**Unison**

**UNIVERSITY OF YORK BRANCH NO. 13322**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday, 15th February 2010**

**At 12.30pm in H/G21, Heslington Hall**

**Present:**  S Brabyn, Chair W Walton

V Clayton R Lambeth

C Halliday T Boddison

C Socket W Williamson

R Gill F Atkinson

D Hayton Y Johnson

D Moore C Green

J Barnes A Stroughair

T Owston G Chapman

Y Liddell K Trinder

C Feasby G Drake

M Garbutt C Moore

D Shepherd J Chainey

**Apologies:** P Foster K Harper

S Walker C Bailey

C Fielding

Sally Brabyn welcomed members to the AGM and introduced Andrew Gray from Thompson Solicitors who would be giving a briefing on the services offered to members.

**U10/1 Minutes**

The minutes of the AGM held on 16th February 2009 were approved. The attendee list to be amended to include C Halliday.

**U10/2 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**U10/3 Chairs Report**

The Chair’s report was prepared by PF and SB presented it to the members on his behalf as follows:

**Jobs**

2009 has been a difficult year for many of our members. However, as your representatives, we’ve been fully involved in consultation and negotiation to minimise the impact of these adverse changes. Many staff within the Directorate of Facilities Management were at risk through restructure proposals but we are pleased to report that as a result of firm but proactive engagement with University managers the worst outcomes were prevented. Departments have also been under financial scrutiny with the aim of reducing costs but we have not been made aware of any risk to jobs as a consequence. We are continuing to monitor the position but are hopeful this year will not see a repeat situation.

**Representation on other staff issues**

The Joint Negotiating and Consultation Committee (JNCC) continues to meet regularly enabling better collaboration and support between the staff representative groups to present a strong and (usually) united front.

Work continues on new policies and procedures dealing with the following:

* Flexible Working
* Home and remote working
* Career Breaks
* Mediation
* Disciplinary Procedure
* Grievance Procedure
* Time off and facilities agreement for TU duties

**Education and Training**

Mid way through the year we established a fund to provide a financial contribution to members undertaking a recognised training or personal development course. Take up is minimal at the moment but we have made a long term commitment to this and anticipate increasing participation in the future. Any member considering applying for this benefit, please contact the Education Officer for a copy of the conditions as funding cannot be given retrospectively.

**Health & Safety**

Accredited H&S Officer, Steve Walker, has been actively engaged with the University in all H&S discussions. He has provided essential advice, support and representation to members with workplace issues and is continuing to assist with several ongoing disputes.

**Member Casework**

Once again we can report that we continue to have a 100% record of successful outcome in all completed member cases. The personal representation services we provide to members continue to be in demand but it has diminished slightly this year. We believe this to be mainly due to a proactive stance taken by your union in establishing consultation groups with managers in several sections, which has meant that potential conflict positions have been resolved before confrontation.

Several members have again been assisted with personal injury claims by Thompson’s and significant levels of compensation have been achieved.

**Membership**

All the Executive have worked extremely hard to ensure that all these successes and effort is translated into an increase in membership. We are pleased to tell you that we saw a 4% increase overall during the year. This is a considerable achievement when looked at in the context of falling numbers nationally and rather perversely, when as a result of our success in negotiating a generous voluntary severance award for staff we have consequently lost those who took it up.

We are never complacent and always strive to increase our nominal roll but we need you to ‘advertise’ and sell to colleagues the benefits of being a part of UNISON.

**Pay**

You will all have received regular updates on the pay negotiations for the 2009 pay award. This was delayed due to one of the three HE unions, UCU, feeling unable to accept the 0.5% offer by the employers. UNISON members, both at York and nationally voted overwhelmingly to accept it and this was finally paid from January 2010. Payroll have informed us that the back dated portion will be paid at the end of February.

Looking ahead to the 2010 pay claim, we have been asked to seek member’s level of support for a claim of 4% this year; in particular they wish to know if members would be prepared to take any industrial action in support of this. Perhaps this will be a good opportunity to discuss this and express your views.

**University of York Pension Fund**

Following widespread and detailed consultation, fund members were balloted on changes to contribution levels and benefits, as well as the introduction of a second option offering lower cost of membership. These were overwhelmingly accepted and implemented in October. The Branch has several members who also have involvement in the decision making bodies of the Pension Fund and are encouraged by the realistic view adopted by the respondents, which aids them in their work to maintain a final salary scheme here. In the context of what has been happening to similar schemes across the country, fewer than 25% remain, this will be a considerable challenge but one to which they are absolutely committed.

**Financial**

Branch Treasurer, Anne Stroughair will be speaking to the accounts shortly, but we’d like to formally thank her for the consolidation work she has carried out. We’d also like to record our thanks once again to our auditors, Jane Turner and Judith Warren for the time they’ve given over to examining Branch records and certifying their accuracy.

**Communications**

We have built on the hard work and success of the regular newssheets of 2008, which we believe has been a significant factor in building membership. In addition, in 2009, we introduced electronic ‘Announcements’ to allow for swift, concise communication about specific issues, such as the DFM restructure. Work has also continued on our website which is providing a valuable shop window for us. We have also set up a mobile telephone contact number – 07542443013 - with a voicemail and text facility to add further channels of communication.

Members are reminded that they can contact Branch Officers at any time on their University extensions or by email to [unison@york.ac.uk](mailto:unison@york.ac.uk)

**Social Events**

We continued to enjoy social events through the year, which provide an opportunity to meet fellow members in pleasant surroundings away from the workplace. Our thanks go particularly to Cathie Murray for stepping in to take up their organisation. We maintained the level of charitable donations and also implemented our objective to allow members to directly nominate suitable causes; these were Cancer Research and Help for Heroes.

**Help needed**

Finally, we’d like to thanks all the Committee members who have, without exception, given a great deal of time and effort through the year.

As in previous years, we would highlight the need for members to come forward and take part in the Branches activities and representation – we are particularly in need of someone to undertake an admin role, even if you are only able to give enough time to attend the monthly meeting and produce some minutes (about 2-3 hours a month). The lack of new blood is now becoming serious, as workloads increase on a diminishing number of officers. Please give consideration to helping the Branch – it’s for all of us.

SB asked the members if they had any comments to make on the report and none were received. SB then went on to express her own appreciation to the outgoing Committee members for all their hard work throughout the year.

**U10/4 ` Treasurer’ Report**

AS made available copies of the year end Income & Expenditure account and Balance sheet which showed there were slight increases on balances on the previous year. AS reported that three charitable donations were made during the year and in total £320 had been split between Walk the Walk, Help for Heroes and Cancer Research UK. AS then thanked the auditors for their assistance during the year.

The Income and Expenditure account and Balance sheet were approved and accepted.

**U10/5 Election of Officers and Stewards**

SB advised members of the names of nominated Committee members for 2010 and these were approved. SB went on to inform the members of the outstanding vacancies of Branch Secretary, Education & Training Officer and Transport Officer as well as vacancies for Stewards. She urged members to consider taking on one of these roles assuring everyone that training would be given.

**U10/6 Guest’s Address**

Andrew Gray from Thompsons Solicitors gave a brief outline of the services provided to Unison members to include:

* Free will service
* Employment & criminal law representation
* Reduced price conveyancing
* Access to a free 30 minute legal advice line

AG went on to inform everyone that unlike legal firms offering no win no fee services, Thompsons did not deduct fees from damages awarded and that unlike many High Street Solicitors, Thompsons are often prepared to take on difficult cases. He also pointed out the friends and families of members are often covered. AG informed everyone that he would be available after the meeting to give individual advice on the services provided by Thompsons.

**U10/7 AOB**

No issues were raised under AOB

The meeting closed at 12.50pm