



Summary of

TGWU OFFSHORE BRANCH & SHOP STEWARDS MEETING

TGWU Transport House 42-44 King Street Aberdeen

28th November 2008

Brother Fraser opened the meeting in the absence of the Branch Chair and Secretary who were both offshore. 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, Angus Simpson, Ian Mundie, Corina McAllister, David Fitzpatrick, Isabella Troup, Gerry Lynch, Gordon Love, Eric Conolly, Nicky Elphinstone and John Taylor.

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

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

Those present confirmed receipt of the letter from John Taylor Re overtime payments and the enforcement of all existing agreements. This confirmed overtime is paid at time and a half and can not be negotiated down to single time by employer or employee any attempt to underpay overtime will not be tolerated.

Branch Report

Branch Secretary Ian Mundie provided a written report:

- Membership and Branch finances are in good order.
- In accordance with the decision to suspend the implementation of the new Unite Rule Book until May 2009 taken by the Executive Council, at their special meeting held on 9th October 2008. The electoral period for the existing elected lay representatives is extended and that during this now extended transition period, the General Rules of Unite in conjunction with either the T&G Section or Amicus Section rule book remain in force for the respective sections.
- A delegation had attended a meeting for activists with Tony Woodley (Joint General Secretary) in Glasgow and the message was clear that name Unite

was already being seen as a fighting back union, but the only way to fight harder is to organise better. The question of branch autonomy was raised as an important tool at our disposal to deliver the level of organisation we all crave. The General Secretary gave his assurance that the autonomy of Branches was paramount to our success.

- A copy of education dates for the Aberdeen district office was distributed to those present and will be posted / e-mailed to all Offshore Shop Stewards in due course. All in attendance were encouraged to continue developing as Trade Unionists and the education available should be taken advantage of.
- District Trade Group Remit.
 - We have now received a written report from the legal department explaining the reasons for declining support to progress the matter to the Appeals Tribunal in regard to grievance meetings carried out onshore during a members leave time. And for this to be classed as work and paid accordingly. The Branch has discussed this with the member involved and it has been agreed to withdraw the appeal.

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.

Officers Report – John Taylor RIO (written report)

Strategy for Growth/100% Campaign

Brother Taylor confirmed there is continued good work by Shop Stewards in 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 Ceith Crocket on the Safe Caledonia, Neil Hamilton on the Ninian Southern and Samuel Creton on the Transoaecon Rather.

The continued goal is to have back to back Shop Stewards on every unit this develops better communication. Each Shop Steward elected will be afforded all the appropriate training and facilities they require to fully represent their constituency.

John commended the work Shop Stewards and other Union members were doing by getting their colleagues who were not yet Trade unionist to join our Union. He emphasised that getting them to join is only the first step. The single most important thing thereafter is to get them properly organised by ensuring all our members fully participate in union matters on their units, and in the wider industry.

John detailed some points which had been raised during the latest COTA meeting on 28.10.08 which included:

- Communications previously sent offshore by COTA without consultation or notification. These included incorrect rates of pay which led to a lot of calls from our members.
- Also minutes of the COTA meeting being circulated by some employers without these having been confirmed as accurate.

- Insurance for loss of pay during secondary emergency duties.

International Trade Union Conference

Following on from a meeting attended by Trade Unions from most of the UK oil sectors and also a number of Trade Unions from outwith the UK sector it is envisaged that an International Conference for Trade Union activists will take place around March next year. The aim is to organise the whole of the North Sea Offshore Oil Industry taking on multinational employers with the collective might of a united Trade Union movement.

Life Long Learning Offshore.

Brother Fraser confirmed that a number of lifelong learning opportunities will be rolled out shortly within all the COTA employers. As part of the poster campaign a new e-mail address of learning.rep@cota.org.uk will be used and this will come directly to him. Thereafter he will assist each employee in trying to facilitate any resources required.

He asked for the assistance of all Shop Stewards to encourage fellow colleagues to participate in this opportunity and reminded all present that this was open to union and non union employees.

Brother Fraser also gave a short verbal report on the recent Scottish Union Learning Reps Conference which he attended in Sterling. He made note that as all unions were in attendance it was interesting to see how each was approaching the subject and that there were lessons to be learned for all who attended.

WTD – (EAT) Employment Appeals Tribunal

Dates set for 16-19 of December. But in the meantime all members are advised to continue submitting paid leave applications for their statutory entitlement. This entitlement will increase to 5.4 weeks as of the 1st of April 2009

Any Other Competent Business.

Upcoming Recruitment Drive

Those present wished to consider whether we should be approaching the upcoming recruitment drive collectively with our Brothers and Sisters of the Amicus section. We are to become Unite and now is as good a time as any to start addressing issues jointly. It was also highlighted that all regions of the UK North Sea should be targeted

Wage Negotiations

It was agreed that we need time scale or possible dates for joint Shop Stewards meetings for next years wage negotiations.

Inter Union Relations

Concerns were raised by those present on the damaging effect some of the propaganda which continues to be published by our sister Union the RMT in their latest publications. Not only is this damaging to us but to the RMT members who have worked closely with us in the past to enhance our joint member's Terms and

Conditions. Questions were raised regarding what we as a Union are doing to address this.

Accommodation

It was agreed that in the next communication to offshore members the Branch re-affirm that if any member is having difficulty sourcing accommodation in Aberdeen they should contact their employer at the earliest opportunity to make them aware of the situation and ask for assistance. While members should take reasonable steps to organise accommodation the employer also has a duty of care to each employee to prevent them being placed in an unacceptable situation such as staying in Aberdeen without accommodation being available.

Pensions

There were discussions about what effect the current economic climate may be having on our member's pension funds. Those present were advised that members should contact Create Financial Solutions directly in the first instance if they need any advice. Their contact details are 23 Carden Place, Aberdeen, AB10 1UQ Tel 01224 264949 or web site www.createfinancialsolutions.co.uk/

The dates of the first two of next years Offshore Branch/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 Friday the **27th of February and 5th of June**. 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

Thanks were given to all Members for their continued support in fighting for our employment rights and the seasons greeting was also passed on to our members and their families.

Meeting closed