1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Siobhan Atkinson, Sue Bedford, Karen Birdsal, Michelle Brown, Joanne Cawthorne, Tom Charles, Simon Copley, Paul Dalton, Martin Fell, Joanne Gelson, Bill
2. New Members

Trina Barber, Palbinder Mann and Ben Nattrass were welcomed to their first meeting.

3. Minutes of the AGM and Branch Meeting held in York on 1 December 2014

The minutes of the AGM and minutes of the Branch were agreed as a true record.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Correspondence

The Secretary reported that the following communications had been received and circulated to all branch members since the last meeting:

a) Consultation Paper on the Reform of Electoral Law
b) Monthly Reminder List and Policy Update for Members and Branches
c) Survey of members regarding formal and informal shared services.

6. Education and Training

The Education and Training Officer reminded members of the courses being held in York including Verification and Count on 26 March and Election Accounts on 18 May 2015.

He reported the achievement of the AEA certificate by the following branch members:

Tara Shanks – Sunderland
Ben Nattrass – Bradford

and the Chair formally presented Ben’s certificate as he had been unable to attend conference to receive it.

7. Financial Statement of the Branch

The Treasurer submitted the latest Financial Statement adding that there had been no recent expenditure and that the Auditors had approved the accounts.

Agreed that the report be accepted.
8. Minutes of the AEA Board and Management Team.

a) AEA Management Team Minutes of 19 November 2014.

In respect of minute 14/081 the Chair thanked members for nominating her.

The minutes were received and accepted.

b) AEA Board Minutes of 3 December 2014

The minutes were received and accepted.

9. Annual Conference 2015

Steven Templeton who had been awarded a national bursary place report on his experience of the 2015 Annual Conference. Steven thanked the branch for the opportunity and gave a very interesting summary of his experiences at conference and how useful and enjoyable he had found all the plenary sessions, workshops and social events.

10. Updates and Briefings.

a) AEA Policy Update issued January 2015

b) Cabinet Office Briefing issued February 2015

The updates and briefings were noted.

11. Individual Electoral Registration.

Colin Dingwall, from the Cabinet Office, reported that the system had stood up to large numbers of registration and that testing would continue to ensure that the system was as robust as possible. The system had been amended to request details from individuals who had had a change of name at any time rather than in the last twelve months. This was to address the issue relating to mis-matches for married women and there had already been an improvement in the level of matching. Colin stated that members would soon be given details of how members would get updates from data matching more quickly during election periods. In respect of the Electoral Commission’s public awareness Colin informed members that this would cease in advance of the 20 April electoral registration deadline.

In response to a question Colin that at the deadline for registration the online screen would show that it was now too late to register for the forthcoming election.

Members discussed various issues relating to EMS software and in particular an issue in one system which had not allowed the ERO to correct a clerical error without having to re-verify the elector's identity at DWP. Members heard that a recent update had now resolved this.
National publicity campaigns around National Voter Registration Day had resulted in many duplicate registrations.

12. Elections 2015

Members exchanged views and information about the elections that would be held on 7 May 2015.

The Chair advised that the AEA would be preparing a report after the elections and that she had offered to collate any comments or information from branch members. The Chair suggested that members could email her as and when issues arose.

13. Discussion on Electoral Events and Current Issues

Guest speakers and members with corporate or affiliate class of membership were excluded from the meeting for this item.

a) Branch Honoraria

The Chair informed members that she had raised the matter of honoraria at the AEA Board meeting.

There was some discussion about possible options for branch honoraria and it was agreed that officers of the Branch would look at alternative methods for setting honoraria and feed back to the branch members at the September meeting. This would allow members to formulate proposals before the AGM in December.

b) Any Other Issues

Members exchanged ideas for employing year round personal canvassers.

14. Any Other Business

There was no other business.


Members noted that meetings would be held in York on;

- Wednesday 3 June 2015
- Wednesday 2 September 2015
- Friday 4 December 2015

The Chair thanked Colin Dingwall for attending.

LUNCH WAS FOLLOWED BY AN AFTERNOON WORKSHOP ON NOMINATIONS