

## **Annual report to SECamb UNISON Branch AGM February 2018 from Nigel Sweet – Branch Communications Officer and Labour Link officer**

### **Communications**

Since our last AGM, communications activity has further increased and broadened. As Communications Officer, I have made several personal appearances during the year to represent our members' views across local and national radio and local television. I covered various issues ranging from our Trust's Bullying and Harassment report issued last summer, to violence suffered by staff, to problems caused by NHS wage cuts, to the ongoing problems of our CQC Special Measures Trust status.

Our Branch has increased its use of social media to engage with members, recruit new members and expound out union's case to the wider public on many issues. On Facebook, the Branch now has its own members-only page, 2 key Twitter feeds from both our Branch Secretary Pete and myself, a renewed Branch website, and a newly launched Branch Instagram account.

I recently benefited from a 3 day TUC Social Media course which covered both Branch use, and issues around representing members facing disciplinary action for social media policy breaches.

The Branch newsletter is still issued by email direct to members, with some intervening direct member emails to cover urgent or targetted "hot issues" eg. relocation redundancy surrounding the move to the new Crawley HQ.

Finally, the pocket-book diary is still issued by the Branch due to its continuing popularity with those who like traditional "paper and pens".

We're always keen to embrace new ways of communicating and would welcome suggestions and ideas from any member.

### **Labour Link**

I represent our members' views as the UNISON SECamb Branch delegate to my local Labour Party of Worthing West, and as a delegate to Sussex Co-operative Party.

The two biggest UK trade unions UNISON and Unite maintain their endorsement of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party Leader (in contrast to the GMB).

The General Election last June sent Branch political activity off the scale, though mainly in only one medium – Twitter – as time and opportunity to engage with the electorate in any other way in such a snap election proved difficult. My prior booked holiday in Greece during the election period also hindered activity, though Twitter transcends distance!

Wider engagement has included a recent presentation by me on Trust, UNISON and NHS issues to the local Labour Party in Uckfield in East Sussex, and the offer of further direct engagement from myself to local Labour MPs like Peter Kyle in Hove and Lloyd Russell-Moyle in Brighton.

Further training for my Labour Link officer role from Regional UNISON is planned next month to facilitate greater and more diverse political activity in the future.

NS - 19 Feb 2018