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UNITE EXECUTIVE MEETING JUNE 2012

## EC Report

### General Secretary's Report

A full report was given, the main points being:

The Oil tanker dispute did not materialise despite "Government Panic". It was resolved through Negotiation, with Dramatic improvements achieved, particularly in H&S and Pensions.

Once again Unite was at the forefront of the Public Sector strike on May 10<sup>th</sup>, Doctors have announced a day of Action on 21<sup>st</sup> June.

It is now some 12 months since the BA settlement, part of deal at the time was to have arbitration talks around the 19 unfair dismissals, these talks proved to be difficult, the eventual out come was that out of the 19, only 5 wanted reinstating, the others who did not received "Substantial Payouts".

Progress being made with Recognition agreement for BA Mixed Fleet.

General Motors have announced huge losses in Europe with potential closure of two Plants. Ellesmere Port was under serious Threat along with Luton, through sensitive discussions both plants will remain open.

Positive Action and employment opportunities; It is part of the strategic agenda to implement more gender, BAEM and age diversity measures to further improve the performance of Unite. From 2012 the emerging positive action work focuses on increasing the numbers of female and BAEM regional officers, piloting eight permanent apprentice roles in Wales, the South West, Holborn and London regions and implementing a paid Intern-Scheme.

### 100% campaign

A full report was given, the main points being, 100% Campaign running well, 24, 144 new members nationally recruited in seven Months.

There are 332 Officers covering over 700 Organising campaigns. 68% of Officers are running successful Campaigns. It was explained that this doesn't necessarily mean 32 % of officers were not putting in the required effort, some had genuine reasons for not delivering, i.e. poor targets but it was clear that some have not 'bought' into the Campaign and an exercise will be enacted to find out those who "Can't" or "Won't do"!

Organisers to return to Greenfield objectives, reviewing possibility of setting up a central leverage department.

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## **Trades Union Congress – Nominations and Motions for Congress 2012**

### **Nominations:**

We are entitled to make the following nominations:

#### *General Secretary:*

As a result of the announcement that Brendan Barber will retire from the post of General Secretary of the TUC later this year, we are invited to make a nomination for the post of General Secretary. The deadline for nomination receipt of nominations is 9<sup>th</sup> July. We are entitled to make 1 nomination. The Executive agreed to nominate Francis Ogrady.

### **TUC Motions:**

The deadline for submission of motions is also 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012. Based on our membership we are entitled to submit 3 motions. Motions cannot be longer than 250 words.

The Executive the Following Motions;

- Fighting Austerity
- Challenging the Governments attacks on Employment Rights & Trade Union Rights
- Equality

## **EC Statements for Policy Conference 2012**

### **[Down load here](#)**

<http://www.unitenow.co.uk/index.php/Download-document/154-EC-statements-policy-conf-2012.html>

### **Finance**

A full report was given, the main points being:

The 3 major issues are;

- Paying Membership
- Eradication of Legal Income
- Pensions Deficit

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Unite is the biggest hit Union in this Double dip recession, simply because of its involvement in so many Sectors. There are plans to sit down with Unite employees to discuss future pension accrual and the 15% limitation set by the EC.

There is still more scope in reducing employment levels. The principle going forward is that Employment Costs should be no greater than 40% of Income (excluding organising).

The finance director issued a Financial Strategy document to the Executive for their approval, Unitenow delegates voiced their disapproval of a further Membership Contribution Increase in

September 2014 until the union had put its own 'house in order' i.e. future pension costs etc. Sadly Unitenow delegates were pretty much alone in this view!

Dispute EC sub-committee set up to oversee operation of the fund.

## Political

Some progress being made by Labour, especially in the May Elections, disappointment with the London Mayor outcome though.

Unite have been hugely influential in the new "CLASS" think tank, it was pointed out the importance of this group maintaining its independence.

## Political Strategy

The political Director has been attending Regional Committees to brief and initiate the implementation phase. Strong leadership from the Regional Secretary and Regional Political Officer and the lay leadership will be required to ensure change happens.

Two very successful meetings of the new Unite Councillors Network have taken place this will be an important part of our political infrastructure in the future.

The Political Fund ballot will need to be held by 8<sup>th</sup> June 2013, this is to enable Unite to have a political voice and should not be confused with funding the Labour Party.

CDP propositions continued to be scrutinised, following discussion with the General Secretary 53 have now been finalised and cheques sent for this year. 4 propositions were rejected as not in line with our expectations, while a further 25 proposals require further work at Regional level to review and make the case, or withdraw.

2 further seats where candidates, which Unite supported, have been selected have been agreed.

Further CDPs for non-Labour held seats will be progressed as indicated in the Political Strategy in the course of 2013, as new boundaries are implemented and candidates are selected – with the emphasis on key marginals.

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It cannot be emphasised too strongly that we are proceeding with two principles in mind – firstly to ensure that we have effective Constituency Development Plans that can help Constituency Labour Parties which are working in partnership with our union, and secondly to spend our members' political fund money wisely.

## **Ratification of Appointment of Officers.**

RCO in London Eastern; Rhys McCarthy

## **Education**

A full report was given, the main points being:

Branch Officer training is now available.

New handbooks to be issued to Workplace Reps.

There are two "Unite Schools" projects being run in the North West

There is to be an "E" Learning Pilot ran in the South West during quarter four of 2012.

## **International**

A full report was given, the main points being:

Welcome change of Political Landscape in Europe, I.E. France, where they have said that they will concentrate on Growth rather than Austerity.

Greek Election imminent.

Since the last meeting of the Executive Council the crisis in the Eurozone has continued to worsen. At the time of writing the Spanish banks stand on the edge of collapse while the situation in Greece remains critical. On a positive note there certainly appears to be a changed political atmosphere with the newly elected French Socialist President Francois Hollande stressing the need to change the fiscal treaty and to place more emphasis on growth. At the same time the Greek election showed a clear majority for anti-austerity parties (with their share of the vote likely to grow in the 2<sup>nd</sup> elections scheduled for June 17<sup>th</sup>), while the German Christian Democrats suffered a heavy election defeat for the German Christian Democrats in the state elections of North Rhine Westphalia.

Workers Uniting

**Rio Tinto:** Unite supported the USW under workers uniting by facilitating delegates from Quebec and organising a protest at the Rio Tinto shareholders' AGM on the 19 April 2012. The action was in response to a dispute over Rio Tinto's announced plans to replace retiring employees with contract

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workers at half the wages and no benefits at all at a profitable smelter in Quebec, Canada. When the workers refused to accept, Rio Tinto locked them out.

Workers Uniting brought to shareholders' attention Rio Tinto's unethical and illegal actions in Canada and the damage this is doing to the reputation of the London 2012 Olympics. Rio Tinto, one of the sponsors of the 2012 London Olympics, is providing 99 per cent of the metal for the London Olympic medals. The protest involved handing out medals to shareholders saying 'Don't let Rio Tinto tarnish the Olympic Games'. We are now calling for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to drop Rio Tinto as an official supplier of the 2012 London Games, because the company's treatment of its own workers does not live up to the Olympic spirit and disrespects the Olympic values of fair play.

**USW Cleveland conferences 21st - 26th May:** UNITE sent a delegation to the USW's 'Next Generation (youth) conference' in Cleveland to participate and learn how the USW organise in their youth section. The conference focused on leadership within the union and how to make being active among young members in a union more attractive. Areas of discussion included making meetings attractive, mentoring positive communication, education, ambition and patience and fewer committees.

Delegates also attended the political training school in preparation for the US elections. They were able to see first hand how such campaigns are run in the US in particular looking at strategy, opinion polls, use of the media / social media and statistics including those on race and its effects on voting.

Tony Burke represented Unite at the USW 70th anniversary conference as well as attending the USE glass conference which was on at the same time.

**Building power internationally course July 2012:** UNITE delegates will participate in the forthcoming 'building power internationally' course in July. The course will bring together delegations of reps from Unite and the USW for one week in the UK and one week in the US. All the delegates will work for multi national / global companies and all have leadership potential. It will develop their activism, commitment and experience within the trade union.

### *EWC strategy - Update*

The international department has continued to provide support for officers and reps with regards to European Works Councils and Information and Consultation structures.

The strategy continues to be focused on upgrading agreements and ensuring that EWC representatives are aware of what the new legislation provides so that they can use the law to effectively hold multinational companies to account.

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As stated in the last EC report, UNITE has already been successful in using the new regulations in the area of training, with ITW, Emerson and AIG covering the full costs for their EWC/SNB members to receive training from UNITE.

As also reported in the last EC report, Easyjet were the first company to be challenged at the Central Arbitration Committee over their refusal to cover the costs of UNITE training. After some negotiations they finally backed down and allowed UNITE to provide the training to the Easyjet EWC. This included not only UNITE representatives but representatives from France, Germany and Spain.

The success of the Easyjet case will be used in the future to encourage other companies to comply with their legal obligations on training. More courses (company specific and EWC general) will be arranged for later this year.

What has become clear since the introduction of the new regulations is the number of EWC agreements that still remain outside the scope of the legislation. These are agreements that were negotiated before the original transposition of the directive into the UK in 1999 and are called article 13 agreements.

The current strategy is to systematically terminate these agreements and negotiate new ones under the new regulations, already HSBC have terminated, INEOS are in the process of terminating and GKN recently issued notice to the company. Unfortunately companies are becoming very hostile to this manoeuvre and we suspect that once this strategy becomes more widely known, companies will start introducing non-termination clauses into their Article 13 agreements, which they will negotiate with representatives who are unaware of what the new legislation provides.

It can't be underestimated the extent to what the new EWC legislation provides for UNITE members. UNITE members now have far greater consultation rights than they have ever received previously either at a national or local level. The more difficult task is maximising the use of the new rights.

## **Area Activist Committees.**

There have been some changes to the committee constituencies, for further details, contact your Regional Secretary. All Area Activist Committee meetings are to be monitored for attendance and their effectiveness.

## **RISCS/NISCS**

There were numerous requests/proposals from RISCS & NISCS for changes to their makeup, the Executive Council actioned the Executive Officers to contact all appropriate lay Chairs to ensure that consultation had taken place and that these requests had been duly agreed.

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## Retired Members

Download document below

<http://www.unitenow.co.uk/index.php/Download-document/152-Retired-Members.html>

## Community Support Workers & Branch Financing

Download document below

<http://www.unitenow.co.uk/index.php/Download-document/153-Community-Membership.html>

## Branch Reorganisation.

A founding principle of Unite was that members should be organised primarily in workplace branches. The method of organisation is essential for the union's primary purpose, organising and representing people at work; workplace branches ensure a direct and enduring connection between our members and the basic level of union organisation, the branch.

This guiding principle was confirmed at the 1<sup>st</sup> Rules Conference in 2011 - that is workplace branches in the first instance and then otherwise in local branches, including local industrial sector branches, and national industrial branches.

Since 2011 the Executive Council, working through the Regions, has been implementing the principle and Rule across the union, establishing or consolidating workplace and local industrial sector branches. The bulk of the re-organisation will have been completed by the end of June 2012, although the process will continue for the rest of 2012.

Six Regions have completed the branch reorganisation process, although there may be some residual tidying up to be carried out, and the number of workplace or industrial sector branches is listed below:

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| • North East, Yorks & Humber | 315 workplace and local industrial sector branches |
| • Scotland                   | 350 workplace and local industrial sector branches |
| • South East                 | 270 workplace and local industrial sector branches |
| • South West                 | 250 workplace and local industrial sector branches |
| • Wales                      | 215 workplace and local industrial sector branches |
| • West Midlands              | 250 workplace branches                             |

In four Regions this is still a work in progress.

In the East Midlands 120 workplace branches have been established or consolidated and work is now accelerating to finish the job.

In Ireland, although a set of encouraging proposals were developed in the Republic the take up of workplace branches by workplace reps has not been as extensive as may have been anticipated, in the North proposals have only recently been sent out to workplaces so the process is behind – 15 workplace branches.

In London & Eastern issues have arisen with the process of consultation with branches and workgroups likely to be affected by change so a reluctance to change had developed in some areas, the Region has been encouraged to review its consultative processes - 190 workplace and local industrial sector branches.

Finally, in the North West, the Region was slow in developing proposals to establish workplace branches so the process has been lagging. Changes to the administrative resources allocated to branch re-organisation have led to acceleration in the process - 190 workplace branches.

Unitenow delegates argued that Branch operating 'standards & honorariums' should have been agreed and put in place before end of June; a discussion paper was circulated to be debated by the EC at Conference.

Membership stand will be at conference to demonstrate branch secretary portal.

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## Legal

Review & Audit of Central & Regional Panel of solicitor's on-going.

Regional legal coordinators have been appointed in each region. Their role is to support the regions in respect of legal and affiliation services and benefits to members.

A report was provided covering significant legal cases and future legal aid, legislative changes, employment tribunals etc.

Affiliated services update was provided;

- Back to work service, including unite4jobs website (June launch)
- Unite Mortgages
- Unite financial Advice; includes a compromise agreements service
- Member to member scheme (to be launched at conference)
- Credit Union progress on going
- Retired Member Plus to date over 13,000 have joined