



*Bolton Branch*

## RULE BOOK 2024

**Bolton Branch 06450 - Branch Rules  
As amended AGM 13th March 2024**



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## **BOLTON BRANCH (06450) OF UNISON RULES**

### **1. BRANCH NAME**

The Branch shall be called Bolton Branch of UNISON.

### **2. RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL ORGANISATION**

Branch rules shall be in accordance with national rules, decisions of the Annual Delegate Conference and the National Executive Council (NEC).

Any member may have a copy of the current Rule Book.

The Branch shall make an audited annual return of branch income, expenditure, assets and liabilities as prescribed by the NEC and in accordance with national rules.

### **3. AIMS OF THE BRANCH**

To support and pursue the Aims and Objectives contained in the UNISON Rule Book, and the Objectives agreed by UNISON's National Executive Committee annually, and in particular:

To achieve the aims and targets set annually through the Organising Framework.

### **4. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POSITON**

The Branch shall seek to ensure that discriminatory acts are not committed against any persons by the branch, it's members or officers, on grounds such as race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age or religion.

### **5. BECOMING A MEMBER**

Every person wishing to become a member of the Branch shall complete and sign a membership application form and return it to the Branch Office or the appropriate Regional or National office as may from time to time be determined. Alternatively, prospective members may join on line via the UNISON website [www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk) An application for membership takes effect from the date upon which a completed form is received by the branch, region or national office.

If the branch declines to accept an application the procedures as laid down in the National Rules will be followed. Such a decision will be explained to the individual in writing together with details of appeal rights.

All Members shall observe the Rules of the Union and shall be afforded such rights and benefits from membership as prescribed in National Rules. The NEC may terminate an individual's membership in accordance with the National Rules.

## **6. SUBSCRIPTIONS**

It is the obligation of the member to ensure that their subscriptions are paid to the branch/union on the date on which it is due. Payment will usually be by docas (check-off) arrangements made through the employer or by direct debit. Members will be notified of the appropriate subscription on joining and of any changes prescribed by the National Delegates Conference.

## **7. ARREARS OF SUBSCRIPTIONS**

In accordance with National Rules, any person owing more than three months' subscriptions shall cease to be a member of the branch unless the National Executive Council or Branch Committee decides otherwise.

## **8. CONDUCT OF MEMBERS**

Disciplinary action may be taken by the branch against any member who does not follow the rules of the union.

## **9. BRANCH STRUCTURE**

There will be an Annual General Meeting of the Branch to elect branch officers. The Annual General Meeting will also confirm members of the branch committee, to receive the branch accounts and report on branch development from the branch committee.

The AGM may comprise one meeting or a series of aggregate meetings in order to maximise the active participation of members.

The Annual General Meeting will confirm the delegations to Regional council, Conferences and group meetings, who have been elected by Branch Committee.

The Annual General Meeting will also ratify the appointment of 2 Auditors as proposed by Branch Committee.

The Annual General Meeting will also ratify the Stewards of Branch and the members of the Branch Committee.

Other general meetings may be called by the Branch Committee, or by 5% of the membership of the Branch, or by the NEC.

The AGM will determine the basis of representation in the Branch and the number of Stewards and other representatives to be elected in each work group or workplace.

The quorum for any general meeting, including the annual general meeting is **75** members of the branch at a single meeting or through aggregate meetings.

Sections will be established for each bargaining group covered by the branch to provide for the participation and representation of members in that section in accordance with rule.

The branch committee will comprise all branch officers (see rule 6 below), and stewards, and will be responsible for the general organisation and development of the branch and for policy and decision making on matters affecting all members within the branch between general meetings.

The core officers' group will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the branch in accordance with the decisions and authority delegated by the branch committee. Its membership and role is as described in rule 12.

In the event of exceptional circumstances which require a Branch decision in between Branch Committee meetings, the Branch Chair may make that decision notwithstanding it should be ratified at the next Branch Committee.

All branch, general meetings including AGM and Branch Committee, Core Officer and Self Organised Group Meetings can be physical, online or a blend of the two (Hybrid), whichever is safest and most appropriate for member involvement. Branch and Branch Committee quorums will remain as outlined in branch rules and voting at all quorate meetings can take place to make decisions. In addition, where decisions need to be made by the Branch Committee between meetings, an email online vote can take place with the same quorum.

## **10. BRANCH OFFICERS / CONVENORS**

a) The Branch shall elect the following Branch Officers annually in accordance with rule 10c:

- Branch Chair
- Branch Secretary
- Treasurer
- Vice Branch Chair
- Assistant Branch Secretary
- Assistant Treasurer
- Membership Officer
- Health and Safety Officer
- Education Secretary
- Lifelong Learning Officer
- Communications Officer
- Welfare Officer
- Equalities Coordinator(s)
- Women's Officer
- Young Members' Officer

International Officer  
Sports and Social Officer  
Environmental/ Green Officer  
Labour Link Officer (elected by members who pay the APF levy only)  
Retired Members' Secretary (elected by the retired members)

- b) Each section within the branch shall elect a convenor, deputy convenor (optional) and Senior Stewards from amongst the stewards in that section in accordance with rule 10e.
- c) Election of Branch Officers:
- i. Branch Officers may be nominated by the Branch Committee or any two members, with the exception of the Labour Link Officer who will be elected by the APF members only.
  - ii. The Regional Organiser can be called upon to oversee the process.
  - iii. Candidates should be full members as defined in Rule C2.3 of the union rule book.
  - iv. If there is more than one candidate for any post candidates will be given the opportunity to address the AGM for 5 minutes and answer questions for 5 minutes.
  - v. The vote will be conducted by secret ballot at the AGM.
  - vi. Where no valid nomination has been received by the deadline, nominations can be called for and candidate elected at the AGM or endorsed at the next general meeting.
- d) In the event of a casual vacancy arising from the officer group the Branch committee shall elect from the general membership a replacement.
- e) Election of Convenors
- The process for nomination and election shall be that the nomination will be by the Section Committee or by any two members of the Section Committee. The annual election, prior to the AGM, shall be carried out at the section committee. Only members of the Selection Committee shall be eligible to vote in that election.
- f) Election of Deputy Convenor/s and Senior Stewards  
The process for nomination and election shall be as in (e).
- g) New Officers to take up their post immediately following the AGM in March.

## **11. BRANCH COMMITTEE**

Representation on the Branch Committee will be agreed by the AGM and will include:

Branch Officers

A representative of each self-organised group

Convenors, Senior Stewards and Stewards.

A member from the Young Members section

A member from the Retired members section

The Branch Committee shall administer Branch business in accordance with the national rules and guidance.

The Branch Committee shall ensure that sections within the branch are appropriately resourced to ensure the effective participation of members, recruitment and organisation, representation, and collective bargaining and campaigning on behalf of members in each section.

The Branch Committee shall meet monthly.

The branch will review Steward participation. If stewards do not attend 3 consecutive meetings without communications to the branch, their Stewardship will be converted to a contact status.

## **12. THE CORE OFFICERS' GROUP**

The Core Officers Group will comprise the following core officers: Branch Secretary, Branch Chair, Branch Treasurer, Assistant Secretary, Vice Chair, Assistant Treasurer, Membership Officer, Communication Officer, Education Secretary, Campaigns Officer, Equalities, Women's Officer (and others as appropriate).

The Core Officers Group will meet monthly to ensure the effective day to day management of the branch within the parameters of the decisions and guidance issued by the branch committee. The Core Officers Group may commit to no expenditure, policy decision or affiliation that has not been previously agreed by the Branch Committee.

## **13. SECTION CONVENORS AND STEWARDS**

Sections comprise all members within the relevant Department and/or employer base and will have autonomy within the branch in respect of collective bargaining with their employer(s) only, subject to the policies and any guidelines and procedures of the branch, region and national union.

Each Section will elect, from each workplace, one Steward per 20 members of part thereof.

Sections will be led by a convenor, a deputy convenor and one Senior Steward per hundred members and who will be the senior accredited representative within the section, and a committee of all accredited representatives within the section.

The Convenors and Stewards duties are attached as Schedule B.

#### **14. CONDUCT AT BRANCH MEETINGS**

- a) All meetings will be conducted in a fair and democratic manner, (guidelines for conduct at meetings are attached as Schedule B).
- b) All meetings should be advertised widely, as far in advance as possible. (In the case of the AGM, all members will be notified in writing at least 12 weeks before the meeting (or first aggregate meeting)
- c) The procedures to be used at meetings will be explained clearly and will be conducted in line with the Branch Standing Orders.
- d) The Branch will maintain records of meetings, financial records, books of accounts and other appropriate records to enable the Branch to function.

#### **15. EQUALITIES COMMITTEE AND SELF ORGANISED GROUPS**

The Equalities Committee will comprise the following officers: Branch Secretary, Branch Equalities Officer(s), Self-Organised Group Chairs (and others as appropriate).

The Equalities Committee will meet quarterly to ensure the co-ordination and monitoring of the branch's equality work. The Equalities Committee will provide a forum to ensure co-ordination and development of the Self Organised Groups on behalf of the Branch Committee.

The Branch recognises, promotes and supports the following Self Organised Groups:  
Black Members  
Disabled Members  
LBGT+  
Women in UNISON

Self organised groups may:

- Elect one representative from each group to attend the Branch Committee
- ii) Formulate proposals, motions and other initiatives for the Branch Committee or branch meetings
  - iii) Receive financial support from the branch in accordance with UNISON's guidelines
  - iv) Report on their activities to the Annual General Meeting of the branch and the quarterly Equalities Committee.



The branch recognises, promotes and supports other groups of members, specifically:

Young Members

Retired members

These two groups shall

- 1) Elect one representative to from each group to attend the Branch Committee
- 2) Formulate proposals, motions and other initiatives for the branch committee or branch meetings
- 3) Receive financial support from the branch in accordance with UNISON's guidelines
- 4) Report on their activities to the Annual General Meeting of the branch and quarterly Equalities Committee.

## **16. BRANCH DELEGATES**

All Delegate positions, whether representing the Branch as a whole or one of the self-organised groups, shall be subject to election.

These elections to be held at Branch Committee or at a meeting of the relevant self-organised group, as appropriate.

The results of such elections to be minuted as appropriate.

That, to ensure the efficient use of branch resources, all arrangements for the attendance of delegates at conferences to be made through the Branch Office.

## **17. AFFILIATIONS**

Affiliations to relevant constituency Labour Parties will be decided by the APF membership.

Affiliations shall be determined by the AGM or Branch Committee.

## **18. DONATIONS**

Donations shall be agreed by the AGM or Branch Committee in accordance with the Union's policies and objectives, the Branch financial regulations and the national rules.

## **19. EXPENSES**

Rates of expenses for members attending meetings or training on behalf of the Branch shall be agreed by the AGM from the Treasurers report in accordance with the Scheme for Branch Expenses contained in the Branch Finances Handbook.

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Branch shall be agreed by the AGM from the Treasurer's report in accordance with the Scheme for Branch Expenses contained in the Branch Finances Handbook.

## **20. BRANCH FINANCES**

- a) The branch shall keep a bank/building society account in the name of the branch and will maintain a financial record of all assets and transactions in accordance with UNISON guidelines.
- b) The Branch Bankers will be the Unity Trust Bank PLC.
- c) The Branch shall hold a dedicated Premises Fund and a dedicated Industrial Action Fund in line with national rules and regulations.

## **21. HONORARIA**

The Branch may pay an honorarium as a discretionary one-off payment to lay members in recognition of voluntary work undertaken on behalf of the Branch. Such payments shall be agreed by the AGM in accordance with the Scheme for Honoraria Payments in Branches contained in the Branch Finances Handbook.

## **22. MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS**

Communications to the media on behalf of the Branch shall be made by the Branch Secretary or her/his nominated officer.

## **23. BRANCH STAFF**

The branch secretary will be responsible for the employment, direction and supervision of any staff employed by the branch consistent with employment law and current good practice.

## **24. APPROVAL/ALTERATIONS TO BRANCH RULES**

- a) Branch rules must be agreed by two thirds of members present and voting at a quorate branch meeting.
- b) Branch rules must be approved in accordance with UNISON's procedures.
- c) Any changes to the Branch rules must be agreed and approved in the same way.

## **SCHEDULE A**

### **CONVENORS' AND STEWARDS' DUTIES**

#### **DUTIES OF THE CONVENOR**

The duties of the Convenor will include:

- Forwarding to the Branch Secretary the names of stewards and Branch Committee members elected and deal with any vacancy in the constituency representation arising during the year.
- Arranging Department Stewards meetings at least 6 times a year.
- Dealing with grading matters, grievances and disciplinary matters on behalf of members within their own department.
- Leading the staff side of Department Joint Consultative in negotiations with department managers; and
- Serving on the Council's Single Joint Consultative Committee (or negotiating committee in the case of other employers).

#### **ELECTION OF STEWARDS AND BRANCH COMMITTEE**

- a) Each Convenor will:
- At least 28 days prior to the Annual General Meeting, identify the Constituencies for the election of Stewards;
  - At least 14 days prior to the Annual General Meeting, to make arrangements for the election of stewards;
  - At least 7 days prior to the Annual General Meeting, forward to the Branch Secretary the names of the stewards;
- b) Each Convenor must notify the Branch Secretary of the resignation of any Branch Committee Member in writing and arrange a by-election if necessary.
- c) In the event of any constituency failing to elect a steward, the Branch Committee may appoint a person to receive communication from the Branch.
- d) Any Branch Committee Member who is unable to attend any meeting of the Branch Committee may substitute another member of the Union from the same Department to attend the meeting on his/her behalf.

## STEWARDS DUTIES

The main duties of Stewards will be to:-

- receive and distribute all communications to members in the workplace.
  - represent members in grievance and disciplinary matters and, where necessary, enlist the help of the Department Convenor or Branch Secretary; and
  - represent members' views at the Departmental Stewards meetings.
- Meetings to take place monthly to:

- i. Discuss matters to be referred to the Branch Committee.
- ii. Discuss Service Conditions matters and problems.
- iii. Discuss items of business for Department Joint Consultative Committees.
- iv. Elect members to attend the Department Joint Consultative Committee.

## **SCHEDULE B**

### **CONDUCT AT ALL MEETINGS**

All meetings will be informal, welcoming and friendly, with members being encouraged to take an active part in discussion. Efforts will be made to ensure that discussion and debate takes place in an atmosphere that is not aggressive or overly procedural. Standing orders will be easily understood and used to aid the organisation, not to exclude or patronise those with less experience.

**All participants at all UNSION meetings MUST:-**

- Refrain from personal attacks.
- Allow speakers to continue uninterrupted.
- Give due credit to other members' points of view.
- Speak concisely and avoid dominating discussion.
- Allow and encourage all those who want to contribute to do so.
- Where representing a work group, report their views accurately.
- Respect the chairperson's instructions to maintain the above requirements.

Any member not observing the above may be asked to leave the meeting.

## **SCHEDULE C**

### **Financial Protocol**

All Officer and Self Organised Group expenditure must be processed through the Branch Office so that proper records can be kept for audit purposes.

Where possible goods must be ordered through the Branch, but if emergency purchases are made receipts must be provided.

All expenditure must be signed by the budget holder and counter signed by a Core Branch Officer i.e. Secretary, Chairperson or Treasurer.

Cheques under £500 must be signed by two Branch Officers, one of which, apart from exceptional circumstances i.e. sickness, annual leave or emergencies, must be the Treasurer.

Cheques over £500 must be signed by three Branch Officers, one of which, apart from exceptional circumstances i.e. sickness, annual leave or emergencies, must be the Treasurer.

An asset register must be maintained by the Branch staff and any new purchases of furniture and/or equipment entered into it as they occur.

All physical resources i.e. laptops, cameras, mobile phones etc must be signed for in the Branch Office by the person receiving them who will then be accepting responsibility for their safekeeping and return.

Physical resources i.e. laptops, cameras, mobile phones must be returned to the Branch Office and receipted by Branch Staff.

At the end of his/her appointment the Officer shall deliver to the Branch Chairperson any books, records and other property belonging to the Union.

Expenses forms must be completed for all claims and receipts provided wherever possible. This includes reimbursements for purchases/bookings made on behalf of the Branch.

All financial documents remain the property of the Branch and must be kept on Branch premises except by special arrangement.

## **Bolton Branch Chair**

Name: Philip Chanin

Signature: 

Date: 14.03.24



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