

Assistant Publicity Officer (Web) Report to Devon UNISON Branch AGM 2005

(This need only be a short report as I can just point you to the branch's web site - see URL below).

I think the idea of using our site as an active resource rather than just a collection of informative static pages is slowly catching on. During the year I had our web hosts change over our web server to one that uses PHP and this allows us to use feedback forms and do surveys; for example stewards were able to complete an extensive survey online back in November and latterly, our OT members were able to give instant feedback to their BAOT rep with their views on the management proposals for 'Agenda for Change'. We'll never be able to use the web to take a vote but there is a resource here that I think we have yet to exploit.

The number of HTML web pages we have online is now around the 100 mark and I've tried with varying success to keep them updated. I can of course only keep them updated if I receive material - some branch officers have been quick to use the web whilst others I have yet to convince! I would also like the branch to be able to give more feedback to members with the branch having minutes of committee meetings, staff side meetings and national conferences 'reports-back' online. Now that we use PHP we could have a password protected area on the web site so that we can restrict access to any sensitive material, but I await a decision from the Branch on this.

During the year, apart from the previously well used LGBT pages and Education pages, the Welfare Committee has added a section, as has the International Officer and Retired Member's Officer. The Latest News section now has a regular news feed on trades union matters. Recently I added a Stewards Resources section and have settled on a site Search Engine that also includes the contents of PDF files on the site.

The recorded number of visits rose significantly around November as the web search engines picked up our Equality Officer's 'Diversity in Diction - Equality in Action - A Guide to the Appropriate Use of Language' pages. We actually recorded 100 hits on one day; these have now declined to average around 30 hits a day. Whilst this is encouragingly far more than this time last year, I think we still have some way to go before we have a significant number of members making use of our web site.

More publicity and repetition of the URL (web address) is still needed. Please will members please ensure the URL below is on their office notice board?

Lastly, the web site won third place (and £50 for the branch) in UNISON's Ariel competition, which was a surprise to me. I still haven't found out what the criteria is, but I hope we'll do even better this year.

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