



Dorset NEU – Branch Meeting Minutes Wednesday 20th November 2024

1. Apologies:

NT
RR
VR
AC
MC
VW

Present:

RP(Secretary)
MO (Retired Members' Officer)
SS
EP
EC
KW
CP
CM – Senior Regional Officer, NEU

2. Minutes of previous meeting & matters arising

No minutes available.

3. Short business section (time limited)

a. Branch Officers

RP explained that there are a range of officer roles within Dorset NEU that are largely unfilled at the moment, and that it is part of the strategic vision of the union that we fill these roles and begin to be more proactive in our approach than reactive. It forms part of the movement away from being seen merely as 'insurance' for members if something goes wrong, towards a proactive approach to resolving issues in education. With this in mind, there are five members that have volunteered to take up posts within the committee, and these will need to be voted on in the General Meeting.

b. Arrangements for Conference delegates and motions

RP explained that the Annual NEU Conference will be 14th-17th April in Harrogate and that Dorset can send 11 delegates due to the size of our membership. There is currently a list of 5 members that would definitely like to attend, with a further 5 members who would like to go, but will step down if another member would like to take the place. This will need to also be discussed at the General Meeting.

RP explained that the committee had raised the issue of economic decline in our area and would like to put a motion to the conference about it. RP passed on the data from AC: *"Dorset TUC is seriously concerned about Dorset's continuing economic decline, with major job losses affecting both urban and rural areas in many employment sectors. Over the last 25 years, economic growth in the South West has lagged behind the national figure of 43%, with the region as a whole on 35%, BCP on only 31% and the Dorset Council area on a shocking 6%. Of particular concern is the impact on our young people, many of whom leave the county to find employment elsewhere. We have raised this issue in commenting on an early draft of the Dorset Council Plan for 2024/29,*



pointing out the need to generate good quality jobs, improve the education and training offer, enhance public transport so the jobs are accessible, and develop affordable, high quality housing.” This needs to be agreed at the General Meeting.

c. Visible Women UK

In MC's absence, MO told the meeting about the campaign by Visible Women UK to raise a statue of the writer, poet & LGBTQ+ trailblazer Sylvia Townsend Warner in Dorchester to give her the recognition she deserves. 85% of statues in the UK feature men or animals, leaving only 15% of women. This will need to be agreed in the General Meeting, but here is the link to the information about the fundraising for the statue: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/help-raise-a-statue-for-sylvia-townsend-warner>

4. Focus on main issues, e.g. national and local campaigns

a. Performance Related Pay

The NEU has a Bargaining Calendar that informs the campaigning of each District over the year, with the aim being that reps and members are discussing the same issues in the same timeframe to make our voices coherent, cohesive and strong. This term's focus is on pay, specifically removing performance related pay.

RP updated the meeting with progress so far:

- NEU model letter prepared and sent to all reps to send to their respective head teachers.
- The same model letter will need to be sent to head teachers directly from Dorset NEU where there is no rep on site. RP is working on gaining information about these schools to enable this to happen.
- At the committee meeting last week, it was agreed that a two-pronged approach may be better, where the CEOs of the MATs was also contacted at the same time as the head teachers, meaning that pressure is being applied consistently across the leadership landscape. With this in mind, RP is working to map the MATs as well as the head teachers to that they can be contacted.
- There have been some successes: Beaminster School, Authentic Education and Wessex MAT have all abolished PRP and agreed to implement the recent pay award for teachers.
- The main area of resistant was regarding 'threshold' to UPS. The NEU view is to support the DfE in removing this 'threshold' and making a 1-9 scale. Some employers are still referring to 'sustained and substantial' and retaining the two year gap before allowing staff to 'apply'. This equates to PRP and should be abolished.

CM updated the meeting to say that Dorset County Council are looking at their policy now, and that any schools that buy into their Human Resources will follow this policy.



b. Stand Up to Racism

RP updated the meeting about the Stand Up To Racism protest in London that she and MO attended, reporting that it was an uplifting and very positive event that countered the far right narrative about what the country wants. CM informed the meeting that NEU South West had the biggest contingent from the whole union and were very visible on the march.

KW asked about resources to support teachers with anti-racism, here is the link to the NEU's resources: <https://neu.org.uk/advice/equality/race-equality>

Here is the link to the Framework for Developing an Anti-Racist Approach: <https://neu.org.uk/latest/library/anti-racism-charter>

5. AOB

RP opened the floor for any other business and KW raised the issue of the Farmer Protests that were happening yesterday and whether the NEU could get involved in this. EP reported that students were wearing wellies to school yesterday in support of the protest. RP confirmed that this ties in nicely with the conference motion discussed earlier.

RP thanked everyone for their time and attention this evening and closed the meeting.