

UNITE EXECUTIVE MEETING DECEMBER 2011

## EC Report

### Rumours!

The GS commented on rumours around a merger with PCS, he stated that informal discussions had taken place with a number of other unions whilst there was nothing concrete in any of the merger rumours, he reminded the EC of Unites strategy this being a three pronged approach:

- Organisation of Green field sites
- Strategy for growth
- Mergers

The GS informed the EC that USDAW had not only rejected a TUC proposal to address Unite concerns reference 'USDAW Single Recognition Agreements' but registered a complaint against Unite with the TUC!

### Finance

A full financial report was given, the main points being:

Finance are in a steady state, with the only negative being the Pensions deficit.

Although overall income to Unite is down, expenditure is also down, which means in short an overall operating surplus of £3m.

### Property Report

A full Property report was given, the main points being:

The following properties have been sold: Dorset, Glasgow, King Street, Bradford, Prestwich & Swansea (exchanged).

The following properties have or are to be refurbished: Eastbourne, Bristol, Portsmouth, Swansea, Derry, Holborn, Newcastle, Aberdeen. To start in 2012: Dublin, Coventry, Moreland Street, Derby, Dundee.

The EC was informed by the GS that it will be required to face a future decision of what to do with its two current National Education Training Centres, Esher & Eastbourne. The current executive officer thinking is that neither of the two facilities are ideal and that a new purpose built Midlands based facility might serve the union's needs best! A plan is being put together as follows;

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- *Ascertain the value of Esher by fully marketing it.*
- *Maximise the value of Eastbourne by appointing an external management team to improve revenues and general efficiencies (without impacting employees' terms and conditions)*
- *Develop a plan to site a new national training facility co-located with a new West Midlands Regional Office.*
- *Look to sell the Birmingham Broad Street and West Bromwich properties once the new national training centre/Regional office is completed.*

A number of concerns/reservations were tabled by EC delegates including **unitenow** members, it was made clear by the GS that no decision will be taken until further discussions take place with the EC.

## **Officers Harmonisation of Terms and Conditions**

A full process has now been concluded and agreed by the EC (**Unitenow** delegates were supportive of the GS actions) that has harmonised all unite officers Terms and condition with a buy-out of some existing 'benefits' and a non pensionable allowance for out of hours work going forward, as it has to be recognised (and also by officers) support is required outside of 9-5 Mon-Fri!

The GS is in on-going negotiations with officer representative concerning a unite capability procedure.

## **Branch Financing**

The new document for Branch financing is now complete and agreed by the EC, the full document is available on the **Unitenow** website.

## **Branch Reorganisation.**

It was identified to the EC that a number of Regions (East Midlands, Ireland & North West) have not tabled any 'concrete' proposals in accordance with the branch reorganisation programme communicated early in the year.

A number of other regions had not put forward proposals covering the GPM sector and that these are required in accordance with the branch reorganisation guidelines as all other branches.

The EC approved that the Chief of Staff inform the appropriate Regional Secretaries that comprehensive proposals for the regions branch structure be submitted no later than the end of the year. Another reason for completion is that Branches not covered by regional branch reorganisation proposals will not receive branch funding! When proposals covering branches have been provided they will receive their branch funding back dated to Jan the 1<sup>st</sup>

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Proposals from a number of regions were put before the EC, which gave the go-ahead for new branches to be created. A number of concerns were raised with some of the regional proposals tabled that will require regional input to address (only appeals not sorted at regional level will be brought to the EC for a decision). If you're unaware of the proposals for your own workplace, contact your regional officer.

## Equalities

There has been some success in slowing down on the Governments attacks on Equality in General, for example the Government have backed down on the removal of the Mobility Allowance., there has been some success on the Women's retirement age, however there is more work to be done.

There is going to be an exciting programme coming in the future, where Unite will put forward a process that allows us to speak to all 15 year olds in all the Schools in Britain.

As well as the election of the Disabled and LGBT EC seats in readiness for the March EC, the National Retired Committee will also be able elect an observer EC position from their national committee for the March EC.

A proposal from the National Youth Committee had been included in the Equality report, the **Unitenow** group pushed for the proposal to be debated and not left 'laying on the table'!

After consideration by the Executive Officers it was brought back to the EC before close of business and unanimously agreed by the EC that; The National Youth Committee will be able to elect an observer EC position from their committee for the March EC and that young member observers to attend the Policy Conference to be determined by the EC.

## Retired Members

A new Unite Active Retirees Structures & Benefits proposal was tabled that had been before the National RMA Committee;

*Currently the cost of Unite retired membership varies often according to the legacy union that the retired member was a member of. Consequently membership contributions can vary from 25p/week to £10/annum to a zero contribution.*

*It is proposed that from 1 January 2012 free membership with eligibility for benefit/affinity partner package will be ended. Members retiring from that date who wish to remain a member of Unite and be eligible for benefit/affinity partner package will need to take out **RETIRED MEMBER PLUS** membership, currently set at 50p per week (preferably paid by biannual or annual direct debit of £13.50 or £26.00 respectively) for members becoming retired after that date.*

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*From 1 January 2012, those retired members who currently make a financial contribution will be transferred to **RETIRED MEMBER PLUS** membership, currently set at 50p per week.*

*Those retired members in membership prior to 31 December 2011 who currently make no financial contribution to the union, including ex T&G Free Card members, will be allowed to continue in membership on the same non-contributory basis as will newly retired members who wish to make no financial contribution. These members will not be eligible for benefit/affinity partner package but will remain entitled to vote in the election for Unite's General Secretary.*

*To be active and participate in the retired members' structures as outlined in proposals 1-5 below members who retired after 1 January 2012 must have **RETIRED MEMBER PLUS** or full membership. Members who were in retirement before 31 December 2011 may continue to be active and participate in union's constitutional structures irrespective of their retired membership status.*

*Retired members who are branch secretaries of workplace, sector, national or general "composite" branches must continue to pay full membership contributions.*

*The former "associate" membership of the ex T&G RMA is now covered by Unite "community" membership for those not in employment, currently 50p/week. If in retirement, a member in the community category would join on **RETIRED MEMBER PLUS** membership and be entitled to join a retired members' branch of the union (see below).*

*As more and more retired members sign up for **RETIRED MEMBER PLUS** a proportion of contributions collected will be remitted back to the Regions for the exclusive use of retired members to work and campaign on their priority issues.*

## **Proposal #1**

*On retirement a member could chose whether to (i) remain in his/her workplace/sector/composite branch or (ii) transfer to a community branch (iii) transfer to a local retired members' branch.*

*Retirees who join Unite via community membership (which organises those who may not work - students, carers, unemployed - but not retirees) will be designated as retired members and directed to retired members' branches.*

*Members could not simultaneously be a member of more than one branch.*

*Retired members' branches – these branches could be based on the 170 existing ex T&G RMA branches in the first instance, although of course more may be created subject to demand from and level of activity of the retired members.*

## **Proposal #2**

*There should be a triennial conference of retired members in each Region. Eligibility to attend such conferences would be by branch nomination, based on some proportional measure but favouring retired members' branches.*

*This conference would elect the currently 20 strong Retired Members' Regional Co-ordinating Committee.*

*The Retired Members' Regional Co-ordinating Committee would elect:*

- *a retired members' observer delegate, with speaking rights, to the Regional Committee*
- *two delegates to the Retired Members' National Committee*
- *delegates, as appropriate, to regional pensioners' and labour movement organisations.*

*Like every committee of Unite covered by the Rule Book, the Secretary of the Retired Members' Regional Co-ordinating Committee will be a full time official of Unite.*

## **Proposal #3**

*To give effect to the further involvement of retired members it is proposed that:*

- *retired members who are also branch CLP GC delegates plus up to four nominees (who must be a members of the Labour Party) from the Regional Retired Members' Co-ordinating Committee, elected by the members of that Committee, are entitled to attend the Regional Political Conference and are eligible to stand for election to the Regional Political Committee*
- *retired member branch officers are entitled to attend the triennial Area Activists Meetings and general AAMs, and to stand for election to the defined retired members' seats on Area Activists Committees.*

## **Proposal #4**

*In keeping with the other equality strands there will be a biennial national retired members' conference, held with the other equalities conferences, delegates to which will be elected on a pro rota basis from the retired members' regional co-ordinating committees.*

## **Proposal #5**

*The Retried Members' National Committee shall be entitled to elect one observer delegate to sit on the National Political Committee and one observer delegate to sit on the Executive Council.*

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*The Retired Members' National Committee shall be entitled to elect delegates, as appropriate, to national pensioners' and labour movement organisations.*

The following points were debated and after a vote accepted these being;

- 'Branch members who are branch secretaries of workplace, sector, national or general/composite branches must continue to pay full membership contributions' this was expanded to all branch officers positions.
- That the EC will determine the maximum number of retired members that can sit on the regional political committee the original proposals had no limit.
- The new proposal would not come into effect until 2013, the EC agreed a transition arrangement of 2 additional seats for retired members be provide for the current regional political committees.

The final document will be put on the unitenow website as soon as it is available reflecting the points above.

## **Rule Book**

The new rule book reflecting changes made at the Rules conference is available (see [Unitenow](#) website) this will now require amending to take into account the agreed changes to retired & young members rules above.

## **Public Services Day of Action**

There was an excellent general debate around the November 30<sup>th</sup> day of action, where several delegates portrayed events that took place in there localities with events consisting of 10's of thousands of people taking part, with National figures estimated to be around 2 million people taking part.

- Some 30 different Trade Unions took part.
- There was also an European day of action
- The following day there was a strike in Greece.
- Public Opinion shows that there was and still is public support.

The one concern is the turn out in the vote, unites was a 31 % turn out, work is to start to attempt to understand the 69% that did not vote.

The debate then developed into "What Next" and a statement was agreed by the EC, the main points being;

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- Support plans for further nationally coordinated strike action to be taken to the Joint Unions meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> December when discussing 'next steps'.
- Support National March in defence of the NHS early in the New Year (Potential Health demo February 4<sup>th</sup> 2012.)

There common view amongst all affiliates that took part in N30 that this is just the beginning and this day of action in itself will not be enough, the theme is "Brace yourself" for more.

It was noted that our General Secretary attended several Picket lines and took part in the London demo; he spoke of the tremendous spirit & mood of all the Activists that took part. He also directed Ass / General Secretary Gail Cartmail to set up a "War cabinet" for future action to campaign against all the attacks on our Welfare State.

## **Public Services Report**

There was a full report given, the main points being:

- Defend Council House Campaign.
- Pay disparity issues, mainly women with many on the minimum wage.
- Day of action on November 9<sup>th</sup> against BESNA (Building Engineering Services National agreement) against attacks on T's & C's.
- A number of Executive delegates including **Unitenow** members attended a 'unofficial' picket line at Blackfriars Station in London to support the electricians who are fighting against the attacks on national agreements by Balfour Beatty Engineering Services.
- Campaign being further developed on the Blacklisting issue.

The General Secretary responded to the Council's dismay that a former employee was in fact advising the Construction bosses, by insisting that any officer who takes severance from Unite in the future will have to sign a confidentiality agreement & will no longer be permitted to work for any other organisation that has Unite recognition for a year.

Southampton dispute has been ongoing for seven months. All three unions involved in the dispute have rejected recent proposals by a majority of 3 to 1. There are also over 1,000 unfair dismissal claims being processed.

There is a general theme of TU / facility time being attacked throughout the Public Services.

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## Transport

A full report was given, the main points being:

- Issues with Bogus Self Employment.
- Serious threats to pay and T's&C's
- Present campaigns include, Bombardier, DHL Dartford, Agricultural wages board threat, Oil Tanker Drivers.
- Serious concerns on Health & Safety with three recent fatalities.
- Low & minimum wage issues.

## Manufacturing

A full report was given, the main points being:

- The Honda / Paddy Brennan situation was once again raised and in addition it was highlighted that following those events, the Japanese car industry was being targeted for the 100% campaign, namely, Toyota, Nissan & Honda.
- Growth in manufacturing forecasts is that it will drop from 2.2 % growth to 0.9% growth.
- Unite 20/20 vision strategy is launched.
- Possible Industrial Action ballot at Bae systems.
- CSEU 35 hour fund issue is still ongoing; GS has now actioned Unite Legal Director to make this a priority.
- General concerns over new Temporary labour legislation and the emergence of the "Swedish Derogation".

## Political

There was a full report given, the main points being:

- The view is that the Ed Milliband and the labour party can still be influenced by Unite and the recent comments from Ed, reference the Occupy campaign were welcomed.
- Diana Holland was nominated by Unite to stand for the Labour Party treasure role.

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## Political Strategy Document

- This document will be available on the [Unitenow](#) website as soon as it is available, however the EC debate focused around the following:
- Start to walk the walk.
- Regional Political officers will now have a 75% Industrial Port Folio with 25% of their time fully focused on the Political Agenda.
- All Unite constitutional Committees to have Political on the Agenda.
- Improve communications on Political throughout all structures including Unite CLP's and Labour party members.
- Develop Candidates for office.

## Strategy for Growth

There was a full report given, the main points being:

- The strategy went "live" in November.
- Over 3,000 new members have already joined the Union in target workplaces where "planning sessions" have taken place.
- Over 130,000 new membership potential in agreed workplace targets

There was a special mention for the Honda Swindon situation and the successful, full reinstatement of Unite Convenor Paddy Brennan, it was a very successful Unite Campaign with huge resource, however we must not drop our focus on these types of de-recognition attacks by Company's.

## Membership Report

A full membership report was given, the main points being:

- A small decline in paying membership since this time last year.
- Organising campaign start to reap benefits.
- Membership record cleansing making progress.

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## Legal

A full Legal report was given, the main points being:

- There is now one legal system of unite.
- The RPI/CPI judicial review was unfortunately lost with 2 of the 3 judges falling on the Governments side. There will now be an appeal lodged.
- The Jackson impact and debate is ongoing.
- Tendering process for future Unite solicitors is ongoing.

## International Report

A full International report was given, the main points being:

- Euro-Zone causing real concern, unites view is that a solution will be achieved.
- Recent Workers Uniting Congress in London was a huge success, this global Union consists of a partnership between Unit & the United States steel workers union USW, at this conference there was a partnership agreement signed between Workers Uniting and Fensuagro (Columbian Agricultural Union).
- There was a guest speaker from Columbia.