

This said, we now have a volunteer in the form of Danny Arnott who has taken on the role as scribe, so hopefully 2021 will show a marked improvement in this area.

### **Branch Membership**

Membership at the start of 2020 stood at 476 and at the end of the year was 474.

### **Branch Organisation**

The union has good coverage of representatives in all employers, although Fulcrum continues to be without any representation – volunteers are actively sought as having a local representative means that the union has access to the workplace and can help organise.

### **Concluding Remarks**

I just want to conclude by putting on record my appreciation to all members of the branch for their continued support; and, to all the officers and stewards of the branch for their hard work in 2020. Let's hope that 2021 is a better year for all of us, that we see an end to the pandemic, and a return to normality.

Kevin Wareham – Branch Secretary

# UNISON *Voice*

The newsletter of the Utility Services Branch of UNISON February 2021

## **Notice of Annual General Meeting of the Utility Services Branch**

It is that time of the year again when the branch is required to hold its AGM. Clearly things will be different as at the time of giving notice of the meetings, the lockdown rules apply,

and we are not able to hold meetings at our normal venues. For tis reason we will be conducting the meetings via Microsoft TEAMS.

The Annual General Meeting(s) of the Utility Services Branch of UNISON will take place on **Wednesday 31st March 2021** at 12.30pm and 5.30pm.

We will be contacting you again nearer the time with the access details for the meeting. In the meantime, please put the date in your diary.

### **The agenda for the meeting is as follows:**

Welcome and introductions

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting**
3. **Matters Arising (not otherwise covered on the agenda)**
4. **Election of branch officers 2021**
  - Branch Chairperson
  - Vice Chairperson
  - Branch Secretary
  - Branch Treasurer
  - Health and Safety Officer
  - Welfare Officer
  - Recruitment
  - Membership Services
  - Youth Officer
  - Women's Officer
  - Equalities Officer
  - Affiliated Political Fund
  - Retired Members
  - Long Life Learning
  - Education Officer
  - Communications Officer
  - International Officer

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## 5.. Election/Appointment of Workplace Representatives and Health & Safety Representatives

### **BRANCH DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVES 2021**

Morrison Data Services

National Office Staff  
Doncaster/Scunthorpe/Grimsby  
Mansfield/Nottingham/Lincoln  
East Anglia  
Hull  
Stoke on Trent  
Derby/Leicester  
Sheffield/Rotherham/Barnsley  
Scotland  
Middlesborough  
South East

Fulcrum

East Midlands Airport

Trent/Barton Buses

Stage Coach

### **6.. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES 2021**

Morrison Data Services

Fulcrum

East Midlands Airport

Trent/Barton Buses

StageCoach

### **7. Branch Financial Report and Actions**

Branch Treasurer's report  
to receive and approve the audited accounts for the branch from 1 January to 31 December 2020  
to appoint the auditor for 2021  
to approve the Branch Honoraria for 2021

### **8. Branch Secretary Report**

### **9. Branch Representation**

National Energy Conference (3 delegates, of which 1 should be female and 2 could be male; should include a low paid female and a black member if possible).  
National Delegate Conference (1 delegate, who can be male or female. Or 2 sharers, one of whom must be female).  
Regional Energy Committee (up to 4 delegates; at least one female)  
Regional Council (2 delegates; at least one female)

### **10. Any other business**

### **11. Chairperson's closing remarks**

## **Utility Services Branch** **Secretary's Report to 2021 AGM**

### **Introduction**

The year 2020 and indeed the start of 2021 have proven to be for many of us the most challenging in living memory due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which amongst many other things resulted in the curtailment of two of the three AGMs we had planned last year.

The branch has continued to function throughout 2020 albeit that we have had to become used to new ways of working – the executive has met via Zoom, and the Morrison Data Services stewards group have had regular Teams meetings to ensure that there is regular communication.

### **Pay 2020**

All the employers which the branch has a relationship have encountered problems due to the pandemic and the impact on revenue. Morrison Data Services for example experienced a £1 million loss in each of the months up until September 2020. Fulcrum required staff, in order to avoid redundancy to be either furloughed or to take a temporary reduction in pay as a means of combating the loss of income. All of this has reflected in the absence of pay awards in 2020, with pay freezes in Siemens, Morrison Data Services, Trent Barton Buses and Fulcrum.

In Morrison Data Services a single non-consolidated £100 was secured due to the work of UNISON. While this payment was at one point withdrawn because our sister union the GMB were not prepared to accept it, UNISON was able to persuade the company that it should be paid to avoid staff losing out completely on the payment.

### **Covid-19**

The branch has worked hard in 2020 in response to the pandemic, initially agreeing furlough arrangements in the first lockdown and securing in Morrison Data Services the incorporation of average bonus, which the company had initially refused to include. We have also worked with the company in developing risk assessments for the return to work following the first lockdown; and we have subsequently been active in highlighting to government the contradictions of their guidance in allowing internal meter reading to continue during the more recent lockdown. We have also, through our national officer, ensured that at least one major supplier suspended internal meter reading during this period. At the time of writing, we continue in our efforts to ensure of our members, advising them always to make use of the dynamic risk assessment and to refuse to undertake work which they deem to be unsafe.

<https://eastmidlands.unison.org.uk/news/article/2021/01/unison-urges-government-stop-meter-readings/>

### **Branch Communication**

It is only fair to say that during 2020 the branch has not achieved what it set out to do regarding producing newsletters for members. Notwithstanding the challenges we have faced, this is an area in which members would have benefitted from more regular contact.