

Aberdeen Section Committee Meeting – Minutes

19th February 2025, 1pm, join by Webex and in-person in the Gill Room

1. Welcome, attendance and check-in –

Present – [Matt Aitkenhead (MA) facilitator], Lynne Batik (LB), Rachel Creaney (RC), David Donnelly (DD), Stefan Jindra (SJ) Ewan McCubbin (EM) [minute taker], Margaret McKeen (MM) [minute taker], Jackie Potts (JP), Doug Salt (DS), Tami Wooldridge (TW)

Apologies – Sam Poskitt (SPo), Mhairi Coyle (MLC), Jason Owen (JO), Liz Dinnie (LD), Esther Banks (EB), Simone Piras (SP),

2. Matters arising from last meeting.

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
Issues/Queries	None raised	/

3. Redundancy

Topic	SITUATION	UPDATE
	Had been asked at most recent HR/union meeting. HR can provide these numbers, but confidentiality prevents them from being widely disseminated.	LD [CARRIED OVER] to discuss EQIA with the next HR/ union catch up meeting. (26 th of February)

4. Report from Branch / HNCC meetings

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
Branch Executive Committee (BEC)	BEC meeting minutes are up to date. The next BEC is 10 th March.	MA [STANDING ACTION] to add the minutes from the last BEC to the OneDrive folder once they are approved, (usually at the following Branch meeting).
HNCC	The last HNCC was the 12 th of December. The next HNCC will be the 20 th of March. Questions need to be nothing that is repeated or more appropriate to another forum (e.g. ED&I, HSQE etc.) repeated or more appropriate in HNCC and should be institute wide. Please ask if you are unsure.	ALL [STANDING ACTION] to send any questions for HNCC to LD/MA/MM via email
HR – catch up meetings	<p>Pay rewards implementation is being worked through. HR have presented to the Prospect Branch Committee and the committee are collating their feedback. At present still the documents are still confidential, but more information will be available soon.</p> <p>Current bands are being calibrated to new system. Pay progression to be retained, with the introduction of new accelerated progression process for above and beyond performance. Definition of performance exceeding expectations yet to be defined.</p>	/

5. Campus issues during development work

<p>1. Tay City deal. Dundee campus</p> <p>2. Craigiebuckler Campus Action Plan or Just Transition Hub, site</p>	<p>Nothing to add.</p> <p>There is still a bit of an issue in terms of communications and what is happening. There seems to be a lack of communication, or they are not prominent enough or leave give short notice. Timescales get more regular updates.</p>	<p>ALL [STANDING ACTION] ALL to discuss issues that arise around space planning/impacts on working environment arising from development works.</p> <p>MA to check with Alasdair to see if Tay City Deal is complete and can be removed from the agenda.</p> <p>EM to follow up with comms about announcements relating to the development work.</p>
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development and ILUSC	<p>There are general concerns across many groups around desk to staff ratio. Some members of staff have lost space due to the development work and this is likely to be permanent also HoDs have been asked to reduce the ratio in their areas. This could potentially be a welfare issue and cause stress. There are concerns that once the development work is completed, things may get worse. Some groups are increasing and so maybe more desks could be added to the existing spaces, where space is available.</p> <p>It was discussed if this is part of planning when recruiting? (e.g. when proposing a new post, do people plan where to put them)? From past evidence, it doesn't seem to be case.</p> <p>Observation made that if space isn't considered at right point during recruitment cycle, problem will just get worse.</p>	
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6. Section organisation

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
General	Co-opt Simone Paris as an ordinary member – passed no objections. Co-opt Jason Owen as co- H&S rep.	/

7. Personal Cases / issues raised by membership

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
Issues/Queries	None raised. Couple of long running conversations going on.	/
Government changes to visa processing and NHS costs for overseas colleagues	<p>No updates.</p> <p>General acknowledgement that this is a challenge. Exec and HR fully aware of challenges, as are Prospect HQ.</p>	ALL [STANDING ACTION] to keep an eye on impacts of government changes to visa processing and NHS costs for overseas colleagues

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
Respect in the workplace	<p>MA wrote a document on guidance to managers sent to HR to see how it could be turned into a guidance note. HR like the document and are looking to align with their policies and guidance. The document contains lots of information about respect in the workplace.</p> <p>Discussion relating to the tribunal running involving Fife NHS case vs one of their nurses over changing areas. It was recognised this is a very complicated issue to resolve. There were concerns that the institute policies around shared space and gender weren't clear.</p>	<p>MA/ MM to check if the guidance around the issues relating shared spaces and gender relating to this issue are sufficiently clear at the next HR/ union catch up. [Note- since the meeting MM checked with HR and their response was that no action is needed to be taken as the policies were in place and we don't have that type of space involved in the tribunal case at the institute.]</p>

8. Process around changing working patterns

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
Workplace flexibility issues	<p>There are concerns that the more recent 'tweaked' flexible working policy is not so well known about as it's not available on connect yet. It's unclear if this policy has been ratified at HNCC. The line from the Exec is staff should be familiar with all institute policies, but they are sometimes hard to find on connect or to track down the latest copy if they haven't been uploaded to Connect yet.</p> <p>In terms of the flexible working policy, the policy suggests that staff should be in office 2 days per week but have stressed this is guidance and not a hard line. There can be flexibility and should be discussed with your line manager. The view from HR is that the guidelines could be used to help with any issues, e.g. welfare</p>	<p>ALL [STANDING ACTION] Keep on the agenda and report any issues.</p>

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	concerns if staff haven't been on site or in contact regularly with line managers etc.. There are difference between departments but the level of flexibility will depend upon the needs of the department. Any decisions must be not to the detriment of normal business of that department.	
Working effectively from home	No updates.	ALL [STANDING ACTION] keep on the agenda and report any issues

9. Pay and conditions

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
Pay & Conditions	<p>MA has requested that pay deal is reported in the Prospect Pay Bulletin. Prospect HQ are working on it adding it to a future bulletin.</p> <p>Branch are looking for people to act within the pay negotiating committee for the coming negotiation round. There is usually one person from each Section who is experienced and one other who doesn't need to have experience. Training is given before talks start so anybody coming forward will be supported. Having 2 reps from each Section allows flexibility if one is unable to attend.</p>	ALL If anyone wishes to get involved in the pay negotiating committee, speak to MA or DD or approach one of your reps.

10. Policies

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
General	AS in Section 8 above. There are still difficulties for people trying to find policies on Connect.	<p>ALL [STANDING ACTION] to raise any issues with policy with MA, LD, MM, or Tess Vernon (for BIOSS)</p> <p>ALL [STANDING ACTION] to keep an eye out for issues around the new flexible working policy.</p>

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
Promotions / JEGS	Promotion process has started, first has been phase completed.	MA to raise issues with short-form JEGS procedure with HR

11. Reports from

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
Prospect Comms Group	RC will be stepping back at the end of June and looking for volunteers to step in while she's on extended leave. RC has been in discussion with Prospect HQ about using other software. Prospect HQ database system and mailing system will be updated as of today (19 th Feb) until 4 th of March. It's hoped the update and may help with issues we have had around how we've had to attach appointments rather than just attaching to emails.	RC to investigate new email software called Movement to find out if it could streamline our communication process and overcome some glitches. ALL Members can contact RC if they are interested in volunteering for Comms role.
Health & Safety (JO, LB) 1. General	JO not present so his action was carried forward. There are 2 different alarm systems during the development, one for the institute and one for Keir covering the development area. Certainly during working time, if one alarm system is triggered, it triggers the other. It's uncertain if this is the case outwith working hours.	LB [CARRIED FORWARD] to ask if Heads of Department can have access to the figures around the recorded number of sickness absence events. {CARRIED FORWARD} JO to ask HSQE about alarms situation during building work. [NOTE- JO has since got details of the alarm systems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An alarm activation SMS is auto forwarded to the Security Officer mobile phone which is manned 24/7 by the reception staff / on-duty Security Officer An alarm activation SMS is auto forwarded to the Site Operations Manager mobile phone

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADT monitoring station manages the Fire / Intruder alarms and will call the Security Officer mobile phone if an alarm is activated • KIER have in place an independent fire alarm covering the JT Hub project work areas – a repeater alarm sounder device is held at the reception.]
Environment (SJ, SP)	<p>Next HSQE meet will take place on the 20th February.</p> <p>It was discussed that the new energy costs will be known soon. So far it looks like costs may go down slightly. Gas prices have been agreed but electricity costs still to be finally agreed upon.</p> <p>HSQE are collating a list of things we can do as an institute to ultimately help reach energy savings and help meet Net Zero but energy use will still be a big factor in this.</p> <p>Sustainability group meets of 3 weeks' time.</p>	/
Equity (LB)	<p>No updates.</p> <p>Figures have been passed to Branch on equity around redundancy, however, at present the figures can potentially identify posts and people involved. It was discussed that we could go back to HR catch up and see if we can generalise the figures to avoid identification at the next catch-up meeting.</p>	<p>ALL Keep as a standing item.</p> <p>(?) to go back to HR and request a more summarised set of data to avoid identification of individuals.</p>
Membership (MA)	Membership is good but new members are always welcome.	/
Employee forum	<p>Some departments have yet to have people step forwards as reps, there seems to be some reluctance to be involved.</p> <p>They may have to tweak the quotas for reps for each department. It should be a fluid process, especially for those undergoing change, e.g. restructuring may make a section of department an</p>	

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
	autonomous department in its own right and have to be represented. This is particularly relevant to Professional services groups. However, there is no time limit/ deadline on volunteering as a rep.	

12. Training

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
Organised by Prospect	<p>Training available to all members: https://www.tuc.org.uk/training</p> <p>ACAS have started doing free webinars: Webinars Acas</p> <p>Reps 2 training will be running in March in Edinburgh. Please note you do not have to be serving on committee to undergo Reps training. Any member can undertake this or any rep training.</p> <p>Training for reps Prospect</p>	/
Organised by Institute	People have been asked to repeat iHasco run courses they had only completed in the last 6 months because of the October cut off date for refreshing certain training course. This has caused frustration and having to repeat the course takes time away from project. Contract work. Members are advised to raise with HR helpdesk as this has been an issue.	LB [CARRIED FORWARD] to ask HR if questions on training can be included in staff satisfaction survey and when is the next staff satisfaction survey going to come out.
Miscellaneous	No updates.	/

13. Conferences & External Events

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
ATUC (SJ)	All updated until January 2025.	SJ [STANDING ACTION] to upload minutes from ATUC meetings when available.
Other meetings		/

14. AOB

TOPIC	CONTEXT/DISCUSSION	ACTION
Vote of thanks	The committee would like to thank Malcolm Collie for his years of service on the Section Committee. It was great to have his input.	
Next Section meeting	19 th of March at 1pm in The Gill Room and online. Facilitator: RC	/