Minutes of Branch Meeting: 5th September, 2012

Present: Janice Aitken (chair)

 Mona Clark (secretary)

 Mari-Cruz Garcia

 Carlo Morelli

 Angela Roger

 Sharon Sweeney

 Keith Williams

Apologies: three formal apologies

The Minutes of the last Branch meeting (19th July) were accepted as a true record.

The Branch meeting had been called to discuss a Motion put forward by the Higher Education SWG t to the Higher Education Sector Special Conference on 13th September. This motion outlined what was considered to be a credible strategy for escalating action in the autumn term and beyond. This would comprise a series of escalating strike action aiming to be seriously disruptive and coercive. That would be an escalation of strike action from one day, then two days, then three days, and so on, for the month of October and from the 29th October and thereafter 5 day strikes. There was an amendment from Carlo Morelli which proposed a series of fortnightly one day strike throughout October and November, Additionally the amendment proposed a recall HE Special Conference to determine a credible timetable for escalating strike action in the spring term, and that UCU should campaign to win support for this action with students as part of a wider anti-austerity campaign. (See attached document)

As there were so few members at the meeting, it was formally abandoned and those there had an informal discussion on the content of the motion and the amendment. The following points were made:

* One day strikes over a period of time would more easily allow mobilisation of members
* The SWG timetable for strike action would ask too much of members in terms of loss of income as it could mean strikes on 15 workdays out of 30
* The motion had been put forward with a view to putting as much pressure as possible on employers to re-open the negotiations.
* There appears to be considerable support for working to contract, although there is little evidence that working to contract has had any impact on the employers.
* The industrial action proposed in the amendment would be part of a general challenge to employers over pay, pensions, conditions and the austerity climate.

However it was agreed that the reality of any mandate for any industrial action coming from DUCU is impossible, due to the very low turnout at this Branch meeting. An informal vote was taken of those present, the results being 1 for the amendment, 4 against the amendment and 2 abstentions. The lack of numbers present determined that the amendment was given no mandate to go from DUCU

Mona Clark,

Secretary.

November 8th, 2012