



**Eastern Region Regional Council
Thursday 28 June 2007
at the Needham Market Office**

MINUTES

In Attendance:	Adrian Axtell,	Regional Secretary
	Trevor Whitehead	Branch/Chair
	Christine Berry	Womens
	Derek Clarke	FPA
	Richard Clifton	Motor Vehicles
	Leonard Denbigh	Energy
	Nigel Gawthrop	GPM
	Cid Gibbs	Branch
	Phil Gilbert	Health
	Chris Gold	Local Authorities
	Kevin Graham	General Industries
	Michael Kneller	Electrical Engineering, Elect & IT
	Geoff Leyshon	LGBT
	Les McDonald	Branch
	Eamon O'Brien	Servicing
	Des O'Connell	Disabilities
	Mark Peters	Aerospace
	Martyn Reuby	GPM
	Alan Rutherford	Food, Drink & Tobacco
	Pam Stacey	Branch
	Paul Stokes	Education
	Paul Underwood	Construction
	Nick White	MOD/Government Departments
	Eileen Woods	Finance
	Gordon Whitman	NEC
	Penny Fisher	Minutes

1 Introductions and Apologies

Trevor Whitehead, Chair of the Regional Council, welcomed delegates to the meeting and formerly introduced Penny Fisher as the new Senior Regional Administrator, who would be assisting the Regional Secretary with the administration of the Council.

Apologies were received from Alan Drury, Lorene Fabian, Lisa Johnson-Geach, John Scarola, John Sterne and Kevin Tricker.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Regional Council Minutes of 26 April 2007 were read and unanimously agreed.

Two points of accuracy were noted, Pam Stacey is a branch delegate not health. Paul stokes was not in attendance.

3 **Matters Arising**

A **Strawberry Fair**

Nigel Gawthroppe gave a comprehensive report on the above event, which was supplemented by Geoff Leyshon and Martyn Reuby. It was felt that this had been extremely useful and that a number of leads had been received. One in particular led to the possibility of 600 new members.

B **Ipswich May Day Festival**

The Regional Secretary reported that this had been an excellent event and that a letter of thanks had been received from the organisers.

C **Union Banners**

In response to a question on the memorabilia from Whitehall College and its current whereabouts, delegates were advised that these had been stored in the basement at Esher and that this was currently being converted into a museum and we would be advised once its open for viewing.

D **Hazards Conference**

Delegates were advised that Eamon O'Brien and Mark Peters would be attending this conference on behalf of the Regional Council.

E **Sunvic Controls**

The Regional Secretary reported that he had received a letter of thanks for the donation.

F **CPHVA Conference**

Delegates were advised that there had been requests received from 4 delegates.

G **Migrant Workers Day**

Richard Clifton gave a brief report on this event which had proved to be successful. A further report would be provided by Lorene Fabian at a later meeting.

4 **Correspondence**

A **Burston Strike Rally**

Correspondence had been received from the Transport & General Sector of Unite seeking a donation of £300 towards the Burston Strike School Rally. It was proposed by Martyn Reuby, seconded by Mark Peter, and unanimously agreed to support this request.

B **Newmarket Battle of the Bands**

A formal request had come in from the Town Council to seek the support of Amicus in the 2007 Newmarket Battle of the Bands. Some concerns were raised as to last year's event in relation to the profile of Amicus. Consequently the Regional Secretary was asked to write to the Town Clerk about these concerns and to report back to the next Regional Council meeting.

C **Guild of Pharmacists**

A request had been received to fund a Union Representative to this Conference. After much debate it was proposed by Martyn Reuby, seconded by Les McDonald and unanimously agreed that the requested amount be paid, but a letter be sent to the National and Regional Officers asking them to pursue this case of non-payment by the employer. Not only for this year but in the future.

D **Magazines**

The Cuba Si and Searchlight magazines were distributed.

E HandS UK website

A request had been received from one of our activists who was seeking support to continue the above website. It was felt that this website makes a tremendous contribution to trade union based health and safety and assists in keeping our high profile. As a consequence it was proposed by Derek Clarke, seconded by Martyn Reuby that a £500 donation be made towards this excellent initiative.

F Castlepoint DCH

A formal request had come in from the Defend Council Housing Campaign in relation to financial/printing support to fight the proposed transfer. After some discussion it was agreed that Les McDonald, Regional Council member, would investigate matters further and report back to the Regional Council.

G Labour Party Conference Demonstration

Colleagues were advised that it was the Union's intention to hold a demonstration at the Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth on Sunday 23rd September this year. This demonstration would be a rallying call for a renewed policy agenda for the Government on a number of areas, not least of all being employment rights, social housing and equal pay. It was clearly the intention to have a strong presence from the Eastern Region and delegates were advised that if they wished to take part they should give their details to Sue Crocker, Regional Administrator at Needham Market, who would have responsibility for co-ordinating this event.

E Justice for Colombia

Information was provided to delegates in regards to Justice for Colombia barbeque taking place on the 7th July 2007.

F Delegates attention was drawn to a recent publication from the Cuba solidarity campaign which highlighted the region's recent contribution.

5 Reports

A Finance

Delegates were provided with an up-to-date expenditure report. It was agreed in future that for ease this would be in chronological order.

B Health and Safety

Delegates were advised of the up-to-date position in relation to the Health and Safety Conference to be held on the 16th October in Newmarket and that invitations would be sent out between the end of July and early August. Paul Underwood also advised those present that he would be presenting the cheque to IOM on the 3rd July in Sheffield and it was hoped that this information would appear on the website shortly after.

C Education

The Regional Secretary reported that a number of courses had been held since the last Regional Council meeting, namely *Computer Skills* on the 30th May and 1st June, *Company Accounts* on the 9th and 10th May, *Globalisation Day* on 16th May at Newmarket. *Personal Injury* courses were due to be held on Monday 2nd July at Luton and Friday 6th July at Needham Market and places were still available. A 1-day *New Reps* course was also due to be held on the 9th July at Cambridge with currently 18 new reps to be in attendance.

Further requests had been received from our Representative at EON that a 1-day training course be held on flexi-working/work life balance. Also a suggestion was made that a further 1-day course be held on Trade Unions and the Economy and later on in the year a relevant Health and Safety 1-day course be provided. It was unanimously agreed that the Regional Secretary investigate the possibility of undertaking these.

D Equalities

The Minutes of the recent National Disability Committee held on the 12th February were circulated and supplemented by Des O'Connell.

Colleagues were advised that there were now new Unite Equality leaflets which need to be distributed throughout workplaces in the region.

A formal request had been received to support literature for future Pride events. After some debate it was agreed that the sum of £2500 be put to one side to cover all of the equality areas rather than one event, and for the Management Committee to liaise with the National Officer to ensure this falls in line with the national strategy. This was proposed by Nick White, seconded by Len Denbigh and unanimously agreed.

Delegates were advised of the dates of the next equality forums.

E Recruitment / Organising

Delegates were advised that Mark Walker had successfully been appointed as the new Eastern Region Organiser.

F ACUA

The proposed merger between Unite and ACUA was now back on track having been suspended as a result of the legal process of merging the Transport and General Workers Union and Amicus. The Regional Secretary's met with the ACUA Executive on Friday 29th June and it was hoped that the ballot of ACUA membership would be held in the next few weeks.

G Regional Secretary's Report

Agency and Temporary Workers

A request for information had been successful and the he thanked delegates who had replied on this matter. Across the region some 25 responses had been received.

SERTUC

Correspondence had been received from SERTUC seeking nominations for an Executive Committee vacancy in the reserved seats for women trade unionists. It was proposed by Mark Peters, seconded by Richard Clifton, and unanimously agreed that Lorene Fabian be nominated.

Regional Administration

The Regional Secretary announced some administrative changes that had taken place in the region, not least the appointment of Penny Fisher as the Senior Regional Administrator.

Finance Sector

Delegates were advised that correspondence had been received highlighting the fact that one of the Regional Council delegates for the Finance Sector had resigned. Numerous attempts to contact this individual had proved fruitless. Consequently the Council was advised that the substitute delegate, Dawn Green, would be invited to attend future Regional Council meetings on the basis that the vacancy is now permanent.

H Retired Members

In the absence of Alan Drury a written report was provided from John Rodd who had attended the National Pensioners Parliament in Blackpool in May of this year.

I Sector Committees

The Minutes of the Regional Sector Committees for the FPA and Motor Components industries were circulated to delegates.

J Regional Council Management Committee

The notes of the Regional Council Management Committee held on the 14th June were circulated for noting.

K Regional Officer's Reports

The Industrial Update Report from the Eastern Region was circulated to delegates. It was agreed that in future these would be emailed to Regional Council members prior to the meeting.

6 Merger Update

The Regional Secretary updated delegates on the current progress in relation to the merger with the Transport and General Workers Union which provoked a number of questions and wide ranging debate.

7 Any Other Business

- A Mike Kneller raised issues in relation to the recent merger of the Chelmsford Branches. It was agreed that this be dealt with by the Regional Secretary.
- B Delegates raised issues in relation to the Sector Committees and their function not least in the progression of Motions through to National Committees.
- C Len Denbigh requested that the Regional Secretary investigate the possibility of running a prospective Repts course. It was agreed that discussions would be held with Mike McCartney and the new Organiser Mike Walker.
- D Paul Brewster raised whether we could have a speaker from BEN, the motor industry charity. This was agreed. The Regional Secretary was asked to invite a representative from this organisation to the next meeting in August.
- E Following on from this, Martyn Reuby from the GPM sector sought the support of the Regional Council to invite a representative from the McMillan Nurses organisation. This was agreed.
- F Finally, Trevor Whitehead, Chair of the Regional Council, sought the support of delegates in thanking Val Haslam for the work she had undertaken on behalf of the Regional Council over the past couple of years.

Delegates asked that this sign of gratitude be formally minuted.

It was agreed that a suitable show of gratitude be given independent of the Regional Council.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 1pm.