

UNITE RETIRED MEMBERS BRANCH GLASGOW

STANDING ORDERS

To be read in conjunction with Rule 17 and the EC's Branch Standards document

1 Notice of Meeting and Quorum

- 1.1 The branch shall normally meet monthly, July and December excepted, on the first Thursday of each month (January second Thursday). Meetings will normally be held in the Unite Glasgow Office and commence at 12.30pm and finish at 2.30pm and notifications shall be posted on the Unite website and otherwise communicated to branch members.
- 1.2 Five branch members present shall form a quorum. If within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting to commence, a quorum is not present, the meeting shall be dissolved.

2 Officers of the Branch

- 2.1 Officers of the branch which shall include Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Communications and IT Officer, Education Officer and Equalities Officer. The Branch Officers plus two other branch members shall form a branch committee who shall be elected at every third AGM of the branch.

The committee shall meet as required and four members shall constitute a quorum.
- 2.2 In the absence of the elected Chair, the Secretary should not chair the meeting. A branch member should be elected as *ad hoc* Chair for the duration of the meeting and should sign any paperwork (eg nomination forms) as such.
- 2.3 Delegates to represent the branch at local Trade Union Councils and Constituency Labour Parties should be elected annually in the Autumn to take office in the following January.
- 2.4 Two auditors shall be elected at the same time as the branch officers.

3 Agenda and Order of Business

- 3.1 The Branch Secretary shall be responsible for receiving all papers and drafting the Agenda.
- 3.2 The Agenda for a branch meeting would usually include the following items:

- a) Apologies for absence
- b) Minutes of the previous branch meeting and matters arising
- c) Secretary's report
- d) Treasurer's financial report
- e) Report from equalities officer
- f) Other reports, eg, Trades Union Council or Constituency Labour Party
- g) Correspondence
- h) Date of next meeting

3.3 Any member may introduce other business for the consideration of the meeting but must notify the secretary in advance.

3.4 The branch secretary shall be responsible for ensuring the taking of Minutes of the branch meeting.

4 Conduct of Business

4.1 The Chair shall be responsible for the conduct of the meeting. Members may only speak when called by the Chair. The Chair shall have discretion on whether to allow a member to speak more than once on a subject.

4.2 The Chair shall have the same speaking rights as any other member. In addition, the Chair may intervene during or at the conclusion of any discussion, to clarify the issues decided and/or to sum up the discussion.

4.3 A member who wishes to raise a point of order (which must be confined to the manner in which the meeting is being conducted) should say "*point of order*" and hold his/her hand aloft until called by the Chair. Subject to that exception, members should not interrupt another speaker.

4.4 The ruling of the Chair on any question relating to the conduct of the meeting shall be final unless a challenge to the Chair is supported by at least two thirds of the members present.

4.5 Save as provided herein, the business of the Branch shall be conducted in accordance with the normal rules of debate as laid down by Walter Citrine in the *ABC of Chairmanship*.

4.6 In the event of an equality of votes, the proposition before the Branch shall not be carried.

5 Smoking/Alcohol

5.1 There shall be no smoking or consumption of alcohol allowed at the Branch meeting.

BRANCH STANDARDS

Branch organisation and branch life are essential to allow for membership participation, democracy and a sense of ownership of the union and for growing Unite.

A vibrant branch life in the union will increase participation with members having a direct influence over decision making thereby making the branch, and through the branch the wider union, directly relevant to them.

Strong membership participation in branches that are organising branches, with a focus on equalities, will ensure that members are active in the community beyond the workplace, particularly in the political life of the community, assisting in building Unite across Britain and Ireland.

Branches that are democratic hubs and are well administered will qualify for branch administration funds to be remitted from the union (10 per cent of membership income less deductions for the central strike fund and to cover for employer check-off charges where applied). Branch administration will be remitted if Unite branches satisfy the following criteria:

1. The branch must meet all rulebook requirements regarding regularity of meetings (which should be properly notified to all members) which must include at least an AGM and the election of branch officers, which under Rule include:
 - chair
 - secretary
 - treasurer
 - equalities officer
2. Other than where the Rule Book allows for a branch secretary to also hold the office of treasurer, members should not usually hold more than one branch officer position.
3. The branch must ensure that elections for the above positions are carried out fairly and democratically. The branch must comply with instructions from regional office to hold such elections triennially at the appropriate point in the calendar and to hold by-elections as necessary.

4. Proper financial records must be maintained, which includes non-audited accounts returned quarterly and audited accounts returned annually to the regional office of the union; branches should ensure that it elects auditors, usually at the same time as its branch officers.
5. Branches must conduct regular membership audits so that membership records may be maintained up to date via the branch secretaries' portal or, in the case of a branch having no computer access, by close liaison with the Regional Office.
6. In cases of grievance and discipline it is an aspiration of the union that branches would take responsibility to provide representation including at appeal hearings; however, it is recognised that many branches will not, at the moment, be able to provide that service.
7. The branch must commit to the campaign for 100 per cent union membership in the workplace(s) which it covers, and must assist, either with full time officials/organisers or on its own initiative, in developing union organisation on "greenfield" sites where and when appropriate in accordance with agreed targets and strategies.
8. Branches have an obligation to promote equal opportunities and tolerance inside and outside the workplace and take action to stamp out sexism, racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination.
9. The branch should play a part in the broader labour movement locally, including affiliating to the local Trades Council where there is one and, where sought by branch member(s) who is/are member(s) of the Labour Party, to the local Constituency Labour Party (in accordance with Rule 22) where branch representation on the CLP GC will be taken on by a branch member, in line with Party rules. Further branches should support shop stewards' combine committees where appropriate and give support to community and retired members' branches.
10. The branch must be conscious of Unite policy on industrial and political issues at all times and must not use union resources, including use of the logo, to publicly campaign against union policy.

RULE 17. BRANCHES

17.1 Wherever possible, Branches shall be based on the workplace, although provision shall also be made for local Branches, including local industrial sector, community and retired branches.

17.2 National Industrial Branches shall be approved by the Executive Council only as appropriate and where the local workplace branch model is not deemed suitable. Members of National Industrial Branches may fully participate in the structures of the Union, including the Regional Industrial Sector Conference and the Regional Political Conference (in both cases subject to meeting eligibility criteria), in the Region where they live if different from the Region where the branch is based.

17.2 Branch membership shall be allocated on the basis of the workplace if there is a workplace branch at the member's workplace, or the local branch most appropriate for their workplace if there is not a workplace or National Industrial branch.

17.3 Branches shall have direct access to a proportion of membership subscriptions. Such a proportion and access arrangements to be determined by the Executive Council, and may be conditional on performed compliance with financial reporting requirements. These funds may be used to meet the cost of administering the Branch; for recruitment and other campaigns approved by the Executive Council; for local affiliations; to assist members or their dependants who have suffered misfortune; or for any other worthy cause, subject to any provisions elsewhere in these rules, and that no general purposes funds shall be used for political objects. Any payments made in connection with any form of industrial action must be made strictly in line with Executive Council guidance applicable at the time. Branch funds shall not be utilised to assist a member or former member in obtaining legal advice, assistance or representation in respect of any court, tribunal or other proceedings brought against (or intended to be brought against) the Union.

17.4 All the property of the Branch including the books and other effects of the Branch, shall be the property of the Union and shall, on request by the Executive Council, be produced for inspection and audit. In the event of a closure, merger or dissolution of the Branch, all property of the Branch shall be dealt with as directed by the Regional Committee subject to the overall control of the Executive Council. No branch will be closed and no member will be transferred to another branch without proper consultation with the branch, the member or members concerned.

17.5 The Regional Committee shall be required to ensure that each Branch meets at least quarterly and operates in accordance with the standing orders provided for in clause 8 of this rule. Where a Branch fails to meet quarterly of all members that Branch shall be suspended and members of the Branch shall be allocated to a Branch which meets the requirements of rule subject to the right of the Branch to appeal to the Executive Council. Branches shall, with the assistance of the Region, advise their members of the venue, time and date of branch meetings; this may be by post or by posting the information on the Union's website. It shall be the responsibility of the branch secretary to ensure that up to date information about branch meetings is held by the Union. 26 (v.2 Oct.2020)

17.6 Where deemed desirable for organisational and/or administrative reasons the Regional - Committee shall be empowered to merge Branches; in the event of an appeal this will be heard by a sub-committee of the Executive Council.

17.7 Each Branch shall have for its management branch executive officers consisting of a Chair, a Vice-Chair (where a branch so decides), a Treasurer, an Equality Officer and a Secretary; and such other officers as the Branch may elect. They shall be elected at a Branch meeting by show of hands, or by ballot, if so decided by the meeting. The election shall take place at a branch meeting held

between 1st January and 31st March in each third year and the elected candidates shall take office for three years. Casual vacancies may be filled at an ordinary Branch meeting, but notice of the impending election must be given to members of the Branch on the notice convening the meeting. The positions of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same member if the Branch so chooses.

17.8 The Executive Council shall issue standing orders to regulate the conduct of Branch meetings and business and may amend the standing orders from time to time. Those standing orders may only be varied in respect of a Branch with the prior approval of the Regional Committee. The quorum for a Branch meeting to make a decision on any matter shall be 5 members and all matters should be decided by a simple majority of those voting. If the votes are equal the proposition before the meeting shall fail.

17.9 The Branch chair shall preside over all meetings of the Branch and shall ensure that business is conducted in accordance with the rules and Branch standing orders. If the chair is absent from a Branch meeting, those present shall elect a substitute to take his/her place for that meeting. The chair shall be entitled to vote on all matters to be decided by the Branch but he/she shall not have a second or casting vote. The Branch secretary shall be responsible for the general administration of the Branch including maintaining the Branch membership, financial and other records in the manner required by the Executive Council, taking and preserving Branch minutes and conducting all correspondence on behalf of the Branch. On taking office the branch secretary shall provide an address where members can contact him or her. This information shall be posted on the Union's website.

17.10 The Branch treasurer shall be responsible for dealing with financial transactions concerning the Branch, ensuring that all payments are made in accordance with the rules of the Union, receiving contributions from members who pay at the Branch and banking monies. He/she shall provide the Branch secretary with a record of all financial transactions and shall ensure that they are accurately recorded in the Branch records and that all monies are dealt with in accordance with the rules and the instructions of the Executive Council.

17.11 If a Branch is unable to fill a vacancy for secretary or treasurer, the Executive Council may appoint a full time officer to fulfil the duties of that office until such time as the Branch is able to fill the position.

17.12 All references to "Branch" throughout these rules refer to lay member organisations. All references to Branch secretaries refer to lay officials.

17.13 Branch officers shall receive the fullest support and protection from the union, and an immediate enquiry shall be undertaken by the appropriate regional industrial sector or regional committee into every case of victimisation of a branch officer with a view of preventing victimisation whether open or concealed. Following the enquiry by the 27 (v.2 Oct.2020) Regional Industrial Sector, or the Regional Committee, a full report will be sent to the EC with recommendations.