



Summary Of

TGWU OFFSHORE BRANCH & SHOP STEWARDS MEETING

TGWU Transport House 42-44 King Street Aberdeen

29th February 2008

Brother Angus Simpson (Branch Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed attending Shop Stewards and Members.

Inspection of Cards

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

Apologies for Absences

Apologies for absences were received from Dave McRae, Murdo Calder-MacPhee, Armand Sangbarani, Tony Palmer, Gordon Love, William Forbes, David Fitzpatrick, Kerry Walker, David Owens, William Mitchell, Ronnie Head and Nicky Elphinstone.

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 the WTD and General Information affecting Offshore Branch Members.

Officers Report – John Taylor RIO

Strategy for Growth/100% Campaign

Continued good work by Shop Stewards in trying to achieve 100% Union membership within their work place. Also encouraging was the number of Members who are willing to take up the mantle of Shop Steward, most recently, Eric Connelly. The goal should still be to have back to back Shop Stewards on every unit to allow for effective communication as well as engaging the membership and reminding them that they are the Union.

Safety Seminar

John confirmed there had been an agreement in principle to allow not just Safety Reps but also Shop Stewards and other Union activists to attend an upcoming Safety Seminar. Once further details are available this will be communicated to all Offshore activists.

International Offshore Union Conference

It was explained that until the TUC decided whether or not to ratify the take over of the OILC by the RMT no firm arrangements can be made in regards to the above as no affiliated Union should be dealing with non affiliated Unions.

RMT/OILC Merger

John Taylor explained that he had met with the TUC and had been reassured by Bob Crow's commitment that the RMT would ensure that all parts of his Union would abide by the principle rules of the TUC, which meant that the RMT would:

- Not actively recruit from another Union.
- Not actively recruit in an area where another Union has recognition.
- Not actively recruit in an area where another Union is already actively recruiting.

John explained that he had no reason to doubt Bob's word and that historically the T&G and the RMT have worked very closely together for the benefit of all Offshore Workers covered by our Joint Recognition agreement. The hope is that this good relationship would continue, but only time and the future behaviour of those involved could confirm this.

Phone Ballot Concerns

There have been some suggestions that the recent phone Ballot may have been open to abuse, and that in some way the integrity of those involved has been brought into question. We have no reason to question the integrity of any of the four Shop Stewards from both the T&G section of Unite the Union and the RMT or the RMT employee who notified both COTA and the two fulltime Officers of the final percentage result.

COTA

- COTA Agreement
The unacceptable delay in implementing this and signing of the Agreement which our Members accepted on the 18th January is being addressed directly with COTA.
- Back Pay and Client Options
As the previous point and discussions are also centering on why some clients have not already confirmed which one of the three options they have chosen.
- Secondary Duties - First Aiders' insurance position
Concerns about potential loss of earnings should someone be injured while carrying out these duties will be further discussed at the next COTA meeting.

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 and detailed some of the expenditure over the last 12 months.

Regional Trade Group Report

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

COTA Wage Offer

It was explained that no right minded person could argue that our entire membership was happy with this years pay offer and this was supported by the fact that 43% of the joint membership of the two recognised Trade Unions voted to reject the offer.

However since the majority of the membership accepted the offer, we as a Trade Union have and will always accept the majority's decision as part of the democratic procedure.

Requests and points had been received from some Members in connection to re-negotiating the second year deal but it was explained that this was not the forum for those discussions. It was duly accepted that if there were to be re-negotiation then it was not for discussion at todays Meeting. The proper forum for these discussions would be at a Joint T&G RMT Shop Stewards Meeting where by those present would bring the aspirations of the Members and then these would be placed before the Negotiating Committee for consideration.

COTA Phone Ballot

Concerns had been raised by Members who could not attend today's Meeting about whether the results of the phone Ballot was accurate and also who might get to find out how each Member had voted, specifically if the employer could ever find out had been raised. Employers are only informed of the % result and no further details are disclosed. The Ballot Papers are kept by each Member's individual Union and not passed on to any other party.

Following on from the earlier discussions on this matter, it was agreed that if necessary then the joint membership should be asked for their opinion of whether to continue with the current phone Ballot. Those present confirmed unanimously that they believed that it was in the interest of the membership to have the Ballot concluded as quickly and this has been helped by the introduction of the phone Ballot. Even if we had had a postal Ballot then we would still be facing this year's late implementation.

The offer to inspect the recording of their vote privately was taken up by all at the meeting. Those present wanted it recorded that this was only done to allay concerns others might have, and did not reflect any doubts about anyone involved in the phone Ballot. Each person confirmed that their vote had been recorded accurately.

Improved Offshore ROTA's

Partly as a result of the latest COTA wage negotiation and also due to the continued pressure which employers and Clients were under prior to the Ruling by the Employment Tribunal, more and more clients were planning ahead for the eventuality that our battle for full holiday entitlement for our members would be successful.

It should never be forgotten that the whole struggle is about improving safety by reducing working time in one of the most challenging working environments in the world.

Activists Meeting Grangemouth 8th March

It was explained that there was to be an Activists meeting in Grangemouth to discuss the autonomy of the Branches, Trade Groups and Committees. The autonomy which the T&G section of Unite the Union currently has should be retained in the views of those present. That is the clear message those present today will be asking Activists to give at Grangemouth.

WTD – Paid Leave

It was explained to Members that due to the sheer size of the ruling, 153 pages and the complexities contained within it, it would take us time to fully digest the ruling. There may be outstanding arguments which the T&G section of Unite the Union may need to pursue on behalf of our Members and we will keep you informed of this in due course.

In the meantime the advice to our Members is to continue submitting their paid leave applications as they have been advised to do every year since the regulations came into force for Offshore workers back on the 1st of August 2003.

Shop Stewards and Branch Meetings

As discussed at our last Branch Meeting, if any Shop Stewards – Members who can ensure sufficient numbers the Branch will consider holding extra meetings in other geographical locations. 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 13th June, 29th August and 28th 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

Meeting Closed.