Group in the Region which we could focus our attention on, especially where we have a Delegate or Delegates who could assist in this regard.

General Election

James Shires, Derby Labour Party Agent was invited to attend the meeting and advise Delegates about his role discuss the forthcoming General Election and what materials are available which would be of use within workplaces emphasising what work Labour has done to improve for example to ask for rights to request flexible working; more holiday entitlement and stronger enforcement of the National Minimum Wage.
A discussion took place as to encouraging workers to use their vote to ensure a large turnout at the polls.

7. Equality Committee vacancies

It was once again highlighted that there are still vacant seats on the LGBT Committee.

8. Regional Industrial Sector Committee dates 2010

The following dates have been proposed for future meetings:

16th June 2010 – 2.00 p.m.
22nd September 2010 – 2.00 p.m.

9. Any other business

1. Motion – The following Motion was put forward by Ian Hawley from Celanese to go forward to the Policy Conference but Mark Bennett raised concerns about the lack of reference to self-sustainable green energy, such as wind farms and wave energy and how the UK is falling behind other European countries when investing along these lines and how we would like the Government to do more in this regard.
Prior to this Motion being put forward to the Policy Conference it was **agreed** that this should be referred back to Ian Hawley for consideration in light of the above.

East Midlands Chemical, Pharmaceuticals, Textile & Process industrial sector is concerned about the escalating energy costs and the effect on our members jobs within UK manufacturing.

UK energy costs are significantly higher than our western European competitors, creating a two-tier market in Europe.

Much of Europe's energy supply industry is still controlled by state owned monopolies, the UK being the only unregulated gas market in Europe.

Manufacturing processes consume large amounts of electricity, gas and steam. It is felt in manufacturing that some large users of energy will cease production being unable to continue because of the high energy costs.

Energy is the biggest concern for many in manufacturing, and Government has to act sooner rather than later.

Manufacturing now accounts for only 15% of the UK's GDP, down from more than 20% when the Government pledged to reverse its decline.

The East Midlands therefore calls on our Union to actively campaign for Government to take urgent action to stem the seemingly out of control rises in energy costs by;

- Ensuring UK manufacturing has a level playing field with our European competitors.
- Energy price raises are no more than inflation.
- Stop the sale of cheap gas to Europe, which comes back to the UK with a double marked up cost to the end user.
- Enforce a rebate system from the energy companies' profits to its high use customers.

We demand that the Government take the energy situation, and manufacturing, seriously before it is too late.

2. Policy Conference – The Secretary asked for Delegates to attend this conference and advised that an interest had been forthcoming from Ian Hawley to attend as the Delegate, who was duly elected by the Committee with Julie Spencer being elected as the Deputy.

10. Close of Committee

The Chair thanked delegates for attending.