

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the
CENTRAL COUNTIES & THAMES VALLEY BRANCH,
Held at The St. John's Sports and Social Club, Stone, Aylesbury.
On Wednesday 6th March 2019 at 7:30pm.**

Chairperson: G. Kneeshaw

There were 19 members in attendance.

1) Chairpersons Opening Remarks.

George welcomed members to the meeting and introduced officers on the top table.

Also welcoming Head Office speaker, Tracey Fussey.

A list of the branch members who had passed away since the last AGM was read out by the Chair and a minutes silence was held in respect of: -

Mr Allan Steele, Christine Carroll, Robin James Holt, Mr Robert Welch, Mr John Rennie, Mr Roy Stanton, Mr G H Whitby and Mr Terence Corkett.

2) Apologies: S. Ranch, R. Howard, R. Sermon, S. Taylor, E. McLaughlin, B. Brennon, P. Craig, S. Denton.

3) Minutes of the Previous AGM 2018.

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting, held on the 8th February 2018, were proposed correct by Mark French, seconded by Richard Abbiss and agreed by the members present and signed as such.

4) Matters Arising From Those Minutes.

It was noted that the prop put at the 2018 AGM by Jamie George, had not been accepted by conference.

5) Secretary's Report.

The Secretary welcomed members to the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

Branch membership had increased slightly to 2,768, with 9% women and 9% under 30's.

Steve thanked the branch officers and committee reps. There was a need to find both a Youth and Womens officer.

Issues arising this year had been changes in BT pension, work place meetings had been arranged but were not that well attended. The final salary scheme has been closed and people moved on to BTRS and the new Hybrid scheme.

Openreach had moved to a BT owned subsidiary. Customer facing staff had problems with Saturday working and re-scheduling. BTFS had been TUPE'd out to two companies.

BT Fleet is facing restructuring with rumours that BT are looking for a buyer, the Union will stand against any 'sell off' of BT Fleet. Fleet had lost the National Rail contract, with consequences for members on that contract.

Redesign conference had been held with review of Unions assets including its head office Wimbledon premises and Alvescot training centre, which the branch is opposed to any closure.

6) Financial Secretary's Report.

The Financial Secretary presented the branch's 2018 accounts to the meeting which were welcomed by the members present. It had been a difficult year, but as usual, with the Financial Secretaries skilled handling, it yet again appeared to be easy. Some financial activities were highlighted and explained.

The General, Political and Welfare accounts were proposed as correct by Richard Abbiss, seconded by Gary Good and agreed by the meeting.

7) Auditor's Report.

The Financial Secretary presented a signed auditor's report on the branch accounts to the meeting. Tim thanked the auditors, Steve Rance and Bob Howard, for their work on the branch audit.

8) Other Specialist Reports.

Equality Report. George Kneeshaw gave a report.

The branch was able to attend and participate in all the CWU equality conferences in 2018 so thanks to all the officers who represented us and for the reports that were provided.

The Branch reps are not reflective of its membership, especially within Openreach with many new and younger people being employed.

More younger activists are needed along with representation from the disability and equality arena. George asked the meeting to keep the branch aware of any members who fell sick or had accidents.

Royal Mail HWDC. Paul Milward gave a report on how the HWDC is fairing. The lease on the premises had been extended and use being restructured to concentrate more on parcels, with new machines due to be installed which could support more engineers in the future.

BT MSL. Ben Rayner gave a brief report on BT managed services.

BT are trying to grow the unit, so no redundancies although there were changes on the horizon, but the impact would not be know yet. Need more apprentice recruitment on the field engineering side. There were H & S issues with the BTMSL premises in Reading.

9) Amendments to Branch bye-laws & Election Rules.

There had been no amendments submitted.

10. Election of Branch Officers, Committee, Conference Delegates, Observers, Trustees and Auditors.

Due to the Biannual elections, there would be no elections this year.

There had been nominations for conference delegates and observers.

The list of attendees will be made available.

11. Nominations and Election of Delegates to Affiliated Bodies.

There were no new delegates elected. It was pointed out that the Branch is affiliated to various Trades Council and CLPs so members could attend.

12. Nominations for NEC and National Officers.

Elections have been delayed to the summer.

13. Propositions to the Branch and to Annual Conference.

There had been three props to General Conference.

One concerning the Retired Members Regional Structure, one with reference to bringing A56 work back to direct labour and one with regard to retaining Alvescot training centre.

The closing date for props to the T&FS Conference has not yet been reached, so consent was obtained from the meeting for any props which the Branch would put in.

14. Any Other AGM Business.

G. Kneeshaw. Paid tribute to Steve Phillips for his work as Secretary. It is a thankless task not made easier by the geographical and membership size of the branch. George also thanked Dick Sermon for his work as previous Secretary.

15. Invited Guest Speaker(s).

Tracey Fussey introduced herself as a member of the NEC for the last 13 years, coming from her background as a BT International operator via the health and safety route.

Branches are seeing more and more work especially from within the Openreach line of business. BTFS staff have been moved to companies with a 'dodgy' history of head count reduction, with the BT estate going downhill with a need for major investment. There is to be a rationalisation of the BT estate, with closure of buildings as well as the BT centre offices. The displacement of people agreement will be looked at by BT in details during the five year closure program. Tracey sits on the Property & Estates committee, as well as the Agency & Manpower committee, the CWU is at the forefront in getting more rights and equal pay, but BT have introduced different contract to try and by pass this.

Tracey emphasised the need to get more younger people involved and stated that the Union is continually putting effort in to training.

More effort is needed to recruit members from new companies, trade unions in general have a lower level of overall membership. Union communication has changed, away from traditional face to face meeting to other methods of engagement, especially with the younger members, who we do need to engage with.

Tracey stated that EE management have a lot of influence on BT pushing new and unfavourable policies on to BT staff.

We are now on the second year of a two year pay deal of 3%, but will the company try and renegotiate this. Within the changes to the pension, webinars and 1 to 1 sessions are available to people to enable them to make an informed decision on whether to join the hybrid scheme or not. The Wealth at Work company is also a good source of information.

A Q&A Session followed.

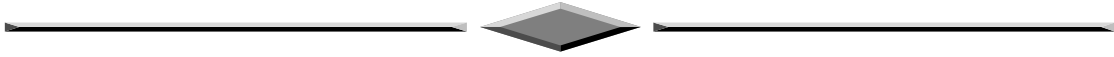
Our Hours Campaign. The Union want a commitment from the company to stop the excess travelling for those on the 2020 contract. A discussion arose on why the Union had accepted this contract in the first place, but this had been part of other negotiations. But it was felt that there is now a two tier workforce.

There were differing views with regard to social media, where it was thought that member issue's driven meetings were still useful.

Saturday working with in Openreach was discussed, with members not happy with some of the unions (HO) and branches discussions.

The Secretary thanked Tracey for her valuable contribution.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS, THE CHAIR THANKED EVERYONE FOR ATTENDING, and also thanked the members for their support, AND DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED.



SIGNED : _____

DATE : _____