

No: 210/20

17th April 2020

TO: ALL BRANCHES

Dear Colleague

CWU REDESIGN PROJECT – ASSET REVIEW

All branches will be aware that in January 2020, we issued LTB 022/20 which explained that as part of the asset review the NEC had taken in principle decisions to sell Alvescot Lodge and the Elstead Hotel. The purpose of this LTB is to advise branches that at its meeting on the 16th April, the NEC unanimously agreed 3 recommendations that moved forward our redesign project and concludes the review of our assets.

We have attached to this LTB a full report on the conclusion of the review, including the agreed recommendations to accept an offer for the immediate sale of Alvescot Lodge and to proceed with the sale of the Elstead Hotel at the earliest viable opportunity.

With regard to CWU Headquarters (150 The Broadway), we have concluded that we should remain in Wimbledon for the foreseeable future. This is the right decision in the current environment and will ensure that the union still has by far its biggest asset in place for the future. However, the plan for our Headquarters will now involve a substantial reduction in our existing operating space (around 50%) and once the internal reorganisation of our headquarters structure has been completed, we will be seeking to generate a significant additional income by renting out the remainder of the building.

All branches will be aware that the asset review is a key component of our plan to achieve financial stability, alongside the staff changes we have implemented on pensions, our headquarters voluntary redundancy programme and the review of Unionline. It is essential that we continue to press forward with the overall redesign project and this is more necessary than ever, given the extraordinary times we are witnessing with the Covid-19 pandemic, continuing trends on membership and other financial factors that are referenced in the attached report.

To support the decisions on our asset review, the NEC also agreed a paper which set out viable options for interim residential training. Furthermore, Kate Hudson, the Head of Equality, Education and Development, will be providing branches with a full update on how we will develop our plans going forward. This will include an ongoing commitment to residential training, as part of a more blended approach, including utilising regional facilities, with the aim of reaching more representatives than we are currently able to. Additionally, the work we are undertaking on our new support package for representatives, is designed to facilitate the approach Kate is taking by setting out clear training and education entitlements for all representatives.

To fully explain the rationale behind the NEC decisions, we will be holding a branch video conference meeting next week and the details and format for this will be sent out in due course. This will also include a session led by Kate Hudson explaining how we will develop our overall strategy going forward.

We can confirm that we have met with our staff at Alvescot Lodge and informed them of the sale. This is against the background that we have previously agreed a voluntary redundancy package with staff. Furthermore, in the report you will see that the buyer for Alvescot Lodge is an organisation that runs an educational/residential facility for autistic children and we are in discussions with the buyer to see whether there may be any opportunities on future employment for our existing staff.

In the meantime, we would like to place on record our thanks to all our staff who have provided a great service at Alvescot Lodge over many years and for the dignified way they have conducted themselves during this very difficult time and on hearing the decision. We fully understand that our branches and representatives, as we do, hold our staff and Alvescot Lodge in the highest regard and we want you to know this has not been an easy decision for the NEC to take. However, taking all relevant circumstances into account and after considering all available options, the NEC is in no doubt that it is acting in the best interests of the overall membership, the terms of the redesign project and the need to sustain the CWU as an independent trade union.

Any enquiries on the asset review to the SDGS Department sdgs@cwu.org and enquiries on the redesign project to the GS Department gsoffice@cwu.org.

Yours sincerely



Dave Ward
General Secretary



Tony Kearns
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