

ENERGY & UTILITIES
NATIONAL SECTOR CONFERENCE 2004
TUESDAY 29TH JUNE AT 9.30AM
PROMENADE LOUNGE
SPA
SCARBOROUGH

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Dougie Rooney, National Officer welcomed delegates to the Conference and introduced the two executive members Stuart McGhie and Gordon Whitman also Vicky Foxcroft, Research Officer as well as the FTOs i.e., Conference Stewards.

He then outlined the programme for the Conference and highlighted the main domestic arrangements. He then continued by giving an account of Amicus's achievements since the merger and highlighted the progress of the merger talks with Unifi and the GPMU.

Apologies

Robert Ferguson
Stef Siolo
Tom Harrison
Dick Anyon
Brenda Marr

Steve Horrobin
Andrew Philpotts
Stephen Simcott
Jackie Wall

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR

One nomination was received for Stuart McGhie

Proposed	George Bloom
Seconded	Stan Summers

Stuart McGhie was elected Chair

3. NATIONAL OFFICERS REPORT

Dougie Rooney gave a comprehensive report of what has been happening in the industry, and outlined below are the main points

- The Industry had continued to re-structure as a consequence of changes to regulation and the introduction of legislation by the Government, to create competition.

- Skills shortages in the industry, and the fact the sector skills councils were realising they had to do more to tackle this.
- Reported about the work the union have been involved in, in relation to the distribution price review and ensuring that that future regulation rewards the Companies that employ a direct Labour force, implement a personal development programmes for employees, in order that they can take on additional skills and responsibilities and gain financial reward. In addition train apprentices, both young and adult and use Contractors that are prepared to work to our Industry's safety standards.
- Amicus put submissions to the Department of Trade and Industry following the publication of the White Paper outlining the Government's Energy Review. Our Union's concerns are that the Nation could become too dependant on oil and gas supplies imported from politically unstable parts of the World and whilst we acknowledge that renewables had a contribution to make towards generating electricity, this was limited. Therefore, we would have to ensure that we maintained and developed our Nuclear capability for generating electricity and improve our performance on de-fuelling and de-commissioning of Nuclear Power Stations and also dealing with Nuclear Waste in terms of the storage of same.
- The Energy Bill presently going through Parliament will, amongst other things, introduce a new body that would own the assets of BNFL and UKAEA. There could be a possibility that our Members being TUPE from their present employer into a new company who would then take over the running of a particular part of the asset.
- Assurances from the Secretary of State for the Department of Trade and Industry in a letter dated 13th February 2004, stating, "furthermore we stated from the beginning that we do not intend to achieve cost savings at the expense of employees." It follows from this that we should aim to take pensions, terms and conditions off the table when it comes to competition." There have been numerous meetings with the senior civil servants in the Department of Trade and all of our Nuclear Industry Senior Shop Stewards have been briefed.
- EU complying with the Kyoto emission targets, and also the need to adhere to the Large Combustion Plant Directive which would require Companies to fit FGD (a chemical plant) on to their existing Coal Fired Power Stations in order to reduce CO2 emissions. There have been a number of problems associated with proposals being put forward with some Companies deciding not to make investment decisions until the market for Coal fired generation is clarified. We believe that for the next 15 years the Nation will require to have Coal Fired Power Stations in order to deal with the peak demand loads, early morning and early evening when the consumption of electricity is at its highest. If we do not have that we could be faced with power cuts. Therefore, we have made our views known to Government.
- A small delegation met the first Minister of the Scottish Executive, in order to urge a special initiative to be undertaken in the North of Scotland in order to create "a renewables cluster," using the former Oil Rig fabrication yards. These yards could be used for producing off shore wind turbines. The First Minister has agreed to have further meetings with our local officers and senior shop stewards.

- We are preparing a strategy to bring the nuclear issue on to the political agenda of the Nation. This would require us to seek to carry a similar exercise to that which we did for the distribution on price review, in terms of holding a Conference on Nuclear Generation, within a balanced energy policy. This action is now being investigated and being referred to the General Secretary in order that we can have clearance to take this action
- Our members in the water industry are being affected by a number of changes. Firstly, Welsh Water, operators and maintainers for the entire water system in South Wales. The Contract is now held by United Utilities is being tendered on the basis of splitting same into four different sections. This has been opposed by our Union and our full time official and senior shop stewards are making representations to the Welsh Assembly and to the Government. I will be meeting the First Minister of the Welsh Assembly to express our Unions' opposition. The other issue is the privatisation of the Water Industry in Northern Ireland. Our Union is campaigning to keep same in the public sector.
- A meeting has been arranged, Monday 12 July, with the Sector Skills Council to argue that the skill shortage being caused by the failure of the Companies to train adult and young apprentices for technician positions.
- Been involved with western power, on an industrial relations issue, in relation to a wage deal being rejected, which was industry standard, there was more to this and I will continue to monitor the situation.
- I have also been involved with full time officers and senior shop stewards in the former Northern Electric Business, again, dealing with a rejection of a wage offer that was within the going rate within the Industry. It was "other issues" that were causing our members to reject this wage deal. Once again, action has been taken to resolve and try to deal with this issue
- I have also been involved in the ECS the Metering Business of EDF Energy, together with the full time officer, senior shop stewards and management, once again to resolve on-going industrial relations difficulties in that business. Outside assistance in the form of an independent consultant was engaged and a programme to address some of these industrial difficulties has been developed and is now being implemented.
- We need to raise "our game" in terms of persuading non-members to join our Union.
- There are particular areas that will need to be addressed and, perhaps there will have to be a National Campaign. Alfred McCalpayne Infrastructure, the Utility Contractor, was needed to be targeted in terms of large sections of their workforce being non-Unionised and they are a Contractor that is dedicated to working on distribution network systems and, therefore, we needed to ensure that this Company was properly organised in terms of Union membership, i.e. amicus. New recruitment literature will be, over the next few months, sent out to shop stewards through full time officers and any particular area that needed to be targeted our publications department can produce customised leaflets/posters.

4. **FULL-TIME OFFICERS WRITTEN REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED BY CONFERENCE.**

These were circulated and there was an opportunity for questions. No questions were received.

5. **ORGANISING AND RECRUITMENT REPORT**

The Regional Organiser Gillian Mackay gave a presentation on the Amicus national organising team and the work they are undertaking. She began by explaining the importance of organising workplaces due to falling levels of membership. Her address then covered the following main points:

- Raising awareness in the workplace
- Communication with the members
- Resources available for recruitment and organising
- Retention of members

6. **COMPOSITES AND WITHDRAWAL OF MOTIONS**

The NEC General Purposes and Finance Committee had approved composites to be debated by Conference in place of certain motions.

Motions 1 and 2 be withdrawn in favour of the following Composite:

Composite 1 – A Balanced Energy Policy

Conference notes the recent blackouts in London and Kent in August 2003 and the West Midlands in September 2003. These blackouts raised many issues around security of supply.

Conference further notes that the increasing dependence on gas in power generation raises issues concerning the security of supply of the UK's electricity system.

Conference seeks the Executive Council's on-going and active support in securing a balanced environmentally friendly Amicus Energy Policy, which includes the active pursuance of renewable energy sources within this generation portfolio.

Conference notes that the UK Nuclear Industry is an important sector in UK Manufacturing and in UK Science and Technology. Nuclear Energy currently supplies a quarter of the UK's electricity without producing greenhouse gases.

Conference further notes that Nuclear Energy helps the UK to achieve both Energy Diversity and Security of Supply and it supplies electricity competitively, safely and reliably.

Conference is concerned that without Nuclear Energy the UK would find it

Composite 3 – Apprenticeships and Training

This Conference calls upon the Government and Industry to address the long-term problem of skill shortages in the United Kingdom.

Conference welcomes the success of the modern apprenticeship schemes and the breadth of choices it offers young people but believes that additional measures are needed to build skills in traditional industries and specialist trade areas.

A skilled workforce meeting the needs of modern industry is a key factor in addressing the productivity gap between the United Kingdom and its competitors. Skill shortages in specialist trade areas are resulting in spiralling recruitment and wage costs.

Conference is concerned that the low level of apprentices in industry and manufacturing will have severe repercussions for the future of the United Kingdom.

Conference calls upon the General Secretary and the National Executive Council to campaign for initiatives to increase the number of apprenticeships, both young and adult in the industry, especially encouraging women and ethnic minorities to enter an area they are poorly represented in.

Moved by Stan Summers
Seconded by Mick Hatswell

Carried Unanimously

7 CONSIDERATION OF SECTOR MOTIONS

Motion 5 - 35-HOUR WEEK

This Conference welcomes the introduction of policies designed to assist workers in the difficult task of the work life balance.

However Conference also recognises that in spite of legislation a long hours culture exists within the energy industry. This long hours culture is testimony to the generalised shortage of staff at all levels.

Therefore Conference calls on the National Executive to instigate a campaign within the industry for a 35-hour week with no loss of pay or conditions for all direct and indirect workers in the industry.

Moved by Mick Gaskell
Seconded by Willie Black

Carried Unanimously

Motion 12 - ANTI-UNION LAWS

This Conference calls on the Labour government to repeal all the anti-union legislation introduced by the Tories during the Thatcher era. Conference understands that these laws were designed to aid big business and to prevent trade unionists from taking effective industrial action

Conference believes in democracy, it also believes that the members should be balloted prior to industrial action but Conference however further believes that it is up to the members of Amicus to determine how its internal democracy is administered and we should be free from the interference of the Government.

In short we instruct the executive as a matter of priority to mount a campaign that should attempt to involve the whole of the trade union movement, for the removal from the statute books of all the laws introduced by the Tories between 1979 and 1997.

Moved by

Mick Gaskell

Seconded by

Peter Burke

Carried

Motion 13 - PENSIONS

This Conference calls for the executive to continue to press the employers and the Government to ensure the existing pensions are protected and to also ensure that new staff are given the hope of decent provision for their future.

Final salary schemes have been closed to new employees and as we have all seen in the press recently some schemes are severely under funded with some at risk as companies go into administration or receivership.

As the ownership of these companies seem to change on a fairly regular basis the old type pension schemes as we know them are quickly disappearing. This situation should not be allowed to deteriorate any further as this is our future. Companies have benefited greatly over the past few years through "payment holidays" yet whinge when they now have to make up shortfalls in the scheme.

These schemes must be protected with no detriment clauses and efforts should be made to improve the new purchase schemes for new members as this helps promote stability within the workforce, which benefits the companies as well as our members.

Moved by

Drew Elrick

Seconded by

Charlie Moor

Carried Unanimously

Motion 14 - ENERGIZE MAGAZINE

This Conference requests the EC to resurrect the Energize Magazine. I think it is important for each Industry to have it's own specific publication, which deals with the specific issues affecting this Industry. The energize Magazine was published by the Union has ceased to be. We need the magazine re-introduced in the same form at as it was before it was removed.

Moved by Dave Morgan
Seconded by Howard Benyon

Carried Unanimously

9 SELECTION OF FOUR GENERAL POLICY MOTIONS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR THE AGENDA OF THE 2005 POLICY CONFERENCE

1. Apprentices and Training
2. Health and Safety
3. Anti union laws
4. Energize

Moved by Mike Gaskell
Seconded by Mick Hatswell

Carried

10 CONSIDERATION OF RULE AMENDMENTS

***Motion 15 - CONTRIBUTIONS**

Rule 5, Clause 1

Conference instructs the Executive to Review Apprentice contributions for the full duration of their training to reflect their lower earnings potential and to encourage membership and future retention.

Moved by Chris Gofield
Seconded by Alan Brown

Carried Unanimously

***Motion 16 - CONTRIBUTION RATES**

Rule 5

Amendment to Rule

This Conference requests the NEC to develop a special benefits package to cover family membership for an increased contribution rate.

Conference believes that this basic package will facilitate penetration into non-union areas and therefore sow the seeds of Union membership to a much wider community than currently.

Moved by Charlie Moor
Seconded by Willie Black

Carried Unanimously

Motion 17 - CONTRIBUTIONS

Rule 5

Add new Para 5

“Retired members will be exempt from any contributions,”

The NEC had recommended that this motion be rejected.

Moved by Willie Black
Seconded by Mick Gaskell

Rejected by majority

Motion 18 - SECTORS

Rule 11, Clause 5

Add at end ‘any proposal by the National Executive Council to modify the number or description of sectors shall be submitted by the National Executive Council to the National Sector Conferences of any existing sectors affected by the proposal for ratification by those conferences. If any of the National Sector Conferences does not ratify the proposal the National Executive Council will require the Policy Conference to ratify the proposal before it can be implemented.’

Moved by Mick Gaskell
Seconded by Peter Burke

Carried Unanimously

Motion 19 - MEMBERSHIP OF GP AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Rule 25

This Conference calls for the membership of the General Purposes of Finance Committees, on a pro-rata basis, to follow the democratic approach in the election of the NEC and mirror the constitution.

This would lead to the make up of as follows:

8 members from industrial/occupation and professional sectors
2 female members
1 regionally elected member

Moved by Peter Lawton
Seconded by Mick Perkins

Carried

11 SELECTION OF TWO RULE AMENDMENTS FOR THE AGENDA OF THE 2005 RULES CONFERENCE

*Motion 15 - Contributions

*Motion 16 - Contribution rates

Moved by Charlie Moor
Seconded by Chris Schofield

Carried

12 ELECTIONS:

[a] 17 delegates to the 2005 Policy and Rules Conference

George Bloom	Stan Summers
Tony McNaughton	Tony Caldicott
Tim Davison	Peter Hodges
John Leggott	Charlie Thompson
Tye Poutney	Dave Upton
Davie Alexander	Ian Taylor
Alex Funston	Herbie Keery
Howard Benyon	Robert Williams
Peter Lawton	

[b] One delegate to attend compositing meetings with the Conference Arrangements Committee at the 2005 Policy Conference:

Charlie Thompson

[c] Three substitute delegates to the 2005 Policy and Rules Conference:

Dave Morgan	Dave Chapman
Len Denbigh	

[d] One delegate to the 2004 TUC [from 13th – 16th September in Brighton]:

Mick Hatswell

[e] One delegate to the 2005 TUC [Brighton]

Tim Davison

[f] Energy National Sector Committee

The Chair received 30 nominations for 28 positions and after an eliminating vote; those names marked with an asterisk were elected.

*Dave Alexander	*Mervyn Baker
*Howard Beynon	Willie Black
*George Bloom	*Tony Caldicott
*Dave Chapman	*Tim Davison
*Len Denbigh	*Robert Ferguson
*Alex Funston	Mike Gaskell
*Mick Hatswell	*Peter Hodges
*Herbie Keery	*Peter Lawton
*John Leggott	*Brenda Marr
*Stuart McGhie	*Tony McNaughton
*Dave Morgan	*Tye Poutney
*Steve Simcott	*Stan Summers
*Ian Taylor	*Jim Thomas
*Charlie Thompson	*Dave Upton
*Jackie Wall	*Bob Williams

Close of Conference

The Chair closed Conference and thanked the delegates and the Conference staff.

The Conference then joined with other Conferences to receive an address and have a Q&A session with Derek Simpson General Secretary.

13 GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT – DEREK SIMPSON.