



## NOTES from Steering Committee 4<sup>th</sup> April

### The Well, Ashford

- 1) Attendance: Helen Couchman, Paul Couchman, Kye Gbangbola, Lee Belsten, Fiona Corr, Malcolm Beecher, Iain Raymond, Robert Evans, John Hadwin.
- 2) Welcome and Introductions
- 3) Apologies received – Thelma Snelgrove, Liz Mansfield, Mick Dawson, Steve Trafford, Sheila Wright, Serena Powis, Ginny Eaton, Pam Cole, Sue Bryers, John Tester, Matt Clarke, Veena Seeva.
- 4) Recap on last meeting and feedback from 15<sup>th</sup> December – Secretary, Paul Couchman. Everyone agreed that the demonstration had been a great success. Lee said around 70 firefighters had attended and the event had boosted morale in the service that we can fight the cuts. Robert said not to forget how cold and wet it was – yet we still got over 200 people to attend. BBC Surrey and Surrey Live covered the event. The live facebook feed had over 3,000 watching at one stage.
- 5) Finances – Thelma had sent in a report to say we have £590 in the bank. Paul proposed writing to all affiliates again asking for donations (Agreed). Paul proposed purchasing a new general #austerity kills banner as the last one is damaged (Agreed).
- 6) Truth About Zane – Kye Gbangbola updated people on what has happened in the last few weeks, including a major meeting at Westminster, a meeting with the Justice Secretary and Shadow Justice Secretary, the petition reaching nearly 60,000 and promotion of the crowdfunding for their new book. For more information please visit [truthaboutzane.com](http://truthaboutzane.com). An appeal was made for volunteers to help with stalls at various conferences and events. Contact us at [saveourservicesurrey@gmail.com](mailto:saveourservicesurrey@gmail.com) if you think you may be able to help.
- 7) Fire Service Cuts – Lee Belsten from the Fire Brigades Union told the group of the serious proposals to cut night time fire cover across Surrey. A public consultation is under way, which closes on 26<sup>th</sup> May and people are asked to respond. We are launching a major petition to SCC in the name of SOSiS (with the support of the FBU) and we want this to go viral and hit thousands of signatures. The FBU will be producing flyers for each affected area so people can contact local councillors and MPs as well as signing the petition. We will present the petition to Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> September with a major lobby of the council, as this is when they are most likely to approve the cuts or not.
- 8) Childrens Centres – Paul Couchman from UNISON gave an update on the closures of 35 Childrens Centres across Surrey and the difficulty of coordinating protest and mobilising staff and users of the centres. It was agreed that individual SOSiS members should consider visiting their local

centre to talk to staff and parents and that SOSIS will offer support to any local campaign on this issue.

- 9) May elections – Paul proposed relaunching our election charter via our email list and offering to publicise those candidates who adopt it – as we have done before (Agreed).
- 10) The next meeting will be our Annual General Meeting, where we will discuss how we organise ourselves going forward and elect to the key officer roles and the Steering Committee. An appeal was made for anyone interested in taking up a more active, leading role in SOSiS to please let us know. The date for this meeting will be Weds 5<sup>th</sup> June. The intention will be to hold the meeting in Ashford again but we will endeavour to coordinate transport from across Surrey where there is a request.

Notes taken by Helen Couchman