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London Ambulance Service Unison Branch Committee Meeting

30th January 2006 10.30hrs – Partnership House

Present: Eric Roberts – Branch Secretary
Eddie Brand – Chair
Phil Thompson – Regional Officer
Mark Belkin – Education Officer
Rob Sydney – Communications Officer
Andrea Shields – Welfare Officer
John A Whiting – North East Sector
Nadine Poonawala – North West Sector
Richard Chow – EOC
Pete Hannell – North West Sector
Mark Lione – East Central Sector
Claudette McNaughton – EOC
Fred Philips – Membership Admin.
Julie Shirt – North East Sector
Gary Edwards – West Sector
Ian Lee – Health and Safety
Karen Walling – West Sector
John Gough – Labour link Officer
Harry Day – Training Department
Dave Smith – Equalities Officer
Clive Tombs - South East Sector
David Lamey – South West Sector
Sarah Hardy – South West Sector

Apologies: Michael Apps
Paul O’Neill
Jo Easterbrook

Previous Minutes

- Minutes from 8th November Agreed as a true record

Action

Matters Arising

- Unfair dismissals referrals not yet on website

PT and RS
to discuss

Branch Secretary's Report (ER)

- The Branch Secretary wished everyone a very Happy New Year. The report included:
- Legal report and running total of compensation. The Branch has broke the £1million mark for compensation for LAS UNISON members since 1999.
- Mileage allowance is up for discussion at the National Staff Council. A national sub group is being set up.
- Bird Flu and Pandemic Influenza information bulletin for information.
- Invitation to attend *working against Racism Conference*.
- Invitation to attend *Stop the BNP in 2006 conference*.
- Annual Report of the Nicaragua solidarity campaign action group (NSCAG).
- Report on the retired members conference.
- Request for retirement grant for Jim Newton – 40yrs service. Agreed by
Committee.
- Application for life membership for Brian Arnold confirmed.

Agenda For Change

The report by the Branch Secretary included:

- Email from Tony Crabtree confirming agreement for EMT2 and EMT3.
- Review of unsocial hours payments.
- AFC notes re. meeting of National Staff Council.
- Letter from NHS employers re. unsocial hrs.
- Minutes from AFC T & C meeting.
- Email from T. Crabtree re. back pay, Press Office to be asked to issue statement to clear up misunderstanding. There are talks underway to help anyone that does need to repay money.
- Meal breaks; talks underway as to who will sit round table to discuss.
- Urgent Care staff should be assimilated in February
- New entrants will start at 75% of top of band 4.
- ER thanked everyone for working hard to ensure as smooth a transition as was possible.

Membership (FP)

- List of new members. Agreed by
Committee
- There are still a large number of wrong addresses registered for members. ER to seek meeting with Payroll once AfC pressures have declined.

Welfare (AS)

- Waiting on new welfare phone. The Welfare Officer will update everyone on new number.

Communications (RS)

- Text alert mailings gone out.
- Twelve people signed up at present.
- AGM on website.

Education (MB)

- Disciplinary & grievance course ran 23rd and 24th January 2006. Course and premises Good.

Treasurer (GA)

- Currently in the process of doing end of year accounts
Nothing untoward, main concern is unpaid cheques.

Health and Safety (IL)

- Stress questionnaire to go out to 200 members of staff in Jan.
- Greater protection to staff in potentially dangerous situations.
- Manual Handling policy now in place.
- Pegasus T-bed; new trolley bed to replace the Falcon 6.
- Sixty five new ambulances set to arrive with improvements.
RS said disposable bag and masks on station and asked why they are not in use yet. DS said safety cannulas also not being used yet, IL replied these maybe training issues.

Pensions (PH) The report included:

- Current LAS workers and other public sector workers have been granted lifetime pension protection.
- New entrants to the NHS pension scheme may be subject to different arrangements.
- Unison has encountered difficulty negotiating lifetime pension protection for existing members in the local government pension scheme and will be balloting members on industrial action.

PTS

- No PTS officer to report.
- ER - one contract won back (Bromley).
- JG - the Kingston contract has been extended for 6 months

CAC

- Nothing to report.

Brian Arnold welcomed to the meeting.

Regional Officers Report (PT)

- Elections reminder; nominations close end of the week.
- Invoice payment discussed with EB and ER.
- Everyone should have received 1 step ahead; new training course that the union is running for experienced reps to ensure all reps are up to date. Enough reps in LAS to run an internal course; date – 15th and 16th May. Course will cover Union law, Branch organization and recruitment and is suitable for all Branch members.

Staff Council (EB)

- Nothing to report

AOB

- Gold Suite issues raised by AS and JG. JG said that staff were not happy with the method of pressure Gold are using to make staff achieve targets, citing an example of PTS staff being put on emergency vehicles, JG said it was effecting staff morale and doing people of London an injustice by trying to gloss over the inability to supply patients with an ambulance. AS said Gold Suite using bullying tactics to get crews to turn around faster to compensate for the lack of staff, with DSO's chasing up staff and inappropriate messages being sent down the MDT causing greater stress levels for staff.

KW added that not enough ambulances for numbers of calls and asked if it is necessary to man RRU's on nights.

ML, GE agreed that it is effecting staff morale and expressed concern.

IL said pressure period originally December and January now extended to February and March.

HD added that the same would probably happen next winter recruitment and new vehicles required not stop gap fillers.

ER to discuss with Martin Flaherty and set a meeting up between Management and senior branch representatives.

- Diabetes update PH

Re. the eight insulin dependant diabetics, PH had a meeting with Deputy director of HR to request that they overturn the ban on driving emergency vehicles on blue lights, they have written to Dr Spencer (Occupational Health Physician) to ask him to overturn the ban as it was on his recommendation, will keep the branch updated as to the outcome.

- New relief rota (GE)

Archaic new rota introduced for new recruits. GE expressed concern that it maybe difficult to retain staff on this rota. ER replied that it would ease the pressure on current staff and that the rota will be shown to new recruits at interview and will help to ease the shortfall in cover. JG added that the pressure on new staff maybe too much.

ER replied that maybe the rota needs to be looked at to see if it can be improved without compromising the principle.

ER to speak to Martin Flaherty.

- Maternity (AS)

There have been a couple of cases where the nearest maternity department have refused to take BBAs that are booked elsewhere and EOC have experienced problems in getting midwives to crews. An email has been sent to F. Moore and awaiting her views.

- Sector support vehicles (CT)

CT raised issue about a sector support crew who have been split up due to lack of funding to provide an ambulance for them.

The AOM has told crew he can no longer afford to fund this vehicle and needs to stay in budget, meanwhile the St Johns and Red Cross are being funded by the LAS to respond to 999 calls.

AS raised the issue of the sector support vehicles at Camden being used over in the East division and crews being asked to change over to a different channel; crews feel segregated from Camden because of confusion over Sector changes.

Date of next meeting

- 10.30 hrs 20th February 2006 – Partnership House