Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd September 2008 held at the T&G Unite Offices, Plymouth.

1. Present: Jeremy Guise Secretary/UNISON; Diana Beal Treasurer/T&G Unite; Tony Staunton Asst.Secretary/T&G Unite; Dave Franklin Vice Chair/PCS; Robin Beal TGWU; Alison Smith NUS; Mike Barry RMT No5 Branch Secretary - buses; Neil Thompson RMT No 5; Dino Peros National Vice Chair, NAPO

2. Apologies: Neil Young Chair/NUJ; Hayley Kemp PSC; Chris Bligh RMT; Danny Bouch CWU; Chris Webb CWU; Mike Barry RMT; Barry Gomery T&GWU Unite; Dave Uren AMICUS/Unite; Steve Peach President; Pat Ryan Pensioners/TGWU; Kevin Treweeks, UNISON; Darren Turner, UNISON;

3. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6th August 2008, were considered for accuracy with the following amendments to typographical errors agreed:
   i. Item 3i: replace Star for “start of the first sentence”.
   ii. Item 3.4: replace DF with “Seconded by DB, who…” on line 6 of page 3.

The Minutes were then Approved as amended.
It was agreed that DB update and maintain the mailing database for the Council.

The following Matters Arising were then taken:

3.1. Item 3.1: Stop the War Coalition: TS reported from Plymouth StWC that trade unions and peace campaigns are holding a lobby of the Labour Party Conference on 20th September 2008. The meeting considered support for the national demonstration, and agreed to publicise the event, support any Council delegates seeking to get to the demonstration, and local activities run by the Stop the War Coalition coinciding with the event.

3.2. Item 3.2: Defend Council Housing in Plymouth: DB updated the meeting on the current position of transfer of all Council Housing in Plymouth. Unions are meeting with the Shadow Board of the new Housing body next Tuesday. In discussion, KT reported the briefing note in the Council’s Housing Department, calling for all staff to encourage tenants to vote in the forthcoming Ballot – October-November this year. The Council is implying that Government is offering a generous help towards gap funding should the transfer go ahead. This effectively requires any “Vote No” campaign to identify where cash for refurbishment will come if the housing stock stays in-house. TS argued that we have a political campaign despite the cash-
blackmail, with council housing being bought and funded by tax payers over many years and should not be sold-off. Even if the vote goes against us, the challenge to privatisation must be made. PR agreed, explaining the transfer is to the private sector, with the Board being made-up of Directors, from private businesses, not tenants. KT explained there are 9 seats on the Board, plus three tenants, who are not accountable to the tax payer or tenants, but will operate as business managers. There is no counter-campaign in the City.

DB **proposed** the Trade Union Council host a public meeting on the issues, whilst recognising that we should not be leading the campaign but promoting tenant-led opposition. DF **seconded**, arguing that we need to invite speakers from London to offer information and leadership to tenants. Following discussion the proposal was **agreed**.

3.3. **Item 3.4. Local Government Pay Dispute:** DF **agreed** to find national speaker for public meeting of the **Public Services Alliance**. TS to co-ordinate meeting.

3.4. **Item 3.1 Stop the War Coalition:** the meeting discussed the weekend of demonstrations at the start of the Labour Party conference in Manchester 20/21st September. It was **agreed** to consider a weekend travel with overnight stays in Quaker accommodation, with DF co-ordinating the numbers.

3.5. **Item 3.2. Defend Council Housing:** DB circulated the current *Evening Herald* with a front page identifying the forthcoming ballot of Plymouth Council homes tenants: “The £168million question” – a reality-TV style makeover if the tenants vote yes: 14,000 new kitchens and bathrooms, and new central heating. Inside the Council there is concern that they are receiving negative responses from tenants. The Council is offering paid overtime to knock on doors and encourage tenants to vote yes (£10 per hour, time-and-a-half on Saturdays). In discussion, JG explained that rents will rise, service charges will be introduced, and smaller Housing associations will be taken over by larger corporate groups acting as private businesses. We have to state this now, from a principled position, in order to come back further down the road to defend tenants facing a hostile landlord. Often, people don’t begin to do anything until they experience the facts. DP welcomed the debate and recognised the bribery of the new homes when Council’s are required by Law to get homes to that standard in any case. The transfer is a sell out – both in terms of there being a lot of tax payers money to pay for war but nothing for council homes. DB described the warnings from the Council that employees will be disciplined if speaking-out against the transfer. The TUC spokesperson will have to be a non-Council employee, for safety. The meeting **agreed** to place a statement in the Press, and seek to campaign with tenants for a No Vote. TS agreed to order DHC newspapers for the Trades Council to circulate, organise a public meeting when tenants are found to front the Campaign, and for the Plymouth TUC to produce a public leaflet.

3.6. **Item 8: Tony Staunton:** UNISON has won the right to have an Appeal hearing at the Employment Appeals Tribunal against the decision of the Certification Officer that UNISON broke the Law in their treatment of Tony Staunton, by preventing him from standing for the NEC. The full-
day hearing will be heard in the next 6 months. The *Friends of Tony Staunton Campaign* has issued a fresh appeal to finance legal representation at the EAT, with a Benefit Concert in Plymouth arranged for October. Donations can be sent, payable to D.Franklin, to *Friends of Tony Staunton campaign*, 24, Devonport Road, Plymouth, PL1 5RF.

4. **Officers Reports:**
   4.1. Chair: NY is on annual leave. No Report.
   4.2. Secretary: JG reported on activities through the last month. Correspondence was circulated and the following election took place:
   4.2.1. **Karen Reissman:** The Secretary has sent a message of support to the KR Campaign in Manchester. He had also received a response from Linda Gilroy MP who said she would have signed the campaign’s early Day Motion had she had time.
   4.3. Treasurer: DB offered an update on the Trades Council’s Budget, including the need for money to come in from constituent Branches.
   4.4. **Delegates to external Bodies:**
      4.4.1. Climate Change: TS updated the meeting on the CC Public Meeting at Plymouth University on 21st October, 7pm, with guest speaker, international author and environmental campaigner, Jonathan Neale. The meeting also discussed plans for 6th December international demonstrations and agreed to organise transport to London, leaving Plymouth Bretonside at 7am, tickets £25 waged, £15 unwaged to be booked by text: 07803 620390.
      4.4.2. Students and Young Workers: AS reported on the new Vice Chancellor’s “Strategic Review” identifying up to 10% job cuts and efficiency savings. Financial Reports show £4million deficits, with no reason for cuts, but the VC wants money to invest in new projects for marketisation of University services. Students are already facing a minimum of £20,000 debts over 3 years of a degree course. UCU has declared they will ballot for strike action when job cuts are announced. The employer is making statements warning that lecturers will try to manipulate students. The University is seeking to sponsor to schools Academies schemes, and the meeting was reminded of our policy against the Academies programme. Trade union stalls are available at Freshers on 24th and 25th September, with NUT bringing anti-Academies campaign materials.
      4.4.3. Pensioners: PR on annual leave – No Report. DB reported the Pensioners Centenary Rally in Bridgewater on 13th September. *Agreed* to send a message of support.

5. **May Day Festival 2009:** DF reported from the sub-committee held on 17th August. Proposals included:
   i. To book the Guildhall for Bank Holiday Monday, 4th May.
   ii. The theme would be “Trade Unions for a Sustainable Future”
   iii. £25 for stall hire, with non-refundable deposit in advance.
   iv. Invite corporate sponsors from business allied to the TUC, including Thompsons, Frizzells, etc.
   v. Music programme to include better known acts. Tracy Curtis, who performed at Tolpuddle, has agreed to play for expenses, and Jenny
Bishop from Cornwall has agreed. Suzie Franklin from UNISON is continuing to contact national artists. Bands will need to have expenses covered by the TUC.

vi. Talks, meetings and film shows to be co-ordinated, with national trade union speakers.

vii. Veggie Perrins to be invited to supply catering, but without exclusive rights.

viii. DB to investigate May weekend events in Plymouth, including making links with the annual Jazz Festival and Plymouth Festival programmes.

ix. TS to promote the event and produce early publicity.

The meeting approved the proposals. The next meeting is Tuesday 9th September at 7pm at 124 Devonport Road.

6. **Respect Festival**: it was agreed to book a TUC stall for the October Festival in Plymouth.

7. **Motions:**
   7.1. **Energy prices**: received from *City of Plymouth UNISON*, proposed by Jeremy Guise:

   Plymouth & District trades Union Council notes with alarm the rise in the cost of fuel and energy. It is outraged that oil companies are making record profits whilst for some vulnerable workers and ex-workers the rise in the cost of energy is a matter of life and death, and for most ordinary workers it represents a severe curtailment of their lifestyles. We further note that a general relaxation in duty on fuel would make no positive contribution to the structural adjustments necessary to tackle climate change. We therefore call for an immediate windfall tax on the profits of the petrol companies to fund:
   1. Action to ensure that all workers and ex-workers (pensioners and the sick) have access to adequately heated living space during the Winter of 2008-9 and there are no deaths from hypothermia;
   2. The provision of additional Treasury Funds to offset all costs of additional fuel rises across the public sector and protection of budgets to ensure no adverse impact upon service delivery or staffing;
   3. The provision of subsidised public transport in all urban areas and across the rail network;
   4. The cancellation of all plans for a new generation of coal and/or nuclear power fired power stations, such as that proposed at Kingsnorth in Kent, until such a time as it can be demonstrated that carbon capture and storage technologies work;
   5. a massive and immediate programme of investment in proven renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and tidal power;

   We further resolve to take this motion, suitably reworded, to TUC Regional Council.

   **END**

   **Seconded by Mike Barry. In debate**, DB spoke of the need to prevent employers transferring the investments costs in energy savings, and the rise of the price of fuel, onto the backs of workers through efficiency savings and job cuts. Large employers, such as Plymouth Council, have contingency funds which should be used in this situation, not

   **Following further debate**, the motion was **put to the vote and Carried with none against.**

Recession and the impact of the global “crunch” on working class living standards: PR spoke of the effect on pensioners and people on benefits of the rowing recession, unemployment and steep price rises.

8. **Class Struggle:**
Local Government Job Evaluation, and national Pay dispute: JG offered an update on the Plymouth Council JE talks. In discussion, DB explained the reasons for a T&G collective Grievance to be taken-out in pursuit of an equal pay claim around the JE Scheme. RB spoke of the expectation that Appeal processes would be completed by March 2009. TS spoke of the national pay dispute, with a national joint unions statement issued on 1st September identifying pay, terms and conditions talks continuing until December. DF identified the pattern national negotiators weakening the resolve of members to fight via long, drawn-out negotiations. Many voiced the feeling of a sell-out.

Civil Servants: no developments.

Plymouth Buses: (RMT): MB reported on recent ballots rejecting current pay offers. The union is seeking to raise differentials to defeat low pay by a single grade pay deal.

9. Any Other Business:
   9.1. There was none.

10. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 3rd October 2008, at 7:15, at the T&G Unite District Offices, Bretonside, Plymouth.

END