
BAWU Branch Secretary Network meeting October 2023

District Branches

Concerns were raised about how branch secretaries in district branches could communicate with the members of the branch outside of their own circle of contacts.

GDPR implications were discussed with an example given of a member being contacted by a district branch secretary out of the blue who they may not even know and what reaction that may get. When members join, they are given the information of their FTO.

Mailchimp could be utilised for those members that we have up to date email addresses for, we can tag different groups of members and send specific emails out to those groups, for example we could ask members to let us know if they wanted to be on the district branch WhatsApp group.

This way members are opting in voluntarily to engage with the branch rather than being contacted by someone they don't know.

Membership details

It is important that these are kept up to date, to comply with legislation and so that when we hold ballots members receive their vote, it is also part of the quarterly returns process.

Retired members

We have a large number of retired members who don't engage with the union, we are looking at whether there is a way to contact them, probably in writing to check they are still at the same address, that they still want to receive correspondence (Foodworkers for example) and whether they would be interested in engaging more in campaigns etc. in their regions.

This could also be something we do with district branches more widely as some members reach out to find out more information through social media or the info@ email address on how to get more involved with the union and other members near them.

Drug and Alcohol Policies

There was a discussion on the recent implementation of a new D&A policy at FBC and whether other companies had them, how testing was being conducted, whether there was random testing or just 'for cause' testing and whether they are punitive or supportive for those who have dependency issues.

The discussion covered how advanced the testing is now, whereas once poppy seeds and mouthwash may impact tests, these days they can identify the levels of prescription drugs and don't need to swab into someone's mouth, which has implications on our members practicing Ramadam, instead they can be wipes which don't have to enter peoples mouths.

We discussed the training element and when third party companies should be brought in, for example if a swab test shows the presence of drugs, an external company should then come into the workplace to run a more thorough test. It was also raised that union reps may be trained with the managers conducting the swabs, not to actually do the tests themselves, but in order to ensure the process is being followed correctly...



Andy's man club

After not being able to arrange a speaker at conference last minute from the organisation, all regions were asked to invite Andy's Man Club to either the October or January regional council meeting, introductions have been made with regional contacts of the organisation and BFAWU FTOs.

Region 5 invited a speaker to the October meeting who was brilliant, the presentation talks about why the organisation was started, the difference it has made to thousands of men's lives, the children who are here today because of the organisation and what actually happens in a meeting, all of which are held on a Monday Night at 7.00pm

Sunshine House has invited them to do a talk there, the dates haven't lined up yet, but one of the people involved in Wigan is an ex BFAWU member from Wigan.

Branch Meetings

Attendees were reminded that they should be holding a branch meeting in December to discuss and agree motions to 2024 conference, the meeting could decide to postpone the meeting until after Christmas when it is generally quieter, but it is important to get the motions in by the last Friday in January which is the deadline.

Credit Union

Is doing well, there were a few people who volunteered to be Directors at conference, though there hasn't been a meeting yet to invite them to in order to start the process of roles and getting through the FCA rules and regulations.

Conference

The venue and dates have now been confirmed, ideas for Fringe meetings and Stalls are welcomed, so far, we are looking at Credit Union AGM, Hazards, STAMMA, TIC, Royal College of Podiatrists, MEEN.

Workplace Facilities

When employers are taken over by new companies, it can at times impact facilities that have been accessed previously, examples were given of Microsoft licenses not being transferred and printing ability restricted and how this should be challenged by the branches so that the reps aren't hindered in being able to do their roles effectively.