



DRAFT Minutes of the GMB Judges' Branch meeting 5/10/23

FOR APPROVAL at the meeting of 18/01/24

Attending: CG, RO'H, VM, DH, DC, NK

Apologies: SB, DS, NC

1. Meeting considered the frequency of committee meetings and general member meetings and unanimously **RESOLVED: to hold quarterly committee meetings and one Annual General Meeting; to retain the option of special general meetings; to produce Minutes under Part 1 (Members) and Part 2 Confidential (Committee only) form; Secretary to produce a schedule of meeting dates for 2024.**
2. Discussion took place on the issue of Committee Members names being released into the public domain as GMB Committee members. **AGREED: This decision is reserved to each individual; it may be necessary to review how officer roles may be performed where identity remains confidential; a list would be maintained The current list appears in Part 2 of this minute.**
- 3.1-3.6 Attendance at GMB and connected events. The issue was raised that whereas the branch is nominally in the South East, actually members are geographically diverse and it would be helpful if people could be enabled to attend events such as diversity summits if those are local to them even if not operated by the Region of which the member is nominally a part. It was **AGREED this would be raised with the Senior Organiser, Stuart Fegan (SF) by President and/or Sec; the Committee approves attendance at the TUC Congress and nominations for attendance may be made;**

The GMB Rule book was tabled by the President, digitally – **NOTED.**

Discussion was held as to how committee can contact all branch members so as to (for example) update them. **AGREED** that this would be followed up with SF and that all members of branch should be told that they can inform committee members of any proposals for policy positions and that committee will discuss outside meeting the formulation of policy areas and lines.

Further to the above it was **AGREED** that DC and DH would be comms leads and would draft a 'welcome' letter for new members, which among other things would invite them to give their input into policy ideas and to indicate, if they wish, what issues if any caused them to join the Union so that those can be taken on board.

Also discussed was the desirability of the branch having a 'notice board' page on the GMB site for informing members of any open matters (but that in addition some confidential means to update members, such as a newsletter) is likely to be desirable. New members should be enabled to have past minutes, and the subject of communication with new and preset members is an area which needs to be further developed probably to include a mailing list or system, for which Union support is needed. **AGREED these matters in 5 and 6 will be raised with SF DC and DH to liaise with SF**

Discussion was held as to the general strategic approach to publicity, engagement and press matters at this early stage in the Branch's development. The Committee was unanimously **AGREED the Branch approach will start out as constructive, seeking engagement with others such as senior judiciary, HMCTS and not one which launches open criticism or 'attack' in public as a first line measure.** By contrast press releases and other open statements which highlight positive work done by the Union and Branch were agreed to be an advantage both as part of recruitment strategy and as part of engagement and relationship building. Together, the comms approach above and the policy of engagement with stakeholders, publication of positive material as to Branch activity, and the encouragement of people to become workplace reps or shop stewards will operate as our recruitment strategy.

The Committee authorised the President and Sec. to formulate press releases for submission to the Organiser, in furtherance of the comms approach above.

#### **4 BRANCH POLICY POSITION**

**4(1) AGREED "The GMB Judicial Branch supports the UN position on the protection of independence of the UK Judiciary as set out in the Bangalore Principles and the Latimer House accord".**

**4(2) AGREED "The GMB Judicial Branch support and promotes diversity and inclusion in the appointment and career progression of Judges noting that the obstacles impeding achievement of this are real and are intersectional in nature"**

4(3) this was not pursued because inconsistent with the Branch decision here to adopt positive engagement before open criticism, as first line approach.

4(4) GMB Core Rule 34 was noted **AGREED** **“No GMB member shall purport to issue a media or public statement in the nature of a Branch statement outside the Rules and Branch procedure, provided always that nothing is to prevent individual members of the Branch from expressing publicly their personal views on workplace issues provided they do not hold themselves out as the views of the Branch and this will engage branch support insofar as this is in line with branch policy”**

**5** **AGREED** Topic specific policy positions to be discussed between Committee members out of meeting and in due course and that **“Any judicial branch GMB member may put forward a draft policy position through any committee member for consideration by the Committee and adoption if appropriate”**

**6** Secretary/President **The Secretary and President were authorised to achieve sororal relations with other MoJ union branches;**

The committee approved the President and Sec to liaise with the GMB officers representing prison and court staff in connection with an approach which had been received from them.

The Sec. updated the committee on the fact that a welcome letter had been sent to the new Shadow LC seeking to open up engagement, and it is hoped a meeting will be held with her in coming weeks with Pres. and/or Sec.

The committee was informed that the LC had been written to asking about RAAC concrete in courts.

The Committee **NOTED** the document tabled by the President in relation to the former LCJ having no objection to union membership by judges, which was relied on successfully by the President (along with applicable legal principles) in persuading the JCIO not to investigate a complaint made against the Secretary that being an officer was ‘political’ and misconduct. The Committee **NOTED** that albeit such had not been part of the facts of the complaint in question, the JCIO had commented in deciding not to pursue the complaint and as part of its reasons that membership was not misconduct and referred to the fact that judges do not pay the political levy.

AOB

- 7 The question of insurance for workplace reps (aka shop stewards) and how to obtain appropriate training was discussed and remitted to the President and Sec to raise with SF. One member had been given to understand such was only available if GMB was a formally recognised union by the employer. Also already mentioned above is the need to follow up on how Branch can contact members, arrange AGM, have a private newsletter and a 'noticeboard' plus the creation of welcome letters and an onboarding process as members come in (see above).

**PART B**  
**Confidential**

Members AGREEING to be publicly known as being GMB committee members:  
**CG, VM, DC, SB (re-confirmed this after meeting to Sec).**

All others **not** presently consenting.