



AGM
Thursday 24 March 2016
The Hyde Room, York House 12.00-2pm

Speakers: Joanna McCoulough (Chair); John Holroyd (Branch Secretary); Mike Potts (Treasurer); Sally Tsoukaris (Regional Officer)

Guest Speaker, a representative from Lighthouse Financial Advice unable to attend due to ill health.

Minutes: Maggie Fordham

JMcC: Welcomed both members and non-members to the meeting and read out the agenda.

JH noticed Ian Steadman (management negotiator SSA) in the room and invited him to the platform to speak on the perceived anomalies between Richmond and Wandsworth councils pay scales, over which there have been many complaints

IS: Reassured staff that although pay scales in Wandsworth appeared to be lower than Richmond's, this is not the case. The top of the grades are the same for R & W. The bottom point of the grade in W is 85% of the value of the top figure. This will apply to R also after Oct 1st. No one currently on the lower grades will suffer a loss of pay.

IS then invited questions from the floor.

Q: Will the monetary value of R's scheme be maintained?

A: Yes percentages will kick in.

Q: Is the purpose to lower people's grades?

A: No

Q: There seem to be fewer grades in the new scale

A: Yes we have tidied up the lower grades, fewer people on it. With PO 7, 8, 9 and higher, there will be fewer managers on grades higher up.

Q: Is there no automatic rise up the grades?

A: It is possible to withhold increments when we move to an assessed approach. There will be accelerated progression if performance is good. It will be based on managers' appraisals.

Q: When will the changes be made?

A: From 1st October

Q: Will appraisals be uniform across the councils, will it be fair?

A: We are committed to consistent and fair appraisals

Ian then reminded staff can submit personal queries to email askus.

SSA final offer

JH: reported that the negotiations for harmonised T&Cs have now ended and we have sent out ballot forms to all staff affected.

If members do not receive a ballot paper over the next few days, please contact us at the Unison office. John recommended members vote to accept the final offer as a vote to reject will see the T&Cs imposed and we may lose the gains we have secured. He doubts very strongly that a vote to reject will bring management back to the negotiating table and some form of industrial action will result.

JH: reiterated that the negotiators from all unions believe that this is the best deal at the moment.
MM (GMB) is recommending his members vote to accept and confirmed that the negotiations have been tough. A lot of hard work has gone into trying to secure the best deal.

JH: then outlined the gains we have made, referring to his letter that went out to members with the ballot paper, (see JH's letter) He opened up the meeting for questions from the floor.

Q: When will the pay deductions begin for those off sick?

JH emphasised there will be no pay deductions during the one year moratorium on applying W's sickness policy. All unions fought hard to secure this.

Q: Will deductions be made even if you have a doctor's certificate?

A: At present the policy applies the triggers even if you have certificated absences. This is part of the details that need to be thrashed out during the moratorium when management and unions will meet regularly to test and monitor how the policy is working. **Just to confirm that no pay deductions will be made during this time.**

TS: added that in the W policy as it stands, pay deductions are not automatic but will be 'considered'.

JH: added that Liverpool, a Labour council with strong unions have a very similar system.

TS: confirmed that there will be training and guidance for all managers operating the system.

Q: Can we see the guidance?

TS: This kind of detail will be part of the negotiations during the moratorium.

Q: Seeing the guidance is crucial, especially regarding the exemptions; a car crash for example, and dialysis; we need to see what they are.

TS: Dialysis is an exemption

JH: We will put in a request to make W's guidance and exemptions available to staff and put them on Rio.

Q: How about reasonable adjustments?

A: These do form part of the policy and will be found at the end.

TS: The policy does work in W. They have better absenteeism stats than here at R. Reduction of short-term absenteeism is the intention.

Q: But presenteeism is an issue, working whilst sick and infecting colleagues.

Q: How about the sliding scale of sick pay after an operation for example, will this remain the same?

JH: After 5 years' service, 6 months full pay, another 6 months at half pay will remain at present. However, Surrey council are about to move from 6 to 3 months.

TS: The 6 month full, 6 month half was enshrined in the Green Book. W had it removed but was restored.

Q: As for long-term sickness, can I see the exceptions?

TS: All disabilities covered by the Equality Act 2010 can be found on the acas website

Q: But it doesn't list all conditions.

Q: If you are working across boroughs, what about the travel costs?

JH: You will have access to an Oyster card, paid for by R.

Q: Will you report back from the year's review?

JH: Yes there will be updates from our side via our website.

TS: If you are treated unfairly, please approach Unison.

Q: What about the change of pay date?

JH: We have been assured that the move from 15-26 of the month will not be to anyone's detriment.

Q: Will anybody be forced to change from a p/t to a f/t contract under the restructure?

JH: There has been no consultation on this as yet. We will fight to keep p/t contracts.

1.30 JMC left the platform; MP took over chair

Q: The car allowance criteria at W calculates mileage but does not allow for those who claim for equipment and emergency call for example. This is impractical and inefficient.

JH: casual car users allowance - right to claim has been a contentious issue; we haven't gone over the details yet.

1.40 non-members asked to leave, members only business

Financial Report

MP: distributed copy of 2015 report and 2016 forecast. Explained we had a budget overspend last year due to the cost of Wellbeing Day 2014 and the departure of LR our branch administrator in December. MF took on the role from November to receive training. We are now managing to keep costs down and we are well funded.

We were unable to move to vote on officer posts as meeting then inquorate. Ratifying the positions will go to next branch committee meeting; no competition for posts. MP then read out the nominees for officer posts plus those that are vacant.

AOB

TS: mentioned the prize draw for members updating their details and the TU Bill still going through parliament and urged members to write to their MPs

Representative from LV gave a brief talk on savings to be made car insurance etc.

Meeting closed 1.50