

David Earnshaw

From: David Earnshaw [david_earnshaw@blueyonder.co.uk]
Sent: 17 March 2008 20:47
To: 'tasangha@tgwu.org.uk'
Subject: Branch 9-89

Tas,

Thank you, I realise that you are very busy, and I appreciate you taking the time out of your day to return my call on Monday 17th March 2008.

However I write to you today not to be mischievous or to hinder, but to merely raise with you my genuine concerns. I have already raise these concerns on many occasions to no avail.

The main cause of my concern is that since Paul Redgate retirement over twelve months ago, Branch 9-89 (Bradford Council) has sought to hold no Branch meeting whatsoever, or at least none that I or any member that I represent have been invited to attend.

As you can appreciate because of lack of any kind of working agenda with other T&G Stewards (and in Paul's day there were 7-8 stewards that I knew of) an agreed course of action is impossible to co-ordinate, leading ultimately I believe to a weak and ineffective trade union base, leading to individual capitulation, which I believe isn't in the best interest of our members or the Union as a whole. Please don't misunderstand me I don't agree with confrontation for the sake of confrontation, but I do believe our members deserve the best service we can offer them, and I fear that hasn't been the case in the past twelve months or so.

However I do understand that the TGWU is represented on many committees on many levels throughout the council, but unless the issues raised are disseminated throughout the workforce there will be reason for descent in our membership. That said I've endeavoured to publish all level 4 meeting minutes I've attended as widely as possible. However of late and since before Nov 2007 I've not been invited or been released to attend any level 4 management meetings. No Minutes of those meeting have been forwarded to me for publication either.

Another concern I hold dear is the fact that branch 9-89 has in the past agreed (but not through the branch committee) to removing the right to have a Safety Representatives and Safety committees this I believe is an error in judgement, and removes what I believe to be not only our legal protection to act in our members interest, but also removes the power base of the Union totally.

It was however with some amazement that I learnt from management (informally) that due to the T&G putting into place a new Health and Safety Rep in Bradford I'd be expected to wait until he'd looked over the said documents, and in his words rubber stamped it before I could receive a copy. I understood this to mean that I'd get a copy whenever it was being distributed to the workforce.

I instantly sought confirmation from the branch secretary with regards to the installation of a new H&S Rep. It was then confirmed to me. I find it incredible that we now have a situation were the T&G has a Health and Safety Rep (me) in place who has never been consulted by management nor informed by management of any changes in any health and safety procedure over the last two and half years, but now the branch secretary think it reasonable to inform management about putting into place a new UNTRAINED EX GMB STEWARD to oversee safety policy even though there is no Health and Safety committee. Again I don't believe this decision is in the members best interest, I believe we need a genuine Safety Committee to debate Genuine Safety issues, not Reps to rubberstamp management procedures.

So in conclusion I believe that I'm all but frozen out of Branch 9-89, meaning I believe that I'm being purposely excluded from any branch activity. The evidence being that I've very little communication with the branch, and the only communication is when I chose to call them. There is no information ever cascaded down to my level, although I seek as much as possible. It's interesting to note that management often comment on how little information I'm feed, and how uninformed the workforce actually is (I have evidence of this in writing) I also believe that management are more than happy with the fragmentation of the TGWU Branch 9-89 as they see it as a positive step in their overall management of this working environment.

It's also a sad fact since my first day as a steward I've had little or no guidance whatsoever, I'd have thought a mentor or advisor would have been at hand at branch level, I was mistaken. I'm grateful however to those outside of this branch who have educated, and advised me.

Can I thank you in advance for your assistance.

Can I also make you aware that both my Safety Representative Credential and Shop Steward Credential are out of date.

Regards
Dave Earnshaw

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