

Notes of the General Meeting of the TSSA Retired Members' Group on 4th February 2021 by Zoom

Taking part were 30 members plus Nadine Rae from Head Office. Apologies were received from 10 members.

1. Welcome and Chair's Opening Remarks. In welcoming those taking part, either with video or voice only, **John Rees** said that whilst many may be new to Zoom, you will soon get used to it. He asked those wishing to contribute via video to raise a hand and those on voice only to key in.

2. Remembrance of deceased Colleagues.

A one-minute silence was observed, with special mention of Claude James, David Godfrey and Fred Rhodes

3. Officers' and Delegates' Reports.

(a) Secretary: Luke Howard said that concerning the 2021 TSSA Diary, he would elaborate further under AOB. He had received positive feedback from Branches over the holding of Zoom meetings. Several contributions from the floor confirmed this and how they were arranging future meetings, although **John Cukill** raised the question of on-line accessibility and **Peter Vincent** remarked that his Branch had held Zoom meetings, but with less participants than a physical one. **Malcolm Wallace** mentioned the requirement for all members to be advised of meetings in compliance with the EC instructions regarding branch Standing orders. His Branch sent out an annual calendar of meetings with the option of members contacting the Branch. **Steve Whitehead** said that London and Southern Retired sent out postal and email invitations and **Bert Slater** remarked that postal invitations from Midlands Retired had no response. He also reported that when the Derby Office was open, postal facilities were available, but Head Office had declined this from TSSA Dispatch as it was a Branch responsibility. Concerning contacting members, **Joel Kosminsky** said that the real world dictates it is impossible to always ask every member to a Branch meeting and **Richard Sharp** thought that given the

cost of postage, an annual invitation along the lines that Malcolm Wallace had outlined would fulfil the obligation laid down by the EC. In view of those comments, **Luke Howard** said he would write to the EC for clarification of the instruction about all members being invited to attend meetings.

He also mentioned the Closure of Bridge House, the Railway Convalescence House at Dawlish. It was suggested from the floor that the Trades Union Movement purchase the building and **Luke Howard** was asked to write to Head Office suggesting this. **Joel Kosminsky** said that the Transport Benevolent Fund had used Bridge House for rest, recuperation and respite relief stays but many TBF members now found the premises old, hard to reach and preferred to use the funding of a stay there for more suitable locations. He said as it was an old building, modernising it would be a massive undertaking.

(b) **Newsletter Editor:** **Bob Bayley** said he was pleased with progress. He had had no complaints so far. The Comments Section had started and was attracting interest. He was also looking forward to receiving articles for publication from the readership. In answer to a query, **Luke Howard** said we used links in the Newsletter rather than attachments as the latter have generated bounce-backs.

(c) **Treasurer:** **David Porter** said he had taken over the role from 1st January 2021 and thanked his predecessor **Colin Cowey** for doing the quarterly return and the 2020 balance sheet. He had completed all the necessary bank changeover details advised the Meeting that we had cash in hand of £166. Concerning 2021 expenditure, he compared the 2020 meeting costs of £950 with the 2015 costs of £2200 suggested the Committee might discuss any needs. **Colin Cowey** said he had asked for £1000 in his final return and, at present, the only expenditure he could foresee would be affiliation fees. **Joel Kosminsky** said that on the grounds of prudence, the £1000 request was good as we may need a booking fee deposit if we are able to hold hybrid meetings. **Steve Whitehead** agreed, saying that it took Head Office three months to pay what was owed to his branch. **Malcolm Wallace** advised the Meeting that any fiscal delays may well be down to maternity leave

within the Finance Section. Luke Howard said that our Zoom licences would be due for renewal in August, but he would pay and then submit a claim.

(d) Pensions Matters: Neil Baker reported that:

(1) Pensions Scheme Bill The initial consultation Document issued by the Pensions Regulator on a revised Defined Benefit scheme funding code of practice, issued soon after the publication of the Pension Schemes Bill 2020, caused some consternation in parts of the pensions industry. This was looking to introduce virtually a one size fits all approach to the investment strategies of pension schemes, following a very cautious strategy with only limited scope for variations in risk.

Railpen, on behalf of the RPS, together with several other large pension schemes that are still open to new members, lobbied MPs and members of the House of Lords quite firmly against these proposals. This was on the grounds that open schemes should be permitted to adopt a higher degree of risk when investing in long-term growth assets in the expectation of securing a better return. The very nature of pensions means that they are suited to long-term investments. As a rough guide, only about one quarter of pensions are paid for by contributions and the other three quarters are funded by investment returns.

The final stage in the passage of the Pension Schemes Bill through Parliament took place late in January 2021. The good news is that the Government Minister affirmed that open schemes do not need to invest in the same way as closed schemes and that future regulations will acknowledge this position. Railpen were very pleased at the number of speeches made by members of all the main political parties in support of this affirmation in the House of Lords.

The next stage in this process will be detailed review of the regulations and the next consultations with the Pensions Regulator. It is hoped that this early success can be consolidated and built upon to help achieve the best possible future prospects for the RPS.

(2) Working from Home On or shortly after 23/03/2020, most of the RPMI staff began working from home instead of in Stooperdale

Offices. Only a very small number still work in the office to carry out essential tasks that cannot be performed at home. This unavoidable exodus made necessary by the Covid-19 epidemic has now lasted 46 weeks and looks like it has a while to run yet. On a personal note, it has been a very strange experience. There are upsides to working at home, but there are downsides as well. My own opinion is that working in an office, with ready access to colleagues with expert knowledge in many different areas, either in the same room or down the corridor makes for a far more effective and efficient team working in meeting the company's objectives and the needs of our pension scheme members. We do our best, but the level of service we are able to provide has probably suffered to some degree. The sooner we can get back to normal, the better it will be for all of us. **Joel Kosminsky** agreed with the comments about working from home and he mentioned his concerns that TfL Pensioners would be adversely affected by the enforced change from the RPI index to CPI(H)

(e) National Pensioners' Convention.

Steve Whitehead reported that he had participated in the latest EC Meeting which, although well patronised, was not very productive. He gave outline details of the NPC finances which were not healthy but specific details were confidential. The Financial Working Party would be making a presentation on this issue. The Campaign Officer reported on All Webinar preparations, the campaign for the Older Peoples Commissioner for England, the next steps in the National Care Service Campaign and safeguarding the triple lock. The 2021 BDC had been cancelled but one was proposed for March 2022. He also mentioned the need to ensure our BDC delegates' fees were paid. **Colin Cowey** pointed out that the RMG paid these, as we needed to be in control as it was not thought safe to leave these payments to Head Office. **Joel Kosminsky** said the Trades Union Working Party had not met for a considerable time and he was unable to get any updates on this from the NPC. The Transport Working Group was still active and holding meetings and they had made a submission on Rural Transport. The National Council met via Zoom in November 2020 and it was quite age inclusive. The next meeting is planned for April 2021, probably again via Zoom. He also reported that the TV licence issue is not a dead duck and the NPC had a direct channel to the BBC.

(f) **Retirement Seminars:** This issue was covered within the contribution from Nadine Rae.

(g) **Group Outings:** No further action due to pandemic restrictions

The Meeting recorded thanks to the Officers and Delegates for their reports in the usual manner.

4 Presentation by Nadine Rae TSSA Equality Officer:

After being welcomed to the meeting, Nadine Rae gave a brief update on holding virtual meetings during lockdown. She hoped hybrid meetings would be possible as there could be possible problems with employers allowing staff to go to locations over which they had no control. Other initiatives were a BAME Conference arranged for 16th March 2021; it was the 10th anniversary of the Neurodiversity Campaign which included themed activities; a workplace-based Equality Survey had been launched and she thought a similar study for retired people was a good idea; the Inclusivity Campaign was continuing and she was seeking to get employers to re-commit Equality Bargaining Standards and mental wellbeing. She also wondered if the RMG might assist in digital organising. Retirement Courses are a flagship issue and she was looking forward to working with the RMG. She then invited questions:

Simon Pearson Could you provide links on these topics that could be put in our Newsletter

NR I will send details to **Luke Howard**

Neil Baker I passed the Equality Survey to RPI Human Resources

NR I have contacted 16 or 17 major employers over these surveys and am hoping for continuing support from Network Rail

Derrick Codling It appears that we are not getting members to remain in TSSA upon retirement. Could not a mention of this be made in seminars.

NR Happy to see this included and open to agenda suggestions.

Simon Pearson I am concerned that people retiring are not staying in membership.

NR Important that Membership make it known that staying in membership is an option

Joel Kosminsky said that if retiring members opted to stay in membership, there was an automatic transfer into the RMG. Membership Section need to keep this option up front.

NR They usually know if retirement is the reason for leaving TSSA. You need to raise this with **Frank Ward** and **John Smith** at Head Office.

Peter Vincent remarked that Midlands Retired are not getting members transferring in.

NR I would say the same action again.

Bob Bayley Suggested that the RMG Newsletter could be sent to all members over age 55. This might well give a boost to staying in membership upon retirement.

NR I will gladly help in any engagement over this. There is value in everyone knowing what the RMG are doing. Perhaps an annual email to all members as well.

Luke Howard said we had presented our revised Retirement form to Head Office for it to be sent to all Div Councils and Branches and for Branches to issue to Local Reps. Will re-issue requests for Membership to promote this form.

Malcolm Wallace said he was not convinced that our revised Retirement Form was being properly distributed.

NR We need to promote staying in membership to younger members by demonstrating the relevance of the RMG.

Bert Slater said that shortly after the RMG was set up, automatic membership of the RMG for retired members was confirmed. The EC agreed the issue of an annual Newsletter to anyone over the age of 50 although Frank Ward insisted that this be age 55. It was also thought that the GenSec's OnThe Go briefing needed a regular piece on this as well

NR Intergenerational co-operation in society, as a whole, needs to spread into the Union. Membership needs to keep RMG/staying in membership to the fore.

John Rees asked if we can arrange a Zoom meeting to discuss Seminar progress.

NR Happy to do so.

Nadine was thanked for taking part in the meeting in the usual manner.

5 TSSA Annual Conference:

(a) Update **Luke Howard** said the Conference Working Party continues to make progress on arrangements. Frequent breaks were being planned, as

there could well be occasions when delegates are called away from their screens such as for doorbells, phone calls or other domestic issues. These need to be taken into account. The EC was also offering support for on line delegates. **Gerry Kennedy** mentioned problems could occur over logging on and the need to know how Conference will be organised and that the Working Party would be paying considerable attention to such problems. **Luke Howard** said they would try to keep within the bounds of existing procedures, but allowances will be made to ensure Conference operates. **Joel Kosminsky** wondered if the Working Party could hold a mock Conference to iron out any problems. **Gerry Kennedy** said this was already being looked at.

(b) Motions, (including proposed Rule Alterations) Prior to discussing this item, it was proposed that, in view of the Conference deadlines and the date of our next General Meeting, the Committee be authorised to determine any amendments to the Preliminary Agenda. There were no objections raised and this authority was agreed.

Luke Howard tabled a motion on **TSSA best Practice after Covid 19** but after a short discussion, the Meeting declined to accept this so he withdrew it

MINUTE NOTES: I HAVE NOT REPRINTED ALL THE MOTIONS AND RULE ALTERATIONS THAT WERE AGREED AT THE AGM AND MINUTED. I HAVE ONLY PRINTED THOSE WHICH WERE AGREED AT THIS MEETING FOR SUBMISSION

(i). National Care Service

" That this Conference notes that Sir Kier Starmer, Leader of the Labour Party, has repeatedly said he wants to see working people have a greater share of wealth and power. The labour Party set out the means of doing this in its 2019 Election Manifesto and Conference urges the Party to fulfil these objectives, particularly for retired people.

Conference notes that this Manifesto included a commitment to a National Care Service. Conference believes that such a service, working in partnership with the NHS, will ensure that care is for people, not profit. This service should be funded like the NHS through general taxation, free at the point and

without means testing.

Conference instructs the EC to campaign in support of this policy."

This Motion received 15 votes and was selected

(ii). TSSA Honorary Life Members

"That this Conference recognises the extensive work and commitment of many Association members who have been rewarded for those achievements with Honorary Life membership (HLM). This illustrious list includes past Presidents and other senior lay officers.

Conference is deeply concerned that these HLMs are being neglected by the Association

Conference instructs the EC to maintain the details of HLMs to the same standard as all other members. Conference asks the EC to send each HLM an individual letter each year, and to copy these letters to the Retired Members' Group and the appropriate branch (either the relevant Retired branch or the branch covering the member's former workplace) to help branches and the RMG to maintain contact with these members."

This Motion received 13 votes and was selected

(iii). Cash Payments This Motion received 11 votes and was rejected

(iv). TSSA Best Practice This motion had been withdrawn.

Michael Maguire proposed the following Rule Alteration TSSA providing Financial Assistance for members attending tribunals, which was accepted on a vote of 15 for and 6 against.

(v). Rule Alteration - TSSA Assistance With Employment Tribunals

Preface: To oblige the EC to provide members with representation and/or legal assistance for any valid claim that the member lodges to an Employment Tribunal within the relevant deadline, if the member requests such assistance.

Rule 4 MEMBERS

4.4 Members' Entitlements

4.4.1 Legal Proceedings and Legal Assistance to Members

Sub clause (c) To add at end: *"The EC shall provide any member with representation and/or legal assistance for any valid claim that the member lodges to an Employment Tribunal within the relevant deadline, if the member requests such assistance"*

The amended clause would read: The EC may at its absolute discretion provide legal assistance in matters relating to their employment. The EC shall provide any member with representation and/or legal assistance for any valid claim that the member lodges to an Employment Tribunal within the relevant deadline, if the member requests such assistance.

This Rule Alteration received 16 votes and selected.

(vi). Rule Alteration - EC Report and Accounts

Preface: To allow more time for Branches and SOGs to consider the EC Report and Accounts, whilst ensuring that the EC have adequate time to prepare the Report.

Rule 10 ANNUAL AND SPECIAL DELEGATE CONFERENCES

10.1 Annual Delegate Conference

Clause (n) EC Report and Accounts

To delete '4' in line 1 and substitute '16 April or 6'

To insert after 'Conference' in line 2 'whichever is the later'

The amended paragraph would read: The EC Report and Accounts shall be sent to Branches and SOGs no later than the 16th April or 6 weeks before the date of commencement of Conference, whichever is the later.

This Rule Amendment received 15 votes and was selected

(vii). Rule alteration - Life membership

This Rule Amendment received 12 votes and was rejected

(c) Nominations

The nominations as agreed at the AGM were confirmed with the following amendments.

(i) TUC Delegation 2021 (3 places)

Al Stoten was added to the list (Sarah-Jane McDonough and Cath Murphy already nominated).

(ii) Labour Party Delegation 2021 (3 places)

Four candidates had been nominated, and after a vote the following three were confirmed: Bob Bayley (18 votes) Jill Murdoch (18 votes) Paul Beadle (14 votes). Felicity Premru (7 votes) was rejected

(iii) TUC Black Workers' Conference Delegation 2022

Mary Sithole was added

(iv) Labour Party Women's Conference Delegation 2021

Cath Murphy Josie Weller

(v) TUC Women's Conference Delegation 2022

Sarah-Jane McDonough Felicity Premu Maryese Thiaw-Chu
Susan Patwell Josie Weller

(vi) TUC LGBT Conference Delegation 2022

David Dewry Aneurin Redman-White

(vii) TUC Disabled Workers' Conference Delegation 2022

Mick Carney Susan Patwell Cath Murphy Ray Spiteri
Bob Bayley

(viii) TUC Young Workers Conference Delegation 2022

Harry Gibb Josie Weller Aneurin Redman-White

(d) Election of Delegate

Michael Maguire volunteered to be RMG Conference delegate, and in the absence of any other nominations, he was elected.

6 Any Other Business:

(a) Steve Whitehead advised the Meeting that the Circular and Accounts for 2019 had just been issued, albeit only a few weeks prior to the date of

issue of the 2020 details. **Luke Howard** reminded the Meeting that there was a deadline of 26th March for the receipt of questions by Head Office and asked that any be sent to him for submission.

(b) Concerning the Diary, **Peter Vincent** said his Branch had submitted the following motion to Conference: *"Conference notes with regret that that the diaries were sent out so late that members did not receive them until after the start of the year. Conference instructs the EC to ensure that future diaries are of not less quality than the 2019 diary with stiff board covers in a business-friendly colour or colours and with a binding that allows the diary to open flat."*

One suggestion was that the diary be in a filofax format so that only the calendar portion was re-issued which could give a long-term cost reduction. **Luke Howard** said that the EC was aware things did not go too well due to circumstances beyond their control. He would forward the points raised and thought a review of the diary may well be needed. **Malcolm Wallace** said that the diary was always referred to as a great recruiting tool and Annual Conference had decreed that it should be sent out by 1st November each year. He was also critical of the current font size, the small size of the maps and there were also proof-reading problems. **Bob Bayley** was of the opinion that the maps and other features were of a standard size.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS 2021

RMG: 20th May; 23rd September; 18th November (AGM). The May meeting will be by Zoom: at that meeting we will consider whether physical meetings can take place later in the year.

COMMITTEE: 1st April; 12th August; 7th October; 9th December

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE CHAIR THANKED ALL PARTICIPANTS FOR ATTENDING AND CLOSED THE MEETING AT 14.10

APPENDIX

MEMBERS TAKING PART

Committee

John Rees (Chair) Cheryl O'Brien (Vice Chair) Luke Howard (Secretary)
David Porter (Treasurer) Richard Sharp (Minutes)
Bob Bayley (Newsletter Editor) Tim Young (Web Liaison) Neil Baker (Pensions)

Head Office

Nadine Rae

Other Members

Graham Abercromby	Manjit Singh Buttar	Dave Chalkley
Virender Chaudry	John Caukill	Peter Church
Derrick Codling	Colin Cowey	Mike Downing
Stephen Floyd	Stephen Halliwell	Bob Howes
Gerry Kennedy	Joel Kosminsky	Stephen Lawrence
Roger Luffman	Michael Maguire	Cathryn Slater
Bert Slater	Peter Vincent	Malcolm Wallace
Steve Whitehead		

Apologies if your name has not been listed (due to the lack of a signing in sheet at on line meetings) Please advise Luke and your participation will be recorded.

APOLOGIES

Phil Allen	Preston Brooker	Simon Chapman	Andrew Hart
Gerry Higgins	Bill Langsford	Mike Palmer	Les Simpson
Derek Strain	Mike Wood		