

In this newsletter

1. November branch meeting
2. UCU congress report.
3. National Pensioners Convention
4. Pensions gender gap revealed
5. Rising pension age
6. The Equality Act and employment
7. Public Service Pensions council
8. Railway stations: impact of de-staffing on disabled and older passengers
9. How green is USS?
10. Council for Academic Freedom and Standards
11. The Future for Care for the Elderly.
12. Minutes of branch meeting 11.6.13
13. Annual Equality conference Nov 15th 2013.
14. Changes to Life membership of UCU

1. November branch meeting

12.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.

Tuesday 19th November 2013

**Dr M. Kovacs-Wilson
Of Exeter University**

will talk about

**'From Suffragism to Post-Feminism:
Womens' Rights and Future Directions'.**

**Venue: UCU Office. Labour Party Rooms
26b Clifton Hill, Exeter EX1 2DJ**

**A buffet lunch will be provided if you let us
know a week in advance.**

ucu.swest@gmail.com

This newsletter is, in part, that of the East Midlands branch who unselfishly share their expertise with all the Retired Members Branches (RMB). Your contributions for our next newsletter welcome.

Email them to ucu.swest@gmail.com

At the meeting in June Helen Gorman expressed her wish to stand down as Membership Secretary. Helen has done the hard work in setting up the Branch membership; Ruth Amias is now taking over.

Email addresses please!

We encourage retired members to use their home email when you give up your work email address. We hope to send out a quarterly newsletter by email but only an annual newsletter by post. This is to save money on post and the effort of stuffing over 300 envelopes.

**Please inform us of
change of address or email at
ruthamias2000@yahoo.co.uk**

2. Report: UCU Congress, Brighton Conference Centre 29-31 May 2013.

1. Wednesday: Retired members' sector. We met while HE and FE held their sector conferences. A brief report from each RMB (retired members branch) was produced which were subsequently circulated. There were reports from Reps on national NPC and the TUC Pensioners' Committee. There was discussion on

a number of issues including how branches should continue to develop, membership lists and info from Head Office. We also discussed relevant Congress motions. There was no mention that Head Office was planning to write to those of you who had been given (AUT), or paid for (NATFHE) Life Membership, asking you to start paying subs. More of this in item 14.

2. Congress: Thursday & Friday 30 - 31st May.

The General Secretary Sally Hunt was absent from Congress through ill-health. The atmosphere in the sessions was surprisingly good-natured and there was a surprising lack of animosity, no doubt as a result of the tone set by Kathy Taylor, who chaired congress.

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/6646>

Six motions from RMBs and several amendments were accepted on the Congress agenda. Those taken, passed.

I voted for all the motions and amendments of RMBs, and the SWest FE and HE delegates followed my lead on retired members' motions.

The most contentious issue was the financial state of UCU. Falling membership means that, if nothing is done..... disaster strikes soon.

The budget proposed included increasing subs, making savings across the board including the reduction of the size of NEC from 72 and voluntary retirement of staff at Head Office. That a Union proposes making people redundant was derided by many. The motions on the budget had several card counts because they were too close to call from the rostrum. This was time consuming, and many motions did not get taken in their allocated time. Some were fitted in later. Oddly, I thought, a later motion to have electronic voting was defeated.

Fringe events I attended.

*A packed audience heard from the Sussex Uni student sit-in and their arrest, and then of the recent acquittal of Alfie Meadows after 3 separate trials. Students are being criminalised for speaking out and protesting.

*England's new (April 1st 2013) NHS system: how can trade unionists prevent more damaging cuts and privatisation in our health services? We were encouraged to join our local GP practice PPG (patient participation group) and to contact our local authority Health & Wellbeing Board (HWB). These have duties in relation to public health and some (limited) opportunity to influence the decisions of local health commissioners.

<http://www.keepournhspublic.com/pdf/HealthandWellbeingBoardsKONPbriefing.pdf>

Further details at <http://www.keep.com>

*Stephen Lawrence 20 years on – there are still cases where no one has been charged with racial murders.

*Congress dinner was a social event at which Russ Bowman, East Midlands RMB, received an award for lifetime service to the union.

Motions proposed/ amended by RMBs & SW region. (Numbers as on Agenda)

29. Support for regional committees (SW region). *Calling for all regional offices to be headed by a local officer & not be managed remotely (as SW is at present)* Carried.

40. Organisation of members/retired members. Carried

45. Defending our pensions. Carried

48. Promoting the debate on public ownership of banking and finance Carried

50. Free Imprisoned Bahraini prisoners. Carried.

Visibility in UCU Structures. Following discussion in our 'sector' meeting, we supported the West Midlands amendment asking that Retired Members to be added to the list of equality seats to be considered for a seat on regional committees. The substantive motion with this amendment was Carried.

Jo Corke SW RMB delegate.

3. National Pensioners Convention

At the June branch meeting there was a very useful presentation about the National Pensioners Convention, at the UCU SW Retired Members branch meeting in June. Three representatives from the NPC Western and Devon Regions talked about the purposes of the Convention and

explained its structure. There was a discussion about current issues, some of the NPC campaigns etc.

Following the presentation, it was agreed that the branch



should affiliate to the NPC Western Region. We now receive newsletters from NPC about their events which we will be circulating to anyone who is interested. Let us know at ucu.swest@gmail.com and we will include you too. We are hoping that some of you would like attend their meetings, details of which appear in their newsletter.

About the NPC

The NPC's aim is to promote the welfare and interests of all pensioners, as a way of securing dignity, respect and financial security in retirement.

The NPC organises rallies and lobbies of MPs, leads delegations to Parliament and makes submissions to government on policies affecting older people. The NPC also stages an annual three days pensioners' parliament in Blackpool, where up to 2000 representatives discuss issues of concern and share ideas in an atmosphere of genuine friendship.

The NPC has engaged in a number of research projects, including on pensions and public transport. They have published a Pensioners' Charter, and have provided briefing papers and given evidence to various reviews, commissions and green papers.

Sharing the buffet lunch with NPC speakers.

The NPC also features regularly in both the local and national media and uses every opportunity to raise awareness of the issues that affect older people. One of the Convention's priorities is therefore to influence public opinion and secure changes to government policy.

The strength of the organisation comes from the work of the many affiliated groups, who are active in their local areas and regions, promoting the NPC's campaigns. This makes the Convention unique, and it is the only national campaign group in the country which is run by pensioners for pensioners. NPC has a regional structure; three of the 17 regions are Cornwall, Devon and Western (covering Gloucestershire, Avon and Somerset).

To keep supporters informed the NPC produces a quarterly newspaper called The Message, a monthly email bulletin,

briefing papers and pamphlets, as well as organising seminars, training sessions, and providing speakers at meetings all over the country. The convention also maintains a library of useful information on a wide range of subjects, which is available to both groups and individuals on request.

The point has been put that with more support the NPC will be able to continue to develop its organisation and strengthen its influence as the campaigning voice of both today's and tomorrow's pensioners.

National Pensioners Convention, Walkden House, 10 Melton Street, London NW1 2EJ.
Tel 020 7383 0388

Website: <http://npcuk.org/>

Email: info@npcuk.org

President Ron Douglas.

Vice Presidents Norman Jemison, Peter Rayner, Jan Shortt, Marion Wilson.

Dot Gibson - General Secretary.

Alan Cousins & Tom Murray

Contributions welcome.

If you know about a group or activity that branch members might be interested in, do write a piece for this newsletter, and send it to ucu.swest@gmail.com

Jo Corke

4. “Pensions gender gap” revealed

The European Commission has published the results of a study that shows women receive almost 40% less in pensions than men in the EU, even though the gap in pay whilst working is only around 16%.

The UK fares particularly badly, with a pensions gender gap of 43%, but at least we beat the Germans who have a gap of 44%. Luxembourg take the wooden spoon with a gap of 47% and it seems the best place to be a women in the EU (if the pensions gender gap is judged to be the most important measure) is Estonia where the gap is a mere 4%.

See: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-495_en.htm

5. Rising pension age

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) confirmed (8.8.2013) that its five-yearly reviews of the [state pension age \(SPA\)](#) will be based on the [Government Actuary's Department \(GAD\)](#) analysis. The impact of this may be to steadily raise the age both when people get their state pension but also their occupational pension. Unions will no longer negotiate normal pension age.

You can read updates on the UCU website
<http://www.ucu.org.uk/tps-underattack>

Julian Atkinson EM

6. The Equality Act and employment

It may seem slightly odd to discuss employment law in a newsletter dedicated to retired UCU members. However, it

is a fact that for some work continues after formal retirement. Under the Act age now becomes a “protected characteristic”. Section 5 of the Act defines “age” as a characteristic covering someone who is part of a particular age group or a group of persons who form an age group. A protected age group could comprise a group such as the over-fifties, or it could comprise people of a particular age, such as 21-year-olds.

The protection means that certain types of conduct are prohibited: discrimination (both direct and indirect), harassment and victimisation. However, before you begin to feel too cosy, direct age discrimination is the only form of direct discrimination that can potentially be objectively justified. Protection applies in pre-employment/ recruitment, employment and post-employment. The Act protects employees from discrimination and harassment that may occur after employment. An example of this is the provision of a work reference with derogatory comments relating to their age, this would be harassment and discriminatory, even though the person's employment had ended.

Age discrimination may be lawful. Many employers have policies that link pay and benefits to an employee's length of service: for example, extra holiday entitlement for employees after two years' service. This may indirectly discriminate against younger people as they are less likely to have been with an employer long enough to qualify for the benefit. There is an exemption to allow this kind of practice to continue in most circumstances.

Generally, any benefit linked to length of service is lawful, but if the length of service required is more than five years, the employer must show that it is expected to meet a business need. This may further impact on the length of wage scales. If the length of service required is less than five years, a benefit linked to length of service will automatically be lawful, without the employer having to meet the business need test.

In the bad old days (pre-October 2011) there used to be the possibility of a **Default Retirement Age** where people could be forced into retirement at a certain age. In these enlightened times we now have the **Employer Justified Retirement Age**. An employer may insert a retirement age into a new employment contract. The employer must provide objective justification for the retirement age. The main criterion they would need to comply with would be that it is a ‘proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim’. A legitimate aim is a reasonable objective of the employer. This could take many forms –for example, the need to allow for succession to a position and allow younger workers an opportunity to rise up the hierarchy. An employer may, however, not be able to justify retirement simply based on it being too expensive to keep older workers. It would be a dull HR department that could not construct a legitimate aim. Employment may also be terminated if a capability test is failed.

Enforcing rights is more difficult than their simple possession. The first stage is writing a grievance letter, with the help of your UCU branch, in line with the ACAS code. This should be accompanied by a “questionnaire” downloadable from www.equalityhumanrights.com. If this fails to resolve the issue, or you risk coming up against the

usual three months minus one day limit to approach and Employment Tribunal, then send in a form ET1 to the local Employment Tribunal. As befits an open society the cost of this is potentially shooting up to £1200. And the results might not be quite what you want. We have a long way to go on achieving equal opportunities.

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-22195-f0.cfm?regional=6>

Julian Atkinson

7. Public Service Pensioners' Council PSPC Campaigns Update – September 2013

Pensions Bill

The Pensions Bill received its second reading in the House of Commons on 17th June and was scrutinised in a Public Bill Committee which reported to the House of Commons on 11th July. Dates for the report stage and third reading are yet to be announced.

As previously stated, single-tier pension does not meet our wider goals as it will be set well below the poverty threshold. Furthermore, the exclusion of existing pensioners means current pensioners would be left on a residual system and there would be little hope of future improvements.

The PSPC is planning a lobbying campaign with other pensioner organisations for the remainder of the Bill's parliamentary passage. As things stand, the Government plans to have the Pensions Bill on the statute book by Spring 2014. If constituent organisations wish to make their own lobbying efforts, they should be mindful of the parliamentary timetable.

Indexation

The September CPI figure which determines public service pay increases is due next month. In the meantime, colleagues will recall that the existing RPI and CPI measures have been supplemented by two new indices – RPIJ and CPIH. The PSPC has carried out some 'back-testing' of the four inflation indices based on the September figures in the relevant years:

	RPI	RPIJ	CPI	CPIH
2006	3.6	3.2	2.4	2.4
2007	3.9	3.5	1.8	1.7
2008	5.0	4.6	5.2	4.8
2009	-1.4	-1.9	1.1	1
2010	4.6	4.0	3.1	2.7
2011	5.6	4.9	5.2	4.7
2012	2.6	2.0	2.2	2.1
Average	3.4	2.9	3.0	2.8

This confirms that RPI increases continue to be higher than those under the other indices and would give higher increases for index-linked benefits. CPIH offers little prospect of producing higher increases than CPI as the owner-occupier costs component has been running well behind general CPI over recent years. RPIJ may in practice

offer slightly higher increases than CPI (assuming no further methodological changes) as the slightly lower average is due to the negative 2009 result. In reality, pensioners received a freeze that year. Applying a zero result for 2009 brings the RPIJ average up to 3.2 per cent.

Age related personal tax allowances

Colleagues will recall that a parliamentary debate on age related personal tax allowances caused by the e-petition reaching 100,000 signatures was scheduled for 29 April but was then deferred until Autumn.

Unfortunately the PSPC only learned on 5th September that the debate had been scheduled for 9th September, which was too late to organise widespread lobbying activity. We have, however, produced the enclosed letter and briefing for constituent organisations to use to encourage members to lobby their MPs.

Universal Pensioner Benefits

The NPC has organised an e-petition calling for the retention of universal pensioner benefits. If the e-petition reaches 100,000 signatures then it should lead to a debate in Parliament on this subject. It is important to remind politicians of all parties of the strength of feeling on this topic before they draw up their manifestos for the next General Election, not afterwards.

The e-petition can be found at

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/49599> and currently has 20,000 signatures. I would urge constituent organisations to circulate this to your membership and encourage members to sign.

Impact of Scottish Independence

The PSPC has previously circulated a paper from the produced by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland

(www.icas.org.uk/ScotlandsPensionsFuture.pdf)

on some of the potential public service pensions issues raised by Scottish independence (see pages 11-13).

The PSPC understands that a Scottish Government paper on pension policy in an independent Scotland is expected this Autumn. The paper will hopefully give some indication of the current Scottish Government's thinking on these issues.

Andrew Morris General Secretary PSPC

8. Railway stations: impact of de-staffing on disabled and older passengers

A briefing from Bob Crow, General Secretary, RMT:

The RMT (National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers) has backed 'Action for Rail' and published the findings of a survey highlighting the disastrous impact that the government's transport cuts will have on disabled and older passengers.

Amongst its findings the survey shows that disabled passengers hugely value the availability of staff on trains and at stations. 39% of disabled passengers say that they rely on staff assistance, a further 32% found it helpful. Key benefits that staff provide include enhancing personal safety and security, providing travel information, buying

tickets and help access facilities and getting on / off trains.

Action for Rail point out that the government, through its Access Action Plan, have asked all train operators to produce Disabled Person's Protection Plans (DPPPs) to demonstrate how they will broaden access to the railways for disabled passengers. Yet at the same time, proposals in the McNulty review, endorsed by both the government and rail operators, indicate that there could be cuts to tens of thousands of guards, stations and ticket office staff on whom disabled passengers rely.

A postcard campaign based on the findings of the survey supports the demand for a rail service that puts people before profit and the needs of the passengers first.

For the full paper see:

http://www.rmt.org.uk/Shared_ASP_Files/UploadedFiles/rmt/8C47C029-18BF-4EF9-9932-2204801F1265_Impactofde-staffingA4Booklet.pdf

Russ Bowman

9. The How green is USS?

The UCU National Pensions Officer, Geraldine Egan, is asking members to consider action to make USS greener. Fairdeal to which UCU is affiliated have changed their name to Shareaction at the start of this financial year. They are lodging a campaign aimed at pension funds to encourage them to consider carbon waste. Could potentially interested members contact USS and ask them for their position on these matters. Could copies of any returns please to be sent to ShareAction and copied to pensions@ucu.org.uk

ShareAction writes: "Our world is set to be altered by climate change. That's why it's so vital that our pension funds look ahead and act responsibly. Pension savers, and the funds looking after our money, have an incredible opportunity to act now to change the course of the future. Investments made early in low carbon companies and infrastructure will protect and preserve the world as we know and love it. But today pension funds are deeply and stubbornly invested in companies that are openly planning to burn carbon well beyond the safe limits agreed by governments around the world, including our own. This is more than an environmental catastrophe waiting to happen. It puts your future financial well-being at risk as well.

A powerful report can be found at :

<http://www.shareaction.org/carbonbubble-resources>

Valuations of fossil fuel companies and the stock exchanges they are listed on could tumble when climate change is factored in. That's why we'd like you to ask USS what it's doing to protect us and our savings from climate change risks. Sending a message is quick and easy. This is the start of a three year campaign to **make pension funds fit for the future**, and we need your help! If this matters to you, get in touch with emily.kenway@shareaction.org. ShareAction are looking to build and support a community of people who are willing to challenge their pension fund about its current environmental stewardship and demand positive investments that protect our beautiful world.

⊗ Want to know whether your pension pot is funding

green jobs growth or fossil fuels? - find out now.

- ⊗ Pension funds should use their billions to fund a jobs-rich, low-carbon future. Is USS? Take action to find out.
- ⊗ Our friends at ShareAction are taking action to pierce the #carbon bubble – and so can you.
- ⊗ Is USS fit for a low carbon future? Use this easy online tool to find out.

Contact: www.shareaction.org/carbonbubble

Russ Bowman EM

UCU publishes Environmental News:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/environmentalnews>

10. CAFAS – join the fight

Academic freedom and academic standards have been the central concerns of the Council for Academic Freedom and Standards (CAFAS) for more than 30 years. One would have hoped that these issues might have been consigned to the historical record but unfortunately they are now more pressing than ever as the neo-liberal assault on further and higher education accelerates. There are many casualties including staff and students. CAFAS is a group dedicated to maintaining standards of integrity and practice in academia, to exposing breaches of those standards and to supporting the victims of those breaches.

CAFAS welcomes widened access to further and higher education. But expansion in the absence of a corresponding increase in funding and the attempt to run education on commercial principles have led to standards being undermined and to staff who protest being victimised. Many are too demoralised, or too pressured by the provision of inadequate resources to challenge the decline; others are fearful of redundancy or are intimidated by the threat of victimisation and some respond to job insecurity by themselves becoming victimisers of the vulnerable.

CAFAS faces the fact that the British educational system is decaying. The principle of academic freedom enshrined in the Education Reform Act (1988) - that "academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom and put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs" - is increasingly under attack.

CAFAS is committed to campaigning against the formal or informal abuse of power and influence by persons at all levels in universities and colleges of further education. As such CAFAS provides a means of challenging arbitrary, unjust, unreasonable or biased decisions in HE and FE.

CAFAS has a good record of working co-operatively with trade unions in the sector – now principally UCU – and have had supportive motions carried at recent Congresses. Sometimes there are differences of approach that can give rise to concern with the official structures of the union.

Recent CAFAS case work in the East Midlands has centred on the case of an academic who faced disciplinary action by his University through the publication of an academic paper detailing the abuse of anti-terrorism policies, seriously jeopardising two research students. CAFAS convened a panel of authoritative members under the chair of a Lord Justice of Appeal who found that there appear to

have been serious abuses of the new powers invoked since 2003 without consultation, notification or oversight.

I have found CAFAS to have been a vital forum to unlock my own victimisation case which resulted in the loss of my academic position and serious ill-health. I would say that without CAFAS I would have stood little chance of recovery from the sustained attacks by senior management. The use of well placed and highly paid legal/management consultants – at huge public cost are simply the tools of the modern corporate university trade. Casualties are many.

Please take a look at the website: www.cafas.net and give serious thought to joining the Council – your experience can be of value for academic freedom and standards.

Ian Hewitt, CAFAS Exec, E.Midlands UCU

**For more information
please contact ucu.swest@gmail.com
or contact the officers here:**

South West Branch officers and committee

Chair: Jo Corke jo.corke@blueyonder.co.uk

Vice Chair: Liza Sentance, lizasentance@hotmail.com

Secretary: Pat Mee Patriciamee@sky.com

Treasurer: Andy Gatehouse, AndyGatehouse@hotmail.com

Membership: ruthamias2000@yahoo.co.uk

11. The Future for Care for the Elderly

The headlines about the Government response to the Dilnot report seemed to flag up “major changes” but it has been argued that Dilnot had been watered down, the number of people helped would be small and the major issue of inadequate funding for care either at home or in Care Homes had been ducked.

Because of austerity measures, changes have already taken place which have a detrimental effect on social care. For example, 800,000 people used to be entitled to care for ‘moderate’ needs but no longer are. Individual entitlement varies between **Local Authorities (LAs)**: some provide help for those with moderate needs but others only for those assessed as having ‘substantial’ needs.

From April 2016, the savings limit above which people have to contribute to their care costs will go up from the current £23,250 to £118,000. There is a sliding scale to determine how much an individual must pay. However, the government calculates a ‘tariff income’ from your savings which is £4 for every £1,000 which means that if you have £118,000 in savings your assumed income would be above the level at which you would be entitled to help, so you’d get nothing.

The other change is the lifetime cap on the amount an individual is required to pay towards their care which is to be set at £72,000 (higher than the £35,000 recommended by Dilnot). However –

- ⊗ This covers care costs only, not ‘hotel costs’
- ⊗ Only the amount of money which would be paid by the LA is counted, if your care home is more expensive, the extra you pay doesn’t count towards the £72,000
- ⊗ Currently, most care homes cost more than **LAs** pay

Most social care has already been privatised, there are not many **LA** run care homes left. Some organizations (e.g. Extra Care Charitable Trust) are providing homes in large ‘retirement villages’ which are a long way from the traditional care home model and will not appeal to everyone. Care provided in people’s own home is also contracted out which means that an individual elderly person may have many different carers coming in for brief periods.

The details of how all these changes will work are, as yet, far from clear and you are encouraged to look for information on the Age UK website.

Helen Chester EM

12. Minutes branch meeting June 11th 2013.

The meeting began with a presentation by Glen Burrows, Chris Elliot and Dave Smith, representatives of South West branches of the National Pensioners Convention, followed by questions.

Branch Business

Present: John Daniell, Margaret George, Helen Gorman, Mick Gorman, Tom Murray, Alan Cousins, Bill Tampion, Andy Gatehouse, Jo Corke, Liza Sentance, Pat Mee.

Apologies: Ruth Amias.

1. New member, **Bill Tampion**, was welcomed by the Chair.

2. Matters Arising from Minutes of 12/3/13

Helen Gorman expressed her wish to stand down as Membership Secretary, and it was agreed that Ruth be contacted about taking this on. Jo thanked Helen for the hard work she had done in setting up the Branch membership list.

3. Reports

UCU Regional Committee AGM 27th April 2013

Ruth Amias had represented the Branch. Her report was circulated and she was thanked for this.

SW RMB Report on Congress 2013

Jo Corke had represented the branch. Her report was circulated. (Item 2 in this newsletter.)

*There was a discussion concerning the role retired members could play at their former workplaces. It was agreed that retired members could offer help in areas, such as being a friend, if they wished. It was agreed to contact Head Office with regard to putting information to this effect on the website.

*Attention was drawn to the item regarding the financial state of UCU due to falling membership

4. **Jo Corke and Pat Mee** reported on the contacting of Colleges and Universities in the region to publicise the existence of the RMB. This is progressing.

5. Tom Murray drew members' attention to the affiliation of the Royal college of Nursing (RCN) to the **National Pensioners Convention**. Tom presented a paper "Giving a voice to Retired members" with information on the RCN retired members' network.

6. Alan Cousins and Tom Murray agreed to write a report for the branch newsletter (Item 3) on today's presentation by the NPC.

Jo Corke proposed that the SWRMB become affiliated to the Western NPC. This was seconded by Mick Gorman and agreed. It was not known whether the national UCU was affiliated (update from Geraldine; UCU is affiliated at national level. Norman Jemison is Vice-Chair of NPC, Phil Burgess is on the executive and Pat Roche and Jim Thakooardin are on the council).

Jo wished that the Branch's gratitude to today's three speakers from the NPC be recorded.

7. Bill Tampion drew members' attention to forthcoming events in Teignmouth to celebrate the centenary of the 1913 march of the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies. Members agreed to try to publicise these events. Bill mentioned Athene Donald's blog

<http://occamstypewriter.org/athenedonald/>

It was agreed that **Mike and Helen** would try to find a speaker on the issue of women's disadvantage in the workplace for a future meeting.

8. Newsletter.

Jo Corke agreed to continue to produce this.

9. Future meetings.

A date of November 19th was agreed for the next Branch meeting.

It was agreed to hold the AGM in the Spring. Date to be arranged shortly

The meeting ended at 2.46 p.m

Pat Mee

13. Annual Equality conference

Registrations are now open for UCU members to attend the 2013 Annual Equality Conference. It will be held at University of London Union, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HY, from 10:00am to 4:30pm on Friday the 15th of November. The conference is an excellent opportunity to meet other UCU members and discuss equality work. It consists of a mixture of motions from branches/LA's, guest speakers and workshops, and is central to taking forward the equality work of UCU. There will be four separate meetings in the morning for women, black, disabled and LGBT members to discuss issues relevant to that group, move motions and elect members to the national standing committees. All attendees will then meet together in the afternoon. Delegates are encouraged to use our online service to register at the following link:

<https://ucu.wufoo.com/forms/the-annual-equality-meeting-15-november-2013/>

Delegates for these conferences are self nominating and must self-identify with the relevant equality group.

*Deadline for registration 5pm on Friday
1st November*

Jo Corke

14. Life members & subscriptions.

In what many RMB officers consider to be an iniquitous and misguided policy, HO has asked those retired members with AUT and NATFHE life membership to pay the normal retired members' subscription or be deleted from the membership lists. If you have agreed to pay, thank you; however, we think this should be optional and not compulsory. Our branch, along with others, wrote to HO on 6th September asking that this action be withdrawn. At the time of writing this newsletter we have received no response.

Jo Corke and Ruth Amias

More information

A lot more information and news can be obtained from these websites. We recommend that you have a browse.

UCU National Website: <http://www.ucu.org.uk>

Keeping you informed

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/henews>

Retired members' area on the UCU website:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5436>

UCU South West Region websites:

<http://southwestregion.web.ucu.org.uk/>

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3366> .

AgeUK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

68 is too late: www.68istoolate.org.uk

National Pensioners Convention: <http://npcuk.org>

Later Life Newsletter The department of work and pensions publishes a newsletter.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/older-life-newsletters>