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Unite Executive Meeting September 2012

EC Report

General Secretary's Report

A full report was given, the main points being:

There is the ongoing issue of former Visteon employees to make Ford Motor Company honour the guarantee to finance their pensions.

There is potential for the creation of up to 100K jobs in the Automotive Industry over the next 4 years and the Organising Unit are watching these developments closely.

The Policy Conference illustrated that Unite is "a union at ease with itself".

Unite was at the forefront of the TUC Conference with Lay Members participating within various debates.

Two public meetings in Liverpool and Paisley were organised and went well with large attendances. The meetings were attended by Maria Eagle MP and Jim Sheridan MP respectively.

The work done by the Job Evaluation foundation stage has been completed. Now Unite has a single grading and pay system in place. There will be Voluntary Severance opened up to National Officers and also job advertisements for a small number of national positions.

100% Campaign / Strategy for Growth

In total over 35,850 new members have joined the union in 888 target workplaces (as of 10/09/12).

Leverage activity in the last quarter had two main areas of focus; London Bus Workers Olympic Award and at Liverpool Mutual homes. Both cases progressed well for the union, the Bus Workers reaching agreement and at LMH unite compensation and the reintroduction of check-off for the membership.

Rule Changes

1. *New Rule 9.7*

The Young Members' National Committee shall elect from its number an observer delegate to the Executive Council.

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This brings the rule into line with practice adopted, and the parallel rule for a retired members' observer.

2. Amended Rule 10.7

Retired Member activists are entitled to attend the triennial Area Activists Meetings and general Area activists Meetings and to stand for election for up to 2 defined retired members' seats on Area Activists Committees, elected by retired members attending the meeting

Puts retired member activists on same footing as any other activist with regard to attending Area Activists Meetings.

3. Delete rule 15.8

The union has received legal advice that this rule would no longer be considered lawful in the light of recent changes to retirement legislation removing the employer's ability to set an obligatory retirement date for employees.

4. Rule 16.2. Delete second sentence and replace with

A candidate must be eligible to vote in the election; have at least ten years continuous membership of the union; and have received at least 50 branch nominations or workplace nominations (where there is no workplace branch), subject to the total including nominations from more than one region.

This reflects the greatly increased number of union branches as a result of the branch reorganisation programme, and also clarifies the branch/workplace difference, eliminating the possibility of a workplace branch making two nominations (one as the branch, the second as the workplace). The only workplaces which will now be able to nominate are those that are not in a workplace branch.

5. Rule 22.5

Line 3 - change "annual" to "triennial"

Line 5 - delete word "and", change "Rule 10.3.4" to "Rule 10.8"

This carries forward into rule decisions already taken by the EC regarding the timing of regional political conferences and retired member involvement

6. Delete Rule 27.9

This rule relates to disciplinary issues pre-dating the merger of the T&G and Amicus into Unite, and is therefore now no longer necessary.

Branch Standards and Branch Standing Orders

After a discussion it was agreed to finally sort these two issues at the next EC meeting in December.

Implementation of Motions from the 2012 Policy Conference

It was agreed that the Unite Handbook would be updated to incorporate the decisions from the Policy Conference.

Remitted Motions Report and Motions on Union Administration from the 2012 Policy Conference

The EC accepted the recommendations put forward by the senior management team to Remitted Motions; however the EC challenged one recommendation put forward in regards to Union Administration. Motion 177 (as amended) – Servicing Members, asked for a process to be put in place in regards to “servicing of members in cases of long term sickness of union staff”. As there is no existing panel system for appointing stand down officers it was agreed that Regional Committees and Chairs of RISCs should be involved in the procedure.

Finance

The financial results for the first half of 2012 are in line with the outlook for the year as a whole. Total income and expenditure (to a lesser degree), are up versus the same period as last year.

Woodberry has been sold and the sale of Quorn Grange and Hayes Court in the future are financial positives, however on the downside, the major refurbishment of Moreland Street as the Regional office for the London and Eastern Region has commenced.

Political

As previously reported, the regions have been asked develop intensive pilot campaigns to pursue the political strategy with the aim of increasing membership of the Labour Party by 1% of Unite membership and to increase delegates by 50%.

The Union is required to conduct a Political Fund Ballot before June 8th next year, if we are to retain our political fund. Preparations are well under way.

On the technical side, there have been discussions with the Certification Office, to examine their guidelines. There will be a requirement to adopt a Rule change with very precise and prescribed terminology to cover the ballot. This Rule change will be put before the December EC for adoption, following formal ratification of the proposal from the Certification Officer.

Parliamentary Report

Unite gave evidence to a committee looking at Blacklisting.

The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill continues to be of great concern. This innocuous sounding bill which covers a Green Investment Bank – in a very weak form – and issues around Director’s remuneration – again very weakly – is the cover for the anti-worker restriction in employment rights. Probably the three key measures which we oppose are: a) introducing a public interest requirement into the whistle-blowing protections, b) a potential cap on compensation at Tribunals at one year’s pay, and different limits for small companies, and c) a form of protected conversation. The latter two measures add up to a simple route to dismissal at low cost for employers which effectively remove employment protection. Unite gave evidence alongside GMB to the Committee considering the Bill

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and made a very effective presentation, unlike Beecroft himself, who merely presented anecdotes rather than evidence.

Durham Political School

The annual political school was very successful. 80 activists attended, with more young and new members. They were very keen and often seemed ahead of the tutors in understanding the political strategy. Responses were good and hopefully the school has generated a set of activists who will assist the political strategy as well as their current industrial activities.

Political Conferences

There has been some confusion around rule book requirements and the Political Strategy on this. For clarity, the triennial Political Conferences which will elect the Regional Political Committees - and then the National Political Committee – will take place in Spring 2013. Detailed advice and a calling notice will be issued at the end of this year.

In addition it is currently proposed, that there should be annual political conferences convened on the same basis but without elections in the other two years of the cycle – so in 2014 and 2015. These will be called by the National Political Committee and will further the political work, but beyond the Rule Book Requirement.

Education

Learning with Unite

The Unite team had a successful Bid accepted by Unionlearn for over £4 million. The period is for 2 years with the first year guaranteed and the monies for the second year subject to meeting certain targets for funding to continue.

The Project currently employs 40 team members. We have three Co-ordinators; one for IT & Communications, another for monitoring and the third is for Equality and Diversity with responsibility for Community Education. There are 30 Project Workers throughout the 5 Regions. Each Region has an identified manager and there is also a Learning Support Worker and one for Electronic Learning too.

This Unite team is committed to guarantee a high standard in quality in its flexible learning opportunities and will use Lifelong Learning to develop members to bring flexible learning opportunities into the heart of their own communities. And all that Unite does in the Unionlearn Project will be measured to ensure the success of our Life Long Learning vision.

In addition, in order to concretise our Lifelong Learning work within the Union, every single project member (all 40 of them) will have a 100% Organising target.

International

Global and European Trade Union Federations

IndustriAll – Founding Congress:

The global merger of the metalworkers (IMF), chemical, energy and mines (EMCEF), and textile workers (ITGLWF), took place at a founding Congress in Copenhagen between 18th and 20th June 2012. The founding Congress was made up of over 2000 delegates from trade unions across the

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globe, with UNITE represented by a delegation including General Secretary Len McCluskey, Tony Burke, Tony Woodhouse, and Mark Lyons.

UNI/UNI-Europa:

Following the adoption of the 'Fit for Purpose' resolution UNI-Europa at the November 2011 Congress the May Executive has now adopted a series of actions designed to implement the proposals.

PSI/EPSU:

UNITE will participate in the forthcoming PSI Congress that will be held in Durban South Africa during November 2012. The delegation will be led by Gail Cartmail AGS and will comprise of Executive Council members from the sectors covered by PSI – Local Authorities, Health, MOD and Education.

IUF/EFFAT:

UNITE was represented by a delegation of five lay reps and two full time officials at the IUF Congress that took place in May 2012. The Congress was attended by some 500 delegates from all around the world with UNITE rep also present at the preceding Women's Conference. The Theme of the Congress was 'Organise, Fight and Win' and all UNITE delegates spoke successfully on motions including Equality in TNC's, Persecution of Agricultural workers, Precarious employment, Organising in transnational companies & On decent work & dignity for Domestic Workers.

Congress agenda items included:

- Organising & winning our fight against precarious work
- Health, Safety & Environment
- Organising ourselves - building a stronger IUF
- Organising & winning our fight for food rights and a sustainable global food system
- Winning Politically

Workers Uniting

Steering committee Copenhagen 17th -18th June: The meeting of the Workers Uniting Steering Committee took place in June 2012 just before the IndustriALL foundation conference. The Steering Committee received reports of Workers Uniting industrial activities for the preceding 6 months that included details of activities/campaigns at Cooper Tyre, Mayr Melnhof, Rio Tinto and SCA; the Wisconsin political campaign; the developing education and communications strategy for Workers Uniting social media and website; Building Power Internationally and global solidarity including reports on Bangladesh, Colombia, Cuba and Mexico.

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Industrial Reports

Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector in the UK is continuing to suffer from current government economic policies and the lack of any industrial strategy. The fiscal squeeze, Euro-zone crisis, high domestic debt and continued levels of quantitative easing have all provided problematic 'drags' on any opportunity for the economy to grow – in short, manufacturing (with the exception of automotives and some parts of aerospace) has flat-lined.

Transport & Food Sector

The Policy Conference agreed the Executive Council Statement on Transport, which will be vital to underpin all our transport sectors' priorities over the coming triennial period.

A transport campaigning leaflet has been produced for the forthcoming industrial sector conferences, area activist meetings, TUC and Labour Party Conferences.

Services Sector

The government is continuing its privatisation mania and loathing of trade unions, the direct and indirect impact of reduced government spending on the wider economy.

Yet despite this very hostile environment sectors are campaigning vigorously. For example significant effort and coordination was exerted in the campaign against the privatisation of the West Midland Police Authority, which engaged and grew Unite's membership.

Anger is mounting in relation to cuts in real terms to public sector worker's pay. A concerted joint union attack has the potential to break government pay policy.

A tough stance by members in a number of private sector pay negotiations has improved offers and resulted in membership growth. In Construction consultative ballots on pay are also actively cleansing membership data and being used as a vehicle for continued surveying of members to glean more evidence of Blacklisting. The AGS provided a verbal update of action on Blacklisting.

The Finance Sector membership should be commended for continuing to organise and grow in a number of enterprises whilst grappling with a plethora of issues not least job cuts and further scandals such as Libor.

Education and training of workplace representatives to support 'fighting back' industrial strategies is a strong theme running throughout the sectors.

Remploy: Nothing has moved this intransigent and totally uncaring government who have neither allowed meaningful negotiations to take place, nor been moved from their unjust decision to close Remploy factories, and redundancies started on 17 August. KPMG are now beginning a report on viability of phase two sites, which are the remaining 18 factories whose future will be determined next year. Talks are continuing with the governments in Wales and Scotland and the respective enterprise agencies to seek prospective buyers and on-going employment for Remploy workers.

Remploy Campaigning: Unite's campaigning has been extremely wide ranging including putting up a billboard in Iain Duncan Smith's constituency and organising for supporters to send thousands of

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emails to him asking him to go and visit one of the Remploy factories and see for himself what the workers do.

<http://www.unitetheunion.org/remploynotforsale>

<http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/318425/Tory-sneers-at-disabled>

When redundancy notices started to be issued we put out a call for messages of support for Remploy workers and were overwhelmed by the thousands of messages received. We had over 8000 of these messages printed into a book and sent a copy to every factory so that workers could see that although the government may not care, the people of Britain are with them: http://b.3cdn.net/unitevol/2ff10716b411835a13_9vm6yhlzc.pdf

Equalities

Unite Equalities is highlighting and campaigning against the horrifying attack on equality from the ConDem government, including the major undermining of the Equality & Human Rights Commission This has now been compounded by appointing as a women and equality minister someone who has consistently voted against equalities advances – Maria Miller the new Culture Secretary. Stickers and a leaflet have been produced for use in campaigning against equality cuts “Get Your ConDem Hands off Equality!” These are particularly for use as part of building for and on 20 October and at the forthcoming regional equalities conferences, industrial sector conferences and area activist meetings.

At Policy Conference, a major debate on equalities took place, and the new positive action measures on representation of disabled and LGBT members agreed at the 2011 Rules Conference were implemented for the first time, together with the involvement of 100 young men and women member observers – all very welcome and positive developments. Conference monitoring was also carried out.

Additionally, a major fringe meeting “We call it Equality : They call it Bureaucracy,” was well supported. It was chaired by Diana Holland AGS and national committee chairs Jane Stewart, Mohammad Taj, Sean McGovern, Betty Gallacher and Naomi Shipsides all spoke, as well as a large number of delegates raising points in discussion. The message from the meeting was twofold: the need to set out the impact of the cuts and to highlight what is happening; and to ensure that we build a united campaign focusing on building strength around what unites us. Delegates were also invited to put stickers on a large map to indicate equality cuts in different areas across the country to also be used in the campaign. The Equalities stall was well supported and a tribute to all who were involved.

Legal

There is an Audit taking place on all Solicitors the Union use

Unite4jobs website is being promoted and the site currently features over 300,000 vacancies.

Personnel Injury Claims and the 35 Hour week Fund where also discussed.