

## **UNITE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL REPORT**

**COMMENCING AT 9.30 A.M. ON 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2012**

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### **EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Council held on 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012 were agreed

Matters arising out of the Minutes - a number of matters arising were raised from previous minutes, of which many feature in the main agenda.

In relation to minute 486 however it was confirmed that officers would be clearly identified regarding responsibility for remitted motions and it was also confirmed that any lay member acting as a "stand down" officer, may not take part in the unions constitutional committee structures

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

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012 were accepted

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

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

- CPHVA Annual Conference in Brighton on 'The Future of Public Health Nursing'
- Speaker at Jack Jones Trust Launch event in Houses of Parliament.
- Labour Party Conference – with thanks to Unite delegation and speakers
- Visit to Northern Ireland, where Con-Dems austerity haver resulted in a 40% reduction in capital expenditure
- Gibraltar visit to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1972 General Strike (6 days)

## **General Strike**

There was an extensive debate about motion 5 at the TUC Congress about considering the practicalities of the General Strike. UNITE has had to fight to ensure this wasn't dropped from the agenda and to avoid a defeatist consultation document being circulated to unions.

The work of John Hendy and Keith Ewing on the legalities of a General Strike was welcomed, but it was recognised that this did not overcome the problem of the law being used against workers or their unions. Historically, effective action by working people has often had to be in defiance of laws intended to prevent them organising and winning.

Some unions oppose the idea of a General Strike outright, while others support it but do very little to bring it about. Some want to wait for a general election in the hope that Labour will undo the destruction of our services, the welfare state and the economy.

At the EC there was consensus that a General Strike should be one of the tools in our armory against cuts and austerity, but that serious campaigning was required to ensure that members supported this and it was effective. We concluded that other action, such as coordinated action in the public sector over pay, should be in addition to rather than in place of a move towards a General Strike.

## **STRATEGY FOR GROWTH**

### **100% Strategy Report**

Around 50,244 new members have been recruited as part of the 100% campaign over the last twelve months. The rate is expected to drop a little as organisers are gradually withdrawn from supporting officers to return to more strategic organising. The organising department has begun looking at targets for strategic organising, and is looking at key industries with potential power.

### **Organising Department Report**

UNITE has produced a new booklet explaining our leverage strategy. The strategy is worrying employers – UNITE has obtained copies of a report by a QC commissioned to try to find ways to stop it - unsuccessfully. Leverage should be used to complement rather than replace collective strength. Companies which dismiss or blacklist reps or withdraw from union agreements will be priority targets for leverage. It will also be used to support members fighting to save jobs (rather than to improve redundancy terms).

## **INDUSTRIAL /EQUALITIES REPORTS**

Many industrial issues were discussed including the threat to manufacturing of black cabs at Manganese Bronze, the threats to Ford Southampton and Dagenham, the all-out strike against job losses at Eddie Stobart Doncaster after outsourcing by Tesco, opposing attacks

on Agenda for Change in the NHS, blacklisting, the disputes at Amnesty and Crossrail.

A new guide to industrial action for officers and activists is in final draft.

Members face massive attacks on the welfare state, including working tax credits and Disability Living Allowance. Many don't yet realise the impact this will have next year and we need to involve everyone in campaigning against the attacks.

There was discussion about the need to defend the NHS which faces cuts, privatisation and even hospitals going bankrupt. This included how to mobilise our wider membership and the community with our members in health. The recent campaigns in Bristol and Lewisham were highlighted as examples.

The new web site is live and is intended to be far more interactive and to link better with social media and campaigning. Some glitches are being ironed out.

The pensions bill is going through parliament – Labour is abstaining. There are also problems getting the government to stick to the agreement in Local Authorities.

The EC was very concerned to learn of the Con-Dem decision to close all the remaining Remploy factories. Of those already made redundant, only around 2% have found alternative employment.

## **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

### **Political Report**

Political fund ballot

As reported to the last EC, we are required to hold a Political Fund Ballot by June of 2013, to maintain our political fund. It is proposed that this will take place during April.

The EC received separately the Rule that must be adopted for this purpose. Under

the complex procedures required by the legislation, we have prepared a draft rule, which follows exactly the recommendations of the Certification Officer, which we have shared with him. He has approved the draft.

This was agreed by the EC and will be submitted to him for formal approval. As colleagues will note it is comprehensive – we would counsel strongly against amendment.

It should be noted that on the last outing, the T&G voted 78% in favour on a 19.5% turn-out, while Amicus voted 71% in favour on a 71% turnout – this was when Labour had a certain unpopularity (2003/4) although around a Labour victory in the General election in 2005.

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Labour's opinion poll showing is better today than at that time. On the other hand, the Right did not campaign against us then – we anticipate they will this time.

Political Strategy – Progress report

Strengthened the battle of ideas. CLASS, the ThinkTank, now has prominence, features in the press frequently, shaped a debate on Inequality with its pamphlet, active in Social media, with successful fringes at TUC and Labour Party and a fantastic Parliamentary launch –and affiliation from UNITE ,GMB, ASLEF, UCATT, TSSA, GFTU

Established a Future Candidates Programme – 300 initial applicants from activists, first weekend course at Eastbourne, second in January both gender balanced, both mainly industrial activists, mentoring to start soon after

Opened the Parliamentary Panel, with the first 6 recommendations made and two more weekends in December

Changed the Labour Party Rule book to seek to end discrimination against workingclass candidates, as below through the direct work of Unite's team, without which Progress or other right wing candidates would have been selected (others have been lost narrowly!).

Note that this is not an exhaustive list of the better candidates – just where we have had a direct impact.

Lisa Forbes in Peterborough

Clive Lewis in Norwich South

Suzy Stride in Harlow

Sarah Owen in Hastings

Carol Dean in Tamworth

Adrian Heald in Crewe and Nantwich

But the most important work has been our Constituency and regional pilots – our strategy document and reports to the EC made it clear that the newly appointed RPOs – who were appointed between March and July - would carry out pilot campaigns in each region to established what worked best, with a view to completion in September to enable a much wider roll out. Regions pursued in a somewhat patchy fashion and in different ways – we

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were not prescriptive so that we could find out what works. Some examples of work are below In the North-East particular emphasis was placed on visiting RISCs and AACs, including the Conferences. Reported that around 60 activists the Labour Party have joined this way.

In Yorkshire, developing activist forums in Leeds, where there are several important seats. Has achieved serious activist buy-in, meetings of 50+ on

Saturday mornings in different parts of Leeds. Some membership growth amongst activists but this work has not yet yielded great growth yet – although promises well.

In the West Midlands, cooperating with Tom Watson's office, 25 members were promised through a mixture of phone banking, letters and e-mails, plus 125 new members of the Supporters Network, organised around a buffet speaker evening. In the North-West, initial work was around schools for activists, from specific constituencies with a membership ask. In Burnley this resulted in a number of new members and doubling of the delegates to 18 today, and a lesser number from Garston and Halewood. Further work in the latter, following meetings with RS and RPO, around a meeting and buffet addressed by Len McCluskey attracted well over 100 members and secured around 25 new members. This had first mobilised officers and activists in key workplaces, and then reached out to members Similar work in Paisley around a meeting, utilising letters, phone, e-mails and texts to activists and members alike, brought 160 to a meeting; estimated again that around 25 joined, but significant follow-up in workplaces, notably Public Service membership continues directly related to the initial meeting

Southampton – local activist political school building on the successful and considerable Unite involvement in local elections – whole new level of election involvement including a number of new members. South-East particularly successful with a series of Political Weekend schools, which have, for example, involved BMW stewards and members at an entirely new level, with a number of new members, involvement in a variety of constituencies. East Midlands, new RPO reports 60 new members in one workplace in Leicester (first 30 forms have been processed!) Last but very much not least, is the exemplary Falkirk. A seat where a candidate selection, to replace the disgraced Eric Joyce, is reasonably imminent, and where Unite, following regional and local consultation, is very likely to back Unite member and activist, Karie Murphy. Using similar methods to Garston and Paisley but at a much more intense level, led by the potential candidate, and very much supported by the local activist base, especially at Ineos, we have recruited well over 100 Unite members to the party in a constituency with less than 200 members. 57 came from responses to a text message alone, (followed up face to face). A collective effort locally, but led and inspired by the potential candidate. This is not an exhaustive list of actions, but gives a flavour of the many positives so far which inform the next stages.

## **International Report**

14<sup>th</sup> November saw an unprecedented level of coordinated industrial action and protests across Europe, though northern Europe had been much less involved

There was a welcome for the result of the US Presidential election.

Unite had issued a statement about the recent Israeli attacks on Gaza and EC felt that the union had played its part in preventing a ground invasion. There were lots of volunteers for a delegation to Palestine – names had been selected randomly.

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The question was raised of whether UNITE's statement about the massacre of miners at Marikana in South Africa was still appropriate as more information had come out and this will be reviewed. A delegation from the South African NUM is coming to the UK early next year.

UNITE is the main union in Gibraltar and the General Secretary had visited and taken part in commemorations of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a General Strike which won equal rights for Gibraltarians. UNITE has been campaigning for equal rights for Moroccan workers in Gibraltar, many of whom have lived and worked there for years. The new Chief Minister is progressing their naturalisation.

There was a presentation from Union Solidarity International (USI) which is providing resources to help branches and workplaces raise awareness amongst members about international issues

Tony Woodley reported on the ongoing efforts on behalf of the Miami 5.

## **General Secretary Election**

A statement from Len McCluskey and decisions of the Executive Council to call an early General Secretary election.

December 2012: notice of election and nomination forms sent to branches and Regional Secretaries

- 1<sup>st</sup> January – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013: branch and workplace nomination meetings (which must be convened in accordance with the election rules)
- 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013: date upon which eligibility to vote is based
- 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013 (noon): deadline for receipt of nominations by the Independent Scrutineer
- 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013 (noon): deadline for receipt of candidates' acceptance of nomination by the Returning Officer, along with their election statement
- 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2013: Ballot enquiry service for members opens
- 18<sup>th</sup> March – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013: Ballot period
- 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2013: Count
- 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013: Declaration

Nomination forms will be sent to branches. Workplaces may also nominate unless they have a workplace branch, which would mean duplicate nominations, but workplace reps have to request nomination forms from their Regional Secretary.

UniteNow delegates, expressed their concerns vigorously with reference to calling a "Snap" General Secretary election on the grounds that there were still 3 years of the current General Secretary's mandate still to run - until 2015 - an election is unnecessary and potentially very costly.

We made it absolutely clear however that our challenge was not directed at the GS's leadership over the past two years, but had grave concerns that all the good work that had been achieved in attempting to rid the Union of unhealthy divisions, could well be undone, unnecessarily.

## Education Report

The Director of Education provided the EC with a detailed report, including: A commitment was given that concentrated efforts would be targeted on maximising each course attendance (pushing up the ratio of students to tutor) and minimising course cancellations. To that end the Director would write again to the Regional Secretaries who are charged with working with their officers to avoid ANY cancellations of courses – and also to the National Officials to ensure that they fulfil their commitment to populate the national residential “Change at Work” sectoral courses at Eastbourne and Esher Place.

## STATISTICAL RETURNS JULY - SEPTEMBER 2012

REGION	No. of Courses	No. of Students	No. of Teaching Days
<i>East Midlands</i>	9	131	655
<i>Ireland</i>	8	95	361
<i>London &amp; Eastern</i>	49	390	1685
<i>NE, Yorks &amp;</i>			
<i>Humber</i>	11	92	448
<i>North West</i>	37	373	1621
<i>Scotland</i>	16	188	806
<i>South East</i>	21	176	827
<i>South West</i>	25	223	76
<i>Wales</i>	18	164	732
<i>West Midlands</i>	25	255	1224
<i>Residential</i>			
<i>Courses</i>	29	487	2318
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>2574</b>	<b>11439</b>

## **Membership Report**

Membership for end of September 2012 stood at 1,511,869 which compared well with the end of 2011 figures of 1,510,026

Positive feedback has been received regarding the branch secretary portal and a considerable number of branch secretaries have now been trained in its use.

In response to feedback the portal is now accessible to the four constitutional branch officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Equalities Officer) There is a screen within the portal that gives details of funds paid into branch and branch fund accounts.

Included within the portal is a form that activists can complete to request a Unite email address.

## **Community Membership**

EC received a report which describes early successes regarding Unite community membership.

Six UNITE regions now have Community Coordinators appointed on a 12 month basis to stimulate the community membership initiative. Other regions are being consulted about when to start theirs.

## **CONSTITUTION & ADMINISTRATION**

### **Administrative**

A large survey of the individual cases being handled by full time officers showed that 43% were from workplaces without union recognition, the rest from recognised workplaces. Cases should generally be dealt with by workplace reps so that officers can focus on their other functions. We need to ensure we have as many well-trained, confident reps as possible.

The General Secretary reported that a number of senior officers have left or taken Voluntary Redundancy and informed the EC of his plans to reshuffle their responsibilities. The new roles will be communicated shortly. The General Secretary made clear that the process is not complete and he expects to make further changes.

It was agreed that using "acting" positions, particularly for long periods, tended to give an advantage to that individual in subsequent appointments and could therefore undermine the efforts we are making to promote diversity in appointments. We will try to minimise the use of acting roles.

UNITE is introducing new employment policies including Capability, Absence and Equality.

Howard Beckett, the head of Legal Services, is also taking over responsibility for membership

## **Officer Appointments**

Appointment of the following officers was approved:

National Officer RTC – Adrian Jones

SW Regional Coordinating Officer – Terry Keefe

SW Regional Officer – Donna Williams

NW Isle of Man Regional Officer – Eric Holmes

A complaint had been received regarding conduct around the appointment of Adrian Jones as the National Officer for RTC, however EC agreed with the response provided by the GS

A unitenow EC member raised the issue that Tony Woodley's two year deal as agreed by the EC finishes on the 31st Dec 2012 and it would require ratification by the EC for it to be extended.

After debate the GS informed he would come back at the 2013 March EC with a proposal for the EC this was unacceptable to a number of delegates. It was pointed out that Tony Woodley staying on would damage Lens credibility with an election to stay on beyond 65 as Tony Woodley will be 65 on January 2nd 2013. Irrespective of the points raised the majority

of the EC agreed for the GS to bring back proposals in March 2013.

Also it was agreed to advertise and appoint immediately for the NW Regional Secretary and National Officer for Local Authorities

## **Constitutional Committees Report**

A report on elections to the Regional Industrial Sector Committees (RISCs) showed significant gaps across most of the union, with certain sectors and regions faring particularly badly. The EC agreed some initial actions to address this, including certain sectors to meet together in some regions and to consult sectors on further proposals relating to the number of sectors.

## **Branches**

A member of the Research Department will be identified to be seconded to ensure queries about branch financing are dealt with promptly

## **Branch Standards**

After deliberating over many drafts, EC has at last agreed a set of branch standards. These are designed to inspire branches to reach decent levels of activity and organisation. These will now be distributed to branch secretaries.

## **Branch Standing Orders**

Again after deliberating over several drafts, we now have a set of guide standing orders for branch meetings, which can be adapted to suit individual branches. These will be distributed to branch secretaries.

## **FINANCE**

### **Report of the Director of Finance & Operations**

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

Dispute fund review resulted in decision to remove all expenditure from this except for actual strike pay and so other incidental costs relating to disputes will not come from this fund.

### **Property Report**

Property discussions centered mainly on updating the EC regarding the Birmingham training centre, Eastbourne and Esher.

Esher had not realised foreseen market values and therefore has been taken off the market. EC will ultimately make the decision to sell or not Esher Place. Eastbourne will be marketed through a 50/50 partnership with a private Hotel chain.

## **LEGAL**

### **Report of the Director of Legal & Affiliated Services**

In response to a query tabled by a unitenow delegate as to the legal standing of rule 16.2 and following advice from the Director of Legal Services the Executive, agreed a change to that rule; to reduce the qualifying period of membership to be a candidate for General Secretary from 10 years to 5 years, because a 10 year requirement was likely to be discriminatory on grounds of age and gender.

### **Unite employees – National Pay Negotiations**

Executive Council endorsed a recommended pay settlement for Officers, Organisers and Staff of 4.75% over a 24 month period, from 1.1.12 to 31.12.13. In addition a London Weighting increase from £3,105 to £3,500 pa from the date the offer was accepted by all three bargaining units (London Weighting has not been adjusted for several years)

Following a full and detailed analysis of the payroll and taking into account the final outcome of the job evaluation exercise, the actual increase in union payroll would be 3.6% (or 1.8% for each of the two years of the deal)

EC accepted the recommendation in the knowledge that Officers and Staff had also voted to accept changes to aid the recovery of the respective Unite employee pension schemes.

## **Correspondence & Resolutions from National/Regional Committees**

A number of remits were considered during the course of EC from constitutional committees, including two specific proposals from the South West regional Committee and Energy and Utilities NISC respectively; to reduce Unite contribution rates for lower paid members adjust to 21 hours the part time rate.

EC agreed that these issues were long over due in addressing, however the contribution rates need to be looked at as a whole and not in isolation. To that end it was agreed that Executive officers would review contribution rates in light of proposed changes and come back to a future EC with any such recommendations.