



Minutes (LPD 1156-1170) of a meeting of the London Production Divisional Committee held at 1100 on Saturday 8 November 2014 in Conference Room 1 at BECTU Head Office, 373-377 Clapham Road, London SW9 9BT

1 Present

Ian Sands (Sound Branch), Mark Andrews (Sound Branch), Nikos Nikolalaos (Sound Branch), Roy Dawson (Props Branch), Peter McInerney (Film Artistes Branch)

Chair: Peter Cox (Post Production & Facilities Branch)

Vice Chair: Nick Ray (Certified Grips & Crane Technicians Branch)

Secretary: Tony Scott (Animation & New Media Branch)

Assistant Secretary: Tim Potter (Camera Department Branch)

General Secretary: Gerry Morrissey

Supervisory Official: Tom Bell

Observers: Jane Perry (BBC Division), Maxim Ford (NEC), Mick Dick (NEC)

2 Apologies

Ian Noah (Sound Branch), Izzy Charman (Writers Producers & Directors Branch).

3 Minutes of previous meeting

LPD letter 19 was submitted, and it was

Agreed (LPD 1156) to endorse LPD Committee minutes (LPD 1140-1155) version 1.0 of the meeting held on 13 September 2014.

4 Matters arising

None.

5 Statement on BECTU finances by the General Secretary

The Vice Chair chaired this section of the meeting to enable the Chair to speak freely on this matter.

General Secretary Gerry Morrissey outlined BECTU's current financial situation. He said the main financial problem is the deficit in the BECTU staff pension scheme, which stands at £7m according to the last triennial review held in November 2013. The review showed that the fund had risen from £11m to £15m, but the estimated obligations had increased due to higher membership longevity and low yields on government bonds.

Although interest rates may rise after the next general election, and another review could be held that would reflect the changes, it would be unlikely to get the union out of its current financial problem.

The GS reported that the NEC had asked him to examine the alternatives to making cuts of £500,000 which could be necessary by January 2017 when contributions to the pension scheme are due to rise.

The GS said it was going to be extremely difficult to rely on increasing the union's income by recruitment and retention. Although the overall membership had risen in the last year, the balance of the membership had shifted towards lower paid workers.

He reported that the possibilities of merging with various other trade unions had been examined. He said his overriding criteria were that the identity of BECTU should be preserved, that members' benefits should be protected and enhanced, and that the existing staff should be protected.

He reported that all other sister unions in the FEU have similar financial problems as BECTU, and merging with them would not solve the union's financial situation; he also said that merging with any of the large unions had the danger of losing the identity of BECTU. He said merging with Prospect could allow the union to continue with its own identity. Prospect has the funds to cover the deficit in the BECTU pension scheme, has 114,000 members and an income of £17.8m per year with assets of £35m. He said contact had already been made with Prospect, and a further meeting was scheduled for 14 November 2014.

Prospect could enable BECTU to become part of a separate division within their structure, which could also include their telecommunications members who had previously been in the union Connect, and could be based in the existing BECTU head office. He also said this new division could have an annual conference, which could feed into the Prospect biannual conference.

If this proposed merger is to be considered it will have to be put to the 2016 BECTU Annual Conference, so that a ballot of members could take place afterwards, which, if approved, would lead to amalgamation of the unions before January 2017, when increased contributions to the BECTU pension scheme are due.

Responding to the proposal to amalgamate with another union, the Chair (who was not in the meeting chair for this item) said it presupposes there is safety in being part of a large union. He said that greater recruitment in our industries would follow from a higher profile commitment to workers' rights and the ultimate aim of a workers' state. He also noted the implications of the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) currently under discussion.

He said he was concerned about the parity of freelance representation on a future NEC in an amalgamated union, and that freelancers were a source of strength. He said LPD and RPD would suffer due to the fact that two mergers were involved: BECTU and Connect, and BECTU/Connect and Prospect, and therefore the influence of the production divisions would diminish.

The GS said there is no freelance divisions in the union, and under the Prospect proposal, the new division which includes BECTU would be the largest in the amalgamated union.

In answer to a question, the GS said he would prefer to resolve the financial problem through increased recruitment and retention, but it was wise to have a plan B if this was not possible - ie amalgamate with another suitable union. He said if the increased recruitment did not resolve the problem, and if a proposed amalgamation was rejected by the membership, he would have to implement cuts of £500,000 in January 2017.

Following further discussion, it was

Agreed (LPD 1157) to note the GS report on this matter and await developments.

6 Industrial reports

- a) Feature film negotiations – The SO reported on the special joint meeting of the London Production Division and the Regional Production Division held on Sunday 12 October 2014, referred to in LPD 1142, concerning negotiations relating to introducing to a new PACT feature film agreement. He said the meeting, involving fourteen LPD branches, was the largest gathering of feature film representatives ever held in the union.

Three items were agreed at the meeting:

1. to write to PACT saying the current draft feature film proposals in their current form are unacceptable, and that BECTU will be tabling counter proposals within the next four weeks with an intention to reopen negotiations and produce a further draft proposal by the end of March 2015.
2. branches encompassed by the feature film proposals provide to Head Office, by midday on Monday 27 October 2014 at the latest, with rate cards for each relevant job category, based on a 55 camera hour week (excluding holiday payments) for four levels of production budget: under £1m, between £1.5m and £3m, between £5m and £15m, and over £40m.
3. branches encompassed by the feature film proposals provide to Head Office, by midday on Monday 27 October 2014 at the latest, details of any issues they have with the grade ladders, along with the terms and conditions, detailed in the current draft feature film proposals.

On point 1 the SO said that PACT had been contacted, and they have accepted that negotiations will have to re-open. On points 2 and 3, feedback from branches has been collected, and is currently being collated.

The SO said a meeting of the Film Negotiating Committee, planned to be held to discuss the re-opening of the PACT negotiations, had attempted to be convened on 12 or 13 of November 2014, but lack of feedback from relevant branches had meant this had been abandoned. Following discussion, and taking into the account the timescale outlined above means that counter proposals need to be tabled by mid November 2014, it was

Agreed (LPD 1158) to convene a meeting of the Film Negotiating Committee during the week beginning 17 November 2014, to enable the committee to consider BECTU's counter proposals before the PACT talks re-open.

- b) ITV recognition – No report.
- c) Television factual campaign - The SO reported, in connection with the meeting held on 24 June 2014 with a number of HR personnel from independent production companies to discuss the Code of Practice originating from the Freelancers' Fair 2013, that feedback was still awaited from the companies, and it was

Agreed (LPD 1159) to await feedback and any counter proposals from the independent production companies.

- d) Television drama production – No report concerning Grips working on high end BBC drama productions.
- e) Independent television drama production – In connection with the document *A proposal from PACT: A PACT-BECTU freelance agreement for TV drama*, dated August 2014, the SO reported a further meeting with PACT and representatives from three independent production companies had taken place.

The scope of the proposals was wider than expected, but did not include continuing drama (soaps) or very high end drama (eg one off joint productions). He said the proposals were structured into two budget levels with a minimum rates formula – ie a simpler version of the PACT feature film proposals.

He said the Joint Divisional TV Drama Negotiating Committee had not been convened yet, and following discussion, it was

Agreed (LPD 1160) to convene a meeting as soon as possible of the Joint Divisional TV Drama Negotiating Committee, referred to in LPD 1046, to discuss starting negotiations with PACT on this issue.

Agreed (LPD 1161) to monitor progress on this issue and await progress with interest.

7 Branch and membership reports

The August and September 2014 LPD membership statistics, extracted from the relevant NEC Reports, were submitted. They showed an overall LPD membership increase from 8012 to 8155. Following discussion, it was

Agreed (LPD 1162) to note the August and September 2014 LPD membership statistics.

- a) Animation & New Media Branch – Nothing to report.
- b) Camera Department Branch – It was reported the PACT feature film negotiations had generated a great deal of interest amongst branch members.
- c) Certified Grips & Crane Technicians Branch - A report was given of talks with ITV.
- d) Film Artists Branch - It was reported that the first recruitment night had been held recently, which had resulted in ten new members. Membership has increased by 8% in the last six months.
- e) Post Production & Facilities Branch – Ongoing branch activities were reported.
- f) Props Branch – A meeting of Props Masters, held on 3 April 2014, was reported.
- g) Sound Branch – Discussion on introducing a branch mailing list was reported.
- h) Writers Producers & Directors Branch – It was reported the August and September 2014 LPD membership statistics revealed an increase of 11 branch members, that all new WPD members are now being contacted directly by the branch, and that the branch AGM, scheduled for 1 December 2014, is planned to be an open meeting to which all members are invited. Following discussion of a proposition agreed at the WPD Branch Committee held on 13 September, it was

Agreed (LPD 1163) to recommend to the NEC that it sends congratulations to our members at the Ritzy cinema for their hard-fought campaign. We note that despite this brave effort and a significant pay rise, the principle of the London Living Wage is not yet established. We therefore ask that: (1) the union should redouble its efforts to recruit those who work in cinemas, and (2) all members bear in mind the living wage when negotiating with employers.

8 Communications

A report was given of the 9 July 2014 meeting of the Communications Committee, whose work includes the examination of the BECTU site home page design.

9 Annual Members Forum 2014

Following discussion, including the implications of the re-opening of the feature film negotiations, it was

Agreed (LPD 1164) to defer holding the next LPD Annual Members Forum until early 2015

10 Reports

- a) NEC - The NEC minutes of 14 June 2014 (NEC 110727-10780) were submitted, and following discussion, it was
Agreed (LPD 1165) to note the NEC minutes of 14 June 2014 (NEC 10727-10780).
- b) Divisional – A report was given of the last BBC Divisional Committee meeting held on 29 October 2014, which included details of proposals that may involve transferring some or all of BBC Production into a BBC wholly owned subsidiary.
- c) Equality – No report.

- d) Health and safety – The Secretary drew the attention of the committee to the continued progress through Parliament of the Deregulation Bill which exclude self-employed film, broadcasting and theatre workers from health and safety regulations.
- e) Training – Following discussion of the evaluation of media related courses, and the role of Skillset, it was
Agreed (LPD 1166) to refer to the Training Committee the procedure applied to how media related courses are evaluated by Skillset, and how this process could be improved.
- f) Film Policy Committee – Following discussion, it was
Agreed (LPD 1167) to re-examine the composition of the Film Policy Committee at the next meeting.
- g) Copyright Working Group – Following discussion concerning the next meeting of this group, it was
Agreed (LPD 1168) the SO clarifies who convenes meetings of the Copyright Working Group.
- h) LGBT Committee – In relation to this newly formed committee, formed as a result of the 2014 Annual Conference, it was
Agreed (LPD 1169) the SO seeks nominations for the LGBT Committee from the LPD membership.
- i) Young Members Forum – It was reported that following a recent meeting, it had been agreed the YMF would adapt a more formal internal structure.

11 Any other business

None!

12 Dates of future meetings

Following discussion, it was

Agreed (LPD 1170) the following 2015 dates for LPD Committee meetings.

(RPD Committee: Saturday 22 November 2014)

(NEC: Sunday 23 November 2014)

(NEC: Sunday 25 January 2015)

LPD Committee: Saturday 7 March 2015

(NEC: Sunday 29 March 2015)

(NEC: Friday 8 May 2015)

(BECTU Annual Conference Eastbourne: 9 May 2015)

LPD Committee (includes LPD AGM): Saturday 20 June 2015

(NEC: Sunday 28 June 2015)

LPD Committee: Saturday 5 September 2015

(NEC: Sunday 20 September 2015)

LPD Committee: Saturday 14 November 2015

(NEC: Sunday 29 November 2015)

Tony Scott
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