



Summary of

T&G SECTION OF UNITE OFFSHORE BRANCH & SHOP STEWARDS MEETING

TGWU Transport House 42-44 King Street Aberdeen

5th June 2009

Branch Chair Brother Simpson opened the meeting attending Shop Stewards and Members were welcomed. He also asked that since this was the first Branch meeting since the Miller helicopter tragedy were 16 of our offshore colleagues sadly lost their lives that we should observe a minutes silence.

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, Neil McLaren, Gordon Love, Graeme Henderson, William Mitchell, David Mitchell, Neil Hamilton, Corina McAllister, Gerry Lynch, Stuart Hunter, Ged Dickson, Andrew Nunnen, Robert Farquhar, Nicky Elphinstone and Tony Palmer.

It was noted that there were a number of absent 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 – Offshore Workforce Involvement day, WTD, Miller Helicopter Tragedy and Working Hours etc.

Those present confirmed receipt of the latest correspondence sent out.

Branch Report

Brother Mundie Branch Secretary reported that the delectation who attended the International Offshore Trade Union Conference found it worth while with some very frank and meaningful discussions taking place. It is hoped that as a result of the conference that there will be a better working relationship with the International Trade Unions in the North Sea, not least of all with those unions with agreements in the UK sector.

One of the objectives of the conference was to address and then eradicate the scourge of social dumping and with the collective might of those Unions in attendance this is achievable.

Regional Trade Group Report

Brother Fraser explained that because of the new structure of Area and Regional activists committees and the new Industrial Sector (Chemical, Pharmaceutical, Process and Textile) which Unite has at its core there is no report as such as there has been no COR Trade Group meeting since the last time the Branch met. All previous constitutional committees both T&G and Amicus sections are now suspended.

On this point it is very important that all members get involved in the consultation process which will determine the appointments to these new constitutional committees.

There has been a very positive meeting in Edinburgh with activists from both the T&G and Amicus sections within our Industrial sector which resulted in a draft allocation of seats for the committee. As a result of this it is proposed that we the Offshore Catering Branch have two delegates.

Brother Fraser also reported back on the Emergency motion passed at the recent STUC congress in Perth with regard to the Miller Helicopter Tragedy and mentioned the silence in the hall as the number of lives which have been lost in our industry was read out. He also noted the absolute solidarity shown by all unions in supporting the motion.

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 and commented that the Branch website the direct contact available from the Aberdeen office has helped increase Branch numbers. John emphasised that the single most important factor in the continued increase in membership was down to the endeavours of our Offshore Shop Stewards and long may this continue.

John highlighted the large number of employees onboard the Ensco 70, 72 and 91 who have recently joined our Union.

John reminded any Members on a unit where you do not yet have a Shop Steward 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.

John then detailed some points which had been raised during the latest COTA meeting on 2.6.09

Wage negotiations 2009.

It was raised at the last COTA meeting that this year wage negotiation would need to be addressed and that at present the negotiations have only been postponed. This is to be further discussed at the next COTA meeting on 7.7.09

Ad-hoc

- Size of and % split of pool (permanent relief / ad-hoc).
- That overtime payments are payable to all in excess of 12 hour shift or over and above the normal trip cycle for the unit worked on.

Both these points are still being discussed with COTA

Working Hours

Concerns were raised about the unacceptable practice of excessive hours being worked on offshore units. These concerns were in regard to the practice of starting work before the designated time, working through scheduled breaks and continuing to work after the scheduled finishing time of your normal 12 hour shift. If individuals feel that their workload is too great to complete within the normal 12 hour shift they **must** make their line manager aware of this without delay and ask for their support in addressing the matter. If overtime is

required to meet the demand then this will be recorded and paid for accordingly. Under no circumstances should breaks be missed to try to catch up with an outstanding workload. These breaks are to ensure that adequate rest periods are taken for health and safety reasons. John informed COTA that it is their responsibility to ensure that **all** hours being worked are accurately recorded. In particular the working practises of Chefs, Bakers, Chef Managers and Camp Bosses were highlighted.

Accommodation Costs

Member still having great difficulty securing affordable accommodation in Aberdeen and £30 does not cover the cost.

Life Long Learning

COTA confirmed that the promotional posters have now been circulated to all units

WTD – Offshore paid leave.

Unite have now lodged their appeal to the Court of Session and this has been served on the respondents, who have now also lodged their response.

The case will now go before the court for a decision on further procedures. At that stage we will consider whether a request for a referral to the European Court of Justice should be made. We will keep all members informed of any update which will hopefully be within the next month.

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.

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.

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.

It has been accepted that any client gifted holidays can be used as part of the calculation of the total holidays being taken by offshore workers. However we are still advising members who receive client gifted holidays to continue submitting applications because of the fact that there is still no agreement as to how many offshore days your statutory entitlement to paid leave would give you.

Life Long Learning

Brother Fraser, COTA Learning Rep asked those present if they had received copies of the posters on their units and how the information had been communicated to the workforce. He also asked for the support of the Shop Stewards and Branch members by fully participating in the life long learning initiative and to encourage all their colleagues to do the same. He reminded those present that this opportunity was open to all COTA employees not only our fellow Trade Unionists. He would also be forwarding a copy of the posted to Branch activists for their information.

Workforce involvement day 11.6.09

Some comments have been passed to the Branch that not all employers and clients have publicised the upcoming event and that the only information that came to some units was by way of our Union.

So that we can address this issue could any member who has not received information on this event from their own employer or the client please contact us with details (unit name employer), your name will not be used

COTA

We have successfully challenged employers who had incorrectly informed some ad-hoc staff that overtime payments applied differently to them compared to other staff. It is important that we are made aware of any such breach of the COTA agreement, due to the insecurity felt by some ad-hoc employees we would speak directly to them before advancing their particular case.

Branch meetings.

It was suggested to go back to two meeting per quarter - two weeks apart.

The next Offshore Branch / Shop Stewards Meetings which will be held at the T&G office 42-44 King Street Aberdeen commencing at 11:00 hrs, on Friday the 11th and 25th of August 2009. **Please encourage as many members to come along** as possible as they will be made most welcome.

If any Shop steward cannot make one of these meetings please contact this office with your apologies for the minutes and at the same time pass on any issues you wish to have discussed in your absence.

Should any Shop Steward feel that they are prevented from attending Offshore Branch / Shop Stewards meetings due to the cost of travel they should write to the Branch via the Aberdeen office with relevant details so that their circumstances can be considered.

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.

Meeting closed