



## **EAST MIDLANDS REGION**

### **REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS, PHARMACEUTICALS, PROCESS AND TEXTILES SECTOR**

**2A Wentworth House, Vernon Gate, Derby  
Wednesday 20 January 2010**

#### **COMMITTEE**

**Attendees:**            **Committee**  
Jackie Williams, Regional Officer  
Ian Hawley  
Christopher Margett  
Julie Spencer

**1        Apologies for absence**

Mark Bennett; Colin Bourne; Ishvar Chauhan; Sandra Harrison and Rob Sanderson.

**2        Minutes of last meeting**

Agreed

**3        Matters arising**

Minute 3 – Election of Delegates to National Industrial Sector Conference

Ian Hawley advised that he was the only Delegate who attended the National Industrial Sector Conference.

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#### 4. Regional Industrial Report

Jackie Williams' written report was handed to Delegates and discussed the issue of losing members through redundancy and also gaining members as a result of the recession. In the instance of Sandvik the Company had put the workers on a 4 day week and as a result of us organising around this collective issue we made a gain of over 100 new members and we now have a recognition agreement in place with 5 new Shop Stewards, one of which is a Convenor.

Jackie Williams also discussed the issues affecting members within the workplace, some of which were of a racial nature and we currently have a number of activists who with the right training will assist in organising the workforce around the issues.

#### 5. Delegates Industrial Reports

**Julie Spencer, Reckitt Benckiser, Derby** reported that currently there is a trial in aerosol department for Mantechs to take on responsibilities of the crew leader and as such would award an increase of £3,000 per annum. As this is a trial covering 3 months those taking part will receive an additional payment of £500. The Mantechs in the high volume liquids department are reported to be feeling aggrieved as they wish also to take part in the same trial.

Some of the women have been moved from the traditional roles on the line to less skilled jobs, i.e. filling the hopper. Julie has asked to see the risk assessment and has a meeting with the Company next week to discuss the issue further.

**Mark Bennett, Reckitt Benckiser, Nottingham** – third quarter results show an increase in profit, although workload has decreased as factory is not producing same volumes as last year.

Pay offer of 2% was accepted.

Awaiting information regarding qualification for annual factory bonus which is linked to factory targets not profit.

There has been a small amount of redundancies as the Company has ditched less profitable products and switched to power brands.

There is a history of poor industrial relations on site, USDAW are the majority Union at Reckitt Benckiser, Nottingham.

**Ian Hawley, Celanese, Derby** – factory in China is expanding and production in the UK has halved which has resulted in the loss of

many jobs which is ongoing.

## **6. Regional Industrial Strategy**

Discussions took place regarding organising and the importance of using "like for like", i.e. worker to worker and where if we can involve either Shop Stewards from the local area or Shop Stewards who work in the same sector to assist in the recruitment and organisation of workers. This has proved to be successful when organising the workers at Sandvik where the Senior Steward from an adjoining workplace attended the Activist Committee meetings and was able to pass on information and experience in the organisation of workers around a collective issue and assisted the activists in mapping the workplace etc.

It was agreed that we would further this discussion at a sub meeting.

**General Election** – discussion took place regarding political strategy and the Unite for Labour website and the promotion of the phone bank, details of which will be sent to the Delegates of this Committee.

A discussion took place on the facility of Charlie Whelan to use members e-mail addresses to promote Labour in the forthcoming elections.

## **7. Equality Committee vacancies**

It was discussed that there may be an issue and consideration given to the route to which people can be elected on to the Equalities Committees as it was believed that while some individuals would be interested in sitting on an Equalities Committee, they may not show the same interest in either the RISC or Regional Committee which may in turn affect their decision to stand.

## **8. Regional Industrial Committee dates 2010**

It was decided that a questionnaire be sent to Delegates regarding future dates and times of meetings.

## **9. Any other business**

Colin Bourne has been made redundant and Mark Briggs has registered an interest in taking Colin's place on the Committee.

**Motion** – The following Motion was put forward by Ian Hawley from Celanese which was agreed by Delegates to go forward to the next National Committee meeting:

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.

## **10. Close of Committee**

The Chair thanked delegates for attending.