

PO Box 378  
Plymouth  
PL1 9BN

07803 620390

*Secretary: Tony Staunton*

*Chair: Neil Young*



[www.plymouth-tuc.co.uk](http://www.plymouth-tuc.co.uk)

## Plymouth & District Trades Union Council

### Minutes

#### of Annual General Meeting at 7.15pm on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009

At the Unite (formerly T&G) offices, Sutton Harbour

1. **Present:** Kevin Treweeks (UNISON); Tony Staunton (TGWU Unite); Neil Young (FoC NUJ); Chris Webb (CWU Area Representative); Rob Rooney (UNISON); Pat Ryan (NATE/Pensioners Forum); Dave Uren (AMICUS Unite); Darren Turner (UNISON); Neal Harrington (UNISON); Alison Smith (NUS UPSU); Paul Staddon (PCS); Barry Gomery (Unite); Tom Jeffery (USDAW); Robin Beale (Unite); Diana Beal (Unite); Jeremy Guise (UNISON); Dave Franklin (PCS);
2. **Apologies:** Sylvia Brice (USDAW);
3. **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008** to be accepted as a correct record.
4. **Officer Reports**
  - 4.1 **Chair:** NY spoke of a good year of networking between unions and increasing our profile in our City. Issues are becoming polarised, with employers scapegoating activists, and the Far Right such as the BNP seeking to Black workers and migrant labourers for the problems caused by the banks. This next year will see increased challenge.
  - 4.2 **Secretary:** JG reported on a “solid year of achievements” for the Council, including formal support for the T&G Tanker Drivers strikes that won significant wage increases. The May Day Festival 2008 was extremely successful, drawing many young people to the Guildhall, with good speeches from national speakers including Kate Hudson from CND. The fate of bank staff caused us concern towards the end of last year, as the recession deepened. PTUC has supported Council Workers on pay issues and campaigns including the Defend Council Housing Campaign and the Anti-Academies Alliance. The Council plans went ahead but with a sizeable minority against the externalisation of homes, and continued opposition to privatisation in general. Internationally, events in Gaza required TU intervention and

solidarity support, particularly through our affiliation to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. The Plymouth University Students have ended the year on an inspiring note, winning concessions for Gaza students through an active occupation of lecture rooms. Climate Change has risen in the media but has fallen down the priority list of trade unionists as redundancies and cuts have hit. We continue to lead the movement locally on this issue. We have broadened our links between the unions in Plymouth, but we face very difficult times with increased threat to jobs and conditions of service as a result of the failures of the economic system. We stand as a bastion of support for ordinary working people.

**4.3 Treasurer:** DB reported that the audit is ongoing, and cheques are coming in for re-affiliation, with an increased range of unions offering support. Auditors were changed mid-year as Sylvia Brice stepped down, and David Milne has been adopted as a professional Auditor. He has recommended a tightening-up of financial processes and a full report will be offered to the next meeting.

**5. Guest Speaker: Chris Webb – Communication Workers Union:** The Chair welcomed the RO from the CWU to speak on the *Keep the Post Public Campaign*. The Hooper Report was published on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and recommended partial privatisation, with Peter Mandelson proposing privatisation within 24 hours of the publication. At least 50 regional centres are to close, with Devon & Cornwall seeing big cuts. Currently *Royal Mail* does the entire job. It is proposed that the private companies do the front pick-ups, to be sorted and deliveries still by *Royal Mail*. The private companies will make profit on the back of the core public infrastructure. The Union has been attacked in terms of objections to “modernisations”, but in fact the CWU is opposing large-scale job cuts. Mandelson is proposing an immediate sell-off of a third of the Company with the potential of further privatisation to 49% (or above) without further legislation. The *Daily Mirror* and the *Guardian* have supported the CWU Campaign. The national campaign is supported by the key General Secretaries, including Tony Woodley, Mark Serwotka and others, and the Early Day Motion has so far won 169 MP’s at an early stage, a very good start. Locally, Plymouth MPs, Seabeck and Gilroy, have been lobbied but failed to support. Linda Gilroy has offered a meeting. Alison Seabeck is to write with her position by the end of this week. On 21<sup>st</sup> March CWU are publishing an advert in the Plymouth Argyle brochure to call for active support. 50 adverts on the back of buses are to be published, and the billboards at key sites across Plymouth will have adverts. Plymouth’s CWU AGM in January had 330 members in attendance, and the Branch is tightly organised. The CWU NEC has stated that the law forbids strike action over privatisation, but a national ballot on closures will take place in May. There will be a *Keep the Post Public* Rally in the City with the full involvement of Plymouth Trades Council, with Billy Hayes and others. The CWU is convinced we can win this debate, but the prospect of failure will set a marker for the entire TU movement.

**In discussion,** DF spoke of the new Plymouth TUC website with the CWU Campaign as the top “splash”. TS suggested we are seeing a new bosses offensive, in some ways fuelled by the recession but at the same time, being

used by employers to attack pay and jobs, and to further privatise more than ever, using the excuse of financial crisis. JG spoke of the perfidious rat-baggage of the New Labour Government that is in the pockets of private corporate interests. We have to place maximum pressure on the MPs in the area around this Campaign. RR asked whether the CWU will break affiliation with the Labour Party – CW is ready to ballot membership in June on disaffiliation. TJ offered support from USDAW. CW was thanked for his attendance.

## **6. Election of Officers:**

The nomination period had opened in December and nominations received within correct timescales from Branches. Positions of Assistant Secretary and Press Officer had received no prior nominations, and were reopened to nominations from the floor. The meeting agreed not to publish voting figures.

**6.1. President: Paddy Ryan** was nominated by NUJ and **duly elected.**

**6.2. Chair: Neil Young** was nominated by NUJ and **duly elected.**

**6.3. Vice Chair: Dave Franklin** was nominated by PCS and Tom Jeffery was nominated by USDAW. The candidates left the room and a hand vote was taken, with **Dave Franklin** duly elected.

**6.4. Secretary: Tony Staunton** was nominated by TGWU Unite and **duly elected.**

**6.5. Assistant Secretary:** As no nominations had been received, nominations were called for and **Jeremy Guise** was nominated by NUJ and **duly elected.**

**6.6. Treasurer: Diana Beal** was nominated by Unite and **duly elected.**

**6.7. Auditor: David Milne** was **agreed** by the meeting.

**6.8. Publicity Officer:** As no nominations had been received, nominations were called from the floor, and **Dave Franklin** was nominated by T&G Unite and duly elected.

**7. Executive Committee:** TS explained that the EC has not been convened for some years. The Constitution allows an EC to be elected that comprises officers and a representative from each affiliated Branch. This reflects “better times” when the full Council comprised 40 or 50 members, and could not be convened in a hurry to make urgent decisions, nor be used to discuss administration. In recent years the Council has been able to administer itself through the officer’s group. It was **agreed** to suspend election of an EC until such a time as is deemed necessary by the Council, and for the Officers group to meet together if, as and when necessary to make urgent administrative decisions. All actions of Branch Officers remain subject to ratification by a meeting of the full Council.

## **8. Affiliations for 2009-10:**

It was **noted** that the *300 Club* is no longer in place and therefore the affiliation is ended. All other current affiliations were **agreed:**

Devon Council of Trade Union Councils  
Unite Against Fascism  
Stop the War Coalition

Palestine Solidarity Campaign  
Columbia Solidarity Campaign  
Justice for Colombia  
Defend Council Housing  
Campaign against Climate Change  
Defend Trade Union Rights  
Campaign Against the Arms Trade  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament  
Friends of the Earth  
Nuclear Free Coalition  
NO2ID  
Anti-Academies Alliance  
Globalise Resistance  
World Social Forum  
Stonehouse Against Racism  
TUC

**In discussion**, it was clarified that the AGM could not make policy and therefore proposals for new affiliations would need to be made at a scheduled ordinary meeting for the full Council. The Secretary and Chair were asked to renew all affiliations for the financial year 2009-10.

#### **9. TUC Bodies:**

**9.1. SW TUC Regional Council:** TS, TJ and DB were nominated and **agreed**, with AS as reserve. It was agreed to nominate TS for the regional committee, to be elected from amongst the Trade Union Council delegates at the SW TUC AGM on 28<sup>th</sup> March in Croyde Bay.

**9.2. SW Regional Trades Councils:** TS, TJ and DB were nominated and **agreed**, with AS as reserve.

**9.3. SW TUC Pensioners Committee and Conference:** Paddy Ryan was elected and reconfirmed for the year 2009-10.

**10. Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 beginning at 7.15pm, venue tbc. END**