



NW Energy Branch

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Dear UNISON Member

I am writing to invite you to the **UNISON NW Energy Branch Annual General Meeting (AGM)** which will take place online via MS Teams. The UNISON NW Energy Branch will be the newly formed branch comprising the North West Gas and Manweb branches. The AGM will be subject to the formal ratification of the new branch on 1st January 2024.

The AGM is an important meeting for all members. It provides an opportunity for you to ask questions about the work of the union, you can see how branch finances have been used and you can help to set policy and agree priorities for the year ahead. The AGM also provides an opportunity for you to elect officials to lead the branch and represent your interests.

This year's AGM will take place over 4 meetings. You have a choice of attending any meeting. Each meeting will have the same agenda and any votes will be aggregated across the 4 meetings. You can only vote at one meeting even if you attend all 4.

The NW Energy Branch AGM's will take place on:

- Tuesday 05th March 2024: 12.00pm

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 345 335 324 034 Passcode: wWF7hF

- Tuesday 05th March 2024: 17.30pm

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 354 839 936 057 Passcode: ygxBrP

- Thursday 07th March 2024: 12.00pm

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 381 985 383 570 Passcode: UcDKas

- Tuesday 07th March 2024: 17.30pm

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 399 881 687 21 Passcode: R5Epe9

Access Requirements

We recognise that to ensure all of our members can fully participate it may be necessary to make adjustments, if you require any adjustment, please contact the branch and we will discuss your requirements.

When attending the AGM your attendance will be recorded so we can check the meeting quorum (minimum attendance) and confirm your membership status.

Electing your Branch Officials and Workplace Reps

The Annual General Meeting will elect your Branch Officers, Representatives and ratify the election of Workplace Stewards for the forthcoming year. A nomination form for Branch Officers, Representatives and Workplace Stewards is enclosed and online version here XXXXXX. A detailed outline of the Core Branch Officer Roles are enclosed with this letter. If you wish to stand for a position in the branch, please ensure that your nomination form is submitted by no later than 5 p.m. on Friday 26th January 2024. Late nominations will not be accepted.

Where there is only one (or a joint) nomination for a post, the person(s) will be deemed elected uncontested. Where there is more than one nomination then a full ballot of the members will be held in accordance with the Rules. In the event of an election voting papers will be circulated in advance of the AGM and returned before the AGM with the outcome announced at the AGM.

Preliminary Agenda

The preliminary agenda is attached. If you wish to submit a motion, please send it to v.walsh@unison.org.uk, with the name of the proposer and seconder by no later than 5 p.m. on Friday 26th January 2024.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Your Sincerely

Vic Walsh
UNISON Regional Organiser

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

ALL UNISON MEMBERS WELCOME

Welcome and introductions

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meetings held by NW Gas & Manweb Branches
3. Election of the following Branch Officers/Representatives and Ratification of Stewards
4. Treasurer's Report:
 - (a) To receive the Audited Branch Accounts
 - (b) To approve the branch budget.
5. Honoraria – to approve the payments for 2023 as recommended by the Branch Committee as shown in the attached report.
6. Annual Report
7. Motions
8. Amendment to Branch Rules
9. Organising Framework and Key Objectives
10. Guest Speaker (tbc)

Branch Officer Roles

Chairperson

Tasks relating to the office of Branch Chairperson:

- to preside at all meetings of the branch and branch committee in accordance with the guidance given in Section 3.2.
- to agree the agenda for meetings with the secretary
- to ensure that business is properly conducted
- to advise the branch officers and branch committee in respect of matters relating to procedure and interpretation of rules
- to ensure that all functions of the branch are carried out
- to work closely with the secretary to provide leadership to the branch.

Secretary

Tasks relating to the office of Branch Secretary:

- to guide the branch's development through the preparation of implementation of a branch organisation and development plan
- to ensure the representation of members within the branch in accordance with national guidance (see UNISON guide to representation, unison.org.uk/acrobat/14975.pdf and stock no 2426) and that case forms and applications for services forwarded to UNISON offices are properly completed and authorised
- to provide strategic leadership to the branch committee on implementing campaigning and lobbying actively on branch and wider UNISON objectives, working in liaison especially with the branch Labour Link officer and branch Communications officer
- to convene and attend all meetings of the branch and branch committee
- to arrange for the minutes of meetings to be kept in a proper manner and circulated to all branch officers and stewards
- to arrange for branch records to be kept in a proper manner
- to ensure the branch, speedily and accurately, processes applications for membership and maintains records in accordance with UNISON's systems
- to ensure regular communication with the members of the branch with news of campaigns, negotiations, issues, branch developments and activities
- to communicate with the union's regional and head offices on behalf of the branch
- to ensure that branch members are aware of opportunities to participate in the activities of the wider union, or within self-organisation if appropriate
- to support, mentor and encourage the stewards in the branch on an individual and collective basis. The branch secretary should seek to meet with each steward on a one-to-one basis, to discuss issues and workplace organisation, on a six-monthly basis
- to ensure that members and stewards are aware, and take advantage, of educational and training opportunities within UNISON
- to ensure that appropriate publicity activities are developed and co-ordinated by the branch.

Assistant Secretary

Tasks relating to the office of Assistant Branch Secretary:

- The Assistant Branch Secretary plays a supportive role to the Branch Secretary on a daily basis within the Office and strategic Meetings such as Joint Secretaries and Local Joint Consultation Committee. The Officer assists in the smooth running of the branch office and acts as manager for the support staff in the Branch Secretary's absence. As a seconded officer they will be expected to be able to give general advice to members who call the office and undertake the necessary training in

employment law that enables them to do this. They will need to develop a good understanding of Green Book terms and conditions and National and Local agreements with respective employers.

- Assist in campaigning and organising across sectors and be expected to attend all Branch Committees. The Assistant Branch Secretary will have a strategic role in negotiations on terms and conditions across Directorates and will have to attend Joint Consultative Committees at Directorate level.

Treasurer

Tasks relating to the office of Treasurer:

- to conduct the branch's financial business
- to keep accounts in accordance with the rules
- to provide reports on the financial position of the branch committee or branch executive committee
- to provide a detailed financial report for the annual branch meeting(s)
- to advise the branch officers and branch committee in respect of matters relating to financial management and appropriate expenditure
- to provide an auditing annual return of branch income.

Education Co-ordinator

Tasks relating to the post of Education Co-ordinator:

- to make sure all new stewards and safety representatives receive initial information and guidance about their duties, e.g. stewards handbook, rulebook, service conditions agreements, etc.
- to publicise the range of educational and training opportunities available to members and activists
- to get untrained stewards, safety representatives and other branch officers onto appropriate training courses
- to co-ordinate and support the work of learning representatives
- to encourage branch members and activists to make use of the UNISON Open College courses, especially 'Return to Learn' and 'Women, Work and Society'
- to maintain contact with the regional education officer/regional education committee.

Equality Officer

Tasks relating to the office of Equality Officer:

- to be the identified and well publicised point of contact in the branch for equality issues
- to collect and share information on equalities issues, including information from the regional and national self-organised groups
- to make sure other branch officers and branch committee consider the equalities dimension of everything they do
- to make sure 'equal opportunities' is being raised in all collective bargaining – not just in bargaining on 'pure' equalities issues
- to encourage and support the development of branch self-organised groups on behalf of the branch committee
- to have a co-ordinating role among the self-organised groups, and between the self-organised groups and the rest of the branch
- to make sure new recruits know about UNISON's commitment to equality and opportunities to participate in self-organisation
- to advise the branch officers and branch committee on the development and monitoring of the action plan to achieve proportionality and fair representation
- to co-ordinate the development and training of members from under-represented groups
- to co-ordinate motions and support to delegates attending self-organised group conferences.

Health and Safety Officer

Tasks relating to the post of Health and Safety Officer:

- to increase the awareness of members, health and safety representatives and branch officers of health and safety issues
- to organise the information held by the branch on health and safety

- to co-ordinate the activity of health and safety representatives and to organise regular meetings of health and safety representatives to exchange information and consider priorities
- to be closely involved in all negotiations with the employer on matters related to health and safety
- to advise the branch committee on health and safety issues arising in the branch and to recommend policies and priorities
- to act as a link between the health and safety representatives and other branch representatives to ensure that health and safety issues are treated as an integral part of the work of the branch
- to maintain contact with the region and regional service groups, for example via the regional health and safety committee.

Communications Officer

Tasks relating to the post of Communications Officer:

- to explain UNISON's policies and to provide the information members need to play an active role in their union
- to assist with efforts to recruit new members
- to help support UNISON's national and regional campaigns
- to help create a positive image for the branch among members, potential members and the public
- to produce news-sheets or bulletins for distribution to branch members
- to lead on the development of electronic communication with members – email, web, etc
- to ensure branch communications are in the accessible formats members need – audit for any particular requirements such as large print/Braille etc
- to ensure that nationally and regionally produced publicity and campaign materials are distributed, as appropriate, to stewards and onward to members and non-members
- to monitor local media for stories which affect the branch and take appropriate action
- to help ensure that the branch makes effective contact with the media whenever necessary by:
 - creating and maintaining lists to media and contacts
 - writing press releases and 'letters to the editor'
- ensuring that appropriate individuals within the branch are available for comments, interviews etc

Membership Officer

Tasks relating to the post of Membership Officer:

- to map the branch's membership in order to identify membership density and steward coverage
- to monitor the branch's recruitment, and also leavers rate
- to work with the branch committee to develop and implement its organisation and development plan
- to make recommendations to the branch committee on recruitment, targets, resources, budgets, etc.
- International Officer
- Tasks relating to the post of International Officer:
 - to co-ordinate the branch's work on international relations
 - to ensure that branch members are informed of national policy on international matters
 - to receive and distribute relevant information
 - to encourage members to be aware of the importance of international solidarity issues within the context of the overall work by the union
 - to liaise where appropriate with regional international structures and to ensure that the views of the branch on international activities are reported appropriately
 - to liaise with other branch officers concerning publicity and education on international issues
 - to liaise with the solidarity organisations and campaigns that UNISON is affiliated to
 - to encourage members of the branch to take action and participate in international solidarity activities organised nationally or regionally
 - to ensure that information on branch activity is shared at regional and national level
 - to seek to develop an international perspective among members, stewards and branch officers.

Young Members' Officer

Tasks relating to the post of Young Member's Officer:

- to recruit new members and to encourage existing young members to become active in the branch
- to make sure issues of concern to young workers are raised by the branch
- to act as a focal point for all young members in the branch and workforce
- to receive and distribute UNISON young members information
- to encourage involvement in UNISON young members campaigns
- to build branch young members organisation and to ensure there are potential new young members' officers in the future.

Branch Young Members' Officer must be under 30 years of age for the whole of their term of office.

Labour Link Officer

Tasks relating to the post of Labour Link Officer: *(Must be a member of the APF)*

- to explain and develop the role of the UNISON Labour Link within the branch and ensure that correct procedures are followed regarding the rights of Labour Link levy payers
- to receive correspondence and information on Labour Link matters from national and regional levels and from the Labour Party
- to circulate information to Labour Link members in the branch and convene meetings of members as necessary
- to attend the UNISON branch committee and agree appropriate means of promoting UNISON policy in the party
- to organise elections for branch UNISON Labour Link representation within the regional Labour Link as necessary and ensure reports are made by branch delegates on their activities on behalf of members
- to liaise with the Labour Link regional political officer
- to promote political education and policy discussions
- to strengthen links with local Labour Parties by affiliating to constituencies and electing delegates to attend meetings
- to communicate with Labour Party members within the branch and encourage individual membership of the Labour Party
- to build campaigning work around key issues and co-ordinate campaigns with the Labour Party in council, Westminster, Scotland, Wales elections.

Women's Officer

Although the majority of UNISON members and employees in the workforce are women, women are often under-represented in our structure. There are many social, cultural and economic reasons for this, but UNISON is committed to encourage and assist women's development by having a Women's Officer.

Welfare Officer

Tasks relating to the post of Welfare Officer:

- to ensure that branch officers, stewards and workplace representatives, and also employers, have regular up-to-date information about UNISON Welfare and its range of services
- to ensure that members seeking welfare assistance receive a prompt, supportive and effective response
- to liaise and co-ordinate with regional and national levels to ensure that UNISON Welfare support is provided effectively
- to undertake training and seek advice from UNISON Welfare where necessary
- to develop and implement local welfare activity
- to develop links with local charities and sources of support such as Citizen's Advice Bureau and women's refuges.

Retired Members' Secretary

The role of the retired members' secretary is to enable retired members of the branch to continue to be active in the union through the branch's retired members' section.

Tasks relating to the post of Retired Members' Secretary:

- to ensure that those members approaching retirement have the opportunity to become retired members
- to organise meetings of the branch retired members
- to encourage the participation of retired members in branch activities as appropriate
- to establish links with other retirement organisations in the area
- to attend meetings of the branch committee (rule D6.3, unison.org.uk/acrobat/15817.pdf)
- to submit a budget to the branch committee to fund retired member activities
- to ensure that the retired members' section functions in accordance with UNISON Rule and any branch standing orders and procedures.