

YEOVIL & DISTRICT TRADES UNION COUNCIL



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Minutes of the **Meeting** held Wednesday 19th August 2009 at Unity Hall Yeovil BA20 1JL

Present; Bill Byrd, Unite/Amicus; Dave Osborne, Unite/Amicus; Chris Dennett, David Kingdon, Unite/Amicus; Rex Brown, Unite/Amicus; Brian Wadsworth, Unite/Amicus; Unite/Amicus; Terry Morgan, USDAW (Visitor); Roger Anderson, USDAW (Visitor); Lee Skevington, Labour PPC (Visitor) and Ken Keable, Prospect (Visitor).

1. Apologies: Joe Conway, Unite/TGWU; Vivian Willis, Unite/Amicus; Brian Macrae, Unite/Amicus; and Mark Hoskins, PCS

2. Minutes: The minutes were accepted as a correct and true record. In the absence of the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary Bill Byrd was nominated as Chair for the meeting and Dave Osborne volunteered to take the minutes.

3. Matters arising: There was confusion about what is happening regarding the debate on the People's Charter. Last month's minutes suggest the Secretary was arranging a speaker for the September meeting. Dave Osborne was trying to find someone to put a case against the Charter. Nigel Costley, TUC Regional Secretary, had told Dave why he was unlikely to get such a speaker and Dave passed on this information. Further discussion was put off until next month.

Dave Osborne said that he had put TUC researchers in touch with Westlands HR about the problems they have filling vacancies for apprentices. It was felt that the lack of investment in manufacturing compared to millions spent on bailing out banks sends the message that manufacturing is not an attractive career choice. Meanwhile, youth unemployment is rising and Bill Byrd reported a 1999 study that suggests 15% of under 25s who remain unemployed will be dead in ten years.

4. Officers reports: In the absence of the **President** there was no report. As Chair of the meeting Bill Byrd welcomed the USDAW representatives and hoped they would become regular delegates. There was no **Secretary's** report, although Lee Skevington reported that he is finalising the updated website.

The **Treasurer** reported that the current account is £1054.06 in credit.

Bill Byrd reported on the recent activities of the Yeovil 50 Plus Forum. The group is now affiliated to the National Pensioners Convention and has elected Bill as its NPC Liaison officer. Yeovil 50 Plus Forum are concerned about suggestions to cut funding for bus passes. Lee Skevington said that as the newly-appointed Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Yeovil Labour Party he is campaigning for cheaper bus fares and better [delete] bus services. Dave Osborne said that Norman Browne of Transport 2000 has spoken to Trades Council on this issue in the past and offered to put Lee in touch with him. Chris Dennett said bus passes are very useful and Lee's campaign could be a vote winner. Yeovil 50 Plus Forum has a stall at the bandstand in Middle Street on Saturday 5th September and are holding an Information Day at the meeting room in South Street on 10th October. Bill said the group relies on donations and grants and asked if Trades Council would make a donation. It was agreed to donate £25. Ken Keable called for public transport to be returned to public ownership.

Ken Keable reported on the Bridgwater meeting in support of the Vestas dispute on the Isle of Wight. It was an excellent meeting describing the fight by a group of workers who had not previously been union members defending jobs and trying to retain the manufacture of wind turbines in the UK. Minister Joan Ruddock had said they can't nationalise it because "the owners refused". Theo Simon from Seize the

Day wrote 'Boys on the Balcony' in tribute to those occupying the site and this can be downloaded by those wanting to show support. Lee Skevington said he had written to the Secretary of State for Climate Change about the impact on employment on the island but no reply so far. Brian Wadsworth said he was not convinced about the value of wind turbines but the government says it does believe in wind power and was concerned about their lack of support for this company.

5. Local matters: Rex Brown reported on the new "green" tax on workplace parking; companies with more than ten parking spaces will have to pay £185 annually per space, the cost doubling after two years. Companies can pass on the costs to workers *if they wish*. Roger Anderson is a national rep for Tesco and believes they will jump at the chance. Bill Byrd said that when he was a convenor at Westlands they tried to negotiate a payment of £35 per week if people left their cars at home but this wasn't taken up. Dave Osborne suggested inviting the TUC Green Workplaces team back to give an authoritative perspective on this issue.

Lee Skevington reported that a speaker from the CWU will attend a meeting of the Constituency Labour Party in September to discuss recent events. Dave Osborne noted that the CWU are affiliated to Trades Council but we have yet to see a delegate and rely on Bridgwater TUC for information. Lee reported cuts being planned by the new Conservative administration at Somerset County Council and those present expressed concern that there was no local government staff representative on this Trades Council. Lee also said he had met Jim Knight MP about working to keep the Tories out in South Dorset; could the unions assist with funding in this area? Some of the larger unions actively support the Labour Party and those involved in the CLP are best placed to explore this issue. Meanwhile, we might be able to support this in conjunction with colleagues from Weymouth and Dorchester Trades Council.

6. Press release: None.

7. Correspondence: Labour Research Department: although not minuted it was agreed we had discussed this last month and decided not to re-affiliate because no one uses the information provided and most Branches get it direct.

Received TUC directory of Trades Councils and County Associations.

From Sustainable Energy Partnership, a statement of achievements to date.

From Cuba Solidarity Campaign, Cuba Si magazine for summer 2009.

8. Any other business: A meeting of the Somerset Association of Trades Councils had been scheduled for earlier this month but has been rescheduled for Wednesday 26th September.

Roger Anderson reported that Tesco are downsizing managers by 40%; USDAW is campaigning for direct local employment instead of using agency staff. Chris Dennett asked what percentage of UK workers are in retail, Roger said Tesco employ approximately half a million people. 51% of Tesco workers are union members. USDAW is currently campaigning for recognition in Asda, Waitrose, Marks and Spencer, etc.

President
