



**Eastern Region
Regional Council
Thursday 19 October 2006 at 10.30 am
at the Needham Market Office**

Minutes

In attendance

Adrian Axtell	Regional Secretary
Mark Peters	Aerospace
Trevor Whitehead	Branch
Alan Drury	Retired
Chris Gold	Local Authorities
Cid Gibbs	Branch
Les McDonald	Branch
Phil Gilbert	Health
Paul Underwood	Construction
Michael Kneller	Electrical Engineering, Elect & IT
Leonard Denbigh	Energy
Paul Brewster	Motor Components
Derek Clarke	FPA &CMA
Kevin Graham	General Industries
Geoff Leyshon	LGBT
Christine Berry	Womens
Eamon O'Brien	Servicing
John Scarola	BEM
Pam Stacey	Branch
Paul Stokes	Education
Allan Rutherford	Food, Drink & Tobacco
Eileen Woods	Finance
Richard Clifton	Motor Vehicles
Lisa Maddy	Womens
Des O'Connell	Disabilities
Dick Barker	NEC
Gordon Whitman	NEC
Val Haslam	Minutes
Siobhan Endean	Visiting Speaker
Stewart Selby	Visiting Speaker

Introduction and Apologies

Trevor Whitehead, chair of the Regional Council welcomed delegates to the meeting and as there was a full agenda suggested progress be made immediately.

Apologies were received from Lorene Fabian, Nigel Gawthrop, Martin Rueby, Nick White and John Sterne

Minutes from the Previous Meeting

It was proposed that the minutes of the Regional Council meeting on 24 August 2006 be accepted as a true record by Cid Gibbs, seconded by Les McDonald and unanimously agreed.

Matters Arising

East Anglian Air Ambulance

The cheque for £2,000 had been received. Nick White had written to the Station Commander but unfortunately owing to a change in command he had been forced to re-send the letter. He would advise the Regional Council of the outcome.

East of England Development Agency

It was noted that there had been a change in management. The Regional Secretary would follow up the request of someone attending a future Regional Council Meeting.

Westminster Visit

The Regional Secretary reported that the proposed date would have to be changed as the result of increased security at the House of Commons. This was exacerbated by the number of people wishing to attend. It was therefore proposed and agreed that the new visit take place on Tuesday 6 February 2007 at 11.00 am. Delegates were also advised that there were still some places available and were reminded that they had to be members of the Labour Party.

Mayor of Cambridge Visit

It was noted that the visit to Bob Dryden's office would be taking place on Wednesday 1 November 2006 at 10.30 am.

Burston Strike Rally

The Regional Secretary reported that the Rally had gone very well. Delegates asked what had happened to the caravan which used to be taken around to various events. It was noted that this had been sold and The Regional Secretary undertook to find out where the money had been placed.

Inventory

The inventory was circulated. It was agreed to purchase a gazebo and also two purpose built portable tables to be used at various events throughout the year as this would raise the Amicus profile. The Regional Secretary was tasked with finding a local organisation to provide these.

Area Conferences

The Regional Secretary reported that the Area Conferences had gone extremely well and there had been a good attendance at all of the Conferences. The dates for the next conferences are as follows:-

Essex and Herts	Thursday 30 November 2006, 6.30 pm at Harlow
Beds and Cambs	Wednesday 6 December 2006, 7.30 pm at Odsey
Norfolk and Suffolk	Thursday 14 December 2006, 7.30 pm at Diss

Officers' Reports

As requested, it was noted that the Officers' Reports had been sent out by email prior to the meeting.

Branches

The Regional Secretary reported that a meeting had been set up to meet with Les McDonald and John Scarola with regard to the proposed Basildon/Fords Branch merger.

Health and Safety Metalworking Fluids

It was noted that this was an excellent event and well supported with approximately 30-40 in attendance.

Website

The Regional Secretary reported that Richard Clarke was in the process of updating the Union's website. He also advised that he was due to be meeting members from the Communications Department to seek further assistance in maintaining the website but also to progress work on an E.Bulletin for representatives and activists.

Appreciation Courses

The Regional Secretary reported that he had spoken to Dougie Rooney who had informed him that Mike McCartney was organising these courses. The Regional Secretary had written to Mike and would report back when a reply had been received.

British Legion Baldock Branch

Alan Drury reported that the event had gone extremely well with approximately 200 people attending the church service.

Correspondence

Hazards Sponsorship Appeal 2007

In line with previous years, the Management Committee were recommending to the Regional Council that a donation of £500 be made to this event. This was formally proposed by Les MacDonald, seconded by Geoff Leyshon and unanimously agreed. It was also agreed that the Regional Council would send two delegates to this conference.

Alternative Oyster Feast

The Management Committee recommended to the Regional Council that a donation of £100 be made. Proposed by Kevin Graham, seconded by Richard Clifton and unanimously agreed.

Magazines and Newsletters

Searchlight Magazine - this was circulated.
Columbia Magazine - this was circulated.
Working Class Shelf life - this was circulated.

Poppy Appeal

A request for a donation had been received from the Baldock Branch. The Management Committee had recommended to the Regional Council that a donation of £150 be made. After discussion, this was proposed by Paul Brewster, seconded by Geoff Leyshon and unanimously agreed.

Chariots of Fire Race

Information on this event was noted as correspondence had been received by the Regional Council after the event. It was suggested that the Regional Council may wish to support the 2007 event dependent on the information being forthcoming at an earlier stage.

Vision Express

This information was circulated and noted. The Regional Secretary asked delegates to make reps and members aware that this service was available.

Battle of the Bands

The Management Committee recommended to the Regional Council that a donation of £180.45 be made to cover the cost of the wristbands for the Ultimate Battle of the Bands Event. This was proposed by Richard Clifton, seconded by Mark Peters and unanimously agreed.

Dignity! Period

Correspondence, including a direct debit was circulated and noted. It was reported that a DVD recording from the Conference was available on the Amicus website.

Watford Defend Council Housing

The Management Committee recommended to the Regional Council that a donation of £150 be made. After a discussion as to whether this request had gone to their local branch, this was proposed by Len Denbigh, seconded by Mike Knellor and unanimously agreed.

Labour Friends of Searchlight

The Regional Secretary outlined an important event taking place in Birmingham on 11 November 2006, correspondence was also circulated. He sought support of delegates present to circulate this information as widely as possible and should people be interested in attending then to contact Chris Weldon at the Sheffield office.

Breakthrough Breast Cancer, Westminster

Correspondence was circulated and noted.

Trade Union Freedom Bill

A letter of thanks had been received from the Institute of Employment Rights thanking the Regional Council for their £100 donation.

Defend Council Housing

Papers were circulated and noted.

National Conference on Venezuela

This event was being sponsored nationally by Amicus and correspondence was circulated and noted.

NHS Lobby 1 November 2006

The Regional Secretary advised delegates that as part of the National NHS campaign there was to be a lobby in London on 1 November 2006. It was clearly the role of the Regional Council to support National Campaigns and as a consequence, he advised there would be approximately 30-40 members going from the region. It was therefore proposed by Les McDonald, seconded by Richard Clifton and unanimously agreed that the expenses for this campaign be met from the Regional Council's budget, the exact amounts be left open to the Management Committee once forms had been received. Materials could be downloaded from the website.

Reports

Regional Secretary's Report

The Regional Secretary reported that officers had been updated on the new Age Equality Regulations that came into being in early October. He went on to advise delegates that invitations had been circulated to workplace reps with regard to the training day on Employment Age Equality Regs which was to take place on 6 December 2006 in Luton and 13 December 2006 in Needham Market. It was also hoped that there would be further courses available as these were expected to be heavily subscribed.

The Regional Secretary went on to advise that since the last meeting both the TUC and Labour Party Conferences had taken place and indeed there were Regional Council delegates at both. Richard Clifton remarked that he had been given the opportunity to ask Tony Blair questions on manufacturing particularly as he felt that this had taken a backseat. Also delegates to the Conference had met up with Richard Howitt, MEP which they found to be extremely useful.

Freshers' Weeks ***UEA***

The Regional Secretary reported that he had attended the Freshers' Fair at the UEA which went well and was extremely well attended. He did though suggest that he believed it would be more beneficial to the organisation to have younger staff at the event who could relate better with the students on a like for like basis. He also anticipated that the region should receive details of the success rate of the recent student recruitment campaign. He also reported that Amicus declined to take part at the Cambridge Freshers' Fair as a price of £700 was being asked.

General Secretary's Visit

It was noted that Derek Simpson, General Secretary was visiting the region on the evening of 16 November 2006 at Basildon to meet with workplace representatives. It was felt that this was particularly important, not least because of the proposed merger with the TGWU.

Branches

The Hospital Physicist's Association

The Regional Secretary reported that this branch had been listed in the Eastern Region when in fact it was organised by a London officer and the meetings were held in London. In line with rule, it was unanimously agreed that the branch should be transferred into the London region.

Royal London Mutual Branch

At the request of some members of the branch, letters had gone out to members asking for their authorisation to merge into the Colchester Central Branch. The Regional Council agreed that provided no substantial objections were raised this should be supported and passed on to the National Executive Council for ratification.

Waveney and Lowestoft Branches

The Regional Secretary reported that he had received correspondence from the officers of the above branches seeking agreement to merge. In line with previous procedures, letters had now gone out to the branch members giving them an opportunity to make comment on the proposals. The Regional Council agreed that provided no substantial objections were raised this should be supported and passed on to the National Executive Council for ratification.

Dereham Branch

The Regional Secretary reported that the current secretary of the Dereham Branch was resigning and as there was no-one willing to take over the branch, it was therefore proposed that they merge with the Norwich Central Branch. Letters would therefore again be sent out to members and should there be no objections to the merger, the Regional Council agreed that this should be supported and passed on to the National Executive Council for ratification.

Finance Report

The Regional Secretary reported that he was still to have a meeting with Christine Grant, the new Head of Finance who would be visiting the Needham Market office soon.

It was also agreed that **£9,000** be moved from the Contingencies Fund to cover Health and Safety, Equalities and General Purposes along with **£5,000** from the Education Budget

Health and Safety Report

In line with previous comments, it was reported that the Metalworking Fluids Conference in Luton had gone extremely well.

The Regional Secretary reported that he had been in discussion with the Health and Safety Department in the hope that the Eastern Region could run a major Health and Safety Conference in 2007. It was agreed that this be put back to the Management Committee to discuss how to take this initiative forward.

Finance Sector Organisation

The Regional Secretary reported that there was to be a Finance Sector Week from 6-10 November 2006 and sought delegates support in becoming involved in this particular initiative.

Bullying and Harassment

The Regional Secretary reported that 27 delegates had attended the bullying and harassment courses. A course was also being arranged in Peterborough on 22 November 2006 and 10-15 people were due to attend.

Employment Age Equality Training

It was noted that three courses were to run this year and early next year.

IT Courses

It was reported that the TUC would send through questionnaires to ascertain what was required with regard to IT training amongst our activists. This would be distributed widely and in particular through both the Regional Council Reps and the Area Quarterly meetings

NHS Regional Training

Phil Gilbert reported that he had spoken to Owen Granfield with regard to this training. As it was being covered centrally there was no need for a specific regional course

Education

It was noted that an Equal Opportunities course was being held at the Needham Market office from 24-27 October, 2006 and 9 people were due to attend.

Suggestions were made as to whether it would be possible to hold one day courses on manual handling, risk assessments and ergonomics. The Regional Secretary was therefore tasked with investigating these. It was also suggested that if people had ideas that they fed them into the Management Committee via Paul Brewster.

Eileen Woods had noticed from the Officers' Reports that under the Lifelong Learning report, Public Speaking Courses were being held in some workplaces. The Regional Secretary suggested that Eileen talked directly with Sam Leigh to gain further information on this course.

It was noted that the GFTU ran courses helping people prepare for their retirement. It was therefore agreed that a delegate from this organisation be asked to attend a future Regional Council Meeting to provide further details on this initiative.

Equalities Womens' Course

It was agreed that this course would be held on 1 December 2006 at the Needham Market office with Siobhan Endean having responsibility for delivery. It was also agreed that invitations would go out first of all to delegates attending the Womens' Conference this year and via the normal workplace representatives distribution areas.

Training for Branch Officers

The Regional Secretary undertook to speak with Mike McCartney with regard to the progress being made in this important area.

Management Committee Meeting

All other items which had not already been covered by the meeting were agreed and the Management Committee Meeting Minutes held on 5 October 2006 were noted.

Officers' Reports

Delegates were asked whether they had any comments to make with regard to the Officers' Reports they had received prior to the meeting. Comment was made with regard to the redundancies at BPL and concern over the selection criteria used within the organisation to differ between sections. The Regional Secretary agreed that he would speak to the officer concerned to gain further information.

Retired Members

Alan Drury gave an update on the recent meeting of the Retired Members Forum.

Proposed dates for Regional Council 2007

The proposed dates for the 2007 Management Committee and Regional Council were circulated. These were formally agreed, although it was suggested that as the Regional Council continued to be well supported that a different venue be found. The dates are as follows:-

<i>Management Committee</i>	<i>Regional Council</i>
8 February	22 February
12 April	26 April
14 June	28 June
16 August	30 August
4 October	18 October
6 December	20 December

The Regional Council Meeting on 14 December 2006 would be held at the Needham Market office.

Merger

The Regional Secretary reported that the NEC had met on 11 October 2006 to discuss the outcome of the working party's talks with the TGWU and that the NEC had voted overwhelmingly in favour of moving forward with the merger, as indeed, had the TGWU. He circulated a number of documents with regard to the proposals and the way forward, which also encompassed a time line. He then went on to outline some of the major issues within the documents, not least the proposal that the Eastern Region merge with the London region to form one area.

Concern was expressed with regard to the TGWU's position with regard to Gate Gourmet and delegates were assured that all due diligence would be undertaken prior to any merger and that our lead officers were well aware of that position.

Concern was also raised as to the role of branches within the new organisation as little mention was made particularly with regard to Branch Officers playing an active role in Committees and Conferences. Again, clarification would be sought on this. In general, it was felt that although there are clearly some difficulties in certain areas and sectors, that this was a positive move if, indeed, Trade Unions were to play an active part in the world at work today, not least because of the major impact that globalisation has had on many of our members.

Finally, it was again reported that the General Secretary would be in attendance in the region on 16 November 2006 and clearly this would be one of the major topics of discussion.

Any other business

Alan Drury updated the Council on the Powerhouse shops situation.

Paul Brewster asked that a letter be sent from the Committee to Derek Simpson asking about the £10,000 donation to the GM Plant in Portugal which was due to close down.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.