

Cornwall Trades Union Council

Minutes of the June 3 2024 meeting of CTUC

Present: Brian Blatchford (Unite Retired) Susan Fairweather (CTUC affiliation secretary, Unite Retired), Ross Marshall (NEU), Angela Hopkinson (Unite Community), Jane Creagh (Unite Community), Trevor Hall (Unite Community), Geoff Ferguson (PSC Retired), Rob Rooney (CTUC president, Unite Community)

President's Welcome: Rob Rooney opened the meeting, informing those present that there would be a couple more items under "matters arising" than advertised on the agenda.

Apologies: Rob Hawkins, Tony Martyn (Unite Retired), Reece Weatherburn (UNISON L.G) Zoe Fox (Unite Community), Mike Butler (ASLEF), Heather Ashworth (Unite Community) Sandy Easterbrook (CTUC deputy president, NEU, RCN), Mark Newman (NEU)

Minutes of April 29 meeting: Agreed as true record – proposed Angela Hopkinson, seconded Jane Creagh.

Matters arising: 1) Leaflet for All Under One Banner is not yet in existence. President to send the draft leaflet which was agreed at the last meeting;

2) Delegations to CTUC. PSC Retired asked the question: "If you allow any trade unionist to vote, what do affiliated branches pay their affiliation fees for? Please note, we will take into account your policy when we decide to renew our affiliation. My branch also allows members to attend our committee meetings but only elected members can vote."

The constitution states that affiliated branches are entitled to delegates according to number of members – 25 members or under, two delegates; 26-100, three; 101-300, four; one additional delegate for every additional 100 members up to a maximum of eight.

Opinions ranged from "I think we need to modernise. If we keep the same rules where you have to be an elected delegate to vote, that's fair enough. But look at who is here tonight" – Brian Blatchford; "Encourage all affiliated branches to name delegates" – Angela Hopkinson; "We are not getting all the members who are entitled" – Susan Fairweather. "As long as people who attend this meeting are members of a relevant trade union, I don't see why they should not be allowed to vote" – Geoff Ferguson.

Rob Rooney said if the usual complement of Unite Community members who turn up outnumbers the amount of delegates its membership entitles it to. Jane Creagh asked Rob if he was a delegate. This had been raised at the previous week's Unite Community meeting and it was unclear – no delegates appointed this year.

Rob added that the ideal situation would be for affiliated union branches to meet, agree a motion and send it to CTUC. That is not happening at the moment.

It was also pointed out that Unite now affiliates on a blanket basis, without naming delegates or even branches. Attempts to get clarification have so far failed.

Agreed: As a first step, it was agreed that all affiliated branches be asked to name delegates based on their membership.

3) CTUC affiliations. Those agreed last month have not been paid because we have not received invoices. Susan Fairweather agreed to chase this up with the organisations concerned.

4) CND affiliation – deferred until next month.

Affiliations: Susan Fairweather reported that UNISON Local Government have paid a £540 affiliation fee; £647.85 affiliation is in the pipeline from NEU.

Treasurer's report: Treasurer was unable to attend due to work commitments but have submitted accounts. The branch is in a healthy financial position with a bank balance of around £6,000.

Branch reports:

Unite Retired – Brian reported continuing difficulties with the branch's bank, rendering the branch unable to pay affiliations or make donations. Unite officials are now helping facilitate online meetings.

NEU – Ross Marshall said his union has produced a “ten demands” manifesto to put to all the competing parties in the general election, covering issues of major concern to teachers such as SEND education, ending the two-child benefit limit, Ofsted, teacher workload, social media. Ross said: “If NEU was a party, I would put my mark on it. None of them (Labour, Tories etc) will be able to say yes to any of these things.”

This prompted a general discussion on the upcoming general election.

The following motion was unanimously agreed: **“Cornwall TUC is totally disillusioned and disgusted at the Labour Party vacating its role as the workers’ party and, instead, advocating for big business and war. Cornwall TUC is appalled that the Leader of the Opposition has given his support to the genocidal actions of the Israeli government and opposed the call for a permanent ceasefire.”**

Proposed donations:

Workers for a Free Palestine – an organisation of trade unionists who disrupt arms factories such as Bae operations in Lancashire. £100 proposed by Angela Hopkinson, seconded by Jane Creagh. Passed unanimously.

Platform Films – previously circulated. Donation asked for, in order to pursue a project to publicise what is happening in Gaza. After discussion, agreed to donate £50.

Bus safety – report back:

President, acting on information supplied by Barry West, RMT rep, at last month's CTUC, had written to chief executive of Cornwall Council, posing a list of questions. These related to the safety of bus drivers, teaching staff and school children and other young people being carried on buses in Cornwall.

The chief executive had not replied directly but the president had been copied into an email. This spoke of an investigation being launched. Hopefully, some progress on this for next month's meeting.

Any other business: None notified.

Date of next meeting: Monday June 24, 7pm on Zoom

Meeting ended 8.25pm