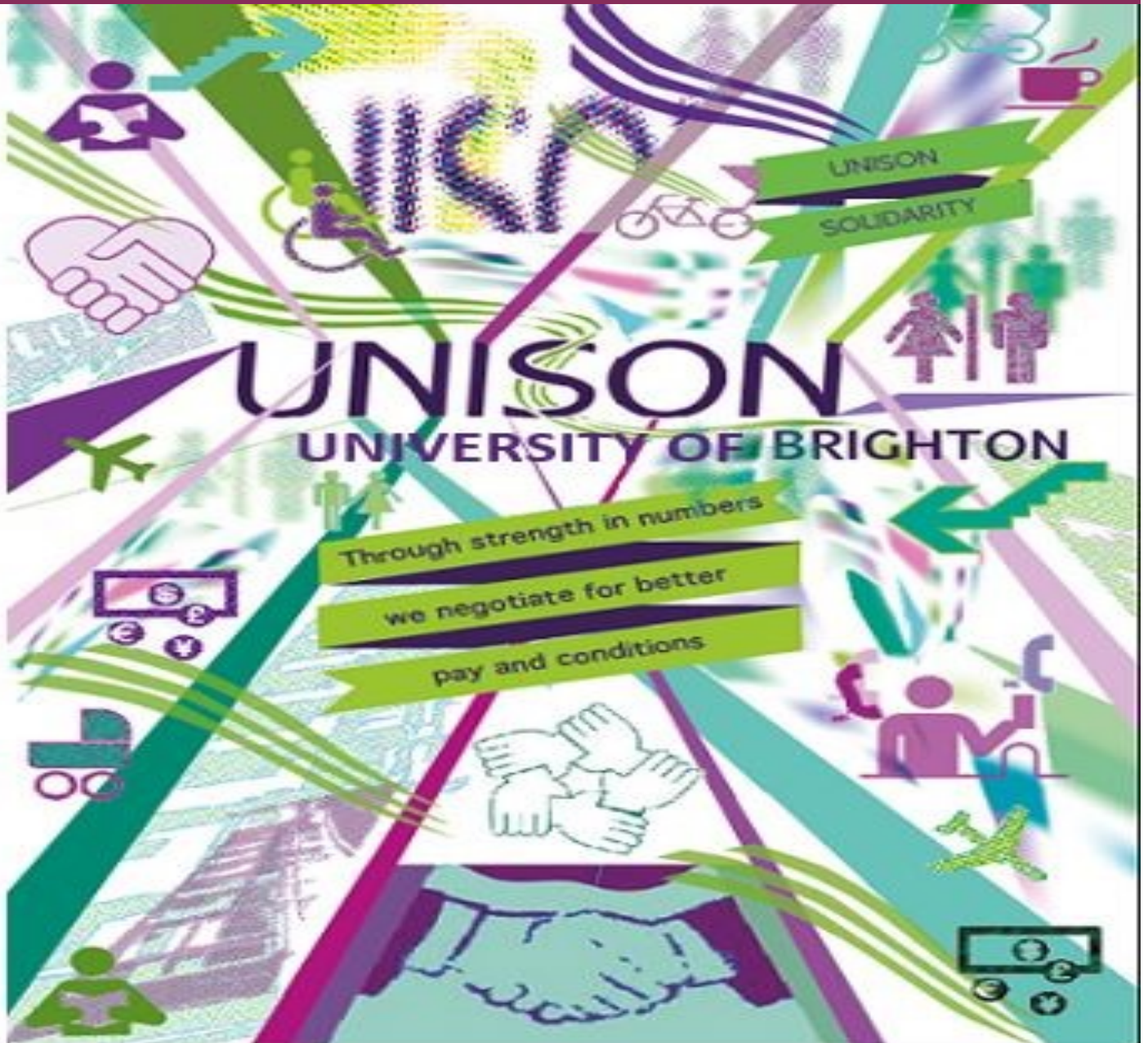




University of Brighton

AGM March 2020



University of Brighton Branch of UNISON

Annual General Meeting March 2020

Agenda

- 1) Welcome**
- 2) Minutes of previous AGM 6th March 2019 (pages 3-5)**
- 3) Speaker /Video**
- 4) Election of Branch Officers (page 6)**
- 5) Ratification of Stewards, Health & Safety Reps (page 7)**
- 6) Ratification of the Financial Return (page 8)**
- 7) Branch Secretary's address and answers to questions (pages 9-10)**
- 8) Motions (pages 11-12)**

End of meeting 2pm

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON UNISON BRANCH

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM), Wednesday 6th March 2019 , Cockcroft hall, Moulsecoomb

1) Welcome

The Branch Chair, Martin Loftus, welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the guest speaker, Alex McIntyre, from Wetherspoons.

2) Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting

Minutes were seen by all and agreed as a correct record.

3) Speaker – Alex McIntyre representing Wetherspoons workers

After a brief film showing Wetherspoons workers taking strike action in their campaign for better wages and working conditions, Alex outlined the campaign and what had been achieved.

Alex talked about the atmosphere at work, with bullying managers and staff forced to attend work when ill. He said that the precarious workers are the industrial workers of the 21st century in many parts of the world.

He explained how workers there had had enough and came together, joined a union and started to stick up for themselves. As a result of their action, workers had achieved a pay rise and pressure on their employer had resulted in a management reshuffle, which had removed some of the worst managers.

Alex said that these events show that change can happen, with managers now forced to listen to their workforce. The Bakers' Union have made strong links with campaigning organisation War on Want and in the year of the young worker, it's important that precarious workers are organised and campaign for better pay and rights at work.

4) Election of Branch Officers

The Chair read out a list of nominations received and seconded and the meeting agreed to endorse the branch officer posts as follows.

Chair	Martin Loftus
Secretary	Ivan Bonsell
Treasurer	Dawn Whitaker
Black Members' Officer	Jean Bosco Ndayizeye
Environmental Officer	Chris Baker
Health and Safety Officer	Maurizio Valeri
Education Co-ordinator & Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator	Cathy Peters
Equality Co-ordinator	Emily Brooks
Communications Officer	Dan Simmonds
Labour Link Officer	Sarah Pickett
Retired Members' Secretary	Mike Adams

The Chair also appealed for members to volunteer for remaining officer roles, or think about whether members would like to job-share existing roles.

5) Ratification of Stewards, Health and Safety reps and Equalities reps

The Chair read out a list of stewards and reps which had been proposed and seconded, as follows:

	School/Department	Campus	Steward	Health and Safety rep	Equalities rep
Alan Dilley	Pharmacy	Moulsecoomb	-	Yes	-
Dan Simmonds	Students' Union	Moulsecoomb	Yes	-	-
Emily Brooks	Pharmacy	Moulsecoomb	Yes	-	Yes
Ivan Bonsell	UNISON	Moulsecoomb	Yes	Yes	-
Jim Hendtlass	Art	City Campus	-	Yes	-
John Kitcher	Information Services	Eastbourne	Yes	-	-
Kevin Pullinger	Estates	Moulsecoomb	Yes	-	-
Lise Loftus	Information Services	Moulsecoomb	Yes	-	-
Mandy Williams	Education	Falmer	Yes	Yes	-
Marco Troiani	Information Services	Eastbourne	Yes	-	-
Martin Loftus	Academic Services	Moulsecoomb	Yes	Yes	-
Maurizio Valeri	Pharmacy	Moulsecoomb	Yes	Yes	-
Richard Clayton	Media	City Campus	Yes	Yes	-
Richard Smith	Hospitality	Falmer	Yes	-	-
Sarah Pickett	Students' Union	City Campus	Yes	-	Yes
Sian Williams	Academic Services	Falmer	Yes	-	-
Dawn Whitaker	Architecture	Moulsecoomb	-	Yes	-

6) Ratification of Financial Return

The Branch Treasurer, Dawn Whitaker, presented the financial return for the year ending 31st December 2018.

The branch received income of £17,690 and spent £24,839, which is in accordance with the branch's agreed policy to invest in publicity and education. This resulted in a reduction in the branch reserves of £7,149, leaving a bank balance of £18,463.

The meeting agreed the return as an accurate representation of branch finances for the year.

7) Motions, Branch Rules

The only motion was to agree the new branch rules. The Branch Secretary explained that the branch is governed by the overall rules of UNISON, and that other than sporadic agreements, the branch had never had a set of rules written and agreed by the branch. The proposed rules outline how the branch committee, negotiating committee and branch officers and stewards should operate.

The rules were adopted by the meeting unanimously.

8) Branch Secretary's Address and Questions

The Branch Secretary, Ivan Bonsell, talked about what the branch had been doing and where he saw the University going over the next few years. He explained that there is expected to be further turbulence in university funding, with the anticipated publication of the Augar review, which is likely to propose a reduction in tuition fees.

This would be a disaster for Brighton in particular, on top of the problem of a reduction in the number of potential students due to demographic changes. The University is already in a difficult financial situation, which has prompted voluntary severance and endless reviews aimed to save money.

Ivan said that reviews of academic services and benchmarking exercises would almost certainly lead to the University very apologetically proposing compulsory redundancies and when that happens, the branch will fight it.

There were questions about staff bonuses and changes to courses.

Ivan explained that the branch remain opposed to individual bonuses, because they are divisive, but would be in favour of us all receiving the same bonus to make up for the deterioration in staff morale over the last few years. Changes to courses moving from Eastbourne to Brighton were discussed, but Ivan explained that there is no plan to close Eastbourne as the situation there is much more complicated when the University made the strategic (and catastrophically poor) decision to close Hastings.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 2pm.



Find us on Facebook: Unison at University of Brighton

Web: <http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/unison/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/unibtonunison>

Election of Officers for 2020/21

The following list of officer candidates have been nominated and seconded in accordance with UNISON

Branch Chair	Martin Loftus/Sian Williams
Branch Secretary	Ivan Bonsell
Branch Treasurer	Dawn Whitaker
Black Members' Officer	Jean Bosco Ndayizeye
Equalities/Diversity Officer	Emily Brooks
Health and Safety Officer	Maurizio Valeri
Labour Link Officer	Antonia Berelson/Sarah Pickett
LGBT+ Officer	Sarah Pickett
Education Co-ordinator	Cathy Peters
Retired Members' Officer	Mike Adams
Women's Officer	Charlene Tanton, Debbie Neale, Jodie Jones
Young Members' Officer	Shannon Fay

There are some potential roles the Branch could add to the committee. If you are interested in any of the following please contact the branch administrator Sarah Pickett s.e.pickett@brighton.ac.uk or the branch secretary Ivan Bonsell I.A.D.Bonsell@brighton.ac.uk

Disabled Members' Officer
Environmental Officer
International Officer
Welfare Officer

LIST OF BRANCH REPS TO BE NOTED BY THE AGM

Stewards (15):

City Campus	Richard Clayton
Eastbourne	John Kitcher, Marco Troiani, Antonia Berelson
Falmer	Mandy Williams, Sian Williams, Richard Smith
Moulsecoomb	Emily Brooks, Debbie Neale, Ivan Bonsell , Kevin Pullinger, Lise Loftus, Martin Loftus, Maurizio Valeri.
Students' Union	Sarah Pickett

Health and Safety reps (8):

City Campus	Richard Clayton
Falmer	Mandy Williams
Moulsecoomb	Allan Dilley, Dawn Whitaker, Martin Loftus, Maurizio Valeri, Ivan Bonsell Nixon Dube

Equalities reps (2):

Emily Brooks, Sarah Pickett

We always need more stewards, health and safety and other reps and free training is available. If you are interested please contact the Unison help email: UnisonHelp@brighton.ac.uk



Branch Financial return 2019

Income

Subscriptions

UNISON subscription income this year	£	£17,890.20
Funding adjustments		£21.36
Retired member subscriptions		£15.00
Deposit Account Interest		£33.52
Total Income		£17,960.08

Expenditure

Administration:	Staffing costs	£1,046.35	
		<u>£10,304.45</u>	£11,350.80
Group Conference & Meetings:	UNISON Annual Conference	£1,225.05	
	Retired Members conference	£0.00	
	HE Conference	£602.21	
	LGBT conference	£147.50	
	Black Members conference	£480.30	
	Women's Conference	£482.65	
	Other conferences (HE seminar)	<u>£1,924.95</u>	£4,862.66
Branch Committee			£1,264.10
Other Meetings:	Branch AGM	£985.00	
	Others:		
	Regional council	£56.55	
	Health & Safety	£391.29	
	University meetings (including grievance & disciplinary)	£52.50	
	Other meetings (including forums and networking events)	£757.76	
	Regional Committee	£0.00	
	meeting members	<u>£97.20</u>	£2,340.30
Publicity			£627.46
Education			£1,268.56
Donations			£400.00
Affiliations			£506.75
Local Activities			<u>£124.57</u>
Total Expenditure			£22,745.20
Excess of Income over Expenditure			-£4,785.12

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2018

Fixed Assets:

Equipment	0.00	
Less Depreciation	0.00	0.00

Investments:

Bank Deposit Account	£10,329.58
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Current Assets:

Bank Current Account	£3,330.13
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Less Current Liabilities:

Creditors	0.00
Branch Funding owed	£18.26

Net Current Assets

£13,677.97

Total Net Assets

Represented by:

Accumulated fund balance at 31/12/19	£18,463.09
Excess of income for the year	-£4,785.12
Balance as at 31 December 2019	£13,677.97

Branch Secretary Report for Annual General Meetings, March 2020

It's probably best to start off with the changes that have happened over the last year and then move on to the changes we expect to be around the corner.

There has been a significant change in the fortunes of the University with a dip in student numbers and the University's management seemingly being incapable of shifting us up the league tables. The estate at Moulsecocomb has become a massive building site and the prevailing idea seems to be that if we can fix things over the next eighteen months then a demographic upturn, shiny new accommodation and teaching facilities will come to our aid.

Meanwhile, the effect of three years of voluntary severance has meant that many of the University's employees are expected to do a larger volume of work, purely because it needs doing. Where this doesn't happen, students are left unhappy and the cycle of poor NSS results then continues.

What we're faced with imminently is perhaps the largest reorganisation in the University's history. Twelve schools are to be massaged into seven and the tasks of most of the people involved in student administration are to be radically re-configured.

This is a difficult test for any trade union. What we've said all along is that we won't accept a significant amount of compulsory redundancies and if we are faced with members being in that situation then we'll be going back to our members with a recommendation that we resist them using whatever power we have.

In terms of developing the branch structures, it's been a good year. We have a very vibrant branch committee of officers, stewards and health and safety reps. We have continued to produce a monthly newsletter and whilst our blog is not as fresh as I'd like it to be, it's still informative and relevant.

In between representing members collectively at meetings with the University's management, we've been involved in many individual cases, supporting members who've been victims of bullying and injustice.

We've continued to develop our national and regional profile. Our branch played a significant role in campaigning within UNISON for a disaggregate ballot to be used for next year's pay round.

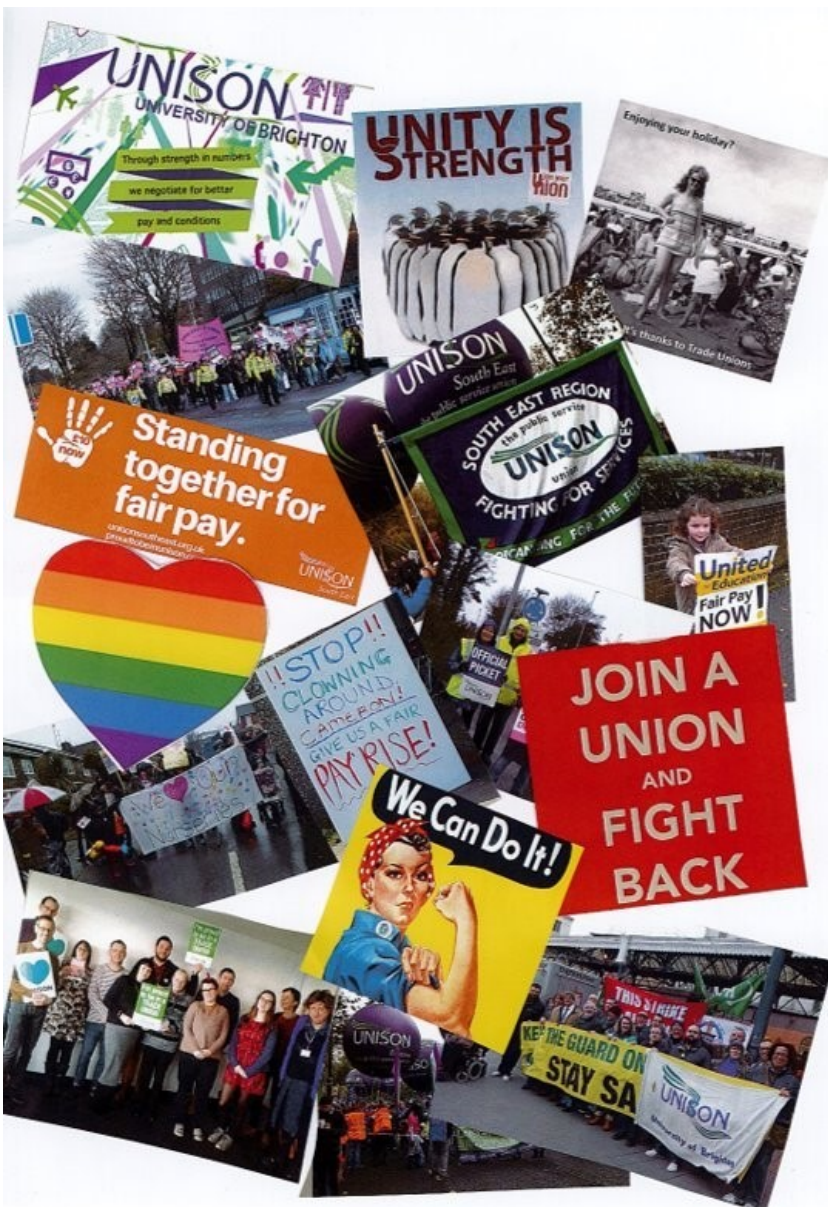
For the 2019-20 pay campaign, the one which UCU are striking over (!), we set out an ambitious plan to make sure that we got the turnout as high as we could, because we knew we needed to get above 50% to make it matter. It took a lot of hard work, and I've written an account of the whole experience for future reference, but we did it. Our 78.1% vote in favour of action on a 51.4% turnout was a significant achievement, even if it was not matched nationally.

We now have the bizarre situation of UCU striking over the same issue which our branch won a ballot over. Our members are hopefully aware of the legal situation, but this does not stop us offering them our total support and I hope our members will give

whatever they can to their hardship fund. The whole point of striking is not to make sacrifices and

martyr yourself, or even to take a principled stand, it's to win the dispute and make a significant difference to the working lives of us all into the future.

Everything we have tried to do has been based on the principle that we're much stronger together than we are as individuals. People join a trade union for all sorts of reasons, but we want to get across to all our members and potential members that trying to fight battles on an individual basis is nowhere near as likely to be successful as fighting them alongside hundreds of other trade-unionists.



Motions to the AGM

Motion 1

Proposed by Jean Bosco Ndayizeye

Can UNISON and the University make mandatory **anti-racism** training to change the soft narrative with goes with the current "unconscious bias" Training.

Racism is on rise, to quote Angela Davis: "In a racist society, it's not enough to be non-racist, we must be ANTI-RACIST".

Motion 2

Proposed by Ivan Bonsell

Support the UCU Four Fights! Decent Pay for all University workers!

This Branch notes:

All five unions involved in the 2019-20 pay round, including UNISON, are still in dispute with the employers' organisation (UCEA) after the University imposed the final offer in September, backdated to 1st August 2019.

This increased pay by 1.8% for most staff members, with slightly higher increases for grades 1 to 3, but in the vast majority of cases, this represents a further real-terms pay cut. This is after over a decade of higher education workers' pay being eroded by below-inflation "settlements".

A series of coordinated pay ballots, involving both UNISON and UCU, took place in September/October 2019, with both union leaderships advocating a vote in favour of strike action.

The University of Brighton UCU branch achieved a 76.3% vote in favour of action with a 59.2% turnout, which gave a clear mandate for legal strike action, since the ballot was conducted on a disaggregate basis.

This UNISON branch achieved a 78.1% vote in favour of action with a 51.4% turnout, but the ballot being organised on an aggregate basis meant that the clear national vote for strike action was legally undermined by the disappointing national turnout, which was well short of 50%.

Both unions worked hard to achieve these results in circumstances which have been deliberately designed to make it difficult. Members were emailed, called and visited to make sure that as many voted as possible. All activists should be proud of these results, which demonstrate the strength of feeling and the strength of union organisation at the University.

This Branch further notes:

UCU members at Brighton took strike action for eight days in late 2019 and are currently in the middle of a further 14 days of action, as well as working to rule.

Talks between UCU and UCEA have taken place, and whilst UCEA have made some concessions on pay equality and workload issues, no further offer on pay has been made.

The majority of UCU members have shown discipline in accepting the democratic ballot result to strike and a determination to deliver sustained and escalating strike action, to win the dispute as soon as possible.

It is the duty of trade unionists to always support others in their struggles. The fact that this is action in pursuit of a pay claim, which, if successful, will benefit members of both unions, makes it more pressing that the UCU strikers receive our branch's support.

This Branch calls on the Branch Committee to:

1. Continue to give the UCU branch and its members our full support in their fight for pay justice.
2. Continue to oppose the feeble attempts at justifications for pay cuts by the University's senior management, putting a case for a properly and appropriately rewarded workforce at all levels.
3. Organise a branch donation of £500 towards UCU's strike hardship fund.
4. Encourage all UNISON members to support the strike by:
 - * Visiting picket lines, bringing encouragement and refreshments,
 - * Not carrying out work which undermines the strike action,
 - * Making donations of whatever they can afford to the UCU hardship fund.

