

Unite Executive Council Meeting

May 2011

- First meeting of the newly-elected EC. All new members were invited to a presentation, by Tony Woodley, on the 100% Campaign (or The Strategy To Stop The Decline & Grow Unite)
- Tony Woodhouse re-elected as Chair; Mark Lyon elected as Vice-Chair – both former T&G.
- Director of Legal to be announced by the end of the week. Howard Beckett, reports directly to Len McCluskey; he has many years' of senior experience in legal practice and is a long-standing union member.
- GS has asked International Dept. for who, why, where and the purpose of any visit/exchange. This info will be fed back to the EC as part of the review of the expenditure of ALL departments. Referred to in my March EC report.
- Coventry City Council – this issue could potentially cost the union millions of pounds. Unite members' want parity of pay with members' of other unions. Compensation payments are being sought by past & present dinner ladies, care assistants, cleaners, office staff and others since the introduction of the council's 'Single Status' equal pay scheme

It's suggested that it has been wrongly anticipated, since 2005, that not every claim would have to be lodged at tribunal. It may have been wrongly assumed by some that a handful of claims could act as test cases, and back pay for all other claimants would follow – this, allegedly, appears not to be so

- Job Evaluation Scheme – GJ raised the issue again on the 3.5% pay increase, the loss of upto 23% of pay to officers' and staff above the threshold with a knock-on effect on their pensions – threshold not known, 13 pay bands (not known), accept offer in principle and details to follow, raised at March EC that one third of regional officers' and staff did not know what they were voting on (copy of ballot paper and letter I share their concerns and raised this at the May EC – said I would never recommend such a document to my members' – Lenny replied that the officers' and staff Shop Stewards were more than happy with it.
- Branch Merger/Organisation – membership information is all over the place
- EC Election – the point was made that the level of activism has fallen dramatically since the merger of the two unions.
- Current paying membership is 1.25 million with the union in decline; hence Tony Woodley's 'rebranding' of the 100% Campaign as 'The Strategy To Stop The Decline & Grow Unite

- UK workers' are still the worse protected in Europe. GS said that Ed Milliband does not fully understand trade unions or their values; obviously, this is because he has never been part of the movement but he is willing to listen and wants to work with us.
- BA Dispute
 - Proposed agreement is out to ballot with the result being known in about 3-4 weeks' (subsequently, a press release was issued on 22 June to say that a deal had been reached)
 - Len contacted by GSs' of other unions to congratulate Unite; BA fight seen as a symbol of British TU Rights
 - BA members' have 5,000 crew flying at any one time, have a community spirit and turn up to fly the plane (14) maybe not know each other previously and may never see each other again. This underlines the tremendous job that the cabin crew and reps' have done. Sean Beatty spoke at a GPM NISC meeting and hundreds of striking cabin crew at a EC meeting last year.
 - All this has been done to a backdrop of suspensions, sackings, disciplinaries, threats, intimidation, 'home visits', and being followed but there has always been full support for ballots and industrial action
 - Willie Walsh 'war chest' of 2billion but he still failed; new CEO, Keith Williams, instrumental in reaching agreement.
 - 300 pilots volunteered to be cabin crew during the dispute. EC is asking for BALPA issue to be raised with TUC with a view to kicking them out.
 - Seen as a major victory for Unite and its members' in defeating an employer intent on crushing the union. GS – "honourable agreement" publicly.

TUC Delegation 2011 – this will be a smaller event this year with less delegates and will be held over 3 days' at Congress House in London.

Motions for Congress

The Council agreed to submit motions for inclusion on the agenda for the TUC on the following subject areas:

- a) Employment rights (to include section on principled trade unionism)
- b) Economic Alternative
- c) Peace in the Middle East

- Cuts

Where do we go after 26 March? (ref. Sara's report); some unions are more advanced than others but Unite is consistently asked to get involved – religious groups, community organisations, student bodies – partly necessitated by the falling membership. Lenny stated he is still unsure of the TUC position after 26/3. Talk of a coordinated campaign by getting the “alternative to the cuts” list out to all members’; it was pointed out that many local authorities are moving at different pace to each other.

- Organising – 100% Campaign (Tony Woodley & Rob McGregor)

Element 1 – presentation given new EC members’.342 officers’ with a brief. Regional Secretaries being asked what are your officers’ doing?

National Officers – 188 National Agreements – 306,000 members’ but 1.3 million employees’.

National Heads consulted – come up with top 85 national agreements; only 15 of these agreements have a membership of 50% or more.

Element 2 – Strategic Organisation. 8,000 new members’ to attract; involving 34 national officers. Shop Stewards/activists involved.

Element 3 – Planning & Buy-In sessions with reps’/activists. Fairness of allocation (targets) for officers’ so that no one ever falls for always covering single members’.

72,000 in Unite comprises workplaces of 8 members or less.

2, 500 members’ ‘drop-out’ of the union each week (no one knows redundant, left, retired. 21% of these rejoin having been spoken to on the phone. Suggestion, from EC member, to give the leaver a form to retain membership.

Talk of a pilot scheme on retention. News to DL and I – 2008

- **Membership Report**

Excluding retired members, the paying membership at the end of March 2011 was 1,199,350. Compared to the end of 2010 this is an increase of 5,374.

More comprehensive reports will be provided to the Council once a single membership system is in place.

The membership integration project is nearly complete. The project involves upgrading the T&G membership system to a new version called Stratum and importing all of the Amicus membership data into the new system. This has largely been completed so that all of the Union's membership data is now available on a test system which is being used to train staff. The full system will go live on 1 June.

Stratum uses a web-based interface with improved layout and usability. Feedback from staff has been very positive about the look and feel of the new system as well as ease of use.

- Organising (Sharon Graham) – lots of work since the last EC on 100% and retention campaigns.

Workers' (Honda) put in a de-recognition application to the CAC; they did not want the union. 775 members' signed, did not inform the union.

The company showed DVD to members' – 'How Your Union' Is Working' – several inaccuracies.

The application to the CAC was rejected as the wording said ballot and not simply de-recognition.

- Finance Sector – 130,000 jobs lost in the sector in the last 18 months'; 50,000 of those in RBS & Lloyds. Looking for a further 25% job reductions across the board.
- Unite Finance Strategy (private & confidential but leaked) – Document 15

Non-recurring items (excluding Pension Deficit Reduction):

£27.7 million in 2010 (see March '11 notes) including a non-cash 'write-down' of the union's properties', to current market values, of 21.5 million. It is accepted/recognised that Unite was formed at the pre-crash peak of the property market and these same assets were 'marked-up' at the time. Also included in this category are severance costs totalling £6.8 million and the 'write-off' of VAT paid on property refurbishment.

Sitting on about 20 surplus properties. One property, near Moreland St, upkeep costs are 250K per annum.

Quorn Grange is up for sale; advisers trying to sell the property as a going-concern.

By April 2012 legal income (new cases) will disappear; there will be a 'tail-off' of existing income until that too disappears in a couple of years' time.

IT Costs – the integration of the Siebel (Amicus) and the T&G system has been scrapped – as reported at the last NISC. 200k in 2010.

- Property (Book Values)
- Bath St Glasgow 810K

Wolverhampton – Office in the bus station is a valuable property in a high-profile location.

Renovation of a property in Bristol

Holborn Office – canteen is being moved to the Ground floor; the entrance to the building is being re-modelled.

Renovation/refurbishment at offices/centres in Portsmouth, Swansea and Newcastle (new computer room after the closure of Hayes Court)

King Street (bv 9.8 million) – lots of attention, some offers.

Warren Street, Hayes – expected to be sold by the end of the year

Sefton Street (Liverpool) – terms of sale have been agreed.

Unite has 2 education centres – Esher & Eastbourne – view is that Unite should use only one. Ed Sabisky looking at a possible sale – he added that these properties are not included in the financial strategy. EC decision.

- International Report

Unite has been represented on the UNI-Europa Congress Preparation Committee charged with preparing the resolutions and political positions for the

forthcoming UNI-Europa Congress in November 2011. Unite's main impact has been, in conjunction with SECTA (Belgium) and GPA-DJP (Austria) to submit proposals seeking to develop UNI –Europa's working structures in recognition of the challenges now faced. In particular, more resources targeted towards strategic campaigns and organising in MNCs', developing a stronger policy unit within UNI-Europa and adopting a more cross-sector approach on key issues. These proposals have been welcomed by other UNI-Europa affiliates.

EWCs' – The International department has been in discussions with a number of National Officers' regarding the possibility of developing sector-specific strategies to deal with the implementation of the new EC EWC Recast Directive. A pilot course for the Energy sector is being drawn up with the Education Department with the intention being to deliver the course during July. The strategy for the sectors' will focus on 'reclaiming the EWC agenda' in order to make EWCs' more effective and beneficial for our members' in the future.

Cuba – Unite again organised a joint delegation of Unite, USW & SEIU to express solidarity with the Miami 5 and to participate in the May day celebrations and solidarity rally. The delegation was accorded the highest respect and met with the wives and mothers of the detained men.

Colombia – So far this year 8 trade unionists have been assassinated. The latest was on 3 May when a teacher trade unionist was shot dead in the street; 2 leading members' of our sister union, FENSUAGRO, were assassinated on 30 March.

Political prisoner, Lilianny Obando, has now spent nearly 3 years' in prison without being convicted of any crime. She has now been kept for longer than is legally permitted without a completion of trial yet the authorities will not release her. JFC has been organising pressure and letters' et cetera to support Lilianny's lawyers' appeal to have her released. Letters' from Gail Cartmail, several MPs', union leaders and lawyers' have also been sent to the Colombian Ambassador in London.

On April 13 the EU-Colombia FTA was signed. It still has to be ratified by the European Parliament. Unite has worked with JFC and other unions to organise statements from the European Trade Union Federations.

- Sub-Committees'

The following sub-committees of the Executive Council were elected.

Finance & General Purposed Committee: Elections:

Tony Woodhouse and Mark Lyon were elected to the positions of Chair and Vice-chair, respectively

Tony Woodhouse	Mark Lyon
Ivan Monckton	John Murphy (Trustee Company)
John Cooper	John Sheridan
Maggie Ryan	Jayne Taylor
Marie Vannet	Martin Maher
Brian Holmes (Trustee Company)	Kingsley Abrams (Trustee Company)
Steve Hibbert	Mark Wood (Trustee Company)

(4 members of the committee were also appointed as Directors of the Unite Trustee Company in accordance with Rule 20; they are indicated on the above list)

International Committee

Mark Lyon	Pat Stuart
Dave Williams	Dennis Wilson
Glenn Jackson	

Education Committee

Tony Woodhouse	Helen McFarlane
Mark Plumb	Kwasi Agyemang-Prempeh
Tam Mitchell	

Pensions Funds Trustees

General Secretary, Len McCluskey
Chair, Tony Woodhouse

Mark Plumb	Dave Williams
Tam Mitchell	Agnes Tolmie

Disciplinary Sub-Committee – panel

Sharon Wallace	Brian Holmes
James Mitchell	Meurig Thomas
Chris Bond	Lindsay Adams
Ruth Creaney	

Training will be provided to the members of this panel.

- **Review of Constitutional Committees**

The union has commenced an audit of the Area Activists Committee and is drawing up proposals for modifications of the composition of Regional Industrial Sector Committees where necessary.

