

## UNITE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL REPORT

(COMMENCING AT 9.30 A.M. ON 9th DECEMBER 2013)

### **EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Council held on 16th, 17th, 18th & 19th September 2013 were agreed.

### **FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 18th October 2012 were accepted.

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 22nd November 2012 were accepted.

### **REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

The GS provided a comprehensive report on actions and events since the September EC meeting, specifically highlighting:

- Speaker at 'Save Our NHS' march and rally in Manchester. This was the biggest march in the North West in a century and even though it took place during the Tory Party conference the coverage of the march was poor.
- Delivered the Jimmy Reid Memorial Lecture, Old Parish Church, Govan.
- Speaker at Unite organised march against fascism, Liverpool.
- Speaker at CLASS Conference on 'A political economy for today'.
- Speaker at the House of Lords to Labour and Unite Peers.
- Speaker at the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs.
- Speaker at Daily Mirror / Unite Fringe meeting 'Real Britain', Labour Party Conference.
- Meeting with French Ambassador, His Excellency Ambassador Bernard Emie. The General Secretary informed the Executive Council of the knowledge that the Ambassador had of the work that Unite does.
- Meeting with North West construction representatives regarding North West RISC Construction Committee. The General Secretary reported that he had to talk to Officers and Key Activists in the Construction Sector in this Region, because there is a division amongst our members and hopefully a solution will be forthcoming from these talks.

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At the end of the General Secretary's Report debates took place on various items, including;

Department reorganisation was debated with a number of EC members questioning the decision to reduce the number of employees in the Research Department.

The Officers, Staff and Organisers pay offer of 2.4%.

Recruitment and Selection was also debated in terms of a strategy to get more BAEM officers and also Assessment Centres for "Stand Down Officers".

The situation at Grangemouth was explained in great detail to the Executive Council. The background of the dispute, how it moved along and the conclusion was part of this explanation. The role of the employer, media and UK and Scottish governments was also studied.

## Organising

### 100% Campaign

That since its re-launch 100% UNITE has now delivered over 100,000(100,634 as of 28th November 2013) new members into our Union. The role and commitment to the strategy from the Regional Secretaries, RCOS and Officers has been key to delivering this very significant membership. Regional have been given assistance to set targets for 2014.

### Leverage

For a number of months the Department has been discussing the possibility of deploying leverage in defence of the NHS. It is proposed that the next comprehensive Unite Leverage campaign will be focused on defence of the National Health Service. The wholesale NHS privatisation is now firmly on the agenda. Health membership is the single biggest section within Unite and with the public apparently remaining committed to the retention of the NHS despite rampant top-down reform and incessant propaganda, it is felt that Unite Leverage could truly make a difference to the future of our health service.

It is recommended that NHS Leverage will deliver an interdependent comprehensive campaign at two levels:

- National Level – Deliver a comprehensive strategy to raise awareness of the negative impact on care of privatisation, expose the "shady" practices of private health companies and discredit politicians through highlighting conflicts of interest.
- Local Level - Direct intervention to prevent or reform local privatisation by using action to target private health care companies and commissioning bodies involved in specific winnable cases.

The core tasks of NHS Leverage running through both 'national' and 'local' will include:

- Publicly expose NHS privatisation
- Make decision makers accountable
- Prevent and reform local privatisation

It is acknowledged that Unite is already engaged in numerous NHS campaigns and it is not the case that NHS Leverage would deter or prevent any NHS campaigning activity, including any industrial action that may be underway or proposed in the future. What is foreseen is Unite Leverage adding genuine value to the fight to defend the NHS and that bringing the Department's significant

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campaign experience to the fore through a comprehensive Leverage strategy will be of great benefit to the fight to safeguard our NHS.

## **Manufacturing Sector**

### **Manufacturing Sector Strategies**

Over the past three months the sectors in manufacturing have launched a number of documents setting out a Unite strategy including manufacturing, aerospace; shipbuilding, space, defence and the steel industry.

'Made in Britain', Unite's strategy for manufacturing growth in the UK was launched at the National Sector Conferences and also with our Parliamentary colleagues in late November.

The overall manufacturing strategy document has been well received, not only by our members but by manufacturing employers' bodies and others and we will be "rolling out" the strategy over the coming weeks and into next year to campaign for a strong, interventionist manufacturing strategy to re-balance the UK economy.

Early in 2014 our new GEMS Sector will commence work on "A Charter for UK Engineering".

### **Automotive Sector**

With the creation of the new Automotive sector, we are ready to move forward with a number of key tasks for the new sector.

The work on mapping the sector is complete and we are ready to move ahead with the organising campaign. The mapping shows that the "supply chain" consisting of the major companies who provide components to the main OEMs in the first tier consist of companies where we have good levels of organisation, some where we have very low levels of organisation or indeed in some they are non-unionised, employing more than 200 – 300 workers.

Our mapping shows a potential of 25,000+ members could be organised.

Other strategic issues for the new Automotive NISC will tackle include the high levels of use of agency workers in some companies as many as four or five agencies. We will also need to tackle the issue of managed service providers. This appears also now to be an issue in the German automotive sector where companies are contracting out whole departments to MSPs.

The other key issue is to develop a campaign to get more of the "supply chain" back to the UK and increase the use of UK made components in UK built vehicles as agreed at the recent NSC. The Automotive Council UK has identified £3 billion worth of work could be returned to the UK with the creation of 15,000 jobs in the supply chain.

### **Aerospace & Shipbuilding Sector**

**BAE Systems** have announced 1775 job losses in their shipbuilding business. This will include the closure of the shipbuilding business at Portsmouth, with the loss of 940 jobs, with a further 835 to

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go on the Clyde and other sites. CSEU National Officers, local officials and senior reps met the company a few days after the announcement for a two day intensive consultation session.

Our members at **Rolls-Royce** are at the point of successfully concluding the pension dispute there. A Memorandum of Understanding has been drawn up and just needs to be ratified at a national level conference which will take place in December. The result has been a fantastic success for the trade unions in Rolls-Royce and has been won through a strategy of organising site-by-site strike ballots, backed by a levy of the whole membership. We had only balloted one site, resulting in an overwhelming “yes” vote for strike action, when the company called us back to negotiate a settlement. Congratulations to all involved.

## **General Engineering, Manufacturing & Servicing**

### **Royal Mail**

CSC Royal Mail Group (RMG) - the company offer of 1.5% increase in pay pot for annual increment based on performance pay model was rejected on behalf of the membership by negotiation committee. The membership is being balloted on 3% increase for all from December, using back dated from July to increase the offer.

### **Industrial action**

We continue to be in an impasse with the Post Office on pay. Industrial action has now taken place on 3 occasions. The 25th October was action short of strike action with 4th November being a full day strike. On the 20th November Unite members in Supply Chain Operational depots were called out on a 24 hour strike.

## **Graphical, Paper & Media and IT & Communications**

At **Polestar BGP**, Bicester site, recruitment has increased steadily there for some months now which is currently in excess of 112. After a meeting with our Reps, rather than lose the momentum, it is our intention to involve ACAS and ballot the workforce as to whether they would accept Unite to be recognised for all T&Cs for their site.

## **Services Sector**

The Finance & Legal Services Sector will be integrated into Unite Regions following a consultation with leading lay members. The aim is to build in more locally available support for outward facing campaigns to defend jobs and members bearing the brunt of Bank’s failures and importantly improve the spread of the 100% Strategy across the Sector.

Lay reps and officials representing the public sector membership are holding a strategy day early January 2014 – ‘Public Sector Pay – crunch time?’ Two aims of this event are to sharpen our message and coordination internally between sectors and externally with other unions. In the meantime

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members in Higher Education have taken industrial action 31 October and 03 December in protest against real term cuts to pay.

Construction and Energy have worked together to put in place a tangible mechanism to safeguard against blacklisting during the construction of the 'Hinckley C Low Carbon Energy Project'. All unsuccessful job applicants will be entitled to the objective reason for no engagement from the contractor or subcontractor. The mechanism will be audited with trade union involvement. Activities across the UK supported the TUC's Day of Action Against Blacklisting, 20 November. Unite dominated the Westminster event, with thanks to the Organising team and were the majority of Blacklisted workers present for the Committee Room Rally. The AGS will provide an update to the EC in respect of The Construction Worker's Compensation Scheme. Unite has welcomed signs of a modest upturn in demand for building supplies as Marshalls and Hansons are hiring after a period of decline.

Since the last EC Remploy has closed its last factory. Support from the Wales Assembly has resulted in the majority of Remploy workers in Wales securing alternative work.

Community Youth Workers held a successful conference in November with an action focused outcome. 'Choose Youth' continues to build support, which is crucial to safeguard a foundation on which Youth Services can be revitalised.

## Transport & Food Sectors

### Passenger Transport

The **taxi section** continues to organise around the announcement by the Law Commission of their Eleventh Programme of Law Reform of taxi and private hire, the findings of which, if adopted by the government, would lead to wholesale deregulation of the industry with a loss of many Unite members to the trade.

At Warrington Transport following industrial action against the employer's imposition of a zero per cent pay offer the members have accepted a 1.5 per cent increase payable the first week in January back dated to 1st May 2013.

### Road Transport Commercial, Logistics and Retail Distribution

#### Recruitment

Approaches have been made to two companies in the sector that we currently do not have recognition with. Both are in car delivery, Eulos and Mobile Services. Whilst Mobile Services are still not agreeing to voluntary recognition Eulos management are happy to make a formal agreement should the drivers be supportive and as such the local officer has been asked to make contact with the membership to progress the issue.

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## Wincanton

The company has confirmed they intend to close the final salary pension scheme to all future accrual. This affects hundreds of Unite members along with other unions. We have started the formal consultation period with the joint position being that we do not accept the company's rationale at this time and will fight to protect the scheme. Several dates have been agreed for future meetings with the proposal from the company that the changes take effect from April 1st 2014.

## Co-operative Retail Logistics

With the company facing significant challenges due to problems in the bank we have been challenged by continuing cost cutting exercises resulting in our stewards feeling they are being forced out of procedures to represent Unite members. We intend to form a collective response to the company's actions along with Usdaw to ensure that our members are not disadvantaged whilst making sure our members job security is not put at risk.

## Ceva Logistics

Following the acceptance of the pay offer the company have dragged their feet over implementing the raise. Our members have become increasingly frustrated with the conduct of the company over the negotiations this year and unless the company can confirm our membership will receive the agreed rise we will have to consider some form of action.

## Political Activity in the Sector

The sector AGS has made contact with numerous cycle campaign groups and with the new shadow Transport Secretary Mary Creagh to begin a joint campaign to improve education and road design around cycle safety. All too often the driver is made the scapegoat and has to live with the consequences, whilst employers remain divorced from the fallout.

## Equalities Report

Unite Equality Strategy – Unite's National equalities committees have agreed to jointly promote the strategy's two key priorities:

- MOVING FORWARD ON EQUALITIES – NO CUTTING BACK
- UNION EQUALITY REPS – UNITE CAMPAIGN FOR STATUTORY RIGHTS

Unite National Equalities Conferences 201. The dates are confirmed as follows:

- Wednesday 26th – Thursday 27th February – Unite Women's Conference
- Thursday 27th February – joint plenary session of all Unite Equalities Conferences
- Thursday 27th February – Friday 28th February – Unite BAEM Conference; Unite Disabled Members Conference; Unite LGBT Conference; Unite Young Members' Conference

Unite attended the **Labour Party Women's conference** where we had a good stall. A new survey called 'tell it like it is' was produced in order to encourage women to talk about work related issues

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and to get active in the union. We need to get women to fill it in as it is about getting active in trade unionism. Over 1,000 women were at the conference and Unite Delegates put forward a range of issues in the debates and workshops.

**Unite Race Forward Campaign** – A very positive equalities session was held at the Royal Sun Alliance Conference, mainly focusing on the Race Forward Campaign at the request of the Reps. Following the presentation by the National Officer, delegates reported that they felt better equipped to develop race equality action in their workplace and in supporting BAEM members. The Senior Representatives, having been told by the company that undertaking ethnic monitoring was, ‘against data protection’ were also more determined to negotiate for ethnic monitoring throughout the organisation and to take action once they had this information. Having seen the Black History Month publications, members were keen to look at different initiatives to organise and recruit BAEM workers.

Arrangements are being made for the **2014 National Disabled Members conference**. The conference is a great opportunity to discuss the issues that affect our members and look at campaigning ideas. The National Disabled members committee want to address our priority issues at the conference with a focus on our campaigns around disability hate crime, campaigning against the cuts and ATOS and looking at the real hit that disabled workers have in terms of income and ability to avoid debt and the impact of pay day loan companies, organising in the deaf community and building the equality reps agenda. There will be a numbers of workshops at the conference including;

- Using social media
- Organising in the deaf community
- Building up Equality Reps in the workplace
- Campaigning technology Inc. direct action
- Building up of political activism over the next few years

**Unite National LGBT Conference, February 2014** – The Committee agreed two motions on ‘International LGBT Solidarity’ and ‘Progressing Equality for the Elderly LGBT Community’.

**Unemployment and Young Workers** - The ConDem Government tried to make great play of the fact that there was a slight drop in unemployment rates, but as pointed out by our Union, this is nothing to be proud of. Youth unemployment again rose by 15,000 to nearly 973,000 and even when we look at jobs being taken up, they are often part time, low wage, insecure employment. The Committee was pleased that our union called on the Government to take urgent action to stop the talent of young people being lost for a generation.

Unite’s Retired Members organised support for the **NPC lobby of Parliament held on 27<sup>th</sup> November**, and also for **National Dignity Day** which will be on 1st February 2014.

## **BAEM Representation on the Executive Council**

The provisions of Rule 14.2.1 guarantees minimum proportionality for the BAEM membership of the union. On the basis of the monitoring figures available, the number of seats required to ensure minimum proportionality is six.

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At the September EC the Executive Officers had circulated a proposal but at this EC they wished to withdraw that proposal with another. The proposal they put forward was one proposed by the national BAEM representative on the Council. After a debate on the validity of EC members having the right to bring Rule changes to the Council the proposal was put forward. It should be noted that at previous Council meetings UniteNow supporters attempted to bring Rule changes up for debate but were told it cannot be done.

The proposal was for the Council to agree to the creation of an **additional** three seats, over and above those mandated by Rule 14.2.1. and that these seats be allocated to the regions and sectors which have the highest proportion of BAEM membership at present, excluding London/Eastern region (24.1% BAEM) and the Passenger Services sector (20.0%), which it is proposed have a designated BAEM seat in any case. There is still the national BAEM seat designated with these two.

The **additional** three seats would therefore be allocated to the following:

Civil Air Transport sector	(20.2%)
West Midlands region	(14.8%)
Food Drink Tobacco sector	(11.4%)

When putting the proposal forward the national BAEM representative did explain the logic behind it, however he did report four regional BAEM committees had rejected the proposal. The logic then put forward is that six regions did not complain so a majority agreed. It should be noted that three of the regions that did not complain were; Ireland, Scotland and Wales which have very small BAEM membership.

One UniteNow supporter did put forward a counter proposal of just make a designated seat for every region which is better than the proposal for six put forward. The Executive Officers ruled that against Rule.

The proposal was agreed.

## Political Report

The quarter has continued to be dominated by the fall-out over Falkirk and the subsequent dispute with Ineos at Grangemouth, although more recently the exposure of Paul Flowers, disgraced former Chairman of the Co-op Bank, seems to have supplanted Falkirk as the stick with which the Tories are attempting to beat Miliband. It is clear that the toxic partnership of Cameron/Crosby will be running what is being predicted as being the dirtiest General Election campaign ever but at the moment, their smear tactics have not worked with the Labour lead in the polls widening rather than shrinking. Nevertheless we must expect the campaign against Unite to continue up until 2015.

The Tories are of course boasting that the 'recovery' currently being experienced vindicates their vicious austerity policies; however, any recovery is for the rich and powerful with workers continuing to see pay suppressed, conditions attacked and communities struggling to cope with ever-escalating cuts.

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## **Collins Review**

Consultation over the Collins Review continues with CLPs across the UK discussing their views on what a reformed Labour Party should look like. The Political Director has spoken at a number of public meetings stressing the importance of maintaining the collective link.

A paper was put to the chamber, **Collins Review: Response of the Unite Executive Council**. There was also a motion from the Scottish Regional Committee debated because it was on this very subject but had some differences. The outcome was that the Scottish motion was withdrawn, but only after a lively debate and the paper was altered to take on board points of view of the Executive Council.

The General Secretary stated that a special EC will be called early February 2014 to discuss and get a Unite view of the Collins Report. This will allow Unite to put forward any argument or position at the Special Conference to take place at the ExCel Centre in London Docklands on 1st March to vote on the outcome of the Collins Review.

## **European elections 2014**

Having been so successful in getting Unite-supported candidates selected to stand in the European elections, it is now important that we do all we can to engage members in the importance both of voting to elect those candidates but also in campaigning for a Europe built on foundations of equality and workers'/trade union freedoms.

## **Liverpool demonstration**

The Political Department team worked hard with the North West Region and others to build wide support for the anti-fascist demonstration in Liverpool in September and also to widen the platform with key speakers. The demo was a tremendous success with between 5-7,000 people joining the march. A key focus of the demo was to build support to kick out BNP Nick Griffin in 2014.

## **Parliamentary update**

### **Lobbying Bill**

Also known as the 'Gagging' Bill, this is currently in the Lords and strategy is being developed to push on opposition to Part 3 which deals specifically with trade unions.

### **Immigration Bill**

This is another Bill being rushed through Parliament with very little opportunity for meaningful debate. Like the Lobbying Bill, it is also a highly cynical and very political Bill and it seems to have been written with the deliberate objective playing to the prejudices and fears being stirred up by UKIP. We have been working in a broad coalition with JCWI and other groups highlighting the worst elements of the Bill in an attempt to get it defeated, and this has included producing briefings for MPs, candidates etc. as well as supporting a very successful demonstration and lobby of Parliament.

### **Other work**

We have supported other departments and sectors in a number of areas and in particular working to get MP support and amongst other things this has included:

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- Yorkshire Ambulance Lobby of Parliament
- Launch of Manufacturing Strategy
- Bedroom Tax Opposition Day
- TUC Blacklisting Day of Action
- Alliance Boots tax avoidance report
- Unite/Mirror/Trussell Trust Christmas food bank campaign

## International Report

There was a great deal of interest from colleagues in sister unions, and the European and Global federations, in the proceedings of the recent Unite Sector Conferences. The participation of a number of international guests was warmly welcomed by delegates and brought a new perspective to a number of debates and discussions that took place during the week. Since the sector conferences we have received a number of comments from the international guests thanking Unite for the invitations and stressing how important this was in building and maintaining solidarity.

As reported previously there remain tensions between Northern and Southern European unions, particularly within the structures of IndustriAll. However events over the last few months have seen some positive developments and certainly the debates held at the recent IndustriAll Europe Executive were of a much more constructive nature than the last meeting earlier in the year.

## Solidarity Work

### Cuba

The Cuban Solidarity Campaign has approached Unite to ask for support for the International Commission Inquiry into the case of the Miami Five to be held in London on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

### Colombia

Unite has been active in the on-going campaign to try and secure the release of Huber Ballestero. Huber was imprisoned on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2013 accused of rebellion. At the time of his arrest he was leading the most widespread industrial action seen in Colombia for decades.

Unite was extremely disappointed that Labour did not vote against the EU – Colombia Free Trade Agreement when it was presented to Parliament. Unite did explain that it opposed the agreement in light of continuing human rights abuses and the murder of trade unionists.

## Education Report

The Department has a policy to stop the same people going on courses all of the time. This is to encourage a wider participation in union education. However Unite has to provide courses that are relevant to Reps needs and interests. This is particularly the case in Political Education for regions and specific sectors e.g. Health Sector in regards to the NHS.

The Education Director confirmed that his department does not employ people on “zero hour contracts” after a question was asked by an EC member.

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## UNITE THE UNION EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STATISTICAL RETURNS JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2013

REGION	No. of Courses	No. of Students	No. of Teaching Days
<i>East Midlands</i>	9	74	358
<i>Ireland</i>	8	99	291
<i>London &amp; Eastern</i>	50	398	1515
<i>NE, Yorks &amp; Humber</i>	21	247	666
<i>North West</i>	30	298	1470
<i>Scotland</i>	23	167	666
<i>South East</i>	25	226	923
<i>South West</i>	33	224	986
<i>Wales</i>	17	134	624
<i>West Midlands</i>	17	149	715
<i>Residential Courses</i>	26	440	1855
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>2456</b>	<b>10069</b>

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## **Finance Report**

A comprehensive report was provided by Director of Finance, showing a satisfactory overall situation.

The financial results for Unite in the 1st Three Quarters of 2013 are satisfactory and in line with the outlook for the year as a whole.

## **Pension Merger**

Having harmonised future service pension benefits for all Unite employees effective 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013, the next step in the process has been to effect the merger of the two main UK schemes. This would result in annual expense savings – actuarial, accounting, legal – estimated at nearly £500,000. Importantly, it would also eliminate one of the last remaining T&G versus Amicus differences amongst Unite’s employees – all would be exactly the same.

At Trustees meetings at the end of November and on 4th December, the Trustees of both schemes voted in principle to approve the merger.

## **Employees Wage Offer**

The 2.4% pay rise has been agreed.

## **Legal, Membership & Affiliated Services Report**

### **Legal**

#### **The new Unite legal system**

This has been live and used by our panel solicitors since 2 April 2013 and is now used by all panel firms.

As previously noted, the new system is far more comprehensive than the old system, now managing the conduct of our 3 main areas of legal service to members - Personal Injury, Employment Law and Unite’s ‘free’ services (half hour advice and wills).

### **BLACKLISTING**

The first group of Unite cases have now been issued in the High Court, and served on the construction companies. The claims are against individual construction companies wherever they can be identified, and also against the Chairs of TCA at the relevant dates for each Claimant. The claims cite unlawful means conspiracy, breach of the Data Protection Act and defamation.

Legal Services has retained John Hendy QC and specialist defamation Counsel. The Unite claims are more far-reaching than those of any other Claimant group.

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As such, the attention has now moved away from the Employment Tribunal cases, and it is expected

Future Legislation

Be in no doubt that if the Tories win the next election there would be further anti-trade union Laws.

## **Affiliated Services**

### **Retired Members Plus**

52,881 have joined which is substantial income for the union.

### **Credit Unions**

There was a successful launch at the Industrial Conferences in November. It was well received and published in the media. The EC were given a list of all schemes for each region.

## **Any Other Business**

### **PCS**

It was agreed to allow the Executive Officers to have on-going informal talks with PCS on a possible Transfer of Engagement of this union into Unite. It was noted however that no Lay Members from Unite had been involved in the process up until now.