



The One Hundred and Third Annual Conference Yarnfield 2022



Annual Report 2021

Bakers, Food and
Allied Workers Union



Annual Report **For the year 2021**

Presented to the
One Hundred and
Third
Annual Conference
Yarnfield 2022

Sarah Woolley
General Secretary
Ian Hodson
National President

Registered Office:

Stanborough House
Great North Road
Stanborough
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire AL8 7TA

Executive Council **2021**



General Secretary
Sarah Woolley



National President
Ian Hodson

No 1 Region Bro Pat Kelly

No 2 Region Bro Nick Mead

No 3 Region Bro Dimitru Manole
Bro Nicolae Macari

No 4 Region Bro John Owens
Bro Shaun Welsby
(also *Vice President*)

No 5 Region Bro Joe Knapper
Sis Pauline McCarthy

No 7 Region Bro Kevin Flood

Female Rep Sis Rachel Mullen

Young Members' Rep Bro Lee Burns

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Executive Council Annual Report 2021	1
Executive Council Minutes August 2021	3
November 2021	5
February 2022	7
May 2022 [Draft Minutes]	9
Regional Officers' and Organising Regional Secretaries' Reports and Conditions of Labour for 2021	
Region 1	11
Region 2	14
Region 3	19
Region 4	27
Region 5	30
Region 7	40
Full Time Officers	46
Previous Conference Venues and Presidents 1910–2021	47

Abbreviations used

ACAS: Advisory, Conciliation & Arbitration Service
ASLEF: Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen
CLASS: Centre for Labour and Social Studies
CLP: Constituency Labour Party
COP: the Conference Of Parties
DPAC: <i>Disabled People Against Cuts</i>
EFFAT: the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions
ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages
F&GPC: Finance and General Purposes Committee
FTO: Full Time Officials
GFTU: General Federation of Trade Unions
GP: General Practitioner
GS: General Secretary
HR: Human Resources
ICTU: Irish Congress of Trade Unions
IER: Institute for Employment Relations
IUF: International Union of Foodworkers
LGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/ Questioning, and others
LRD: the Labour Research Department
MP: Member of Parliament
MSP: Member of the Scottish Parliament
NP: National President
NULR: National Union Learner Representative
NSSN: National Shop Stewards Network
PPE: Personal Protective Equipment
STUC: Scottish Trades Union Council
TAEN: <i>The Age and Employment Network</i>
TUC: Trades Union Council
TUCG: Trades Union Coordinating Group
WEA: the Workers Education Association

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL Annual Report 2021

Delegates

Last year I wrote that 2020 had been one of the strangest, most difficult years many of us had ever experienced. Well, 2021 felt like it was a continuation of that: lockdowns, changes to restrictions, different rules in different nations, Furlough and the Universal Credit uplift ending, massive vacancy numbers in our industry and continued uncertainty.

Towards the end of the year, the UK felt a lot more divided than it had when we were stood on our doorsteps over the summer of 2020 clapping key workers and there was still a lot of uncertainty around how and when we would resume some sort of normality and what the long term fall out of the pandemic would be, not only on our industry but the wider economy and communities within it.

Each region has continued to work hard over the year to navigate through the continued challenges of the pandemic, and the Executive Council thanks all our officials, clerical staff, branch secretaries and reps for everything you have done to keep the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union functioning throughout.

Two clerical staff retired in 2021, **Grace** from Region 3 and **Pauline** from Region 4. It would be normal under these circumstances to wish both a long and healthy retirement, which we very much do for Grace and thank her for all the years she has worked hard in Region 3 supporting members, branches, and officers.

Unfortunately, we knew Pauline was retiring as her cancer had returned and though she saw out 2021 and her birthday in 2022 she passed away shortly after in February 2022. Pauline was such a strong figure in Region 4 and is sorely missed by the region and the wider union. Rest in Peace, Pauline, and thank you for everything you did for our union.

The beginning of 2021 saw our Hovis members in Northern Ireland go out on strike over pay alongside colleagues from UNITE, not even the weather or threat of the regional officer Laura being taken away could dampen the spirits of the picket line which stood strong for 11 days of 24/7 all out strike action, the first time the site had been out on strike for over 40 years. On the 11th day the company offered an improved deal which was voted on and accepted, ending the strike.

We saw several employers make redundancies through the year, not on the scale of 2020 thankfully, but redundancies all the same at Warburton's sites Wednesbury and Eastwood and Allied nationally at different levels. The redundancies at Allied Orpington were initially put on hold due to driver shortages nationally but as Frank has outlined in his report, they have been restarted in 2022.

There wasn't an employer we work with that wasn't hit by massive staff shortages throughout 2021, the fallout from the pandemic and furlough really had people re-evaluating their worth and choosing not to return to poor pay or unsociable hours, we witnessed employers from other sectors or nonunionised workplaces trying to tempt members away with promises of sign on bonuses and retention bonuses, we heard stories of drivers reaching supermarket depots and being shown contracts! Thankfully these seem to have eased off in the main, though there are still pockets of increased turnover there isn't the level that there was this time last year.

Other changes in the year have come about due to takeovers, Ferraro took over Foxes and later in the year Burtons, only time will tell how that will look medium to long term, but it has been encouraging that locally at least the management teams have been keen to continue working with the union and carry on as normal.

We lost the funding in England for UnionLearn at the end of March 2021. This was a massive blow to us as a small trade union heavily reliant on the fund to provide educational resources. Though we still have very active funds in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, we have struggled to keep the momentum going of the English project, not helped by COVID and the inability to physically keep in contact with ULRs. We have built up a relationship over the year with *the Skills Network* who offer distance learning courses and are talking to organisations like the WEA to source English, Maths and ICT courses for members in England. It is still a work in progress, but thanks to regional TUCs sourcing funding in specific mayoral areas and our relationship with the Skills Network, we are accessing pockets of funding in small areas to start the ball rolling again.

To add more complications, not only did the Tory Government attack the UnionLearn fund, they also restricted residential education funding too, meaning that as the new academic year started in September, the costs of sending new reps to Northern college jumped so much that it became unaffordable for us to do so. It jumped from around £150pp with funding for a 5 day course including 2 meals to around £500 *pp no meals and only 4 days*. We have since then been directing people to the TUC courses that are more available now than they have been historically on a national basis and increasingly so, whilst the GFTU produce a new set of hybrid reps courses that they will run. (Your local TUC courses can be found here – www.tuc.org.uk/TUCcourses)

After having a first not holding a Conference at all in 2020 due to the pandemic, we had another first in 2021 when we ran Conference *digitally*. It wasn't without its hiccups but how great was it being able to get together (albeit) as squares on a screen after so long! We had more young delegates and first-time speakers than we have had for years and because people felt more comfortable, the debates we had and conversations in the fringe meetings felt more open and honest as a result, it gave branches an opportunity to elect delegates that maybe can't attend a physical conference normally, attend and be directly involved in the democracy and sovereign body of our union.

Speaking of Conference, I couldn't write the overview of the year without mentioning the sad loss of **Brother Pat Rowley**. I remember getting the message sat in wage negotiations with Greggs and feeling the air leave my lungs. Whilst I wasn't as close to him as other colleagues with being from another region, the hole I know that will be left not only in Region 2 but throughout the whole union will struggle to be filled and it was felt from that moment. Pat was an inspiration who never failed to get up at Conference to challenge the accounts and call delegates to action on matters that he was passionate about, he could always be found out and about campaigning, protesting and standing in solidarity and he will be sorely missed not only this year but for years to come too. It was strange not having Pat attend the digital Conference in 2021, but it will be felt more vividly not having him here to raise questions on the accounts this year. Rest in Peace Pat.

In solidarity

Sarah Woolley
General Secretary
on behalf of the **Executive Council**

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Executive Council Held at Quorn Grange Hotel, 3rd–6th August 2021

Present S. Woolley (GS) I. Hodson (NP) Tony Shukla (TS) Nick Mead (NMe) Dimitru Manole (DM)
Nicolae Macari (NMa) Shaun Welsby (SW) John Owens (JO) Pauline McCarthy (PM) Joe Knapper
(JK) Kevin Flood (KF) Rachel Mullen (RM) Lee Burns (LB)

Apologies P. Kelly

Minutes from previous meeting

Mover Joe Knapper

Seconder Kevin Flood

Accounts

Mover Nick Mead

Seconder Pauline McCarthy

Election of Vice President and composition of Subcommittees

- Shaun Welsby was elected as the Vice President
- Trustees – PK, NMe, DM, JO, JK, KF
- F&GP – SW, RM, KF
- Legal – LB, JK, PM
- Organising – DM, PK, JO
- Rule Book – NMe, NMa, RM

All meetings to be held virtually.

Correspondence

The executive discussed a number of correspondence letters from various organisations. The executive agreed to reaffiliate to LRD and Scottish Hazards, to continue to work with Unity Consulting as they have done such fantastic work on the right to food campaign. They agreed to embrace the training EFFAT who we affiliate to is offering around organising, to work with the Ron Todd foundation to offer bespoke training on McKenzie Friends and street solidarity and launch financial learn for members. Other areas included upgrading the security of our IT systems and training for employees on fire safety, stress, and mental health awareness.

Organising

A discussion was had about the importance of completing branch mapping, so that we could identify trends and develop resources accordingly, to support branches with organising members and developing activists and reps.

Health Safety & Environment

The executive agreed that it was a good idea to relaunch the cool it campaign, this time with some more guidance for what health and safety reps should be arguing for and a clear set of measures for them.

The executive would be interested to know if any branches are paid for being Mental Health First Aiders – in a similar way First Aiders are in the workplace?

A lengthy discussion was had around PPE being the last form of defence not the first

Branch Reports

A discussion was held around what to do with the current branches that have less than 10 members. After the rule change at Conference, it was agreed that those branches with more than 5 members and less than 10 would remain as branches but would be reached out to with an offer of support to build the membership. From the 1st September, new branches would need 10 members in order to be recognised as a branch.

Education

There has been an issue with the residential courses at Northern College, due to Government pulling funding the costs of the courses have become untenable, the funding reduction would see the 5 days reduced to 4 and whilst the price per person has almost tripled, meals have been taken out of those increased costs and would be an additional cost on top without a discount. Whilst discussions are ongoing with the GFTU, Northern College and the TUC the executive agreed that new reps should be encouraged to use the TUC courses, local ones can be found on the TUC website **Find a course for you | TUC**

We have found a Environmental reps course and are looking to run a pilot online course in the new year, working with the Ron Todd Foundation on political education as well as two bespoke courses on McKenzie Friends and Street Solidarity and undertaking a general overview of our education programme for members and reps.

Political

After a lengthy discussion about the Labour Party, the survey that was circulated earlier this year and the auto-expulsion letter the NP received for being unknowingly named as a sponsor for Labour Against the Witchunt, the executive unanimously agreed that we should recall conference to discuss disaffiliating from the Labour Party.

Conference

The GS provided an update on progress for 2022 conference, since the meeting it has been confirmed that conference will be held at the Yarnfield Centre, Stone Staffordshire, arriving on Saturday the 4th June. Further details to follow.

AOB

A lengthy discussion was held around subscriptions, after looking at the finances of the union and a number of different options, it was agreed that the subs would increase by 5p in January 2022. 1p of which would go into the national strike fund to support members when industrial action was taken as per the rule book. This decision wasn't taken lightly, we haven't increased subs since September 2019 and 4 p into the general fund was the lowest we could go in order to keep functioning with membership at its current level. The additional 1p would be placed into the national strike fund and a set of rules is being worked on with regards to accessing the funds.

There being no other business the meeting closed

Minutes of the Executive Council Held at Castlefield Hotel, Manchester, 3rd–5th November 2021

Present: S. Woolley (GS) I. Hodson (NP) Shaun Welsby (SW) P. Kelly (PK) Nick Mead (NMe) Dimitru Manole (DM) Nicolae Macari (NMa) John Owens (JO) Pauline McCarthy (PM) Joe Knapper (JK) Rachel Mullen (RM) Via Zoom; Kevin Flood (KF) Lee Burns (LB)

Apologies: None

Minutes from previous meetings

Mover: Rachel Mullen

Second: Nick Mead

Accounts

Mover: Joe Knapper

Second: Nick Mead

Correspondence

The executive discussed several correspondence letters from various organisations. Including looking into an updated recruitment video, re-affiliating to Palestine Solidarity Campaign and building links with international unions such as the UFAWUZ which is the United Food and Allied Workers Union of Zimbabwe

Organising

G.Lane and J.Butcher attended the executive to give an update on the Fast Food Rights Campaign.

The Executive discussed the difficulties of organising during the pandemic, but also looked at sites where membership has continued to grow such as Greencore and Greggs Balliol and how we can learn from them and example being holding socially distanced rep's surgeries in the canteens at consistent specific times and utilising WhatsApp groups.

Health Safety & Environment

The executive discussed the national health and safety minutes at length, touching on the importance of mental health, and keeping people safe through COVID.

The GS gave an update on accident claim figures (only from Thompsons as we currently don't receive figures from others) up to November members have received £310,299 in PI claims, £188,566 in Employment cases meaning a total of £498,855 has been received by members via Thompsons year to date.

Environmental wise, we are holding a Green Reps network meeting in January, are looking at courses and have a dedicated email address Green@bfawu.org for queries, we are also looking at restarting the Greener Future newsletter and to have a dedicated Green Foodworker each year to coincide with COP.

Education

We are still relying on the TUC courses currently, the GFTU executive has agreed to put together a new programme of reps courses that will be run at Quorn Grange hotel over a shorter period of time, we are waiting on the courses to be finalised and will circulate dates once we have them.

The Executive signed off the GS running quarterly online training sessions, covering different topics, more information will follow once they have been confirmed

Local TUC courses can be found on the TUC website [Find a course for you | TUC](#)

Political

A position was agreed on requests for support, both financially and in terms of affiliation from political organisations such as TUSC, Breakthrough, Green Party and others going forwards. We haven't had any direction from Conference for further political affiliation since the decision was made to disaffiliate from the Labour Party. We will prioritise support for our members who choose to stand for political parties in line with Union Policies from our political fund. If members want to help campaign for political parties it is their right to do so.

Conference

The GS provided an update on progress for 2022 Conference, Conference will be held at the Yarnfield Centre, Stone Staffordshire, arriving on Saturday the 4th June and will include a number of fringe meetings, training sessions and workshops as well as usual conference business.

AOB

The TUC Women's Conference Delegates were agreed – L.Dinning, R.Mullen and P.McCarthy

The TUC Disabled Workers Conference Delegates were agreed – D.Dale

Both will be held *online*

We need further delegates for the TUC Young Members, Black Workers and LGBTQ+ Conferences – please send nominations to head office before the end of January.

There being no other business the meeting closed.

Minutes of the Executive Council Held at Quorn Grange Hotel, 2nd–4th February 2022

Present: S. Woolley (GS) I. Hodson (NP) Shaun Welsby (SW) Nick Mead (NMe) Dimitru Manole (DM) Nicolae Macari (NMa) John Owens (JO) Pauline McCarthy (PM) Joe Knapper (JK) Via Zoom; Kevin Flood (KF) Lee Burns (LB) Rachel Mullen (RM)

Apologies: P. Kelly (PK)

Minutes from previous meetings

Mover: Kevin Flood

Second: Nick Mead

Accounts

Mover: Joe Knapper

Second: Kevin Flood

Correspondence

The executive discussed several correspondence letters from various organisations.

They agreed to look into a number of additional member benefits as well as supporting the action of PCS members, reaffiliating to the campaign for trade union freedom and thanking Ivan Walker for his support with the pension scheme and wishing him a long and healthy retirement.

The Executive also made two financial grants to members in hardship.

Organising

Membership is still in a worrying decline, the executive agreed that the union needs to focus on rebuilding the membership now the restrictions are easing as with everything going on people need unions now more than ever before. They also felt that we need a strategy to deal with automation in the industry as it was felt the pandemic would push companies to become more reliant on machinery than people who can fall ill.

The People Powered Campaign has started in Wigan, with a stall in the town every Saturday and different organisations giving advice to the community as well as soup, tea, coffee and cakes being available. It is going down well, the plan to do something similar in Scotland has been pushed back.

Health & Safety and Environment

It was clear from the regional council meetings that Covid and staffing issues were still very much issues that haven't gone away despite what the Government was suggesting and agreed that it was wrong that some employers were choosing to differentiate between vaccinated and unvaccinated in terms of sick pay.

There was concern that companies were being encouraged by the Governments decision to go back to normal to remove Covid measures that were in place and it was agreed that the union would support those branches that wished to make a stand around that.

It was agreed that Environmental issues needed to be on the agenda at regional councils and branch meetings so that best practice can be shared as well as highlighting particular issues

Education

The TUC courses are still being encouraged, the GFTU is in the process of developing a hybrid set of courses but unfortunately, we haven't a start date yet. The Executive signed off on a induction handbook to help with new reps training from day one. The shop steward one is in second draft form. The GS is also working with a number of organisations with regards to other training to support reps in their roles.

Conference

Plans are well underway, there are a number of confirmed stalls and fringes, including Ronn Todd Foundation, Thompsons, Watkin and Gunn, NSSN, Hazards, IER, CLASS and more. Delegates will attend two fringes each day after conference business in the morning.

The executive have invited Ronnie Draper to attend Conference on the Sunday in order for him to be able to say goodbye properly.

Any Other Business

The Executive discussed at length the impact to the union on the increase in powers to the Certification officer and the areas the union is at most risk because of them.

The turnout for the Branch secretary and Sexual harassment surveys were disappointingly low, however the information we have gathered from both will help us going forwards.

There being no other business the meeting closed.

Minutes of the Executive Council Held at Quorn Grange Hotel, 3rd–6th May 2022

Present: S. Woolley (GS) I. Hodson (NP) Shaun Welsby (SW) Nick Mead (NMe) Dimitru Manole (DM) Nicolae Macari (NMa) John Owens (JO) Joe Knapper (JK) T.Shukla (TS) Via Zoom; Kevin Flood (KF) Lee Burns (LB) Rachel Mullen (RM) Pauline McCarthy (PM)

Apologies: P. Kelly (PK)

Minutes from previous meetings

Mover: Nick Mead

Second: Kevin Flood

Accounts

Mover: Joe Knapper

Second: Kevin Flood

Correspondence

There were a number of pieces of correspondence, including the re-affiliation of the Nicaragua solidarity campaign action group and requests for support of the Hazards campaign and the Durham Miners Gala. There were 5 grants awarded to members in hardship.

Finances

A long discussion was had before signing off the annual accounts that will be presented to Conference, noting the anomalies due to the fact we were still in some restrictions last year, with the lockdown at the beginning. Although some conferences such as Labour Party continued physically, many didn't.

Organising

The number of Free cards have risen and whilst it is fantastic that so many members have remained in the union for so long, we need to make sure we are recruiting new members in to make up for the reduction in subs from those who have 40 years plus membership.

The overall membership isn't great and we need to look at how we organise going forwards. We will talk about the importance of branch mapping at conference so that we can focus resources in the right places as well as how we reach out wider in the industry to organise and grow.

The Union towns project is starting to build membership up in a number of workplaces and the People Powered project has started to make inroads with regards to talking to workers in food factories in Wigan.

Greggs reps met at the end of April to put together an organising plan for the next 12 months which included identifying the areas where reps are needed to be engaged as well as a focus on gaining membership.

Health & Safety and Environment

The executive thanks D.Clarkson for his work on the national committee and welcomed M.Blundered onto the committee.

There are still lots of issues across the regions around COVID and staff shortages and employers are increasingly changing the rules around COVID.

The committee and the Executive agreed that changes should only happen in accordance with a risk assessment and consultation with the trade union on site. If an employer makes changes and fails to consult or provide/ conduct a risk assessment then we will support branches with any action that they wish to take as a result.

There was a long discussion around long COVID, the impact this has on a members absence and the importance of ensuring that if absences are linked by COVID then the employer needs to be made aware they are linked, there was also a discussion around when long COVID is classed as a disability which then means the member is protected under the Equality Act

On environmental issues, work is still ongoing there will be a green reps introduction session at Conference and resources are still being developed.

Education

The Shop Steward booklet is ready to launch for all shop stewards to work through upon being elected, reps in the position a while could also utilise this as a refresher.

The GFTU has put on a course in June for all affiliates, information will be circulated. Other avenues of learning are being explored such as gambling awareness training, political education and others.

Conference

Final arrangements are being put together, award winners were agreed and Helena England has been invited as the Executives Guest to Conference.

Fringe meetings have all been arranged and speakers have been confirmed.

Delegates will received their packs digitally and will have a physical version of the final agenda and treasurers report given to them at conference itself. Discussions were had around evening events

Standing orders will meet at 3pm on the Saturday of Conference and the Executive at 4pm

AOB

There were no matters raised under AOB.

There being no other business the meeting closed.

REGION 1

Organising Regional Secretary's Report 2021

Dear Comrades,

A second year under Covid restrictions seemingly coming to an end. A year of virtually everything virtual, representations, meetings, conference and webinars. We have learnt to adapt and, in some ways, perhaps found improved ways of how we can do things, greener and financially better. The virtual conference which was our first was executed with precision and professionalism and should be applauded by all involved in delivering and attending.

With the Covid situation has come casualties not just to life but also long-term health and living conditions for so many. The crippling effect of low incomes and job losses, and the furlough scheme has seen a huge rise and need for food banks. The rise in fuel costs, the cost of living, National insurance and wage increase less than inflation does not bode well for anyone making ends meet, you can't begin to imagine the devastating impact on those already relying on handouts. If Covid has taught us anything, it should be to help our family friends and neighbours and be charitable to all less fortunate in society.

Within the region I have continued to support all our branches, reps and members as and when required. I thank all the branch reps for their continued and valued support to their members and myself throughout the year, especially the efforts made in recruitment enabling us to maintain membership levels. I have continued to attempt to recruit new members whenever possible.

I like many of my colleagues have been placed on a long educational program to enhance and provide the skill to enable us to do our jobs to a collective high standard, which is beneficial to us and our members.

I have been dealing with a proposed closure of Allied Bakeries Orpington; however, this was put on hold due to staffing and logistical issues. Sadly, this will be resuming in 2022 to close around November.

With lockdown measures easing in sight, it is hoped that I can resume going out and begin recruiting whenever possible albeit still a lot less than previous years, given that I am the only officer in the Region. I would like to thank my clerk Mela for her assistance along with Adrian and the staff at head office who are always supporting in the background. Finally, the National officers and the EC. Who have had a challenging couple of years steering the Union through very turbulent times?

I wish you all a Safer healthy year and look forward to meeting up with you in 2022 may we continue to support our members, families and communities and continue to recruit.

Frank Loveday

Organising Regional Secretary

Region 1

REGION 1

Organising Regional Secretary's Report 2021

Dear Comrades

Greggs Shops

It has been difficult to organise clearly due to the current pandemic (COVID-19). Shops are now open and functioning as they were pre-pandemic. Christine Marsh and Team have continued to support our members within the region. I have been providing representation at many levels including Grievances, Disciplinary & Performance Review Meetings.

[Haroon has been working in Regions 1 and 3 to ensure our best coverage over this difficult period. Our thanks go to him for his sterling efforts. His activities in Region 3 are reported in the appropriate section]

FineLady Bakeries – Banbury, Oxfordshire.

It has been a difficult year at this branch with talks on terms and conditions with view to reaching a One Contract across site. There was a multitude of different contracts across site and negotiations took place. Members were balloted on the final proposal to accept a One Contract across site with many receiving a generous 25% increase in pay.

My sincere thanks to Abid Hussain and the committee on site for all their hard work over the year.

Warburtons – Enfield

I am now servicing this branch since Steve Finn's retirement. Mandy Ambrose is doing an excellent job at branch level dealing with predominantly all issues on site.

Greggs Enfield Distribution (EDC)

I am now servicing this branch in region 1. Peter Pyne has managed to get a well balanced branch structure in place and is doing an excellent job at branch level representing our members' interest.

Greggs Enfield Branch 116

Anna Markiewicz is doing an excellent job as the Branch Secretary on site supporting members with any issues arising.

Global Pandemic

The global pandemic had a significant impact on workers. During the COVID pandemic, the food industry experienced unprecedented levels of pressure due to the panic buying from the public. As a result, food workers were considered as key workers and were put under immense pressure to increase the rate of production.

However, workers were just as much at risk of being infected with Coronavirus as the public. Despite the added risk of attending work, employees did not see any compensation for this. On the basis that an employee tested positive for Covid or displayed symptoms of Covid, the government advised for individuals to isolate. This would require employees to take sick leave. However, due to most employers only paying statutory sick pay, employees would overlook the health concerns and still attend work which posed a health risk to their colleagues.

Responsible employers should have paid 100% sick pay to protect the integrity of the product as well as the welfare and well-being of the employees.

Getting Justice is being ever increasingly difficult with changes in Employment Law that make even a simple Unfair Dismissal Claim complex for members. We have seen the Unfair Dismissal fees abolished after a landmark ruling see this overturned.

Tribunal Officer

Coronavirus caused panic across the world, the food industry included. Employers were often likely to react from an emotional perspective rather than ration. As a result, conclusions were made without the basic procedure being followed leading to a significant increase in cases, particularly Covid related. Many cases consisted of worker dismissal due to the worker showing symptoms of Covid despite there not being any evidence or proof that this worker had any symptoms. There were several cases which resulted in pay outs for these workers due to the rash decisions of dismissal made by employers.

Haroon Rashid

Organising Regional Secretary

Regions 1 and 3

[Haroon has been working in Regions 1 and 3 to ensure our best coverage over this difficult period. Our thanks go to him for his sterling efforts. His activities in Region 3 are reported in the appropriate section]

REGION 2

Organising Regional Secretary's Report 2021

As you'd expect, the Coronavirus continued to cause issues and problems during 2021 and it is hoped that 2022 will start to get back to some normality. Members continue to face challenges during 2021 which has had an impact on mental health and continues to cause stress. As we all learn to live with this new type of normal and hoping for a respite in restrictions, so too are companies looking to bring normality back to the workplace.

- **Allied Bakeries** having made members redundant in 2021, it is hoped that this trend will be reversed and the depot at Cardiff will get back to normality.
- **Greggs Treforest** has gone through some changes to allegedly bring them in line with other sites, which tends to mean upheaval for employees. I have supported Dorian Jones (Branch Sec) whenever he has requested me to.
- **Burtons** has now been bought by **Ferraro** who adds another company to their existing portfolio. It is hoped that this will be a positive step forward for Burtons Biscuits. 2021 continued to be a challenge for the branch and in particular the ongoing issues within the workplace, one of which, is over zealous managing which has seen some complaints of bullying. During the year, the company looked at including absence for covid in the absence figures, but this was put off after the intervention of Michael Maguire (Branch Sec) contacting the Welsh Government and getting HSE involved as well. As this was a national ruling, the company stopped it at all sites.
- **Memory Lane Cakes** had the same issue as Burtons in regard to Covid absence being added to normal absence and again this was dropped by the Company nationally after the intervention of Tony Mansell (Branch Sec) initially raising this on a local then national level.
- **RF Brookes** raised issues around the grading structure, which caused upset with some members, although this wasn't negotiated and was implemented by the company, with many being moved to different grades. The restructuring is due to take place in 2022. I continue to support Dai Mort (Branch Sec) who works tirelessly for the local branch, along with his shop stewards on site.
- **Hovis** had some redundancies where I attended site with Jason Moore (Branch Sec) to help support him through the process. As is so often with these type of redundancies, the company had vacancies within the company at Avonmouth, but on much lower wages. This did result in some members leaving through redundancies, while the company recruited in other departments. Jason is keen to have open days where I attend site and this is something that will happen in 2022.
- **Warburtons** is a new site that I acquired when Dave Dash retired and I was called in at the start of the year to deal with an issue that was unpleasant. This resulted in the member being dismissed after being convicted for an offence that had nothing to do with work impacted on his employment. Since then, Terry Povey has dealt with any issues.
- **Bakkavor** is not a company that we appear to have a recognition agreement with and due to Covid, I have not attended this site. Michael White is the Branch Secretary and although I have conversed with Michael, I will need to catch up with him to see how we can move this site forward.
- **Greggs** at Amesbury is a distribution site that I look after and although I have had some conversations with members, I have not currently attended this site due to Covid. On the occasions that I was due to attend, the matters were resolved before the meetings took place. We currently have no branch Secretary at this site and although notices have been put up for potential Branch Sec to come forward, no one is currently prepared to consider this position at this moment.

I continue to represent members in the postal branches who are mostly employed in non-recognised sites. This seems to take up a lot more time than at normal branches and it is interesting to see how companies believe they can treat their employees in relation to unionised sites.

The Wales Union Learning Fund continues to provide many different type of courses during 2021 despite the problem of class based learning. Claire James has worked to ensure the project is on track and through her continued work, Claire was successful in putting together a bid that will see the project continue for another three years to 2025.

In 2021, I supported members and branches whenever I was required and I am grateful to all Branch Secretaries and members who helped and supported me during this time. It is hoped that as 2022 starts off, it will be safe once again to have open and recruitment days. Many companies are now opening up to all visitors to get back to normal and I believe that the coming year will see a return to normality and that Covid will become like flu, something we get that some people might die from. For those that lost loved ones and friends through this awful pandemic, that was unable to attend funerals because of restrictions, may those dark days become a thing of the past. One thing I will always remember is the resilience of the members to continue to put themselves at risk while producing the food necessary for citizens to eat.

I would like to thank all those who supported me through the last twelve months and as we move to 2022, to those who continue to support me through my work.

John James
Organising Regional Secretary
Region 2

Region 2

Organising Regional Secretary's Report 2018

2021 was another strange year, with ongoing lockdowns throughout the year made it difficult for me to visit sites. Disciplinarys and grievances were all online and I have done a lot of them.

We started our online training course and as part of that I had to do level 2 English and Maths and I was happy that when I sat my exams I passed on both the subjects.

As we go into 2022 and we come out off lockdown my aim for the years will be to visit as many shops as possible and to get as many new members as possible. Recruitment is the life blood of our union and I will be doing all that I can to achieve this.

Gary Johnston
Organising Regional Secretary
Region 2

REGION 3

Regional Officer's Report 2021

Executive summary

The overall performance is good during a challenging year with the conditions caused by the pandemic. It has been a busy year on the recruitment front with campaigning limited to existing branches. Within region 3 we have been organising to help create 100% membership in our existing branches by maintaining a good support level for our membership. This is based upon developing an “organising plan” for the region.

I would like to thank everyone in Region 3 for their hard work. Over the year we have been able to recruit over 400 members, and have appointed 21 shop stewards & 9 H&S stewards.

The membership in the Region at the minute stands at 4,053. We have set an objective of building the Region's membership so that by the end of 2022 we have 4,500 members. This will be achieved by implementing our new organising plan 'Time to grow'.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the branch secretaries, shop stewards and lay members – especially Adrianna Kara and Douglas Johnstone, National Officers and the Executive Council for leadership & support in a troubling year. I must also express my thanks to our Regional Office staff and FTO who have played a pivotal role in supporting us and helping us to achieve our objectives.

Signature Flatbreads – Luton

This site was previously looked after by Jit Singh, who was transferred to Region 5. To carry on his work, we have trying to implement a new shop steward structure. When we implement the new structure, we will able to move forward our objectives. We have found it difficult at the moment because of the lack of access to the site. This is because the company was forced into placing restrictions upon us by the pandemic.

Greencore- Northampton

The Branch is going through a difficult time under COVID and managements resistance to union activity. There has been an attack on the Full Time Branch Secretary's position. He no longer Full Time engaged in union work. The company is attempting to change our existing agreement, and has so far no presented myself with. In the negotiations to draw up the new agreement, the company failed to have myself or any other FTO present.

A new union organisational structure has been implemented and we are moving forward to try and achieve a 100% membership strategy at Greencore. With our new structure in place, we have been able to enhance the membership & improve union values in the branch. Our 2021 objectives enabled us to deliver:

- Union surgeries being carried out by all reps
- The setting up of a union facebook page
- The production of regular union newsletters
- Regular monthly zoom meetings with our reps
- The creation of a Whatsapp page to help communication between members and the union
- Branch organising social events that help build branch cohesion
- Branch secretary's expenses put back into the branch
- The Reps have successful been trained in Branch Mapping and GDPR

Last year Unit K voted to have the union recognised. The company has failed to live up to the vote by our members. They agreed to a pay rise in April for Unit K, and like the previous statement management has not delivered this.

I'd like to thank Nicolai Macari, Alex Ropota, Manole Gelo and all the other Union Reps for supporting me and the union on all our work carried out on various shifts.

Myfresh – Bedford

A previous site looked after by Jit Singh. Unfortunately, we have no structure in place at the minute. We have been unable to visit the site because of COVID restrictions. When these ends, we are planning to have two roadshows there. We will also be able to create a branch structure, and build the membership by following our 'Time to grow' plan. With this being a majority Polish factory we will try and obtain support from our comrade Adrianna Kara.

I would like to show my appreciation to Lukasz and Douglas Johnstone for all their hard work.

Matthew Walkers/Two Sisters – Derby

We have trouble gaining access to the site because of COVID restrictions. When these restrictions end we intend on completing some roadshows, and recruit some new shop stewards and create a new branch structure.

Region 3 would like to thank the Branch Secretary James & Douglas Johnstone for all their support.

All Samworth Brothers Sites – Leicester/Manton Wood

The branches membership numbers have been falling because of our inability to visit the sites due to the COVID restrictions. We have had meetings with the Peace and Justice Project to start up a major campaign in May to unionize all Samworth sites. We have the feeling that this will grow our membership excrementally. Also Jeremy Corbyn has said he is willing to speak at an event we will be organising in May at Leicester with the General Secretary.

At the sites in 2021 we were able to represent members in various disciplinaries and grievances. These sites were Kettleby Foods, Manton Wood, Bradgate Bakery, Charnwood Foods, Melton Foods, Leicester Samworth Distribution Centre, Salad Works, Leicester, Aston Green, Midshires Foods, and Sausage and Deli Foods, Leicester. This has been taxing, and required a great of our time as there are no structures in place on any of these sites. Our objective for 2022:

- Updating the Facebook page so workers can understand the benefits of joining our union
- To campaign on the gates with support from the Peace and Justice Project, Leicester and District Trades Council, FTOs and lay officials
- To organise a community event in May
- To seek support from local MPs

Region 3 would like to thank the FTOs, lay officials, Adrianna Kara and Douglas Johnstone for their support in helping build the branches by talking to workers.

Charnwood Foods (Part of Premier Foods) – Leicester

A challenging year where the company was failing to protect its workforce in either its Health and Safety policies or by following COVID fair practices. We are still in discussions with management over working hours and pay. I represented members art various disciplinaries and grievances. I would like thank the Shop Stewards. Our objectives for 2022 is

- To update the Facebook page
- Issue a regular new letter to keep our members updated on union activities
- To implement 'Time to grow' and complete Branch Mapping
- A new election for branch secretary and shop stewards
- Hold regular branch meetings

I would like thank all the shop stewards for their support.

Greggs Shops and Distribution Centre

Due to the pandemic we have been restricted to going round to the shops. In 2021 we liaised with our members, and represented them at disciplinaries and grievances. Objectives for 2022

- Shop visits by FTOs and shop stewards.
- Plan of action, and shop mapping
- Organise a zoom branch meeting for our members in Region 3. I have spoken to the branch secretary, and I am waiting for convenient dates in which to hold these
- To hold regular shop steward and FTO meetings
- New branch elections to be held which complies with the rule book
- By using tools such as the 'Time to grow' policy we will attempt and build our branches so they include 100% of all Greggs members in Region 3

Due to COVID restrictions we have been unable to visit the Greggs Distribution Centre. When these are fully lifted we will be able to organise some dates when we can have Road Shows and build the branch. Objectives for 2022

- Organise some Road Shows
- Update the union board
- Improve shop steward structure
- Organise regular branch meetings

I like to thank at both Greggs Shops and Distribution Centre the Branch Secretaries, Shop Stewards, FTOs and our office clerk Donna. Donna help has been crucial during the pandemic, in dealing with members enquiries and difficulties.

Jacobs – Leicester

Due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic we have been waiting to see these lifted so we can carry out some road shows. I like to thank the branch secretaries, the shop stewards. Objectives for 2022

- To maximise the membership
- To have some road shows
- To carry out branch mapping
- To produce a branch newsletter

Manor Stoke Branch – Stoke on Trent

I like to thank the branch for all their hard work in maximising the membership. I was able to represent members at the branch in their disciplinaries and grievances. I am waiting to carry out some road shows. I would like to thank the branch secretary, shop stewards for their continuing hard work.

Cofresh Branch – Leicester

This was a branch that was represented by Jit Singh, who has been transferred to Region 5. There is at the present time no structure in place. Again because of COVID restrictions we have been unable to visit the site. When all the restrictions have been lifted we will carry out some road shows. We will also be able to create a structure for the branch. However, despite all the hardships I have been able to represent the branch in various disciplinaries and grievances. I would like to thank the branch secretary for his continuing hard work.

Bibby Distribution – Corby

Jit Singh's old branch. There is low membership on top of a branch that has no structure. The Covid restrictions meant we could not pay the company a visit to carry out a road show. Hopefully after the restrictions have been lifted we will be able to carry out road shows, and put a structure in place, building the membership incrementally.

Eurobuns – Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire

Due to the pandemic, we could not organise the site from the gates. Once the restrictions are lifted, we will be able to return to organising. This will be extremely good as they are a branch where the membership is growing all the time, and all we need is a little push to gain recognition. Once we gain recognition we will set up a branch structure, and organise regular branch meetings. However I have been busy representing members at the sites in disciplinaries and grievances.

Amazon and Amazon Fresh – all sites

We have been very busy representing members, and we have been gaining members from our Facebook page. Thank you to Adrianna Kara and Douglas Johnstone for the hard work they have carried out in helping build our membership at Amazon.

Birmingham District Board/Nottingham District Board/Midlands District Board

A very difficult year to represent members because of all the restrictions that has been placed upon us due to the pandemic. However, we have been able to hold various meetings on zoom to keep our members in touch with the union. In total across all district board branches, we have a total of 476 plus members. I do however spend a great deal of time making sure those comrades have sufficient representation carrying out disciplinaries and grievances across the country. I would like thank 331 Birmingham District branch midlands, branch secretary Adrianna Kara and branch president Pawel for continuing to build the branch, and continuing the campaign around hotel and migrant workers. In the Midlands District Branch I would thank Douglas Johnstone, branch secretary for supporting us on various campaigns which is holding 244 members. These members have been recruited from various campaigns we have been carrying out across the midlands. Objectives for 2022

- To support regular branch meetings within the District Board
- To involve members in local Trades Councils
- To involve members in local community events
- To campaign at Greencore sites- Hatfield, Boston, Peterborough, Tamworth and Prime Baker Crew
- To maximise membership at every level eg fast foods, hotel workers etc
- To organise an eastern European meeting for all

Conclusion

Region 3 would like to conclude that they are on target to meet the Regional objectives. Especially the object of recruiting 500 members by the end 2022.

The workload has significantly increased in all areas, as per usual in greenfield sites where there are no shop steward structures. This has put tremendous pressure on existing resources.

I would like to thank all the team included the Regional office team provided by Donna for all their valuable work during this very challenging year with the significant increase in new union members, disciplinaries and grievances. Donna have provided reprographics assistance for the campaigns. Further playing a pivotal role on membership checks.

I would like to show my appreciation to all the Region 3 FTOs, Union Representatives, Branch Secretaries & learning services team for their hard work to deliver our values.

Objectives for 2022

- To carry out Regional Councils
- To help support branches in the 100% campaign
- To organise the regional health and safety meetings at all branches
- To encourage our BAME reps to attend national BAME meetings

- To encourage our reps to take part in the national ULR Network, Branch Secretary Network, Young Members Network, Green Reps Network Meetings
- Support the branches in carrying out mapping and in their organising
- To organise LGBT members, zoom meeting and continue updating the LGBT members Facebook page
- To encourage the branches to affiliate to local trades councils and the National Shop Steward Network
- To encourage the branches to support the Rights to Food Campaign
- To encourage the branches to play an active role at our National Conference i.e. by putting motions in
- To organise a lay reps committee that will support us on our campaigns
- To ensure that all branch secretaries/ shop stewards have been trained to carry out branch mappings, and to comply with GDPR
- To ensure all reps have got the relevant training

I would like to wish all my comrades a successful and happy new year!

George Atwall
Regional Officer
Region 3

Region 3

Organising Regional Secretary's Report 2021

Organising over the pandemic was not easy. Majority of the sites covered used this as an excuse to prevent FTO access to a site. Vast majority of meetings, including representation and branch meetings, were organised online, via Zoom, MS Teams or other suitable platforms. Lost funding for Learning Services and lack of new courses also did not work well towards membership increase, especially on sites where those courses played a pivotal role in recruitment and communication. Even the extensive vaccination programme did not bring the results expected straight away.

With the regulations and guidance on the pandemic changing on regular basis, things acceptable in one week could not be acceptable week after. It was very important to stay on the top of those changes, so the advice given is correct.

With all the conspiracy theories, antivaxers, antimaskers or any other group of science deniers sometimes it was a battle to represent those expressing those views. They simply believed, that they are right regardless of data and evidence presented by scientific community. It was more important and trust worthy for them to believe things appearing on social media echo chambers than to listen to specialists. Media did not help at all, as there is a general perception, that they would push the view supporting their own agenda, to make profit and to use scaremongering tactics rather than concentrate on the facts, studies and experiments. Celebrities, with a massive following, became the experts and their view were more influential than words of experts dedicating their lives to study very narrow subjects.

As we all learned and adjusted to live with the virus not going away this is now shifting towards more face to face approach. Unfortunately, I was not able to support the region fully following my operation and recovery but George took over all my responsibilities, and covered all the required meetings, allowing me to have a stress free recovery and come back to work full of enthusiasm and energy.

Organising

Greggs Shops

Visited many shops in the Region and represented members on various disciplinary/grievance hearings. The frequency of visits should now increase due to the restrictions being lifted.

Greencore Northampton

Assisted George with recruitment and building new branch structure. Assisted with Polish section of this branch. Supported the branch with organising meetings and events, raffles etc, also supported branch with advice and support with disciplinaries

Samworth Brothers – Manton Woods (ex 2SFG)

Represented members on numerous occasions, especially on night shift. Unfortunately we were unable to continue with at the gates campaign but membership growth was noticeable following the use of social media platforms.

Samworth Brothers sites

Represented members on many occasions across all 9 sites in Leicestershire on disciplinary/grievance and 1-1 consultation meetings after new terms of employment were introduced by employer. Conducted many meetings around the issues on sites which resulted in membership growth across all sites.

Fyffes Coventry

Wage review was concluded and accepted by membership earlier this year. This was the Company idea to support hard working key workers fully accepted by membership. No major issues on site, at the beginning of the pandemic the local outbreak was controlled, union was involved during the talks with local authorities, effected only with 2 day shutdown and no financial lose for our members.

Pilgrims Pride (ex Tulip Coalville)

All activities concluded remotely, still unable to visit due to high levels of Covid-19 on site through the pandemic. Branch meetings and all communication done remotely. Currently there is no union structure as BS retired. Ballot will be organised as soon as the access is granted again. Wage review ongoing to start shortly, pay claim presented to the company.

Myfresh – Chicksands

Due to restricted access and couple of Covid-19 outbreaks on site during last year the roadshows were restricted. Communication with members and potential members conducted remotely, via social network platforms.

Wealmoor – Atherstone

This is the flagship of anti union behaviour. The company does not address any issues on site, there is no communication and ownership once the issues are highlighted. Investigations completed are very selective and one sided, always in support of the management, never shop floor. The company showed total disrespect towards our members and tried to bypass the union and implement the wage increase without meaningful negotiations. ACAS was involved in the process; next wage review will be probably assisted by CAC as the company already proven lack of understanding and their own definition of the word “NEGOTIATIONS”. 3 cases (out of which 2 are our shop stewards) awaiting ET hearing later this year, as the Company refused to use furlough scheme to support the most vulnerable employees. Their access to the site was blocked as soon as the shielding letters were sent out, leaving them on SSP only for 13 weeks, causing detrimental effect on their mental health and financial situation.

Greenfield sites

Many issues arise around implementation and relaxation of the site rules following guidelines. On many occasions the changes were not communicated in a way, which would provide understanding and reasons behind them.

Objectives

To maintain good relationship with www.polska-uk.com as it's generate members continuously and to continue working with regional team to support membership and increase membership density to the best of my abilities. To concentrate more on building strong branch structures as they have proven to be absolute must without access to members from outside, also to continue utilising social media platforms to get the message across.

In Conclusion

As we all should be aware next year and further increase in NLW/NMW would cause even more challenges as the employers realise that there would be no more terms and conditions to strip, therefore zero-hour contracts would become even more popular, there will be increase of Agency workers labour. Real effects of Brexit are now more noticeable, there is shortage of workforce in certain areas leaving some employers in a situation, where they need to be competitive on the labour market, offering more than just bare minimum.

I would like to thank the whole team for their support, mainly George for his continuous guidance, advice and mentoring. Obvious thanks to the best office clerk Donna for her hard work and acting promptly with all requests, even on very short notice. Hopefully the future is getting brighter now, vaccine program is going well.

Lukasz Bemka

Regional Organising Secretary

Region 3

Region 3

Organising Regional Secretary's Report 2021

Greggs Shops

It has been difficult to organise clearly due to the current pandemic (COVID-19). Shops are now open and functioning as they were pre-pandemic. Christine Marsh and Team have continued to support our members within the region. I have been providing representation at many levels including Grievances, Disciplinary & Performance Review Meetings.

Warburtons – Enfield

I am now servicing this branch since Steve Finn's retirement. Mandy Ambrose is doing an excellent job at branch level dealing with predominantly all issues on site.

Greggs Enfield Distribution (EDC)

I am now servicing this branch in region 1. Peter Pyne has managed to get a well balanced branch structure in place and is doing an excellent job at branch level representing our members' interest.

Greggs Enfield Branch 116

Anna Markiewicz is doing an excellent job as the Branch Secretary on site supporting members with any issues arising.

Global Pandemic

The global pandemic had a significant impact on workers. During the COVID pandemic, the food industry experienced unprecedented levels of pressure due to the panic buying from the public. As a result, food workers were considered as key workers and were put under immense pressure to increase the rate of production.

However, workers were just as much at risk of being infected with Coronavirus as the public. Despite the added risk of attending work, employees did not see any compensation for this. On the basis that an employee tested positive for Covid or displayed symptoms of Covid, the government advised for individuals to isolate. This would require employees to take sick leave. However, due to most employers only paying statutory sick pay, employees would overlook the health concerns and still attend work which posed a health risk to their colleagues.

Responsible employers should have paid 100% sick pay to protect the integrity of the product as well as the welfare and well-being of the employees.

Getting Justice is being ever increasingly difficult with changes in Employment Law that make even a simple Unfair Dismissal Claim complex for members. We have seen the Unfair Dismissal fees abolished after a landmark ruling see this overturned.

Tribunal Officer

Coronavirus caused panic across the world, the food industry included. Employers were often likely to react from an emotional perspective rather than rationally. As a result, conclusions were made without the basic procedure being followed leading to a significant increase in cases, particularly covid related. Many cases consisted of worker dismissal due to the worker showing symptoms of covid despite there not being any evidence or proof that this worker had any symptoms. There were several cases which resulted in pay outs for these workers due to the rash decisions of dismissal made by employers.

Haroon Rashid

Organising Regional Secretary

Regions 1 and 3

[Haroon has been working in Regions 1 and 3 to ensure our best coverage over this difficult period. Our thanks go to him for his sterling efforts. His activities in Region 3 are reported in the appropriate section]

REGION 4

Regional Officer's Report 2021

Overview

Total membership for the region is 3045 for Dec 2021.

Senior Membership

- Currently there are 121 Free Cards
- 42 Retired Members

Tribunal and Compromise Agreements

Compromise Agreements

- 20 Compromise agreements (Thompsons)

Industrial Tribunals

- 0 concluded in 2021
- 0 carried forward to 2022

Medical Tribunals

- 0 successfully concluded.
- 0 ongoing

It is my belief that we are the only region who support our members at these tribunals. This really helps to show these members our commitment.

Obituaries Region 4

Since 2019, we have recorded the passing of 10 of our members/members spouses.

- Faisal Hussain Branch452
- Linda Forster Branch 452
- HarryIson Branch 405
- DebraBland Branch466
- Diane Garnes Branch 452
- Kenneth Walker Branch 405
- Pushpa Mistry Branch452
- BerylSpencer Branch 405
- Anne Benson Branch 452
- Dhanbai Vora Branch452

Accident Settlements for 2021 Region 4

Total number of Settlements 46

Total amount paid in settlement £237,421.08

44 cases were closed due to 'no case to answer' or being withdrawn.

A special thank you to our solicitors, Thompsons (Manchester) and Slater Gordon (Preston).

Organising and Recruitment

Organising and recruitment in the Region has been limited, due to the government and companies' response to 'covid'.

Shop Steward, H & S Representatives and ULR Training

Whilst the vast majority of our members have been working throughout government imposed lockdowns and restrictions, many of the courses have taken place online via the TUC and the GFTU. Regional Council meetings have been held via 'Zoom' and members have continued to receive support and guidance from the Legal Services

Industrial Relations:

It has been an extremely difficult to improve relationships with employers, due to the government's and companies' response to 'covid'. Most contact has been done via 'Zoom', which does not improve relationships in the same way that face-to-face meetings do.

In Conclusion:

The 12 months under review have been very difficult. The implications of the response to 'covid', along with lockdowns and restrictions have placed great strain on our members, who have had to attend work in difficult circumstances. Hopefully, there is some light at the end of the tunnel and a return to some sort of normality, which can only be a good thing for our members, the industry and the Union as a whole.

The last 12 months have been extremely difficult for me and my family as I recover from cancer of the bladder. Having spent only 3 months of the year under review in work, it will not be a long report. I would like to thank my colleagues – John, Geoff, Pauline and the Trade Union for supporting me and my family throughout my illness.

Roy Streeter
Regional Officer
Region 4

Region 4

Organising Regional Secretary's Report 2021

Organising and Recruitment

Over the last year organising and recruiting has been done via enquiries over the phone as we have not been allowed to attend sites to do roadshows or recruitment drives due to the pandemic. We have relied on the branch representatives to do their own form of recruitment; this may have been done via word of mouth or attending inductions. Again this may have been difficult depending on what restrictions companies have been enabling to deal with the virus so as such I have little to report around organising and recruitment

General

2021 has been yet another year of hybrid working via zoom, telephone and on occasion back into some of our sites due to the constant changes to government restrictions – with most sites only allowing me to attend if it suited management. All or most disciplinaries and grievances have been conducted via zoom which has brought its challenges along with not being able to accompany our members but also the disruption it causes to my home life and family activities as you're constantly at work it seems, not switching off to relax or reflect. Even whilst taking holidays I've felt bound to keep an eye on my work phone and or computer especially as we've not been able to travel.

Over the last seven months of the year from May all of us FTOs have been enrolled on to the trade union apprenticeship course which has been interesting at times but also feels like going back to our early years of stages one two and three of shop stewards courses. At the time of writing this report I've recently received my Maths and English assessments which are to be done as part of the apprenticeship. After months of asking again we are attending this course twice a month via zoom which is not ideal, as above, my home is now also my office and classroom.

I would like to thank John in the office (his home) for the support he has provided over the last year when I've needed it and also thank my colleges Pauline and Roy for their support.

Geoff Atkinson
Organising Regional Secretary
Region 4

Region 4

Organising Regional Secretary's Report 2021

The past year has shown many challenges .

I have been helping out in Region 5 since March 2019, covering Ian Wood's sites until October when Lizzie Dinning the new full time official started. I have been helping her introducing her to some of her sites, and continuing to do the Speedibake sites with her, we have just concluded wages .and the company want to attack the sick pay as they have a high absence rate, at this time it is ongoing .

Park Cakes, Oldham

This year has been very busy, we had a hard time getting the wages through, and the company stated that they would like to look at sick pay as the absence level is unacceptable. We have lost quite a few members through dismissal, the core staff is now getting steadily diminished, I have represented the chargehands from investigation stages right up to the appeal stage I must have represented at least 30 chargehands in the last year . the core of the chargehands is slowly diminishing, I have represent technical from investigation up to appeal, I have also represented technical from investigation up to appeal .the agency and canteen I have also represented from investigation up to appeal . The Advanced and Standard contracts I also do from investigation right up to the appeal stage, but we should this year get the advanced and standard recognised in their own right . this year I will be meeting with the Branch secretary Julie Summersgill and the company to see if we can move progress about representation .

Hunts Cross Domino Pizza:

It is regreable that this branch has been put into the district branch, this was done in the July quarter when the company hounded the Branch Secretary out of the business, I would like to thank Ian Kyffyn for all his help in setting up the branch, I am sure Ian will always be involved within our union.

Fastfoods

I have over the year represented a couple of few fast food members within the region – 2 in TJ Fridays and 1 in Wetherspoons .

GREGGS

I have visited the Greggs shops in our region on a regular basis with Alison our only active steward at present and we have made over 40 members this year. As Christine stepped down from being a steward and Debbie Chappel has left the buisines I would like to thank them both for being stewards and giving their time .as we have been out and about we have recruited new shop stewards which is really good

In Conclusion

This year we as a region are going into all our sites and doing roadshows to try to improve our membership in exsisting sites .we are also planning to get all new stewards trained so that they are able to fulfil their rolls .

The Credit Union is going from strength to strength and we will continue to look at giving members benefits .

Pauline Nazir

Regional Organising Secretary

Region 4

Agreements in Region 4

Manchester

- **Blackburn – Bright Blue Foods (Br 406):** Local agreement.
- **Fine Lady Bakery (Br 407):** Local agreement
- **Allied (Br 432):** Local agreement
- **Allied (Br 451):** These members are part of ABF and are covered by a local agreement. Salaried staff now amalgamated with shop floor branch.
- **Park Cakes (Br 452):** Local agreement.
- **Park Cakes, Salaried Staff (Br 466 & 467):** Local agreement
- **Axis (Br 454):** Local agreement.
- **Soreen (Br 456):** Local agreement Guenther (Br 458): Local agreement
- **Greggs (Br 459):** National Group Agreement covering Bakery, Managers/Supervisors, Engineers, Shop Workers and Clerical Staff.
- **Kara Foods (Br 460):** Local agreement.
- **CSM UK (Br 472):** Local agreement covering one site (Skerton Road).

Preston

- **Beechs Chocolates (Br 404):** Local agreement
- **Tangerine (Br 414):** Local agreement **Park Cakes (Br 415):** Local agreement
- **Aveance (Br 405):** Local agreement
- **Hovis (Br 417):** Local agreement. Salaried staff now amalgamated with shop floor branch
- **Warburtons (Br 418, 419, 429):** National agreement
- **Foxs Biscuits (Br 420):** National agreement
- **Burtons Foods (Br 423):** Local agreement. Salaried staff now amalgamated with shop floor branch
- **Sayers the Bakers (Br 424):** Local agreement
- **Park Cakes, Salaried Staff (Br 413):** Local agreement
- **Warburtons, Salaried staff (Br 429s):** National agreement

REGION 5

Regional Officer's Report 2021

Membership

Total membership at the end of December was 4,368 a decrease of 287 compared with December which was 4655.

Organising

Scotland

Organising over the last year has been a challenge due to restrictions on Covid which has affected access to several sites. However, we have still managed to go in to certain sites. We also set up WhatsApp groups for most of the sites, where we have managed to keep members informed of all changes and encouraged branches to organise.

In Scotland the focus has been on maintaining the membership in the branches we have trying to rebuild the branch structures that have dropped due to a frustration from reps, people not willing to take on the roles, and other issues happening for many outside the workplace. We have managed to maintain the new branches we set up like, Future Cleaning Services, Compass Food Group and Lazy Day Foods, Central Cleaning Services. Although the numbers have dropped from what they were, we still have activity in those branches. We have also witnessed an increase of members from the Scottish Islands, due to our online membership joining.

Rafal continues to organise through his learning project and has also built up a large network throughout the Polish/migrant communities in Scotland.

Moving forward our plans for organising to build on existing branches and work on previous targets.

Northumberland and Durham

Organising in Northumberland & Durham again has been tough going over the past year. On a brighter note, there has been a significant increase in membership over the period in **Greggs Baliol** and **Gosforth**. This is down to the strong branch structure at each of the sites and the tenacity of the reps in ensuring any new starts at each of the site sign up to the union.

Greggs North Lakes has a difficult task due to there only being one rep on the site who carries out all tasks, this is despite constant attempts to get someone in to help.

Warburtons Free From continues increase membership thanks to the hard work of the new branch sec who took on the role at a difficult time and steadied things in the branch

At **Country Style Stockton** there has also been a maintain in membership, but I feel we would see a bigger increase with a better rep structure on site, who would challenge this employer.

This is the same at **Paradise Foods** and other sites in the Team Valley.

There is also the opportunity for growth in Stockton once Warburtons reopen their Stockton site as a **Bagel & Wrap** plant.

There has also been an increase in membership for the area due to the online joining.

Moving forward our plans for organising to build on existing branches and work on previous targets

West Yorkshire

In West Yorks in the established branches such as **Speedibake**, **Suma**, **Rathbones**, **Fox's** and **Warburtons**, they continue to maintain and increase membership. There has also been a rise in membership for the online membership joining

Organising targets in the area include **Bright Blue Foods**, **Countrystyle Foods** and **CSM** .

We will also continue to build membership and service members in **Greggs** with Ruth Marsh as well as supporting all branches to reach as close to 100% density as possible

South Yorkshire

Again, it has been real difficult to organise in the branches such as **Manor, Fosters, Jacksons** and **Farmhouse** due to the restrictions that have been put in place

Organising targets include **Country Style Grimsby, Farmhouse Potato Bake** and **Fosters** as well as supporting other sites reach as close to 100% density as possible.

Recruitment

We have 107 members joined through the online membership joining

- Scotland 36
- N & D 10
- Yorks 61

In Conclusion

I will conclude by thanking May, Vicky for all their help and support. Jit and Lizzie for all their hard work and support within the region. I would also like to thank Rafal Obrebski for all that he does over and above his own learning role. I would also like to thank Gareth Lane for all the organising he does in the region. And to all the branch reps and active members, who are at coalface in their workplaces, for their assistance in enabling us to provide the service which our members deserve.

Mark McHugh
Regional Officer
Region 5

Region 5 (Scotland)

Regional Officer's Report 2021

Warburtons

The last year at Bellshill has been challenging due to the Covid outbreak and limited access to site. There have been some changes to the branch reps on site who have represented Bellshill nationally at the meetings. This is all kind of new to them and hopefully in order for them to develop, they get the opportunity to do their stage 1,2,3 courses. It would also be beneficial to get some additional reps from across the shifts active in the branch. There has also been a real lack of union learning on site, despite the reps requesting online course.

Recognition Agreement negotiated nationally

Dawnfresh

Dawnfresh made an announcement to close the Uddingston site on the 9th of September and move all production to their Arbroath site which is just under 3 hrs from Uddingston. Consultation at this site was challenging with the employer failing to commit to an actual date of closure due to them building a new extension to their Arbroath site. No workers at Uddingston have indicated that they would like to relocate to Arbroath. We are still in dialogue with the employer as this is written. There has been limited union learning at Dawnfresh due to their stringent site access during Covid, however the union learning organiser has repeatedly requested courses ran on site and digital learning

Recognition Agreement locally.

Johnstones

In Johnstones we have worked tirelessly with the branch secretary who carries out all branch activity on her own, in challenging the employer to improve pay and also look at alternative shift patterns. After some tough negotiations we managed to implement a new shift pattern which was beneficial to members. In August we also managed to negotiate a further 9.8% pay increase out with the wage negotiations which came in to play in their September wage. Although this was a good deal, it was frustrating knowing that the employer could afford that post pay talks, when they were under pressure to keep their staff. There has been limited union learning on site for the reasons posted above.

Recognition Agreement negotiated locally

Lightbodys

Lightbodys have over the last few years struggled to keep any staff due to shift patterns on site and just above min wage being paid. That is the reason why most of our members at Lightbodys decided to take a redundancy offer last year. With it being one of the largest employers in Lanarkshire, we aim to focus building our membership at Lightbodys.

No Recognition on site.

Branch 500/500f

The membership in both 500 and 500f branches continue to grow despite the fluctuation in many fast food and hospitality employers. This is down to the ability to sign an online membership form which is much more in line with many young workers. It has also opened organising opportunities in other bakeries and food producing factories. We have built up a small group of activists in Glasgow and Lanarkshire. The real challenge is keeping them involved, as many move on to other things. The plan for this year is to be involved with the STUC Youth Committee and Unions in to Schools campaigns.

Although more often than not this group of young workers take up more time than recognised sites with workplace representation, they still need representing and hopefully it makes them stay with the BFAWU as their careers go in different directions

Branch 500 continues to grow as we pick up new members from the communities.

Branch 520 SUPSIT Interpreters

Over the last year this branch has gone from strength to strength with their activism and the need to change the sector in which they work. They have a strong branch structure and hold regular branch meetings on line, pushing each other on to challenge the establishment, They have campaigned in the Scottish Parliament on the procurement process and submitted a number of FOI requests on behalf of their membership. This is a group of workers who found themselves not qualifying for any financial assistance throughout the Covid pandemic and subsequently more precarious than they could have imagined. However, they did manage a big win for the interpreters who work in the NHS, after legally challenging why they were unable to qualify for the £500 payment awarded to all NHS staff in Scotland, because of their employment status. They won their case and all members working in the NHS were paid out. We are challenging the procurement process through Unity Consulting in Scotland. No recognition.

Future Cleaning Services

The members at FCS have had a tough time throughout Covid due to their primary role of cleaning the cinemas in Glasgow and surrounding areas was affected by the cinemas closing and leaving them to look elsewhere for work, however most of the membership has remained. The branch is 90% migrant workers who have pushed the employer in engaging with them to deliver a fairer workplace with much improved conditions

We have delivered progression ESOL classes to the members which has given them more confidence to challenge the employer. This is ongoing. No Recognition Agreement yet.

Central Cleaning Services

We had a few issues with Central Cleaning regarding hours worked and shift patterns which was resolved. There was also some breakdown between members on holiday requests which again was resolved through the grievance process. We are still looking for a rep to take up some of the branch issues. Members at Central have made good use of all the learning opportunities. The company have expressed a willingness to sign a recognition agreement.

Organising

Over the next 12 months we will work on a campaign for the Right to Food which came about in Scotland, through some intervention with Elaine Smith MSP, and also Rhoda Grant MSP, who took over the campaign from Elaine Smith. This has been a long process over a few years which initially started through North Lanarkshire Trades Council and has since grown with the help of Unity Consulting and Ian Byrne MP for Liverpool. We believe that by being part of the campaign will allow us to increase membership in Scotland.

In terms of organising, we will continue to increase membership in existing branches, and more importantly in other sites and areas. This hopefully will come through our online membership joining and previous targets such as Farne Salmon in the Scottish Borders, Fyffes's bananas in Livingston, Genius Bakery in Bathgate and UIN Foods in Cambuslang. There is also a number of members who have left some of the branches above and started working in Albert Bartlett in Airdrie and Scotbeef in East Kilbride and Glasgow. We will also continue our community work with the migrant workers and North and South Lanarkshire Trades Councils

I would like to thank the branch secretaries and lay officials in Scotland for their support throughout this difficult time for everyone. I would also like to thank my fellow officials in Region 5, Jit Singh and Lizzie Dinning for their support too. It would also be right to thank Rafal Obrebski for all his good work on the Learning Project and his continued support in organising.

I would finally like to thank our office staff, May and Vicky for all the help.

Mark McHugh
Regional Officer
Region 5

Region 5 (Northumberland and Durham)

Regional Officer's Report 2021

Organising

Greggs

Greggs has a Private Group Agreement, which covers all workers. We have a large number of shop Members covered by this Agreement thanks to the good work of all the reps.

Lizzie Dinning sits on the national committee with Greggs. There is also regular increase in recruitment throughout the region which is a significant in the previous years. This is down to the hard work of the reps in Baliol, Gosforth and North Lakes. And also, to the reps that cover recruitment in the shops.

Recognition Agreement in place at the Gosforth, Balliol and Penrith sites.

Warburtons

After the closure of the Newburn site, most of the staff transferred next door to the Free From bakery we have managed to build up the branch and have a good cohort of reps. Despite the branch sec being new to the role he has galvanised the branch.

We have also been told that Warburtons plan to reopen the Stockton bakery later this year, with a new bagel & wrap plant which will see an increase in membership plant.

Both covered under a National Agreement.

Allied Bakeries Gateshead

We lost 7 despatch operatives and 8 drivers from the Gateshead depot due to redundancy. However, we still have a union presence on site and the new branch sec is active in the branch and is in regular contact. No production at this site. Despatch operation only.

Countrystyle Stockton

Again, Countrystyle has proven to be a real difficult site. Communication between ourselves and management is really problematic due to our email addresses being blocked by the employer. There also seems to be a bit of a malaise set in with our reps in the sense that whatever the employer says they just accept it, despite me regularly being available and on site. This is made all the more difficult due to the structure of the directors and all that they control. Local Agreement.

Mission Foods Seaham

Recognition on this site. However, the membership is very low despite several attempts and campaigns to increase numbers. It is a site that we have open access to from the employer, but remains difficult to organise.

Paradise Foods, Gateshead

The high turnover of staff makes this site difficult to gain any momentum in terms of an increase in membership despite me always being available anytime I am in the area.

All Good Snacks, Gateshead

A number of our members from Warburtons Newburn have started working in All Good. This is a decent site who are open to working with the BFAWU and treat their staff well.

Organising Targets

- To increase membership density in Greggs across the region and to support the reps through organising roadshows, and regular site visits etc.
- To have organising campaign at Paradise Foods and All Good Snacks in the Team Valley, Gateshead.

- Build on the online membership in the area and get some of the young members active in their work area and in their communities.
- All of the above will be key for membership growth in the coming year and supported by the correct branch structure

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all branch secretaries and lay officials in the region for their hard work and help throughout the year. And to also Jit and Lizzie for their support in the region. Thanks also to May and Vicky for their support also.

Mark McHugh
Regional Officer
Region 5

Region 5 (Yorkshire)

Regional Organising Secretary's Report 2021

We all looked forward to 2021 hoping that restrictions would be lifted due to the vaccine rollout and began to start planning to be out organising with new representatives around the Greggs shops and organising roadshows at recognised sites, only to be stopped again due to the new Omicron variant taking hold. The skills we had learnt in 2020 and the use of technology to conduct our meetings and represent members were still being used in 2021. I have not been allowed on some sites unless by specific invitation by the site managers – depending on the importance of the issue. I have kept in regular touch with the branch secretaries, our members who have been brilliant by following the guidelines set out by the government and the rules put in place at the sites that they work and have kept the nation fed.

Organising

Suma Foods

The company tried to implement change to Terms & Conditions which would have meant if somebody wanted to resign from a particular the individual would lose their contracted days' pay. (At present the employee would receive full pay until another suitable role is found) After attending a number of consultation meetings the company finally backed down and introduced a new policy which was more reasonable to our members.

Rathbones Wakefield

I have spent a lot of time at this Branch this year as the relationship with the company has deteriorated over the year with attacks on our Branch Secretary and also with the 2020 Pay Talks. I have attended a number of disciplines that were raised by the company against the Branch Secretary (we believe he has been targeted due to his union activities)

The October 2020 pay award was unanimously rejected by the branch and talks continued with ACAS and the Company well into December 2021. The Branch was up for a fight and was itching to take some kind of industrial action. After ACAS Conciliation and Mediation talks a new improved offer was put to our member which was overwhelmingly accepted.

The Union also entered consultations in May for the Tupe Transfer of Rathbones drivers to Wincanton and after extended consultation talks the company backed down and agreed to pay the drivers a lump sum payment for the 2020 pay award that was were still ongoing.

Hovis Bradford Bakery

The company entered consultation with the Trade Union about changes to the hygiene Structure which would have meant our members would have had a reduction in pay of around £4000. The company wouldn't give an answer to the Union if Redundancy would be offered to our members as it was fundamental change to their current Terms & Conditions and the alternative roles were not suitable. The company and the Union concluded consultation and the company withdrew its proposal and kept the structure as it was.

I have attended site representing members on various issues as well as well as Collective Grievances that the Branch has raised on behalf of its members including a grievance raised by the Front Line Managers against the company after various meetings the issues were resolved and the FLM'S went away happy with the outcome of their Grievance Hearing.

The company is trying to re- build its relationship with the Union, only time will tell.

Hovis Drivers Bradford

Union raised a collective Grievance on behalf of the drivers that were on 2nd Generation Contracts and were on less favourable Terms & Conditions than 1st Generation Contracts. The Union also argued that due to driver shortages companies are paying bonuses and pay scales are increasing daily across the West Yorkshire Area. If the company moved the 2nd Generation payments in line with the 1st Generation payments this would go a long way in retaining our existing drivers and attracting new ones. After lengthy discussions the company agreed to this.

Fox's Biscuits Batley

Fox's have recently been taken over by the Ferrero group who have promised new investment of up to £30 million over three years it seems to be coming through with improvements to the building and equipment. One of the sites with restricted access and have only managed to attend once this year to represent a member on their appeal hearing. Mark and his team are being kept very busy as there has been a rise in disciplines at this site. The team started wage negotiations in Mar 2021. The Union presented a proposal to management and the members voted in favour for company's counter proposal. I would like to thank all the Reps on site for their work over the last year as I was restricted by the company to come on site due to Covid.

Manor Charlton

At Charlton wage negotiations are on-going, spent a lot of time on site in Wage Consultations as they are more complex this year as we are addressing several issues. Some of the issues we are addressing are reviewing and re-instating the differentials between Grades 1-4 as these have been eroded by the NMW, moving the holiday year to April – March, moving hourly paid to salary some individuals will no longer get Top Ups to their wages because they are falling below the NMW. It isn't a straight forward percentage increase as previous years.

Fosters Bakery

Fosters is one of the sites I haven't visited much this year, I attended wage negotiations this year we attempted to look at the grading and pay structure but unfortunately to no avail, due to the affects the pandemic had on the business (Grading and Pay structure will be discussed in 2022) The business at one point was looking at closing but has survived and also the employees were given a pay rise to April 2021 and also later on in the year were given another age increase to attract and keep its existing employees.

Greggs of Yorkshire

Not managed to visit any shops this year due to the pandemic have been supporting members virtually which is not ideal. The members in the shops are suffering due staffing levels are at an all-time, some shops are temporary closed or trading hours are shortened because of low staff due to Covid and an upturn in trade (Not helped by the restructure last year when roles were made redundant) as seen in the drop of membership from previous year. The bakery in Leeds is also suffering with labour shortages and recruiting in Greggs is a priority in all areas.

I would like to thank all the Officers in region 5 for their help and guidance over the year. Many thanks to Vicky and May and all the Branch Reps for their help throughout the year as the Region could not function without their support.

Jit Singh

Organising Regional Secretary

Region 5

Region 5

Organising Regional Secretary's Report 2021

The last twelve months has been a very frightening/grim time for me and my family. But thanks to all the love and support we have been given and the fabulous NHS I am making substantial progress.

- **Greggs Gosforth** –been on site, met with reps, both bakery and retail. Attended supply forum and retail partnership.
- **Greggs Balliol** – been on site, met with the reps.
- Attended **Greggs GNC** and pay talks.

As restrictions start to be lifted, we can get back to some normality, not live in a world of zoom but meet face to face with our reps, members and look to grow the union.

I would like to thank Mark, Jit, May, and Vicky for all the help I have received on my return to work.

A big thank you to Sarah Woolley for all the help she has given me and my family during this challenging time.

Lizzie Dinning
Regional Organising Secretary
Region 5

Region 5

Conditions Of Labour 2021

Private agreement or local bargaining

- Jackson's Operatives Agreement (covers one bakery)
- Jackson's Salaried Staff Agreement (covers one bakery)
- Rathbone's Operatives Agreement (covers one bakery)
- Farmhouse's Agreement (covers one factory)
- Fosters (covers one bakery)
- Birdseye Foods Agreement (covers one bakery)
- Manor Agreement (covers one bakery and Salaried Staff)
- GI Group Workers covered by private agreement
- Greggs Agreement covers three bakeries and all employees and Balliol Park central savoury plant
- Fox's Agreement (covers one factory) depot
- Speedibake (covers two factories)
- Bright Blue Foods (covers one factory)
- ABF (covering one dispatch)
- Suma Foods (covers one factory)
- British Bakeries (covers one bakery)
- N.A.M.B.C. & C. (covers one bakery)
- Dawnfresh (covers one factory)
- Lightbody Cakes (covers one factory)
- Warburtons (covers four bakeries)
- Country Style Foods Stockton (covers one factory)
- Mission Foods (covers one factory)
- Kookaburra Foods (covers one factory)
- Johnstones Just Desserts (covers one factory)

REGION 7

Regional Officer's Report 201

Work within the Branches

We entered 2021 in Northern Ireland with a local lockdown just after the Christmas, which again restricted the ability to get into branches however we do believe we have opened more channels of communication to make it as easy as possible for members to reach out or make contact on a regular basis through different methods of social media on online forums.

The past year seen many pay talks held over digital meetings, which was disappointing for myself as I was not on site and physically present with our representatives, we had to make the best of the situation and adhere to the guidance being given around the pandemic on a national, local and site by site basis. The representatives of each site were the backbone of the region over the year and did their best with ever changing situations at each of the sites, while all the time keeping me in the loop and keeping health and safety of our members at the fore.

Branch 701 – Regional Branch

Over the year many of the members in this branch have contacted the union for advice on changing Covid rules and what their employer should or shouldn't be doing. The members placed in this branch are typically in companies that we do not have any recognition agreements with. Following the New Year restrictions, there was a small lifting of the restrictions and the amount of people that could be within enclosed spaces, which enabled me to get back into some workplaces and represent members face to face. Over the year we have been lucky within this branch to have a very active retired member and his help and assistance with Health and Safety related issues in the region were extremely welcomed.

Branch 702 – Greggs

In the last quarter of 2020, we were able to recruit a rep to this branch however with a few different gross misconduct cases to deal with, the rep had not yet been trained to a level that could represent such cases, so I was dealing with these cases, which again were all held over a digital format. These hearings took up a considerable amount of time from investigation through to appeal stages. Our membership in this branch has remained somewhat static throughout the year, which has been difficult to organise due to the shops being spread out across N.I and the added restrictions of not being able to visit shops in the capacity of organising. At the latter end of the year, I sent out a questionnaire to all our members asking what the union could do for them, what they currently found difficult or challenging and unfortunately only one response was received. I believe that with the New Year, in 2022 we need to focus on how we better engage with members in this branch.

Branch 703 – Irwin's Bakery

Over the past year in Irwin's, we conducted our pay talks, both in person and digitally for some meetings. We were able to hold branch meetings where I attended virtually and held briefing sessions within the site that I attended in person. With the members we discussed what they want to see changed within the current union structure in their branch and discussed what they want to see more of the union doing. The feedback was very helpful, and I especially welcomed the criticism received because without addressing this we would not be serving the interests of all our members. Negative feedback was then brought to the reps' group so we could look at better ways of working for our members and we have encouraged as many as possible to join our private Facebook and WhatsApp groups, because one of the criticisms was around communication with members following meetings with the employer. We fought long and hard for a good pay deal and had members fully engaged in this process, which was good to see considering half of this was done digitally. We have looked at ways in which we can organise more effectively coming into 2022 and hope that no further lockdowns or restrictions will hinder this.

Branch 704 – Almac

Almac is a pharmaceutical company that we have a few members located within. We do not have a recognition agreement at this site however I have been involved in several meetings over the year to represent our members.

The first half of the year saw meetings conducted virtually however from September onwards I have been able to be physically present at meetings to represent members. Our ability to organise here again over the last year has been impacted by the pandemic and we have relied on good feedback from the members to tell other employees about their experience of our union. I have had one member that has helped me by distributing forms and union information to their work colleagues. Membership here also remained a similar number to the previous year.

Branch 705 – Maine Bakery

I had advised in my 2020 report that this company had tried to change contracts of employment without entering a proper process, which remains unresolved to date however the HR consultancy firm they deal with has mentioned possible meetings around the issue when I have attended other hearings for members in branch 701, as the same HR firm deals with a number of different companies. Over the year I have also represented members of this branch, one being for gross misconduct that unfortunately ended in dismissal and after appeal we were advised by our legal services that there was no challenge that could be brought against the employer. We still have not had any member wanting to come forward as a representative which means I deal with all issues relating to the site. Members have been approached and asked if they could nominate a representative but there is a lot of reluctance from anyone to step forward.

Branch 706 & 707 – Hovis & Hovis Engineers

As many of you will be aware, Hovis in Belfast had quite the year! Early into 2021 we commenced pay talks that went on for a number of months and following a rejected consultative ballot both our union and Unite the Union went for a ballot for industrial action. The ballot went through and on 14th May we manned the picket lines at 6.00am and started our ongoing all-out strike action. Throughout this period, we had to cover the picket line 24/7, and both unions worked tirelessly to get the best deal for our members. The impact of the strike action saw a local shortage of bread, as the other bread houses in the region could not keep up with the demand and Hovis themselves did not have any form of backup plan to keep product going into stores. This may have been because there was doubt around the members actually taking action, it may have been because of the pandemic or it may have been due to Brexit, depends on who you ask however the fact that our members stood their ground, shoulder to shoulder with members from Unite would have meant that no matter the reasons, not one thing was getting in or out of the factory even if the employer did have a backup plan. The mood on the picket line each day was one of being united in solidarity, wanting the best to come of the strike and taking the opportunity to stand up and say that as essential workers they deserved better. After 11 full days of action, we balloted our members on an offer that the company maintained they could not go to. The determination of our members and the strength in unity that they proved they had forced the offer in the end. I was honoured to work with the members and reps in this branch during the strike and they have done themselves so proud, walking back into a factory with their heads held high and an understanding of what can be achieved when we stand together as a union. The pay offer also came with the outcome of having the Labour Relations Agency conduct an Industrial Relations Audit, which by the end of 2021 has not yet been started so we will follow this up for 2022.

I have also been involved in a couple of cases with members at the latter end of the year, as some of our reps have been off on long term sick and the other reps not having yet had sufficient training. All but one is outstanding as we enter 2022.

Branch 710 – Golden Cow

I now have one member in this branch that transferred from Branch 705, and together we have been looking at ways to get back into organising the site. It has been difficult due to the restrictions we were still in and the fact the member has just joined the company so with an understanding that they will get their feet under the table first, we want to address the situation of becoming active again at the site. This site has been included in my organising strategy for 2022, pandemic permitting.

Branch 711 – Allied Bakery Belfast

This branch has faced several changes in the past year, from redundancies to shift changes etc. It seemed that we were no sooner out of a process that we were back into another one. Again, most of the meetings within this branch were conducted digitally, and of the whole year I have only been at the site a handful of times. We also had pay talks looming at the latter end of the year and given that the last pay talks ended in industrial action, the employer was keen to meet earlier to commence pay talks. This year the reps took the opportunity to meet with the different shifts on site, accommodated by the employer, as we would not have been able to hold mass branch meetings, and they then were able to feedback what our members wanted from the pay talks. The employer went straight down the road as the same offer that ended the industrial action in Hovis just a few months earlier, in terms of the percentage offered. While we tried to negotiate more, following a consultative ballot of our members the offer was accepted on the first vote. I do believe that the constant changing within the site through the year had an impact on this as members were feeling sick and tired of one thing after another.

Branch 715 & 716 – Moy Park

This branch started off the year with getting a better structure in place and we set up different online platforms for members to use and connect with us daily. We also grew the number of reps we had on site through the year and training for them is still ongoing digitally. We did try to address the issue of how we organise effectively as this branch will always remain the one that has the most potential for growth, but with constant changing management structures we have been on the back foot each time we approach the subject of organising. We also had a few reps off on long term sick again this year which left the remaining reps picking up the bulk of the disciplinary, grievance and appeal hearing to deal with. We conducted our pay talks early in the year mostly through digital methods or when there was a lack of reps, I was permitted on site so long as the company covid measures were adhered too. Not surprisingly, the employer used covid and the cost of isolation, sick pay etc, as a reason they could not afford a higher percentage pay offer however we ensured that our site got the same as the other Moy Park sites across N.I. The consultative ballot was accepted on the first vote.

We have seen a slight increase of membership over the year which I know is positive given that the turnover of staff is so high the company are struggling to manage it. With this high turnover in mind, we worked with the employer to introduce new incentives to the existing employees but also to try and attract new workers into the business, which shows how bad the turnover of staff has become. Different bonus elements, increased overtime rates and attendance allowances were negotiated and brought in over the summer months however they are up for review at the turn of the New Year so we will argue that they need to be maintained going forward when the review comes around. We have also requested dates in 2022 to re-engage with organising.

Branch 726 – Howell House

This site has had another relatively quiet year, with pay talks being held via a digital platform and we achieved an offer that members accepted but that was only after an overwhelming rejection of the first offer and what we suspect was a worrying period for the company to not end up in a similar position as Hovis in industrial action. The level of the rejection on the first vote pushed the company further than we had anticipated for their second offer. What did happen throughout the year after pay talks, however, was another increase on wages and the implementation of a company sick pay scheme that we had been told the company could not afford when we asked for it. This was done in a bid to try to retain the employees they have, again similar to branch 716, with a view of having more attractive benefits and so far, it seems to have been welcomed and all staff have stayed with the company.

We are almost at 100% membership within this branch, as it is a small local bakery with a small number of staff but that doesn't mean that it is given any less attention than the branches with bigger numbers or more potential. Over the course of the year, I have not attended any meetings in person but have been present over digital platforms. The reps keep me updated with any changes in a regular basis, but this is a branch that operates very smoothly most of the year.

Legal Services in Region 7 2020

Through the year the union legal services have secured £45,301.10 in personal injury and employment law claims.

2021 was another quiet year for compromise agreements and I only worked on one that settled for £11,000.

Organising in Region 7 2020

Organising in 2021 was impacted as much as it was in the previous year. In N.I we had much stricter guidance in place for most of the year which in turn made the ability to organising as we normally would very difficult. We saw the introduction of online sign up to join the union, which is a massive step forward for our union from solely paper-based membership forms and joining ability. We still did not have an effective way to organise in 2021 because as soon as you would plan an event there would be different guidance to consider or companies not wanting to commit to on site campaigns. We also looked at other venues to see if that would be an option of trying to run an organising event however each venue has their own set of guidelines to follow, and none were offering what we would need in terms of setting up events. These events would have been held away from the workplace too and that would have impacted how successful they could be. As with last year's reps, we have done the best we can in the challenging times we are still in and with employment being so unstable at the minute, most of our branches have felt the impacts of high staff turnover.

Membership Figures

Our membership over the year 2021 saw an increase of 28 new members, which on the face of it is not a big figure at all however when we consider the fact that we have also covered our losses through the year the actual figure of new members made in 2021 is higher than 28. On this note, I would give extra thanks to the reps at each of the branches that worked to either maintain or increase their membership despite the challenges they faced with losing so many members. One rep likened it to trying to hold back the tide following shift changes and redundancies which saw the branch figures impacted and I couldn't agree more, so many thanks for all the hard work.

Regional Business

Over the year we were hopeful that work would get back to some form of pre-pandemic operation however that was not the case and with changing guidance we had to keep adapting to what was in place at a specific time. It has meant that we have not been able to get back to ordinary face to face meetings for any great length of time, which takes away from the personal experience we have with our members and has created somewhat of a void in our daily working lives, membership interaction is so important to what we do and hopefully we are through the worst of this pandemic and 2022 will bring better ways of working and physically being present alongside our members and giving the ability to organise new members.

The region has continued to work from home for the most of 2021, with our regional office being serviced remotely. This has worked well for the region, and we see no immediate plans to change back to an office location however we have retained our links to the office building that we previously used and our plan for 2022 is that 2 Regional Council meetings will be held there in person. Should we have a need to enter office space again, this building will always have ample opportunity to do so.

We continue to monitor regional spend and with the removal of the physical office space we have saved on rent and rates, only paying for a virtual office lease. Our regional running costs are possibly as low as we could ever hope to get them.

Retired Members/Unwaged and Free Card Holders 2021

As of December 2021, we report the following figures:

- Retired/Unwaged members 78
- Free Card Holders 26

Conclusion of 2021

Going into 2021, Northern Ireland was already in a lockdown, and it gave an insight into how the rest of the year would pan out. High levels of uncertainty and ever-changing guidance from a party, who's handling of 2022-2021 has been disastrous, left most of us striving to achieve our best under difficult circumstances. We got a fair understanding through 2021 of exactly what employers of essential food workers think of their employees and having to go to the extremes of taking industrial action for decent pay just gives a tiny glimpse of that. Key and Essential workers that got round of applause after round of applause on a Thursday evening did not get the wages that reflected their efforts during the pandemic, which is still with us, nor did they get close to what they deserved without fighting for it.

Each pay talk we has this year centred around the worth of the members and workers we represent, because we knew that they have been a major part of the backbone that keeps our country going, they have been and always will be skilled essential workers because without them our nation would have no food at all. It remains a sad reflection of the food companies out there that even with the knowledge these workers deserve more, they feel it is fair to offer so little. Even now, months after our industrial action at Hovis, I am riding a wave of hope and certainty that our union will continue to fight for and improve the working lives of our members in the food industry, as our General Secretary so rightly put it at our 2021 Digital Conference, we will not let our members become the forgotten heroes of this pandemic.

This year also saw the first ever BFAWU Annual Conference being held digitally, and it was so wonderful to see that members are still making and forming rules for which our union functions, even on a digital level. I thought the conference was a major success and showed how we can adapt as a union to meet the needs of our members. There were many first-time speakers, members we haven't seen for so long and a lot of interaction at the many fringe meetings that were held. Our region thanks everyone involved in the setting up and successful running of the 2021 annual conference.

I also couldn't mention conference without saying how very sad it was in November 2021 to hear of the death of our long-time comrade **Pat Rowley**, a great loss to our union. I can't remember a conference that Pat wasn't at, holding the union to account each Sunday morning in the Treasurers Report section of conference and giving some outstanding speeches to motions! He really did devote his time and energy to our union, and we will all miss him so very much. Pat, conference won't be the same without you and we will never forget you, RIP.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank every rep in each of the branches that has continued to work hard to protect our members, keeping health and safety at the forefront of everyday working for our members and holding employers to account when they have failed to protect them. Being a rep isn't an easy role, I've mentioned in reports before that on occasion it can seem a thankless task, but we really do have the best union reps in the country. They are the blood that pumps through the veins of this union, and we couldn't work without them, so a massive thank you to our local regional reps but also to all our reps nationally.

I would also like to thank the Regional Council members for their work over the past year, it can't be easy with my constant emailing and messages, but they have worked with online meetings, and we got the opportunity to have one physical meeting through the year, which was great to finally get together. The RC members were on hand to offer support and solidarity at the Hovis Picket Line, night and day, both the members in Hovis and I really appreciated their support.

I would finally like to thank Renee Halliday for keeping me on track, for her work within the region and MANY hours spent on the phone with me, we always know a call together is going to be a long one! And a special thanks to Renee for continuing to work with the challenges we have faced and working remotely, it's not as easy as it may seem and can be very isolating at times, but we have been there for each other on the phone and by email which has been extremely important for us.

Laura Graham
Regional Officer
Region 7

Full Time Officers

No 1 Region

[No Regional Officer]

Bro F Loveday Organising Regional Secretary

Bro H Rashid* Organising Regional Secretary

No 2 Region

[No Regional Officer]

Bro J James Organising Regional Secretary

Bro G Johnston Organising Regional Secretary

No 3 Region

Bro G Atwall Regional Officer

Bro H Rashid* Organising Regional Secretary

Bro L Bemka Organising Regional Secretary

No 4 Region

Bro R Streeter Regional Officer

Bro G Atkinson Organising Regional Secretary

Sis P Nazir Organising Regional Secretary

No 5 Region

Bro M McHugh Regional Officer

Bro J Singh Organising Regional Secretary

Sis E Dinning Organising Regional Secretary

No 7 Region

Sis L Graham Regional Officer

* Haroon has been working in both regions in the course of 2021

Previous Conference Venues and Presidents

Conference	President	Conference	President	Conference	President
1910 Birmingham	F Bentley (Manchester)	1959 Southport	E Haynes (Birmingham)	1994 Morecambe	D Nash (Nat Pres Elect)
1911 London		1960 Leamington Spa		1995 Morecambe	
1912 Liverpool		1961 Blackpool		1996 Blackpool	
1913 Cardiff		1962 Weston-Super-Mare		1997 Bridlington	
1914 Leicester	J S Brown (Barrow)	1963 Bridlington	C Child (Nat Pres Elect)	1998 Bridlington	R Draper (Nat Pres Elect)
1915 Leeds		1964 Great Yarmouth		2000 Bridlington	
1916 Southampton		1965 Rhyl		2001 Bridlington	
1918 London		1965 Birmingham		2002 Bridlington	
1919 Oxford	T Fems (Birmingham)	1966 Morecambe	C Child (Birmingham)	2003 Bridlington	I Hodson (Region 4)
1920 London		1967 Weston-Super-Mare		2004 Bridlington	
1921 Southport		1968 Scarborough		2005 Bridlington	
1922 Swansea		1969 Eastbourne		2006 Bridlington	
1923 Worcester	H J Keen (London)	1970 Rhyl	T O'Neill (Bradford)	2007 Bridlington	I Hodson (Region 4)
1924 Cambridge		1971 Blackpool		2008 Bridlington	
1925 Nottingham		1972 Torquay		2009 Bridlington	
1926 Bristol		1973 Bridlington		2010 Bridlington	
1927 Birmingham	E Haynes (Birmingham)	1974 Great Yarmouth	T O'Neill (Bradford)	2011 Bridlington	I Hodson (Region 4)
1928 Cardiff		1975 Skegness		2012 Bridlington	
1929 Manchester		1976 Southport		2013 Bridlington	
1930 Portsmouth		1977 Torquay		2014 Southport	
1932 Blackpool	E Haynes (Birmingham)	1978 Bridlington	T O'Neill (Bradford)	2015 Southport	I Hodson (Region 4)
1934 Leicester		1978 Birmingham recall Conference		2016 Southport	
1936 London		1979 Margate		2017 Southport	
1938 Birmingham		1980 Skegness		2018 Southport	
1940 Birmingham	E Haynes (Birmingham)	1981 Bridlington	T O'Neill (Bradford)	2019 Southport	I Hodson (Region 4)
1942 Birmingham		1982 Bridlington		2020 Cancelled – COVID-19	
1945 Morecambe		1983 Bridlington		2021 <i>Digital (Zoom)</i>	
1946 Nottingham		1984 Bridlington			
1947 Cardiff	E Haynes (Birmingham)	1985 Blackpool	T O'Neill (Bradford)		I Hodson (Region 4)
1948 Margate		1986 Blackpool			
1949 Blackpool		1987 Blackpool			
1950 Brighton		1988 Blackpool			
1951 Whitley Bay	E Haynes (Birmingham)	1989 Blackpool	T O'Neill (Bradford)		I Hodson (Region 4)
1951 Birmingham		1990 Morecambe			
1953 Margate		1991 Morecambe			
1954 Weston-Super-Mare		1992 Morecambe			
1955 Birmingham	E Haynes (Birmingham)	1993 Morecambe	T O'Neill (Bradford)		I Hodson (Region 4)
1956 Rhyl					
1957 Morecambe					
1958 Bournemouth					

