

National Sector Conferences 2011

Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel

Contents of Agenda Book

1. Formal Agenda
2. Delegate List
3. Motions from National Industrial Sector Committee and Regional Industrial Sector Committee
4. Report of the National Officer
5. Report of the 2009 National Industrial Sector Conference
6. Standing Orders for the National Industrial Sector Conferences 2011

VBA National Industrial Sector Conference
Metropole Hotel, Brighton, 29TH November 2011

AGENDA

Plenary session.

This will take place in the Oxford Suite, Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel at 9am and will be chaired by Tony Woodhouse Chair Unite Executive Council. The business for this session will include:

1. General Secretary's Report
2. Assistant General Secretary's Report
3. Contributions on organising and from the mothers of the Miami 5
4. Nominations for the SOC for the 2013 National Industry Sector Conference will also be taken at this session.

Following the plenary session each conference will adjourn to its own room and follow the agenda set out below:

VBA National Industrial Sector Conference

Dukes Suite

This conference will be Chaired by the VBA NISC Chair Bro. John Cooper

5. Chairman's opening remarks
6. Apologies
7. National Officer Report
8. 100% / Strategy for Growth
9. Guest Speakers, accompanied by Unite's International Department
Columbian Trade Unionist-Rosaiba Gaviria
Venezuelan Trade Unionist
Wolf Jaecklein – EMF Automotive Committee
Others to be determined / Time Permitting
10. Consideration of Sector Motions
11. Elections
 - Unite delegation to the 2012 TUC (Brighton)
 - Unite Delegation to 2013 TUC

The exact order of business may be amended at the discretion of the Chair to accommodate guest speakers.

Delegate List

REGION	FORENAME	SURNAME	Delegate no.
East Midlands	Trish	Ford	1
East Midlands	Pete	Tsouvallaris	2
Ireland	Jim	Wright	3
London & Eastern	Paul	Geary	4
London & Eastern	Pritam	Gill	5
London & Eastern	Leslie	McDonald	6
London & Eastern	Michael	McManus	7
London & Eastern	Mushtaque	Parkar	8
London & Eastern	Gary	Reay	9
London & Eastern	Trevor	Tansley	10
London & Eastern	Kevin	Walsh	11
NEY&H	Simon	Bell	12
NEY&H	David	Connolley	13
NEY&H	Duncan	McGregor	14
North West	Dave	Alty	15
North West	Morrison	Anne	16
North West	John	Cooper	17
North West	John	Flynn	18
North West	Regan	James	19
North West	Goodwin	James	20
North West	Whiteley	Ken	21
North West	Pearson	Kevin	22
North West	Davis	Stuart	23
North West	Graham	Weaver	24
Scotland	John	Peat	25
South East	Andy	Cox	26
South East	David	Elson	27
South East	Norman	Gough	28
South East	Cee Jay	Jackson	29
South East	Steve	Sargeant	30
South West	Paddy	Brennan	31
South West	John	Ellis	32
Wales	Wenna	Ellis	33
Wales	Edward	Evans	34
Wales	Philip	Jenkins	35
Wales	Mike	Nelson	36
West Midlands	John	Anderton	37
West Midlands	Thomas	Boyle	38
West Midlands	Terry	Firzgerald	39
West Midlands	Larry	Gaffney	40
West Midlands	Martin	Hartnett	41
West Midlands	Kevin	Jones	42

West Midlands	Michael	Livingstone	43
West Midlands	David	Rosten	44
West Midlands	Stanley	Ruddock	45
West Midlands	Maggie	Ryan	46
West Midlands	Martin	Stribbling	47
West Midlands	Mark	Szokalo	48

NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL SECTOR CONFERENCE 2011

VEHICLE BUILDING AND AUTOMOTIVE

SECTOR MOTIONS

1 Agency Workers Directive

This conferenceCalls on Government to ensure that the Agency Workers Directive introduced by the previous Government is implemented in full.

Moved by: Chris Bond
Seconded by: Tom Boyle
National Industrial Sector Committee

2 Support for UK Manufacturing

This conference calls on Government to support UK Manufacturing by ensuring the social impact of any government contract be given due consideration before any contract is signed.

Moved by: Les McDonald
Seconded by: Gary Reay
National Industrial Sector Committee

3 Procurement- Strategy for UK Manufacturing.

This Conference calls on UNITE to campaign for a clear Manufacturing Strategy for the UK. We call for a level playing field with our European Trading partners enabling fairer competition that underpins UK Manufacturing
This conference also calls for a government Procurement Strategy that supports UK Manufacturing and strengthens Job creation and a build for Britain policy that avoids contracts like Bombardier going abroad.

Moved by: Kevin Walsh
Seconded by: Paul Geary
London and Eastern

4 Procurement

This conference urges the Government to assist with the Vehicle Building & Supporting Industries by means of procurement.

We appeal that strategies and policies are put into place to insist that all vehicles used by Government and Local Government Organisations are to purchase vehicles manufactured in the UK and Ireland.

Moved by: D Connolly

Seconded by: S Bell

North East, Yorkshire and Humberside

5 Manufacturing and Employment

This VBA and Automotive Sector Conference, opposes the run-down of Manufacturing jobs within the UK and calls for government measures to:

1. Control the export of capital for investment abroad.
2. Halt the export of manufacturing jobs by introducing tariffs on imports in these sectors.
3. Control the Bank of England and ensure that in the future interest rates are set to benefit manufacturing rather than the banks.
4. Create green manufacturing jobs (eg electric cars) both through state controlled banks and through government investment by taking equity (ie. shares) with full voting rights in firms given any kind of financial assistance.
5. Support manufacturing in Britain, even when this may conflict with EU directives.

Moved by: Graham Weaver

Seconded by: Ann Morrison

North West

6 Procurement

This conference calls on the government and councils to invest in the UK car industry by adopting a policy of only purchasing UK manufactured vehicles including heavy trucks. Also researched and built, low carbon vehicles where there are clear emission gains thereby ensuring a market for the production of such vehicles in the UK and assisting in the green jobs agenda.

Moved by: Stuart Davis

Seconded by: Dave Alty

North West

7 Support for the UK Automotive Industry and National Economic Growth

This conference calls for Government support and stimulation in to the Automotive industry and greater UK economy by logical and strategically thought through decisions to create growth, greater job security and avoid a possible double dip recession by the following steps;

1) Resurrection of the successful Scrappage Scheme

The previous Scrappage scheme was good for the many thousands of people involved across the automotive industry from Component Supply to Dealerships, Manufacturers to Vehicle Transporters, not to mention the finance sector, the greater economy and even the Environment. Such a scheme would no doubt once again prove a stimulus to the economy in general.

2) A Temporary Reduction in VAT

The last time this was done also so an increase in retail sales across the economy and would no doubt have benefits to areas of the Automotive Sector that would not be greatly effected by the Scrappage scheme and once again would be a shot in the arm to improve the economy as a whole improve confidence and create spending and growth.

3) A UK Biased Public Procurement Policy

When we see UK Manufacturers like Jaguar winning accolades such as car of the decade for it's XF, how can Police forces across the nation argue the case for BMW's as an example of what is wrong with the present Government policy, a policy that has the National Interest as a whole at the heart of it rather than the shambolic decision that was taken at Bombardier, saving pennies in cost and costing pounds in unemployment Benefits, is what is required and what other EU Governments do to protect jobs and stimulate growth.

These steps will stimulate our industry and our economy at a time when confidence is weak and growth needed, we urge support both of this conference and the Union in lobbying politicians and arguing the case for growth.

Moved by: Tom Boyce
Seconded by:
West Midlands

8 Skills Shortage in Automotive Industry

This Conference calls on Unite the Union to increase its focus and campaign and lobby the Government to give young workers, the opportunity to gain skills in the manufacturing sector.

The current levels of unemployment in the 16-24 year bracket are now at 18.4%. We need to invest in apprenticeships and skills to sustain and promote vehicle manufacturing in the UK

Moved by: Paul Geary
Seconded by: Kevin Walsh
London and Eastern

9 Disability Discrimination

Under the equality act 2010, the British government committed to outlawing discrimination against people with disabilities in the provision of goods, facilities and services. Within this area we have the access or possible lack of access to public transport, it is the aim of this motion to raise the awareness of buses which are not yet adapted /modified to allow access to wheelchair users.

To comply with the public service accessibility regulations (2000), all single deck buses will have to be accessible by 2016 and double deck by 2017, as wheelchair users will only be using the lower deck anyhow, I fail to see why a difference is being made in the two vehicles. For the first time, our nations capital will play host to the much publicised, much respected Paralympic games 2012 running from the 29th August - 9th September. Keeping in mind the nature of the games, it can be assumed that there will be a significant percentage of the nations 750,000 wheel chair users descending upon the capital as spectators. It could only be described as unfair then that these people will not be afforded the same priviledge as the spectators attending the Olympic games the previous month. With the eyes of the world focussed on the UK throughout this great sporting event, we would be doing ourselves a disservice to prove incapable at providing public transport to the less fortunate among us. I call on the conference to lobby our transport minister in trying to have him expediate these regulations and see results sooner rather than later, given the timeframe before the games. It is one thing to commit to the capital having access but the spectators have to travel from their homes to reach the event so it makes sense that this issue is recognised and addressed as a national problem as opposed to localised.

Moved by: Jim Wright
Seconded by:
Ireland

10 Rural Transport

This conference

Calls on the Executive Council to form a policy on Rural Transport for the U.K. and Ireland. For too long transport providers have taken every opportunity to either reduce or cancel the rural service all together. Providers have sighted the cost and harm to the environment as a reason for this withdrawal. This practice has seen the loss of community contact and the further isolation of those who live in rural communities. We further call on the Executive Council to ensure that public transport providers are made aware of the procurement of Maxi and Midi buses which are more fuel efficient and built by Unite members. By placing orders within the U.K. and N.Ireland companies they will not only revamp the rural network but also help to secure the jobs of our members.

Moved by: Jim Wright

Seconded by:

Ireland

11 Facility Time

This conference notes the increasing attacks on trade union facility time in the VBA sector. This severely impacts our ability to protect members' jobs and their terms and conditions. We therefore call on Unite to implement the following steps:

1. Full protection of any rep who is victimised because of trade Union activity.
2. Policy and legal guidance on facility time and how to maintain it.
3. Full support from the Unite National Union
4. Co-ordinated response where appropriate
5. Political response via the Unite parliamentary group

Moved by: David Elson

Seconded by: Norman Gough

South East

12 The EU/ India Free Trade Agreement is all about social dumping and its secretive part relates to Mode 4

This conference calls for the Policy Conference to support the following:-

The World Trade Organisation categorises Mode 4 as workers who are moved from one country to another as “service suppliers”.

The main features of Mode 4 are: transitional companies have the power to bring into Britain cheap labour from outside the EU to work for extremely low wages; these workers will not be classed as immigrants and the company they work for will hold their visas, which effectively makes them bonded workers. Furthermore, Mode 4 allows the corporate right to replace existing workers with cheap temporary labour with no limits on numbers.

This will result in existing workers being sacked, loss of their spending power through loss of earnings and more state expenditure on unemployment pay increasing the nation’s debt. It also means no training and jobs for young people.

Moved by: Maggie Ryan
Seconded by:
West Midlands

Dear Comrades,

The past two years have been a remarkable journey for the Motor industry in the UK. The global economic downturn and deep recession affected the sector badly and as the global economy starts to recover, albeit slowly, the UK Motor industry is now in an excellent position to take advantage of the recovery. However, I would like to take a moment to mention the recession and the way members in Unite worked hard to try and stop plant closures and retain vital skills were not lost to the sector.

You all know the industry was under severe strain during the recession and the implementation of the Auto Assistance programme (AAP) by the last government meant strategic policies such as the scrappage scheme, a £2.3 billion investment programme for the sector and the investment of £400 million¹ to support the shift to low carbon production methods helped the sector to come through the worst of the recession. However, we should not forget the part our members played by agreeing pay freezes, shift changes and ground breaking banking of hours arrangements, unfortunately this came to late for many component firms who either closed or laid employees of without pay.

It is widely known that the Motor sector in the UK is of crucial importance to the wider manufacturing sector but it is also vital to the economy of the UK through the high level of exported vehicles and its contribution to annual GDP – if only past and present governments would recognise this fact! The motor vehicle industry, that the component company's play a full role, exported 75% of all vehicles produced in 2010² and exported to over 100 countries worldwide.

The motor component sector produces tens of millions of parts to the 1 million cars and commercial vehicles sold over the past year as well as being major suppliers to the UK Plants that produce over 2 million engines annually, with a turnover of £39.8 billion in 2009³.

The announcement that Jaguar/LandRover is to open its own engine facility in Wolverhampton is also great news for the supply chain along with 700 new jobs in the West

¹ www.bis.gov.uk

² SMMT – Motor Industry Facts 2011.

³ *ibid*

Midlands this will create thousands of jobs in the UK component sector over the next 2 years.

For companies such as Ford, Nissan and Toyota, the shift to R&D, innovation and production of electric cars and batteries has offered opportunities for growth which could not have been seen even 5 years ago. I strongly believe this is the time for the motor component sector in the UK to flourish and grow again. After the lean hard years of the recession the UK Motor industry is now seen as the place for investment. The sector has without a doubt transformed itself and again it's the workers, our members, who deserve the credit for this transformation.

Vauxhall Motors at Ellesmere Port are leading a group of OEMs in a strategic national campaign to bring component work back to the UK, after years of cost downs which forced company's to transfer work to the Far East in search of cheap labour. The earthquake in Japan brought home the real issue of transporting supply parts thousands of miles to be assembled in the UK. A number of OEM's were only days from announcing stand downs because of a shortage of parts, while both Nissan and Honda experienced lay offs due to the shortage of parts from Japan. Unite is fully behind this campaign and believes it is a very important opportunity for the components sector to grow in the UK.

The motor components sector is crucial to the growth and viability of the Motor industry in the UK; around 2,350 UK companies regard themselves as supplying the Motor industry in the UK and employ around 82,000 people.

The sector has a positive opportunity for growth over the next 5 – 10 years and this opportunity must not be missed in terms of recruitment and organising.

Although we have seen inflation busting pay rises in the OEM's the component industry will again suffer the high inflation this Government see's as a price worth paying, 5.6% at the time of writing this report. We therefore have to be mindful of company's taking advantage yet again and do all we can during pay negotiations to ensure our members are not short changed

I believe that what we all have to do now is make sure the sector remains focussed and we ensure this government does nothing to jeopardise any future investment into the sector.

We have to be aware that the Motor industry in the UK is owned by multi-national companies, owning and operating facilities world-wide and that they have no loyalty to UK based component firms

This situation has benefits and disadvantages for UK workers. On the one hand the unprecedented inward investment into the industry means there is substantial growth, On the other hand, we must recognise that multi-nationals are always looking at the bottom line and cutting costs with year on year cost downs written into contracts. The UK has one of the best and most flexible workforces in Europe unfortunately we also worst employment protection making it easier, quicker and cheaper to close sites in the UK and transfer our work abroad. We have spoken many times about UK legislation changes to safeguard our jobs, this fell on deaf ears during 13 years of Labour so it's not going to change now.

As a sector we will continue the fight in Europe for a level playing field and Unite has also remained solidly behind its campaign to highlight and change the currently disastrous situation regarding the procurement of vehicles for government, the civil service and local authorities. Nowhere else in Europe would a situation be tolerated where there was no guidance from government about buying locally, lets be clear about this, neither the last Labour Government nor it seems this one fully understands the powerful tool for economic growth and opportunities for re-balancing the economy the procurement process offers. The constant mumbling about it breaching EU Procurement rules is a total nonsense! ever seen a police car in France that isn't French built or German ambulance that's not got a German badge on it? No I didn't think so! there can be no more hiding heads in the sand the UK government should be prepared to ensure their manufacturing industry gets a fair chance at bidding for procurement contracts, we need the full social impact taken into account including the percentage of UK built parts fitted to vehicles and not just where the vehicle is made taken into account when awarding these multi-million pound contracts, rather than just look to see who's the cheapest - **we don't want favours we want fairness!**

Although not a Motor Component issue as you know the industry is split between myself and Roger Maddison and for my sins I have been given responsibility for Honda, I say for my sins because of all the anti-trade union companies I have ever dealt with Honda are the worst, you are all aware of the disgraceful way Honda has treated Paddy Brennan, our site convenor at the Swindon plant, and as we take a moment to reiterate our support and

solidarity for Paddy we should remember that this fight for Paddy is a fight for all convenors in all workplaces, a union is only as strong as its shop stewards, this sort of discrimination has in many companies been assigned to the history books decades ago, but at Honda its here, right now, our fight for Paddy is a fight for survival, I am pleased to report that the General Secretary has personally been involved in the negotiations with Honda UK and that Unite has made contact with the partner union in Japan and the IMF to seek support for the campaign and to work collectively for a positive resolution.

I would also like to mention the programme of work we have undertaken by our designated researcher Janet Golds, after discussions with members of the Motor Components and VBA NISC's Janet produced a Charter which outlines the member's aims for the future of the sector. Janet is also in the process of producing a policy document for the sector. Again outlining what the members see as the future of the sector, what they want for the sector and most importantly the document will give everyone the opportunity to see what Unite is doing within the sector and the vital role our members play within the industry.

We are currently running 100% campaigns in a number of key companies with the national campaign focussed on Delphi and Bentley. We also have a number of officers running excellent local campaigns across all regions.

Comrades, yesterday we all had the opportunity to show our support for the public service workers who are bearing the brunt of this 'Thatcherite' Governments attack on the working classes, this attack on the very social fabric of society effects everyone, whether you have children at school, use the NHS, rely on your local council for amenities or the Police to protect you, we will all suffer in order to protect the obscene pay rewards given to those who have failed not just the financial world but all those in it, not happy with this, this right wing millionaire club has offered private companies the opportunity to attack their employees pensions by offering advice that CPI would be a better way of calculating increases to pensions rather than the more traditional and fairer RPI

Comrades, I would like to finish by saying that I have so far enjoyed my role of National Officer for the motor component sector and I would like to thank everyone for their help, support and guidance over this past 6 months since returning from Europe, and look forward to a successful future.

Roger Maddison

National Officer

Joint-General Secretary's Report

I. Winning the Battles that Face Us

Good morning. Colleagues, this is a day that I have been looking forward to for a long time when we bring together our industrial strength in the sector conferences. What is so vital about sector conferences is it gives you the individual right within your sector to determine your policies. It is not going to be determined by anyone else. It will be determined by you. There is no other lay democratic process anywhere at all than what you are doing now, and you are doing it within the bounds of Unite. And why? Because as individual sectors, we would not have the strength to win the battles that face us.

We knew this when we first discussed bringing together Amicus with four recently merged unions, and Tony with the T&G bringing those together. This is the only merger in the history of the movement that I can recall, that is not based on the fact that one or other partner were a lame duck; financially or in membership difficulties. It has been brought together for a strategic reason. There is an obvious reason: strength in the workplace, strength in your workplaces. We could spend our time fighting together instead of fighting each other: who is going to get the membership? Who is going to get the single union agreement? We do not have to worry about that now.

There are still some areas where old histories will take a while to die away, but we can spend the time much more productively fighting on behalf of all our members to improve terms and conditions and build our membership through organising, through the 100% Campaign and trying to stem the decline in union membership due to the economic problems that we currently exist in. That is great and that is wonderful, and that alone would be worth doing. But if that is all we did – if that was the limit of it – then it is all about winning in the workplace. Under the present set-up, we will ultimately lose a much bigger and greater battle.

We will fight to try and repeal the anti-union laws. We will fight to try and allow solidarity actions which are illegal under those anti-union laws. We will support our colleagues who, for example, if you recall the refinery workers and the construction workers challenged by the law because of solidarity action. We did not get the law used against us, maybe because we have a Labour government. Maybe they held back because they did not want to expose an open sewer. But, sooner or later, unless we change the law we will not be able to have that solidarity action win it back.

II. Changing Politics

So, there is a greater battle to fight than the next wage claim, or regrettably, the fight to protect jobs as people are threatened with redundancy. That greater fight is one of the three reasons why we merged T&G and Amicus together. It is to change politics. Tony referred to it: we want people in Parliament that represent us. I do not want people in Parliament representing us; I want us in Parliament representing us.

I go around on regional tours and I say to people, 'Why? Why aren't people in this room MPs? Why not?' Many of us do not believe we have it in us. Somehow or other we believe

it is something special to be a MP. Crikey, if you look at some of them you cannot believe that for much longer, can you? We need people in Parliament that represent us. Back to the traditional roots of the party we created. The Labour Party did not create the trade union movement; it was the other way around. We created the Labour Party and it is time – long past time in fact – that it was back to that tradition and back to representing our interests. We would not be low in the polls. We would not be as concerned, disillusioned, or disappointed if we had a party that was our party. It is time to take it back and we need a big, strong union to do it. That is us. There is not another union that can do it. There is not another union with the breadth and strength to do it. Quite frankly, I wonder if there is any other union with the intelligence to do it.

Let us look at some of them. Our friends in the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) Union. One of our National Officers told me that in the transport sector, in real terms, there is something like 60% unorganised, so what is the RMT's answer to recruiting their 60%? They go down to Heathrow and pinch our taxi drivers. They go into the old North Sea and to the oil rigs to do that. It is time they got on the bloody railways and organise them; an indication that a single specialised union cannot survive. We cannot survive unless we have this kind of a conference because everybody in a big, powerful union will say, 'This union does not represent me'. You will have unions saying, 'Join us because your union is too big and broad and they are not interested in you'. Well, this is the answer. The sectors give you the right to determine your own policy, but within a union big enough to make a difference. Let us assume for example, we change the law, we win Parliament, we win the Labour Party back and we get shot of the anti-union laws. There is a bigger battle still to fight, and what is tragic about it is that most people do not actually know it because we are concerned about today's problems.

We have just applauded two good colleagues, John and David from Canada. Vale Inco, a Brazilian company intent on world domination. They want to buy up all the mineral resources so that one company can control almost life itself; become so powerful it can dictate to governments. They are in a four month strike because they are up against a powerful conglomerate. We referred the crisis of capitalism. Do not believe for one minute that that crisis of capitalism was a crisis of the capitalists. They are still there, they are still powerful, they control fortunes, they dictate to governments. It is fairy stories, you know, the faceless ones, you do not see them. Not the G8, not the G20, the faceless ones; the ones that can pull strings, bring governments down, start wars, stop wars, create crises in energy, and move petrol prices around so that the rest of us suffer as a consequence. Those people are still there and they operate on a global scale. How do we as working people expect to contend when they are more powerful than the government that we could create?

III. Our Challenge

We have to have a plan. We have to have a plan that builds an international union strong enough to take on the strongest of the conglomerates. A union that anyone who works anywhere in the world for any particular company can join. A union that can, for example, bridge the dilemma that we just experienced at General Motors; where the Germans tried to screw everybody else with that Magna contract. Until the intervention of ourselves, and particularly Tony, which got our government galvanised, and they think those in Germany who scuppered the deal, and Tony is very popular in Germany now apparently. When we have got back to GM, what were the Germans saying? 'Ah, you will be all right in Britain but in a few months you won't be'. There is still that competition, and that is what happens in global federations, quite frankly. We all sit around and have great ideas and then we all go

back and look after our own backyards; a bit like we could be if we are not careful. We sit around and talk about our policies and then go back to our own backyards. It is time to think outside the box. It is time not just to think about how we win terms and conditions or even how we change the laws to make it easier for us to win terms and conditions. It is about how we are going to survive in the future if we do not have a union capable of fighting on the international front, that can stand solidly with Vale Inco colleagues because we have plants over here that belong to that conglomerate. We should be in a position to fight across the board.

That is the challenge, so why did we come together? Because you cannot build an international union if you cannot build a UK union, or a German union, or an Australian union, or an American union. That is why we stand in with the United Steelworkers (USW) and with Workers United. It is a beginning perhaps, but hopefully a successful beginning that will go on to build that international union.

IV. Conclusion

Colleagues, when we talk about building a union where there is no place for fear, fear this: unless we change politics and ultimately build an international union we need to be very afraid. That is the task and only this union can do it in this country; no other union can. That is the challenge to you. I am delighted, absolutely delighted, that we have been brought together in this way. Whatever we do in the future, whoever we elect as General Secretary, and whoever we elect as our Executive, needs to keep one thing clearly in mind: strong workplaces are no better than shuffling deck chairs on the Titanic if we do not have a political and international strategy. If some colleagues, and I have read some of them, now change their leaflets to reflect that they will get my support. Thanks.

Apologies, Introductions and National Officers welcome – Dave Osborne, National Officer

Apologies were given on behalf of

John Anderton, – Aston Martin
Chris Bond, South East, BMW
Dave Cribben, South East – BMW Services
John Fetherston, North West – Vauxhall
Norman Gough, South East – BMW
Lauren Waite, London & Eastern – Ford Motor Company
Paul Wallage, East Midlands – Ford
Dave Wilkinson, West Midlands – Land Rover

National Report – Dave Osborne, National Officer.

Colleagues,

About 18 months ago, as the T&G National Secretary, I accepted an invitation to address the then Amicus Section, Motor Vehicles Conference, here in Brighton.

I remember talking about the challenging times we faced. I can say, without equivocation that the 18 months that have passed since then, have been the most challenging I can recall for our union, our activists and our members.

The collapse of the financial sector, which created the recession, came quickly. It was a global crisis of unprecedented proportions, and nothing could have prepared us for the turmoil we have seen in our industry.

Whilst greed, incompetence and failure have been rewarded to the banks, our members have been struggling to survive. At best, our members have had to contend with widespread layoffs, downtime and significantly reduced earnings through shift changes. At worst many have paid the ultimate sacrifice by losing their jobs.

The banks have failed us not once, but twice, for whilst they have received grotesque amounts of public money - our money, they have ensured credit and finance has dried up, piling even more misery onto our companies and our members.

It is worth reflecting for just a moment the chaos our industry has been facing as a result:-

- Toyota, the largest and most efficient car company in the world recorded the first loss in its 70-year history.
- Jaguar/Land Rover went from forecasting record profits in excess of \$1bn in mid 2008, to fighting for its very survival.
- GM and Chrysler entered chapter 11 in the U.S. and had to be bailed out by U.S. taxpayers.
- Vauxhall and Opel (GM Europe) was put up for sale.
- Additionally, we faced unprecedented periods of lay offs and shut downs, notwithstanding the pay freezes and other concessions we negotiated, (quite rightly), in order to protect security of employment on behalf of our members and their families.

Automotive markets have collapsed around the world. The major markets of North America and Europe have been hit hard. In the US, sales fell by about 30%. In Europe, even with widespread government initiatives, such as the scrappage schemes, the market has fallen by 6.6%. Here at home, car sales have fallen by 12.3% so far this year compared to 2008. Commercial vehicles have been even worse hit – down 35% year to date, and by a staggering 90% in the first quarter of the year – reflecting the very difficult trading environment for businesses.

Whilst some employers have unscrupulously exploited the recession, we have worked successfully to find innovative ways of protecting our members' job security. We have won the argument to protect skills, so that UK jobs are not lost forever.

We can turn to a series of achievements:

- A successful March for Jobs in May with over 7,000 people supporting our campaign.
- We gave evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee and called for a series of initiatives to support the industry including a short time working subsidy.
- We continued to campaign for UK procurement amongst our public services and bodies.
- We called for the introduction of the car scrappage scheme along with SMMT and worked with other stakeholders calling for government intervention.
- We campaigned for more money for skills development and more money has been announced for apprentices, as well as R&D grants.
- In Vauxhall, which has been at the forefront of extreme uncertainty, we have secured an agreement which will protect 5,000 of our members well into the future. Without question, our determination to succeed, in the face of hostile opposition from so-called trade union brothers and sisters in Europe, has ultimately secured an agreement that enables our members to face the future with confidence.

I would now like to comment on the future and the opportunities that present themselves. However, it would have been inappropriate to ignore the scale and change that has confronted us. We have to understand the reasons as to where we are, in order face up to future challenges.

In a few minutes we will be debating some of the very vital issues that matter. I can tell you now that major companies are forecasting significant production cuts when the car scrappage schemes end. The European market for example, is predicted to fall by 1.5m units next year.

So what of the future?

First, it is pleasing to report that the government in recognising the crucial importance of the automotive sector has established a UK Automotive Council and our union has been invited to participate. This will provide us with the opportunity to help debate and fashion measures for the UK business environment and to strengthen the supply chain.

In the years to come, the industry will transform design production processes in a low carbon era. We must strengthen our campaigning work to ensure the UK becomes a centre for the production of low carbon vehicles.

Global platforms for both vehicle and engines will intensify competition. We need to ensure the UK retains the skills to design and manufacture across the range, so that our plants are able to compete.

We have to maximise public procurement of UK built vehicles and maximise export opportunities.

Our new union affords us the opportunity to create a trade union automotive forum bringing together senior convenors and activists to discuss strategy and decide on matters of common interest.

We have to develop organising initiatives and campaigns to build on our collective strengths.

Colleagues, in conclusion, I want to say this. By the time we hold our next conference, we will we have had a general election.

I sincerely hope we are not faced again with the 1980s – legislation to make it difficult for us to represent our members – manufacturing industry devastated – mass unemployment to drive down terms and conditions of employment. That and much worse was the legacy of the Tories.

Whilst we have had our difficulties and disagreements with this government – do you really believe the Tories and David Cameron are the answer? It is in our and our members interests to retain a labour government.

We face some very difficult challenges – of that there is no doubt. I am convinced that if we focus on the issues with the support of activists like your good selves, we can continue to be influential inside the outside the workplace, delivering real and long term prosperity to our members and their families.

Thank you for listening and have a good conference.

Composites and withdrawal of motions recommended by the Standing Orders Committee.

The following composites were agreed by the delegates:

- Motions 1,2, 3, and 4 be withdrawn in favour of composite 1.

Mover: Laurie Evans

Seconded: Gary Reay

CARRIED

The Chairman announced that Motions 11 and 12 were to be referred to the National Sector committee meeting scheduled to be held in the New Year.

Consideration of Sector Motions.

1. AUTOMOTIVE FORUM

This Conference deplores the lack of cohesion in governmental approach to the UK Automotive Industry and calls for the setting up and support of an Automotive forum involving all relevant stakeholders including:-

- Government Ministers
- OEM Employers
- Component Suppliers
- Dealers
- Regional Development Agencies
- Trade Unions

This body should be given the terms of reference to give advise and form policy on a strategic development plan to support and develop the automotive sector stopping the decline and retrenchment of the industry to low cost economies, in particular aims should be to deliver a strategy to put the UK at the fore front of new and green technology.

Mover: Nick Chattaway

Seconded: Mark Szokalo

CARRIED

2. SHORTTIME WORKING

This Conference calls upon the Government to give like for like Layoff pay and benefits to our members in order to alleviate hardships during this economic downturn.

Mover: John Cooper

Seconded: George Taylor

CARRIED

3. DDA

We, the Vehicle Building & Automotive Regional Industrial Sector Committee Scotland call on the National Industrial Sector to support a campaign by the VBA Sector and Passenger Sector demanding that the UK Government endorse the 2012 legislation on DDA. This legislation will secure manufacturing jobs in the Bus Build Sector, ensure new vehicles that can adapt to the needs of disabled customers and protect the environment with the new low carbon engines and bio fuels.

Mover: John Peat
Seconded: Jim Wright

CARRIED

4. PUBLIC BUILDING AND AUTOMOTIVE

This conference pressure the Government to adhere to the timescales proposed in the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 and not to succumb to pressure from any company or group of companies to postpone this date.

Mover: Chris Whitehead
Seconded: Mark Szokalo

CARRIED

5. ADDRESSING LACK OF SKILLS IN THE MOTOR INDUSTRY

This Conference calls upon Unite to demand from our Government a rigid plan to start an apprenticeship scheme back into our manufacturing plants. This could be by ratio of employees, as an example, a company of 1000 employees taking on a minimum of four apprentices.

At a time with Car and Components companies facing declining books, they are laying off employees throughout the industry. The long term failure of this action is the terrible loss of individual skills within the industry that are lost forever. Recruiting apprentices will go a long way to re address the skills shortage.

At this moment in time the Government are trying to tackle the high unemployment figures to such an extent they are offering employer's Government assistance for taking on young people. This could be made compulsory but with assistance, which in the past has been a major stumbling block.

This motion demands our Union to remind our Government that not only are we losing car plants, but we are losing established skills for ever as well. This motion goes some way in re-addressing the long term decline in skills in our industry by re introducing young people to our workplaces and to gain the skill required.

Mover: Paul Geary
Seconded: Laurie Evans

CARRIED

At this juncture, debates on motions were suspended to enable guest speakers and international visitors to address conference.

JUSTICE FOR COLOMBIA (GUEST SPEAKER, MARTIN SANDOVAL)

Martin Sandoval, a human rights activist and regional leader of the Permanent Committee for Human Rights, the largest human rights group in Colombia spoke about the plight of Colombian activists in Colombia. He, Martin himself has spent the majority of his working life working to end the abuses against trade union members in Colombia which, he claims is the most dangerous country on earth in which to be a trade unionist. He has been fighting to bring those responsible for the attacks to justice.

In November 2008, as a result of this work, the Colombian regime jailed Martin Sandoval. He was never put to trial, never convicted of any crime, nor told when he might be released.

Shortly after his arrest, British trade unionists, including members of Unite, and Labour MPs, began campaigning for Martin to be freed. Letters were sent, meetings held with Colombian officials and a visit organised to Martin in prison in Colombia. In May this year, after six long months in jail, he was finally released – a clear example of international solidarity really making a difference.

Members asked how they could support Martin's cause and assist the Colombian activists.

A question and answer session followed and it was agreed that members should support the Justice for Colombia movement as much as possible. The Chairman thanked Mr Sandoval for coming to share his story.

UNITED STEEL WORKERS (USA)

(GUEST SPEAKERS – JON GEENAN – USW VICE-PRESIDENT AND JOE GUIDO)

Delegates received a presentation from Messrs Geenan and Joe Guido about the work that Workers Uniting is doing in North America especially the assistance that it offers to the Vale Inco miners on strike. The Workers Uniting Group is a broad based left-progressive organisation within Unite the Union.

Over 3000 USW members (now part of Workers Uniting) are currently engaged in a protracted strike in Canada. They are defending their pensions and other benefits against an attack by the greedy Brazilian owned multinational that owns the mine they work in.

It's the biggest and most profitable nickel mine in the world, but the employer wants to impose third world wages and conditions on their entire workforce. Vale workers in Brazil are supporting the action because they know unless the best organised remain strong they will have no chance of achieving the improvements on wages and pensions they hope for in their country.

Joe Guido has been a steel worker with Vale Inco for 30 years. He and his fellow strikers in Vale Inco were fight for the safeguard of their bonuses, pensions and other benefits which were secretly agreed by the company and the Canadian Government.

Mr Geenan spoke about the healthcare system in the United States and hoped that with the help of international co-operation, USW would be able to work towards improving healthcare conditions for workers in the United States.

They were both grateful for international co-operation, especially that of Unite and the assistance they have received to encourage them to continue in their fight for better conditions for workers.

The Vale Inco miners have been on strike for about five months now and delegates generously donated cash to assist the miners with their cause.

INTERNATIONAL METALWORKERS FEDERATION (GUEST SPEAKER - ROB JOHNSON)

The Conference welcomed Mr Rob Johnson of the IMF. Brother Johnson reported to conference the problems global multinational companies were facing as a result of the economic downturn. He was duly thanked for his contribution and the Chairman presented Mr Johnson with a gift on behalf of the union.

At this point, conference returned to the agenda to debate motions.

5. Composite Motion 1 – PROCUREMENT, GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR THE BRITISH AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR AND THE EXTENSION OF THE CAR SCRAPPAGE SCHEME.

We are all aware that the Industry is fighting for its future in this terrible recession, whether it is a car plant or van plant. We are seeing our orders halved, schedules dropped and the consequence are that shifts are being lost and a large amount of skilled people are leaving the industry.

The Government has signed up to a scrappage scheme, which has been very successful in kick starting new sales and has been a good incentive to our industry.

Conference calls on the Government and the industry to extend the scheme and welcomes the performance improvement in CO₂ emissions as a result of the scheme.

Conference calls upon the Government to give financial assistance where an OEM or component supplier is experiencing financial difficulties in maintaining its presence in the UK with the consequent effect of putting our member's jobs and livelihoods at risk not only in this sector but right across the board.

With the current global decline in demand for the products within our industry and the adverse effect it has had on our members who work within the Automotive Sector, including redundancies, short working weeks, lay-offs and pay cuts. It is crucial to maximise the productivity of British built vehicles for the survival and prosperity of our industry within the UK.

We have highly skilled and flexible workers within our sector and any further decline for our goods will diminish that skill and put these members on the ever increasing unemployment

figures. This will not only destroy the UK Automotive Industry but will add further burden to the Treasury and the recovery from the worse recession most of us have seen.

The Government could do and has to do more. One of the main initiatives should be Procurement. If you visit France or Germany, all state vehicles are from that country. But unfortunately that this is not the case in the UK, where we have councils and government agencies using non British built cars and vans.

It was not long ago where we had a Welsh police force buying Mercedes Van and Cars therefore not supporting the Ford engine plant in Bridgend. This practice must stop and they should be encouraged by our Government to support British Vans and Cars.

This motion calls upon Unite to address their MP's to contact all Government ministers and ask them their respective authorities whether it is the Police, Army, Health, Government cars the following question:-

Why do these authorities continue and purchase non-British Cars and Vans? And get the reason why they do. Is it a case of poor delivery times, cost, poor quality and poor dealership? The Industry could then valuate the response and hope to improve the current situation.

It is no good to dictate and shout from the rooftops, to these groups they should buy British; it has not worked in the past and will not change the situation. We need to know why they are not and these results will go some way in changing the situation.

If we can change attitude and procurement this will have a positive effect on our industry up and down the country.

Mover: Laurie Evans
Seconded: Gary Reay
CARRIED

6. NEW RECOGNITION AGREEMENT FOR HONDA

In December 2001 the workers at Honda in Swindon secured union recognition via an overwhelming ballot vote organised through the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC). Due to the intransigence of the Honda management it took a further twelve months to reach an agreement on a detailed Recognition Agreement and this on the insistence of Honda contained a "no strike" clause; inadequate facilities for the union shop stewards to operate effectively and many other "restraining clauses."

Over the past seven years Honda have used the union's lack of any real union "leverage" to their advantage in forcing their will on the workforce notwithstanding this the Unite negotiators have done well to secure pay settlements and other agreements, which have compared favourably with the rest of the automotive industry.

However, the inability for the workers at Honda to express their dissatisfaction with Honda dictats through a legitimate independently conducted industrial action ballot has repeatedly resulted in Honda management using their “power” against the best interests of the workforce.

This Conference therefore calls on the Unite EC to lead a campaign to change the existing recognition agreement at Honda of the UK Manufacturing Ltd. in Swindon to one that redresses the balance of power.

Mover: Patrick Brennan (delegate 33)
Seconded: John Ellis (delegate 34)

CARRIED

7. ELECTIONS

Unite delegation to the 2010 TUC (13th – 16th September in Manchester)

Andy Cox and Julie Soule were elected

Unite delegation to the 2011 TUC (Brighton) – two to be elected.

Paul Geary and Maggie Ryan) were elected.

Substitute delegates to TUC 2010/11

2010 David Elson

2011 Philip Jenkins

8. CLOSING REMARKS

In his closing remarks, the National Officer, Dave Osborne informed Conference that this was a historic moment for the sector, as well as for Unite and its members. He reminded delegates that the future would be very challenging for us as we strive to enhance the terms and conditions of employment and job security for our members.

He thanked Brother Cooper for the professional way he had chaired the Conference, his Secretary for taking the minutes and all delegates including those who had contributed to the debates. He wished delegates and their families a Merry Christmas and a more prosperous 2010. He also urged delegates to get involved actively in Justice for Colombia campaign and urged colleagues to raise the campaign in both workplaces and branches.

9. VOTE OF THANKS

The Chairman in thanking delegates for their participation advised that this was likely to be the National Officer's last Conference. On behalf of the delegates, the Chairman thanked the National Officer for his stewardship of the trade group both in the ex-T&G section and as the National Officer of Unite. Delegates extended their thanks to Brother Osborne and wished him well for the future. He will be sorely missed.

The Chairman also thanked everyone who made a contribution, reminded them that the VBA sector was a truly global industry and it was important to build and strengthen our links with international colleagues and in closing the Conference urged colleagues to involve themselves in workplace and union activities in order to counter the worst excesses of global capitalism.

Standing Orders 2011

STANDING ORDERS – NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL SECTOR (NIS) CONFERENCES

1) Purpose

The National Industrial Sector Conference has the following purposes:

- 1.1 to set industrial policy for the Sector provided that it is not inconsistent with the general policy and objectives of the union.
- 1.2 to consider emergency motions, on matters that are in accordance with 1.1, that could not have been considered by a RISC, which should be submitted in writing to the General Secretary for the attention of the Standing Orders Committee.
- 1.3 to elect representatives to attend the annual TUC Congress
- 1.4 to elect the Standing Orders Committee for the following NIS Conference

2) Composition and Size of NIS Conference

- 2.1 NIS conferences will be comprised of one delegate per 1,000 paying members in the Sector (subject to a minimum of 30 delegates). Regional allocations will be based on paying membership in the region in the sector.

3) Delegates and attendees

- 3.1 The NIS Conference will be open to all accountable representatives of workers elected by Regional and/or National Industrial Sector Committees.
- 3.2 All delegates will be allocated a numbered seat and will retain that for the duration of conference.
- 3.3 Executive Council members, working in or representing the sector but not elected as delegates shall be invited to attend on an *ex officio* basis.

4) Chair

- 4.1 The Conference plenary shall be chaired by the Chair of the Executive Council.
- 4.2 The Sector Conference shall be chaired by the chair of the National Industrial Sector Committee.
- 4.3 The Chair shall only have an ordinary vote on all matters if elected as a delegate.
- 4.4 The Chair shall not have a casting vote.

5) Secretary

- 5.1 The National Official or other employee shall act as Secretary to the conference – advising the chair as appropriate and, assisted by a member of the Research Dept, recording decisions taken and the outcome of the elections.

6) Order of Business

- 6.1 The Order of Business for the Conference shall include:
 - 1. Plenary: General Secretary supported by the Assistant General Secretaries as appropriate
 - 2. Election of delegates to form the SOC for the following NIS Conference
 - 3. Political, international and other speakers
 - 4. National Officers' Introduction and Apologies
 - 5. National Officers Report including national strategy for the Sector
 - 6. Consideration of composites and motions approved by Standing Orders Committee.
 - 7. Election of delegates to the annual TUC Congress for the next two years

7) Conduct of elections

- 7.1.1 All nominees in conference elections shall be individually nominated and seconded. Nominees who do not attend may be elected provided they have given an appropriate apology reported by the National Officer and accepted by conference.
- 7.3.1 Votes shall be cast by a ballot vote or by show of hands from amongst those delegates present at the Conference.

- 7.3.2 Any dispute about the conduct of an election should be settled by the Chair. If it is not possible to settle any dispute at the Conference, then an appeal should in the first be lodged with the Standing Orders Committee which has overall responsibility for the conduct of the elections.
- 7.3.3 In the unlikely event that any such dispute cannot be settled, an appeal against the decision of the Chair can be forwarded to the General Secretary, who may delegate handling the appeal to an appropriate senior official.

8) Conduct of Business

- 8.1.1 The Chair shall be responsible for the conduct of the meeting. Delegates may only speak when called by the Chair. The Chair shall have discretion on whether to allow a delegate to speak more than once on a subject..
- 8.2 The mover of a motion shall be allowed five minutes and subsequent speakers three minutes each. No delegate shall be allowed to speak more than once on any motion except the mover who shall have the right of reply.
- 8.3 Next business, that the vote be taken or such other procedural motions may be moved and seconded by any delegate who has not previously spoken during the debate. There shall be no speeches on such motions.
- 8.4 Emergency motions shall be put if in writing to the General Secretary for the attention of the Standing Orders Committee. No such motion shall be deemed an 'emergency' that is connected with circumstances which could have been dealt with by conference/committee allowed to forward motions for the agenda.
- 8.5 The Chair shall have the same speaking rights as any other delegate. In addition, the Chair may intervene during or at the conclusion of any discussion, to clarify the issues decided and/or to sum up the discussion.
- 8.6 A delegate who wishes to raise a point of order (which must be confined to the manner in which the meeting is being conducted) should say "*point of order*" and hold his/her hand aloft until called by the Chair. Subject to that exception, delegates should not interrupt another speaker.
- 8.7 The ruling of the Chair on any question relating to the conduct of the meeting shall be final unless a challenge to the Chair is supported by at least two thirds of the delegates present..
- 8.8 Save as provided herein, the business of the Conference shall be conducted in accordance with the normal rules of debate as laid down by Walter Citrine in the ABC of Chairmanship.

8.9 In the event of an equality of votes, the proposition before the conference shall not be carried.

9) Smoking/Alcohol/mobile phones

9.1 There shall be no smoking or consumption of alcohol allowed at the Conference.

9.2 All mobile phones should be switched off at all times during conference.

Hilton Brighton Floor Plan

