

National Sector Conferences 2011

Construction

Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel

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**Construction
National Industrial Sector Conference
Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel**

A G E N D A

Plenary session.

This will take place in the Oxford Suite, Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel at 9 a.m. (see enclosed plan at back of agenda book) 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 from the mothers of the Miami 5.
4. Nominations for the SOC for the 2013 National Industrial 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:

**National Industrial Sector Conference
Balmoral Room, Hilton Brighton Metropole Hotel**

**The conference will be chaired by the
National Industrial Sector Committee Chair**

5. Apologies, Introductions and National Officers welcome
6. National Reports.
7. 100% Campaign
8. Consideration of Sector Motions
9. Guest Speakers – Professor Keith Ewing.
10. Elections
 - (a) Unite delegation to the 2012 TUC (Brighton)
 - (b) Unite delegation to the 2013 TUC

The exact order of business may be amended to accommodate guest speakers.

Delegate List 2011

REGION	FORENAME	SURNAME	Delegate no.
East Midlands	Bob	Baldwin	1
East Midlands	John	Hughes	2
London & Eastern	Kieran	Campbell	3
London & Eastern	William	Harvey	4
London & Eastern	Clinton	McCree	5
London & Eastern	Paul	Noakes	6
London & Eastern	Russell	Stimson	7
London & Eastern	Kevin	Williamson	8
NEY&H	Christopher	Haigh	9
NEY&H	James	Moon	10
NEY&H	John	Taylor	11
North West	Steven	Acheson	12
North West	Ryan	Armstrong	13
North West	Ronnie	Proffitt	14
North West	Gerard	Sheridan	15
North West	Dave	Walsh	16
Scotland	Alexander	Balfour	17
Scotland	John	Gillespie	18
Scotland	James	Harte	19
Scotland	Michael	Murtha	20
Scotland	Kenny	Smith	21
Scotland	Gordon	Turner	22
South East	Russell	Blakely	23
South East	Howard	Sharpe	24
South East	Martin	Walkinshaw	25
South West	Kevin	Hardiman	26
Wales	Brian	Harries	27
Wales	Meurig	Thomas	28
West Midlands	Jeff	Carter	29
West Midlands	Marc	Heath	30
West Midlands	John	Worrall	31

NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL SECTOR CONFERENCE 2011

CONSTRUCTION

SECTOR MOTIONS

1 Industry National Agreements and Mode 4

The East Midlands Regional Industrial Sector Committee wishes to raise our concerns to conference with regard to our National Agreements and the unscrupulous attacks from employers to down skill and downgrade our members terms. Employers under the JIB are saying that they are doing this to compete in a difficult market, whilst making millions of pounds in profit from the labour of our members and in the process handsomely paying their directors.

We call upon our Union to campaign and lobby this government on the key issues of deskilling and destabilising an industry where safety and competence must be a driving factor for our members, whilst continued quality training for future generations is a must. Government and employers must understand that the sector will react to protect and uphold our long standing and hard fought for Agreements in our industry.

Our members recognise that even with the National Agreements in place employers from overseas with migrant work forces and indeed some UK based employers have sort to pay less than the terms and conditions their workforce are entitled to under such agreement. Our members employed in our sector now face challenges from the influx of migrant labour impacting on local workers, communities and services whilst unemployment in the country continues to rise and we raise to conference that our Union commits to ensure to undertake and commissions a full study of such impacts on our sector and to campaign on contentious issues, such as mode 4.

Moved by: Robert Baldwin
Seconded by: John Hughes
East Midlands

2 Dedicated Officers and resources for Construction

The London and Eastern RISC are extremely concerned that the original intention of dedicated officers in construction has been diluted. The original EC motion intended to provide increased resources to the sector. However this intention has not been met. RISC call upon conference to use what powers possible to lobby the union for an improve service for our sector.

Moved by: Kevin Williamson
Seconded by: Paul Noakes
London & Eastern

3 THE DECLINE OF THE BUILDING MATERIALS SECTOR

This conference should be made aware of the continued decline of the building sector, the irreparable damage that the recession has already caused and that if the decline is allowed to continue at its current rate there is a strong possibility that the construction industry may have to become almost completely reliant on imported building materials.

All building material manufacturers have had to close some of their manufacturing sites over the last three years with the building brick sites being hit especially hard, i.e. I spoke recently with the Convenor from Hanson's who told me they have closed 23 out of 24 of their brick producing sites, with only the Peterborough site remaining.

In my opinion there are a number of reasons for the rapid decline of the building materials sector, the most obvious being the recession and the decline of the construction industry generally. Orders for new construction work fell in the second quarter of the year and are now at a level not seen since 1980. However there are other specific contributing factors, cheap imports from India and China, the aggregate tax and the landlord tax, both taxes imposed on U.K. employers by the Government.

The imported building materials industry has expanded from around £6 billion in 2000 to £12 billion today, increasing while the demand for new construction work nationally has decreased.

A part of these imports are the Indian stone business, shipped into this country at a fraction of the cost of our own natural stone and even undercutting our replica concrete products, our own natural Stone selling between £40 - £60 a square metre with Indian stone as cheap as £12 - £20 a square metre.

Up until around 1997 Italy were the largest importers of stone into the U.K. Since then India and China have dominated and now account for 68% of the imported stone market. The average price of stone imports from Italy last year was £990 a tonne, compared with an average price from China of £223 a tonne and India £178 a tonne.

The Indian Market accounted for 347,293 tonnes of imported stone last year and China imported 72,793 tonnes, with all shipments being free of any ethical restrictions.

A large part of the stone from India is quarried using child labour, bonded labour or slave labour or in some cases all three, which is why some companies are able to quarry the stone, cut it, package it and ship it into this country, cheaper than we can produce ourselves.

Other more reputable companies have joined the ETI, the ethical trading initiative, a diverse alliance of retailers and brands, trade unions and non Government organisations, working together to tackle the complex questions posed by ethical trade. Companies that join the ETI agree to adopt their Base code which is widely accepted as a model code of practice and sets standards which do not include any form of child labour bonded labour or slave labour.

There are 291 active importers of natural stone from both India and China in the U.K. yet there are only 10 of these registered with the ETI, unfortunately even being members of the ETI does not mean compliance with the base code and out of these, Marshalls are the only company that reports transparently on compliance and regularly checks.

The landfill tax was first introduced in 1996 followed by the aggregate levy in 2002, both taxes were introduced as environmental taxes and the Government at the time admitted they were introduced to keep the “green” people happy. At that time the building materials sector could probably afford it as the whole construction industry was on a high. Today building material companies like Marshall’s are paying £2.00 a tonne aggregate levy £2.50 a tonne for inert materials on landfill tax and £56.00 a tonne for other waste, a cost I believe all building material companies can no longer afford and should no longer have to pay.

Brothers, I have today highlighted three areas of concern; I believe have been contributing factors to the decline of the building materials sector. Regrettably I was unable to find out exactly how many manufacturing sites have been closed and exactly how many jobs have been lost throughout the industry, although I ‘m sure the latter will run into the thousands.

I therefore call upon this Conference to support a motion to lobby this Government to remove the burden of the aggregate levy and the landfill tax from all building material companies (which should help support the building materials sector) then level the playing field for British business’s and reclaim their lost taxes by imposing heavier import duties on all imported building materials, with a reduction for companies who can prove their materials have been Ethically sourced (again keeping the “green” people happy).

Moved by: C Haigh
Seconded by: A Moon
North East, Yorkshire and Humber

4 Organising to Protect Construction

The North West Construction Regional Sector Committee would seek conference support of construction sector colleagues who are currently opposing unnecessary and unprecedented attacks on not only their terms and conditions which have been embodied in National Agreements for over 50 years but also for the future of an industry that is key for the economy and growth of this country but one which gives employment opportunities to the future generation of youngsters through recognised apprenticeships. These attacks by the major employers in construction have been designed to destroy the Trade Union participation on representation and registration. These attacks will see a reduction in salary and benefits of up to 30% for our members. These attacks fuelled by company greed and share holders ignorance are driven by a contempt for those who operate in the industry, the front line troops of the industry being our members.

Conference, the battle which lies ahead is one that can be won, it is one that can re define our purpose in the construction sector, it is one that can result in direct employment for all those who seek it and an end to cheap agency driven hire and fire practices. Conference, any fight that needs to be sustained has to be funded and I urge that the executive look at organising and authorising a levy of branches to provide branch support when required.

Colleagues, Comrades, Brothers and Sisters. We did not ask for this fight, we were however left with a choice: Do nothing and die or fight back and survive. We will fight back, we will survive, we prosper and grow, we will & win not only for us now but for generations to come. I urge your support.

Moved by: John Sheridan
Seconded by: Steve Acheson
North West

5 M&E Construction

'This conference condemns the actions of the eight major M & E Construction Companies in attempting to withdraw from the JIB and SJIB National Agreements and implementing the so-called Building & Engineering Services National Agreement.

Conference also condemns the threatening and intimidating manor in which the major companies have conducted their dubious consultations with their employees.

With this in mind, this conference instructs the union to use all the power at it's disposal, as the biggest union in the country, to take a stance against these companies and fully support the campaign of the M & E Construction Workers throughout the UK, in order to put a stop to BESNA once and for all'.

Moved by: John Gilliespie
Seconded by: Jim Harte
Scotland

6 The Scandal of the British Construction Industry

This conference notes that in light of the infamous M&E 8 contractors, 5 of which (BBEL, CHT, SPIE Matthew Hall, SES and NG Bailey) are upping the stakes by issuing 90 days notice with the intention to dismiss employees who don't sign inferior contracts. Unite must now end all formal talks with employers and put all their efforts into organising a ballot for industrial action across the M&E National Agreements workforce. This will also include electricians normally working under the JIB (NWR) but who are temporarily employed under NAECI. Unite must also get involved in recruiting the thousands of M&E workers who are denied employment under the National Agreements. These operatives are forced onto employment agencies for any form of work.

Moved by: Russ Blakely
Seconded by: Martin Walkinshaw
South East

7 CONSTRUCTION PENSIONS

Our pensions represent the most important condition of employment after pay itself, enabling workers to survive into old age without poverty. Workers' pension funds represent the single largest source of investment finance and are central to growing our economy from recession.

The Construction Section of Unite gives its support for the existing public sector pension schemes, and its opposition to the government's attempts to impose unnecessary cuts on those schemes and present those cuts as an economic necessity rather than a political choice on its part. Constant attacks on public and private sector pensions, fuelled by this coalition, threaten their viability, meaning that the rights of current and future pensioners to draw their pensions are under threat.

This includes the decision to change the uprating measure from RPI to CPI thus reducing the value of benefits by around 15 per cent, a government attack now being opportunistically replicated across the private sector.

The Construction section notes the Chancellor's statement in the 2010 CSR that "from the perspective of filling the hole in the public finances, we will seek changes that deliver an additional £1.8bn of savings per year in the cost of public service pensions by 2014-15". We must condemn the government's continuing attempts to impose contributions increases, which are simply a tax on public sector pensions. The intention to increase contributions by 50 per cent plus will cause many members to reconsider their membership.

Conference condemns misleading statements by government ministers on the affordability of public sector pensions and notes that the Hutton report showed costs falling, and that the NAO report showed the reforms agreed in 2007/08 "reduces costs to taxpayers by 14 per cent". Conference notes that the total cost of providing tax relief to higher rate taxpayers is more than five times the cost of public sector pensions. The so-called 'reform' of public sector pensions is about making them 'affordable' for privatisation.

Abolition of the Fair Deal arrangements will lead to a critical point in schemes where government will be liable for finding additional money to pay current pensioners because there are not enough people contributing to the schemes. Provisions for Admitted Body Status must be preserved to ensure that workers who are TUPED in and out of local government do not have their pension entitlements eroded and that private companies are not given an unfair advantage when bidding for local government contracts.

Conference recognises that pensions are an important element of the reward package and are in fact deferred pay. As the government seeks to dramatically cut the value of pension provision for millions of public sector workers, it is vital that the impact on this total package is addressed.

Conference further recognises that occupational pension schemes must be designed around the demands of the occupation, including the physical demands of those occupations. Retirement age cannot simply be determined by general conclusions around life expectancy but should be based around the requirements of the relevant profession. The government are putting public sector pensions at risk and have failed to act on the private pension's scandal. Further, with some 14 million workers in the private sector having no workplace pension provision, Government and employers should be encouraging people to save for their retirement, not attacking those workers who do.

The Construction Section supports and campaigns for fair pensions for all private and public sector workers and for a requirement on all employers to contribute adequately to occupational pension schemes for their employees.

Conference asserts that attacks on pay and conditions of service, including pensions, should be challenged by all appropriate means, including legal action.

The Conference must therefore.

- 1 Robustly defend public sector pensions and campaign for affordable pensions for all workers on the basis that provision should be based on levelling up and making private companies face up to their responsibilities rather than cutting public sector pensions.
- 2 Support and co-ordinate close collaboration between affiliates in defence of schemes.
- 3 Mobilise, politicise and campaign with pension groups and civil society to prevent poverty in the future.
- 4 Give full support to industrial action against pensions cuts, including action planned for this autumn, and maximise its co-ordination.
- 5 Use the media to dispel the myths and falsifications around pensions.
- 6 Campaign for Fair Pensions for All.

Moved by: Jim Harte
Seconded by: John Gilliespie
Scotland

8 National Agreements

This conference Calls on the NISC to continue the campaign which promotes defending the National Agreements in Electrical Contracting, Plumbing, JIB and HVCA. Electricians, plumbers, pipe fitters and ducting workers are under threat of de-skilling. Unite does not need to change the heating, ventilating, air-conditioning, piping and domestic engineering industry National Agreement which has been operating since 1911. The Agreement has been very useful for both parties for the past 100 years. We accept that there is always time to discuss and agree changes for the advancement of modern day industrial relations within the industry. We do not accept being dictated to by a group of rogue employers at this moment in time or at any point in the future

Moved by: Howard Sharpe
Seconded by: Martin Walkinshaw
South East

National Officers Report to the National Sector Conference 2011

Introduction

Unite is the sole or joint signatory Union to every significant National Collective Agreement across the whole of the UK construction & contracting industry and also throughout the construction products supply chain.

In addition, Unite continues to represent skilled craft workers operating in both the public and private sector; in local authorities, the National Health Service and housing associations, as well as those workers currently employed by direct labour organisations.

Never before in the history of the movement has a Trade Union been better placed to organise and recruit workers throughout the entire industry.

It is well worth emphasising this point, in practical terms there is potential for organising and recruitment of Unite members on every single construction site regardless of its stage of development.

The State of the Industry

Current figures from the Construction Skills Network suggest that a total of 1,839,338 workers are currently engaged in the UK construction industry, with 1,007,628 of those being skilled craft and manual workers, a further 283,030 in the professional occupations and 548,680 employed in managerial and white collar functions.¹

The UK construction and contracting industry continues to feel the full effect of the economic downturn. The latest available figures from the Office for National Statistics confirm the fact that the total volume of construction output to the second quarter of 2011 fell by 1.6% compared with the previous 12 month period.² Analysis of the figures show that there has been a marginal increase in new work this has been offset by a larger decline in repair and maintenance.

Investment in infrastructure, most significantly in energy and transport is largely responsible for stabilising output. According to the same figures from the Office for National Statistics the total volume of construction output generated by public and private sector infrastructure projects was 8.8% higher in the second quarter of 2011 compared with the previous 12 month period.³

It is also important to recognise the fact that the latest Construction Skills Network Report forecasts that the infrastructure sector will experience average growth of 4.4% per annum between 2011 and 2015.⁴

Nuclear New Build

October 2011 saw the publication of the final report on the safety of both the UK's existing and proposed nuclear facilities by the Chief Nuclear Inspector, Dr Mike Weightman, commonly known as the Weightman Report.

The report found no reason to curtail existing operations or the planned nuclear new build programme, which will provide the largest single stimulus to the UK construction and contracting industry for a generation.

¹ Blue Print for UK Construction Skills 2011 to 2015 – Construction Skills Network

² Output in the Construction Industry 2nd Quarter 2011 – Office for National Statistics

³ Output in the Construction Industry 2nd Quarter 2011 – Office for National Statistics

⁴ Blue Print for UK Construction Skills 2011 to 2015 – Construction Skills Network

At time of writing, EDF have begun the tendering process for several packages of work at the Hinkley Point site, which is intended to be the first of the new nuclear power stations to be constructed - with a target for completion by 2017.

The Labour Force

The UK construction industry continues to face recruitment and retention issues which will have an acute impact on the industry as it inevitably expands into the medium term and long term.

Unite are exceptionally mindful of a number of salient points recently highlighted by the Sector Skills Council. Namely that the number of 16-19 years olds in the industry has fallen by 52% since 2008 (resulting in only 12% of the workforce being under the age of 24) whilst at the other end of the scale nearly 20% of the workforce is less than 10 years away from retirement.

According to the latest Construction Skills Network Report the industry will need to increase its recruitment each year between 2011 and 2015 to meet demand. Each year to 2015 the industry will need to increase its levels of workers on skilled craft and manual grades including; 2,130 bricklayers, 1,220 plasterers, 620 scaffolders, 1,560 plant operatives, 960 steel erectors, 3,870 labourers, 1,670 electricians and 1,180 plumbers.⁵

Collective Bargaining

Current economic conditions have created a number of significant challenges for Unite as we seek to represent our membership in the industry.

As within other sectors of the wider economy it remains increasingly difficult for Unite to negotiate pay increases for our members employed under their respective national collective agreement.

Members employed under the national agreement for the Joint Industry Board for Plumbing Mechanical Engineering Services (JIB PMES) England and Wales, are currently subject to a 2 year deal. This has resulted in a 3% increase to rates and allowances from January 2011 and the same again from January 2012. There has also been an improvement to average holiday pay and a reduction in the calculation of overtime from 39 hours to 37.5 hours. From January 2012 advanced PHMES operatives will be on an hourly rate of £13.50.

Members employed under the Joint Industry Board for the Plumbing Industry in Scotland and Northern Ireland received a 2% increase to rates and allowances from June 2011.

Members employed in the demolition industry are currently part way through a two year pay deal which saw a 2% increase in rates and allowances from July 2010 and a 3% increase from July 2011, resulting in an hourly rate for demolition operatives of £9.66 from July 2011.

Members employed under the Refractory Users Memorandum of Agreement will receive a 2% increase to rates and allowances from January 2012, resulting in the hourly rate for a senior trades person increasing to £11.17.

Members employed under the Construction Industry Joint Council Working Rule Agreement (CIJC) received a 1.5% increase to pay rates from September 2011 and a 5.3% increase to fares and subsistence allowances from June 2011. This has resulted in an increase in general operative rate to £7.87 per hour and the craft rate has increased to £10.46 per hour.

In 2011 there was no pay increase for members employed under either the Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry (JIB) or the Scottish Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting industry (SJIB). As a consequence approved electricians remain on an hourly rate of £14.35, or £16.07 if they qualify for the London rate as defined by JIB National Working Rule 6.2.

⁵ Blue Print for UK Construction Skills 2011 to 2015 – Construction Skills Network

In October 2010 members employed under the Heating, Ventilating & Air Conditioning National Agreement received a 2% increase in their rates and allowances, resulting in an hourly rate for the senior craftsmen grade of £12.40. At time of writing no further agreement has been reached in respect of any increases beyond October 2011.

On the 4th January 2011 members employed under the terms of the National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI) received a 4.7% increase to base, shift and overtime rates, welding proficiency payments, radius/accommodation allowances and sick pay. The upper limit for performance based incentive bonus payments on categorised work was also be increased by the same amount.

Mechanical & Electrical Campaign

Unite have been informed that seven major contractors in the mechanical & electrical sector of the UK construction industry have signalled their intention to pull out of long standing national collective agreements.

The contractors concerned are; Balfour Beatty Engineering Services Limited, NG Bailey Building Services, Crown House Technologies, Gratte Brothers, Spie Matthew Hall, Shepherd Engineering Services and T.Clarke PLC.

MJN Colston Limited were also involved with this group but on the 27th September 2011 they notified their workforce that they do not intend to proceed with the proposed new agreement.

Those contractors listed intend to terminate their participation in the following:

- Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry (JIB)
- Scottish Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry (SJIB)
- Joint Industry Board for Plumbing Mechanical Engineering Services in England and Wales (JIBPMES)
- Scottish and Northern Ireland Joint Industry Board for the Plumbing Industry (SNIJIB)
- National Agreement for the Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning, Piping and Domestic Engineering Industry (HVAC)
- Major Projects Agreement (MPA).

And impose the Building Engineering Services National Agreement (BESNA) on their mechanical & electrical workforces.

Unite are extremely concerned about the content of BESNA and the consequences for the current and future workforce. Despite claims to the contrary Unite are convinced that BESNA will represent a significant detriment to both remuneration and the terms & conditions of employment in the sector. Independent analysis from Incomes Data Services has confirmed a potential 17% reduction in pay for JIB labourers and a 26% pay cut for electricians.⁶ In reality this figure is likely to be far higher with the potential loss of associated benefits.

Furthermore, Unite are convinced that the influx of semi-skilled operatives facilitated by BESNA would ultimately reduce the recruitment and career development of apprentices and adult trainees.

As well as being extremely disturbed by this opportunist attack on the terms & conditions of the workforce, Unite are also apprehensive about the potentially divisive consequences BESNA would have on the ability of the industry to recruit and retain the skilled workforce it needs to deliver essential infrastructure projects.

⁶ IDS pay Report 1083 – October 2011

Unite are alarmed that certain industry stakeholders have seemingly forgotten the very reason that the aforementioned national collective agreements were introduced in the first place, namely to secure industrial relations stability and provide consistent employment practices for a transient workforce.

Unite are legitimately concerned that the application of BESNA would result in a significant detriment to skilled craft workers in the industry and will continue to campaign vigorously against its imposition.

Local Authority Craft Workers

Unite have encountered difficulties with National Pay Awards due to the present coalition government cuts.

The Red Book Agreement has not had an increase since April 2009. There has now been 2 years of a pay freeze and worryingly George Osborne at this year's Tory Party Conference announced Council Tax freezes for the next year which will again make pay bargaining difficult.

This issue is not going to go away with inflation remaining consistently high.

Despite the National pay freeze there has been a move onto salaries and some good deals have been negotiated on behalf of our members at Southampton City Council and Bristol City Council in particular.

There has been ongoing outsourcing of Local Government DLOs.

Unite recognises the importance of retention of these members and the National Agreements within these organisations who are geographically spread throughout the UK.

With this in mind Unite established a Kier UK Shop Stewards National Combine that is designed to assist in improving communications, consultations and negotiations with the company on key issues.

The bad side of outsourcing reared its head with the collapse of Connaught which resulted in Unite members losing their jobs in outsourced DLOs in Norwich and Hull.

Unite announced at the TUC Conference in conjunction with Unison, GMB, UCATT and other Public Sector Unions of our intention to coordinate a full ballot of Unite Public Services membership on the issue of pensions.

It is clear that Central Government have placed the talks in such a tight straight jacket that this has effectively prevented any progress. The employers proposals are broadly as follows:

- *An increase in the retirement age to 66 from 1 April 2014*
- *2-2.5% increase in contributions for earners over £21,000 per year*
- *1.5% increase for £15,000 - £21,000 earners*
- *No increase in contributions for those below £15,000 per year*
- *Retention of 1/60th accrual rate for those people earning below £15,000 per year*
- *Worse accrual rate of 1/68th for those above £15,000 per year*
- *People earning below £15,000 per year can reduce their contributions for a worse accrual rate*
- *Earners above £15,000 per year can pay higher contributions to keep 1/60th accrual rate*

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is a core part of the terms and conditions of employment of nearly two million workers enabling and encouraging them to save for their

retirement. The LGPS is affordable. Current benefits require employer contributions of less than 14%, other workers do not subsidise the LGPS. Over 50% of the cost is met by the employee contributions and investment returns. LGPS is funded with real money and makes a direct contribution to the economy. There is currently over £100 billion held by LGPS funds being invested creating jobs and regenerating the economy. The real pension divide is not between public and private sector workers, but between the fat cats in the board room who secure outrageously generous pensions for themselves with low retirement ages and their workforce who suffer repeated cuts to their future pension benefits.

SCOTTISH CRAFT NEGOTIATION LOCAL AUTHORITIES

2010 / 2011

During last years wage negotiation employers side made an offer of 1.5% split over a 3 year period with 0% in second year. The Trade Unions responded by stating they wanted to reconfigure the 1.5% in a way that would avoid a pay freeze in any year.

Without any further consultation with the Trade Unions the COSLA Council leaders group on a recommendation from the employers side negotiators imposed a 3 year arrangement consisting of 0.65% for the first year followed by 2 years of pay freezes.

The Trade Union side have registered a failure to agree with this position and accordingly will submit a pay claim for 2011 / 2012.

2011 / 2012

This year's pay claim has been submitted and a preliminary informal meeting has been held with the managements side's Secretariat. It was stated that there would be no money available for any pay rise however they would be willing to discuss with us some of the non-monetary aspects of the claim.

At the end of these discussions the Trade Union side made it clear that we wanted our claim submitted to the Management Executive Group that will meet in November.

The basis of our claim are as follows.

Substantial increase in pay

Reduction in working week

Increase in sick pay – including bonus payment while on sick

Substantial increase in standby allowances

The Diamond Jubilee Bank Holiday on 5th June 2012 must be granted to all craft workers as a day of paid leave

Abolition of Agency working in Local Authorities building maintenance and associated contracts

Increase in all allowances under Schedulu1,2

Increase in all tool allowances

National Sector Conference 2009

- Joint General Secretaries Report 2009
- National Officers Reports to Conference
- Conference Report 2009

Joint General Secretaries Report

Winning the Battles that Face Us

Good morning. Colleagues, this is a day along the process, but it 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 not any more 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 I, in Amicus with four recently merged unions, and Tony with the T&G bringing those together. 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 so much.

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.

You see, 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 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 or win it back.

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, who I mention because it is a transport day. 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?

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.

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 the leaflets to reflect that they will get my support. Thanks.

NATIONAL SECTOR CONFERENCE REPORT 2009

Apologies

Apologies were received from

Mark Davis	South West
Steven Dunning	NE, Y&H
Deron Keating	Ireland
Matt McGleish	Scotland
Steven Norman	NE, Y&H
Paul Roberts	East Midlands
James Wetherill	East Midlands

Guest Speaker

Ian Lucas Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Business Innovation and Skills

In order to accommodate his itinerary for the day, the Construction Minister Ian Lucas MP was invited to address Conference.

The Minister began by acknowledging the massive difficulties currently being faced by the UK construction industry, as a result of current economic conditions. He assured delegates that government was especially mindful of the importance of the industry to the rest of the UK economy.

The Minister continued by advising Conference of a number of public sector procurement projects that had been either brought forward or initiated by government for the sole purpose of stimulating demand in the UK construction industry.

Reference was also made to the recently published Donaghy Report into health and safety in the industry and Conference was advised that government intended to respond to the report before the end of the year.

In addition, Conference was advised that government also intended to press ahead with regulations that would make it illegal to blacklist workers in the industry for being members of a trade union.

The Minister then went on to acknowledge the importance of the UK construction industry in delivering the infrastructure for a low carbon economy. Specific reference

was made to the recent announcement that government intended to press ahead with the construction of new nuclear power stations.

Conference was advised that the government had now appointed Paul Morrell OBE as the government's first Chief Construction Adviser.

Conference was also informed about the recent establishment of the 'Construction Innovation and Growth Team' and of the fact that National Officer Bob Blackman had agreed to represent Unite on this Committee.

Finally the Minister advised Conference that the long awaited review of skills and productivity in the UK engineering construction industry (the Gibson Review) would soon be published.

With time remaining the Minister indicated that he was happy to take questions from the Conference floor.

The Minister was asked - is government confident that the UK construction industry has enough skilled workers to deliver the nuclear new build programme on time and on budget?

The Minister accepted that this was a crucial question and assured Conference that government would take every step necessary to ensure that industry, trade unions and the skills agencies worked together to address the potential skills shortages.

The Minister was asked – what steps does the government intend to take to ensure that the nuclear new build programme is undertaken within a stable industrial relations framework?

The Minister acknowledged that the state of industrial relations was primarily dependent on the relationship between employers and the workforce. He assured Conference that government would look at this relationship as part of its strategic review of the industry.

The Minister was asked – is government prepared to define the national collective agreements that exist in the UK construction industry as 'universally applicable' for the purpose of the Posted Workers Directive?

The Minister advised Conference that government did not intend to take this course of action.

He went on to advise delegates that the Gibson Review would seek to address the cause of the current grievances in the UK engineering construction industry, with specific reference to the perceived exploitation of migrant workers.

The issue of the ageing demographic of the workforce and the current lack of apprentices entering the industry was raised.

The Minister acknowledged that this was a serious issue and assured Conference that government was attempting to address the situation by using its significant influence in the procurement process.

The Minister was asked – what action does government intend to take to ensure that the UK construction products industry is still in existence by the time the economy starts to grow?

The Minister advised Conference that government had been working closely with the Construction Products Association and had brought forward a number of public sector projects to ensure that there was still a level of demand in the sector.

Finally the Minister was asked about the long term future of the open cast coal industry in the UK.

He advised Conference that whilst this was primarily an issue for the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) the recently published draft Energy National Policy Statement on Fossil Fuel Electricity Generation was intended to speed up the planning process for new coal fired power stations – providing they meet the requirement to fit carbon capture and storage technology (CCS) – and that such an initiative should ensure that there continues to be a demand for the output of the UK coal sector.

National Officer Report – Tom Hardacre

Tom welcomed delegates to the first Unite Construction National Sector Conference.

He went on to outline his primary areas of responsibility and explained to Conference that as a result of the merger, Unite now represented workers in virtually every sector of the UK construction industry.

Tom also advised conference that much work was being done in respect of identifying a role for construction specific Regional Officers, and in establishing a protocol whereby Unite could aim to establish a senior shop steward on every major construction project in the UK.

He explained that in order to achieve a real and tangible influence in the industry, all sites must have a Unite presence right from the start of the project.

Tom went on to inform Conference that Unite continued to campaign for direct employment in the industry and had been in dialogue with government on the issue of eradicating bogus self employment.

Tom also explained in further detail the work which Unite had undertaken, along with the GMB, to deal with the problems that had instigated the widely publicised disputes in the UK engineering construction industry.

National Officer Report – Bob Blackman

Bob began by echoing the sentiment outlined by Tom and explained that now Unite was signatory for every significant national collective agreement in the industry it should make the best use of its influence to organise the workforce.

Bob continued by advising Conference of the difficulties being faced by a number of different sectors in the industry and expressed concern over the significant decline in the number of apprentices currently being trained.

On a positive note Bob did highlight a number of infrastructure projects which he believed would sustain demand in the building and civils sector going forward, including expenditure on schools, colleges and hospitals. He also made reference to the massive programme of work being undertaken by Network Rail.

In addition Bob spoke about the Donaghy report and welcomed a number of recommendations, not least that workers in the industry should join a trade union.

Bob concluded by advising Conference of the campaign that Unite had launched to protect the national collective agreement for local authority craft workers (the Red Book).

Guest Speakers

Carol Landry and Dave Gordon from the United Steel Workers (USW)

Conference welcomed Carol and Dave from USW.

Carol advised Conference about the structure and activities of USW and stressed the importance of the Workers Uniting initiative as the only tangible way in which global multinational companies can be held to account for their activities.

Dave continued by explaining to Conference about the bitter dispute (and current strike) he and fellow USW members were engaged in with the multinational mining company Vale Inco.

Elias Rodriguez from the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign

Elias gave a fascinating and informative presentation on current developments in Venezuela and on the progressive work being championed by President Hugo Chavez.

Gertrude Hambria, General Secretary of the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers of Zimbabwe

Gertrude explained to Conference the very real difficulties being faced by agricultural workers in Zimbabwe as a direct result of the land reform policies of the Zanu PF government.

Consideration of Sector Motions

Motion 1 - NAECI

This Conference requests that the National Officer/NAECI negotiating team negotiate all future incentive bonus arrangements should be paid in FULL on a weekly basis.

The current arrangements allow for abuse from the employers in regard to unlawful deductions and non payments.

Moved Philip Willis
Seconded Richard Foster
Carried unanimously

Motion 2 - HVCA Industry

This Conference asks the national officer/national committee to campaign for the recruitment of more apprentices in the HVCA sector and in addition all employees working for HVCA agreement should be employed directly.

Moved Howard Sharpe
Seconded Joe Davis
Carried unanimously

Motion 3 – Proposed Skills Bank/Employment Pool

We call upon this Conference to support the following motion.

This Conference is very concerned that Unite the Union appears to have initiated the above proposal. It appears that there have been recent developments to the above proposal by the parties of the JIB for the electrical contracting industry. If an agreement is reached this could bring about the biggest change to the JIB national working rules since its conception in 1968.

This Branch is therefore concerned that this proposal may well be forced upon the membership in the electrical construction industry with little or no prior consultation taking place.

We therefore call upon Unite the Union to instruct its FTOs in all Regions and in the major cities to hold special meetings on the above item to inform and answer any of the membership concerns.

In conclusion, only after this consultation takes place should the membership be balloted on this single issue.

Moved Gerard Sheridan
Seconded Michael Prophet

Carried unanimously

Motion 4 – Shop Stewards in Construction

After a brief debate it was agreed to remove the word “engineering” from the motion to ensure that the principle would apply right across the UK construction industry.

The substantive motion to read:

This Conference calls on the Executive Council to support shop stewards in the construction industry in their endeavours to have senior, experience shop stewards on all major projects in the UK

Moved Meurig Thomas
Seconded Clem Llewlyn

Carried unanimously

Motion 5 – Workers Memorial Day

This conference calls upon the Executive Council to encourage all Regions to actively support Workers Memorial Day, and to continue to ensure that H&S is a key issue for our members on sites/in workplaces.

Moved Joe Davis
Seconded Michael Prophet

Carried unanimously

Motion 6 – Regional JIB

After a brief debate it was decided that the motion should make reference to the fact that any delegate being elected to the Regional JIB for the electrical contracting sector should be from the appropriate trade. It was agreed to stipulate this within the motion.

The substantive motion to read:

We call upon this Conference to ensure that all future rank and file delegates to the Regional Joint Industry Boards are elected by Regional Industrial Sector Conferences. Delegates must be trade specific.

Moved Gerard Sheridan
Seconded - David Walsh

Carried unanimously

Emergency Motion

The National Local Authority Employers for Craft (Red Book) have once again stated that they intend to serve notice of termination of the Red Book National Agreement if the unions don't voluntarily agree to the transfer of the Red Book membership to the Green Book. This demand has been included in this years pay award.

This Construction National Industrial Sector Conference fully supports the defence and maintaining of the existence of the Red Book Agreement for Craft Workers in Local Government.

The Red Book Agreement, like other National Agreements, is under attack by employers as a way of smashing organised labour and lowering terms and conditions of our members.

If Employers get away with eradicating the Red Book National Agreement, further attacks will take place on the Community and Youth (Pink Book) Agreement and then finally the Green Book Agreement (The National Joint Council for Local Government Services).

This is all about breaking away from National Pay Bargaining and the implementation of Local Negotiations and Agreements which will lead to the deterioration of our member's terms and conditions.

Conference understands and congratulates the Executive Council that at its meeting in September 2009 the principle was supported to obtain the Unions political support and get the Campaigns and Communications Departments involved with campaigning and lobbying to ensure the survival and preservation of the Craft Workers National Agreement, Red Book.

Conference now calls on our union to step up its efforts in this regard and to work with UCATT and the GMB unions who are co-signatories to the agreement.

Moved David Walsh
Seconded Brain Jones

Carried unanimously

Elections

Meurig Thomas, Delegate 38 Wales, was elected from Conference to the Unite delegation to attend the 2010 TUC.

John Gillespie, Delegate 24 Scotland, was elected from Conference to the Unite delegation to attend the 2011 TUC.

Robert Baldwin, Delegate 1 East Midlands, was elected as the substitute delegate for 2010 and 2011.

Guest Speaker

Rob Miguel, Unite Health & Safety Advisor, gave a presentation on current developments and explained to delegates the role of the newly formed Unite Health & Safety Unit.

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 METROPOLE FLOOR PLAN

