



**MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BRISTOL TRADES UNION  
COUNCIL HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup>. FEBRUARY 2021**

**1/ ATTENDEES**

**OFFICERS** Sheila Caffrey, (President, NEU), Simon Crew (Secretary, UNITE), Hugh Kirkbride (Vice President, UNITE), Alex Kempshall, (Communications Officer, UNITE), Tom Mewies (Treasurer, PCS).

**DELEGATES Others**

**2/ APOLOGIES:**

Accepted

**3/ PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS**

President welcomed new delegates.

**4/ MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:**

Minutes of previous meeting were agreed with changes.

**5/ MATTERS ARISING:**

None

**6/ APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND SCRUTINEERS**

Alex elected teller.

**7/ PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT, INCLUDING THE FINANCIAL  
STATEMENT AND BALANCE SHEET**

Secretary presented the Annual Report etc. and answered questions arising.

Both Reports were endorsed 18 votes to zero.

**8/ RULE CHANGES**

The President advised after previous discussion a number of rule changes were submitted by UNITE SW/001401 branch, these would need a two thirds majority to be passed. The votes were held as follows:

- 1, Removal of Avon County 19-0
- 2, Reduce Quorum of Executive 18-0
- 3, Delete meeting must be on a certain day 19-0

- 4, Create an Equalities Officer 19-0
- 5, Make Secretary an annually elected position 19-0
- 6, Presidential term limit changed to 4 years, 15-4
- 7, Complaints procedure 17-2.

Teller Alex confirmed that all the amendments had received the necessary two thirds majority and were added to the rules.

## **9/ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Hugh Kirkbride withdrew his nomination for Vice-President leaving the below who were unanimously elected.

President	Sheila Caffrey	NEU
Vice President	Suzy Cheeke	UCU
Secretary	Simon Crew	UNITE
Treasurer	Tom Mewies	PCS
Equalities	Sofy Crew	UNITE
Communications	Alex Kempshall	UNITE
Custodian		
Auditor	Keith Evans	UNITE

## **10/ ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

1. RAIL & SHIPPING (2)
2. TRANSPORT (4) Hugh Kirkbride
3. ENGINEERING (3)
4. MANUFACTURING (4)
5. DISTRIBUTION (2)
6. PUBLIC SERVICES (4) Roger Thomas
7. COMMUNICATIONS, MEDIA & PRINT (4) Alex Kempshall
8. EDUCATION (3)
9. CLERICAL & FINANCE (4) Mike Luff
10. BUILDING (2)

## **11/ REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES**

SWTUC Womens Committee – Sheila elected as our representative.

Key Workers Summit – Roger, Sheila, Keith, Pete and Simon volunteered which was agreed.

Bristol Unemployed Workers Movement – Roger agreed as our representative.

**12/ TRADES COUNCILS CONFERENCE 2021 i) Motion** Hugh moved and Barbara seconded the following motion which was unanimously agreed.

## Organising During Covid & Beyond

The TUC's New Deal makes sensible points about organising workers in the pre-Covid environment, but hardly any of these were put into practice. The employers' opportunist attack on workers during the pandemic has shown that real organisation, not just trade union membership, is the key to resistance and fighting back.

Some features of this have been:

- a. Key Workers:** while key workers have been widely applauded, government and employers have still sought to suppress pay and conditions. Initiatives such as the Key Workers Summits in the West Country have united key workers and help them fight back.
- b. Home Working & IT:** home working has seen workers separated from their workmates, and employers have sought to exploit this. However, IT savvy workers have also found ways to use what employers see as the means of control, to unite and manage their own situation.
- c. Community Organisation:** tenants have been at forefront of the struggles to resist exploitation, and tenants unions, based on trade unions, but geared to reacting quickly with widespread mobilisation, have proved invaluable.
- d. Gig Economy:** the iniquities of the gig economy have become even clearer during the pandemic, but TUC-affiliated unions have been slow to understand the nature of the workforce, and to develop appropriate ways of organising.
- e. TU Structures:** the formal structures of many TUC affiliated unions have been weak in response to the crisis. Workers in insecure employment tend to be unrepresented on committees, and so the structures tend to preserve the status quo, rather than respond to new circumstances.
- f. Industrial Action:** while the legal route to industrial action has been used effectively during the pandemic, so have more informal actions. Collective actions have to be suitable for the issue at hand, and timely.

All these phenomena show that trade unions are only effective and sustainable if they are able to respond quickly and effectively to any developments. Trade unions must become enabling, not monolithic.

This conference instructs the TUCJCC to canvass the views of all Trades Councils on the good and bad examples of trade union action and organisation during the pandemic, and prepare a paper for the TUC General Council (to be presented before the end of 2021) drawing these lessons and recommendations together for organising in the "new normal" workplace post-covid.

**ii) Delegates** Sheila Caffrey (NEU) and Suzy Cheeke (UCU) unanimously elected as delegates.

**iii) Nomination for JCC** it was agreed by a majority to support Dave Chapple.

## **14/ MOTION**

### **UCU South West Regional Retired Members' Branch**

Bristol Trades Council:

- 1) congratulates Unite Community (Leeds and Wakefield) on their success in getting their local council to take action on this important issue.
- 2) agrees to write to Bristol City Council, urging it to institute an explicit campaign around pension credit as part of their Covid support strategy
- 3) encourages affiliate branches and their members to write to their local councillors, asking them to raise this issue with their local councils, based on the model council motion below.

#### ***Model Council Motion: Increasing Pension Credit Take-up***

##### ***This council notes:***

- 1. 1.3 million pensioner households are missing out on pension credit they are entitled to.*
- 2. £3 billion is returned to the treasury because pensioners do not claim the Pension Credit they are entitled to.*
- 3. Pension Credits are a lifesaver for the least well-off pensioners and provide vital help with council tax and dental bills*
- 4. Pensioners claiming Pension Credit they are also exempt from paying their TV licence.*
- 5. The government has ceased funding over 75's TV Licences. Since August 2020 the BBC is now charging over 75's for their licence.*
- 6. For over a million of the oldest people in our country, television is their main form of company.*
- 7. This change will harm millions of older people who rely on their TV and the most vulnerable will be forced to cut back on essentials to make ends meet, or lose out on TV altogether.*
- 8. Removing older people's access to TV would be an unthinkable cruel blow when many are already facing huge challenges.*
- 9. Half of all over 75s are living with a disability, and many rely on their TV for companionship and entertainment and for those who don't have the internet, TV lets them stay up to date with what's happening in the world.*
- 10. Loneliness is already a problem in the UK – two thirds of people rely on the TV for company in lieu of real social interactions.*
- 11. Removing the free TV licence for Over 75s in the middle of a pandemic is particularly cruel. Many older people have been left isolated and frightened by lockdown and it is vital that they have access to the news and public health announcements*

##### ***This council resolves to:***

- 1. Start a local public information campaign targeting retired residents of this council to encourage them to claim Pension Credit.*
- 2. To highlight this issue as part of the strategy to support residents during the pandemic.*

Mover: UCU South West Regional Retired Members' Branch – delegate Barbara Segal. Seconded by Pete Bright unanimously agreed.

**15/ AOB**

NSSN SW Conference 7<sup>th</sup> March

Being no further business meeting closed at 2105 hrs.