

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the TSSA**  
**Retired Members' Group on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021**  
**Held on-line via Zoom**

Taking part were 28 Members with apologies from 8

**1. Welcome:**

**John Rees** welcomed new and regular members to the Meeting and, due to the importance of the AGM and the amount of business that needed conducting, he asked that comments be item specific. Also, to prevent unnecessary sounds, he asked that participants muted their screens until invited to speak.

**2. Remembrance of deceased colleagues:**

A short silence was observed to also include members who had fallen during past conflicts.

**3a. Minutes of last meeting:**

These were agreed.

**3b. Matters arising, not covered on agenda:**

None.

**4. Officers and Delegates Reports:**

**(a) Secretary:** **Luke Howard** said that due to time pressures and the fluidity of the current situation, there were still issues to catch up on, which were not helped by the disruptions caused by the updating of the TSSA website, but apart from agreeing the dates for the 2022 meetings, any other issues he had were covered in the agenda.

It was agreed that, subject to review, the **General Meetings** would be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 28<sup>th</sup> April, 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 6<sup>th</sup> October with the AGM on 17<sup>th</sup> November. At present, these were to be via Zoom, although, Covid permitting, the option for hybrid meetings was still open. It was also agreed that, subject to review,

**Committee Meetings** would be held on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 6<sup>th</sup> October and 8<sup>th</sup> December. As had been previously agreed, these would all be via

Zoom. Concerning hybrid meetings, **Joel Kosminsky** said that despite the technicalities involved he preferred hybrid meetings, and asked what the present position was. **Luke Howard** replied that he was waiting for contact details from **Cheryl O'Brien** for the St Michael's Centre at Stoke Gifford (adjacent to Bristol Parkway station) to discuss hybrid set up details, but he thought the earliest date would be either the April or September meeting. **David Chalkley, Gerald Kennedy, David Bolton, Michael Maguire** and **Luke Howard** all agreed that hybrid meetings were safer and more inclusive, although **Luke Howard** cautioned that suitable venues were the key.

(b) **Newsletter Editor: Bob Bayley** mentioned that he had received feedback on the State pension article from **Trevor Watson** who had pointed out that the pension % increase was now 3.1. **Luke Howard** apologised that, due to difficulties in getting postal addresses for non on-line members from Head Office, some Newsletters had been issued later than the e-mailed ones. This was a recurring problem and he would take this up again with Head office.

(c) **Treasurer: David Porter** reported that since his last report, one item of expenditure had been dealt with, that being £27.70 for **Joel Kosminsky's** train fare to Coventry representing the RMG on NPC business. Our balance stood at £1377.86. The holding of meetings via Zoom had so far this year has resulted in a massive reduction in expenditure - only £330.00 - with the costs being the Zoom licences. However, the resumption of face-to-face meetings would increase expenditure. **Luke Howard** mentioned that there may also be additional costs for any IT equipment needed for hybrid meetings either by purchase or leasing but this issue would be looked at by the Committee. **Peter Vincent** thought that a venue with the necessary equipment installed would be a better option. Concerning NPC costs, **Steve Whitehead** mentioned that all our forms for the Biennial Conference had been submitted so an account can be expected, plus any further delegate expenses. In view of previous difficulties experienced by the NPC in securing payment from Head Office, it was agreed that as the RMG represent the TSSA at these NPC functions, we would continue to pay the accounts and reclaim the expenditure from Head Office which met with approval from **David Porter**.

**(d) Pensions matters:** Neil Baker had submitted his monthly pensions update (which was sent out with the agenda). He specifically mentioned the suspension of the triple lock where the Lords had voted the return of the Bill to the Commons, but the Government then defeated their Lordships recommendation that the triple lock be not suspended on party-political lines. He wondered if this suspension would be setting a precedent over future increases if there were similar monetary issues. He mentioned that in September, inflation rates were 3.2% then 3.1% but in October that had risen to 4.2% and will possibly increase further, thereby causing increasing financial problems for pensioners. He suggested that members might like to visit the NPC website where there were some very interesting press briefings.

**Joel Kosminsky** gave an update on the situation concerning TfL pensions:

- TfL Pension Fund review continues. Published shareholder responses to the Call for Evidence are all in favour of the existing structure, arguing that a stable and affordable long-term scheme should not be revised in response to short-term financial pressures, and this scheme is an important factor in allowing TfL to recruit and retain the staff it needs to effectively serve London.
- Existing pensions are secure but any changes to the scheme will affect the benefits paid to current and future contributors.
- Trade Unions are growing cynical about the 'contact group' set up to engage them with the review: one TU has withdrawn from this, others including TSSA may follow.
- Next milestone is the publication of the first stage report, listing the options that will be considered further, in early December. This is also when the current TfL financial settlement expires.
- Three-yearly actuarial assessment of the TfL Fund is under way, looks like an improvement in the funding level on the basis of previous assumptions but this includes assuming the employer covenant remains strong: if this is changed (as a result of the review) the picture may be different.
- Note also that the TfL PF annual increase and some of the investment the Fund holds are linked to RPI so will be affected by Government plans to change the basis of RPI calculation. A judicial review of these proposals is

due to start in 2022 - this may affect other members' pension funds, either because they are also linked to RPI or they hold linked investments.

In thanking **Neil** and **Joel** for their updates, **John Rees** said the RMG valued **Neil's** Railpen briefings and despite him finishing his term of office, he hoped that these would continue. **Luke Howard** mentioned a query that a retired TfL staff member had raised at a Pensioner Forum with the Rail Delivery Group where it was asked if two of the four free pass entitlements could be swapped to permit a companion to travel on the remaining two as this would be at no additional cost to the provider. He thought this was something that the RMG should be looking to request. He would speak with the DWG as well. **Tim Young** mentioned the case of an elderly Manager who had had a request for a companion to have free travel on his pass agreed by RST. **Derrick Codling** wondered if this was not an entitlement that was covered under that person's terms and conditions. **Dave Bolton** thought that it is better to ask for more rather than offer to give up part of a concession.

**(e) Pre-retirement seminars:** **John Rees** said that there was nothing new to add. They were still looking for a recently retired couple to take part in a short video presentation. He assured Phil Allen, who had volunteered to be the singleton, that he had not been forgotten. **Bob Bayley** said he would put an advert for suitable volunteers in the next Newsletter.

**(f) National Pensioners Convention:** **Steve Whitehead** reported that the NPC finances were looking a little healthier. The NPC charity had been approved and a meeting of the trustees was imminent. This development increases fund-raising activity. **Joel Kosminsky** said that in his role as Chair of the NPC Standing Orders Committee he would soon be dealing with BDC motions, many of which, from past experience, were expected to be somewhat lacking in structure and quality. Also, there was still grave concern about the mis-use of e-scooters which had no brakes or audible warnings, and whilst local authorities could set conditions of use, such as speed limits, little or no policing was undertaken. He had also detected a feeling of unease from larger affiliated Unions over the jobs that the TSSA was taking.

**(g) Group outings:** It was still considered premature to make any

arrangements until the Covid situation is more secure. However, any suggestions would always be welcome. **Joel Kosminsky** said that one member of the Association of British Airways Pensioners was a volunteer at the Brooklands Museum - a venue that has previously been suggested - and they were looking at booking a room there. He would keep the Committee advised.

**(h) Conference Report.** **Michael Maguire** spoke to the report he had previously submitted and that had been published in the Newsletter. His main concern was procedural, with what he saw as confusion over the President's interpretation of raised hands which whilst indicating a desire to speak might have been taken as an indication of support for a motion despite there being an assistant monitoring screens. **Luke Howard** pointed out that with the IBB discussion taking up two days of Conference time, the rest of Conference business had to be condensed with much formal proposing and seconding of business. However, contentious issues were dealt with electronically to ensure that only delegates' votes were counted. **Peter Vincent** reminded the Meeting that on Zoom, there was a yes/no button for voting. For future hybrid meetings, **Michael Maguire** suggested that a special card or paddle could be raised for voting with a raised hand only indicating a desire to speak. **Stephen Halliwell** thought that whilst hybrid meetings were ok, those on Zoom could not see what was happening in the Conference Hall. **Luke Howard** added that perhaps that part of the hybrid structure could be a camera focussing on the Hall to allow Zoom participants to see proceedings. **Gerry Kennedy** agreed that one downside of hybrid meetings was that Zoom participants did not get the atmosphere of the Hall. He thought that on balance, Conference had been reasonably successful and it had been a learning curve. He also confirmed that the upcoming SDC would either be hybrid or totally on line.

## **5. RMG Matters:**

**(a) Proposed changes to RMG constitution** - none had been proposed.

**(b) RMG Committee Elections** - **Luke Howard** had offered to stand again as Secretary and as there were no other nominations, he was re-elected. Unfortunately, there had been no volunteers for the two up-coming

Committee vacancies, but **Tim Young** said he was prepared to swap his IT liaison duties for that of Minute Secretary and this offer was gratefully accepted. There would be a further advert in the next Newsletter for two new Committee members who would be 'without portfolio' although it was hoped one would take over the role of web liaison.

**(c) Election of Auditors - Tim Bartlett** had indicated that was prepared to stand again and, as there had been no other volunteers, he was re-elected. **Bert Slater** said that his wife, **Cathryn**, was not enjoying the best of health and that she had reluctantly decided she would not be seeking re-election. **Neil Baker** said he would take on the role of auditor and his offer was also gratefully accepted. The Meeting expressed thanks to **Cathryn** and hoped she had a speedy return to good health.

## REFRESHMENT BREAK

6. **Luke Chester, TSSA Organiser:** Although **Luke Howard** had sent e-mail invitations, no response had been received and he did not attend.

7. **TSSA Annual Conference, Sheffield, 7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> May:**

**(a) Update** In response to an earlier point from **Malcolm Wallace**, **Luke Howard** said we would be taking up Steve Coe's offer of a stall and he would raise the question of paying costs for volunteers manning the stall. He also thought that **Malcolm's** suggestion of a briefing leaflet about the activities of the RMG was a good idea and that perhaps **Malcolm** would like to take this on. **Joel Kosminsky** enquired about the staffing - full time or just at times displayed. **David Porter** said he was willing to help man the stall and that it should be full time. He thought a roster could be drawn up from willing visitors. **Bob Bayley** suggested that we have some freebies to hand out such as pens, badges, note-pads etc. and copies of the then current Newsletter. **Luke Howard** said he would check with Steve Coe over times and what TSSA 125 might be giving out. **Gerry Kennedy** mentioned the possibility of fund-raising merchandise and concerning this, **Malcolm Wallace** raised the question of security. It was agreed that the Committee would look at this.

**(b) Conference Motions** **Luke Howard** had proposed two motions and, as no further motions had been submitted, it was agreed they be adopted.

### **Motion 1. Transport Policy reserve motion:**

"That this Conference recalls that, until recently, the EC proposed a portmanteau reserve motion on Transport Policy each year at Conference **with a typical deadline for amendments less than a month before Conference**. This allowed Conference to determine the union's policy in this vital area in a timely and effective way. Conference therefore calls on the EC to resume this practice."

Joel Kosminsky proposed that the wording indicated in red was superfluous to the motion and should be deleted. This amendment was agreed.

### **Motion 2. Welfare State**

"That this Conference notes the continuing attacks on the Welfare State with:

- the ongoing underfunding of Universal Credit and other benefits, and an abhorrent administrative regime designed to find fault and penalise claimants rather than address human needs;
- among the lowest state pensions in the developed economies;
- Continued starvation of resources from local authorities, and disregard of the vital role these have to play in social care and other vital public services.

Conference calls on the Labour party to give priority to the restoration of cuts in benefit levels and local authority funding, and to put forward an alternative benefit regime to the inhuman procedures brought in by the Tory Governments since 2010"

### **(c) Nominations - the following were nominated:**

- **TUC 2022** (up to 3 nominees)  
Sarah Jane McDonough (Euston), Fliss Premu (London), Al Stoten (SE Metro)
- **Labour Party Conference 2022** (up to 3 nominees)  
Jill Murdoch (NE General), Josie Weller (SE Metro), Bob Bayley (RMG)
- **Labour Party Women's Conference 2022** (up to 2 nominees)  
Jill Murdoch (NE General), Cath Murphy (Crewe and Cheshire General)

- **TUC Black Workers' Conference 2022** (3 additional nominees)  
(London, 6 - 8 May so clashes with TSSA Conference: Anand Pillai and Irene Wright already elected)
- **TUC Women's Conference 2023** (5 women)  
Hillary Hosking (Anglia #3), Sarah Jane McDonough (Euston), Josie Weller (SE Metro)

**(d) Election of Delegate Luke Howard** was proposed by **Gerry Kennedy** and seconded by **Steve Lawrence** as delegate to both the SDC and Annual Conference. There were no other nominations and Luke, who accepted the nominations, was duly elected.

In response to a question from **Joel Kosminsky**, **Gerry Kennedy** said he would push Head Office EC on having visitors to the SDC.

#### **8. Proposed Merger with IBB:**

In opening this debate, **Luke Howard** referred participants to the additional information that was included with the Agenda and advised the meeting that a structured list of questions had been submitted to Head Office. **Joel Kosminsky** said that at his latest Branch Meeting Marios Alexandrou, LT DC EC Member, had reported that the General Secretary only had further merger discussions with the original four Unions and was 'given the brush off'. There had been no contacts made with other Unions. He also reiterated the fact that ALL TSSA assets would transfer to the IBB with only any derived income kept by the TSSA. Our Rules and affiliations would remain the same and the IBB cannot do anything about that. As much of the IBB income is used to pay high salaries to senior staff, he wondered where the money for running costs came from.

### **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR**

#### **Malcolm Wallace:**

- If we have to use their Bank, will we be bound by US law.
- Prospect could be an alternative partner but they have not been approached.
- Are the answers received so far from HO what IBB would say.



- On 9<sup>th</sup> November, the TSSA held a Zoom Meeting on the Future of Rail, at which Neil Robertson, CEO of the National Skills Academy for Rail said that the industry would expand by 15,000 until 2026 after which it would decline to approximately the staff level of today.

**Luke Howard** said that we have asked about banks - whichever bank we have we would be bound by US Law as part of the IBB.

**Gerry Kennedy** said he was confused by the whole process. Other Unions want to absorb us and take over our assets. I do not trust the IBB but cannot see another way out.

**Steve Whitehead:**

- The IBB Constitution is quite clear on anything concerning retired members. That is a fundamental issue for us.
- On banking and finance, US policy on extra territorial governance says what can and cannot be done over jurisdiction.
- Most US States have their own banking laws, so we will be bound by those rules.
- We have nothing concrete laid down over what we can and cannot do.
- We have not had proper accounts and that which has been provided are incomplete, so how can we progress the issue without this full information.

**David Chalkley** said the next IBB Conference is not till 2026 so who will make decisions over the proposed merger and how will any IBB Constitution changes be made.

**Stephen Halliwell:**

- Will we be allowed to have Retired Members' Branches.
- Where will Retired Members go.
- Why are they so against Retired members holding any form of Office.

**Peter Vincent** said he was concerned over the decision to retain the TSSA as an independent organisation as the most important issue was to retain jobs. He was also very concerned that the only person putting things forward was the

General Secretary. There had been no open comment from the President, the EC or our Solicitors and he found this surprising.

**David Porter** wanted to know what was in it for the IBB. There had been no satisfactory answer to that question. Could it be their bank, their railway past or enhancing their sphere of influence, and why would they want to take on a loss-making organisation in a country 3,000 miles away. We want satisfactory explanation.

**Richard Sharp** was of the opinion that their sole intent was to secure an attractive London office along with other valuable assets. Surely the better approach would be to let them lease all or part of Walkden House and thereby provide TSSA with survival income whilst TSSA retained ownership of our most valuable asset.

**Luke Howard** thought what does the IBB gain to be a good question to ask. He also added that the IBB Constitution is specific and supreme and supercedes all others. Our responses from Head Office are totally at odds with this fact. He also added that at his latest TfL Central Branch meeting, the view of members was that TSSA was valued as an entity, and being aware of the weaknesses of other Unions involved with TfL, the thinking was that the IBB were the only option to keep the TSSA identity.

**Derrick Codling** asked why are they happy to embrace us. We will only run on income as we will have ceded our assets.

**Bob Bayley:** said that IBB is a workers Union whereas TSSA embraces all grades so what will be the disadvantage to Managerial and Technical grades. He suspected that there would be losses of members over and above those forecast by the General Secretary.

**Malcolm Wallace:**

- Our assets would go to any other Union we were to merge with.
- The EC were not diverging from the General Secretary's decisions.
- During his talk, the General Secretary said that the IBB may wish to set up a bank in the UK. **Malcolm** said he had discussed this later with

the General Secretary and suggested that this was their objective in taking us over.

**Stephen Lawrence** said that we needed to make hard decisions. Staff cuts happen everywhere and we should use Walkden House as an income asset.

**Phil Allen** thought that the General Secretary had not explored all options.

**Bert Slater** said it looks too good to be true that there is a benevolent institution in the US that wants to give us some money. The TSSA will have access to cost effective support staff in Kansas so this merger actually means there will inevitably be TSSA staff losses and he could not understand the rush and the short notice of intent at Conference.

**Luke Howard** added that the EC were already a month late on delivering the motion they accepted over the publication of Accounts.

**Simon Pearson** as a CLP member asked if we would still be able to affiliate to the Labour Party.

**Joel Kosminsky** said that the IBB Constitution was in conflict with British Sovereign Law. How in view of this, he asked, would the transfer of our assets be shown in in IBB documents.

**Michael Maguire** asked why do the IBB want us to merge with them and why would we want to be a junior partner. In his opinion this merger will be the death of the TSSA.

**Bob Bayley** said we needed confirmation from the IBB that they agree with all the answers we get from Head Office to our questions.

**Peter Vincent** thought we needed legal opinion on the whole issue, and asked if we should hold a special meeting to mandate our delegate.

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In winding up the debate, **Luke Howard** said:

- IBB Constitution seems to discriminate against Management staff.

- The EC and staff are keen to avoid the pain of further job cuts.
- We still do not know the full financial position and he would reiterate this and the fact that we have not yet had full answers to our questions.
- He would pull together the points raised, reiterate the need for total transparency and the timely issue of paperwork. (The RMG's further questions would be pasted on the RMG area of the website.
- A special meeting to discuss our response would be arranged for the first half of January - specific date to be advised.

**Derrick Codling** asked if the voting decision would be a simple or 2/3rds Majority.

**Gerry Kennedy** said the EC were meeting on December 8<sup>th</sup> and the SDC motion would be circulated as soon as possible thereafter. The decision would be based on a simple majority in any members' ballot.

#### **9. Motions from members/Any other business**

**Joel Kosminsky** said he had been advised that TfL had just announced cuts to bus and rail services, but had not yet been told details.

**The next Committee Meeting (via Zoom) would be 9<sup>th</sup> December.**

There being no further business, **John Rees** again thanked all those who had participated in the most important AGM, repeated his thanks to the retiring Committee Members and closed the Meeting at 14.50 hrs.

### **POST MEETING NOTE**

**Like Howard sent the supplementary questions to Head Office on 19<sup>th</sup> November. This letter will be posted with these minutes onto the website.**

## APPENDIX

### PARTICIPANTS

#### COMMITTEE

John Rees (Chair) Luke Howard (Secretary) David Porter (Treasurer)  
Neil Baker (Pensions items) Bob Bayley (Newsletter Editor) Richard Sharp  
(Minutes) Tim Young (Web liaison)

#### MEMBERS

Phil Allen	Dave Bolton	Marjit Singh Buttar
David Chalkley	Derrick Codling	John Edwards
Steve Floyd	Stephen Halliwell	Gerry Kennedy
Joel Kosminsky	Stephen Lawrence	Michael Maguire
Seamus O'Connell	Rod Payne	Simon Pearson
Malcolm Scane	Bert Slater	Cathryn Slater
Peter Vincent	Malcolm Wallace	Steve Whitehead

#### APOLOGIES

John Corkill	Roger Luffman	Brian Mayhew
Cheryl O'Brien	Mike Parker	Donald Purdy
Sandra Vaughan	Phillip Worsfield	

Simon Pearson had also apologised, but was able to join during the Meeting