



Richmond upon Thames

**Branch Committee Meeting Thursday 18 June 2015
Salon 12-2pm**

Present: John Holroyd (Branch Secretary), Joanna McCoulough (Chair), Don Rainbow (Vice Chair & LGBT); Bill Reed (Welfare Officer); Steve Cunningham; David Hodgson (Libraries); Balinder Johal (H&S RuTC)

Guests: Greta Farian (Regional Officer); Patrick Kenny (Local Organiser)

Apologies: Herb Simms, Ernie Hunt, Mike Potts, Adeola Adeyemi, Fiona Campbell, Barbara Gray

Minutes: Maggie Fordham

Minutes and Matters Arising

New officers had been ratified by email. **GF** pointed out that information given at AGM re shared services with Wandsworth had since been superseded.

Shared Staffing with Wandsworth

JH referred to document distributed to the union. JH, MP, DR will analyse document in depth, but key issues:

1. Interviews for senior posts to be held in July
2. Shared staffing terms and conditions to be harmonised across both boroughs, seems to be favourable for Richmond staff.
3. Increase in annual leave; all staff to get 31 days regardless of length of service or pay grade.
4. Performance Related Pay and how it works in Wandsworth, contentious issue, attractive to some staff.
5. Senior managers working across boroughs will be paid more
6. Wandsworth has more severe sickness policy, (confidential draft copy circulated) will be changed Oct 15 after negotiation to remove most contentious issues, but may be delayed to join negotiation for other T&C.

DR feared those sections of sickness policy subject to 'managers' discretion' possibly discriminatory for women and gay staff.

JMcC concerned about staff reaction to document.

DR questioned the confidentiality of sickness policy that will not come into force until Autumn 2015.

BR suggested meeting with Wandsworth Unison to forge consultations on common ground. Asked whether staff would be employed by Richmond, Wandsworth or separate body.

JH confirmed no separate body set up; Ian Steadman will head negotiations for Richmond.

JMcC suggested booking a slot on coming Cabinet Meeting

GF confirmed that she is meeting with Wandsworth counterparts coming Tuesday, will set up meeting. Confirmed employer will be Richmond or Wandsworth. Confirmed no timetable as yet for negotiation on T&C. Supports regular dialogues between unions.

JH confirmed his intention to speak at **Cabinet Meeting on Thursday 2 July**.

All staff meeting should follow quickly before beginning of summer holiday period. A good recruitment opportunity.

GF will attend both Cabinet and All Staff meetings

JH stated that after Chief Officers appointed, discussions will start in each department.

JMcC asserted the need to ascertain staff reaction to sickness policy changes.

JH could not foresee much opposition if it is a good deal for our members.

BR thought it important that we prepare our position with Wandsworth Unison on matters of sickness policy, PRP; should be harmonised upwards not downwards.

DR expressed his concerns about the level of consultation with officers on the ground. It isn't happening yet and he fears favouritism in appointments.

GR queried assimilation panel involvement. She has spoken to Wandsworth Officer about sickness absence reporting and PRP and it seems they are not a big deal for their members. PRP looked upon as bonus.

JH commented that these issues are outside the JCC.

DR expressed further concern about PRP which as it is finance driven, can be subject to manipulation by managers, eg nobody achieves more than a 2 in appraisal so nobody receives a bonus if there is insufficient funds in the pot.

JH stated that it wasn't clear how Outer London/Inner London weighting pay would work in practice.

BR commented that JDs states that staff are required to work anywhere the organisation requires.

DR questioned who would award PRP when staff work across both boroughs.

BR suggested what kind of opposition exists against PRPs.

DR informed the meeting that Richmond had tried to introduce PRP a few years ago and that many staff supported the scheme. It was never implemented however.

JH we must be sure to reflect members' views, most contentious will be Sickness Policy

GF there is now wide acceptance of PRP

JMcC will there be an appeals procedure?

JH we need to meet with Wandsworth Unison before All Staff meeting; we could ask them to come over here?

GF suggested Congress House.

DR commented on the displacement of senior people already; KK has resigned. He added that Assistant Directors have been appointed without interview.

JMcC suggested Greta, Bill and Don to send their concerns to JH in advance of Cabinet meeting.

BR suggested speaking on behalf of both unions if a meeting cannot be arranged.

GF disagreed.

DR suggested giving GN the date of All Staff meeting; we are then seen to be pro-active, perhaps we could produce a flyer?

PK Does Unison speak at these meetings? An opportunity for recruitment?

JH Yeas we do speak but don't usually do recruitment; certainly at All Staff meetings we do.

DR concerned that as vacancies occur there is a rush to fill them without consultation.

Actions:

- 1. JH, MP, DR meet to analyse Cabinet document 'Shared Staffing Arrangement with LBW'.**
- 2. JH to book a slot at Cabinet Meeting**
- 3. GF set up meeting with Wandsworth Unison**
- 4. Greta, Bill, Don to send their concerns to John in advance of Cabinet Meeting.**

RuTC

JH reported that membership at the college is still good. Was announced at JCC that Principal looking to make 12 FTE cuts to support staff jobs; redundancies possible.

GF reported that Kingston College made considerable cuts to courses; FE being starved of funding.

BJ reported massive cuts to courses and that additional vocational courses on offer not recruiting well. Queried how long this will be sustainable.

JMcC asked how recruiting in schools and colleges was going

GF reported that earlier recruitment drive in college had not been very successful and that funding for colleges has a higher political agenda.

JH commented that the new principal at college very dynamic; wants academic subjects to stay in schools.

Recruitment

GF reminded the meeting that key areas for recruitment in Branch Assessment were schools, council offices, RuTC, RHP. Kingston are organising a recruitment drive in AFC, requested additional people to help out. Preparing for merger is an obvious recruitment opportunity, must keep up communication.

SC hopes to soon be appointed to Pension Board, can take info around schools to recruit.

Action: Volunteers needed to help recruitment in AFC; dates tbc

Website

JMcC appealed for reports for website

DR Suggested using website for Q&A and comments re shared staffing.

BR offered help with website

Action: reports needed from conferences for example, to go on website

Peer Support

JMcC reported that re-accreditation training was good, provided opportunity to discuss cases with colleagues. Suggested having peer support sessions Thursdays monthly in Union Office, starting early July, possibly lunch time or 9.30; send out email invitations.

Action: Maggie to organise peer support sessions

TFM

JH reported on success of outsourcing to Babcock. We were opposed in principle, but they made a good offer, redundancies minimal, transfer handled well by authority.

Email confidentiality

DH reported that managers in libraries have been given login access to staff emails for absence purposes. Raises issues for stewards and unison members who may be communicating confidential matters.

DR in the authority, managers are given 'restricted access ie, viewing only. We have raised at JCC the possibility of Unison having a separate mail box for stewards/officers, management looking into it.

Action: Unison mailbox to be raised at next JCC

AOB

JH reported request from MP who is concerned about the make-up of members on the new Pension Boards. Permission was given to MP to challenge who has voting rights on the board. John had informed the authority that SC was the trained Unison rep for board when they made a request for board members to all staff.

On another matter, there have been over/under payment in the Libraries and management are trying to claw back money going back 2 years, some chronic discrepancies. HR at fault with calculations.

Action: DH to ask members to put forward their names to Marie Gadsden in HR

BJ reported back from H&S show he attended, interesting stands and stall; would be willing to attend Wellbeing Day.

DR informed meeting that rugby world cup in September will disrupt borough for 10 days. Request risk assessment for lone workers at next JCC.

Action: JH or DR to raise request for risk assessment for lone workers at next JCC

Meeting closed at 1.30; Next meeting September date tbc.