

Cornwall Trades Union Council

Minutes of September 23 2024 meeting (online)

Present: Brian Blatchford, Susan Fairweather, Rob Hawkins (Unite Retired); Jane Creagh, Heather Ashworth, Rob Rooney (Unite Community) Geoff Ferguson (PCS ARMS), Grant Ash (ASLEF Penzance), Reece Weatherburn (UNISON Local Government)

Apologies: Mike Butler (ASLEF Penzance), Mark Tripconey (CWU SDC), Sandy Easterbrook (RCN, NEU), Mark Newman (NEU), Richard Westcott (RMT Penzance 1), Jonathan Beale (ASLEF Mid-Cornwall).

Speaker: Chris Willars from Labour for a Green New Deal.

Chris spoke for 15 minutes and then answered questions. LGND was started in 2019, primarily aimed at Labour Party members initially. Now that avenue is effectively closed and the orientation is towards the unions.

LGND position is that man-made climate change is a class issue and an existential threat to the working class. We will be massively more affected by the changes that are coming than the rich. It is therefore crucial that the working class intervenes to ensure there is a just transition.

Chris asked that CTUC support LGND model motion, which he read out (and is available on LGND website). If CTUC agreed, CTUC is asked to distribute LGND survey, aimed at unions, among our affiliates. Chris left open the question of whether we give financial support to the campaign. There is one paid worker at the moment but funding for that is due to end, he said. The rest of work is shouldered by activists like Chris, who is a fellow trades council officer in the Leicester area.

After answering questions, Chris then left the meeting. The meeting voted, 5-2, with two abstentions, to support the model motion.

July minutes: agreed as true record.

Matters arising: None raised.

Motion from Unite (Retired) branch: - "Hybrid meetings are unsatisfactory due to an inability to see or hear adequately who is speaking, together with the fact that, on occasion, someone online and someone at Redruth attempts to speak at the same time.

It is therefore proposed:

- a) All business meetings should be online, which is fully inclusive for everyone, with no travel requirement;
- b) A social committee should be formed with the remit of organising social events for those who wish to meet up in person. Cornwall Trades Union Council can contribute to these events instead of paying for room hire and pasties at St Rumons."

Proposed by Susan Fairweather, seconded by Brian Blatchford.

Susan spoke on the motion. There were no other speakers. Vote - six in favour, two abstentions. Motion carried.

Branch reports –

Unite Retired - Brian Blatchford reported that only four turned up at his last meeting, so they were inquorate, and could not make donations. The branch now has a chequebook. They had a general discussion, dominated by the withdrawal of the winter fuel allowance. They are to have a summer school in Torquay, October 19/20, at which Sharon Graham (general secretary) will be present.

Unite is organising a lobby of Parliament on Monday Oct 7th about the winter fuel allowance.

ASLEF Penzance - Grant Ash, deputising for Mike Butler, reported on ASLEF members overwhelmingly accepted the offer from the new government to settle the long-running dispute. The deal is five per cent for 2022, 4.7% for 2023 and 4.3% for 2024.

Unite Community - Rob Rooney spoke about a national online Unite Community meeting he (and Jane Creagh) attended on September 19. Sixty members from all over the country met to discuss the campaign to bring the utilities and the energy sector back into public ownership. Speakers were Joan Collins, a member of the Irish Dail who was prominent in the tumultuous campaign to privatise water in Ireland in 2009/11. She was followed by Colin Hampton, Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre, who spoke on the importance of community/retired branches acting in solidarity with industrial branches. Colin also outlined what is being done by Unite Community branches around the country to publicise the union campaign. He was followed by Unite's national officer for utilities and energy, Simon Cooper who illustrated, with many examples, why privatisation is such a failure.

Rob intends to raise this campaign at the forthcoming Unite Community meeting.

Statutory Sick Pay Campaign – CTUC is part of this national campaign (a coalition of community groups and charities and the TUC) to raise the current paltry level of SSP from £116 per week and to have it paid from day one of sickness. There is a nationwide photo-call on October 8 in advance of the government introducing its Employment Bill. It is hoped to have an event in Cornwall on that day.

Secretary position – This position with CTUC remains unfilled, with Richard Westcott filling in on the role as well as the role of treasurer. Again, no takers. Position to be on next month's agenda.

Affiliations – Susan Fairweather reported £20 received from ASLEF Mid-Cornwall. £200 has been received from Unite (Retired).

Treasurer's report - deferred to next month.

Any Other Business – none.

Date of next meeting - Mon Oct 28th, 7pm

Meeting ended 8:05pm