

Minutes of Prospect BEC Meeting 8th June 2005, Silvan House, Edinburgh

Present

Tony Cousins (TC)
Iain Kirk (IK)
Robert Matthews (RM)
Gerry Robertson (GR)(part)
Marcus Sangster (MS)
Ian Willoughby (IW)

1. Apologies

Paul Cody
Chris Finnerty
Keith Miller
Ian Tubby

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of meeting on 31st January 2005 were accepted.

3. Matters arising

Covered by agenda.

4. Ending of specialist tour system

Management paper and Edward Shepperd, TUS FC secretary (ES) response discussed. Management are proposing to rescind on their stated commitment to those 'on tour'

TC to send letter to ES highlighting need for reserved rights to be retained, without prejudice to individuals career and future prospects in current 'specialist' role if offered role is unsuitable or does not materialise. **Action TC**

5. Post filling

Concern was raised over a recent GIS manager trawl which went straight to external recruitment. Presumption currently is that a post is usually trawled internally first, unless there is an insufficient pool of internal candidates.

TC to seek assurance from ES and remind local TUS representatives who comment on trawl procedures, that the presumption should be that posts should be trawled internally first. **Action TC**

6. Sickness absence management

General disquiet registered about official side proposals. Concern also over lack of consultation.

TC to indicate that ES letter should be revised to indicate how proposals might seriously affect members, to highlight general principle of terms and conditions being altered, and to separate out the issue of lack of consultation. **Action TC**

7. Stalling of culture change in the FC

BEC agreed that despite massive investment in 'culture change' progress had stalled and in many cases actually regressed. Some staff who may have highlighted this point may be failing to fill in staff survey.

TC to raise at core group meeting.

Action TC

Need to come up with 3-4 questions on efficiency of survey process to include in union newsletter.

Action TC / IK / MS / PT

8. Pay negotiations 2005

Discussion took place on 2005 pay claim, tactics and likely difficulties. Priorities confirmed as re-valorisation of maximum in line with inflation, followed by progression. Options for possible alternative progression methodologies were discussed.

BEC agreed TC and CF to carry out negotiations, with RM to be on hand during pre meetings and through the day to give technical advice to Prospect team.

Action TC / CF / RM

On the subject of higher grade maximums, ES's information on comparisons with other civil service departments were again noted, and also width of pay bands due to artificial merging of different grades. There was also discussion on what performance markings might actually merit 'performance pay', hence an increment, if performance pay is highlighted as a Treasury requirement by the official side. Negotiators to note and utilise if useful.

Action TC / CF / RM

9. Pay poll 2004

Discussion on the pay poll took place.

RM to amalgamate TC's analysis into his analysis, possibly highlighting 3 categories of responses – industrial action, lobbying, no action. Responses to be presented as a percentage of responders, not absolute numbers, by 10th June 2005. **Action RM**

Feedback on analysis and any proposed action (which will not include industrial action) to be taken, to be issued through BARK by 15th June 2005.

Action TC / Paul Taylor

Questionnaire responses to be returned to CF, with a letter asking him to summarise responses. **Action TC**

Use these results which indicate grave disquiet amongst many staff, plus illustration that BEC defused memberships desire to reject offer and take industrial action, to highlight as an example of the positive outcomes that can result from engagement with unions, in a delegation stressing concerns over 2004 pay deal to Kim Lardge and Tim Rollison, before end of June. **Action TC / CF / ES**

10. Report on action taken on ADC motions

TC presented a brief summary of his responses on a number of issues.

11. Future of the branch

TC indicated his willingness to continue in Branch President role until February 2007. Concern raised over limited support from Stirling office. Prospect intention is to move all Scottish staff to one office in Edinburgh. RM highlighted importance of utilising any savings in providing extra support for lay members. This approach was agreed by GR.

12. AOB

Business passenger mileage supplement

Keith Miller is seeking clarification on how passenger mileage is paid, for example for non FC staff carried on official business.

Research promotions

Concern highlighted over failure to implement grading criteria equitably in research promotion procedures.

TC to speak to Tracy Houston and Glenn Brearley to determine if only isolated cases occurring, and to take forward fair implementation of procedures, and ensure as a general principle (no specific cases have been identified so far) that any staff appealing are not disadvantaged in the future. **Action TC**

Alice Holt Review

TC to offer support to Tracy Houston if she desires it over this issue. **Action TC**

Future of Forest Research needs to be raised at FC staff council. RM to draft briefing paper with Tracy Houston and Glenn Brearley, for FC TUS meeting. RM to consider if time permits possibility of attending for this agenda item or via video conference.

Action RM

TUC meeting report

MS presented report from joint TU council meeting.

NOC's – TC to talk to Joan Webber to see if Alice Holt is covered. **Action TC**

TC to raise stress survey with ES. **Action TC**

Membership

GR discussed possibilities for membership recruitment.

Consultations

TC confirmed he is happy for BEC members to respond in a personal capacity to direct consultation from ES, as long as they copy him in to any reply. **Action All**

13. Date of next meeting

Next meeting scheduled for Silvan House, 6th September 2005. TC will not be attending. A room has been booked.