# **CONFERENCE, DEMOCRACY AND YOU**

Napo is potentially the most democratic trade union in Britain. Its supreme policy-making body is the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which takes place at Napo’s autumn conference. The AGM is open to all members to attend, address and vote at on an equal basis, with the logical exception of pay and conditions of service issues, which can only be voted on by full members.

So how does this democracy work in practice and how does it translate into what Napo does in its members’ name?

The core of the AGM is:

* Holding Napo’s Officers, Officials and Committees to account by scrutinising the Annual Report;
* Creating Napo’s policies by debating motions.

A motion is a formal proposal for Napo collectively to do something. They are debated at the AGM and the members attending can vote whether they want them to be accepted as Napo policy or not. If a motion is passed at AGM it goes on to the Committee responsible for the area of work which the motion addresses - National Executive, Negotiating, Professional, Campaigning, Family Court, Equal Rights, Health & Safety, TU Organisation, Training.

Except for the National Executive Committee (NEC) itself, these committees are elected every year by the NEC from a list of members nominated by their Branch/Section. The NEC is composed of branch/section co-reps, two black reps and national officers, who are elected every two years in a postal ballot by the whole membership. The NEC runs Napo between AGMs and is accountable to the membership, along with all its committees, through an annual report, which is presented to the AGM for approval.

Motions for Napo AGM can be proposed by a branch/section, a national committee, the PSO forum or two individual members. These are submitted and published well before the AGM so that all members can see them and can submit amendments to them if they wish. All members, **whether they are able to attend AGM or not**, are also asked to choose 6 motions that they would particularly like to be debated at AGM and to return their motion ballot forms to the Steering Committee at Napo HO. These returned ballots are then aggregated and used to construct the order of business of the AGM.

The order of business is divided into separate committee slots. The motion relevant to each committee, which receives the highest number of votes in the ballot, will be debated in that respective committee slot i.e. it goes to the top of the agenda. After all the motions in the committee slots have been debated at AGM, the remaining motions are then dealt with in the order in which they were balloted i.e. those with the most votes are debated first.

**Members therefore have an extremely important role in the democratic functioning of Napo even if they cannot make it to Napo AGM Conference:**

* Firstly, they can help formulate AGM motions and amendments by being involved in their Branch/Section meetings;
* Then they can influence the order of business at AGM by returning their motion ballot so that AGM prioritises the policies and decisions that the members consider to be most important to them.

**It only takes 15 minutes to complete the AGM motion ballot. Please play your part, keep Napo democratic and return your ballot form today - it really matters!**

Steering Committee