

GMB Northants Community Branch
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Minutes of the branch meeting held on 28.10.15

Present: Rajko Loncar, Ian Totton, Sterling Bryan, Brian Fayter, Adrian Grover, David Swan, Danny Gillespie, Jackie Grover, Gordon Glassford.

Apologies: Ray Beeby, Maggie Don, Lily Lowe, Dave Hewitt, Rachelle Wilkins, Fergus Farrell.

The secretary hasn't ordered any more LRD Health and Safety at Work books yet as he has been on holiday. We need to look at what books we need for all reps. Any reps who wants one of these books or a Law at Work book should contact the secretary, although all LRD books can be read and downloaded from www.lrd.org.uk.

It was agreed to continue to sponsor the Kingswood Juniors FC under 11s and to re-affiliate to Labour Research.

Nomination forms have been received for delegates to next years congress, this will be on next months agenda.

Some branch members had attended the hustings for General Secretary in Nottingham both candidates performed well. There had also been a debate about the proposed re-structuring of the industrial sections the feeling of the meeting was overwhelmingly against.

The trade union movement is undergoing a massive attack from the government in the form of the Trade Union bill currently going through parliament. The right to take industrial action will be severely restricted, facility time for reps will be limited and check off will be stopped in the public sector, which means we could lose thousands of members if we can't get them onto direct debit. Anti Trade Union laws are already the worst in Europe and this will only make things worse for us. This will form the major part of the annual branch newsletter. Members affected will be sent direct debit forms. Info about the changes will be going on the branch website.

We remain financially very healthy. We should be looking to see if there are more charities we could be supporting or if we could be spending more on recruitment.

Jackie commented on the governments attack on the working poor by trying to cut working tax credits. This had been thwarted by the House of Lords but it shows that Tories believe the poor should pay for the lifestyles of the rich. She suggested that we could make donations to local food banks and we could form recruitment teams to try and attract new members.

October newsletter went out to 1294 members, we had 235 email opens to date, which is 18.3%, better than June and July which was at 15%. Aiming for 22.7%. We have added search function to website home page and H&S page. Added Crown Paints and GMB Dental Plan info to Member Benefits page. Added Cookie preferences & Privacy page to website which is good practice. Traffic to the website for last 30 days is 42 unique visitors and 387 page views. We continue to publish News items, including minutes and agenda to Facebook and Twitter. The

Greenpatch sponsorship photos generated good interaction with Greenpatch on Facebook which meant GMB profile was shared with all Greenpatch followers. Facebook Page likes up 5 to 20 and Twitter Followers up 34 to 239, since last report. We had three items featured in the latest Contact Magazine, including NPC Pensioners Conference, donations to Musical Youth & GreenPatch.

Accumma Plastics: Rajko reported that the threatened shift changes had been put on hold.

Matalan: Recruitment remains strong. Ian is trying to get new members onto direct debit. It was agreed that the branch will pay the union dues of one member who is on long term sick.

Kier: The two workplace organisers are both off sick so David is holding the fort. Some temporary workers have been made permanent it is not clear whether they are union members. The secretary will send David an up to date list. One member feels he is being harassed by managers, he was given advice on how to start the disciplinary procedure.

Sterling had attended the regional Equality conference with Lily. There had been two very interesting presentations. The first had been about prostate cancer by a cancer support group Friend & Bredrins. The second had been by the pressure group 'Dying to Work' this group is trying to get the government to close the legal loophole which allows employers to dismiss employees who are suffering from terminal illnesses or are long term sick. Given their track record I'm sure the government will be very sympathetic.