



## Summary Of

### **TGWU OFFSHORE BRANCH & SHOP STEWARDS MEETING**

TGWU Transport House 42-44 King Street Aberdeen

12<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Brother Angus Simpson (Branch Chair) opened the meeting, welcomed attending Shop Stewards and Members, he also apologised that the date of today's meeting had to be rearranged due to unforeseen circumstances.

#### Inspection of Cards

All cards of those present checked and found to be in compliance.

#### Apologies for Absences

Apologies for absences were received from Murdo Calder-MacPhee, Armand Sangbarani, Derek Duffy, Duggie Sheppard, Lee Yackiminie, David Owens, Stuart Hunter, Isabella Troup, Mick Murphy, Bob Farquhar and William Mitchell.

#### Minutes from Previous Meeting

It was confirmed that the Minutes from the previous Meeting had been received by those in attendance and that the contents had already been agreed as accurate.

#### Latest Correspondence

All present confirmed receipt of e-mails & written correspondence in connection to General Information affecting Offshore Branch Members. Some offshore correspondence is still being returned to the Aberdeen office and those present confirmed the correct offshore address was on file.

#### **Officers Report – John Taylor RIO**

##### Strategy for Growth/100% Campaign

John once again thanked all those who were in attendance from far and wide during their field break, and that this demonstrated the level of commitment that we, as a Union, have come to rely upon when fighting to improve our members terms and conditions. There is continued good work by Shop Stewards in trying to achieve 100% Union membership within their work place. It was also encouraged by the number of Members who are willing to take up the mantle of Shop Steward, most recently, Stanley Cousins onboard the Borgholm Dolphin, David Hadfield on the Gryphon Alpha, William Mitchell is now Shop Steward on the Safe Bristolia and Derek Duffy on the Ocean Team Explorer. The goal is to have back to back Shop Stewards on every unit to allow for effective communication, acting as a focal point as well as engaging the membership and reminding them that they are the Union.

### WTD – Paid Leave Claims

A meeting is planned with our legal team to further discuss this matter; all members will be informed in due course.

### Offshore workforce involvement day Murrayfield

The number attending this event were very encouraging however the numbers involved from COTA were not as high as we would have hoped for. Members are asked to contact the T&G office in Aberdeen with details where an application to attend this event was refused by an employer, we are also interested in finding out what information the employers and clients issued prior to the event taking place as there seems to have been an inconsistent approach in advertising this across the North Sea.

### FOSS Catering

Constructive talks have taken place with Jose Lopes, senior operations manager for FOSS & ESG Catering. Part of this discussion was about the difference in rates of pay to his staff and those paid by COTA which are the minimum rates which we as a Union are prepared to accept for any catering employee working in UK waters. Mr Lopes has confirmed that it would be his intention to introduce rates equivalent to those paid by COTA.

### International Offshore Union Conference

It is now hoped that following the takeover of the OILC by the RMT that the above conference will go ahead around November / January. The delay in organising this conference was the question of whether the TUC would sanction the takeover.

### COTA

- COTA Agreement  
The latest delay in getting the new COTA agreement signed off is that COTA wish to introduce wording which the Two Recognised Trade Unions are not prepared to accept. John explained that this was not in connection to any of the 3 options relating to paid leave and that at no point have COTA declined to implement one of the three options once the agreement is signed off.
- Second Year Deal  
John acknowledged the calls for the second year deal to be renegotiated but explained that the first priority was to get the first years deal signed off and fully implemented.
- Secondary Duties - First Aiders' insurance position  
COTA have asked for details of any incidents where employees have suffered financial detrimented, or had a policy refused due to the secondary duties they carry out offshore, any member affected please contact the T&G office in Aberdeen with details.

### **Those in attendance then discussed the following points:**

#### Branch Report

- Branch Secretary Ian Mundie gave a short verbal report confirming that Membership and Branch finances are in good order.

- A donation has been made to our Brothers and Sisters in the East Timor Union to support the great work they are doing in very difficult and violent environment.

### Regional Trade Group Report

A short verbal report was given by Brother Victor Fraser. He confirmed that a copy of the Minutes from the previous COR Regional Trade Group Meeting and The National Executive Report were available as usual.

The ballot for the new rule book is likely to commence around the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, we encourage all members to participate.

### COTA Wage Offer

- Calls for the second year deal to be renegotiated.
- Employers stating when paid leave can be taken – this is at the discretion of the employer but some clients continue to allow Catering Contractors to apply for dates.

### Offshore workforce involvement day Murrayfield

Brother Fraser gave a short verbal report on his attendance at the event and was impressed by the sheer determination and dedication to offshore safety shown by all those who attended. This is a great start, but as a union we need to be sure that every offshore worker who was not at the event shows the same level of involvement in offshore safety. Everyone confirmed that they received the Step Change website address [www.stepchangeinsafety.net](http://www.stepchangeinsafety.net) and that this would be a useful tool for Safety Reps, Shop Stewards and active members offshore.

### Activists Meeting Grangemouth 8<sup>th</sup> March

The Activists meeting in Grangemouth was very well attended and the overwhelming message from the lay membership was that the autonomy of the Branches, Trade Groups and Committees must continue. This will allow these groups to best represent the membership from which they have been elected.

### Grievance meetings during working time.

The District Trade Group have on behalf of the Offshore Branch requested support from both the Regional Trade Group and the District Committee for a review and / or financial support to proceed with a claim to the Employment Appeals Tribunal against a Tribunal ruling which stated that when an Offshore Employee attends a grievance meeting in their field break, this was not classed as working time and therefore not payable.

The ramifications of this decision should not be viewed in isolation and are far wider reaching than for this one member, they could affect every single working person. Ultimately this could result in the reluctance of employees to give up their own time to attend such meetings causing them to be bared from exercising their legal right to submit a claim to the Employment Tribunal. It is always preferable to resolve issues as early and amicably as possible but we can not allow our statutory rights to be threatened like this.

The District Committee has overwhelmingly endorsed the motion submitted during their recent meeting and is to progress this to the Regional Committee's next meeting.

### Union Income Benefits

With the help of the General Secretary following concerns raised by an Offshore Branch Member who had been refused income protection by UIB due to the fact that the Member worked in the offshore Oil Industry, Unite have confirmed that from May 2008 UIB will be offering income protection without the need of disclosure of either their occupation or medical health questions. This now means that all occupation classes will now be in a position to benefit from cover going forward.

### COTA Minutes

Please can members confirm that these minutes are being distributed by each employer to each offshore unit.

### Shop Stewards and Branch Meetings

As discussed at previous Branch Meetings, should any Shop Stewards or Member be able to ensure sufficient numbers, the Offshore Branch will consider holding extra Branch meetings in other geographical locations of the UK. Please be aware that numbers must justify the expense of the Branch Officials attending these meetings.

The next Shop Stewards meetings will be held at the T&G office 42-44 King Street Aberdeen commencing at 11:00 hrs, these will be on, 29<sup>th</sup> August and 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2008 all TGWU Offshore Branch Members are welcome. Any Shop Stewards who cannot make the meeting please advise at the earliest opportunity.

In the mean time please keep checking for the latest information affecting Offshore Members by checking the news page on the Offshore Branch's website at [www.tgwuoffshore.org.uk](http://www.tgwuoffshore.org.uk)

Meeting Closed.