



NEU SUFFOLK BRANCH

Joint Secretaries: Luke Halpin & Wendy James
suffolkbranch@neu.org.uk

DRAFT Minutes of Ordinary General Meeting

20th March 2025

St Benedict's RC High School & MS Teams

Attendees in person:

Neil Stiff, Teacher, St Benedict's RC High School (NS)
Shelagh Kavanagh, Supply (SK)
Neil Hanger, Supply (NH)
Luke Halpin, West Row Primary School (LH)
Wendy James, Supply/Consultant (WJ)

Attendees on Teams (note there was an issue with the Teams link for some people, but the meeting ID and password worked successfully):

Roger Stares, Supply (RS)
Christine Ince, Ipswich Academy (CI)
Ivya Scott, Realise Futures (IS)
Sammi Morgans, Shotley Primary School (SM)
Phil Pitt, King Edward's High School (left early) (PP)
Paul Widdowson, Vertas (joined late) (PW)
Sue Groome, Tutor/Examiner/Supply (joined late) (SG)
Kim Robinson, St Joseph's Primary School (joined late) (KR)

Apologies:

Rory Richardson-Todd, St Alban's RC High School

1.	Welcome: As no Branch Chair was present, LH chaired the meeting until a Chair was elected. LH welcomed members and thanked them for attending. The meeting was deemed quorate as the Draft Branch Rules brought to the meeting for approval state that a minimum of 10 members must be present.	
2.	Minutes from last OGM: No minutes were provided from previous Branch Secretary. LH apologised.	
3.	Election of Branch Officers & Caseworkers: The following nominations were received in writing prior to the start of the meeting. Only one nomination was received for each available officer role, so all positions were uncontested. Chair: Neil Hanger , proposed by Oliver Garwood, Beccles High School, seconded by Rosie Hawkins, Sir John Leman High School NH chaired the meeting from this point forward. Vice Chair: Rory Richardson-Todd , proposed by WJ, seconded by LH	

	<p>Joint Branch Secretary: Luke Halpin, proposed by Danielle Norman, West Row Primary School, seconded by Laurie Beaumont, West Row Primary School</p> <p>Joint Branch Secretary: Wendy James, proposed by Rory Richardson-Todd, St Alban's Catholic High School, seconded by Rebecca Bothwell-O'Hearn, Northgate High School</p> <p>Treasurer: Christine Ince, proposed by WJ, seconded by LH</p> <p>Equalities Officer: Ariette Brown, proposed by NH, seconded by WJ</p> <p>Health & Safety Officer: Roger Stares, proposed by LH, seconded by WJ</p> <p>Caseworker: Neil Hanger, proposed by Oliver Garwood, Beccles High School, seconded by Rosie Hawkins, Sir John Leman High School</p> <p>Caseworker: Roger Stares, proposed by LH, seconded by WJ</p> <p>Caseworker: Ariette Brown, proposed by NH, seconded by WJ</p>	
4	<p>Branch Rules</p> <p>WJ explained that Suffolk Branch Rules could not be found, so she had taken the <i>Model Branch Rules</i> from the <i>NEU Rule Book April 2024 Appendix G Model rules for Multi-Employer (publicly funded) Branches</i> and modified the sections that were identified as needing change:</p> <p>1 Title – “Suffolk” inserted</p> <p>2 Membership - “Suffolk” inserted</p> <p>6.3 Meetings – <i>The quorum for all general meetings shall be “10”</i> inserted</p> <p>WJ explained that the rules could be amended, but any amendments needed to be approved by the NEU Executive</p> <p>10 Rule amendments</p> <p><i>10.1 Proposed amendments must be agreed by a simple majority of members present and voting, at the first meeting of the academic year or a meeting specially convened for the purpose.</i></p> <p><i>10.2 Rules initially adopted and any subsequent amendments must be approved by the Executive before taking effect</i></p> <p>The Branch Rules were unanimously agreed.</p>	
5	<p>Branch Secretary Report</p> <p>WJ outlined changes that had taken place to the Branch Secretary role during the year.</p> <p>WJ explained that Eastern Region had asked Suffolk to be a <i>Priority Branch</i> and put in place a development plan to move towards being an <i>Ideal Branch</i> by implementing the NEU's <i>Ten Commandments</i>. WJ outlined these Ten Commandments and explained briefly some of the work that had already been undertaken to achieve them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQ sheet for school reps • WhatsApp Groups for individual MATs & SCC • Meeting arranged with CEO of Diocesan MAT who pay into Facilities Time, but do not have a Joint Negotiation and Consultative Committee (JNCC) 	<p>Action: LH/WJ to include list of MATs who pay into Facilities Time and have JNCC's in Autumn Term Newsletter</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting arranged with outgoing CEO and incoming CEO of Asset Education Trust who have a Trade Union Recognition Agreement, but do not pay into Facilities Time and so do not have a JNCC <p>SM asked how members would know if Asset agreed to pay into Facilities Time. It was agreed that information on all MATs would be shared in a newsletter in the Autumn Term, once the FT payment deadline had passed.</p> <p>The Branch were now keeping records of casework and categorising each case.</p> <p>Branch Secretaries attend JNCC's and work closely with the JNCC representatives from other unions: NASUWT, NAHT, ASCL, Unison, Community, to ensure that issues are added to the agenda; policies are challenged, as appropriate; and good practice is shared across MATs and SCC.</p> <p>Facilities Time was being well used and enough hours were allocated from the "pot" to cover the caseload.</p>	
6	<p>Treasurer's Report</p> <p>CI shared her report on the screen, paper copies were available in the room.</p> <p>Income from District Levies 2024/25: £12,209.43 Total Expenditure for 2024/25 £6321.44: Office costs £1,578.37 Equipment purchases £487.51 Repairs & Maintenance £231.01 Bank Charges £15.25 Meetings & Functions £4,009.30</p> <p>"Meetings & Functions" includes travel costs and subsistence for casework – there has been an increase in these expenses. Improved record keeping will enable the Branch to track caseload versus expenditure.</p> <p>There have been fewer equipment costs this year due to prudent recycling of equipment.</p>	
7	<p>Training Opportunities</p> <p>LH outlined training being arranged by West Suffolk District:</p> <p>4-5pm 3rd April 2025 Social Media training by Scott Lyons, Norfolk Branch Secretary – TEAMS</p> <p>Time TBC 14th May 2025, H&S Training by Shelagh Kavanagh, Newmarket Academy</p> <p>RS requested Mental Health First Aid training for caseworkers and reps. WJ explained that she was already in touch with Suffolk Mind to explore what they could offer. She has also spoken to Scott Lyons, Norfolk BS, about the Norfolk offer.</p>	<p>Action WJ: arrange Mental Health First Aid training</p>

	SG recommended the TUC Employment Law training	
8	<p>Branch Honoraria WJ proposed that Branch Officers received an annual honoraria for their voluntary service to the Branch. The development plan would require a lot of work from officers to implement. WJ had explored the possibility of honoraria with Eastern Region and had also spoken to Murray Sackwild, Essex BS, about their model – 6 Districts/1 Branch – where Branch Officers receive honoraria.</p> <p>PW asked if Branch honoraria could be paid.</p> <p>WJ quoted the following regulation and confirmed that an email from Paul Laughlin, Regional Secretary, confirmed that the Branch held “NEU funds” as it had its own bank account and treasurer.</p> <p><i>NEU Guidance for Treasurers Regarding Honoraria Regulations Regulation 33 from the Local Financial Regulations as amended by the outcome of Motion 50 at the 2022 Annual Conference effective for the 2021-22 service period onwards:</i></p> <p><i>Branch Officers</i> <i>This section only applies to Branches that hold NEU funds.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Branches with NEU funds must hold a quorate General Meeting to agree Honoraria with the minutes from this meeting forming the authorisation to make the payments.</i> • <i>The Branch must be able to prove that the meeting was quorate and provide a list of attendees upon request. This is necessary because officers are able to benefit financially from the Honoraria decision and a list of attendees will show that transparency is being maintained.</i> • <i>The individuals to whom the Branch has decided to award Honoraria to may not take part in the vote on the decision.</i> <p>CI confirmed that honoraria could be paid through the Branch.</p> <p>Proposed Honoraria for 2025/26: Note: Branch Officers are elected in March but take up their post in September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Branch Secretaries: £1,000 each • Chair, Equalities Officer, H&S Officer, Treasurer: £500 each <p>Total cost for 2025/26: £4,000</p> <p>There is enough money in the Branch account to cover honoraria for 2025/26. The honoraria amounts will be reviewed at OGM in March 2026. If an increase to District Levies is required, this will be discussed and a proposal sent to Districts in time for AGMs in 2026.</p> <p>Accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honoraria will be awarded in arrears. • Officers will be expected to evidence their voluntary service during 2025/26. • Honoraria will be paid in the summer of 2026, once evidence has been received and reviewed by Branch membership at the Branch OGM in March 2026 (continued commitment to the officer role will be expected during the summer term). 	

	<p>The members in the meeting who were not eligible for honoraria voted on the proposal (KR, SG, PW, SM, NS, SK):</p> <p>For: 6 members</p> <p>Abstained: 0 members</p> <p>Against: 0 members</p> <p>The proposal was passed.</p>	
9	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None</p>	
	Meeting closed at 18:05	