

# 51<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL REPORT



*Manweb Branch*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### 2022

AGM meetings will be held by Teams Invite

**Tuesday 1st March 2022**

**12:00 and 15:00**

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022**

**12:00 and 15:00**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA 2022

1. Chairpersons Welcome (p3)
2. Receive the minutes of last year's AGM meetings (p4-6)
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. To receive reports for the last year (Annual Report) including
  - a. Energy Retail (p7)
  - b. Energy Networks (p7)
  - c. Branch Secretaries (p7-8)
  - d. Retired Members Secretary (p8-9)
  - e. Finance Report to be approved by meeting (p10-11)
5. To receive recommendations in respect of honoraria (p12)
6. Election of Branch Officers (See Appendix I)
7. Election of Branch Stewards (See Appendix II)
8. Election of Representatives of Company Bodies (See Appendix III)
9. Re-appointment of Branch Health and Safety Reps (See Appendix IV)
10. Motions (p12)
11. Open Forum / Questions

## **Chairperson's Welcome (Agenda Item 1)**

Dear Members, welcome to the AGM of the Manweb Branch of Unison.

This year the AGMs are again being held via Teams meetings. There are four AGMs in total, two on 1<sup>st</sup> March and two on 3<sup>rd</sup> March you are welcome to join any meeting.

Who would have thought that after 2020, 2021 would turn out to be more of the same?

Covid-19 affected not only our home life but our working life too. Many of us are working from home and those of us that come into the offices are following the rules around social distancing, mask wearing etc. Working from home can affect everybody with some members welcoming the benefits of an improved work life balance while others are feeling vulnerable, working alone with little or no contact with their colleagues. It is a very difficult time for some and if anyone is feeling the strain of this, I would encourage you to speak to your Team Leader or Manager or Mental Health First Aider or Unison rep. We are here to help you.

The electricity industry is going through an extremely difficult period at the moment with increased wholesale prices causing many smaller retailers to close and higher bills causing financial worries for all customers. Unison continues to campaign for the government to review the energy market, adopt a national programme of energy efficiency measures to get every home to have an energy performance rating of C and to support low income families.

Within our branch, we have for many years shared the services of the United Utilities Branch in Warrington for our administration. This year we took the decision to withdraw from that agreement and maintain our records within the branch. I would personally like to thank Steve O'Connor, Dana Davies, Nicky Miller and Angela Porthouse for all their work in setting this up. My thanks also go to Dave Read for his support and to Vic Walsh our Full Time Officer for keeping us straight with the Union rules in setting this up.

Thank you for your continued support during 2021 and here's to a successful 2022.

**Geoff Littler (Branch Chair)**

## Energy Retail - First meeting 1PM & Second meeting 4PM

|                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| <b>Date</b>          | 2nd March 2021  |  |
| <b>Location</b>      | Via TEAMS   |  |
| <b>Present</b>       | Angela Porthouse (Joint Branch Secretary)<br><br>Nicky Millar (Joint Branch Treasurer)<br><br>Dave Read (Retired Members Sec)<br><br>Steve O'Connor (Chair) – (Joint Branch Secretary)<br><br>Tom Gibbons | Anthony Hogden - Jane Martin<br><br>Christalla Buoey - Anthony Edwards<br><br>Louise Williams - Keith Davies<br><br>Pat Hopper |
| <b>In Attendance</b> | Vic Walsh (UNISON) - Janet Caulfield (UNISON)   |  |

### Meeting Notes based on agenda

#### 1. Chairperson's opening address

Steve O'Connor took the Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending and referred members to the Chairpersons address on the opening page of the Annual Report.

#### 2. Confirm the minutes of last year's AGM

The minutes were agreed.

#### 3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

#### 4. Receive reports for the last year (Annual Report)

##### 4.1 Branch Committee

The report was received.

##### 4.2 Finance Report

The accounts were agreed unanimously.

##### 4.3 Other reports

None received

**5. Election of Branch Officers (Appendix I)**

The list of officer nominations received and set out in the Annual Report Appendix I was received & accepted

**6. Election of Branch Stewards (Appendix II)**

The following nominations for stewards were made from the floor for Energy Retail – Anthony Edwards, Nicky Millar, Angela Porthouse and Sally Williams, Steve O’Connor Angela Jones, Dana Davies & Nicola Bishop. The nominations were agreed unanimously.

**7. Election of representatives to company bodies (Appendix III)**

The nominations set out in Appendix III were agreed at the meetings.

**8. Appointment of H&S reps (Appendix IV)**

The appointments set out in Appendix IV were received.

**9. Motions from the Annual Report**

There were NO motions

**10. Open Forum**

A brief update was given to advise that the four T/U’s had met, and a proposal for a new pay award has been submitted to S/P management

**Energy Networks - First meeting 1PM & Second meeting 4PM**

|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| <b>Date</b>          | 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2021   |  |
| <b>Location</b>      | Via TEAMS  |  |
| <b>Present</b>       | David Read (Retired Members Secretary)<br><br>Geoff Littler (Chair)<br><br>Steve O’Connor (Joint Branch Secretary) | Nathan Clare - Danial Lonsdale<br><br>Janet Bowker<br><br>Yvonne Lucy - Pam Barker |
| <b>In Attendance</b> | Janet Caulfield (UNISON) – Vic Walsh (UNISON)  |  |

## Meeting Notes based on agenda

### 11. Chairperson's opening address

Geoff Littler took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He introduced Janet Caulfield (UNISON) and Vic Walsh (FTO – UNISON). There was also a special thank you for Dave Read (Former Branch Secretary) & Tom Gibbons (Former Branch Treasurer) for all their hard work & commitment to the branch over the last 20+ years.

Geoff also gave and supplemented the Chairpersons address as set out in the Annual Report.

### 12. Confirm the minutes of last year's AGM

The minutes were agreed.

### 13. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

### 14. Receive reports for the last year (Annual Report)

#### 4.4 Branch Committee

This report was received

#### 4.5 Finance Report

The Branch Secretary gave a brief update on the key financial reports.

The accounts were agreed unanimously

#### 4.6 Other Reports – None received

### 15. Election of Branch Officers (Appendix I)

The list of officer nominations received and set out in the Annual Report Appendix I was received & approved

### 16. Election of Branch Stewards (Appendix II)

The list of nominations was received & accepted.

### 17. Election of representatives to company bodies (Appendix III)

The nominations set out in Appendix III were agreed

### 18. Appointment of H&S reps (Appendix IV)

The appointments set out in Appendix IV were received and Yvonne Lucy's nomination for Liverpool was agreed

## Energy Retail Report (Agenda item 4a)

In October of 2021 the trade unions agreed to ballot its members on a 2year pay deal, which was to out as “best that could be achieved via negotiation”. The deal was for 1.5% in the first (backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April) and 1.5% for the second year from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022, with the possibility of an extra 0.5% being added in year two, if Retail was to hit three out of their six targets. The deal was accepted by 80% of Unison members, between the MANWEB & SCOTTISH branches.

With the current uncertainty of the gas & electric markets, and the loss of quite a few of the smaller suppliers, ScottishPower management started a consultation process with members of the RBF, to advise that they had recognised some roles within Energy Retail may no longer be required, at first it was reported that an initial 27 roles had been identified and the role holders were given two options, either to take V/R or if they wished to stay then they would go through the Redeployment Policy. At another meeting in December the T/U's were then advised that there needed to be another 162 roles that would be targeted, although it reported that no details of what or where these roles would be. S/P management then decided that they would open up the V/R process to see how many staff would be interested in applying, though the company insist that the option of V/R would be granted, we (as a branch) continue to support our reps in trying to save as many jobs as we possibly can, but if any of our members are put in this position, then they get the best help & advise we can offer, so a more informed decision can be made. This whole process will probably last the rest of the year.

At the time of receiving this report from our Energy Retail reps, most of our members are currently working from home again, after the government announced some restriction back in December to tackle the ongoing COVID pandemic, although S/P have a HYBRID working model in place at the moment, we are still waiting to see exactly how this is going to pan out for the years to come.

**Please remember, that if anyone is struggling for whatever reason, either personally or if it's a member of your family, and working from home full time would help, then please speak to your line manager in the first instance, if they are unwilling to accommodate even on a short term basis, then speak to a local rep to get escalated.**

## Energy Networks Report (Agenda item 4b)

The 2021 pay negotiations were completed with a 15-month deal ending March 2022 and an average salary increase of 1.5% and a non-consolidated payment of £500. A claim has already been sent to the company for a pay increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. Talks will be arranged soon to start the process.

Unison is a major player in the structure of Business Forums and Negotiation committees within Networks. We are looking for new stewards to get involved and be part of our team. Please come forward to support us and your colleagues.

## Branch Secretaries' Report (Agenda item 4c)

Well, 2021 has been just as unforgettable of a year as 2020, although we did see the lifting of restrictions and the return to work for thousands of working people, after being on furlough, the government possibly got it drastically wrong when doing things either too soon or too late. This government has been branded as the worst in the history of British politics, breaking laws that they set, by having parties when the rest of us weren't allowed, they have also somehow lost £4.3 Billion pounds that they gave to fraudulent people, or did they. They also spent £Billions of tax payers money giving contracts to their friends & relatives via VIP lane, and acquired PPE that was not fit for purpose, if this was a business the police would have been brought in some time ago to investigate, but then we know which side they are on.....

The MANWEB branch has seen a lot of upheaval over the last 12 months. We have seen a few of our friends, colleagues and members leave due to different reasons. The branch has decided to bring a lot of the admin that is required to run the branch efficiently back in house, with a number of the reps doing some of the admin work which was previously undertaken by the United Utilities branch. We as a branch would like to formally thank the UU branch for all their help and support over the last few years.

Nationally, Unison has been one of the main instigators in trying to get our Dr's, nurses & most of the NHS staff a proper wage rise they very much deserve. There has also been a lot of media surrounding the "BILL" that is currently going through the House of Lords, which will make it easier for this greedy, inept government to try and privatise OUR NHS, if you get the option to add your signature to the many petitions that are taking place, please do so, and keep the NHS where it belongs, to the British people.

**Please remember, if anyone is suffering from any sort of health issue, whether it be mental or physical, ScottishPower & Unison have people who can help. Don't suffer in silence, there is always a helping hand, you just need to ask.**

**“A PROBLEM SHARED  
IS A PROBLEM HALVED”**

**Steve O'Connor and Angela Porthouse (Joint Branch Secretaries)**

### **Retired Members Secretary Report (Agenda item 4d)**

In the last 12 months I have been busy dealing with the campaign we have been running to challenge IBM's treatment of former IT workers in our branch, specifically their attempt to limit the amount of pension compensation which was due to Beckmann\* members made redundant in June 2020. As I reported last year this is a complex issue which as with all pension matters is unlikely to be resolved quickly.

After much consultation with Unison's National Pension Officer and their legal team we have submitted a group claim to the Pensions Ombudsman. The gist of this claim is that members with Beckmann entitlement have been unfairly treated by IBM who we believe have incorrectly made significant deductions from the Beckmann payments they were obliged to pay.

The first hurdle in the process has been crossed with the group claim accepted and now under review by the Ombudsman. We had been expecting to hear back from them by the end of January with an update but at present are continuing to chase up for a progress report.

The other long standing and complex issue, which arises from a Lloyds High Court Case in October 2018 and relates to potential discrimination against a number of retired female members who were active members of the Manweb Pension Scheme between April 1978 and April 1997 remains ongoing. We have had no further update from the Trustees of the Pension Scheme but hope that further updates will be forthcoming in the future. It is not



clear what level of compensation can be expected at this stage, although it is not necessarily going to be a large amount per person.

We have a significant number of retired members in the branch so if any retired members are interested in getting involved in any Branch activity then please let me know.

\*Beckmann refers to a 2002 Employment Tribunal Ruling which found that where an employee had a right to an early pension when made redundant this right is protected by TUPE and transfers with the employee as an employment right, even though pensions in general are not protected by TUPE.

**Dave Read (Retired Members Secretary)**

## **Tribute to Jim Brown**

### **Former Branch President and former Branch Retired Members Officer**

It is with great sadness that we have recently learned of the passing of Jim Brown, former Branch President, former Retired Members Officer and sitting Member Nominated Trustee of the Manweb Pension Scheme. We send our condolences and commiserations to his family and record our thanks for the long-service Jim gave to the Manweb Unison Branch and its predecessor NALGO Branch.

Jim Brown was an active trade unionist throughout his working life and held key positions in the Manweb Branch for over 35 years. He provided guidance and leadership throughout the many challenges the branch faced before and after privatisation and was unwavering in his support for members during the many rounds of redundancies, reorganisations, and outsourcing.

Not only was Jim active during the branch throughout this period he was also a Member Nominated Trustee for the Manweb Pension Scheme who fought tooth and nail to make sure the scheme continued to provide excellent benefits for its members and to ensure any surpluses the scheme recorded were shared between the company and the scheme beneficiaries. One significant change was to have the 5% cap on annual increases removed so pensions would keep up with any RPI changes above 5%.

After retiring from Manweb over twenty years ago Jim became the Retired Members Secretary and continued as a Member Nominated Trustee in the pensioners' section. His powerful voice never quavered in his pursuit of fairness and equality for pension scheme beneficiaries, and he continued to play an active role in the branch offering advice and guidance to newer stewards and officers.

Jim was a larger-than-life character with a great sense of humour and was widely respected not just by members and staff at Manweb but by those whom he challenged in discussions and debates on the company side. As all who knew him will attest, Jim also had a wicked sense of humour – very few who have met him have not on occasions found themselves the target of some prank or good-natured teasing and have soon learned that a ready wit is a valuable form of defence.

Jim was one of a kind and will be sorely missed by all those who worked with him and relied on him for support and advice. Our lives have certainly been made richer by his presence and we now pause to remember Jim with respect and thanks.

**David Read  
(Retired Members Officer and former Branch Secretary)**

## Finance Report for the Financial Year 2021 (Agenda item 4e)

### General Fund Income and Expenditure Account for Manweb for the year ended 31 December 2021

|                                    | 2021             | 2020              |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Income</b>                      |                  |                   |
| Branch Funding                     | £7,369.84        | £9,561.64         |
| Branch Levy                        | £900.00          | £900.00           |
| Retired Members Subscriptions      | £15.00           | £181.00           |
| <b>Income total</b>                | <b>£8,284.84</b> | <b>£10,642.64</b> |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                 |                  |                   |
| Other administration               | £6,147.05        | £4,880.00         |
| Honoraria                          | £0.00            | £0.00             |
| Conferences and group meetings     | £56.17           | £784.15           |
| Branch Committee                   | £0.00            | £295.61           |
| Other Meetings                     | £0.00            | £228.63           |
| Publicity                          | £0.00            | £0.00             |
| Education                          | £0.00            | £20.00            |
| Donations                          | £245.00          | £0.00             |
| Affiliations                       | £60.00           | £60.00            |
| Local Activities                   | £0.00            | £0.00             |
| Transfer to Industrial Action Fund | £900.00          | £900.00           |
| Transfer to Dedicated Fund(s)      | £0.00            | £0.00             |
| Other Expenditure                  | £300.00          | £0.00             |
| Hardship Payments                  | £0.00            | £0.00             |
| Other Branch Funding Deductions    | £0.00            | £0.00             |
| Tax                                | £0.00            | £0.00             |
| <b>Expenditure total</b>           | <b>£7,708.22</b> | <b>£7,168.39</b>  |
| <b>Surplus for the year</b>        | <b>£576.62</b>   | <b>£3,474.25</b>  |

### Consolidated Balance Sheet for Manweb For the year ended 31 December 2021

|                                  |                   |                   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Fixed Assets</b>              |                   |                   |
| <b>Total Fixed Assets</b>        | <b>£0.00</b>      | <b>£0.00</b>      |
| <b>Current Assets</b>            |                   |                   |
| Branch Funding                   | £0.00             | £179.98           |
| Bank Deposit                     | £64,924.53        | £64,924.53        |
| Current Account                  | £31,888.40        | £30,231.80        |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b>      | <b>£96,812.93</b> | <b>£95,336.31</b> |
| <b>Current Liabilities</b>       |                   |                   |
| <b>Total Current Liabilities</b> | <b>£0.00</b>      | <b>£0.00</b>      |
| <b>Net Current Assets</b>        | <b>£96,812.93</b> | <b>£95,336.31</b> |

|   |                   |                   |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Total Assets</b>                                   | <b>£96,812.93</b> | <b>£95,336.31</b> |
| <b>Accumulated Funds</b>                              |                   |                   |
| Accumulated General Fund at year beginning            | £48,730.62        | £45,256.37        |
| Surplus/Deficit                                       | £576.62           | £3,474.25         |
| <b>Accumulated General Fund at year end</b>           | <b>£49,307.24</b> | <b>£48,730.62</b> |
| Accumulated Industrial Action Fund                    | £45,705.69        | £45,705.69        |
| Surplus/Deficit                                       | £1,800.00         | £900.00           |
| <b>Accumulated Industrial Action Fund at year end</b> | <b>£47,505.69</b> | <b>£46,605.69</b> |
| <b>Total Funds at End of the Year</b>                 | <b>£96,812.93</b> | <b>£95,336.31</b> |

## **Item 5 - Recommendations in respect of Honoraria**

The following extract from the Code of Good Branch Practice should be considered before making any such award:

"An honorarium is a discretionary one-off payment, made annually by the Branch to a lay Member, in recognition of the voluntary work they undertake for the Branch".

This Branch recognises the valued work undertaken by all Activists and this year proposes the following honoraria.

£500.00 to David Read in recognition of the personal time required to undertake administrative duties to ensure the efficient running of the branch. This Branch Annual General Meeting recommends paying said honoraria in line with UNISON's guidelines for the tenure of those offices in 2021.

Proposed – Branch Committee

## **Item 10 - Motions**

### **Rule Change - Virtual Meetings**

Delete Rule 6g and add new Rule 4(j)

The branch may hold any of its meetings, including AGM meetings, in a virtual format where attendees join the meeting by some form of remote connection such as phone or video link (or any other medium which may be suitable for direct communication). Where meetings are held face to face, as far as is reasonably practical, the Branch Secretary, Branch Chair or other appropriate Branch Officer will make arrangements to ensure remote communication facilities are available where attendees indicate they wish to attend via remote communication. All attendees whether attending in person or via remote connection will have the same full rights of participation and decisions making in accordance with Branch Rules and the Unison Guidelines on Good Branch Practise.

Proposed – Branch Committee

### **Rule Change – Remove Finance and General Purposes Committee**

Delete Rule 7 - Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) and re-number accordingly.

Proposed – Stephen O'Connor

Seconded – Nicky Millar

## Appendix I – Officer Nominations 2022

| <b>Position</b>                | <b>Nominee</b>                   |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Chair                          | Geoff Littler                    |
| Vice-Chairperson               | Sally Williams                   |
| Secretary (Shared)             | Steve O'Connor, Angela Porthouse |
| Treasurer (Shared)             | Dana Davies, Nicky Millar        |
| Education co-ordinator         | Dana Davies                      |
| Lifelong learning co-ordinator | Dana Davies                      |
| Equalities Co-ordinator        | Nicky Millar                     |
| Health and Safety Officer      | Angela Porthouse                 |
| Communications Officer         | <i>Vacancy</i>                   |
| International Officer          | Stephen O'Connor                 |
| Membership Officer             | Nicola Bishop                    |
| Young Members Officer          | <i>Vacancy</i>                   |
| Welfare Officer                | Angela Porthouse                 |
| Labour Link Officer            | Dana Davies                      |
| Retired Members Secretary      | Dave Read                        |
| Sports and Social Officer      | <i>Vacancy</i>                   |
| LGBT Officer                   | Callum Giblin                    |

## Appendix II – Steward Nominations 2022

| Business                | Location           | Posts | Nominations      |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------|------------------|
| Energy Networks         | Prenton            | 3     | Geoff Littler    |
|                         |                    |       | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
|                         |                    |       | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
|                         | Liverpool          | 1     | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
|                         | Llandudno Junction | 1     | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
|                         | Rhostyllen         | 1     | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
| Energy Retail CSC       | Warrington CSC     | 5     | Angela Porthouse |
|                         |                    |       | Sally Williams   |
|                         |                    |       | Anthony Edwards  |
|                         |                    |       | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
|                         |                    |       | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
|                         | Rhos CSC           | 4     | Angela Jones     |
|                         |                    |       | Dana Davies      |
|                         |                    |       | Nicola Bishop    |
|                         |                    |       | Steve O'Connor   |
|                         | Home Based Members | 1     | Nicky Millar     |
| Energy Retail Dataserve | Warrington         | 1     | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
| Everis                  | Home Working       | 1     | Mark Bancroft    |
| TCS                     | Warrington         | 1     | <i>Vacancy</i>   |

## Appendix III – Steward Nominations to Company Bodies 2022

| Company Body                                  | Posts   |
|---|---|
| ScottishPower Company Council                 | Steve O'Connor<br>Geoff Littler               |
| ScottishPower Company Health and Safety Forum | Steve O'Connor<br>Geoff Littler               |
| ScottishPower Pensions Forum                  | Steve O'Connor                                |
| Energy Networks Company Council               | Geoff Littler                                 |
| Energy Retail Business Forum                  | Steve O'Connor<br>Angela Porthouse            |
| C.S & S Consultative Forum                    | Nicky Millar<br>Sally Williams<br>Dana Davies |
| Operations Consultative Forum                 |   |

## Appendix IV – Reappointment of H&S reps 2022

| <b>Business</b>   | <b>Location</b>    | <b>Nominations</b>   |
|-------------------|--------------------|--|
| Energy Networks   | Prenton            | Tracey Thompson<br>Geoff Littler                               |
|                   |                    | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
|                   | Liverpool          | Yvonne Lucy  |
|                   | Llandudno Junction | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
|                   | Rhostyllen         | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
| Energy Retail CSC | Warrington CSC     | Angela Porthouse<br><i>Vacancy</i>                             |
|                   |                    | Nicky Millar   |
|                   |                    | Sally Williams   |
|                   |                    |  |
|                   | Rhos CSC           | Nicola Bishop<br>Angela Jones<br>Steve O'Connor<br>Dana Davies |
|                   |                    |  |
| TCS               | Warrington         | <i>Vacancy</i>   |
|                   |                    |  |