



## Dorset NEU – General Meeting Minutes Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### Apologies:

RR  
VR  
AC  
MC

### Present:

RP (Secretary)  
MO (Retired Members' Officer)  
SS  
VW  
EC  
KW  
PP (Committee Member)  
NT (Committee Member)  
KL (Assistant Treasurer)  
JB  
RF (Committee Member)

### ★ Introductions

Rebecca(RP) introduced herself as the Joint Secretary for Dorset NEU and explained that her colleague Vicki Richmond (VR) was unwell and therefore unable to attend, and Amy Brinsden (AB) is the other Joint Secretary.

### ★ Dorset NEU Updates

RP explained that she has one day a week facilities time to complete union-related duties, and AB has one day every two weeks. VR time is still under negotiation, but hopefully this will also be one day per week. Geoff Cooke (GC) is the Treasurer, with Karen Lindsay (KL) the Assistant Treasurer.

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.

Five members have volunteered to undertake these roles:

- ★ Emma Holder, Sir John Colfox Academy – Health and Safety Officer
- ★ Serena Scaife, Shaftesbury School – Women's Officer
- ★ Katherine Whitaker, Sir John Colfox Academy – New Professional and Young Member's Officer
- ★ Vikki Williams, The Studio School – Black Members' Officer
- ★ Emma Cartwright, Atlantic Academy – LGBTQ+ Officer



KL proposed that these five members be accepted onto the committee, PP seconded the proposal, and it was unanimously voted. Congratulations to those members, and welcome to the committee! RP will update the NEU database after the meeting to reflect the new roles.

## ★ National Conference

RP explained that the Annual NEU Conference will be 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 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. Katherine expressed an interest in going – she will confirm.

Current delegates:

Definitely attending	Would like to attend if there is a place
RP	PP
EC	AC
VW	LK
PD	MC
SS	RF
KW - tbc	

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 was agreed and a motion will need to be drafted, potentially working with Lisa Weir, District Secretary of BCP.

NT commented that she noticed on the committee minutes that another motion was suggested regarding MAT CEO pay. RP checked and agreed this was the case: a motion to lobby the DfE to publish MAT CEO pay across the UK, and the amount of money spent on consultants. NT proposed that we raise this motion at conference, which was seconded by EC, and this was unanimously agreed. A motion will therefore need to be drafted.



### ★ Update on PRP Campaign

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. Rebecca 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 resistance 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.
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NT mentioned that Paul Coles is the NEU representative on the JCNC for Aspirations, so it would be a good idea to check with him about progress on this issue.

### ★ 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. 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>.

PP proposed that we donate £500 from Dorset NEU for this statue, NT seconded it, and it was unanimously agreed.

### ★ Other Issues in Dorset

#### Training

RP updated the meeting with dates for training in the South West, highlighting those she thought would be appropriate for those attending. As discussed, here are the dates:



Training Date	Course name	Location
24 September 2024	Chairing Skills	Exeter
11, 12 & 13 November 2024	Foundation	Exeter
26 November 2024	Introduction to Employment Law	Bristol
27 November 2024	Reps Negotiating Skills Part 1	Bristol
27 November 2024 (half day in Secretaries meeting)	Preventing Burnout - Part 1	Exeter
2 & 3 December 2024	Representing Members in the Workplace	Exeter
16 January 2025	Treasurers Training	Exeter
22, 23 & 24 January 2025	Foundation	Exeter
10 February 2025	Equality in the Workplace	Exeter
26 February 2025	Reps Negotiating Skills Part 2	Bristol
27 February 2025 (half day in Secretaries meeting)	Preventing Burnout - Part 2	Exeter
3, 4 & 5 March 2025	Advanced	Bristol
10 March 2025	Redundancy, Restructure and Resistance	Exeter
17 March 2025	Maternity Matters	Exeter
24 & 25 March 2025	Health & Safety Part 1	Exeter
1 & 2 April 2025	Organising for Positive Change	Exeter
8 May 2025	Capability	Exeter
4 June 2025	Pay Progression	Exeter
9, 10 & 11 June 2025	Foundation	Bristol
16 & 17 June 2025	Health & Safety Part 2	Exeter
25, 26 & 27 June 2025	Advanced	Exeter
7 July 2025	Introduction to Employment Law	Exeter
8 July 2025	Representing Support Staff	Exeter

SS queried whether a workplace rep who is employed part-time who attends NEU training on a non-working day can claim that day's pay from their employer. Neither RP or anyone else in the meeting knew the answer, so RP agreed to raise this issue with Craig Martin, Senior Regional Officer for South West NEU.

### Support Staff

RP commented that there has been a lot of discussion recently about the NEU and other unions providing services for support staff. Other unions have commented that the NEU does not have collective bargaining rights for support staff, and while this may be the case, we would still be stronger in our workplaces if all staff employed in an education setting were supported by the



same union. Whilst we cannot poach members from other unions, we can ask support staff whether they are in a union, and if they aren't we can suggest the NEU. In some workplaces, there may only be a rep for NEU/NASUWT, and so it could be argued that support staff need a rep on site that knows the educational setting and the people involved. Where there is a strong support staff union presence, however, this would not be valid. As we move forward, it is going to become more and more important that staff in our workplaces speak in one voice and stand together. RP urged the members in the meeting to consider support staff in their workplaces and seek to encourage membership in a union.

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