



# UNISON VOICE

The newsletter for members of the East Midlands Gas (Southern) Branch

March 2023

## Annual General Meeting

Another Polite Reminder....The AGM(s) are taking place on:

Tuesday 21st March 2023 Leicester Spinneyside Meeting Room 8 Roosecote (and via Microsoft TEAMs) at 12.30pm to 1.30pm and 1.30pm to 2.30pm.

Also another chance to join on Thursday 23rd March 2023 (Microsoft TEAMs Only) 5.30pm to 6.30pm.

To support your operational release for participation in the full duration of your chosen AGM please notify the branch secretary Nevil Fanibanda [nevil.fanibanda@centrica.com](mailto:nevil.fanibanda@centrica.com) of your intention to attend.

If you have not received an invitation electronically and would like us to send onto you the meeting TEAMs links, please email [nevil.fanibanda@centrica.com](mailto:nevil.fanibanda@centrica.com)

Those who don't have site access and who plan to attend the AGM(s) in person please pass your details onto Nevil so that he could alert reception of your attendance via [nevil.fanibanda@centrica.com](mailto:nevil.fanibanda@centrica.com)

The agenda for the meeting will be as follows:

Welcome

Apologies for absence

Minutes of the AGM held on 23rd March 2022

Matters Arising

Branch Secretary Report

Finance Report

- Treasurer's Report

– Honoraria Proposals: Treasurer £1250 Branch Secretary £1562 Auditors £150 RMS  
Administrator £340

Reports from Other Branch Officers

Election of Branch Officers

Nominations so far received are as follows:

Mickey Kauldhar Sham Laher – Job-Share Disabled Members officer

Nevil Fanibanda – Branch Secretary

Adelle Flynn – Branch Chair

John Merrell – Retired Members Officer

Imran Ravat - Communication Officer

Hasmukh Mistry - Health and Safety Officer

Treasurer – Jay Patel

Vacancies ( as things stand)

Black member's Officer

Welfare Officer

Education Officer

Women's Officer

Labour Link Officer (nominee must be a member of the Labour Party)

International Officer

LGBT+ Officer

Membership Officer (WARMS Administrator)

Election of Workplace Representatives/ Health and Safety Representatives Union learning Representatives

Jay Patel

Nevil Fanibanda

Kerry Haldane (inclusive of H&S Rep Role)

Hasmukh Mistry (inclusive of H&S Rep Role)

Kam Sandhu

Devan Anand

Kamisha Francis

Adelle Flynn

10.1 Union learning Representatives

Appointment of Auditors ( Two to be appointed)

Mohamed Rahman

Vacant

Conference Reports

Delegates for Conferences

Motions for Conference

Amendments to Branch Constitution

Any Other Business

Closing Remarks

## **Black Members Conference Report**

Our delegate's report is available via <https://eastmidlands.unison.org.uk/news/article/2023/03/east-midlands-gas-southern-branch-nbmc-report/> . If you would like a hard copy please contact [nevil.fanibanda@centrica.com](mailto:nevil.fanibanda@centrica.com) . We will publish the details of the conference decisions once they are available online.

### **Important Motion for Energy Conference**

UNISON members in the E.ON Branch based in the East Midlands have put forward the following motion which we are sure will strike a chord with many members working in British Gas – we'll discuss it at the AGM with a view to lending our full support.

## **Managing Difficult Customers/Members of the Public.**

This energy conference notes that, In the past year we have experienced a cost-of-living crisis which has placed many energy customers in increasingly difficult circumstances. Fuel poverty is on the rise and many households are having to choose between eating or heating. It is making people more stressed and anxious and at times angry.

Our energy members are working in energy companies in roles that require them to engage on a very regular basis with these customers and to behave professionally at all times. They are taking calls or interacting with customers/members of the public which can lead to shouting down the phone, they can threaten to commit suicide, they can be deeply distressed and also vulnerable to harm.

While some limited training is often provided to UNISON members working with difficult customers it does not often reflect the increasing volume or nature of these challenging engagements nor the complex and distressing circumstances that are present. UNISON members dealing with difficult customers are often in the firing line for matters which they have no control over.

The effect of trying to manage difficult or distressed customers is inevitably having its own negative impact on our members. This is increasing the levels of stress and anxiety faced by members but also increasing the levels of sickness and mental health issues they are vulnerable to. Further our members may well be facing cost of living issues themselves and struggling to pay energy bills.

This motion calls on the Energy Service Group to take the following actions to help support its members facing these difficulties:

1. Create a survey that can be used by energy branches to understand the scale of these problems and use the data to help support wider engagement on these concerns.
2. Engage with key employers to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by members and seek to ensure these concerns are the subject of full discussion and action plans drawn up to mitigate our concerns.
3. Seek to ensure that more specialist training is provided to deal with the complex nature of issues raised by customers especially when harm is threatened to themselves or others.
4. Seek to ensure that staff faced with distressing calls/face to face contact with customers are given adequate support in the workplace or at home.
5. Raise these issues more broadly with energy stakeholder such as Ofgem, the Government and the Labour Party, via the Labour Link, so they are aware of the wider pressures.

*UNISON Power*

And that's about it!



