

Minutes (SEC 11877-11897) of a meeting of the BECTU Sector Executive Committee held on Friday 4 June 2020 at 3pm via Zoom

Present: Chair Ann Jones, Richard Avis, Christine Bond, Darrell Briggs, Iain Dawson, Mike Dick, Andrew Evans, Keith Flett, Andrea Gauld, Steve Grey, John Handley, Liz Hardwick, Glen Keane, Nicole Young, Tom Machell, Gavin Moffitt, Gary Painter, Nick Ray, Tracey Russell, Caroline Sansom, Mark Steele, Ian Stewart and Angus Wheeler-Rowe

Observer: Philip O’Rawe (NEC)
Vidya Krishnamurthy (Job-share)

Officials: Philippa Childs – Head of BECTU
Spencer MacDonald – National Secretary
Noel McClean – National Secretary
John Ferrett – National Secretary
Diane Lockwood – PA to Head of BECTU

Apologies: None received

SEC BY-ELECTION - LPD REPRESENTATIVE

The Chair opened the meeting by putting on record the thanks of the SEC for all the brilliant work that the Bectu team had done during a very difficult time, she recognised that staff had been working very long hours to support members and had achieved a great deal. The Head of BECTU advised the Committee that two nominations had been received to fill the vacancy for a LPD representative on the SEC. However due to the coronavirus crisis an election had not yet taken place. She now sought the Committee’s endorsement to go ahead with the election process. She also advised the Committee that Philip O’Rawe had left BT and therefore a by-election would need to be run to fill this BT vacancy. He was attending the meeting as a NEC member ex-officio. It was

(SEC 11877) AGREED to endorse the commencement of an election to fill the vacant seat on the Sector Executive Committee for a London Production Divisional representative and to run a by-election to fill the vacant seat for a BT representative

AGENDA

The Chair presented the agenda and the following additional items were proposed:

- Belfast Office – Philip O’Rawe
- Branch Analysis and Joiners and Leavers figures – May 2020
- BT and Digital Divisions - membership – Tom Machell
- BECTU website – Andrew Evans
- LPD and RPD - branch level discussions – Nicole Young

It was

(SEC 11878) AGREED to adopt the agenda with the additional items

MINUTES

The Chair tabled minutes SEC 11846-11876 of the meeting held on 2 February 2020. It was

(SEC 11879) AGREED to adopt minutes SEC 11846-11876 of the meeting held on Sunday 2 February 2020

COVID-19

The Head of BECTU gave a synopsis of the work that had been carried out since the emergence of the coronavirus crisis. The focus had been on the financial impact on members, especially freelance members, those who had been furloughed and those who had fallen between the gaps of the CJRS and SEISS schemes. The Union had lobbied the Chancellor and DCMS, over concerns with the Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme and joined with other organisations in the creative industries including the BFI, TUC and Creative Industries Federation to highlight these gaps.

The Head of BECTU advised the Committee that during this period it had been agreed to join the Creative Industries Federation as a member. She reported that there was positive collaboration across the industry to raise awareness and provide solutions to the terrible situation some of our members are in due to the crisis. SEC member Andrea Gauld said that BECTU was doing exceptional work on behalf of members but was worried about the return-to-work plans. It was

(SEC 11880) NOTED that Bectu had joined the Creative Industries Federation

STAFFING

The Head of BECTU advised the Committee that a number of staff had been furloughed. The offices in London had re-opened with small numbers of staff coming in and zoom meetings had taken place for furloughed staff to keep them updated. She acknowledged the hard work done by those members of staff working from home who she commended were working together effectively. Innovative ideas had been put forward such as Bitesize training, an online programme and webinars on various topics affecting members, including explaining the CJRS and SEISS, return to work plans, a New Deal for freelancers and mental health and welfare. It was noted that staff were working long hours and she said that members of staff had been encouraged to manage their time working from home and to take some annual leave during this period.

Belfast office

NEC member Philip O’Rawe advised the Committee that he felt that the BECTU office in Belfast needed to be able to access the Bectu membership system and enquired about additional support for the Officer. It was

(SEC 11881) AGREED that the Head of BECTU would address the issues raised

MEMBERSHIP

Branch Analysis and Joiners and Leavers

The Head of BECTU reported that over March, April and May recruitment had been very good. She said that every division in the BECTU 5 divisions had increased their membership and it was a testament to the hard work carried out over the last three months by staff. A reduced membership rate had been put in place for those financially impacted by the crisis although a majority of joiners had paid the normal agreed rate. She advised the Committee that she felt the next few months would probably not be as positive as the financial impact of the crisis materialised.

SEC member Tom Machell queried the procedure and eligibility of self-employed people wanting to join the BT and Digital Divisions. NS John Ferrett would contact him and look at the issues he raised. It was

(SEC 11882) AGREED to note the report

Membership subscriptions and long-term sickness

The Head of BECTU reported that a request had been made from two members to be excused subscriptions due to illness. It was

(SEC 11883) AGREED to excuse these individuals from paying subscriptions for the specified period

Public Liability Insurance (PLI)

Head of BECTU Philippa Childs gave an update on the annual PLI renewal which was currently underway. She advised that the union had paid members' PLI premium for May and June as a vast majority of members were not working through out that period. The process of renewing the policy with a reduced premium from 1 July for a period of 10 months was now being put in place. It was

(SEC 11884) AGREED to note the report

Stage, Screen & Radio

Head of BECTU Philippa Childs advised the Committee that due to the coronavirus crisis the SMT had decided that the next edition of Stage, Screen & Radio should be sent out as a digital publication. However, she said that the NEC's decision not to post out a hard copy had been taken for a number of practical reasons. The staff were working extremely hard as a result of the crisis and had been communicating with members on a very regular basis via all member emails, social media and webinars. However it was also agreed to reduce the spread of the coronavirus, Prospect had not been posting anything during the pandemic.

The Regional Production Division had held a discussion at their last meeting on 2 June, about the importance of having a published edition of the magazine, which they had sent for the SEC's attention in advance of the meeting. SEC member Christine Bond tabled this item.

An in-depth discussion ensued and some of the concerns raised were that emails sent to furloughed members' work emails may not be accessible; a hardcopy of the magazine could be useful for recruiting freelancers as they do not work in offices; it is an historical document.

In response, the Head of BECTU outlined the statistics in relation to the various mediums that the union had been using during that crisis all of which were very positive. She suggested, as a compromise, that when emailing members with a digital copy that they would be invited to request a hard copy once the lockdown was over and that hard copies would be sent to reps at that point. It was

(SEC 11885) AGREED that only the next edition of Stage, Screen & Radio, to be sent out in June, would be sent to members digitally and hardcopies would be posted out to all those who requested one and to reps in branches once lockdown was over.

BT Division and Digital Division - membership

SEC member Tom Machell raised his concerns that the BT and Digital Divisional membership seemed to be excluded from the BECTU Sector communications in some areas. The Head of BECTU advised that this would be due to structural issues around having two separate membership systems and two separate websites. A discussion ensued with the BT and Digital SEC reps advising that they had not received Bectu communications until recently and had been unable to register for webinars as they were not a 'BECTU member'. There was a general feeling that the BT and Digital Divisions were not integrated as well as they should be three years after the merger. It was

(SEC 11886) AGREED that NS John Ferrett would look to address the issues raised by the Sector Executive Committee's BT and Digital Divisional representatives in conjunction with the Divisions.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

BBC Pay Claim

NS Noel McClean reported that due to the deterioration in the BBC finances because of the measures taken as a result of COVID-19, the BBC Division had agreed to postpone submitting a formal pay claim until the autumn at least. The other joint unions had taken the same approach. It was

(SEC 11887) AGREED to note the report

CAMPAIGNS AND LIVE EVENTS

A New Deal – Freelancers and Precarious Workers

The Head of BECTU reported that this was a new campaign in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. It was an initiative to enable debate around the future conditions for freelancers and precarious workers, to reshape their relationships with their engagers and to influence their terms and conditions going forward. It was

(SEC 11888) AGREED to note the report

NoCreativeLeftBehind

Head of BECTU Philippa Childs reported on this social media campaign which had been part of a strategy to highlight our members' plight and lobby and fight for financial support. It was

(SEC 11889) AGREED to note the report

BBC – Over 75s TV Licence Fees

NS Noel McClean reported that the BBC had postponed plans to start charging for some over 75's licences which was a significant contributing factor to their financial challenges. Additionally, the wider BECTU campaign on securing a fair future for the BBC was still being worked on but no launch was planned due to the current circumstances. It was

(SEC 11890) AGREED to note the report

Live Sessions – webinar programmes

Head of BECTU advised that various webinars had been set up and sent out to all members covering various topics that would affect members in the current climate. These had been well attended. It was

(SEC 11891) AGREED to note the report

Bitesize

Head of BECTU Philippa Childs advised the Committee that Bitesize was a training programme organised by Training Officer Rachel Bennett. The Training Team had done an excellent job in setting up these training courses which were offered across the creative sector and also to members in museums and galleries. It was

(SEC 11892) AGREED to note the report

BECTU Website

SEC member Andrew Evans asked if the Sector website was still currently being run by the BECTU Comms Team and for an update from the Website Working Group. Head of BECTU confirmed that the website was still being run by the BECTU Comms Team but an external body was assisting with technical work on it. SEC member Christine Bond reported on a meeting of the Website Working Group. She advised that BECTU members on the Group did not feel that the issues they had addressed had been resolved. She would report back to the SEC after the next meeting of the Website Working Group.

The Head of Bectu explained that the whole of the Comm's team had been focusing on the Sector's response to the coronavirus crisis but that traffic to the website had seen an increase of 60% on the same period last year. 142,000 visits to the website and 19,684 visits to the join page. A solution to the archive question was still to be resolved in due course. *Subsequent to the meeting a report was circulated to the SEC and is attached to these minutes as Appendix I.* It was

(SEC 11893) AGREED to note the report

LPD and RPD – branch level discussions

SEC member Nicole Young thanked the officials and staff at BECTU for their hard work in support of the Costume & Wardrobe Branch. She raised a query on how communication could be improved between branches in the London Production and Regional Production Divisions. Head of BECTU Philippa Childs advised that branches in these two divisions are organised differently, LPD branches are based on crafts and RPD branches are based geographically but said that it had been recognised that this had caused some communications issues during the crisis. A discussion ensued and it was agreed that further consideration should be given to the best way forward. It was

(SEC 11894) AGREED to note the report

2021 BECTU SECTOR CONFERENCE

Head of BECTU Philippa Childs confirmed that the Sector Conference would be held on Sunday 16 May 2021 in Bournemouth. It was

(SEC 11895) AGREED to note the report

2019 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Head of BECTU Philippa Childs advised the Committee of the names of the successful members on the new 2020-2022 National Executive Committee. It was

(SEC 11896) AGREED to note the report

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NEC member Philip O’Rawe said that as the next meeting of the SEC was due to take place in September 2020, he thought that it would be useful to have an interim, non-minuted meeting of the SEC earlier.

(SEC 11897) AGREED to hold an interim SEC meeting at the end of July 2020

DATE OF THE NEXT SEC MEETING: 20 SEPTEMBER 2020

The meeting closed at 5.15pm

APPENDIX I

Important updated website information from Ann Jones for BECTU SEC Committee members

Dear colleagues

During the RPD and SEC zoom meetings on 2nd 4 June 2020 concern was expressed about the union's website content being removed after 6 months. This is NOT the case as is confirmed by Andrew Pakes, Director of Communications & Research, in his email below.

Please add Andrew's response to the minutes of these meetings to avoid any further confusion.

I also include below, FYI, the website statistics provided by Philippa Childs at the SEC meeting.

Dr Ann Jones
Prospect President
BECTU President

On Mon, 8 Jun 2020, 08:52 Andrew Pakes,
<Andrew.Pakes@prospect.org.uk> wrote:
Morning Ann

Thanks for the chat on Friday. Just catching up on some of the points you raised.

We are continuing to develop the website although some elements have been delayed by the immediate needs of member support in the current situation.

In terms of the question you asked about content: nothing gets taken down after 6 months. I don't know where that has come from but that is not an approach the team takes.

On the former Prospect site, all content was marked with an owner and a review date. This triggers an email to the owner at review time to check that the information is still accurate and/or legally correct. For example, on elected office bearers. It is not simply about adding a page, we also need to ensure it is hidden or updated when office bearers change.

The issue on the old Bectu site is that there was no review process so that everything stayed live whether that was a news item, job advert or legal advice, regardless of whether the information had changed or expired. Or that it required a staff member to remember the page was there and to manually change it.

None of the Bectu information has been lost. It has been hidden until there is time to review it. Over the coming months we will need to find Bectu members willing to do the first review as it runs to hundreds of old pages.

The Coronavirus hub on both the Bectu and Prospect sites is the most visited set of webpages we've had. Along with the all member emails, our engagement rates (pages visited) and open rates are much higher than usual..

Hope that helps. Stay safe & well

Thanks, Andrew

Andrew Pakes

Director of Communications & Research

Prospect, New Prospect House

+44 7980 551212

Follow us online

at: prospect.org.uk, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Linkedin](#), [Vimeo](#)

These are the statistics provided by Philippa Childs to the SEC on 4 June 2020.

These stats are all since 28 Feb when we first uploaded COVID-related content.

- 142,000 visitors to the website – 60% increase on same period last year
- 19,684 people visited the join page – doesn't mean they converted but is positive. Work being done on join form ready to be tested.
- Email your MP pages most popular – 25,000 visitors
- 50,000 people viewed COVID-19 advice pages