



## Summary of

### TGWU OFFSHORE BRANCH & SHOP STEWARDS MEETING

TGWU Transport House 42-44 King Street Aberdeen

27<sup>th</sup> February 2009

Brother Simpson opened the meeting attending Shop Stewards and Members were welcomed.

#### Inspection of Cards

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

#### Apologies for Absences

Apologies for absences were received from Derek Duffy, Ronnie Head, Neil McLaren, Alex Whyte, Neil Hamilton, Corina McAllister, Gerry Lynch, Eric Connolly, Andrew Nunnen, Graeme Henderson, and Robert Farquhar.

It was noted that there were a number of Shop Stewards who had not given apologies for their absence.

#### 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 – NRB guidelines

Those present confirmed receipt of the latest guidelines and were also were also issued with the flow chart on their use. This information was also to be sent to every Offshore Branch Member's home address.

#### Branch Report

Branch Secretary Ian Mundie gave a short verbal report and confirmed that the Annual Branch audit had been completed and that all was well, he also explained that over the last 12 months the branch had sanctioned £1000 in hardship awards to members. All present were reminded that such an award is considered on application from a Branch Member enduring financial hardship as a result of long term illness. Any member in such a situation should apply in writing to the branch through the Aberdeen office.

#### Regional Trade Group Report

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

He also reported that the economic situation is already having a devastating affect on the already difficult manufacturing sector, and that this can be seen every time you pick up a paper or turn on the TV.

**Officers Report – John Taylor RIO**  
Strategy for Growth/100% Campaign

Brother Taylor confirmed there is continued good work by Shop Stewards trying to achieve 100% Union membership within their work place. He was also encouraged by the continued number of Members who are willing to take up the mantle of Shop Steward on their units, most recently Alexander Whyte on the North Cormorant and Ray Duffy on the Brent Delta.

John detailed some points which had been raised during the latest COTA meeting on 28.10.08 including concerns which he raised over the treatment of ad hoc employees as he believes that they are not being employed for the reasons stated in the Relief Crew Agreement. He outlined his intentions of approaching each company to get information on ad hoc staff.

The following points were then discussed and were also to be posted to all Branch members as part of a mail shot going out shortly.

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**WTD – employment appeals tribunal (EAT).**

Unfortunately we are still awaiting the decision from the EAT in regard to claims taken against COTA employers when they refused paid leave applications. As soon as the ruling is disclosed it will be communicated to all offshore branch members by post, as well as placing the information on the news page of our Branch web site.

In the mean time our advice remains to continue to submit your paid leave applications by downloading the pre-written application form from the news page of our website.

As some of you will be aware the statutory entitlement to paid leave will increase from the current 4.8 weeks to 5.6 weeks from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2009. As such an updated application form is enclosed and can also be downloaded from the news page of the branch web site or received by contacting the Aberdeen office.

The question of what this entitlement really means for offshore workers and when the paid leave can be taken are among the questions that will be detailed in the EAT's decision.

Please remember that unless you have: applied to your employer in writing for your paid leave / been refused by your employer / raised a grievance (if you worked for Aramark, ESS or Sodexo this has been done by your union as a collective grievance) / returned the Unions paid leave questionnaire the union can not and will not have submitted a claim on your behalf.

It is important to protect your entitlement to submit a claim that these steps continue to be taken by you the Member.

For Trinity members they will need to follow the full internal grievance process as previously stated, with pre written letters also available on the news page of our web site.

As the regulations identifies only the minimum entitlement the question of whether client gifted paid leave is allowed to be used as part of the calculation also needs to be resolved by the EAT.

### **COTA - Wage negotiations 2009.**

The date of 7.4.09 has now been set for the first of this years wage negotiation meetings and as such two Joint Shop Stewards meetings have been arranged for 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of March. These meetings are to be held two weeks apart, and we would urge each Shop Steward to attend one of these meetings. If you do not have a Shop Steward on your shift / unit or if they can not make one of these meetings please discuss with your fellow Union members what their aspirations and priorities for the forthcoming negotiations are, and forward them to the address above or e-mail them to [vcfraser@aol.com](mailto:vcfraser@aol.com) ensuring the title of the e-mail is COTA wage negotiations 2009.

### **Recruitment drive.**

Our Offshore Branch membership continues to grow and this is largely due to the work of existing members and Shop Stewards in publicising our achievements as a Trade Union. That is why we have enclosed some application forms and information pamphlets and would request that if you have any colleagues on your unit that are not yet Trade Union members that you ask them to join, together we are stronger.

The Branch is running a recruitment drive to take in all points of departure and arrival to your units, but as we have members on every single offshore unit what better way to reach those unaware of the benefits of trade union membership than have one of their fellow colleagues explain it. If any further information is needed please contact the Aberdeen office.

### **Workforce involvement day & Survey**

Following the recent distribution of the flyers publicising the upcoming workforce involvement day (a colour copy can be down loaded from the news page) there is also be an opportunity for all offshore workers to complete a Workers Involvement survey taking place at the heliports. We would urge all members to take the time to participate in this survey as it is aimed at improving offshore safety.

### **COTA**

#### **ESS – Terms and Conditions.**

There are still some outstanding concerns about the latest version of the Terms and Conditions and the wording of the accompanying letter which was sent to our members around 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008. John Taylor RIO for T&G section of Unite has met with ESS and further discussions are planned we will keep our ESS members informed of any update.

#### **Sodexo – Terms and Conditions**

Like ESS, Sodexo re-issued new Terms and Conditions to their offshore staff without prior consultation taking place. This has resulted in Unite submitting a failure to agree on any of the changes made within those T&C's. Sodexo have accepted this and are to review the terms and conditions and this will involve full consultation with the recognised Trade Unions. We will keep our Sodexo membership informed as this progresses.

### FOSS and Entier Catering

Both FOSS and Entier have now been formal accepted as members of COTA and as such will be bound by the COTA agreement. I hope you agree that this protects the terms and conditions we have fought long and hard to achieve from the threat of tenders based on reduced rates of pay.

### **Shop Stewards**

Should any Members be on a unit where you do not yet have a Shop Steward we would ask you to address this and try to get one elected to each shift. A Shop Stewards Credential form can be downloaded from the branch news page, completed and returned to the Aberdeen office where it will be processed.

Once this is done, suitable training will be available to the new Shop Steward to allow them to fully represent their constituency.

### **Not Required Back (NRB)**

There have now been firm guidelines published of the scourge of (NRB) the practise of a client removing a contractor from their unit. These new guidelines are as a result of industry leaders acknowledgment of the Unions concerns on how the practice had been abused in the past. These guidelines must be seen as a positive step forward in the protection of our activists on offshore units.

We now need to ensure the actual practises meet comply with the guidelines.

### **COTA Learning Rep**

The electoral period for the above position currently held by Victor Fraser comes to an end on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2009. Victor has confirmed that he would willing to continue in the position if re-elected.

The prime responsibility of the Learning Rep will be to encourage learning and personal development, and promote the courses available to colleagues, including Skills for Life, IT training and Personal Skills Development etc. There will, however be other associated duties within the COTA organisation. Full details are contained in the accompanying letter.

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### **Any Other Business**

#### Cost incurred attending Shop Stewards meetings.

It was agreed that should any Shop Steward feel that they are prevented from attending T&G section of Unite Offshore Branch Shop Stewards meetings due to the cost of travel they should write to the branch via the Aberdeen office with details so that their circumstances can be considered.

#### Undermining of COTA agreement by RMT.

In the past both unions (T&G and RMT) have worked together to the collective benefit of our membership and those present did not want this to change or to have to spent time and resourse in conflict with a sister Union when what we should be doing is collectively taking on the employers.

However all those Shop Stewards present felt that by allowing the printing of inflammatory comments in some of their publications infrering that there was some sort of sweatheart deal between COTA and the regonised trade unions ( T&G section of Uniite and actualy the RMT itsself ) that this was causing resentment amongst our membership and some thing needs to be done to address this.

It was agreed by the Shop Stewards committee that a letter be drafted to have this matter resolved once and for all.

The dates of the next Offshore Branch/Shop Stewards Meeting to be held at the T&G office 42-44 King Street Aberdeen commencing at **11:00 hrs** will be on Friday the **5<sup>th</sup> of June**, further dates will be confirmed in due course.

As discussed at previous Branch Meetings, should any Shop Steward 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.

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

Thanks were given to all Members for their continued support in fighting for our employment rights.

Meeting closed