Report of the Ninety Sixth Annual Conference
Southport 2014

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Official Report of the 96th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Held at
The Theatre and Convention Centre, Southport

from
Sunday 8 June 2014
to
Wednesday 11 June 2014
VERBATIM report of BFAWU Annual Conference 2014

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[Conference Closes]
Sunday 8 June 2014

Morning Session

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, General Secretary to call a roll call.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, sorry Dave, how many?, Dave?, I can’t hear you, okay but on the sheet you’ve only got 19, that’s why I was querying it. No. 3 Region, can you make sure when they come in, Tony, they go to Standing Orders Committee, Region 4, sorry Geoff, 38, Region 5, Region 6 and Region 7.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, while the General Secretary’s just totting up ......

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: 171 Delegates present.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can I remind everybody, logistics, could you make sure that your mobile phones are at least turned to silent. Can you make sure that, obviously the toilets are clearly marked, so when you find them, if somebody could tell me where they are, I’d appreciate it. Through the door to the left, through the door and, as always, to the left, but I believe you go over that way, yes? Obviously the fire exits are clearly marked. I’m not aware of any fire drills that are planned, so if there’s a fire, quite clearly leave the building as safely and as quickly as possible and I believe there’s a pub next door, is that where we’re meeting?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: The Hungry Horse.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: The Hungry Horse, we meet in the Hungry Horse, I believe. So, obviously, Conference obviously welcome to Southport and now it’s my great pleasure to formally invite the Mayor of Southport, who’s one of those unusual people, he’s in the Labour Party, a trade unionist and for the first time in many years we’d like to welcome a Labour Mayor to open our Conference, so without further ado, let me introduce Kevin McClusky, who’s the Mayor of Southport.

[APPLAUSE]

Kevin McClusky, Mayor of Southport: Technically that’s wrong, I’m Mayor of Sefton. Although you may have heard of Southport, it’s actually a part of the Merseyside Boroughs, there’s six of them and which was created many years ago. It was Southport in Lancashire then and where myself and comrade Draper come from, Litherland, is an old town in Lancashire, but it’s now in this Merseyside Borough.

So the main thing is, welcome to, at last, sunny Southport. If you’d have been here yesterday, it was something like the rain that’s been pouring down in Miami on the England football team. It does get some rough weather here. Southport’s quite unique in that it’s got a very strange beach, you’ll be lucky if you see the sea and when it comes in, it’s only about four or five millimetres, but it’s excellent for things like the Air Show. We have the second biggest Flower Show in the country, after Chelsea and it’s a town full of good quality restaurants, clubs, plenty of things to see, if you’ve got the time of course and it’s a very popular Conference town.

Just speaking for myself, I’ve been a member of UCATT for over 50 years. I’m retired now of course, but the main thing is, enjoy yourselves and come back. Have a good Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, thank you very much. We’re now going to do what we always do at the opening of our Conference, which is we’re pleased to present a cake, which this year’s been done by Manor Bakeries in Stoke, which obviously is a fantastic cake and I believe it’s in that box, is it in that box, in that box? It’s in the box and obviously Ronnie’s going to present it to Jenny, who’s from Queenscourt Hospice in Southport. I believe that it’s Southport, not Sefton.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, now can I officially welcome everybody and obviously this is our first time in Southport. Obviously after years and years at Bridlington, where everybody knew everything and everybody was aware of how everything worked, so obviously we make mistakes every year and I probably make more mistakes than most, so expect a number of mistakes and obviously if you pick up on them, there’s no prizes, because they’ll probably be very, very easy to pick out, but firstly can I welcome all our new Delegates.

We’ve got a number of new Delegates this year for the first time at our Conference and we’d like to welcome you and obviously if you need any assistance, obviously there’s a lot of experienced Delegates here who can give you assistance. Obviously the full-time Officials, but if you do need any help then there’s probably a lot of people in this room that can tell you what you need to know.
Obviously we’d like to welcome all of our stall holders, who this year are from Walkers Union, Thompson’s, Watkins & Gunn, Payplan, the GFTU Northern College, the Union Learn Credit Union, Lighthouse, Shrewsbury 24, the NSSN, Hazards, Youth Fight For Jobs, Westfield, the LRC, Right To Work and also we’d like to thank Warburtons for sponsoring the tea and coffee and Fox’s for providing the biscuits. Also the new branches that we’ve been made this year, Honeytop Foods, Dave Wood Baking, Maine Bakery, Mother’s Pride Engineers, Dobbies Garden Centre, so we’d like to welcome all of those new branches as well, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]
And now the bit where I forget everybody’s name and then they have a go at me after. The Executive Council, I’ve got John, I’ve got Jason, I’ve got Cecil, I’ve got Butch or Dave, I’ve got Jackie that’s sat behind me, Pauline McCarthy, Norville, Mark, Lizzie and Noel as well, Mark McHugh, Lizzie, Rachel, John Owens, obviously that’s Norville, John Fitz, Joe Knapper and obviously my VP, who makes sure that I stay in check, John Fox and of course the General Secretary who sits on the right-hand side of me, Ronnie Draper, okay.

We’ve had some messages sent in as well. We’ve had some messages sent in from Andrew Fisher who’s from PCS, he’s also written a book recently and he wishes our Conference well. We had messages from Unite The Union, Jenny Formby, who sent her best wishes to our Conference well. We had messages from Unite The Union, Jenny Formby, who sent her best wishes to our Conference well and there’s quite a number of others, which I haven’t brought with me unfortunately and obviously I’m sure our Conference would like to send a message of get well soon to Mark Serwotka, who’s the General Secretary of PCS, who’s recently undergone some serious heart surgery. We believe he’s on the mend and hopefully we’ll see him back and fighting fit and representing his members in the fantastic way that he always does.

Also this year it’ll be quite strange for us because for years and years we’ve got used to Olive Molloy from Standing Orders, who’s been an absolutely superb Chair of Standing Orders, who unfortunately was taken ill just before Conference. We believe she’s okay and she’s getting better, but I’m sure Conference would agree that we send her a message that we wish her a speedy recovery and obviously our best wishes from Conference.

[APPLAUSE]
And also I think we could send a get well message to Grace who works in our No. 3 Office, who’s also been off work with a serious illness and I’m sure we’d like to send Grace from Region 3’s Office a get well message as well, okay.

[APPLAUSE]
We’ve got Scrutineers, Region 1 is Jack Lee, Region 2 John Harding, Region 3 Lukasz Bemka, Region 4 Michael Redshaw, Region 5 Kath Suggett, Region 6 Eddie Burke, Region 7 John Halliday Junior and obviously the nomination forms need to come up to Ronnie for the EC and Standing Orders, yes.

For the new Delegates, we’re now looking at the Annual Conference Report, which is the red one and it’s got ‘Presented to the 96th Annual Conference, Southport, 2014’, yes? And once you’ve got it, if you could turn to Page 58. As you’re turning to Page 58, obviously this year people will be aware of two giants to the Labour movement that we lost and I’m sure we’d like to pay tribute to two heroes of the working class that were taken from us this year. Firstly the RMT General Secretary, Bob Crow, a proper trade unionist in just about every respect, who fought and campaigned hard for his members, protecting and improving their pay and conditions year on year. He was a true Titan that will be sadly missed and also to pay tribute to two heroes of the working class that were taken from us this year. Firstly the RMT General Secretary, Bob Crow, a proper trade unionist in just about every respect, who fought and campaigned hard for his members, protecting and improving their pay and conditions year on year. Bob was a friend to our Union, standing alongside us in campaigns against zero hours and workplace temperatures. He was a true Titan that will be sadly missed and also to pay tribute to the best Prime Minister the UK should have had, Tony Benn, who famously said “If you can find money to kill people, you can find money to help people”. Tony had his priorities right and he defined every quality that we seek from the people we elect. I hope that his lasting legacy inspires future politicians for years to come and of course for all our comrades, colleagues, friends and members of family that we’ve lost during the year, could you please stand for a minute’s silence.

[Silence observed]
Okay, thank you Conference.

I’d now like to welcome Gloria Martin to give her first Standing Orders report to Conference.

Sister Gloria Martin, Standing Orders: Thank you, Mr President, Platform, Delegates. Good morning to you all and welcome to our 2014 Annual Conference. Part of my duties as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee is to put to you for your approval the report on the procedures for each Conference. I put to you the following, for your approval.

Each Conference session will begin with the roll call being taken by our General Secretary. The morning session will begin at 9.30 until 12.30. The afternoon session will begin at 2 o’clock until 5 o’clock.
All tea breaks, guest speakers and presentations will be at the President’s discretion and all Delegates must be in the Hall for the beginning of the roll call, or they will be refused admission until they have been before the Standing Orders, where they will be fined for their lateness. Delegation leaders must come to Standing Orders with names of any absent Delegates. Please carry your credential cards at all times, not forgetting to take it with you at lunchtimes. Delegates must not leave Conference early, unless they have been given permission, express permission, otherwise they will be liable for the cost of their accommodation. Finally, make sure that all mobile phones are switched off during all Conference sessions.

Now please turn to your Agendas. You certainly can, Ron, right, you settled now? Right. Rule changes and new rules. Motion 1 is withdrawn, motion 2 stands, motion 3 stands, motion 4 and 5 are composite 1, motion 6 stands, motion 7 stands, motion 8 has been withdrawn, motion 9 stands, motion 10 stands, motion 11 stands, motion 12 stands, motion 13 stands, motion 14 stands, motion 15 has been withdrawn, motion 16 stands, motion 17 stands, motion 18 stands, motion 19 stands, motion 20 stands, motion 21 is out of order and motion 22 stands. That, Delegates, is as far as we’ve gone so far. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to Conference, do we accept the report? All those in favour please show .

Okay, thank you Conference.

Okay, for all the new Delegates, we’re now going to turn to the Annual Report and I believe it starts on Page 35, double-check. Back to the red books, the Annual Report and we’re starting on Page 3. Now, for new Delegates and obviously for people who may have forgotten, I read out the pages and if you want to come down, then you say your name, your branch and whatever is the question that you want to raise, yes? So I read out the pages and show me your hand, come down, your name, your branch and then ask your question, okay? So, Page 3, Page 4. Now we move onto the Executive Council minutes of 12th June, 2013 which are on Page 5. Page 6, sorry, Page 6 which is the minutes of the Executive Council held between 7th and 9th August, so Page 6. Page 7, Page 8, Page 9, Page 10, okay. The Executive minutes held between 6th and 8th November, which are on Page 11. Page 12, Page 13, Page 14, Page 15, okay. Now on Page 16, the minutes that were held on 5th – 7th February, Page 16. Page 17, Page 18, Page 19, okay. Okay, now we’re going to turn to, has everybody got a copy of the loose leaf ones? The loose leaf ones should say ‘Minutes of the Executive Council held on 6th – 9th May’, has everybody got them? Yes, everyone? Okay, yes, hold on a minute, let me read the page. Okay, so we’re looking under loose leaf, the ones entitled ‘6th – 9th May’ and it’s Page 1. Yes, we’ll get there. So Page 1 I’m at first, yes? Okay, Page 2, okay, Page 2? Okay.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Morning, Conference. The first one, Region 4, debate took place on Trades Council payments. If you get your rule book and read 14/15, it says and it’s the last bit of this that’s relevant, payments to Delegates shall be the same as Delegates to Conference, Regional and National Committee meetings on reporting back to the branch and Regional Council and that comes out as we will pay public transport for you to travel. Sorry, I can’t see that. There’s nothing in that about public transport. It says you’ll get a Delegate’s fee. Can we have some clarification, please?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. The clarification’s as simple as this, Trades Council’s expenses appear on the Branch Secretary’s quarterly expense sheet. Branch Secretaries fill in those quarterly expense sheets and put those claims into the Regional Office. The rule suggests the actual payments that are being talked about are on reporting back to both Regional Council and to branches. The issue about attending Trade Union Councils is that the Trade Union Council Delegate normally will tell the Branch Secretary and if you’re the Branch Secretary you will fill in the form, hand that in to your Regional Office and they should pay you what you’re entitled to be paid. As for the Delegates fee, we’ve never actually paid a Delegate’s fee to Delegates at a Trades Council. We’ve only ever paid on what the Branch Secretary has filled in on the Branch Secretary expense sheets, which is normally out-of-pocket expenses. That’s my understanding of how it works. Obviously from personal experience as a Trades Council Delegate, as a Branch Secretary who used to fill in the Trades Council part of the claim form for me and my Delegates and when I was a full-time Official, advising people on how to fill in their quarterly sheets when I had a new Branch Secretary, so that’s what I was told, that’s what’s been in place for many a year. If you think that the rule is badly worded, then what I would suggest is because it doesn’t say for attending Trades Council, it actually says for reporting back, I would suggest that the best way to resolve that would be to bring a motion to the Conference next year, okay? Don’t tell me I’ve made you happy, Marilyn [LAUGHTER]. Thank you.

**Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary:** Page 2.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Page 2.
Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: Delegates, Platform. I read here in this, “debate took place on Trades Council payments” and if a debate takes place, you should have a result. When the minutes must decide that (a) it was dropped, (b) it was taken care of or it was laid on the table for another meeting, but to have it like that, if you go to a meeting and you debate and you debate and you debate and you take no decisions, what’s the point of a meeting? It’ll become like question time. David Dimbleby lets them talk and talk until he’s fed up listening to them and then he moves on to another subject, but I would like to see a conclusion to it. I’ve noticed it here and there in minutes when debates take place and no decision taken. What’s the point? Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Pat. Okay.

[APPLAUSE]

In response to that, the issue is not as clear cut as it may appear. The rule is there and the rule makes a number of suggestions about what people are entitled to pay. The debate took place about what we’ve been doing for a number of years and we believe that we’re operating it correctly. Now obviously we have a Delegate who attends Trades Council and we’re grateful that they go and attend Trades Union Councils, but we don’t believe at this moment in time that that rule enabled us to do anything other than what we’ve currently done, which is why obviously we’re trying to make progress in relation to moving that forward by suggesting maybe a motion comes forward next year. A debate is a debate. The position was that, at the end of the debate, we obviously communicated the answer back, as far as I’m aware, to the individual and obviously he’s still unhappy, but obviously been able to bring the issue up here and I’ve tried to answer your question this morning, Pat. You’re not coming back for a right of reply on that, you’re not coming back for a right of reply on that, okay? If you’ve got another question on Page 2, not on Page 2? Anybody else with anything else on Page 2? No, you can’t. Anybody else on Page 2? Okay, Page 3, are you coming on Page 3, mate?

Brother Paul Crandon, Branch Secretary (Avana Bakeries, Rogerstone): 21 years a Union Official, second time speaker at Conference, so Gary will slate me for that, but my question is, Avana Bakeries is under a threat of closure and I would like to know when our General Secretary and National President, bearing in mind we’ve got 400+ members at the site, when our General Secretary and National President are going to make an appearance at that site....

[APPLAUSE]

…because these people have been paying for a long, long time, you’re talking a substantial amount of money and if I didn’t get up today, I would be doing them an injustice and the same speech to these guys here, yes, I’ve had phone calls, but there has not been one of the national, National President, General Secretary have not made a visit to that branch and my question to them is why?

[APPLAUSE]

Let’s be honest, Avana Bakeries, it looks like yes, we’re under threat of closure, obviously Park Cakes will be looking for the guys from Park Cakes. I will look out for you, but please come and give me a shout, to let me know what you’re doing with the orders. We’ve been led a merry dance down it at the moment, the orders are, how do I put it, it’s on a week to week basis, the place is closing, it’s not closing, we’ve got Greggs, Sainsbury’s, Waitrose, to name but a few, but the thing is, there’s 450 members at that branch. How many of you can tell me in this room you’ve got 450 members at a site? How many of you? Is there many of you got 450+ members at a site? But I want to know when these guys, who are sat up here, are going make an appearance at that site. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: General Secretary to respond.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Yes, Paul, I’m obviously speaking on behalf of both of the National Officers. I do apologise that we haven’t made the effort, if you like, to get down there. They’ll be a million and one excuses you can give. I’m not going to do that. One thing I would say though is, we don’t go to any branch unless we’ve got an actual invite. We’re not like the factory inspector or a bailiff where we can just turn up and knock on the door and get in. If we’re given a date and I’m happy to do that, Paul, at the tea break, I will give you a date when I will come back, over the next week or so, obviously I can’t go this week, but I will give you a date when I could come back, I can come down to that branch, but I have been in contact with yourself over what’s happened there and I have been in contact, almost constantly, with the full-time Official in that area to make us aware of what the situation is. And just to explain, the other thing that we’ve done and I don’t know whether Paul’s aware of it, one of the big issues that we’ve been dealing with with that company through our Parliamentary Group and I’m sure that John McDonnell will report this afternoon and that is that we’ve now got Ranjit Singh to come before our Parliamentary Group to answer questions, as we believe that this guy is over-stretched in the food market and rather than him being good for the food industry, he’s actually detrimental, what he is doing is causing a race to the bottom, but I will not hold over an excuse as to why I have not been there, as I say there can be a multitude.

[APPLAUSE]
The fact is, we haven’t been there and Paul, you’re right and all I can do is apologise, but what I will do, I will promise that I will put it right. If you see me at the tea break, I will most certainly give you a date, within the next couple of weeks, when I will come down, even if I have to juggle my diary around, I will come down to Avana Cakes.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Before you do, Janine, were you coming back on ....

Brother Paul Crandon, Branch Secretary (Avana Bakeries, Rogerstone): The only thing that I would say, Ronnie, is you haven’t got to be invited on our site, you’re more than welcome at any time, so let’s pack that one up, because that’s just an excuse. At the end of the day, you can come down here whenever you want to. Give me a phone, you’re more than welcome any, any time. Yes, you’re right in what you say, I know that, but at the end of the day the people on the shop floor don’t know that, you’re more than welcome at any time, so please, please, please, attend.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Absolutely.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Page 3, is it?

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): Yes, Page 3. I want to raise the question on appeals, Delegates appeals. I want to know how come the Executive Council overturn a rule. If branches elect or do not elect, when do Delegates get elected by the Executive Council then, because that’s not in the rule book. There’s also circulars sent out 114 (?), sent out on 17th February this year, saying there’ll be no exceptions to the rule, so why, when I was under the impression that Conference changed the rules, has the Executive Council now decided that branches don’t count anymore and they’ll elect the Delegates?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Janine, obviously people are entitled to appeal to the Executive Council. People are entitled to appeal to the Executive Council, they always have been. Ronnie wants to also come in.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Janine, all I’m saying for Conference’s benefit, because Conference don’t know what you’re talking, which one are you talking about?

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): Right, I do want to name names, Jason Moore, Executive Council member. I call branch meetings about once a month, for which at least seven days notice is given. I post it on Facebook and I text the members as well. Jason hasn’t attended a branch meeting, well you’ve attended one in the past 17 months. He didn’t even drop me a text to say that he wanted to be elected in the March quarterly meeting, because apparently I was supposed to know. I didn’t know. My branch and my Delegate was elected as per rule, seven days notice was given, a branch meeting was held, they were nominated, seconded and I asked if anybody else wanted to stand. The appeal didn’t come from the branch, it came from an individual, who didn’t even raise it at any of the other branch meetings I’ve had since the March quarterly meeting, which was before the Executive, so it could have been ratified by the branch and there wouldn’t have been an issue with it. At the end of the day, I want to know and the Executive Council knew all this because I sent an email telling them. I want to know how come the branch don’t decide who gets elected now and the Executive Council does.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: General Secretary to respond.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Can you go through the mike because it won’t pick it up and give your name Colin, please.

Brother Colin Morgan – Branch 238 (Burtons, Llantarnam): Morning, comrades. Point of clarification, I thought EC members didn’t have to be elected at branch, they went in their own right.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, that’s true, but not as Delegates. They come in their own right, but if they come in as a Delegate, then obviously they have to be elected at branch, but Ronnie’s going to, the General Secretary’s going to respond.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Yes, thanks Janine and Colin. I think first of all to deal with what you’re talking about, Colin, an EC member can come to Conference without being elected and basically sit on their hands, they can’t vote or whatever and then they clearly wouldn’t be able to stand for the Executive for the next two years. In the case of appeals, we can receive, one of the appeals that I received this year on a Delegate was received from a full-time Official, who reckoned they’d made a mistake. So the Executive Council have all the appeals in front of them and what they do, in their collective wisdom and bear in mind they are an extension of you.
The ruling body of this Union is Annual Conference, but unfortunately we can’t sit in Committee like this for 365 days a year. You’re here for four days and so during those other 300 and odd days, that is the remit of the Executive Council as you give them that power to do that. When the Executive are looking at appeals and you can they do through them, it’s not a verbatim report what you see there, it is based on the evidence that is put before the Executive Council and yes, Janine, your evidence was put before the Executive Council and Jason Moore also put evidence before the Executive Council and at the end of the day, we have a result and that is the result in there, but if you give the Executive Council the power to make decisions on behalf of the Union, then you have to accept that they take those decisions. You can’t say well, you can take that decision but because I don’t like that one, that one isn’t going to count.

We never, or very, very rarely when there’s any controversy on any motion in this Hall will we get a unanimous decision, there will be people who will be for and there will be people who will be against, but at the end of the day, what we do do is we come out with a result and I’ll tell you what, we’re not talking about a two minute debate here. I suspect that that debate went on for over an hour at the Executive Council, it was a long, long debate, but at the end of the day the Executive made a decision, as is their right, as is given to them by you, when you elect them and that is the decision that they came up with. They took the decision. Whether Conference liked that or whether the branch liked that or whether individuals liked that, is down to argument.

The fact is, they took a decision and that decision resulted in Jason Moore being a Delegate at this Conference, but as I say, it was on the basis of evidence being supplied from two different areas. I mean in fairness, when it’s talking about people shouldn’t be at Conference, I’ve never known any time when evidence has been given by a branch that says and I’ve been around for years, I’ve never known a branch give evidence against somebody going as a Delegate, but the fact is they had evidence from two sides put before them and after a long, a long debate, a long searching debate, that was the answer that they came up with. They took the decision. Whether Conference liked that or whether the branch liked that or whether individuals liked that, is down to argument.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): Can I just say one thing though? In the rulebook next year, can you do me a favour and remove the paragraph that says there will be no exception to the rule, because you’ve just said the Executive will do what they like anyway.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Page 3. I think that was just a closing statement, I don’t think she was looking for a reply to that. Okay. Anything else on Page 3, no? Page 4.

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: Delegates, Mr President. On the last page, on the first paragraph. The National President and P McCarthy gave a report on the Collins Review-inspired Conference, dealing with the links between the Labour Party and the trade unions, raising questions of our future and affiliation. Now, what I would like to know, Mr President, is if we do affiliate where are we going, or what steps have been taken and what did the Collins Report say as regards that? Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Obviously the Collins Review was about making the Labour Party not a trade union affiliated block membership and turn it into an individual membership. Obviously it has all sorts of implications. Unite’s view is that they can increase the membership and have a bigger say within the Labour Party. We don’t think that’s quite true.

We believe that the Labour Party should have retained that collective link which the trade unions offer to working people who don’t have the ability to buy and influence the politics within the political arena. We believe that the Labour Party through that collective link was able to offer us an opportunity, not to make policy, but certainly to have an input to help influence the political agenda of the Labour Party. What we believe the Collins Review does is take away that collective voice within the Labour Party and I think that obviously at this moment in time this trade union is affiliated to the Labour Party and we’ll be fighting obviously, unless something changed significantly, for a Labour Party victory in 2015.

The changes in the Collins Review aren’t expected to take hold until, I think it’s 2017, by which time then obviously what we will have to understand is whether or not the role that we play within the Labour Party will be of any value whatsoever. Individually people will be entitled to join, but from a trade union perspective, we may view that that’s an opportunity to maybe look at other political campaigns, but that’s not for me to make a decision on, that’s for our Conference to make a decision on in future.

Is that okay?
Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: If we don’t affiliate to the Labour Party and walk away, the Party that the unions built back in the early 1900’s, back there somewhere and in those days the Party formed 12 MPs for parliament and they made the one mistake, they gave them the right to do what they liked, they said they wouldn’t interfere with them, you do what you like and true to the cause, the Labour Party has carried out that year on year since then. We have to oppose this and we have to get democracy in the Labour Party. We won’t walk away, it’s our Party.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Pat. Okay, to Conference, do you accept the report? What Page?

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I have a loose leaf of a Special Executive Council meeting. Why wasn’t it given to us in our packs? and while I understand that there was a need for the change, it’s a change of rule that the Executive Council has carried out alone. I thought that’s what Conference did.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Right, let me explain what the loose leaf one is. The loose leaf sheet and the Special Executive lasted, I don’t know, a couple of minutes. It was open an Executive, make a decision, close the Executive. Let me explain what the rule change was, because it seems that if you just say there was this rule change, it sounds as though we’re just corrupting the rules. What the rule change was, comrades, is that for the political fund ballot, we have to ballot every member and we have to put a certain word in on the sheets that we send, the certificates that we send back to the certification officer. In the last 10 years, within our rule book you’ll see the certification office has an address, they have moved address and we couldn’t use the same rule.

We couldn’t wait for Conference to come along and say is it alright if we change the address of the certification office, so the Executive took a decision, that is the only change that was made, was changing an address for the certification office, so when we put the envelope in the post it went to the right address and even if it got re-directed to the certification officer, our ballot, which is now going to start running this week, would have been null and void if we hadn’t have done it. We could not have taken the decision at Conference to change the address of the certification officer.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I’ve got no problem with the change and I understand clearly why it’s been done. What I don’t like is the fact that this was hidden away, it wasn’t put, alright it happened before the Executive Council meeting, why wasn’t it put in the Agenda first before the Executive Council meeting and it’s my belief Conference makes the decisions, so you should put it here now for ratification by Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, fair enough. Does Conference have an issue with us changing the address for the certification officer? All those in favour of us agreeing the change to the certification officer, please show. Anyone against? That’s carried, thank you. Yes, we can get that, I believe, I’ve just been told reliably, yes?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: If you want a copy of a piece of, if you want a piece of paper that says we’ve changed the address of the certification officer, we can get it for you, but then don’t come about green issues, about us chopping down Amazonian rainforests to produce the paper to do it. That’s all, well you’ve got the minute, I think you said yourself you’ve got it, you know what’s on it, but if all Delegates want a copy, if you come and see us, we’ll make sure you get a copy of it, if you want it.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, if you close those minutes and now we’re looking at the Treasurer’s Report, which is the white one.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I can’t hear you, Janine, you’ll have to come down.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sorry, I’ve just realised that when we were getting you to vote on the other thing, I forgot to get you to vote on the Annual Report as well. Everybody accept the Annual Report? Anybody against? Okay, then we can move on to the Treasurer’s Report, apologies. We can rewind that on the tape. Okay, so everybody got the Treasurer’s Report out, yes? Okay. I’ll read the pages, same principle as before, anybody got an issue, name, branch and obviously your question. Okay. Page 1, Page 1.

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: Delegates, Mr President. The CCFA budget, which stands at £859,000 and it stands at that or around about that every year and I don’t, I can’t get how it works out, because it pays £202,975 into the General Fund, where does the pay(ee) income and where is the £859,000 kept? Is it kept in a special account, or does the Executive hold it somewhere special.
I know what it’s for, it’s to pay for lost cases or anything that the Union might incur over a four year period and if you take that over a four year period, it pays between close to £200,000 each year into the General Fund and you still have this £859,000, but I don’t know where it is in the report or if it is held in some other account. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Pat, it’s just held in the General Fund, but held under a separate code, like there’s lots of different things have a different code, we don’t have millions of different accounts all over the place. That money has to be kept separate and I’ll explain the reason. You’re right, it’s the money that’s raised from successful cases, but of course that money’s going to run out because the Jackson Report stopped those sort of things happening, but I, as the Treasurer and the Union as an organisation, have to produce an account that demonstrates that that money’s there. We couldn’t sort of put the money straight into the General Fund and start spending it and doing whatever we wanted because that money was actually set aside as, I suppose for want of a better word, rainy-day money in case you lost a big legal case, so what you did, like the squirrel gathering her nuts in May for when times got hard you could then use that and that was exactly the same as us.

We were gathering the money through the successful claims that our lawyers took out for us, we put it into an account and then if we lost a case, we’ve had a case down at Bradford, we’ve had a few cases which have actually cost us legal fees where we had to pay out, we take that money out of that reserve. The reason why we don’t shove a whole lot into the account at once, we only move over the quarter, I think £202,000 I think you said Pat, we moved over this year. It’s because it’s a four year cycle, we can only use a quarter of it over the next four years, but in three years now, that money will run out, we will not have it anymore because we haven’t got CCFA money coming in, because the government’s stopped it and that’s, well you’ve seen the effect for the first time ever in our history and I can’t understand it. We’ve got barristers going on strike for the attacks that have been taken on the legal profession, that’s just one of the things but yes, it is held separate, but strictly for that legal purpose and then every fourth year we then move a quarter of it over into the General Fund to spend on campaigning and all the things that we need to do for it.

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: So it will run out in the near future.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: It will run out, Pat, in three years. Don’t forget, what you’re looking at now, when I say three years, I’m looking at three years ahead. What you’re looking at is not what’s happening in 2014, you’re looking at a snapshot of 2013, that’s what the Treasurer’s Report is based on. So you will see that come 2016, that money will run out that year. We will not have it any more because we’ll not get the income from CCFA anymore, you can’t do it, it’s illegal. Okay?

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: Just another question.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: What Page?

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: Another question on the same page. In the year 11 and 12, we had the Pension Fund liability printed on it and it was going in a very, very, very dangerous way, it was going up to three million, but this year it’s not printed, the Pension Fund liability. I know it’s further on, on Page 5, but it’s not printed here to tell us what is happening to it. Sorry, it’s on Page 5.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I have a liability to make sure that it’s published within the accounts of the Union, the report I’ve done there, I just pick edited highlights. What I don’t do is the same report this year as I did last year and if that’s not in there, I will say, Pat, when we come to look at the, if you do look at the Pension Fund, the Pension Fund’s actually in a better position now than it was.

We’ve had the highlights of what the actual report’s going to be and it’s going to be less of a burden on the Union as it stands, because of the way that shares and that and investments that we’ve taken out have improved, but because I never had an up-to-date figure, because we’re right on the cusp of an actuarial report, I didn’t have all the final figures to show, but what we will do, once we get them, we will publish them anyway.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Okay, Pat? What Page?

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: Page 1, on the accounts.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Let me just say, we’re now on Page 1, yes?

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: Yes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Page 1.

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: Okay, sorry, sorry President, I didn’t ….. On the bottom of the income, you will see profit on the disposal of assets. Does that mean that we have sold assets to stoke up the General Fund, or why is it there and it also appeared two years ago on, I think it is, 2011 that we sold assets of what they are, it’s £113,304. What assets were sold for that?
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Pat, what that is, that’s when you, we have a portfolio of investments as a Union. Although we’re registered as a charity, we have to operate the same way as a business does, to keep going. What we do, we invest, if it’s on a five year bond or something like that and that matures, then that has to show somewhere, once it matures, we have to put the money back. Then we look at, at the Finance Committee meetings we will then look to re-invest that money. All it is is that that money has come back into the Union from an investment that’s matured.

The other one is, it could be the money, because there was some money that was in Southern Ireland that we had invested over there for a while, which we actually brought over. We would never bring it over in the past because it was prohibitive on the cost of transferring funds from euros into pounds, but of course we’ve been through a period where it wasn’t that detrimental and so what we did, we transferred money over from Southern Ireland, from that account over there, back into the General Fund.

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: You count that “disposal of assets”, is that the term you use for it?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: No, it’s not a disposal of assets, it’s a maturing asset that we have to show, we have to show every penny that the Union’s got and show it in the accounts, so it’s an income to the Union. It’s not a disposal, it’s just, that’s an accountant term, that’s not my terminology or Adrian’s. The things that go on here are what an accountant tells us we’ve got to put in. Like lawyers, they put words into things that we don’t always understand and that’s why you have to pay them more money than the minimum wage to find out what it means. That is accountant speak, that’s how they would write things down. They prepare this account.

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: Yes. When it says “disposal”, I took it that when you dispose of something or you lose it, turn it into cash, you have disposed of the asset. It doesn’t mean that our general assets, does it mean that our general assets have dropped by £113,000?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: No, no, it just means it’s in a different form and therefore it’s showing in the account, otherwise you’d see you’ve had a much bigger deficit over the year if that was the case.

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: I’ve just one complaint to make. The lighting down the Hall is very, very, very dull and it’s very hard, it must be hard for other people too, to try to read the material that’s under their hands.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Okay. Can the technicians turn the lighting up for us please a little bit, out in the Hall, not here because I’m getting a suntan.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Just a very ……

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: What page is it? What page is it?

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: None. Ronnie, we’re struggling with your mike. I don’t know whether anybody else is, but we are on the back row. We can hear every word that Ian says, unfortunately, but we’re not getting all yours. Do you want to swap mikes?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I think what it might be, Marilyn, you can hear me now no doubt, I think it’s because I’m stood up doing it, that’s why.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: You need to sit down then.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I’m happy to sit down for all of it if you want. The only thing is I’ll end up with a cauliflower arse, you know what I mean. I’m happy to sit down if you want.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: I’ve heard you already have got a cauliflower backside, but there we go.


Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: 5.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: 5, Page 5.

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: We’ll change the situation. Conference, Delegates, Mr President. On the Pension Reserve again on the liability, I see that the liability has come down by about £413,000, is that a trend now that will continue because it’s a step in the right direction, because the Pension Fund was looking very dangerous over the last few years when it went up to over three million, it was very dangerous for this Union, but now that has dropped down to £2,779 and it means that in money terms it has come down by £413,000. If it continues that over the years, we will be in a very good position, very soon. Thank you. Is that correct?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Pat, what I can’t do, I can’t promise you it’s an ongoing trend. I wish I could.
If I could, I’d be a multi-millionaire. That’s not the way the money markets are. What has driven that change is two things, I think. First of all we changed the way that the Pension Fund operated, where we had salary sacrifice and that’s coming out into an account in 2013, so we changed the amount of money that the Union has to pay. The other thing we did, we extended the length of the deficit. You were always under pressure from the Financial Services Authority as they’re called now, or whatever they’re called, they changed their name, those people used to put pressure on you to pay up any deficit you had over a relatively short period of time.

What we did through negotiation with the Financial Services Authority is, we actually got the length of time when we could pay that back over a longer period and hence the payments, the premiums that we pay have dropped, but as I said, Pat, the one thing that I’m quite pleased with is that when the actual report comes in, the Pension Fund will be in a better situation and hopefully less of a burden, so then it’s down to the trustees and the Union to take the decision whether we shorten the time that we’ve got that debt there, or whether we reduce the payments that we make back to it, but one way or the other this year the pension will be in a better situation.

If George Osborne carries on making the town halls of the economy the way I think he is and hides it behind this rosy glow, then I can see the Pension Fund going up in the future as well, so it’ll depend on what governments do, not necessarily what the Union does.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. Page 6. Okay, now I’m missing (I missed?) a couple of pages out, Page 10. Page 11.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Under the last one ……

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Name, branch.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Was 6 foot 3 when she started coming to Conference. Been up and down that many times, my legs have worn out.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I’ll be putting you further to the back next year.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Affiliation fees and contributions to industrial committees, what is it and regional affiliation fees, what are they for?

**Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary:** I can answer, the regional affiliation fees, Marilyn, would be stuff like Trades Councils and stuff. The affiliation fees and contributions to industrial committees, I will have to find out. I’ll come back with an answer for you, I’ll get in touch with Adrian because he’ll have it all on a computer. I haven’t got it on my computer at Conference, but I will find out.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Right, so we’re good friends then are we with the local Trades Councils, what a good do. Thank you.

**Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary:** We’re excellent friends with them.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Page 12.

**Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580:** Morning, Conference. If you go down the column, you come to £15,000 bank charges. Would you like to explain why you incur bank charges. I’ve never paid a bank in my life, they pay me money, so why are we paying out £15,000 bank charges?

**Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary:** We actually pay for all banking, as do any business. We don’t operate under the same criteria as an individual does. If you can get your bank to come and do our banking for free, then I would gladly take you out for a few pints with the money that we save, how’s that?

**Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580:** Thank you for your answer.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary:** I will though.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. Page 13. Page 14. Okay. I’d like to put the Treasurer’s Report now to Conference. Do you accept the Treasurer’s Report? All those in favour? No one against? Now both the Annual and Treasurer’s Report combined to Conference. All those in favour? Against? That’s carried, thank you very much.

**Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary:** Conference, can I ask the National President to give his opening address to Conference. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I might have to sit down. Can you hear me? Can you hear me, Marilyn? Anyone?

[LAUGHTER]. Okay.

Well, obviously here we are in lovely Southport, a new location, new venue, obviously looking forward to some great debates and obviously we’ve got some great speakers. Obviously this Conference is all about designing the policies that we’re going to be obviously putting in place over the next 12 months and beyond, so obviously I’d like to welcome everybody to Southport and obviously hope you all enjoy your Conference this week.

Since this time last year, obviously we’ve had some highs and some lows and I’d like to mention some of them as I go. The so-called economic recovery hasn’t yet reached the food industry. We continue to see site closures with loyal workers being thrown on the scrap heap and facing uncertainty and obviously, as we’ve heard this morning, anyone working for Two Sisters Group, for Ranjit Singh, who’s been particularly busy, is shutting down factories as quickly as he buys them. His model is nothing more than asset stripping, which leaves companies and people tossed aside with total disregard. How can this be right?

However in David Cameron’s big society of Britain of hard working people, this kind of behaviour is rewarded. It demonstrates the sheer perverse nature of the business world, who are making huge profits at the expense of workers, something to be celebrated, but it’s not been all doom and gloom. Over the past 12 months, our Union has raised its profile to an unprecedented level, thanks to the victory of our members at Hovis, Wigan who successfully fought against zero hour contracts and agency labour exploitation. Their actions both made the local news and won support of the Labour movement and the general public. I would like to thank our fantastic members, all of our reps, all of those that were inspired to become reps during the strike, the branch secretary Nick Hughes, whose actual first job was actually to lead our members out on strike and of course the full-time Official for the significant role that he played during that dispute. Well done, Geoff.

[APPLAUSE]

I also wish to acknowledge the fantastic support given to our members by Unite The Resistance and all of those groups that came together in support of our members, all of the different unions that came down and made sure that those people weren’t starved back to work and stood and manned our picket lines and all of those people helped secure a victory and of course with the great support of the local MPs, Lisa and Andy.

Obviously we’ve gained further coverage as a result of the Fast Food Rights campaign, which recently received media exposure on CNN and Channel 4 News, as well as the national and local press. We’ve made history by holding our first ever Young Members Conference in Blackpool at the beginning of the year and I want to congratulate Rachel and Walkers Union for sponsoring that. We’ve now developed forums which are delivering new benefits, targeted at young workers and it demonstrates how this Conference, with its commitment and dedication to putting policies in place to give young people a voice in our Union, is now making sure that we have a strong robust network of young members and that’s what we need to make sure that we have a future and I’m immensely proud of the steps we have taken in this area and what we are achieving.

One of the key areas that we need to focus on over the next few years is undoubtedly organising. We simply need to up our game. If we stand still and navel gaze, we will wither and die and I’m not prepared for that to happen on my watch. We need a joined-up recruitment strategy and we need to move with the times. We’ve got the profile, we’ve got the membership benefits, we’ve got the resources and we have easily accessible officials. We need to develop programmes for the next generation of Union officials. We need to develop our organising capacity and it’s absolutely vital that we maximise our potential in branches where we already have recognition agreements. If we were to achieve at least 70% membership at all our sites, it would add over 10,000 to our existing membership. That in itself would secure the independence of this Union for the foreseeable future and we need to seriously think about that. Either we organise better than the bosses, or the bosses will organise better than us and this Conference will give us an opportunity to make recruitment easier, by nailing our cause to the mast in relation to a living wage.

It will give us an opportunity to be brave and commit to a figure that we can aspire to. I’ve witnessed first hand how this approach gives working people a reason to get organised and the amazing fights taken place in New Zealand and the US and many other countries around the world and I have the results in growth in union membership. In those countries, it’s my belief, there is no reason why we can’t replicate that will and determination to fight for a wage that workers can live on in our own industry. I say let’s go out and tell workers in the UK food industry, join the BFAWU and join together and let’s fight for a basic hourly rate of £10 an hour. No worker should be paid less than £10 an hour.

[APPLAUSE]
I also want to mention some stuff about Health and Safety as well and the concerns and some of the data that’s recently been produced by the ITUC and the co-ordinated attacks by the government and its supporters in the media, who are keen to roll back our safety rights, scale back Health & Safety Executive. They seek to achieve this by bleating about health and safety gone mad and having us believe that health and safety is needless red tape that holds business back. It stops kids from playing conkers in the playground and bans giant marrows from church fetes. It’s not – here’s the reality of what’s happening because of the corporate attacks on health and safety. One worker dies every 15 seconds, 6,300 workers die daily. Asbestos kills 100,000 people a year.

Other hazardous chemicals kill 350,000 people a year. Over 2.3 million deaths occur due to occupational accidents or diseases. 160 million workers suffer work-related illness. 337 million workers are injured in workplace accidents. The fact is that more are killed at work that on battlefields, yet this goes unreported in the mainstream media. The inconvenient truth for the political classes and their lackies in the media is that robust properly enforced workplace safety improves profitability, improves efficiency, cuts down on waste and helps retain the skills base.

It has nothing to do with conkers or oversized marrows, it’s about protecting and saving lives and people who work in factories, building sites and down mines do know the difference, but it’s not just their safety that’s being targeted. They have workers rights and workers organisations in their site, from the gagging bill and threats of more anti-union legislation. Recently released research shows that these moves by the policies are having a devastating effect, not just in the UK but globally. In the past year, governments of at least 35 countries have arrested or imprisoned workers as a tactic to resist demands for democratic rights, decent wages, safe working conditions and secure jobs. In at least nine countries, workers are regularly threatened with murder, disappearance, in addition to a number of other tactics designed to intimidate them into subservience. Workers in at least 53 countries have been dismissed or suspended for attempting to negotiate better working conditions. Laws and practices in at least 87 countries exclude certain types of workers from the right to strike. The global economy needs co-ordinated action to raise living standards around the world.

Seven years after the economic crisis, there are still more than 200 million people unemployed and many more struggling on low wages. Meanwhile, governments are in the grip of the corporate power and are knowingly and wilfully failing their people. Here in the UK of course, working people and those at the bottom end of the pay scale struggling on low wages. Meanwhile, governments are in the grip of the corporate power and are knowingly and wilfully failing their people. Here in the UK of course, working people and those at the bottom end of the pay scale continue to face attack on an almost daily basis with their terms and conditions and work rights under endless fire. Cameron’s Tories and Clegg’s vile LibDem quislings have embarked on a five year long scorched earth policy, that has destroyed the lives of countless people in this country. Our Royal Mail has been sold to their millionaire friends, with our NHS set to follow suit. In fact, just about everything we once owned has now gone. Zero hour contracts have spread throughout the labour market like a cancer. People on any kind of welfare are demonised and sanctioned for next to nothing, yet we turn a blind eye to tax avoiders and the millions spent on the Royal Family .

The bottom line is this, there are close to seven million trade union members in the UK. It would be virtually unstoppable if mobilised. My message to Frances O’Grady in the TUC is this, we’ve done the marches, attended the rallies and got nowhere. Snappy sound bites and ‘raising in awareness’ guff has achieved nothing. Stop beating about the bush and make the call for a general strike.

[APPLAUSE]

Over the last few decades, UK politics has become a pus-filled sore that needs lancing. We need to make our politicians understand that their job is to represent us, the electorate, not just their donors or those that they perceive to wield the power. The way out of this race to the bottom is by offering hope, fair play and dignity and I also want to add this. I’m sick of working people being described by out-of touch rhetoric spinning politicians as hardworking people nonsense. It’s just another classic way of divide and rule. I’m working class, as we all are in this room and I know we’re all proud of it and those that want to lead the working class, should make sure that they stand with them. We need a Labour movement that’s going to come together and re-build trust in our communities. To slay the beast, we must work on aspirations of the moral, decent people. We want to afford to put good food on our tables. We want our children to go to good schools, colleges and universities. They want real paid employment and a modicum of job security, not low paid roles and a culture of fear. They want disposable income and the ability to afford to buy their own home. They also want a society free from division, blame and hate.
Every one of these is a non-political basic fair and achievable aim. In the past the Labour movement has stepped up and fought and it is vital we send a message to our political classes that the current status quo is not acceptable and we need to make sure that our members understand that UKIP is not the answer. A political party, made up of ex-Tories with chips on their shoulders and led by a privately-educated ex-stockbroker, a Thatcherite millionaire, who believes it’s okay for the wealthy to dodge paying their tax, who likes to be pictured with a pint and a cigarette in his hand, will not bring about the positive change the working class need, no matter how much wall-to-wall media coverage they get and most of all, we need to learn how to fight and I believe that line is beginning to wake and I’m proud of our members who, over the past 12 months, have fought for jobs against redundancy and resisting pay cuts and further exploitative contracts. Proud of those members that have been to support other workers in struggle, like the Doncaster care workers and their fight against Care UK, fighting for our NHS.

Let’s send a message of solidarity to those on indefinite strike at the College of Lambeth and as well as those Ritz cinema workers taking action and taking strike action for a living wage and the teachers continuing to campaign against ridiculous workloads and attacks on their terms and conditions. It’s great to see people fighting back and let’s this week, at this Conference, make a clear statement of our intent too. To those supermarketers who think our members are going to pay the price for their supermarket wars, we’ve got a message for you. Use your own profits, not our members wages.

To those employers who think they can use this as an opportunity in our industry to freeze our pay, we will strike. Reduce our terms and conditions, we will strike. Attack our safety, we will strike. Bring your second generation contracts in, we will strike and if you bring your slave labour Workfare schemes here, we will strike. Let’s make that message clear to every employer in the country. The Bakers, Food & Allied Workers Union’s members are going to fight back.

[APPLAUSE]

That just leaves me to say this, I’d like to thank all our officials, our reps, our activists, as well as those working in our learning services, the credit union, our regional offices, the clerks. Most of all, I’d like to pass on my sincere thanks to our loyal members all over the country for their continued support, without them we are nothing. Enjoy your Conference. Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]

Tea break. 20 minutes.

Hold on a minute. Can I also remind, we need the nomination forms taken upstairs to Standing Orders before 11 o’clock.

[BREAK]

Okay, Delegates. Can I remind Delegates as well, I forgot to mention it when we opened up the Conference that we passed a motion at this Conference some years ago now about the Sun and the Murdoch press, we don’t have them in here, we don’t like them, we don’t want them, they’re anti-trade union and we don’t want to see it on our Conference floor, so can you please make sure you don’t bring it in.

[APPLAUSE]

In fact, sorry? Okay. So no Sun, no News of the World, no Murdoch press in here whatsoever. In fact no Tory press in here whatsoever. If you want a decent paper, get the Socialist Worker, get the Socialist, get the Morning Star, that’s the paper we endorse, okay.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. New Delegates, if you get your Agendas out now. This is now the main part of Conference. If you want to speak on a motion, after the mover and the seconder have spoken, then you just come down, make sure that when you go to the microphone you give your name and your branch number and then obviously whether you’re for or against, obviously you make your speech whether you’re for or against, yes? Okay and you form an orderly queue. Okay, so agendas and it’s motion 2.

2 New Rule – Hovis Avonmouth 201

This Conference agrees that when motions, particularly rule changes, are submitted to conference, and where a composite motion cannot be agreed upon, or is inappropriate, a hierarchy should be established, as to which order they are placed on the agenda. Motions submitted at Branch level to be heard first, then Regional Councils and finally motions submitted on behalf of the Executive Council.
Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I’m not going to read the motion, you can read it. The way that the motions have been put into the book historically has always been the Executive Council’s motions come before anybody else’s, if it’s the same rule or whatever. I propose that because, in my opinion, the branches are the most important people, then it’s the Regional Councils and then the Executive, in that order, because let’s be honest, this is the only opportunity that branches have to have their voice heard. If there is a rule change or whatever, then the hierarchy should be established that it should be branches first and the Executive Council should come last. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: Here to second the motion. I believe it’s only fair that motions submitted by branches come first in the Agenda, followed by Regional Council and lastly the EC. Branches have to submit their motions first and the EC has the longest deadline. Obviously the categories would still stand and the order would occur under each category, this would ensure that the motions that have been submitted first are presented to Conference first. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers? General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I’m surprised, the first time you didn’t want the last say. Conference, the Executive Council, we’d support the motion. I’ve got to say that I was unaware that we didn’t put branch and regional motions first, on the basis that I put them in the Agenda in the order that they come in to us. In December you moved the motions from branches, then Regional Councils do it in January and the Executive Council don’t put a motion in until February, so the preliminary agenda is already being built and everything just tags on. The only time when it would move above is if there was a different clause on a rule, which meant that it went first, but I try, I don’t know whether you can see in the agenda this time, there are motions that look the same as branches and there are a couple. We’re happy to do that, but clearly where there’s a composite involved that includes an Executive motion, like any other time, we clearly want to go through the negotiations of Standing Orders to determine if the wording was right, because if the wording on the branch motion didn’t do exactly probably what you’d want to get out of it as a result, then we’ll sit down together and we’ll negotiate that way forward and where it can’t be composited, a motion dealing with similar subjects or similar rules, then we’ll do as we do now, we’ll let the branch go first, we’ll let the Regional Council motions go second and the Executive will be glad to bring up the rear and if we disagree with what you say in the first two motions, then like all the time, we’d speak against it. That’s the way democracy works within the Union.

I’ve got to say, I’ve banged on for years and those Delegates who’ve been coming for donkeys years will remember, every year I bang on about branches getting motions in to Conference, that’s what I want and if you cover the bases, then we don’t need to put any motions in at all, we’re happy not to put any in. I want more participation at branch level when it comes to getting motions and I’m glad branches like Janine’s do put motions in, it shows that they clearly do think about things before they come to Conference, because when you do it through Regional Council, it becomes a nameless thing, somebody puts the motion forward at a Regional Council, they may not be a Delegate, they may have felt passionately about it, but the fact is they’re not at Conference to speak on it and therefore it falls on somebody else and so I’m a firm believer that what we do is we get the branch structure right, where we put motions forward and it’s included in our courses, we do it. As I say, Conference, I will absolutely make certain that the Executive motions that are similar or the same as branch or Regional motions, like this year, will come after, so we ask Conference to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 3.

3 Rule 4.1 – Greggs 580 Yorkshire

This conference agrees there should be a young person representative on the National Health and Safety Committee. The election of the young person should take place at annual conference every 2 years.

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: The National Health & Safety Committee should represent all members of our Union. At the moment, as far as I’m aware, there is no one sitting on there representing young workers and their issues. Without a young representative on the Committee, how can we be sure that the Committee is discussing their issues and working on them? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253 (Greggs, Treforest – or somewhere down there anyway now): I’m here to second and support this motion. Two reasons really, (1) health and safety is so important and with this Tory government in at the moment, it seems to be getting lost and also having a young person on there, it’s vitally important that we do have a young person on and like Sarah said, each part of the Union should be represented and this goes for the youth as well, so please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: I’m up here to oppose this. Your age is irrelevant when we start talking health and safety. I think all this is going to do is add more expense onto the Union’s outgoings, they’re already whinging about it, they won’t pay £5 for a Delegate’s fee, so please oppose it [LAUGHTER].

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I’m here to support this motion because I think age is relevant, because when it comes to health and safety, young people have more rights than everybody else, so they need somebody to represent that. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, any other speakers? I’ve got to like turn now. Okay, Conference. Can you hear me, yes? Conference, the Executive Council would ask you to oppose the motion. We don’t feel this will offer what the motion is intended to achieve and what the mover’s actually looking to achieve for young workers. For a start, health and safety isn’t just a young worker’s issue, it’s everybody’s issue and young workers are faced with safety issues that may be different to other workers, but on the whole a risk assessment is carried out and conducted and anybody who’s going to do that job will face the same risks as any other worker, whether you’re 16 or whether you’re 66. We recognise the importance of youth and we really do believe it’s important that in all aspects of the trade union that young people are actively involved. We believe that there should be a robust structure that enables all of our regions to play a part.

One of the issues that we would have with this is it would only put one young person on and it’d be one young person representing seven regions. Now there’s seven different Regional Councils, which would mean that one Regional Council would have the benefit of having that active young individual, whereas the other six would not. We believe that the best way to achieve what the young person wants, is to have all of our regions involved and that includes having as many young people involved regionally and there’s nothing to stop a region electing a young person to be their health and safety representative, that sits on the National Committee.

There’s nothing that says in the rule book that you have to be above the age of 27 and obviously what we would ask Conference to do is oppose this, because it would mean that only one region and one young person would have the ability to attend that meeting and that would mean that the other six regions may feel excluded and maybe not participate in the way that we want all young people across every region to participate. Okay, thank you. Right to reply? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s lost. Obviously the next two motions 4 and 5 will be composite 1, so mover of motion 6 please.

6 Rule 5.2 – No 7 Regional Council

‘Unemployed Members’ to read ‘Unwaged Members’ going forward.

Brother Kevin Flood – Regional Branch No. 7: Morning, Conference. I would like you to support this motion. What I would like to do, I would like to get away from the right-wing thinking of unemployed people as being the great unwashed, so instead of us all speaking about unemployed people, we could call them unwaged members, so please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Seconder? Formally seconded? Any speakers? Conference, we agree wholeheartedly with the mover and we would ask Conference to support. Sometimes people find themselves out of work through no fault of their own and they shouldn’t be treated any differently to any other member of the working class. That’s what we are and we should all be proud of it and I think that this change will enforce the message which I believe the mover is asking the Union to recognise. We’d ask Conference to support the motion. So, to the vote, those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Okay. The mover of motion 7.
7  Rule 5.4 Contributions – No 4 Regional Council

That this conference agrees rule change Rule 5.4. Upon reaching state retirement age the rate of contribution may be reduced to £0.35p per quarter if the member has retired from full-time employment.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: That this Conference agrees rule change Rule 5.4, “Upon reaching state retirement age the rate of contribution may be reduced to 35p per quarter”. What we’re asking for here is that only comes in if you have retired. If you’re claiming your pension and you’re still working, why do you need a reduction in your Union subs, you don’t, so that’s what we’re asking for and that’s why we’re asking for it. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]


Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, Chair. Delegates, we’d ask Conference to support the motion. Clearly, as a trade union and to keep functioning in the way that we do, we want people to pay the full contribution to the Union where that is necessary and where they get the services offered.

The only problem with the motion as far as I see it, is the wording and that is generally the key to success or failure of what you’re trying to achieve. The motion talks about full-time employment, so let me pose the question back. What is full-time employment? Is it fewer hours than that member used to work when they worked full-time? Say a reduction from a 30 hour week down to a 16 hour week or is it going from a six day working week down to a three or a two day working week, or is it going from year-round work to just doing seasonal work at specific times within that year? Because if it is and it does mean that, then the Executive wouldn’t be asking you to support the motion and the reason I said that is you can’t say that it’s okay for a person over the recognised state retirement age to pay reduced contributions on say a 16 hour week at the same time as you tell a single mother who works within Greggs, who works 16 hours, that they’ve got to pay a full contribution rate, I think Marilyn highlighted that, there’s no fairness in what is being said if that is what was meant. That, as I say, clearly wouldn’t be fair. Whether we like it or we don’t like it, we have a contribution rate for members who are over 18 years of age who are working and until it is altered, that is what we’re stuck with, with the caveat that it means everyone who’s working full-time, then we would ask Conference to support the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Conference, to the vote. All those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Okay, motion 7. Oh, that was 7, sorry, motion 9. Is 8 and 9 composited, no No. 9 stands, motion 9 stands.

9  Rule 5.6 – Executive Council

That this conference agrees to increase the fatal accident benefit to £2500.

Sister Pauline McCarthy – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Here to move this motion on behalf of the Executive Council. That this Conference agrees to increase the fatal accident benefits to £2,500. We believe that the times are hard and we all know that times are hard. I’ve been looking on the internet and cost to people the funeral benefits, the cuts have affected everybody across every branch that we work on, we’ve seen it. It costs £1,500 to bury somebody in a plot. It costs £650 for cremation. It costs £100 for a vicar, or whatever you have and that’s not counting all the other things you need. You need to notify people, you need to have a bit of a wake or a bit of a do, a big bit of a do if you come from Northern Ireland [LAUGHTER], so we ask you to support, please.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Here to second the motion and offer my support to Pauline. Many members struggle to balance their finances throughout their lives and life insurance may often be seen as a luxury that many simply cannot afford to have. We ask for an increase to provide those suffering when losing a loved one, a little extra financial support during a traumatic time in their life. Please, Delegates, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]


10  Rule 11.3 Conduct of FTOs – Executive Council

At the end of the first paragraph, remove the words ‘to Conference by notice in writing to the EC within 21 days of its decision’ and add ‘Appeals will be in line with the agreement between the Full-Time Officials and the EC’.

Sunday June 8 morning: Motions 2 –12
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Chair, Delegates, we ask Conference to support motion 10 that I suppose, for once, you don’t particularly have a choice in this, you’re almost obliged to carry it. It’s one of those things about tidying-up exercise, but if you look at the rule book as it’s written now, it’s not only morally wrong, totally unfair, it’s also wholly illegal. I’ve been around long enough to remember the practice of dismissed full-time Officials, who had to come to Conference to plead for their jobs back when they’d been dismissed by the Executive Council. It was not only a barbaric way of dealing with issues, it was unfair to throw the onus onto Conference Delegates to vote on whether or not an Official should be hired back or have their dismissal ratified. Even if it wasn’t legal, to frustrate an Officer’s ability to appeal immediately against dismissal, the reality of the effect on their lives could be immense.

You’ve all got a copy of the rule book and as the rule is written at present, we could fire an Officer at the Executive Council meeting that takes place on Wednesday afternoon. When you elect your new Executive, their first meeting will be on Wednesday afternoon at the close of Conference, so if we had an Official who was going through a disciplinary procedure, the way the rule is at the moment, we could dismiss them on the Wednesday afternoon and they couldn’t appeal for their jobs until next year, next Conference. The motion, as far as we see it comrades, corrects an anomaly that shouldn’t have been carried out, even if we’d have wanted it to. It rids Officials of any confusion about how discipline will be carried out. It ensures that we, as an Executive and as employers, comply with employment legislation and makes sure the right people are dealing with disciplinary issues rather than putting the onus onto people who haven’t had any say in it right through. Conference, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded? Speakers? Okay. All those in favour? Against? That’s carried.

Composite 1 Rule 5.1 – Executive Council

The weekly contribution of all waged members (other than free card members) 18 years of age and over, shall be set by the EC but shall not exceed one half of the basic hourly rate in the National Working Agreement. With the NA Agreement, members under 18 shall pay £1 per week to be increased each year at the same percentage rise as the as the full members contribution increase, also, where a member is employed on a zero hours contract in the Fast Food Industry or any industry organised by the BFAWU and is an unrecognised site, they are entitled to pay the same rate as members under the age of 18 until such time as the site becomes recognised and/or the member is placed on a full contract. They shall then pay the full rate of membership contribution.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, has everybody had a copy of the Composite 1? Everybody got a copy?

Okay. Conference, obviously Composite 1 would be the new rule that goes into the rule book under Rule 5.1, “The weekly contribution of all waged members, other than free card members 18 years of age and over, shall be set by the EC but shall not exceed one half of the basic hourly rate in a national working agreement. With the NA agreement members and under 18 shall pay £1 per week, to be increased each year at the same percentage rise as the full members contribution increases. Also where a member is employed on a zero contract in the food industry or any industry organised by the BFAWU on an unorganised site, they are entitled to pay the same rate as members under the age of 18, until such time as that site becomes recognised and for the members to be placed on a full contract. They then shall pay the full rate of membership contributions”.

I think everybody understands what zero hour contracts are. Obviously we’ve been organising in the fast food industry, where many of the workers are young and on an age-related minimum wage, which means on average they’re earning somewhere in the region of about £2.65 an hour, so to ask them to pay £2.75 makes it a bit of a barrier to them being able to join and for us to be able to organise, so we’re asking Conference to recognise the hardship of not just the people in the fast food industry, but all of those unorganised workers across the food industry and other industries that we choose to organise in and to make a statement to say that we want those people in membership, we want those people organised and we’re asking Conference to support this rule change that will enable our Officials and people to go out who’ve been joining our campaigns and say you can join the Bakers Union and get represented and it will cost you £1. So we would ask Conference to support the motion. Formally seconded? Speakers? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Absolutely fantastic. Well done.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, we’re on motion 11.
Rule 22.1 – No 7 Regional Council

That this conference agrees to move to a Biennial Conference. Given the cost of running an annual conference we feel it is time for the union to move away from this. We believe the savings that would be made on this move could be better distributed within the union e.g. for the proposes of recruitment and organising campaigns etc.

Brother John Halliday: Good morning, Conference, Platform, Delegates. Moving motion 11 on behalf of No. 7 Regional Council. Membership is the lifeblood of any Union and continued growth in membership is needed to survive. Indeed, over the last few years, the Executive Council has shown its commitment to this, an example being the organising course in Blackpool, but when gains achieved through weeks and months of hard work can be wiped out with the stroke of a pen, resulting in the closure of a site, it’s an uphill task. Conference, day-to-day running costs need to be covered by contributions or contribution income, but as shown in the Treasurer’s Report, when increases in contributions are cancelled out by falling membership and overall expenditure creates a deficit, something has to give. That’s why we’ve brought this motion to Conference.

We’ve approximately 20,000 members, but this is falling. Conference costs around £85,000 a year, the equivalent of the annual contribution of over 600 members. We lost over 900 members this year alone. In his Treasurer’s Report of 2012, Ronnie said in regards to Conference costs, “Members must expect a rapid increase in the cost in this area, that will have to be met from a falling income base” and that was with a membership decrease of only 342 that year. This year’s report shows a decrease of 952. Delegates, moving to a biennial Conference would save £85,000, money that could be used to organise and recruit. Unions larger than ourselves, for example Community with 50,000 members and Prospect with 118,000 members can and do operate with a biennial Conference.

In 2011/2012 the Treasurer’s Report showed deficits of £119,000 and £126,000. Although we have a slight surplus this year, falling membership and the implementation of the Jackson Report which withdraws the Union’s opportunity to claim success or referral fees, a cost of around £250,000 a year, an annual Conference becomes unsustainable. As I look around the Hall, I see younger passionate activists taking the place of the old guard and in moving this motion I look to you, the future of this Union, to vote with your head and not your heart. Ask yourself, is an annual Conference worth the risk? A biennial Conference won’t make this Union weaker, but it will ease the pressure on our finances. The BFAWU is not a big super Union with infinite finances and a million members, but size doesn’t determine strength. We are the Bakers Union and we’re going to do what’s needed to stay independent. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother George Hoy – Branch 703 (Hovis Bakery – Region 7 Executive): Delegates and also President, I’m here to second this motion and ask all Delegates here today to support us.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Delegates, Mr President. Conference, yes, I support the resolution and I would ask Conference to support the resolution. We’re now halfway through 2014. When the Executive and the National Officers get home from Conference and then put all of this together and they get it all ready to send out and record it all and then they have to turn around in a couple of months later and start off again, all over again. Now, that takes up an awful lot of time and an awful lot of work that might be spent other ways in helping the Union to stay solvent. As John said, £85,000 or whatever the cost of Union is, is a lot of money and if it did continue, remembering too that what you give up today, you will not get back again if you ask for it, because you won’t be getting it, but the Conference, biennial Conference, should be able to work, other unions are doing it and I think we should be able to do it, in the interest of the members who have to pay for everything we do here at Conference or at any other Conferences, or at any other meetings, so it is better to have a biennial Conference. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: I’m up here to oppose this. We shouldn’t have to wait two years to come here to change something that we’re not happy with. I certainly don’t want to wait two years to challenge the National President’s thinking on Rule 14/15. I ask you to oppose [LAUGHTER].

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): I’m here to support this motion. I agree £85,000 a year would be better spent supporting the members back in the workplaces. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]
Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I’m here to oppose this motion, for exactly the same reasons as Marilyn. Us coming to Conference every year, I understand there’s an expense, but it’s not something we can afford to give away. This Executive Council does what we tell them to do. It’s our opportunity to change the rules and it’s our opportunity to hold them to account. Please don’t get rid of that, please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: I’m also here to oppose this motion. Whilst I can understand the meaning behind it with saving money, thinking along lines of timelines for Conference, last year we had 100 motions, this year we’ve got 100 motions, so Conference will be doubly long every two years, so is it actually going to save any money? Please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: I’m also here to oppose this motion. I totally agree with what Janine has just said. We’ve got to hold the Executive Council to account every single year, but also looking at employers, they’re going to probably turn around and say well, you didn’t have a Conference last year, why do we need to let you go this year and maybe you lot won’t be able to attend every other year because your employers will say well, it isn’t worth it. So please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers? General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you Chair, Delegates. The Executive Council would ask Conference to oppose the motion, just as we did in 2008 and just as we did last year, although reiterating that we support the mover’s assertions on saving money. One thing I don’t agree with, John, in what he said right at the beginning was when he made a comparison between what happens within Community and what happens within Progress. Please don’t compare us with Community and with Progress, we’re a proper trade union and I want us to carry on that way.

[APPLAUSE]

Despite the cost involved, the Executive still see the need for an annual Conference on a number of fronts and forgive me for taking a little bit of time to point these out. I think first and foremost, we need the ability to change our rules and to react to situations with the industry as they happen across a year, rather than waiting two years to take a final decision on what we’re going to do. I’ve said it before, but it’s worth reminding Delegates, that we used to have a Change of Rule Conference every fourth year, when an extra day was added to Conference, so you never used to have Sunday at Conference, you would travel on a Sunday and the Conference would start on the Monday and we got rid of it in 1979 because there were that many rule changes that were coming through, you actually blocked the Conference, every fourth Conference, when you couldn’t do it and branches at that time felt really frustrated by not being able to do it.

You don’t need to be a financial expert to understand the savings that are going to be made by moving to a biennial Conference, although it would not equate to a 50% saving, let me be quite open and honest about that. The opportunity to do deals with councils, with hotels, with service providers would be diminished. We wouldn’t get the same sort of discounts that we do when we can drive a hard bargain on Conferences being there every year or in a multi-year negotiation. I explained last year about the major changes we’d gone through within our industry over the last three decades and how it appeared that those changes are now being concentrated into months. It’s a trend that hasn’t changed over the last 12 months and we continue to see endless closures, changes to employment legislation, attacks on terms and conditions by greedy unscrupulous employers and for that reason, we need to be able to react relatively quickly and this motion may well be detrimental, comrades, to doing that.

I reiterate what I said last year regarding the question of accountability of the Executive. Despite the changes that were made on how the Executive is elected, you still have the opportunity to challenge their decisions they make from the Conference floor every single year. It begs the question as to whether this motion would give the signal to get all the bad news out in the first year, at the beginning of their tenure as Executive Council members, as it will give nearly two years to make reparation. I said last year that time heals and every decision taken could be forgotten by the time elections came around again. The differences that now with individual regions electing their own individual Delegates, you collectively cannot change the Executive en-bloc.

An annual Conference affords great networking opportunities, the chance to build our communication links, activists meeting within a social dimension, swapping ideas and building links, listening to a wide range of speakers on a wide range of subjects, that help to focus our minds and enhance the methodology we need to make it to our full potential. An annual Conference, comrades, gives everyone the chance to recharge batteries, to let off steam at the frustrations that they face on a daily basis and to refresh their views and their thinking.
John’s right, other unions have gone down the route of biennial Conferences before they’ve actually found it a costly mistake. I’ll name a union for you, the GMB. Their National Executive, unlike ours, wanted a biennial Conference because of cost. Their wish was granted by Conference, but they found that in the intervening years they had to put on extra sectional Conferences at even greater cost than when they had annual Conferences. That decision that they took lasted for four years and then they reverted back to an annual Conference. They are in a better financial position than us and had the ability to revert back to an annual Conference. We may find that reversing that decision may be a damn sight more difficult.

The final reason, comrades, for retaining an annual Conference is the things that you’ve negotiated and your Officials have negotiated back at the ranch. I believe there’s a possibility that if we gave up paid release from every year to every other year, we would have the devil’s own job to get it back should it be needed in the future. Employers are looking to cut back wherever they can and for us to hand the time back on a plate, I believe would be a mortal mistake. I’ve recently been involved with a company who wanted to cut the days of paid release and the amount of Delegates released. That could become a more normal occurrence throughout the Union if you pass this motion. Yet there’s absolutely no mistake that going to a biennial Conference will save some costs, but so would a programme across the board redundancy, getting rid of Officials, that would save money, withdrawal from our affiliations, let’s not pay the TUC anymore or the GFTU, let’s cut our education programme, they all save money, but you have to look at what the detrimental effect on this Union, on the industry and on the members that we represent would be.

No I, along with our Head Office staff, have really struggled to move the Conference venue from Bridlington to Southport and I can’t praise Jan and Adrian enough for the work that they’ve done. I know that they’ve been pulling their hair out. It’s an absolutely terrible job to move Conference, but move it we have and when you come in here and the lights work and everything, the microphones, it’s fantastic and you go and you book in at your hotel and you get in your room, it’s fantastic, but when you see the work that has to be done, I would hate to think that I would have to do what I did every other year to look for a venue for a Conference, because I would surely have to go back and re-negotiate and of course we wouldn’t build the relationship up that Jan and Adrian have built up with the tourist board, that would be gone because we’d have to be re-building those things in the future. Comrades, we ask regions to ensure that we had motions coming to this Conference, as without them we were going to lose the ability to have an annual Conference. It was almost getting to the stage where it was superfluous to our needs and you responded and you responded absolutely magnificently, as this year’s agenda and last year’s agenda are testament to.

Now we need the same response from you to growing our membership. If you do, cost will not be a factor. I want to go back to the days of when Regional Councils and District Boards and Regional Boards, but Regional Boards had a function of looking at recruitment. Officials were questioned on where they’d been, what they’d done, where the campaigns are going and help was given by members and what we did, we grew membership then, and that’s what we’ve got to do again and I’m pleased to say, under the leadership of the President, that we’re now doing that, we’re now seeing more lay activists becoming involved in organising, but it can’t just be left down to those handful of people who are willing to do it, it has to be something that we do at Regional Councils, that we make sure that it is a talking point and when we come to organising, we don’t have people doing this, what time’s the train or what time’s the football we’re there to do the job and that is the way that we’re going to solve any financial crisis within this Union.

The only way that we raise revenue is through membership. Okay, we get a couple of bob back off investments and we might get the odd few shillings off the lawyers, but we are a membership-driven organisation and I’ll tell you what, if we don’t concentrate on that, we won’t be talking about whether we have an annual Conference, or a biennial Conference or whatever every three years is, we won’t be having a Conference because we won’t be there. It’s about concentrating on getting the organisation right, getting membership right and if we’ve got to start cutting, if we’ve got to start making cuts, there are other areas that we can cut first before we start cutting the policy-making body of this trade union. Think about what I’m saying, comrades, take it back to your branches and take it back to your regions. I would ask Conference to oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply?

Brother John Halliday: Conference, this motion was brought for one reason and it’s sustainability. As Ronnie said earlier, by 2016 we’ve lost the safety net of the income from CCFAs. If we don’t have that coming through, we’re back in deficit every year. Yes, we need to be out, we need to be organising, we need to have members coming in and that’s the only way we’re going to keep this Union going or, as Ronnie said, it will be taken out of our hands, because the only option will be amalgamation. Please support the motion.
VERBATIM report of BFAWU Annual Conference 2014

Sunday June 8 morning: Motions 2 – 12

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s lost. Motion 12.

12 Rule 22.12 – No 5 Regional Council

That this conference agrees to change the last day that branches can submit motions for conference from the end of December to the end of January as December is normally the busiest month in the baking industry and difficult to administrate during this period.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): That this Conference agrees to change the last day that branches can submit motions for Conference from the end of December until the end of January, as December is normally the busiest month in the baking industry and difficult to administrate during this period. As I can say, December is, I know we can get organised, I have my branch meeting around about September/October for motions for Conference. It’s hard to get people to come and submit motions, but if not then the branch secretaries pick up and submit the motions and each year, as it gets into December, you’ve got Christmas, you’ve got Christmas holidays, in the shops they must be busier, I just think, I’ve been to Regional board meetings where because branches have not submitted enough motions, that we’ve been asked to try and submit them so that we get a good Conference and plenty of motions, that was three or four years ago and since then it’s been exceptional each year, getting better, but I do think it would be easier and more motions would be submitted if we could put it, I know it’d be a logistical nightmare for the EC and the Regional and National Office, but I just think more motions would come through if we move this to the end of January, the same as with Regional. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: Here to second the motion. December is our busiest time of the year in the shops and in bakeries, meaning that submitting motions for Conference unfortunately doesn’t become top priority, hence the number of motions that are put through at Regional Council. I believe that moving the deadline to the end of January would result in more motions placed at branch level, as is wanted by the Union, as January is far quieter for us. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Larry Stone – Branch 116 (Enfield): Hi, I support this motion, because as a driver for Greggs, it is our busiest time of the year and it’s very difficult to arrange these things, to do our work for the Union, so that’s why I support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Knight – Region 1 – Branch 105: I too would like to support this motion. I had two resolutions that I would have liked to have put across, but unfortunately I was too late and to me they were really important, so I just think support this motion please. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I’m here to oppose this motion. Presently the motions have to be submitted by the end of December. If for whatever reason you can’t do that, you’ve got a second bite of the cherry in January at your Regional Council meeting. I just think it’ll be counterproductive to do that, when every branch is entitled to a Delegate at Regional Council, so please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speaker? General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you Chair, Delegates, Platform. We ask Conference to support the motion. We do accept that within the industry that December is a busy time of year but the longer we extend, the time constraints on Head Office staff become. We have to produce a preliminary agenda and the further you push it back, the more difficult it’s going to be to make sure that that’s out in place, because the Executive Council meets the first week in February. Preliminary agendas have to go to the Executive Council. The reason it goes to the Executive Council is first of all for ratification of the stuff that’s gone on, but also we have the opportunity of looking what motions are put in and as I said before, when we were talking on a previous motion, it gives us the opportunity of then putting our own motions in or looking at motions that are on different subjects to what branches have put in. So one thing I would stress, comrades, if we’re going to vote for this, it only extends the periods for branches, that’s all it does, it extends them.
I don’t hold that we’re too busy in December and therefore couldn’t put the motion in, miss the deadline, because you could have put it in to Regional Council and it wasn’t in Regional Council, so it wasn’t as important as being made out. The fact is that those motions you have all of December, but we will accept the premise that everyone’s too busy to do things in December and we will extend it to the end of January, but I would plead with you, if you can do it before, don’t leave it until 31st January and even more importantly, don’t leave it until afterwards when you’ve forgotten it and say oh, the post never delivered the mail, we never got it, we didn’t know we had to or we did send them, we sent them, didn’t you receive them at Head Office? We have the worst postal system in the world when it comes to receiving replies to stuff that we want and yet when we send cheques out, they always seem to land, weird the way it happens. So we would say that yes, by all means have until the end of January, but don’t wait until 31st January to send the things in, because it really does cramp everything up, not just for me but for our people back at the branch and it will not extend the time that Regional Councils have for putting motions in or for Regional Officers or whoever sending them in. I want them still within the time constraint of the Regional Councils. Okay? So on that basis, we would ask Conference to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: There is a right to reply, because there was somebody who opposed it. Do you want the right to reply? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

Okay, you can put, as Conference knows, as anybody who’s been on any of the campaigns at Hovis, we’re working with some fantastic organisations from Unite The Resistance, which are over there at the back of the room at our Conference, Boycott Workfare, they’re only here today, find out about that campaign, it’s an absolutely amazing campaign, they could only be here today, but obviously make sure you engage with them today because the campaign that they take part in is unbelievable and it’s really aimed at trying to end the exploitation of the unemployed and we’ve been working quite closely with another group and I’m going to invite Claire from Youth Fight For Jobs, who attended our Young Workers Conference earlier this year and Youth Fight For Jobs is an absolutely unbelievable organisation of young people and Claire is one of their main spokespersons and I’ve got to say, Youth Fight For Jobs as an organisation has been working on our fast food campaign and what we found was that they were able to engage in over 31 towns and cities with us to try and organise fast food workers, so Conference I’d like to give a really warm welcome to an absolutely unbelievable organisation and its spokesperson, Claire Laker. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Address to Conference by Claire Laker, Youth Fight For Jobs

Claire Laker, Youth Fight For Jobs: Okay. Well, first of all, thank you very much for that really warm welcome and thank you very much for the opportunity to come and speak to you as a Conference and to stay and hear your debates and listen to what you’re discussing here this week and I feel really privileged to be able to come here and also to be working alongside the Bakers Union and just to give you a little bit of background about our campaign, Youth Fight For Jobs and tell you perhaps a little bit about who we are.

Well, we were set up in 2009 in the wake of the financial crisis because young people, I think, are at the real sharp end. Everyone who’s working purse is suffering as a result of austerity, as a result of cuts, as a result of all of the terrible policies that are being implemented by the ConDem government, but I think it’s fair to say that young people in particular are facing a really bleak outlook as a result of what is taking place and when we set up our campaign, we thought that it was likely that youth unemployment would rise to over a million under this government and that’s actually what has happened and we’ve been fighting for decent jobs for young people, we’ve engaged in things like organising a recreation of the Jarrow march, reclaiming some of the traditions of the Unemployed Workers Movement.

We marched 30 unemployed young people from Jarrow right up in the north east of the country, all the way to London, 300 miles and we’ve been trying to highlight the plight of young people who are out of work, but the other thing that we’ve been discussing is what kind of work are young people going to be able to go into when they do get a job, because I think modern day unemployment kind of looks a little bit different to how it has done in the past. Increasingly there’s hundreds, thousands of people, young people in particular, but people of all ages who are kind of left on the fringes of employment. Officially they don’t show up in the statistics, so the likes of Cameron and Osborne can say well, it’s a success, youth unemployment is falling, but in truth thousands of us are on zero hour contracts, we’re faced with a daily problem of having to wait for a phone call to find out if you’re going to get any hours and you’re faced with not knowing whether or not you’re going to have enough money from one month to the next, to pay your bills, to pay your rent and just to do some normal things which ordinary people want to enjoy in their lives and that’s the kind of work which this government is offering young people, which this system offers young people today.
and we don’t think that that is good enough and we’re really pleased and proud to be part of the Fast Food Rights Initiative which is a coalition of groups, as Ian has mentioned and obviously central to that is the Bakers Union which initiated it, but we’re proud to be a part of it, we’re proud to be working alongside other organisations as well and I think that there were two main inspirations for the Fast Food Rights Initiative, if I am correct and one of them was the really inspiring victory that was won by Hovis workers and I want to join this Conference in saluting those workers in their struggle …

[APPLAUSE]

… because I think that that victory is actually something which has given a kind of lift to the whole movement. It’s shown that these contracts can be beaten and the weak can stand up and fight back, but I think the other inspiration that there’s been for this has been an international inspiration and I think that internationalism is actually a great tradition which is at the heart of the trade union and workers movements and in that spirit, I want to start off my speech or my remarks, I suppose, with a message that’s come from the United States, from Seattle, but perhaps some of you will have read. It’s been reported in our own newspapers here in the UK, that in Seattle workers, particularly fast food workers, have just won a marvellous victory and that has been in the implementation of a $15 an hour minimum wage, which is going to lift thousands of people out of poverty.

[APPLAUSE]

So I have a message from Jess Spear, who’s the organising director of the 15 Now campaign in Seattle and she said, “Here in Seattle, we are celebrating a huge victory, a $15 an hour minimum wage. This is a victory for a movement started a year ago by fast food workers walking out in strike action. Here in Seattle this was galvanised by the election of Kshama Sawant running on an Independent Socialist programme and including $15 an hour as her central demand. She won a Council seat at the end of 2013. Kshama followed her victory with the launch of the 15 Now campaign in Seattle and nationwide. In Seattle we were very quickly able to organise a programme of protests, rallies, action groups in every district. This formed the basis of a huge grass roots campaign, bringing together trade unions, community activists and others to form a powerful alliance. The cumulation of this was on Monday, June 2nd, where the Council unanimously agreed to raise the minimum wage. This is a victory for the grass roots campaigns and should be seen as a beacon of resistance. When workers and communities come together, they can win. But this victory, important as it is, is not enough.

We need to spread the idea of $15 an hour across the States and internationally as well. That’s why the recent International Day of Action, which we participated in here in Britain on 15th May was so important. It reinforced the importance of fighting for a living wage. We want to build international links and to learn from each other, where we win and how best to build the struggle. That’s why we are sending a message of solidarity to this Conference at the Bakers, Food & Allied Workers Union”.

[APPLAUSE]

“We know that you have been vital to building the movement of fast food workers in Britain and what we’ve done in Seattle shows what we can do when we stand together. We wish you the best of luck for your Conference and in your struggle”.

[APPLAUSE]

And I think that that was a really inspiring message from Seattle and I will say that if you do want to hear from some of those activists in person and you want to come to another Conference in June, sorry July, on 5th July, the National Shop Stewards Network are going to have a speaker there from Seattle, so please pick up a leaflet from that on your way out and I think that that example is brilliant because it provides another example of how we can win and I think that that movement has electrified the situation across the US, but I think that that struggle is going to spill over beyond the bounds of that country and it’s going to come to the UK too.

So I want to just say a little bit about what we’re fighting for, why Youth Fight For Jobs is involved with fast food rights, why we’re working with the Bakers Union. Let’s look at the kind of conditions which fast food workers are enduring in this country and I think endure is actually the right kind of word to use, because if you work in McDonalds, if you work in KFC or Burger King or Subway, you don’t begin your week secure in the knowledge of when you’re going to be working and when you’re going to have time off. You don’t know when you’re going to need childcare for your children, if you’ve got a family. You don’t have any firm idea of how much your paycheck is going to be worth at the end of the month and you don’t know whether or not you’re going to be able to afford to pay your bills and the power in your working relationship is all in your bosses hands. They’ve got you where they want you.
You’re not able to raise a complaint, to raise issues about health and safety, to raise complaints about your legal rights not being observed, because they’re saying well, if you make any complaints, we’re just not going to give you any more hours. It’s an open season for bullying and that’s the kind of conditions, those are the kinds of situations which make people feel powerless, but what Fast Food Rights is about saying is that actually workers, even workers in fast food, even workers on zero hour contracts, actually do have power. We’re about giving people the hope that comes with knowing you’re not alone, we deserve better. There are five and a half million people on zero hours contracts and disproportionally they are young people. They’re living insecurely and they’re living in fear and we say well actually, that’s not good enough. We know that there’s enormous wealth in our society, the problem is it’s all in the hands of the small, rich minority. Since 2009, 95% of the wealth increases, of wage increases, have gone to the top 1% of the population. That’s the sickening level of inequality which exists within our society and we’re all victims of it. Insecurity and zero hour contracts, low pay, go hand in hand. Working on zero hour contracts all too often means working in poverty, with low wages, on minimum wage, on youth rates and that means for people choosing between eating and heating. It means not really living, just surviving, when I think that our movement has always been not about fighting for the right just to survive, it’s about fighting for the right to live and to live well. So I support the call for a £10 an hour living wage, a living wage with no exemptions for young people.

[APPLAUSE]

And the representatives of the bosses, the representatives of big business, the representatives of the likes of McDonalds want to tell us that that is actually too much to ask, that we’re being greedy, that really they can’t possibly afford £10 an hour for their workers, but let’s look at this from the other angle. Who’s really greedy in society? McDonalds are celebrating £5.5 billion in annual profits and yet they want to hold us to ransom. They’re saying if we want £10 an hour in a minimum wage, then they’re not going to employ us, but the truth is that the source of McDonald’s profits is the hard work, the sweat and the toils of the low paid workers who do the job day in-day out and what’s been shown in the US is that when those workers say well, I’m not going to put up with it anymore, McDonalds management have a problem, because they do have power, when workers refuse to continue to work for pathetically low wages, McDonalds can’t continue to make the profits that they are doing, so they have a problem and we’re the problem that they’ve got.

In Youth Fight For Jobs, we say we deserve a future not for the 1%, not for the rich few in society but for all of us, for the 99% and I’m optimistic about what Fast Food Rights can achieve, because I think that McDonalds, Subway, KFC and Burger King are running scared. When we had our protest on 15th February, sorry 15th May recently, McDonalds sent their Communications Officer from Head Office to a small McDonalds store just because they were so worried about Channel 4 News filming our protest outside McDonalds and worried about the effect that that would have on workers in that particular McDonalds store, but more than that on all of those who watched it on the television and who heard about it afterwards.

So what we’re doing is perhaps in some ways a small start, we’re starting off with a campaign which is highlighting the issue, which is telling young workers you can join a union, you have rights, you can get involved in the Fast Food Rights campaign, but we’re thinking big and let’s be optimistic about what can be achieved. If we look to the US, we can see that these people have an appetite for getting involved in the trade union movements and they want to be able to defend their rights and to fight for better conditions. So I think it’s possible that in the next years we can see thousands of fast food workers, tens of thousands, joining trade unions, joining the Bakers Union and that’s the fight that we’re waging today.

So I want to finish by saying that I think this campaign is an industrial campaign, it’s about trying to get people organised, it’s about trying to get people fighting, but it’s political as well, because we’re about sending a message not just to McDonalds bosses but to the bosses and to the government and the politicians. We’re saying that we’re not going to put up with a few meagre crumbs from the table, we want the right to live well and I’ll finish by saying a message of solidarity from Youth Fight For Jobs to everybody here, because like the Bakers Union, we’re hungry for justice and we hope that you are too. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Right, I think first of all to say, comrades, thank you Claire for bringing a great message to a great crowd of people who are committed Socialists. It is a marvellous job that you do and all I would say is that I believe that the plight of young people in the future is, if it’s in your hands and your organisation’s hands and in the hands of unions like this, then we will win eventually. I want to make a small presentation to you, first of all I’m going to give you a tin of biscuits which is made by trade union members and ......
[APPLAUSE]
…out the top 1% flit away all the money and all that, I suspect that you might be flitting these biscuits away just for yourself, so on behalf, what we will also do, Claire, is we will make a donation on behalf of the Union to your fighting fund and I’ll give you a cheque, either later today or tomorrow, whatever, okay?

Claire Laker, Youth Fight For Jobs: Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, we’re going to finish for dinner. Everybody back in here 2 o’clock. If you’re late, you get fined. Don’t be late.

[LUNCH]

Afternoon Session

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I’ve been passed a receipt, that anybody who was in the Prince of Wales last night, it’s probably yours and it’s probably lost. Roy Streeter’s trying to claim it was his, he actually went to the bar last night …...

[APPLAUSE]

…so if you’ve lost your receipt, we’ve got it up here, because obviously we don’t believe a word that Roy tells us, I’ve never seen him at the bar yet.

This just goes to show what a honest bunch people are in a Bakers Union. We had some money handed in last night, obviously not everybody shout at once and it may have a picture of the Queen’s head on, I admit, but if you’ve lost some money, if you go and see Ronnie and tell him how much it was you lost, you’ll be able to claim it back, okay?

So if you’ve lost some money, come and see Ronnie and you’ll be able to claim it back. It’s you is it, Roy? I take it that was for the receipt, was it? [LAUGHTER].

Obviously this morning, of course, we’ve got our learning stand at the back and I would imagine most people would have noticed this morning they were missing a bundle of joy called Kendra. I’m sure Conference would like to send a message to Kendra to get well soon, because unfortunately she’s not going to be well enough to join us and so that means we’re not going to have to be able to listen to, sorry, we’re not going to hear her delicate tones singing on the karaoke at some point this week, but yes, we’ve just been told Janet Goodwin’s going to make up for it. I’ve not heard Janet, but I have heard Kendra. So I’m sure Conference would agree that we send her a get well soon message.

Obviously there’s also a book that I mentioned this morning by Andrew Fisher, now we’ve got some leaflets about it. Andrew Fisher has been a big supporter of the Bakers Union and the book, I’ve got to tell you, what it talks about the economic crisis and understanding it, it’s the most illustrated and simplest read I’ve ever read about understanding exactly what the economic crisis is all about and well I’m simple, aren’t I? If it’s easy, I’m easy, honestly if you’re into the economics and understanding it, that book is unbelievable, it’s a phenomenal book.

Okay, I believe it’s 2 o’clock. General Secretary for the roll call.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5, Region 6 and Region 7. 173 Delegates present.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, obviously before we turn to our agendas, I just want to make a couple of comments, because everything that I’ve been told up to press has been absolutely fantastic. So before we invite Ronnie to speak, I just want to say this in regard to this year’s Conference, because obviously if this would have failed then Ronnie would have carried the can and this hasn’t failed, it’s been an absolutely phenomenal bit of organisation from Ronnie. I think the hotel, I think the Conference Hall itself, I think all of the comments that we’ve received have been absolutely brilliant and I want to say in my introduction to our General Secretary, who’s going to make his opening address to Conference, that thank you very much for organising this, Ron, it’s been absolutely superb up to press. General Secretary to address Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

General Secretary’s Address to Conference

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: You nearly got my crying there, Ian, I’ll tell you. Comrades, what a year we’ve had since we last met in Bridlington. I’ve got to say, I think like Sam Vickers also quoted, that it doesn’t actually seem like a year, there must only about 10 months to every calendar year now as the government are probably cutting back the time when we can enjoy ourselves.
It’s clearly been a year of highs and lows for our Union, for the food industry and for society in general and the only promise we seem to be getting from our politicians is that there’s more to come. I presume that means there’s going to lows as government deal in highs, at least that’s the way it is for working people. The highlight for me, comrades, came on 19th September in Dublin Airport, last year. I’m not talking about the President giving me a great highlight when we were told that we were going through security, that we’d have to have a retinal scan and he said, “Have I got to take my trousers off for that?”. I said no, no, no, Ian, that’s [LAUGHTER], so joking apart, comrades, I’m talking about the phone call that I received from Brian Carlton, who was the HR Director from Premier Foods, offering for the first time in over a month a settlement to the Hovis dispute and I’ve got to say the pride that I took and the smile that I had on my face when he said, “We will settle with Wigan” if I, as the General Secretary, would sign a disclaimer that any other factory that wanted a fight against zero, we would reject them and wouldn’t support them. You can imagine the elation, comrades, knowing that I was in a position to tell him to get stuffed. We will supply our members who take the brave stance ….

[APPLAUSE]

…taken by those workers at Hovis in Wigan. I don’t want to dwell too much on the happenings in Wigan at this moment in time because I’ll be responding on behalf of the Executive to the motions on zero hours, which are going to come probably on Tuesday and of course you won’t be surprised the Hovis dispute will figure quite prominently on that.

The low points for the Union and the food industry in general have to revolve around the incessant programme of closures hitting our members workplaces, in particular, as the President stated in his address, those involving the Two Sisters Group. Ranjit Singh came with a reputation of being a hard-nosed businessman who is on the march upwards and onwards in his quest to build a £3 billion empire. His HR Director assured National Trade Union Officials right across the movement that despite the fact that he had gone bankrupt before, he was not an asset stripper and that his reputation with supermarket chains was second to none. Crap, absolute crap. He and his band of disciples have systematically bought companies, they bought the companies cheap, they’ve raped and pillaged terms and conditions where they’ve been allowed to, they’ve destroyed the value of workers pensions and then they’ve reduced redundancy down to the bare minimum. It’s criminal and it needs investigating and I’m pleased to say he will be getting investigated by our Parliamentary Group.

[APPLAUSE]

You could be forgiven for thinking this was an overstretched business, a business that was borrowing too much, too quickly and unable to deal with the consequences, or is it plain old asset stripping that was denied early when they took the businesses over? I was involved in the talks at Corby and I was present when the council offered him a new factory where he could capitalise not only the building but the council would capitalise the plant and machinery that was going to be in there, so all the excuses about it wasn’t in line production, all the things that were in different rooms or the roof was leaking, all those things have evaporated. They were taken away from him, the carpet was pulled from under him by the trade union and also by the council and he refused it. Instead, we had this timid mishmash of blaming the supermarkets for the margins that they were given before actually coming clean that the business was not being taken away, it was actually being given away by the company and if his reputation was so good with the supermarkets, why did the cake business suddenly disappear from Avana Cakes to a competitor in the north, why would that happen if you’d got a great reputation with a supermarket?

[APPLAUSE]

If there’s anything to be thankful for, it’s that our members at Avana Cakes wouldn’t allow the company to cut terms and conditions and drive down the price redundancy. That took bottle, that took real bottle.

[APPLAUSE]

And you know, society in general isn’t faring any better. The claims that things are improving are just a tissue of lies. It’s almost a re-run of 1997, when you couldn’t go an hour without hearing that D:Ream song “Things Can Only Get Better”, blaring out somewhere. It became new Labour’s signature tune for the election and for the first part of the Blair-led government we actually did see a little progress. The introduction of the Social Charter, cuts to VAT on fuel and the right to recognition for trade unions when a majority of workers wanted it, were just to name a few of the treasures that we got. If things are getting better under this bunch of shysters in government, now as it’s claimed, then I would hate to know what bad times look like. If we took a straw poll within this Hall, I doubt that we’d get more than a handful who could say that their lives are improving to any great extent. But we all know somebody who is dependent on handouts to feed their families.
To the working class, the green shoots to recovery are no more than weeds on the stony paths of poverty. If I’m over-reacting, Chair, then why did the independent Trussell Trust announce that they’d handed out in excess of 900,000 food parcels as opposed to 350,000 last year. It isn’t because they’re more accessible like some government ministers claim, it isn’t because people are eating more, it’s because people have been driven to the edge of despair, to the very, very edge of starvation by a government that doesn’t care what happens to the general public, they’re only interested in the money people. Just while I’m talking about food banks, I’d like to sincerely thank one of our young Delegates, Apryl Walcott, one of our Youth Delegates from Manchester for the work that she does in collecting food for one of the food banks in Sheffield, where she’s a student at university and in her spare time she goes out and she collects food for this food bank. I think it’s absolutely remarkable. Well done, Apryl, it’s fantastic.

[APPLAUSE]

You know, if things were really, really improving in society, they why are so many thousands of people sleeping rough on the streets of our cities? It’s not because it’s a preferred option or they like the fresh air, it’s precisely because they have no option other than to sleep rough. Lack of affordable housing, exorbitant rents being charged by Rachman-style landlords and of course the dreaded bedroom tax, pressurising already impoverished people into the abyss of despair. Decisions in society, comrades, created by Cretins like George Osborne, who uses clichés about the unemployed hiding behind the curtains while you’re returning from your nightshift. Divisive rhetoric aimed at creating fissures between those with very little and those who have even less. While we fight with our own class, they carry on plundering us. Remember it’s not the unemployed attacking your terms and conditions, it’s not the unemployed driving a coach and horses through your working agreements. It’s the greedy employers that you work for, backed by even greedier politicians …...

[APPLAUSE]

and their self-serving anti-worker legislation, that is what’s doing you down, comrades and where does this leave our political system? Well clearly, as far as I’m concerned, not in a good place. I’m absolutely sick to death of hearing and seeing Nigel Farage’s racist xenophobic rants plaguing our media, in particular the BBC, which we own ……

[APPLAUSE]

…the right wing press almost hero-worshipping him and his achievements in the recent elections. Talk about the press having the ability to amplify nothingness, that’s exactly what they’re doing.

Did UKIP do well, or did the mainstream parties under-achieve? I suppose Nigel Farage captured a little of the populous imagination and there’s no doubt that both Tories and Labour didn’t do as well as could and should have been expected. The LibDems were just glad that the Monster Raving Loony Party didn’t stand, to push them even further down the pecking order.

The real tragedy, comrades, of course is the exceptionally low turnout, with a turnout of 34% in a country that prides itself on supposedly being democratic. It’s terrible, but not entirely unexpected. The people lose trust in the politicians and the politics of our country. Constant attacks from the coalition linked with almost total inertia from the Labour Party, have driven the electorate to a choice between the UKIP protest vote or almost total apathy, though personally I believe UKIP comes somewhere behind apathy in the usefulness stakes and time will show that, the lack of substance and value that they’ve ever offered to the British public. The President made a point this morning that judging by the amount of time that Nigel Farage spends in a pub with a beer in his hand and then outside being one of the lads sucking on a fag, that it won’t be long before it takes a toll on his body. The only part of him that’ll remain undamaged will be his pocket, because he’s an ex-banker and they always get somebody else to pay for their mistakes.

[APPLAUSE]

What a dilemma he faces. If the guy looking into his lungs or his liver happens to be the Romanian surgeon living next door or if the Nigerian nurse assisting is one of those who came over and took somebody else’s job, what a dilemma he’s going to face if it’s going to help his health. I’m sure hypocrisy though will win through, comrades. He’ll close his eyes and he’ll dream his policy for cleansing our workplaces of immigrant workers has actually worked and that these people aren’t foreign at all. He, like his party and I know it’s been done down the press, he, like his party, are closet racists, except the doors of the closet are open for all to see. He’s a chancer ready to prey on peoples’ fears in much the same way as the BNP did a number of years ago and where did the BNP vote go to, where did the English Defence League votes go and indeed the extreme right votes from the Tory Party? Yes, you guessed it, they went to UKIP. Unlike the right wing press, I’m not going to give any more time to UKIP and instead I want to devote some time to my visions for Labour and our visions for Labour. Ed Miliband has a major job on his hands if he’s to get the natural Labour voters back on side and promising light touch austerity is not the way he’s going to do it, but let me give him a few pointers. Follow through on the pledge that he made to the TUC Congress, when we were there last year, to scrap zero hour contracts. That, comrades, is a vote winner.

[APPLAUSE]
Pledge to alleviate poverty by introducing a living wage. That’s a vote winner.

[APPLAUSE]

Scrap the dreaded bedroom tax. That’s a vote winner.

[APPLAUSE]

You know, with thousands of people needing affordable homes, right across the country build those thousands of homes that are needed, include council houses. That is a vote winner.

[APPLAUSE]

And I’m sure if Andy Burnham had have been here tomorrow, he would have been talking about fully capitalising our NHS, so the people can get treatment at the point of need and free of charge. That is a vote winner, comrades.

[APPLAUSE]

We’ve had the get-rich scheme within our Royal Mail. Well, take our postal services back into public ownership, with no inflated buy-back to the Tories who bought them or ended up with them and while we’re at it, let’s have our rail network and utilities back. They’re all vote winners.

[APPLAUSE]

Pledge to stop fracking, re-open Remploy factories, give workers their access to justice back and repeal the most heinous element of the Tory employment legislation. All easy tasks, all relatively cheap and all would strengthen our support for Labour. You get the gist? That’s how it’s working. A few simple things can make all the difference and a Labour Party can rule forever if it makes those changes and represents the people they’re meant to. I haven’t mentioned other things that, I’m sure John McDonnell mentioned something today, I haven’t mentioned the introduction of a mansion tax, a Robin Hood tax, a levy on bankers bonuses and a pledge to get those who avoid paying their taxes with the same vigour that they would go after you or I if we owed a few pounds.

[APPLAUSE]

Vote winners and vote winners that could fund the inward investment needed to capitalise the pledges I have just made out on behalf of Ed’s behalf. Comrades, over the course of Conference, we will have debated the hopes and visions for not only our members but society in general. If we can see it, then we ask the question then why can’t politicians see it? In particular politicians from the Labour Party who we help to fund. Chair, I want to finish off with another little reminder to both the trade union and the Labour movements on a subject that I know that you’ve been very, very close to. That is the links between our movement and our political party and I say our political party because the trade union movement was not born out of the Labour Party, it’s quite the opposite, the Labour Party was born out of the trade union movement.

[APPLAUSE]

You know, when they were debating the Collins Report in London, when they re-called Conference and Ian and Pauline McCarthy went along to it, I’m pleased to say, I’m not pleased to say, I’m actually disappointed, but only three unions who are affiliated to the Labour Party voted against the Collins Report. Now I know that weeks before, we had all the support. Unite were going to do it, they were going to fight the battle and they were leading. We were one of the unions who supported the stuff at Grangemouth. I was one of the ones who went on the press, on the television, to tell the press to keep away from Len McCluskey, because if you worked as hard as he did for his members, then it’d be a much better world, but then when it came down to the pressure from the Labour Party, they backed off. All the big unions backed off. The union that we got purged with this morning, Community, they backed off. Three unions, comrades, refused to support the Collins Review. BECTU, which is a very small television union, the musicians union, both who sit on the GFTU Executive with us and of course our own Union and comrades, that is something we can be proud of. We fought for working people.

[APPLAUSE]

And as Marilyn McCarthy points out quite often and you’ll see it in the motions, the mighty Bakers Union prevails again. That’s why we should be a haven for people who want a Socialist future, people who want to take the left wing fight board, those who do want to see a political party that represents the true values of people. The haven is going to be the Bakers Union. It’s not going to be as much good work as big unions do, it is not going to be the haven of our political future because when the chips are down, they withdraw from it. It is a scandal, comrades, that others could not carry through the courage of their convictions and vote with us, but sometimes the value of sound bites on television and on radio and in the newspapers is much better than the lure of justice for working people.
So let me finish by sending a message to the Labour Party leadership that other trade union leaders fail to send and that Ian, our President, was actually refused the opportunity to state at that Conference and I repeat it and I make no apology for repeating it. The Labour Party was born out of our movement, to give working people a say in parliament, not the other way around and we will not tamely kow-tow to the pressures that others have rolled over and accepted. We will fight to retain the link and fight to ensure our members and their families have direct access to the decision makers in parliament. Comrades, we can and should be in a position to influence those who seek to change our lives. Let’s relish that battle and show it in the motions that we pass at Conference. Thank you, comrades.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, Conference. I’ve got here in front of me now the nominations. EC, Region 1, if your name’s read out and you don’t want to stand, you need to shout “withdraw”, yes? Okay. Region 1, Vince Payne, Mandy Ambrose. Region 2, John Newman, Jason Moore, Huw Forisz, Chris Lay, I apologise Hugh. Region 3, Jackie Barnwell, Paul Mahon, Paul McGarry, Lukasz Bemka, okay. Region 4, John Fitzpatrick, John Owens, John Fox. Region 5, Pauline McCarthy, Joe Knapper, Lizzie Dinnin, Mark McHugh, Angela Shortreed, Rachel Mullen, okay, Rachel Mullen withdraws.

**Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary:** So did Angela Shortreed.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** And Angela, right, okay. They should have all gone in by 11 o’clock this morning.

**Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary:** Wherever you do your nominations, you don’t nominate in the way that we used to, that’s down to your regions now, it comes from the regions, it doesn’t come from here. Hang on, hang on, you don’t make a point of order from over there, you come down here and make a point of order.

**Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton):** Point of order. I’ve been nominated by people, we’ve not had our forms collected. What are you doing about it?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I’ve got to say that it’s not us that does it, it’s your region. Your region nominates, your region collects your nomination papers and delivers them, as they’ve done every year, to Standing Orders by 11 o’clock and I announced it, I announced to make sure that all the nomination forms were taken. I mean all I’ve got is a list of names that’s come from Standing Orders, that’s all I’ve got.

**Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton):** So why have they not been collected then?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I don’t know, ask your officials, whoever’s supposed to collect them.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Point of information?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Pardon?

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Can I give you a point of information ......

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** on this? We’re sat right on the back row, when you announced it as we were getting up to go out, apparently, that they were being collected, we didn’t hear it. Now what’s happened since is that one of our guys has gone to Standing Orders and they’ve agreed for the papers to be collected in and he’s just taken them in as you’ve announced the results.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I haven’t announced any results, I’m announcing what I’ve been handed by Standing Orders for nominations.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Right, but our nominations are not in, ours are not all in that, that’s what I’m saying, Ian.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I’m at a bit of a loss. I mean first off, right, when I opened Conference this morning, I pointed out about the nominations. Secondly, I again announced it before I actually gave my opening address and I reminded everybody that all the nomination papers had to be upstairs by 11 o’clock, as they always have, year on year.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Upstairs where?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Standing Orders, Standing Orders.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** All I can say is, maybe we just weren’t listening to you then.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** But how can I be held responsible if you don’t listen? That’s not my fault. I asked if everybody could hear me and nobody’s had a problem with hearing me, I mean, nobody’s had a problem with hearing me.
Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: If you’re sat down we can hear you, if you stand up we can’t. I flagged that up this morning.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: What am I supposed to do about an issue where everybody knows year on year when the nominations go in? It should say 11 o’clock, that’s when you’re supposed to have them in by. I mean, I’ve got to say, I’m not currently aware, I’m not currently aware that any of the other regions have had a similar problem, I’m not aware. You need to come down to the mike.

Brother John Cheetham – Branch 459 (Warburtons, Burnley): Ian, sorry. Just a quick one, you were at the Regional Council meeting when we voted Des P on, so I presumed that his name would have been put forward anyway. That’s how I thought it went forward, because we voted him on that at the Regional Council meeting.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No it has, you have to fill a nomination form in.

Brother John Cheetham – Branch 459 (Warburtons, Burnley): Well the nomination forms obviously have just been collected in by yourselves and none of us at the back heard anything about 11 o’clock deadlines, I can assure you that much. My hearing’s perfect.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Well I’ve got to say, I mean Marilyn did say that she said she heard me mention the 11 o’clock when you were leaving.

Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton): Ian, Ian, there’s two regions not had nominations put in and the full-time Officials, whoever’s responsible have not done their jobs. Sort it out now and …… I beg your pardon, are we not democratic? Are we democratic or not? Can you sort it out now, please then, yes or no? Are you democratic or, yes? Right, we’re a democracy, we’re not a dictatorship.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: But you’re asking the wrong people. Conference, Conference said it’s regions that do it and it’s regions that do it, we don’t do it, we don’t do it, Des, we don’t do it.

Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton): The Officials responsible haven’t collected the ballot papers, it’s not my job collecting ballot papers. I’ve been nominated, right, it’s …… Oh God, I give up.

Brother George Tittensor – Branch 392 (Birmingham & West Midlands): Can I check, Mr Chairman, that No. 3 papers are still out lying on the table, unaccounted for. Who’s responsible? Who cares? Nominate anybody.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Point of order, Ian, I didn’t say that I heard it said at 11, other people said as we were getting up and going out of the Hall it was announced that the papers had to be in at 11 o’clock, we were on our way out. I didn’t hear it, somebody else told me and I believe they were telling the truth, so there you go.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: So somebody heard me say 11 o’clock, but you mentioned, I said Marilyn said that I was heard saying 11 o’clock. Yes and you take them up to Standing Orders.

Brother Paul Crandon – Branch 256 (Avana Bakeries): Branch Secretary, Chair, Platform, Delegates. This is quite easy really, let’s be honest. Put it in what you want to say. At the end of the day, right, if you say 11 o’clock, we know it’s 11 o’clock. If you don’t say a time, then how are we supposed to know? It’s over to you, it’s easy, let’s be honest, it’s down to you. You say a time, we know what time it’s got to be in, it’s your fault, not ours.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, I mean, I take responsibility for a lot of things and I haven’t got a problem with responsibility. Now Marilyn said that somebody told her I’d said 11 o’clock. Other people said I said it when they were leaving, don’t forget, nominations up by 11 o’clock, so if people heard me say nominations up by 11 o’clock, surely that means I must have said it.

Sister Apryl Walcott: Can I just ask a question?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Go on.

Sister Apryl Walcott: None of mine from, I don’t know what branch I’m from, that one ……

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Branch 450.

Sister Apryl Walcott: 450 apparently, none of us have had our ballot papers taken, so how was John, John and John elected from our region when none of us have voted or put nominations forward?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I don’t know.
Sister Apryl Walcott: Then something needs to be done, because something’s dodgy, something’s gone wrong, it’s not our responsibility, you have to do something, something has obviously gone wrong, if three people have been nominated and none of us have handed in our election papers.

[APPLAUSE and CHEERS]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Andy. Andy, go on.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): We were getting up to leave, Ian made an announcement, our ballot papers haven’t been collected, I got ours and took them up to Standing Orders. Whoever’s made the mistake isn’t these lot sat up there, it’s whoever was in Region 4 who should have been collecting our ballot papers.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton): Take ownership and take responsibility, someone needs to.

Brother Carl Thorne - Branch 543: We don’t need to take responsibility, just let’s get it resolved.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Roy Tysall – Branch 414: Ian, I did hear you say 11 o’clock this morning. I actually came and spoke to you in the foyer, however, we were leaving and nominations weren’t taken away from us. That’s not the Delegates fault. I understand it’s not the EC’s fault either, but surely it can be rectified now.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: General Secretary.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): It’s the Scrutineers responsibility to take in these nomination forms, right?

[APPLAUSE]

If the Scrutineers didn’t do it, you need to be having a word with them. As far as I’m concerned, the President needs to be drawing a line under this and moving on.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: To us, it doesn’t matter who’s nominated, there’s nothing there to block anyone. The only thing I would say is, if you saw this afternoon that your papers were still there, did nobody sort of go hey, why’s my paper still here?, after he made the announcement this morning. We can wind the tape back and show you that it was said this morning by the way. I accept that it might not have been a big, I’m not the quietest person and he most certainly isn’t the quietest person in Conference, that’s probably the last thing he’ll be accused of, so you make an announcement. All of those people who’ve been to Conference before, I’ll tell you what, I’ll forgive first time Delegates because you’ve never been through that procedure, but every single Official has been to Conference, full-time Officials, for years. People who are Delegates at Conference have been here for years, including you Des, you know when they get collected, papers, you can blame and you do what you want, you can’t blame the people up here. As far as taking ownership, if the region is happy for your name to be added, fine, fine. All you do is you create more work for the office staff upstairs. I don’t care how many names are on, you can yawn all you want, you can do that, that’s okay.

Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton): Well, you’re making derogatory remarks.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: What’s a derogatory mark?

Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton): About me knowing, I didn’t know.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: You know, have you never been to Conference before?

Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton): I have been to Conference.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Have you? When did your papers get collected for nominations?

Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton): I didn’t hear today about the 11 o’clock deadline.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Every other year, when did they get collected?

Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton): I didn’t hear it. Then the members who’d been nominated from our region, if the nomination’s only just been collected, why is there three people already in?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: You tell me.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Because Andy Moorhouse has just come down here and said he collected nomination papers and took them to Standing Orders.
Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton): He only just came around about 20 minutes ago, collecting nominations.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Look, if your nomination is missed off, then I suggest that one of your Officials goes into Standing Orders and say look, we’ve missed somebody off. It isn’t the National President who missed them off.

Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki – Branch 419 (Variety Bakery, Bolton): I didn’t. I asked for an extention, I asked for the people who’ve been nominated to go to Standing Orders, can you say this to Standing Orders then? and get the people who’ve been nominated and been missed out, let them stand for election.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I’ll tell you what, if you come and let John Fox know who’s been missed off, right and we will check the regions that you were nominated and then we’ll put it through. I don’t see that it’s a big, it’s not a big problem. The fact is that it was this morning, it’s always been this morning. I think this is my what, 35th Conference or something that I’ve been to, it’s always been on a Sunday morning, all of a sudden it hasn’t happened today. The first time when you change to regional election of EC members as opposed to a National Executive being elected by the whole of the Union. The first time you’ve changed it and it hasn’t happened. We don’t know whether your papers have been collected, but you know when they haven’t been collected and you should have handed them in, but if your name’s missing off, put it on, go and see your Official.

Brother Colin Morgan: Comrades, comrades, listen, there’s one solution to this isn’t there? There’s been a mistake made. Surely we can agree maybe to change the rules for today because for whatever reason people didn’t hear, right, there’s been a mistake made. If people want to go forward like Ronnie said, let’s go up, put the extra names on the ballot and now we’ll go from there. Easy, right?

[APPLAUSE]

Listen fellas, right, if my members and I’ve got 680 members in my branch, seeing the way this was conducted, I would lose half of them, let me tell you. We need to be more professional and maybe starting from the beginning.

[APPLAUSE]

Somebody somewhere has made a mistake, so let’s start again, let’s keep everyone happy because that’s what we are as a trade union, we look after those people who’ve been wronged and somebody’s been wronged here today, let’s change it, let’s put it right.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I don’t see anything wrong with that solution.

Brother Larry Stone – Branch 116 (Enfield): This is my first time to Conference and believe you me, it’s been a bit of an eye-opener. I’d like to know what the procedure is now because I don’t know, so if someone could tell me where we go from here, I’d be happy. I think we can all get on and resolve it easily, so thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I’ll say it again, if your name’s been missed off in your regions ...... you better tell them that then.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Mark Brooks (Vice-Chair, Standing Orders): Thanks, thanks, Ronnie. Thanks to people in here. Okay, that better? Right, Mark Brooks, Vice-Chair for Standing Orders.

At quarter past 10 today, we had about four nominations in, so I sent a letter up to John Fox to tell the President that we wanted nomination forms in at 11 o’clock, no later. Anybody go back to last year, we had nomination papers coming in at 3 o’clock in the afternoon, 4 o’clock, we had to stay behind and re-check it and re-do it year on, year off. Everyone knows it’s in the morning, it’s in the rule book guys. Nominations to Conference, for EC members is on a Sunday morning, with the voting taking place on the Monday. Now if you just want to keep going through it, how long do you want to do it, how long do we keep actually adding names and adding names. It’s not the EC’s fault, it’s not Standing Orders fault. We have seven Scrutineers for seven regions and I’m sorry the decision from Standing Orders is no more nominations will be accepted.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Colin Morgan – Branch 238 (Llantarnam): Listen, we need to put an end to this ......

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can we be quiet, please.
Brother Colin Morgan – Branch 238 (Llantarnam): somebody has been wronged, right? Whether somebody’s got to put an emergency motion in, or whatever, let’s get it done, let’s get it right and let’s get on with the proper business of attacking the Tories and the people who are wronging us and our employers, not fighting against one another ......

[APPLAUSE]

let’s put this right, let the people who haven’t been nominated, a mistake, somebody made a mistake. Anybody in this room who hasn’t made a mistake? I don’t think so, so let’s give these people the opportunity. Standing Orders can do what they want, but if we put a motion in and we get somebody to put a motion in, we’ll overturn it and let’s get on with what we’re here to do. Come on, let’s move on chaps.

Brother Warren Broomhall – Branch 390: Am I right in saying that if Conference, all the Delegates we’re in charge of Conference right now. If we are to put in a resolution to fix this problem and we vote on it, can it be done and let’s move on.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You can suspend Standing Orders and do it probably.

Brother Warren Broomhall – Branch 390: My resolution would be why can’t we just get each FTO of each region and just flood across the tables, pick up any nominations that have been missed and let’s crack on.

[APPLAUSE]

If I put that as a resolution right now, can we vote on it and just do it and move on?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Yes, what you can do and I’m not recommending this, all I’m doing is giving some guidance. What you can do, if you don’t agree with what Standing Orders, you can suspend Standing Orders and you can have a debate on that issue, right? At the end of the day you come to a decision. What you’ve got to accept and well, we can’t overrule Standing Orders at Conference. Mark Brooks came down and made a statement. If you suspend, if Conference wants to suspend Standing Orders and have a debate on this, then fine, that’s down to you.

Brother Warren Broomhall – Branch 390: Will that get it, will that get us moving on Conference if we do that?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Ask the question.

Brother Warren Broomhall – Branch 390: My resolution then, for right now, to get this issue sorted, is that we have each FTO of each region flood down each table, collect up nomination forms and get them immediately to Standing Orders, so we can carry on with Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is there a seconder for that motion? Seconder for that motion, yes? We’ve got a debate going on, Pat, so is it part of the debate?

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Yes, seconder, I’ll second it.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is it to the motion?

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Yes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you seconding that, yes?

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Seconding.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To be honest, to be honest, I thought Warren had already done it, right and it was seconded. Are you actually seconding it, Marilyn? And then I said is it a debate and then Pat spoke and I thought that’s what you were doing now, you don’t need to do another one. Right. Yes, I can’t hear you from there, Marilyn, is it a point of order? Is it a point of order? Make sure it’s a point of order.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Point of order. The lad from Standing Orders stood up there and said it’s in the rule book that it’s got to be in for 11 o’clock. Sorry about this, we can’t find the rule. Now if he doesn’t understand the rule book, he shouldn’t be doing Standing Orders.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Listen, Marilyn, right, nobody’s going to pick on any individual, yes, nobody’s going to pick on any individual. He’s come down, obviously the Standing Orders is normally chaired by Olive, they’ve all been thrown in in the deep end this year because they haven’t got that guiding hand of Olive, yes? He’s come down, he’s responded and given the position of the Standing Orders. He’s responded to the position of the Standing Orders. That wasn’t really a point of order, because the debate is on the motion that Warren asked to be moved, which was that Standing Orders was suspended and Conference was given an opportunity to vote to say whether or not the Delegates forms could now be collected and taken up to Standing Orders. That’s the motion on the floor.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Okay.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yours is not a point of order, but thank you for your contribution.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Right, well I’d like a point of information, are we going to get this wrapped up before it’s time to go for a drink?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I don’t know, I mean obviously it depends who wants to come down and speak. It’s a democracy this. Obviously you can’t come back, Warren, no-one’s opposed you, mate. Right, nobody else wants to speak? No? Okay, to the vote. Those in agreement with suspending Standing Orders, show your hands. Point of order, yes?

Brother John Halliday – Branch 701: Point of order. Standing Orders. A decision was made this morning on behalf of the Standing Orders that 11 o’clock was the deadline. Are you all going to sit there, disrespectful to myself and my colleagues, because that’s what it sounds like. If we have the wrong Conference, make rules, then you have to stick by them, because what you are doing, every time something happens, we’ll suspend Standing Orders, put in a motion, so any motion can then be debated on the floor. The Standing Orders have met, put the Conference Agenda in front of you, the same with the rules, so now you are going to take every opportunity, because that’s what it’s opening, every opportunity when something happens, we’ll suspend Standing Orders and go ahead with something else. Standing Orders runs the Conference with the NEC’s blessing, that’s the way it should be. 11 o’clock was the deadline, that’s it.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those that want to suspend Standing Orders. Those against suspending Standing Orders. I believe that’s lost. Those, right, yes, love (?) the tellers. We’re going to the vote, tell us, yes? Okay, those that are voting in favour, don’t forget you’ve got a vote for your Executive and obviously we need the Standing Orders people as well, so those in favour of suspending Standing Orders show and keep your hands up until you’ve been counted. Okay, is that everybody counted? Yes, you should be counting your delegation, yes, yes, yes. Okay. I’ll call out the regions, right, the full-time Official give us the result, yes? So those opposing ......

Brother Paul Crandon: Excuse me, point of order. Ian, you’ve just bullied people into making a decision. At the end of the day, right, you should not say or guide people in any way, shape or form. People should make their own democratic decision. Thank you very much.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I’m lost. I’m sorry, I’ve asked for a yes vote, I’ve asked for a no vote. Those in favour ...... You tell me what you think I said.

Brother Paul Crandon: You guided people into making a decision, Ian. At the end of the day you shouldn’t have done that. You’re here to lead the people, not to guide them.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: My role is to ask people to vote, my role is to ask people to vote. I believed when it was took that it was lost, that was challenged, so to be democratic, to be democratic I’ve asked for people to count the votes, so when those votes are counted, it’s clear, absolutely clear. Now, obviously, obviously I need you all to sit down and let’s have the vote and let’s find out what the result is. Point of order, okay.
Sister Sheila Hyman: Can I just say that I’ve got my own mind please and I can make my own mind up, I don’t need these guys to guide me, I make my own mind up on what I want to do. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, so obviously I have to ask those people who are not in favour of the motion to suspend Standing Orders to vote, so please put your hands up. To suspend Standing Orders, the question was to suspend Standing Orders. So can they tell us, now count the hands of those people that are opposed to the suspension of Standing Orders. Can you make sure you keep your hands up, so people can count them.

Okay, okay, right. I’ll read out the regions, you want to count them. Right, Region 1 those for? 14 for. Those against? No, those for the suspension, right, first so for? 2 for, 14 against, okay. Region 2, I can’t hear you mate, 9 for, 8 against. Region 3, 24 for, 3 against. No. 4, 36 for, 2 against, okay. Region 5, 1 for, 47 against. Region 6, 1 for, 4 against. Region 7, 1 for, 12 against. Okay, 74 for, 90 against, so we’re not suspending Standing Orders, okay.

[APPLAUSE]

[APPLAUSE]

Move onto your Agenda.

Right, I’ll continue reading the nominations then. I think I was on Region 5 and I think Rachel had withdrawn from Region 5. I think Rachel had withdrawn and Angela Shortreed had withdrawn. So, Region 6, David Byrne. Region 7, John Halliday Junior, Noel Mullen. Standing Orders nomination: Region 1, Cecil John, J West, J Lee. Region 2, Gloria Martin. Region 3, Mark Brooks. Pardon?

Brother George Tittensor – Branch 392 (Birmingham & West Midlands): Is it not a fact, Mr Chairman, that if I’m nominated through my branch as a Delegate to Conference, I can stand for any position within this Union? If I’m on Standing Orders I can come and not speak or address or even vote on anything, is that not in the rule book, Mr Chairman? Then Brooks is out of order.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You can speak if you’re a Delegate, you can’t speak if you’re not a Delegate. You can speak if you’re a Delegate, yes. I’m sorry, I’m lost, what was that about? Okay. Region 5, M McDonald, S Woolley, Angela Shortreed. Standing Orders, yes. Region 6, Dave King. Region 7, Kevin Flood, D Creaney. Who shouted withdraw then? Who shouted withdraw? Okay, D Creaney withdraws. Okay. Youth Rep, Rachel Mullen, Apryl Walcott. Female Rep, Helena England, Sarah Woolley, Pauline McCarthy. Pauline McCarthy withdraws. Trade Union Congress, Pauline McCarthy, Rachel Mullen.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Rachel Mullen ......


Okay, colleagues, if you’ll turn to your Agendas and I believe we’re on motion 13.

13 Rule 22.4 – No 2 Regional Council

That this Conference agrees to amend Rule 22.4 b). Paragraph 4 to read ‘Members of the Standing Orders Committee shall be paid in accordance with Rule 22.5 and shall be subject to Rule 9 and, in the event of loss of earnings from their employer, shall be compensated for any loss by the union’.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): Oh no, this is Regional Council, sorry, I do apologise. No. 2 Regional Council. The rule actually states that “they shall be paid in accordance with paragraph 5 of this rule”, but there’s only four paragraphs, so it doesn’t make sense. It’s nothing major, it’s just a tidying up exercise, so please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, seconder? Formally seconded? Any speakers? The Executive would agree with the mover and ask Conference to support. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 14.

14 Rule 22.6 Power of Conference – Greggs 253 Treforest

That this conference agrees to that this rule be amended so it says:

Regions 3 & 4 = 2 members,
Region 5 = 2 members
Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253 (Greggs, Treforest): Moving to change Rule 22.6 Power of Conference. That this Conference agrees that this rule be amended so it says Regions 3 and 4 equals two members and Region 5 equals two members. Two reasons for this really, just to be a bit fairer so that all regions in 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 have the two members and then the second reason really is on costings, do we really need the extra EC members when the members very much, it’s not a big change in numbers, then why do we need extra EC members for certain regions? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Dawn Scott – Region 253: I would like to support this motion as I feel it is fairer and more even if the numbers are the same for all regions. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: I’m up here to oppose this. The reason that they’re not all the same numbers for each region is about the membership in various regions. No. 5 is a huge, covers a huge area, that’s why they’ve got so many, one more actually than Region 4. I’m asking you to oppose this.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I’m here to support this motion, because it doesn’t make sense to me, I’ll be quite honest with you. If it’s about membership, then surely No. 3 region should have more Executive Council members than anybody else, because they’ve got more members in the branches. Please support, it doesn’t make sense.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers? General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, Chair. Comrades, we would ask Conference to oppose the motion. To be clear, it’s not a decision that we’re asking you to take on just self-preservation, it’s purely and simply based on the proportionality and the demography of the Union’s membership. When we changed from a district set-up to a regional constitution, we tried as near as damn it to reflect the Executive as it had been before. This ensured a consistent make-up and spread of how the decision-making authority was spread, but there’s one question I would put to you. If the motion’s there to equalise Regions 3, 4 and 5 with those of Region 1 and Region 2, then the question’s got to be asked, why didn’t it mention No. 6 and No. 7, why hasn’t No. 6 got two and No. 7 got two? If we want equality, then let’s have equality, not equality just on certain terms. If we’re not to have proportionality on the Executive, then at least we should be looking for equality. There is of course an element of cost saving that’s going to be achieved if this motion is carried, but it would not take place until this change is implemented at the 2016 Conference, so in two years’ time, but before voting ask the question of yourselves, do I want the decision-making process concentrated on fewer people. I’m not sure that that is going to benefit the Union as a whole, so comrades, the Executive would ask Conference to oppose.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, right of reply.

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253 (Greggs, Treforest): Ronnie’s right, I am looking at the equality and I apologise to Region 6 and Region 7, I made a mistake and I will be submitting it in two years’ time to say that we all have two EC members each.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: So, are you withdrawing it?

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253 (Greggs, Treforest): No, that’s if it don’t fall, sorry.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s lost. Motion 16.

16 Rule 29 – No 5 Regional Council

That this conference agrees to a £0.05p per week increase in union subscriptions to be put into Union Strike Fund for the use of any BFAWU Branch that is left with no other choice than to enter into industrial action/strike with their employer. These monies are to be used to support the branch and help relieve the hardship of our members during industrial action.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): That this Conference agrees to a 5p a week increase in union subscriptions, to be put into a strike fund for the use of any BFAWU branch that is left with no other choice than to enter into industrial action strike with their employer. The monies are to be used to support the branch and help relieve hardship of our members during the industrial action.
We already have a rule on this, Rule 29.1, the Union shall establish a strike fund, the said governed by the General Secretary and the National President. The fund could be raised from branches, Regional Councils and Annual Conference and the generosity of the National Executive. All I’m asking for in this motion is that it’s actually done at source, it says at branches, 5p would put, within a year, round about £50,000 into a strike fund. I saw the Wigan strike last year and the fundraising that went on was phenomenal, it was fantastic. Unite the Union or Unite the Resistance, sorry, were fantastic, the money raised at the TUC, it was great, but I just feel if we had a pot ready there waiting, we could still go out and raise money to refresh it, but the employers know the hardship when people go on strike. I think if we had a pot of money there to help the hardship, to help with the organising and everything, it would be far better.

Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: I’m here to second the motion and support it. Can you imagine if we had 10 bakeries on strike, the hardship throughout those bakeries, where’s the money coming from, how can we support 10 bakers, sorry bakery factories on strike? We need this hardship fund, because in the future we could face that problem, it might come. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Janet Phillips – Branch 405: Comrades, I support this motion. At Hovis, Wigan we had wonderful support from all the unions, left-wing groups and individual people. I agree with the motion, we need adequate funding in place to provide support and confidence for comrades during industrial action. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nick Hughes – Branch Secretary (Hovis, Wigan), Branch 417: I support this motion. The reason is, for two reasons, sorry. First of all, it’s in our rule book 29.1 and secondly as I believe as well providing a safety net for striking workers, it sends out a strong message to the employers that we won’t be starved back to work. Please support this.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Kumran Khan – Branch 303 (Greggs Bakery, Region 3): First time Delegate and speaker. Last year at this Conference I believe a motion was passed regarding a strike fund. We cannot justify a subscription increase to all our members with the specific intention to strike. I urge you to oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Imran Hussain – Branch 301 (Greggs shops): First time Delegate and speaker. There are branches across the country that would never strike due to fear or inability to organise and engage with members. We run the risk of losing members if we increase the charge. I oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: I oppose this motion and I oppose it on two things. First of all, 5p a week, and this, at the end of Conference, will have a conflagration about putting the subs up so your subs are going to go up by at least 10p a week. On a personal note, it does not affect me at all, I’m retired, so I’m not going to need a strike fund and the other thing is that I paid the £25, so my subs are not going to increase, I’ve paid it now for the rest of my life, but I am asking you to oppose this.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558: I’m here to support this motion. An army marches on its stomach. You also need to let your employers know that this Trade Union is prepared to take action and the working man has a right to withdraw his labour.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): I’m here to support the motion. I believe that just the existence of the fund will make bosses think twice before driving us into a corner to take action, because they know if they do drive us into a corner to take action, we have got a lot more behind us, because when we struck at Wigan it was really hard at first, it was really, really hard trying to get everything organised. If we have our own fund, it would be so much easier, which would make bosses think twice about taking us on. That’s why I think it’s a very good idea having this fund. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Conference, we would ask first if the mover would remit the motion and I’ll explain the reasons why. Last year we did put in the rule book about how we can put a strike fund together. We also have the ability as a Trade Union to actually levy members if our members are in dispute. One of the concerns that we had on the Executive was the potential that if we actually include a levy on members through check-off and through the payroll, that the company may refuse on that basis to start taking the monies that we need as dues from our membership. So we would ask you first if you would remit it, because we want 100% agree that we will never allow our members to be starved back to work and we do recognise if a dispute was to actually occur and we needed to raise funds, we would use every tool that we had to make sure that our members would be supported and we can give you that assurance, but we are concerned that if you don’t remit it then we will have to oppose it on the basis for fear that the company may refuse to start taking our monies from check-off. So first we’d ask you to remit.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): I will remit the motion, but I hope we will be watching and hopefully a strike fund will be raised through donations and through branches. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, thank you very much Dave. Motion 17.

17 New Rule – Greggs 580 Yorkshire

This conference agrees that unacceptable behaviour at conference will not be tolerated and will result in a ban from conference and disciplinary action taken.

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: We come for Conference to do a job. Throughout the day this Conference Hall is our place of work. We make decisions that direct the way this Union moves and develops. Alongside this there is a chance to catch up with friends old and new that aren’t seen from one year to the next, meet new friends and carry on debates throughout the day. What we don’t come to Conference for is to experience violence or unacceptable behaviour of any sort. We are comrades, friends, a union and under no circumstances should we accept, in my opinion, outbursts at Conference towards other Delegates or anyone else for that matter. Doing so should result in a ban from Conference and disciplinary action to determine how long for and if anything else needs to be sanctioned on top, depending on the severity. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Okay.

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: I strongly oppose this. When you see the wording, disciplinary action taken, can you imagine if this got back into the workplace, he’d not only be disciplined here, he’d be disciplined in the workplace when he got back and knowing the companies that we deal with, it could probably be classed as gross misconduct. My problem is the disciplinary action is way out of order. We have FTO’s here, full-time officers and we have Ronnie and them, they’re the people that should deal with this matter, not to be put in an action as a disciplinary action. I urge you to oppose this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Kumran Khan – Branch 303 (Greggs Bakery, Region 3): As a trade unionist activist, we strive to demand and expect respect and dignity at our workplaces. We certainly do not expect to be witnessing bad behaviour within our own organisation. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Here to oppose the motion, because what is unacceptable, I mean we know what is unacceptable behaviour, but where do we draw the line? I’m sure if anybody was acting unacceptably, they would be removed from Conference. I don’t think it needs a motion to back it.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Imran Hussain – Branch 301 (Greggs Shops Region 3): We are all colleagues, brothers and sisters. We should all behave with responsibility. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers? Okay, General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, President. The Executive Council would ask Conference to support the motion. The only argument is why does it only apply to Conference?
What about unacceptable behaviour in the branch or at Regional Councils? Without going into the conduct of any individual or any group of individuals, we have to accept that representing your members at any meeting, your conduct should be almost impeccable. We’re not prudes or trying to turn union gatherings into some kind of nanny state. We know that activists are under pressure when they come away and sometimes they can react in different ways to different situations. We even know that some of you like the odd drink now and again, but at the end of the day you and hundreds of activists like you are ambassadors for this Union, at meetings to represent those who can’t be here to give the best of their ability, so you have to do it to the best of your ability. Irrational, disrespectful or antisocial behaviour shouldn’t be tolerated, irrespective of who does it. Racism, sexist or any other discrimination cannot and will not be excused. If problems are caused by alcohol or may I say drugs, then don’t take them if they affect you adversely. We spend a fortune on trade union equality courses that promote a culture of accepting people, irrespective of their sex, colour, creed, religious beliefs or sexual orientation. So why should we let those values slip just because we happen to be away from the workplace for a few days? If you don’t accept these basic principles of trade unionism, indeed principals of decent humanity, then maybe you shouldn’t be involved in that culture. I do say where I do agree is that the question of disciplinary action is somewhat more difficult to meter out. Without trying to sound blasé, it’s easier for the Executive to discipline an employee than it would be to discipline a member who’s attending as an elected representative, but we will support any ban imposed by the Standing Orders Committee on any Delegate who is guilty of inappropriate behaviour.

As a Delegate I would be mortified if I had to tell my branch that I’d been banned from attending a future Conference because of my inappropriate behaviour. If you join a club or association, you have to abide by the rules of that association. If you don’t accept these rules, then you don’t have to be a member and this Union is absolutely no different. We have rules of the Union that we expect everyone to abide by, that we have to abide by. No excuses and no exceptions. Above all, we ask for mutual respect for each other and that you uphold trade union values. No more, comrades and no less. Conference, don’t just put your hand up because it sounds right or because it looks right or because it feels right. Vote yes because it is the right thing for trade unionists to do. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

Okay, just before we bring Mark in from Standing Orders, I’ve got a list here for the Labour Party, which is Pauline McCarthy, Rachel Mullen, Helena England, Dave Dash, R Hurst.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Helena England’s withdrawn.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Helena England’s withdrawn. R Marsh, R Marsh withdraws, Lizzie Dinnin, Lizzie Dinnin withdraws, Mark McHugh, Dave Suddards, Dave Suddards withdraws, Mandy Ambrose and Vince Payne. Okay, thank you very much.

Mark Brooks from Standing Orders.

Brother Mark Brooks, Vice-Chair, Standing Orders: Could you please turn to your Agendas. Motion 23 stands, sorry, that better? Thank you. Motion 23 stands, the amendment is out of order. Motion 24 stands, motion 25 stands, motion 26 stands, motion 27 stands, motion 28 stands, motion 29 stands, motion 30 stands, motion 31 is out of order, motion 32 has been withdrawn, motion 33 stands, motion 34 stands, motion 35 stands, motion 36 stands, motion 37 stands, motion 38 stands, motion 39 stands, motion 40 stands, motion 41 stands, motion 42 stands, motion 43 stands, motion 44 stands, motion 45 withdrawn, motion 46 withdrawn, motion 47 stands, motion 48 stands, motion 49 stands, last but not least motion 50 also stands. I’d like to put that to Conference, yes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To Conference, accept that report? Those in favour? Against? Thank you very much, thank you Mark. Okay, we’re going to take tea break now, so back for quarter to.

[BREAK]

Okay, Delegates, can you take your seats please. Okay, mover of ..... Delegates could you please sit down and I’ve also been asked to make you aware that when you’re talking and people are speaking, that people in front of you can’t hear the people speaking from the rostrum, so if you could show your respect for when those people get up, it would be really appreciated. This is normally a place where people come to listen to people speak, so if you could do that, I think the person making the point from the rostrum can be heard, you can know exactly what it is, the debate is, that you’re taking part in, if you don’t mind please. Thank you very much. Okay.

[APPLAUSE]

Mover of motion 18. Point of information.
Brother Roy Streeter, Full-Time Official, No. 4 Region: It’s just a point of clarification, because I feel like I’ve misled some of my delegation in terms of elections for the Executive Council. My understanding this year was that we give nominations, the nomination paper was actually a ballot paper and what I’m being told now and it may be me that’s at fault here, what I’m being told now is that we’re entitled to three EC members and if more than three people stood, there would be a ballot on Monday?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes.

Brother Roy Streeter, Full-Time Official, No. 4 Region: That wasn’t my understanding. My understanding was that the nomination paper was a ballot paper and I was telling my Delegates that if you’ve got, you’ve got three votes and if five people stood, you choose three people to be your Executive Council member. So, in terms of trying to bring some understanding, that is what we understood and I don’t know if other people within the Conference Hall believe the same thing. Obviously we’ve got a rule change this year in terms of how we elect our Executive Council and I think that we went through a load of rubbish in terms of suspension of Standing Orders and all that, at the end of the day what we wanted to make sure was that people got an opportunity to vote for their EC member and I felt, I believe I’ve misled some of my delegation in terms of when they were putting their names on the nomination forms, I was telling them you’ve got, if there were five people standing in Manchester, sorry in No. 4 Region, so you’ve got three votes and it was only talking to Ronnie then that I was being told that no, if more than three people stood, there would be an election on Monday …..

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes.

Brother Roy Streeter, Full-Time Official, No. 4 Region: and I didn’t, so I need to apologise, because I misled some of my, because I was being told that we put nominations forward at our pre-Conference meeting, five people stood, I was telling people listen now on the nomination forms you’ve got, you need to put three names out of five, so I do apologise and I apologise to my Delegates, because I got it wrong.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Listen Roy, I appreciate that, thank you very much for that point of clarity. Okay, back to your Agendas. I’ve asked, who is it? Yes, motion 18.

18 New Rule – Greggs 253 Treforest

That this conference agrees to put a new rule: The classification of youth within the BFAWU will be a member which is at the age of 30 or under.

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253 (Greggs, Treforest Branch): That this Conference agrees to put a new rule in the classification of youth within the BFAWU, will be a member who is at the age of 30 or under. I believe this because I myself was a late starter within the union movement and I believe if people go onto higher education and then go into jobs and stuff like that, before they even then go in their jobs and if they are then quickly signed up to the Union, they’re not actually getting into the Union until they’re like 24/25, which is what happened to me, which is what happened to me and I just think that like having just that little bit more age gap to get that experience, so that they can also then share their experiences with the younger members, such as 18–21 year olds and stuff like that, is a bit better than sharing them with people like Mr Hodson and Mr Draper who’s a bit older. I did say it quietly. Please support the motion, thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: I’m here to second the motion. From next year the school leaving age rises to 18, meaning young adults will be entering employment at a later stage and therefore joining unions later too. Moving the age to 30 will help to keep later joining members engaged. I myself didn’t become an active member until 24, I’m now 27. I know a few people that are sat here in the same position. I believe the cut-off point of 27 leaves lots of young members feeling in limbo. They’re not yet old and they haven’t got a lot of experience, but they’re no longer seen as young in our Union, so I think it needs to be raised to 30 to incorporate the changes in education and people joining the Union later. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: Chair, Platform, Delegates. Here to support this motion. I’d like to see the age be put up to 30, as I feel that our younger people are important for the future of the Union. Not all young people feel confident until their late 20’s and with this in mind, I would like to see the age go up to 30. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 258, Branch Secretary (Memory Lane Cakes): First time speaker, I would like to support this motion because again like myself, I didn’t get involved in the Union until I was 24, I’m now 29 and I just believe that younger people should have more of an opportunity because they’re not getting involved until they’re getting mature and that’s why I support this motion.  
[APPLAUSE]

Sister Apryl Walcott-Chow – Branch 450: I oppose this motion. I come at this from a different angle than the 27 year olds, the 28 year olds. I’m 21 and I know in these shops and in these forms of employment there are young people, there’s 17 year olds, 18 year olds, 19 year olds, 20 year olds, surely we should be pooling our resources into getting them confident enough to run for positions rather than letting 26 year olds waiting until they’re 30, taking it away from people that should be getting the experience.  
[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else? Okay.  

Sister Rachel Mullen –Replying on behalf of the Executive: We would like to oppose this motion on a couple of things.  
I just want to echo what Apryl says, obviously we’ve got young people out there but they are rarely given the chance and quite often overseen and maybe that’s us as a Union’s fault or whoever’s fault it is, for some reason we have been overseen for quite some time and as for the point that Chris Lay made about people going onto further education and going to university, if they want to be active in a part of a union, there’s a students union that they can join and get experience from campaigning and things like that from them. I know it’s not the same as a workplace union, but it is still a union that represents people.  

Also why 30, where will it end? Why not 31, 32 if you want to say that. I mean from my point of view, personally, I can say oh yes, I support this motion because it would mean that I could possibly get a further chance if I was elected to continue in the youth representative seat for longer, but I don’t want to do that because I want to pass it on to somebody younger so they can come through and learn and develop and obviously help shape the future of the young people in the Union. If anything, I think, if anything, the age should probably be going down or up, so obviously we can have a cut-off point but I just want to oppose the motion and as well it’s the TUC guidelines. I mean there was a change at the TUC Young Members Conference that if any union did have a specified age over 27, that they wanted to, that they had was in their rules, that was fine, but there are also people like teachers, people in the fire brigade union, occupations where you don’t qualify until you are in your early to mid 20’s, so it makes sense for them to have a higher youth limit, but as an industry we aren’t a highly-paid industry, we want an industry that requires qualifications so we tend to bring in the people that leave school with little or no qualifications, so that is why we are 27.  

Oppose the motion.  
[APPLAUSE]


19 New Rule – Greggs 580 Yorkshire

This conference agrees that to fully support the Youth Executive Council members, a national committee should be made up comprising of one young member from each region, so together they can move the young members section of this union forward.

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: If you look at other unions, the majority have some sort of young members section in which they put forward motions to TUC Young Workers Conference and indeed hold their own Young Workers Conference as we did for the first time this year. We have started the ball rolling with having a young person’s seat on the EC, but to really drive the young section forward, having a representative from each region, working together on ideas, getting the Union’s message out to young people across the board and supporting the EC member is the next step. Now I know there will be a monetary cost to this and that will be a concern of our General Secretary, but I ask you this. What price do you put on ensuring this Union is still here in five, 10 or even 20 years, as without developing a young section to draw our activists, future FTO’s and National Presidents. Once you all retire, the Union will fizzle out and all your hard work will have been for nothing. Please support.  
[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Who’s the mover of the amendment? Who’s moving the amendment? Are you moving the amendment? Who’s moving the amendment?
Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: Sorry and just for the amendment, remove that the elections are held at Annual Conference every two years, to come in line with all the others. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Any other speakers? Okay, the Executive would ask Conference ...... say again, oh yes, alright, okay.

Brother John Fitzpatrick – No. 4 Region, speaking on behalf of the Executive: We’d ask the person to remit this or we’d oppose it and the reasons behind it, it’s a great resolution and we need it in place, but it hasn’t got when you’re going to meet and whatever and we believe it should be elected at the Region and the reason behind it is you’d meet and report back to the Region and you’ve got the young EC member to report to the EC and if you remit it, the EC will write this motion for next year and we’ll put it in place, because you need where it’s going to be held and where you meet up, which in fairness you need to meet before the Region and then you’d report back to the Region and then you can report back at Conference and that’s the reason why we’re asking you to remit it, otherwise we’d oppose it on the grounds that it’s not enough information, which it’s a new rule and it needs more information. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: I remit the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Motion 20.

20 New Rule – 201 Hovis Avonmouth

This Conference agrees that all known conference policies should be displayed on the BFAWU website.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): When we come here, there’s a big massive sign on the front that says don’t buy this and certainly don’t bring it in here. We are told there are certain Conference policies that are acceptable and not acceptable. I’m happy to follow the rules, just let us know what the rules are. Put them on the website, everybody knows the rules. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Okay, General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Conference, Delegates. The Executive Council would ask Conference to oppose the motion for a number of reasons, but for two reasons in particular. If we’re talking about all future policies and I’ve said it before, if we’re talking about future policies, then the Executive Council could have had more sympathy for the motion, but publishing every known policy has serious implications for us both in time and in practicality. The question of what is a known policy also has to be questioned, because the memory of the author would be called into question. Policies known by whom? Presumably the older the author, the more policies that’ll be remembered. The Union has been producing policy for 167 years. Even Pat Rowley won’t know them all [laughter]. How do we find every past policy and where do we get the time and human resource to go through the research needed?

In the past verbatim reports were not done in the same way as they are now and so we may need to read through regional and district archives to find what was put on Conference and what was passed by Delegates before we can determine what is and what is not a policy. I want to give some examples which I’ve given before to the 2008 Conference of past policies and make no apologies for reiterating them again, because we do have new Delegates here. Some of the policies that we have that would need to be on the website because they are known that we either ignore or have never changed, the first one is the abolition of cellar baking, this one we won but it’s a policy of the Union that we don’t have them again. The abolition of night work, you’ll all put your hands up for that one. Abolition of Sunday work is a policy of this Union. No Bank Holiday working, being ignored by loads of people once we had the fight in 1977, but it’s still a policy. Nationalisation of the baking industry. No answerphones in Union offices, I remember Malcolm Chisholm moving the motion many times and speaking on it at Conference. The retention of Clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution, they ignored us, we’ve still got it as a policy. That we only buy British cars, the Officials are absolutely over the moon, Rolls Royce’s all around, absolutely fantastic and no mobile phones for offices, that is a policy of this Union. Hands up if we broke it?
The fact that they appear on a website is going to mean exactly what? Members will still work nights, you’ll still work Sundays, you’ll still do Bank Holidays, would it make the slightest difference to our membership if they could read it on a website? I’ve got to say I don’t believe that it would. All it would do is draw attention to how many Union policies they’ve broken and produce the opportunity for scaremongering amongst potential members.

What does an organiser tell potential members, outside a factory, who they’re trying to recruit, who are being told by their employer that that Union there, the Bakers Union is trying to stop you working nights, they don’t want you to work Sundays and of course Bank Holidays will be taboo. We’re trying to recruit new members, not frighten them off. Are we still calling for the nationalisation of the baking industry, if yes, let us know because our grip has slackened over the last few months with the purchase of Hovis by Gores.

I’m not ashamed of these policies, comrades, indeed I voted in favour of most of them, not the ones on seller baking incidently, but I am a realist and they are clearly policies that the vast majority of our members do not aspire to.

I posed the question in 2006 when I asked, is it that we want to be reminded of the aims and aspirations of our forefathers, is it so we can judge what progress we have made or the failures we have swept under the carpet? We do have some policy documents which have been circulated to branches and which appear on the Union’s website, on issues such as bullying and harassment, equality, drugs, alcohol, but we don’t write a policy document on everything that is passed here at Conference, there is no need for that, Delegates. We’ve had motions dealing with free TV licences for pensioners, free bus travel, street lighting, etc., etc., all passed by the Conference and all now Union policy. Indeed, some have returned year after year, so do we need them placing on a website as an epitaph to constant reminders that we wanted, but failed to achieve.

Surely a more sensible approach and economical way of tracking Union policy is the verbatim report or the DVDs that are produced of previous Conferences. If the motion was passed, then it is Union policy. Indeed since the last time the mover moved a similar motion, which we asked her to remit, we have put the verbatim report on the website, so all those policies are now on the website. If you don’t have access to a computer, Union offices should have copies of past verbatim reports and there is certainly no reason why branches should not have them, as they’re all sent out every year. Finally, I ask the question, who’s going to trawl back through all these old Conference reports, copy the motion and determine what is a policy?

Over the past years staff at Head Office have reduced from six to three during the move to new technology and we would not have the resources to carry out the mover’s wishes. Delegates, there are many more practical things we could use the time that we have for, that would indeed benefit our members.

Delegates, we ask you to oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): Right to reply. I just want to say, the reason for this was last year one of our esteemed Delegates, Mr Pat Rowley, was accused of having a Sun newspaper. It was a fictitious accusation, however he had to go to Standing Orders and explain himself. I’m not saying Pat didn’t know the rule, because I think we all do, obviously new Delegates don’t. They come here, you don’t know what policies are, you’ve got this lot spouting off, saying you can’t do this, you can’t do that, we don’t support the Trade Union Maggie Thatcher Act thing and do you know what I mean?, just let us know what they are.

I want to follow the rules, I want to agree with Conference policy and I think most people in here do, but if they aren’t going to tell us what they are, then why are they spouting off that we shouldn’t be doing this, that and the other. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s lost. Okay, mover of motion 22. Did you notice I waited for you to sit down?

22 New Rule – 201 Hovis Avonmouth

This Conference agrees that if any member should force a ballot, by standing against either the General Secretary or National President, they should not receive the support of the Union.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I didn’t intend for this to be a rule change, but as it is we’ll just go with the flow. It was pointed out to me that this motion doesn’t satisfy current legal documents.
In actual fact, the Trade Union Relation Consolidation Act actually states that there should be a ballot, but as I’ve said, we’ve decided that we don’t go down that road, we don’t follow this Act, however I understand it is democratic, but there was a big hoo la last year about a mistake that was made and I’m sorry, but it’s my belief that these guys, yes we can slag them off and I’m probably the biggest one to do that, but they’re doing a good job and I don’t believe that any single person in this room or anyone in the membership who thinks that they’re a trade unionist should make them or try to make them unemployed. Surely that’s why we’re here to fight, people getting kicked out of jobs and losing their livelihoods and yet we’re quite happy in the name of democracy to follow this not-great law because that’s what it says we need to do. The law is crap, let’s be quite honest with you, Maggie Thatcher knew exactly what she was doing when she brought this bullshit law in, pardon the French, but I understand, however if we are going to follow this law, then the way that the Executive is elected also breaks the law, so do we pick and choose which part of the law we follow and which part we don’t? So on that basis, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you seconding, Pat?

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, we always had the policy in this Union that whilst any Official served us properly, did their job correctly, they have a right to their job the same as anybody at work or any other place, but under the Thatcher government was a law brought in that we had to put our full-time Officials, our National President and General Secretary up for election and we, as a Union, have to obey and support our full-time Officials and not stand against them because it could be totally out of order for us to do such a trick on our own full-time Officials. Thank you, I support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother George Tittensor – Branch 392 (Birmingham & West Midlands): I’m here to actually oppose this resolution. It’s not a dictatorship, are we a free country?, we should be. If the position’s up for election, let them stand. It only brings the best out of them. A democratic country and a democratic Union, that’s what we want. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Okay, General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, Chair. Delegates, we would ask Conference to oppose the motion, but let me say a personal thank you for Janine putting the motion in because I mean there are two people most certainly in this room with a vested interest in the things that you’re talking about and it is, I suppose, every five years you do have the potential to have the Sword of Damocles held over your head, because there’s only two people who have to stand, two Officials who have to stand for re-election and that’s the two National Officers on the basis of being what is termed in the law as Executive Officers, but let me just make one point which I wasn’t going to make.

The Conference actually supported the change to this about, I don’t know, was it seven or eight years ago?, it was an ex-Official who was dismissed by the organisation who then threatened, because we did ignore the trade union legislation,

Joe Marino 1979, he was appointed and it was probably, I don’t know, it was 2001 or something when he actually was forced, Joe and I took the decision to support the anti-trade union legislation only for one reason and if you check back on the verbatim report I spoke on it, it was on the basis that if we didn’t, the Certification Office would say hang on, you haven’t supported it, if we go like that up yours mister, we’re not doing it, because we don’t support anti-trade union legislation, we would have been fined and it was a progressive fine, it wasn’t a one-off and then they’d forget about you, you would then be told to comply and if you didn’t comply then you’d be fined again and if you didn’t comply, you’d be fined again, it would go on and eventually the moral high ground of keeping Joe and I in employment would mean that the Union eventually would become bankrupt, but as I said before, Ian and I have a vested interest in supporting this motion, but unfortunately it does bring both of us as individuals and the organisation into conflict with so many of the values that we hold dear.

Our rule book is the contract between the Union and a member and whilst ours is not exactly foolproof, we do want to avoid any ambiguity at any cost. The danger is that if interpreted by a court, the likelihood is that they would interpret in a way that was most favourable to the member who challenged us. We read the motion as meaning a ballot once a term of office has come to an end and not being forced by a vote of no confidence, but the wording of the motion is a little ambiguous and does not make that clear. What exactly do the words ‘receive support’ mean? Are we talking about financial support or are we talking about practical support? Does it prevent members or Officials from expressing a preference for a particular candidate?, because if it does I’ve got to say it borders on the illegal.

[APPLAUSE]
If it was an Officer who forced a ballot, would talking to people during normal visits constitute financial support, because they’d be driving a company car and receiving salary as an employee of the Union and if they were getting around to other factories and doing a bit of canvassing while they were doing it, that could constitute support and the motion would stop us doing that, so what would we do? Would we take the car off them and stop paying them when they went to factories? The motion itself would cause major problems, as the wording is not such as could be lifted directly into the rule book without striking a discordant note.

On the question of legality and I’ve got to say I have checked this with our employment law team, again we see problems. By virtue of Section 48 of the Trade Union Labour Relations Act 1992, anyone wishing to stand as a candidate for General Secretary or National President has the right to have an election address distributed to the entire electorate, at no cost to themselves, that is financial help. This is already enshrined in our rule book in Rules 22 and 26. This is financial support for the candidate and puts us at severe conflict with the motion, leaving us open to challenge through the courts or indeed through the Certification Officer. A trade union’s rules have to satisfy the consideration of both natural justice but also, comrades, public policy. The motion leaves us open to similar challenges in that it implies that a challenger would receive no support but the incumbent would and that in itself would fly in the face of any claim for equality and would certainly put us in conflict with both supporters of natural justice, public policy and indeed, I believe, democracy.

It also brings us into a problem with regard to the governance of the Union, in that we accept an Executive Council member can be freely opposed, but an Executive Officer cannot. That could bring our reputation into question when it comes to the jewel in our crown, as I say, that is democracy. On a personal level, as I’ll finish off, both the National President and I do thank the mover, I really, sincerely mean that, for what they’re trying to achieve and the spirit that they meant to convey, but we would rather our exceptional good looks, massive personalities [laughter] or our ability to do the jobs with the grounds for not being challenged and not because a rule says so.

We ask you to oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Right of reply? I hope it’s to say yes, I agree about the good look bits [LAUGHTER].

**Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth):** Using the right to reply. If you’re going to be voted in for your good looks, you may as well pick up your two P45s now guys, that’s all I can say.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Oh, no.

[LAUGHTER]

**Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth):** Right, it was with good intentions I put the motion in and as far as I’m concerned, anybody who stands against these guys because they make one mistake needs a slap in the face, but I will remit the motion.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, Conference, I think what we’re going to do now is we’re going to ..... he’s not having a late night tonight ..... I think what we can do now is close your Agendas and get everything packed away. I’ve just got a couple of announcements to make before obviously we bring in our final speaker of the day. Now then, I’ve been asked to make you aware that you can leave your folders on the tables overnight if you wish, but you must take all of your rubbish with you and I believe there’s going to be some bins at the door, because they can’t distinguish between what you’re leaving and rubbish, so if you leave rubbish it’ll be there tomorrow, okay? So make sure you take your rubbish and put it in the bin on your way out and you can leave your stuff there.

Right, can everybody hear me? Okay, tomorrow’s vote, in by 11 o’clock, no later, no ballot paper after 11 o’clock will count.

[APPLAUSE]

Did everybody hear me? Those that can’t hear me, ask your mate that’s sat next to you.

Conference, obviously every year, last year unfortunately due to an illness we weren’t able to hear the words and the wisdom of our next speaker. He’s a phenomenon in the political world and he fights so hard on behalf of our class. He’s always there at the forefront of everything we do as a trade union, to make sure that we are able to have our political voice heard, obviously giving a report on our parliamentary group. I’d like to welcome and ask him to speak to Conference. Please, Conference, welcome John McDonnell.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother John McDonnell: I speak at Conference every year and to be frank, this is the first time and this is my fault, this is the first time I’ve realised that the Union publishes a verbatim record of everything that’s said. Could someone cut out the bad language that I’m about to use [laughter], because I might, when we come on to the Tories record I might be f-ing and blinding a bit, so if you could help me, that would be very wonderful.

I couldn’t make it last year, I’m really sorry as Ian said, I wasn’t well and Dave Crausby stood in for me. I don’t know whether you knew the story of what happened to me last year, there’s a moral tale behind all this. I was speaking in Trafalgar Square on May Day and thought I had a fair amount of indigestion and so I just put it off and then spoke at about a dozen meetings between then and the Saturday and on the Saturday I was speaking at a Conference on disabilities, our anti-cuts campaign that we support as a union, then I was driving Tony Benn and myself down to speak at a meeting in Brighton and at the Conference in Central London on the Saturday, I was sitting next to Ian Hodson. I went up and spoke, came off, shook Ian’s hand and immediately had a heart attack. Now I don’t blame anyone for this [LAUGHTER], but I just, the moral behind this tale basically is always have a paramedic when you’re with him [laughter], every time, but the reason I’m here this year, the reason I’m here this year is because the care and the professional treatment of the NHS …..

[APPLAUSE]

…and I’m never surprised and always staggered at the commitment and devotion of NHS staff and yet that bastard Jeremy Hunt this year has denied them their pay increase, even a 1% pay increase, Jeremy Hunt has refused them this year and that’s why on July 10th a large number of public sector workers will be coming out on strike, about 1½ million workers, coming out, the largest industrial action we’ve seen in this country for a number of years ….

[APPLAUSE]

…because when that nurse, that doctor, that health worker, the midwives and all the others go into work this year, their pay is not being increased, it’s actually being cut. I’m just one of the millions of reasons why we’ve got to prevent this government attacking our health workers and privatising our NHS and that’s why us, as a Union, will always be in solidarity with the campaigns against the privatisation of the NHS and what this coalition government is doing. We set up the, as you know we set up the Parliamentary Group six years ago now, we’ve got about 27 members and we set it up because we wanted a voice in parliament, a political voice to represent us as a Union. That voice couldn’t be heard if it wasn’t for the support first of all of the National Officers Ronnie and Ian and the Executive and all the other Officers of the Union and I’d like to thank them for the support that they give us, but in addition to that, we have a small team that works with us, which Simeon Andrews co-ordinates, Richard, Laurie and Michael and I’d like to thank them on your behalf for the work that they do, they deserve our applause for their commitment.

[APPLAUSE]

You, as a Union, rank and file members coming together in the branches, coming on to this Conference, then the Executive meets, you set our Agenda. You determine what we say in parliament, the issues that we take up and it’s based upon what our members want. What do our members want? They want a secure job, they want decent pay and they want to work in a safe and healthy environment. They don’t want to have to put their lives at risk when they go to work, so that’s our Agenda and it’s not much to ask for in the 6th richest country in the world, is it? Not much. Secure job, decent pay and not put your life at risk when you go to work and that’s what we’ve been backing the Union up.

On the secure jobs, we’ve done everything we possibly can to expose what’s happening within our industry. As you know better than me, we’ve now got a new breed of employer.

The Two Sisters are the best example of the new employer vulture capitalists that are taking over our industry in this country. The way in which they’ve exploited every opportunity. We saw it at Brookes in Leicester, then we saw it in Corby and then we saw it in Newport. These are asset strippers and they strip the assets from our workers. They take their jobs and if they continue to employ them, they try to cut their wages and undermine their conditions. They’re vandals and vultures and we try to expose that as much as we can in parliament. There’s some jobs that you give us, there’s some jobs that you give us, to be honest, which are not the most enjoyable and one of them is in a few weeks’ time. We’re meeting Ranjit Singh Boparan from Two Sisters and we’re going to talk to him about the way he’s treated our members and to be frank we’re going to say to him this, if you continue on like this, every opportunity we get in parliament, we will name and shame you on every occasion.

[APPLAUSE]

Our members need a secure job, they need secure employment and that means employers that will work with us rather than against us, end the asset stripping and ending the cutting. They also need decent pay.
There’s too many in our industry now that are on low pay and that’s why it was important that in parliament we did everything we possibly could to support the Hovis strikers, our members and I just want to say thank you to them, not just thank you for what they did for our Union, but thank you for what they did to the whole of the trade union movement in this country.

[APPLAUSE]

They sent, fighting off an employer who tried to bring in a two-tier workforce, impose zero hours contracts on some, they sent a message of confidence right the way across our trade union movement and I know what courage and determination that took, but I tell you it lifted the spirits of so many. There’ll be other trade union members in other trade unions at the moment who are fighting back on the basis of the example set by our members at Hovis. They’re heroes and heroines, every one of them.

[APPLAUSE]

I want to thank this Union as well. This Union has supported and virtually launched, to be frank, the Fast Food Rights Campaign. These are some of the most exploited workers in this country, in fact around the world. They work in the fast food sector, largely young people, largely young people, some of them at their first jobs, they work on zero hours contracts and low pay and intimidation. We held the meeting, Ian was there, one of the workers in one of these fast food joints came up and said I’ve got no work next week, why is that? I didn’t smile at customers enough today. So to penalise him and send a message to others, no work the following week because he’s on a zero hours contract. That’s the level of intimidation that’s going on. Someone somewhere had to stand up for these workers and I’m proud it was you. I’m proud it was the Bakers Union that did it. We took up the challenge and we’ve linked up, thanks to Ronnie and Ian’s leadership, we’ve linked up now with the global campaign and the other day we had a day of action, but that day of action wasn’t just a number of us in this country on picket lines outside McDonalds, it started in Japan and as the sun went round the globe, there were picket lines on McDonalds shops right the way across the world, right the way from Japan back over to the United States and we were part of that international solidarity, so be proud of what you’re doing for this most vulnerable group of workers. It’s in the best traditions of the trade union movement.

Nobody should stand by when brothers and sisters are being damaged, made vulnerable, exploited in this way. We’ve come to their aid, it’s in the best tradition of our movement. That principle, that an injury to one is an injury to all of us. Thank you for what you’re doing. I just want to say thank you.

On safety, again people want decent secure employment, decent pay but they want to be safe when they go to work, so we focussed on the two issues that you set us over this last couple of years. The first, as you know, is asthma. We’ve tried to expose in parliament and elsewhere, in our negotiations with ministers and with the Labour front benchers what a curse asthma is to our members. We’re the second group of workers in the country with the highest levels of asthma, baker’s asthma. We’ve been working with Professor Paul Cullinan, who I think actually is superb. He’s been a fantastic support, with the Brompton Hospital Imperial, we’ve been working with them. We met his boss, the Chief Exec, who gave us total support in the research that he’s undertaking and we’ve had a breakthrough this year. Thanks to Paul’s work and our pressure, the HSE now yes, it’s been cut to ribbons, but now they’ve made baker’s asthma a priority in this coming period, so that’s a major success for us, because what we want is not just to ensure that our members endure the curse of that condition.

The second priority you gave us was maximum temperatures and we’ve been trying to expose more and more in our debates in parliament and in our meetings with ministers and others just what these short-term and long-term implications are for our members working in hot conditions and I think we’re winning the argument. We almost got there, to set a maximum temperature under the last government, but the employers and the civil servants threw every hurdle in the last government’s way, so what we’re doing now is we’re getting no joy from this government, but we’re trying to get a commitment from the Labour Party to insert it in their manifestos. As we reported last year, we met Ed Miliband, we’ve met the front bench, Steve Timms, again and we feel that we’ve at least now won the argument, is trying to ensure in this coming six months it’s inserted into the manifesto and I have to say this, the TUC is supporting us 100% and they’ve sent their experts down in our negotiations and we’ve received support right the way across the union movement.

So that’s our Agenda and that’s the work we’ve been doing and people have been working very hard and I just want to say how proud I am that I can stand up in parliament with the backing of yourselves, with the backing of this Union and speak authoritatively on what’s happening within our sector and that we’re gaining some ground as well. It is about secure jobs, decent pay and a safe working environment, but you know our members aren’t just interested about what happens to them at work, they’re interested in what happens when they go home, what’s happening to their families.
We’ve got 12 months left of this government and what this government is doing is a scorched earth policy. There’s a number of them who think they may not get back next time, so they’re trying to drive through their policies as rapidly as they possibly can over the next 12 months and what does it mean? It means cuts and privatisation. The privatisation of the health service is going on apace at the moment, they’re trying to drive it through as fast as they possibly can. They’re trying to cut back on all public expenditure, but they’re targeting particular groups and one of the groups they’re targeting is anybody who claims any welfare benefit whatsoever and the special group they’ve targeted and this is why this Union has been so strong in supporting their campaigns, is people with disabilities. They introduced the Work Capability Test, administered by a private company called ATOS, that was making millions out of the contract and what they were there for is to assess every person with disability whether they could work or not. It wasn’t about that, they were trying to force as many people off benefits as possible.

They assessed over 1,300 people as fit for work who died before they even took up work. There’s a website called Cowan’s List, it lists the number of people who’ve gone through the WCA, the capability assessment under ATOS and committed suicide. The one for me was Paul Reekie up in Scotland, he’s a poet, went through the Work Capability Assessment Test. He didn’t leave a suicide note, he just left beside him the two letters that they sent him withdrawing all his benefits. We had another case in Cameron’s own constituency, a man who lost all his benefits, he starved to death in Cameron’s own constituency, five stones eight pounds he was when they found him and when they did the coroner’s report, his own doctor said up until then he was coping perfectly well, but this pushed him over the edge. We asked the minister, on our group, we asked Ian Duncan Smith to publish the number of people where the coroner had reported that the loss of benefits had been a contributory factor to their suicide. They started collecting the information and now they’ve stopped and they refuse to publish it. Why? Because it exposes the brutality of this government and what they’re doing and it just goes on and at the same time they try to tell us there’s a recovery, not for our people. Do you feel better off? None of us, no working class person in this country feels better off with this supposed recovery. Why? Because the latest statistics demonstrate that 95% of the benefits of any recovery of the last 18 months has gone to the top 1%, so the bankers and speculators who caused the crisis are now making money out of the crisis, that’s the scandal that we’re having to deal with and I think the government took a very conscious decision that this next 12 months is that they’ll destroy everything they possibly can that we, as a movement, built up over generations.

They are coming back for us. There’s going to be more legislation in the Queen’s speech, we saw to attack rights in employment tribunals. They’re storing up the opportunity maybe to bring back more legislation around the balloting for trade unions to prevent them taking industrial action. What’s our response going to be? We’ve got to, in parliament, do all we can to frustrate them, delay them and prevent them implementing the legislation, but in addition to that, to be frank, outside of parliament we’ve got to do everything we possibly can as well.

We’ve got to fight back, so when the demonstrations are called, People’s Assembly on June 21st, we should attend, we should be there and be proud to be there. When industrial action takes place, that other unions are taking place, let’s do everything we possibly can to support them, even if we’re not involved in that industrial action, let’s join them on their picket lines, let’s join them at their rallies and give them all the support we possibly can, because we’ve got to bring this government down as soon as we possibly can. I don’t think we can wait 12 months.

[APPLAUSE]

I’ll just say two things finally as well. In every recession in our history there’s always been some right-wing proto-fascist politician who’s come along to exploit that recession. In the 1930s it was Mosley blaming the Jews. In the 1980s it was the BNP and the National Front blaming Blacks and Asians. This time around we’ve got Nigel Farage blaming any immigrant whatsoever coming from any country and when he says I’m not racist, oh yes he is, yes he is…

[APPLAUSE]

…and he exposed himself when he said a few weeks ago about Romanians living next to him, he exposed that he is a racist. We had a discussion as a family and took the view if Nigel Farage moves in next door, we’re moving out, quite honestly.

[APPLAUSE]

And do you know, when the message got lost in translation in the way back to Bulgaria and Romania and some poor sods thought when they came to this country they’d be forced to live next to Nigel Farage, there was a near riot at the airport. We’ve got to ensure that our members are not deceived by this scapegoating of individuals, it’s just a disguise, a cover-up from the ones who really cause the crisis, which is the bankers and the speculators supported by those who fail to regulate them in government and that was the Tories, but I have to say there was elements in New Liberal/New Labour as well and that leads me to this final point.
I want a Labour government, I want a Labour government, but we’re not going to get a Labour government until someone stands up and says this is what a Labour government does and this is what a Labour government should do. It should build council homes to make sure people have got a roof over their heads. It should secure full employment. It shouldn’t implement a minimum wage, it should implement a living wage.

[APPLAUSE]

It should restore trade union rights. It should end all privatisation of the NHS and yes, let’s start bringing them back, starting with rail and then going onto energy, bring them back into public ownership and control.

[APPLAUSE]

And I’ll just say finally this, because Tony Blair is hovering about again. We should also say as a Labour government we’re a party of peace and always have been and will never ever go down the road of invading another country like Iraq again.

[APPLAUSE]

I think, I think if a Labour leader came up with those policies we’d be re-elected, but there’s a lack of confidence in the Labour leadership, so what we’ve got to do is give them confidence. Ed Miliband has demonstrated that when an issue is safe, he’ll move on to that ground and when he does, he gains popularity, so when it was safe to attack Murdoch he did, when it was safe to attack bankers bonuses he did, when it was safe to attack the energy companies and call for freezes he did and he rose in the opinion polls, so what our job is is to recognise we’ve got to make an issue safe. We’ve got to campaign on these issues, make them safe and the Labour leadership will move. It’s a reversal of leadership, we’ve got to become the leaders now to lead the leader, because in that way we can develop a policy programme that I think can return a Labour government. Get rid of this stinking, vandalising coalition and replace it with a Labour government that you never know, we might be able to talk about socialism again. I just think it needs three things.

[APPLAUSE]

It needs three things. I’ll repeat it, determination, let’s be determined we’re going to do this. Courage, stand up, even if things are unpopular in the first instance, stand up and have courage, but above all else, it needs solidarity, working in solidarity together, helping each other, striving together, supporting one another, it’s the basis of our movement, solidarity, solidarity comrades.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. Obviously John’s here, I don’t know whether people have got any questions. I can see hands going up straight away, quite clearly. If you come down, obviously Marilyn you’re already on the way, yes. I’ll take another one at the moment. Yes, okay and you, yes, yes, yes. Hold on, Pat, hold on. Come on Pat, come on Pat. Okay, Marilyn, go on.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Good afternoon, John, it’s nice to see that you’ve recovered from your bad experience. Well, the good news, John, is that I’ve now moved out of the Oldham area, so I’ll no longer complain about Michael Meacher, however I do complain long and hard about the Labour MPs who have the bare-faced cheek to tell trade unionists they should not be coming out on strike, Ed Miliband and Andy Burnham to name two. These people need to realise that strike action is our last weapon of choice, not our first. The Labour Party was born from the trade union movement, have these ministers forgotten that?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, I’m going to take all your questions first and then obviously get John to answer them and then I might be able to get some more questions in.

Brother Alan Milne: Hi, John. I’ve been a Labour Party member for a long period of time now, many years, I’m not going to go back that long because I don’t want to show my age, I’m nearly as old as Ronnie [LAUGHTER], but never mind. What’s concerning me now is we’re getting a situation in the North-East, we’ve got great MPs, great Labour MPs which are well supportive and more to the left, I believe, than to the right. What concerns us is what’s happening on a national basis and I’ve just looked at Ed Miliband’s proposals for the Working Time Directive where, if you look at the start of it, well you’re saying well I’ve dealt with the DTI and people like that and we’ve looked at what we can do and we’re coming back and see well, people can ask for a full-time contract if they’ve been on a zero hours contract for six months. I mean these type of things are really weak and we need them to get some meat on the bone and really, if he’s going to engage the great percentage that don’t vote and show a real effective opposition, he needs to start doing it now.
Doing it now, getting people together and getting them fighting and go against these massive bloody cuts, we’re seeing it in every area and you’re right a lot of it is privatisation, let them get out and start fighting against these cuts. I do believe you’ll get more movement to right and you’ll get more movement to left and keep the people tied in, if nobody seizes an effective opposition. That’s my point of view.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. If we can try and make them a question rather than a statement, that’d be great. I’ll get more in that way.

**Brother Carlton Thorne:** My question is, do you think that if Labour had a referendum on the EC, whether it’d have any bearing on the forthcoming General Elections?

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. To the point, like it.

**Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215:** Conference. Thank you, John, for coming to our Conference, it’s great to see you again.

Now we have an upcoming Election in the next year, in 2015, which you know more about than I do, but we have to attack what we have to do. I think the people expect more from us than cries of indignation attack, the times are too grave, the challenge is too urgent and the stakes too high to permit the customary positions of political debate. Is the Labour Party ready to repeal these laws? New Labour didn’t repeal and the trade unions. Are we ready now to do it and will the Party take that seriously and we must, we must repeal these laws and the most cruel law of all is the people and the bedroom tax. Now we should, I’m not blaming you John, we should as people should have come out to the street and stopped this.

It’s too long to leave it until after the Election. If we lost the Election, what will happen? The Tories will carry it out and they will laugh at us. That is what is going to happen.

[APPLAUSE]

That wouldn’t happen in Greece, that wouldn’t happen in France, the streets would be on fire, we’re not up to it sometimes. John, it’s over to you. [Laughter and Cheers]

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother John McDonnell:** We should have got Pat in parliament years ago, shouldn’t we really [LAUGHTER].

I just want to deal with this issue about the North-East MPs. Jeremy Corbyn had his 30th anniversary at being a MP a few months ago. Jeremy, I think, is the finest socialist I’ve ever met in parliament and at the reception I spoke and said that Jeremy Corbyn is a fantastic socialist, he’s my best friend in parliament and my wife said to me John, he’s your only friend in parliament [LAUGHTER] and what’s interesting is that the North-East and it’s a good example to the rest of the Labour Party. The North-East provided us with Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson and a whole range of people who are just absolute careerists.

The local Labour members there have worked hard and they’ve returned some fine socialists, Ian Lavery, Ian Mearns, Grahame Morris. There’s a group there now that are absolutely superb MPs, working incredibly hard, working with our group, members of our group. Just working class MPs, people who have life experience, not some policy adviser parachuted in, but people like Ian Lavery, a miner who was imprisoned during the miners strike, lived in his constituency all of his life, those sort of people are the ones we want in parliament and some of the work we as a Union need to do in this coming period is making sure we’re encouraging our members to be coming forward, to stand for elected office and I think we need to, just as we’ve done with our political schools, which have been a major breakthrough, I think some of the best work we’ve done is our political schools where we’ve brought people together, talked about politics, shown them how politics work, but I think those political schools now have got to be breeding grounds for our young people in this Union to recognise that they could be the MPs of the future, because we want working class MPs back representing the working class, it’s as simple as that. Now I think if we did, we wouldn’t be in the situation that we’re in now.

Let me just go through this, the first question I was asked is a reflection of that. Every time we’ve had a dispute now, a number of us have put down motions in support of disputes, we’ve put down motions in support of national actions even called by the TUC and the front bench Labour response has always been this either muted we’d like the employers and the trade unions to get together or at times condemnatory, that’s no longer acceptable. The reason so many people, like our members and others are going out on strike is exactly as I said, it’s not the first resort, it’s the last resort because people are desperate, people are desperate.
Employers coming along, tearing up contracts, cutting wages, introducing agency workers to take their jobs, no wonder people are angry and I’m trying to get that across to other Labour MPs and I think now we’re building up ahead of steam within the Labour Party, the parliamentary Labour Party, to understand a bit more what the realities of life is like and if people like Andy Burnham and others are not supporting us enough, well to be frank I think me, Ronnie and Ian need to pay a visit, not with, we’ll have a frank discussion to explain why those individual disputes are taking place, because we’ve got to bring these people into the real world. I think it’s beginning to move, it’s beginning to move because of the new members that have come in that are so effective and that links up to this issue of working time directives and other industrial matters.

There’s got to be a greater recognition with the Labour front bench now about just how many people are suffering at work and how exploited they are and I think we, as a Union and we’re using every platform we can, but in the run-up to the Labour Party Conference this year, we’ve got to make sure our voice is heard about shaping the Labour’s manifesto for the next election. It’s got to say something about scrapping the anti-trade union laws, it’s got to have some movement about restoring democratic rights to trade unions, the ability for us to take industrial action without having to go through all the hurdles of the ballots that we have and the ability when other workers are coming out on strike for us to come out in sympathetic action as well. There’s a bottom line in all this. This country is condemned year after year by the International Labour Organisation because we’re outside the law at the moment with our trade union legislation, our trade union rights, so again one of our jobs in this coming period will be to shake these people up to be frank, to shake Labour MPs up about the reality of the world out there.

In terms of the European referendum, I helped launch a group called Labour for Referendum, why? Not because I’m anti-European but it’s exactly as I said on Tony Benn’s tribute in parliament, Tony was not anti-European, he was a European like me. I believe that we should be working across Europe, working across nations. I’m an internationalist, I don’t think there should be borders or barriers. We should work towards full integration, but I don’t want a super-state and I don’t want a super-state controlled by basically capitalist bankers in the way that the European Union is as well. That’s why I think it would be incredibly popular if Labour includes in their manifesto a commitment to a referendum and that’s nothing to do with fending off UKIP or anything like that, it’s because it’s basic democracy. Give people the right to have a say about the future of this country and in that way we would re-shape Europe, we’d work with socialists and others across Europe to re-shape the institutions so they’re working for us and they’re not working for the banks or the employers.

Pat said it, Pat’s right. There’s lots of things that have been introduced that we should be campaigning against and we are, but you know sometimes democracy is one thing speaking in parliament, another way we work is industrial action, but there’s another way which I used to call insurrection, we’re now polite and we call it direct action. The reason ATOS as a company has now withdrawn from administrating the Work Capability Assessment, even though they were making millions of pounds, is because disabled people in their wheelchairs occupied their offices on a regular basis. They joined up with para-olympians to condemn ATOS’ role and they led a direct action campaign that gained publicity, was incredibly effective. It’s the same with UK Uncut, the demonstrations that they made put tax judging (?) on the agenda for any future government to address, so there are forms of direct action that we support as a Union, that are effective and that’s why in our campaigning on the fast food, we’re not just trying to recruit, we’re picketing and demonstrating outside McDonalds and Costa and all the rest of it, because we have to combine a political voice with industrial action and with direct action and as a Union, we’ve been leading the way on that and that’s why I’m proud about that. I think Pat’s right to show the anger that he has, because people are suffering. You know the million that go to food banks, but there’s so many others now that are being evicted as a result of the bedroom tax. People living in squalor, a housing crisis that we’ve not seen in this country since the Second World War, the greatest level of inequality since Victorian times, that’s what makes me bloody angry and I want other Labour MPs to be bloody angry as well so that we can mobilise people to bring this government down and replace it with a Labour government that recognises the people it should be representing and that’s us, working class people. Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. Listen, I’ve just noticed the time, so listen John, I think ..... 

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Obviously John, I reiterate everything that Ian said before, but you did ask me when that breaking news came through there to tell you Manchester United have released their European fixture list for next season, so 30th August they are at Swansea away [LAUGHTER] and 4th March they’re at Swansea at home, so that’s it, it’s finished.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is this the first, how many years is it, how many years?
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Excuse me, I was talking to John McDonnell, the MP. He did ask me if the breaking news came through to let him know.

John, as always, we’re going to give you a tin of biscuits, which you don’t have to share with those Tories or anyone in parliament. If you go out the back door, you’ll miss Simeon, he’ll not want any. Made by trade union members, the only downside is that they’re Ranjit Singh’s, so don’t make too much of a fuss or you won’t get them next year [LAUGHTER], so thank you very much for that. The other thing, John, is that you’ve got more bakers than we have, given that you come here every year. What we, the Executive, decided is that we will donate £100 to any fighting fund or charity of your choice, as long as it’s not Nigel Farage’s lot [LAUGHTER], or in fact David Cameron’s lot, but if you want to let us know where it’s going, I will give you a cheque for 100 quid.

Brother John McDonnell: Can I, what I’ll, if it’s alright with you, what I’d like to do and this is with your permission, I’d like to donate £50 to our local hospice where I’m a trustee and we’re desperately raising funds at the moment to do a hospice home service where people are allowed to stay in their home when they die and the other £50 will go to a local training scheme that we’ve set up in our local area as well, with your permission, I’d be very grateful. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. Thank you very much. See you at 9.30 in the morning.
Monday 9 June 2014

Morning Session

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can we make sure the doors are now shut, please. Anybody who arrives late, can you make sure they go up to Standing Orders, thank you. General Secretary to call the roll.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Region 1, cheers Steve. Region 2. Region 3, thank you. Region 4, sorry Geoff, cheers. Region 5. Region 6 and Region 7, thank you. 173 Delegates present.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Conference, before we start this morning, I just want to clarify a couple of issues in relation to the running of Conference. If anybody has a point of order they want to bring, can you please make sure you raise your hand before you come down to the rostrum and I’ll call you to speak and to make sure that when people are speaking, we don’t want anybody shouting or continuously talking. You’re here to do a job of work and listen to the speakers and make sure that when you take part in the vote, when we go to the vote, that you’ve paid attention to that debate and obviously you vote in relation to what’s been spoken about and not what you think’s been spoken about, because the people who are sitting in front of you, when you’re talking at the back of them or you’re sitting in front of people and you’re talking, it is distracting from people being able to hear the debate.

If anybody has an issue in relation to the way that Conference is run, then obviously if you seek your full-time Official and ask them to take you to Standing Orders, where you can raise your issue with Standing Orders, I’m sure they’ll be able to deal with it more effectively to enable us to make sure that we can get through Congress as smoothly and as professionally as possible. Obviously I appreciate your indulgence, I understand sometimes issues run deep to people and we all get upset at times, but at the end of the day one of the things that must always happen is we treat each other with dignity and respect and we must make sure that we give everybody the same courtesy that we would like people to give to us.

So with that, Conference, just to let you know that motion 23 has been withdrawn and we’re going to call the mover of motion 24. Thank you, Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

As the person from motion 24 is coming down, just to let you know that S Coulston has won a prize from Watkins & Gunn and I believe they can collect it either during the break or at dinnertime.

[APPLAUSE]

24 General – No 5 Regional Council

That this conference agrees to support shop based stewards to become branch officers.

Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees to support shop-based shop stewards to become branch officers. As a Union we are becoming more shop-based. Growing memberships throughout our shops, the Union doesn’t really have anything in place for shop stewards to become branch secretaries, not within a shop where I work, they’re all bakery-based, so I think the Union need to go forward and put plans in place to support shop stewards who want to become branch officers. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers?

Sister Lizzie Dinning – Branch 529 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): We ask Conference to support this motion. Any member who is elected by their branch, whether they are bakery, shops, transport, engineers, will always get the full support of the Union. The members of the branch elect their branch officials. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried.

Motion 25.

25 General – No 4 Regional Council

That this conference agrees to set up a working party to look at reduced union subscriptions for people earning below £100 per week.
Brother Michael Redshaw – Branch 459 (Greggs, Pennine): That this Conference agrees to set up a working party to look at reduced subscriptions for people earning below £100 per week. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder?

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Morning, Conference. Up here for the first time today. Yes, I’m up here to support this. Now there’s going to be a daft argument over this, because you’re going to get people saying well, what happens if you’re on £101, what happens if you’re on £102? Somewhere along the line, we’ve just got to draw a line in the sand and say anything below this gets the reduced, anything above doesn’t. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Colin Morgan – Branch 238 (Llantarnam, South Wales): Morning, comrades. I ask you not to support this motion, because I don’t think it’s the right way forward and the reasons for this, we have a lot of people on 16 hour contracts and Burton’s 25 hour contracts. I’ve got nearly 100% membership in my branch. If we change the way we do the subs, a lot of my people are not going to be happy, but I look after the people on a 16 hour contract the same as I do on a 39 hour contract. Now, I can sell this Union because we look after our members and it’s not differential to what they earn, £2.75 a week for what they get, it is good value for money. I’m asking you not to support this, because it’s not the way forward. We do provide an excellent service as a Union with the deals we have with the solicitors and all, it’s not the way forward, mate, honestly, trust me, it’s not the way forward. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558: Morning. I’m here to oppose it as well. I think for all the reasons that Colin said before me, it’s as simple as that. You need to start keeping these people afloat.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers? Sorry, when I was on about putting your hand up, I meant for points of order. If you wanted to speak in the debates, you still come down as per normal.

Sister Lizzie Dinning – Branch 529 (SpeakSister Julie Knight – Branch 105 (Warburtons, Enfield): I’m here to support it. I am only part-time now and not through choice, through illness. I earn more than £100 a week so it won’t affect me personally, but I know how hard it is to live on a low wage and £2.75 really doesn’t sound like a lot, but that could be a difference between a meal for somebody, it’s very, very hard these days and people earning less than £100 per week, I just don’t know how they do it, so I’m here to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? Okay, Conference, the Executive Council would ask Conference to support. The mover of the motion is asking that a working party sets up to look at the membership fees. I agree with Colin in many respects in relation to the service and the benefits of joining our Union and one of the things that we offer is a service that is second to none and the trade union movement what we stand for is incredible, what we believe and fight for is incredible, but let’s make it clear, we want to be a mass membership organisation and we don’t want cost to be a barrier to anybody becoming a member of this Trade Union.

We want to give everybody an opportunity to become a member of this Trade Union, to fight with us, alongside us and if cash to them is an issue, then we must do everything in our power to make sure that that is no longer a barrier and if we can turn this Union into a mass membership Union, we shall be looking at reducing the price of membership of this Trade Union, so we would ask Conference to support this motion and to support it unanimously, to say that we want a mass membership Union, not one that says that we will only have people who can afford it because they have the ability to pay. We want everybody who has a job, who’s in work, to be organised and to take part in the debates and the services that we offer as a Trade Union, so we ask Conference to support. Right of reply.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael Redshaw: I’d just like to say that obviously I work for Greggs and obviously there’s an ideal opportunity here for all of these people in the shops to obviously subscribe to the Union. The Union is obviously losing members at a very fast pace and I think it’s an ideal time for obviously the Union to look at this. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? Thank you very much, carried. 26. You didn’t forget it was you, did you?

[LAUGHTER].
26 General – No 2 Regional Council

That this Conference agrees that this union should step into the 21st century and offer the option of expenses, Delegates fees and anything normally paid by cheque, to be paid at request, by BACS transfer instead.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Region 2: Yes, it is what it is, it says on the tin. I tend to stack my cheques up if I’m perfectly honest with you, because I can’t be arsed to go to the bank, so I get told off about having three or four cheques there at the time that haven’t been cashed for about eight or nine months, so I think yes, bank transfer’s definitely the way forward. It’s no more difficult to do and it saves people time, so please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, Chair. Comrades, good morning. We ask Conference to support the motion. Just to say that although it’s not a BACS system, we’re already doing it, we’ve actually just started it. We’ve been running a pilot scheme in No. 2 Region with Francis and Michelle to see how it would operate if we transfer money into the banks. I’ve got to say it was a successful trial and now what we’ve done, I spoke to Adrian on Friday, we’ve now rolled it out through Regions 1, 3, 4 and 5 and that should be up and running, if it isn’t up and running now, it will be up and running very, very quickly. I’ve got to say the reason, yesterday we talked about equality, the reason it’s not running in No. 6 and No. 7 Regions is because they don’t bank with Unity Trust Bank and so we have to have that dialogue with them at some time in the future to make sure that we can come to a similar system.

As I say, the reason we’re not using BACS as a system are mostly financial. For every BACS transfer that you do, so let’s say if we were going to do, if we were going to pay No. 3 Regional Council by BACS, you’d have to set up a separate file for every sort of meeting that you have and that costs £5 to set it up. Now it isn’t a great amount of money, but if you think across the amount of meetings that we have within the Union which incurred Delegates fees and whatever, except Trades Council’s meetings of course, I’ll get it in before Marilyn does, you have to pay £5 on each file, but on top of that, every single individual transfer that you make into somebody’s account costs you 5p, again you can see 5p nothing, but when you do it over like either receiving money or paying money out, it is an absolutely tremendous amount of money that we would have to pay.

Under this new system and it’s an internet-based system, very, very safe, there’s no set-up costs, there’s no transfer costs and probably more important to you, it’s actually slightly quicker than a BACS transfer because a BACS transfer isn’t like we press the button today and you’ve got it in your bank today, it doesn’t work like that, it still has to clear by four days. I’m assured by Adrian, who’s our Finance Officer, that this is actually a quicker system. So one thing that we will need to do though, comrades, to fulfil what you’re asking for is we will have to (a) have people’s bank accounts and we’ll have to know exactly what the fees are that are owed, because if it’s going to paid through Regional Office, they will have to set that up prior to a meeting in case people haven’t got the money, but as I say, this scheme should be running within, if it isn’t running now, it will be running very, very soon, so we’ve actually fulfilled Janine what you asked for in the motion. We’ve just called it a different, it’s just a different name but a similar system. Okay, so please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? That’s good, because we’re already doing it. Those against? [LAUGHTER]. Okay, that’s carried. Motion 27.

27 General – Greggs 580 Yorkshire

This conference agree to bring union travel expenses in line with fuel prices for Shop Stewards who are not employed by the union.

Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees to bring Union travel expenses in line with fuel prices for shop stewards who are not employed by the Union. Petrol prices are always on the increase, so how can 20p a mile cover the running cost of a car? I don’t have a company car or a petrol card and as a shop-based shop steward I do have to do a lot of travelling to do recruiting and representing members, so why should we be out of pocket? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Rough night?

Brother Mark McHugh – Branch 503 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): We would ask Conference to oppose the motion of paying shop stewards travel expenses in line with fuel prices, on the grounds that by only paying shop stewards, we would be excluding health and safety reps and learner reps who play an equally important function in the running of this Union of the same benefits. Please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]


28 General – Branch 405

*That this conference agree that the Executive Council should allow conference delegates, members on training courses and meetings to use cheaper methods of transport other than the present rail warrant system eg. low-cost airlines or hire cars.*

Brother John Williams, Branch 405: That this Conference agrees that the Executive Council should allow Conference Delegates, members on training courses and meetings to use cheaper methods of transport other than the present rail warrant system, i.e. low cost airlines or hire cars. The present systems have been outmoded. People who travel from London to Barnsley, if they’d used the low cost airline through to Leeds, it would have cost £90 less than using a rail warrant. If there are three or four people of you travelling, if you got a hire car, say a Hertz, pick it up wherever you are, drop it off at Barnsley and then coming back, the same job again. I would imagine it would save the Union quite a bit of money. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 258 (Branch Secretary, Memory Lane Cakes): I support this motion. I know for myself, when I’ve attended training courses in Barnsley, if I get a rail warrant it’ll cost near enough £200 and if I take my car, it’ll cost me maybe £80 in fuel and I always get just a little bit more than that and claim it through expenses off the Union, so I think this is a big cost-saving exercise for the Union and I support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: Totally here to support this motion. A couple of times I’ve had to go down to London for a couple of meetings and stuff. Where it would have cost me about £120 on the train, I’ve actually caught the Megabus down or a National Express and it’s only cost me £20. It’s only added an extra 45 minutes to an hour onto my journey each way, but that doesn’t really bother me to be honest with you. Also as for attending training courses, I think when it comes to branches and things like that from your other regions, if you’re living close, for instance Mike doesn’t live too far away from me or Dawn doesn’t live too far away from me and Mike, then maybe we could all car-share and pull together and that’ll then save this Union a hell of a lot of money, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, I thought he was coming down. No more speakers? General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, Chair. The Executive would ask Conference to support the motion. I just want to say something, I picked up on what John Williams was saying about how it could be cheaper depending on whether you fly or whether you go by train, but let me give you an example of where it isn’t necessarily cheaper. When we were running the shop stewards courses in Manchester, when we were at the Willowbank Hotel, I once got one of the Delegates, one of the shop stewards from the chicken factory, Grampian Chickens in Banff, which is like near the Arctic Circle, it’s right up there and a guy said to me, he phoned me up, he said Ronnie, he said, if I come down on the Sunday and stay over, it’ll be cheaper than me getting a peak ticket on the Monday, which will still get me in late but it’ll be half the price of the ticket, so I said look, I’ll put you up in a hotel, don’t worry, I’ll put you in a hotel, booked him in the Willowbank, you get your cheap ticket.

The sting was the week after when I got his expenses claim, because not only was his train just slightly cheaper than what it would have been on the Monday, plus I’d had to put him in a hotel and buy his meals, he also sent me a taxi receipt, because he got a taxi from where he lived to the station, because he couldn’t get a bus, there were no buses ran on a Sunday and his taxi fare was £90, so we do have to be pretty discerning when we just give a carte blanche and what happens, with rail travel or any type at all but look, the Executive Council, we’ve had a number of debates on this issue and we do like it. Indeed, in some instances we’re already carrying that out where we can.
Obviously you know that people will drive by car because it’s quicker for them to do it and they get a mileage allowance, which is generally cheaper than paying out the rail fare, but I use the example of Steve Finn. Steve Finn, who’s our Regional Officer in No. 1 Region, if I want him to come to a meeting in Birmingham, he never drives to Birmingham, what he does, he goes on the trainline.com, which is an excellent way of travelling if you’re going by train, he books his tickets and he gets to Birmingham and back for virtually nothing, as long as he’s travelling outside of peak times, but even if you are travelling outside of peak times, it’s still cheaper than using a rail warrant. When we used to have the national union learner reps meetings in Cardiff, Lizzie Dinning, who’s on the Executive Board, is also the national union learner rep for No. 5 Region, used to fly from Newcastle into Cardiff or Newcastle into Bristol because it was cheaper to do that than to get a train right across the country and of course it was a damn sight quicker and we wouldn’t have to put her overnight if it wasn’t necessary. So we already did that.

Last week I travelled on a train to London. I generally would drive to the office and leave the car at the office and then get a train into London. Where I live, I got a train into a meeting that I had in Central London for £28, it saved a lot of money and I can do work on a train while I’m going, so we do actually use those things. Indeed, in the past our delegation that’s come from the Republic of Ireland to here, have driven over and got the ferry rather than fly, because they’ve seen that that’s a cheaper way of doing things, so we do look at the cost all the time, but of course the difficulty is that we don’t always know when a member’s going to travel or indeed what their expenses are going to be. The only reason that we went to rail travel, for those who can go back long enough for Conference, was that some Delegates said well, I can’t afford to pay the money up front for my ticket and then claim it back.

I mean, the system that we’re going to have, this internet banking system, we can pay the money straight back if we know that people have actually spent the money on the ticket, but it was only because people said they couldn’t afford the cost of that ticket, but it is, it is absolutely an expensive way of paying for attendance and it’s one that we, as an Executive Council, we who look after the finances during the rest of the year would like to change, because everybody wins. It gives you the option very often of cheaper, quicker travel and it gives us the option of actually saving money and spending it in other areas that we need, but one thing I would say about a rail warrant, that some people don’t use them in the way they’re meant to be used, because it very much depends on where you’re travelling, when you’re travelling and probably more importantly, when you buy the ticket. You get some people who roll up at the last minute, there’s a rail warrant, I want to go to London and of course you pay the full fare, you pay the lot. If you go with that rail warrant, if you know you’re coming to Conference and you need a train, there’s nothing to stop you, if you’re a Delegate, because you’ll know you’re a Delegate in March, nothing to stop you getting your ticket in April or May with a rail warrant and you’ll get it a damn sight cheaper than you will if you leave it until the Friday or the Saturday when you’re travelling up to Conference, so don’t leave it until the last day if you’re going to use a rail warrant.

We will look at other areas, but of course I would say where possible, if there’s only a couple of people going, looking to regional offices to make sure that we book maybe their travel on the trainline and get them cheaper travel to come to the meetings, much better than rail warrants and if we could, we would like to actually end the system of rail warrants, but that means that we have to have a united front on how we sort transport out and travel to meetings, so have a look at it, it is a cost effective, there are cost effective methods of travelling to meetings out there, let’s all work together to make sure that we do. We are absolutely committed as an Executive, if we can, to doing away with rail warrants and looking for other forms. Please support, Delegates, it is going to help the Union in the future.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 29.

29 **General – No 1 Regional Council**

That this conference support our resolution that the current mileage rate of 20 pence per mile be increased to 30 pence per mile, when using your own transport to attend union events were expenses are applicable.

**Brother Larry Stone – Branch 116, Area 1 (Enfield):** Mr President, Platform, Delegates. That this Conference supports our resolution that the current mileage rate of 20 pence per mile be increased to 30 pence a mile, when using your own transport to attend Union events, where expenses are applicable. This still works out far cheaper than the travel warrants that we can get. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Formally seconded? Any speakers? Okay, General Secretary.

**Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary:** Thank you, Chair. Conference, we would ask you to oppose the motion.
Clearly one thing that we can’t do as an Executive and I don’t believe that you can do it, is to justify a 50% increase in the cost of anything that the Union buys or uses, so such a hefty increase would be totally out of character with the way that we budget for the coming year. The mileage allowance was not made to benefit drivers disproportionately over those who travel by bus or train. It wasn’t brought in to cover the cost of fuel for those who prefer to travel by car, sorry it was brought in to cover the cost of fuel for those who travel by car rather than train to meetings. A 20p, which is the AA guide, the allowance covers the cost of cars that do 30 miles to the gallon, which I’m sure covers most cars today irrespective of diesel or petrol engines. If a member wants to drive a 4 x 4 Range Rover, which doesn’t do 30 miles to the gallon, well clearly that is their choice, we do offer, as I’ve just said in the last motion, we offer alternative ways of travel if they want to do that.

It also begs the question of what happens if the price of fuel rockets or it plummets, because at present the Executive Council can alter the rate and they have altered the rate in the past depending on where the fuel levels are and remember the government were going to put this fuel escalator in a couple of years ago, which happily they stopped. The motion, if it was passed, would tie us to 30p a mile irrespective of the price of fuel for the next three years, we would not have it in our authority to change that and the final point is the question of who pays this 50% increase should it be agreed by Conference.

The Executive clearly can’t rub a magic lamp and somebody comes out and grants us three wishes where we can bring extra funding in and neither do we have a licence to print money, some of them well may do it as a hobby on the side, but we most certainly don’t have a licence to do it, so the only way that we can get extra money and bear in mind all the things that I said yesterday during the financial report about losing revenue from the legal side, yes, we’re looking at a decrease in membership at the moment and hoping to sustain some growth, but the only place that we can get extra money is by going back to the members and before when Julie said about people who are single parents, if you’re going to go back to them, bear in mind there will be an increase in subscriptions, we have to increase subscriptions, we try to keep that increase as low as possible, but you keep on putting financial burdens on the Executive, we have to come back to you to pay that and that’s going to be, I think, unwelcome to the vast amount of people who you’re here to represent.

We’re already going to increase, as I say, the subscriptions, but I can’t see that your members will vote for that extra element being put on to fund a 50% increase for the people who are attending meetings. The Executive will continue to look at the price of fuel and whether it’s going up or whether it’s going down and will make adjustments accordingly, but don’t burden us with a 50% increase on something that we can’t budget for. There’s nobody in here can budget for a 50% increase in anything, that’s just the way that the economy is at the moment and we are tied to that same economy just the way you are, so please oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]


30 General – No 3 Regional Council

That this Conference agrees that the Executive Council opens a National debate on the subject of Organising, also to play a more active part on this subject of Organising, to arrest the union’s falling membership.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I just want to ask, you told us yesterday that we had to get our ballot papers back to Standing Orders by 11 o’clock and we haven’t actually got any ballot papers at gone 10, so where are they?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We understand there is a slight problem with the printer, which broke down and I believe they are trying to get them out a.s.a.p.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: They’re doing them now.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: They are doing them now. We’re hoping to have them before your break. Obviously if we haven’t got them before your break, I’ll let you know and obviously we’re not going to expect you to get them back before your break, but unfortunately what happened was, the printer yesterday that we brought from head office stopped working so we had to go out and buy another one and Ronnie wouldn’t put his hand in his pocket, so he told them to start writing [LAUGHTER].

Okay, mover of motion 30.
Brother Warren Broomhall – Branch 390, Branch Chair: Mr President, Platform, Delegates. I’m not going to read the motion out, you’ve all got your Agendas, so I’ll just go straight into it. I would like to open this debate by explaining the origins and also my personal thoughts. During a Region 3 Council meeting, we were given a report from our FTOs of all the organising, industrial action, wage ballots and various other issues that were ongoing in our region. It came across to me that our FTOs diaries were chock-a-block and there was barely a spare minute to be had. Later we were informed of a new strategy of recruitment that was to be the targeting of fast food outlets such as McDonalds, Costa Coffee, Pizza Hut. I don’t know if I’m alone in my thoughts on this, but I would like to share them with you now and begin this debate. Firstly I would like to applaud the sentiment behind the strategy. I understand the importance of doing everything we can to help and support these vulnerable workers.

My concern with this strategy and the reason the debate began at our regional meeting is this. Correct me if I’m wrong, but over the last few years we have had a decline in our membership. We clearly have a FTO group who are working at full capacity. If we are successful in recruiting in these fast food outlets, do we have the ability to service these potential new members with an already stretched thin Officials group? In Ian’s opening remarks, he told us that if we increased our membership of our current branches to at least 70%, this would give us around 10,000 new members. Surely this should be our priority.

At branch 390 we are constantly pushing to get 100% membership, but it’s not easy, but when is anything worth doing ever easy? I can personally think of at least four non-members who refuse to join for the sole reason that at their previous workplace their union let them down when they needed them most. Again, I would like to applaud the idea of what the Bakers Union is trying to achieve with this strategy, but I urge caution on biting off more than we can chew. I very much look forward to hearing your thoughts and feelings on this very important issue. This motion is one I feel needs this debate, because what we’re really talking about is how do we keep this Union strong and healthy for many years to come. Thank you. I move.

[APPLAUSE]


Sister Monica Currie – Branch 508: Hi. I’m here to support this motion. Region 5 in Scotland unfortunately lost their full-time Officer, he hasn’t been replaced and we have to make do with whatever full-time Officer we can get over the phone. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Also up here to support, but can I just point one thing out to you? If everybody in this room recruited one member this year, we’d virtually double the membership. I’ll have a go at it. Support it.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I’m here to fully support this motion. I think we’ve just got to bang through the message, Organise, Organise, Organise. The only disappointing thing for me is, I can only speak for Region 2 obviously because I’m part of Region 2, is that when the Officials go out recruiting, organising, standing outside factories, Greenfield sites, they always thank all the people who’ve helped them. It’s very, very rare you ever see any of our Executive Council members names down there, so come on guys, pull your finger out at well.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, we’re all organisers, not just the Executive. Now, a few years ago when we took up organising, it was taken up and Joe Marino said to us yes, go out and organise, we will put every means with you to help you organise. Organising is a tough job and it’s a hard job. I’ve been out with Gary Johnson on the gates at 5 o’clock in the morning and it’s a very hard job to do and it’s very hard to get people. I don’t know the reason why people are not joining us, I don’t know. Some factories, some are taking advantage of what you people pay for and they get the same as you, so they save that part of their money, because if we could organise in our branches that we have organised, that we have working agreements in for years, if we could get all the members in them, our Union would have quite a few members more today, but I’m a retired member and I’m not going to blame anybody in branches. I did my job in my day and I have to say that the young people today have to do their job. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: Totally here to support the motion. I’ve been fortunate enough to go on the organising course with Andy Birchall. That helped me quite a lot actually to look at how I’m going to map my shops out and see what members I’ve got in each and different shops. Me and Gary now follow that to the T and we know exactly who we’ve got in each shops and which shops we need to target more and more, so yes, please support.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Craig Olley – Branch 529: I totally support this motion. I do believe it’s up to all to organise. I’ve actually set up a major recruitment drive next week at Gregg’s head office and I think going forward that’s what we’ve got to do. We’ve got to look at these sort of places. We had redundancies in March and I went in to head office and a few of them thought that the Union was just for the shop floor, so I spoke to the head of Gregg’s, had a word with him, he’s allowed me to go into head office, try and recruit more office staff and I agree with Warren as well, we are focusing on the fast food, but what I don’t agree with is biting off more than we can chew. Once we’ve got enough of those workers together to form their own branch, we as branches can support them until they’re up and running. I don’t think we will be servicing them for the long-term, it’s just giving them the initial impetus to support themselves. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Here to support the motion and what I’ll say is currently our employers are out there recruiting anti-trade unionism, as in Hovis employees have their say, I don’t whether they know, but I’ve received a letter this morning inviting me to a focus group. The employers are actively trying to recruit against the unions, so it’s definitely important that we do recruit. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Colin Morgan – Branch 238 (Llantarnam, South Wales): I ask you to support this motion, but let’s look at the way we organise, maybe we’ve got to be smarter, I don’t know. Standing outside a Greenfield site, it’s hard work. Do people stop and want to join the Union? Maybe we’ve got to look at this newfangled thing Twitter, social media, all this stuff. The youngsters today are into that, it’s alien to me, but let me tell you the way I organise. We’ve got nearly 99% membership. Last week we had 16 new starters joining our company, we managed to get 15 of them. I was piddled off because one escaped and I see it as escaping. Maybe we as branches have got to be looking the first day these people start in the company, that we want a slot to speak with them and get these people to join the Union, because that’s the way forward. We’re now lucky that we’ve got 99% membership, we work hard at it, but we’ve got to be smarter the way we do it. Handing out leaflets may not be the right way, so let’s go back, let’s have a look, because if we don’t increase our membership, where are we going to go from there? I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529: Obviously you all know I’m the youth rep and one of the things that we’ve been doing is trying to talk to young people definitely, as the traditional ways are obviously, talking about the Union, we’re trying to do it in the way that they speak and the comrade before has just mentioned that social media is one of the ways and we have got a young members’ Facebook page and obviously with the promotion and everything about that, we will get more people following it and hopefully get more young people involved and hopefully maybe set up a Twitter page as well, because obviously people are on Twitter and I just want to say that I was at the TUC young workers forum in March and I went to one of the workshops and there was a lady there and I can’t remember what her name was, but she was a key organiser. Young people, what do they do? they are on their phones constantly, so why not target them where they spend most of their time?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers? Okay. Okay, hello? Okay, Conference. The Executive Council would ask Conference to support and I’ll tell you why we believe we should be supporting the motion and I’ll give you some information too. Obviously Warren talks about the pressure that we place on full-time Officials and to a point he’s right. We also invest £140,000 a year in education programmes to train our shop stewards and our branch secretaries and we want them to be the people who are out on the shop floors on a day-to-day basis, building up those branches and telling people about the benefits of our fantastic Union.

We believe that we offer some of the best benefits around, but the only way people are going to know about them is if people are informed and made aware of the benefits that this Trade Union offers, so I think it’s important that as representatives you take the message back about what this Trade Union stands for and this week obviously you will be setting the position that this Union will have for the next 12 months and beyond in relation to the benefits that we offer our members and what we will be able to take back our branches, hopefully after we’ve had the debate on the living wage, is an agreement that this Conference will tell its membership that when we go and sit and we’re going to go and meet with our managers, that we will be demanding a £10 an hour basic rate of pay for all workers in our factories, that’s what we’ll be telling people that we want them to join and fight for.

We will be asking them to get involved in campaigns that say we want to change how people view youth and unemployment for example. We want people to be involved in issues around why there should be no longer an acceptance that if you’re under the age of 22 you should be on less pay, so if you’re a young person, why should it be acceptable for you to get less pay than the permanent person that works alongside you, doing exactly the same job?
That’s another reason why this Union is important for people in your workplace who are currently young and probably not organised in the Union, because they don’t understand what the Trade Union is going to fight on their behalf for, so it’s about making sure this week we put in place those benefits that we can offer our future members, to organise them, but also to make sure that we pass the information on that the benefits that we currently do offer. Also when you talk about the Fast Food Campaign, the Fast Food Campaign is an unbelievable campaign, it’s not just the Bakers Union. The Bakers Union is part of a group of people that gives us for the first time an army of activists, that we’ve never had in our history.

It gives us young people who are prepared to go out and take part in leafleting campaigns on our behalf. It includes Unite the Resistance, those fantastic people that stood alongside our members at Hovis and made sure that that was a successful outcome and a victory for those members at Hovis. They take part in our campaigns and help us leaflet, so yes, we recognise the pressures that we put on full-time Officials, but again that’s what they’re employed to do and I’m sure if they didn’t enjoy it, they wouldn’t go out and do it. If they thought it was too much, they’d be the first people to tell us for over-burdening them, so as much as I recognise the importance that you place on our full-time Officials, so does the Executive and I welcome the fact that you want to have a debate.

I hope that when you go to your Regional Councils, that that debate will start taking place at your Regional Councils, because one of the disappointing things of course is, is that this Executive Council has invested a lot of money in the last three years, because I keep getting reminded by Ronnie about the amount of money we’ve spent in relation to trying to improve our organising and unfortunately part of that was to say that organising should be the number one item on the Regional Council’s Agenda, but unfortunately in many Regions it’s still not the first item on the Regional Council Agenda, even though it was accepted that it would be, so we would ask Regional Councils to make sure that organising is the first item to be debated on their Agenda and that way, we can make sure that that is given the priority that it deserves, because when you’re a membership-driven organisation, membership is how you survive, so we would ask Conference to support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

To the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Okay, on the ballot papers that are being issued, in Region 5, disregard R Mullen and A Shortreed, as they shouldn’t have been on the papers, they withdrew yesterday. Cheers.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Point of order. Morning. Up here on a point of order. None of 450 have been given ballot papers. Now, if that’s because we didn’t fill the things in yesterday and get them covered, that’s fine, but there’s another table in here that also didn’t get their papers in on time and yet they’ve been given ballot sheets. Are we once again operating to two different sets of rules?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I think what you’ll find, Marilyn, I think what you’ll find is is you haven’t got a ballot paper because your Executive Council Delegates are unopposed.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Alright, so our Executive Council are unopposed, but what about other people, there is some of the No. 4 Region that actually took their own papers in . . . . . .

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I think what Standing Orders . . . . . .

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: what about female rep, that’s not one of our three?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: They haven’t come out yet, Marilyn, so you are getting them, they’re just coming out from Standing Orders.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: You’ve just left the best ‘til last.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That’s it, absolutely, absolutely, we’re leaving the best ‘til last. You will get them and obviously, like I said before, the problem has been that the printer broke down. Now, obviously we can’t do anything about that, we’ve bought a new printer and obviously they’re in the process of doing them. I did say and I’m just waiting for Standing Orders to tell me when everything’s been put out, but before the break I will make everybody aware if we’re extending the time which, by all accounts, is quite likely if we can’t get all the ballot papers out because the printer we’ve bought isn’t as good as the one we had unfortunately that broke down, because we haven’t got the facilities we had at Bridlington.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Alright, I’ll believe you, thousands wouldn’t, but I will.

[LAUGHTER]
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I can only tell you the information I’ve got [LAUGHTER].

Point of order.

Brother Desmond Pokrzywnicki, Branch Secretary, Warburtons, Bolton: Yesterday we had an issue with ballot papers not being collected and today you change the rules again and it’s out of order this, it’s supposed to be a democracy. Yesterday we had a problem with our papers not being collected and today you’re changing the rules. You either stick by the rules or, yesterday we couldn’t vote because our ballot papers weren’t collected. Today there’s an issue, but you can extend the time.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I can only produce the information if we have a printer that can print them. If we don’t have a printer, we can’t print them, so how do people take part in a ballot if I can’t give you a ballot paper? You can write them all down if you like, but the reality is the printer broke down, we’re still only on 20 past 10, so there is still the possibility that before 11 o’clock you will have all had your ballot papers and we would have been able to make sure you’ve taken part in the ballot. Maybe when it gets to 5 past 11, you can say we’ve changed the rules, but at this moment in time I believe they’re working absolutely like Trojans in the back to try and produce your ballot papers, which should be with you hopefully before 11 o’clock. Next motion, what was it? 33.

33 Rights at Work – No 5 Regional Council

That this conference through the trade union movement put pressure on the labour party to give back workers their rights and change back the detrimental changes that this Tory Lib Dem, government have made when they next get in government.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Morning, Conference. I think there’s something in the water at Southport, I don’t know.

[LAUGHTER]

That this Conference, through the trade union movement, put pressure on the Labour Party to give back workers their rights and change back detrimental changes made by this Tory LibDem government, that the LibDem government have made when they next get into government. Yes, basically in fairness, John McDonnell, one of the MPs who spoke yesterday very, very well, seems to be on the side and in there fighting for the trade union movement and pushing to have these reforms changed. I would ask you to support this motion, because week by week and day by day it’s getting worse and like he said yesterday, this government’s going to push through even more reforms before they leave. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 566 (Warburtons): Platform, Delegates. I’m here to second this motion. We must support this motion, as the anti-trade union legislation imposed first by the Thatcher government and carried on by this LibDem continues to attack terms and conditions within our workplaces. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael Lynch – Branch 505, Region 5 (Northumberland, Durham): Supporting this. I think what the last speaker said it winds it up. We’ve had more taxed by this government than we did actually, I think, with Thatcher, but what we’ve got to be aware of, we’ve got to be aware that the next government, a Labour government, will get the right colour. I don’t want to see blue Labour, I don’t want to see the progress ......

[APPLAUSE]

I want to see a left wing socialist Labour government, the one that Tony Benn would have wanted, the one that Bob Crow wanted, that’s what we want. We want a Labour Party that represents a working party. We do not want them to carry Tory policies out. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE and CHEERS]

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, the Delegate just gone down has said it all. Conference, not only this government do we have to repeal the laws, we have to repeal the laws that the New Labour they did not repeal, tax or government. That’s the laws we have to appeal, we have to appeal them. If we want our human rights, we have to get them. It’s human rights that people are, they forced our unions into debt, they forced our unions into debt to get rid of us, to crush the working people. Conference, support the resolution. We want our rights and we’re going to get them.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: Here to support the motion wholeheartedly. I want to see Ed Miliband actually turn around and say he backs the trade union movement. Every time he seems to be asked the question about his relationship with the unions, he seems to back away and shy off. He’s got to remember that, he’s got to remember that the Labour Party is there for the working people, it’s not for him. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you coming down? Any more speakers?

Brother John Fox – Branch 405 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): Conference, we ask you to support this motion, but we can’t do this on our own. We’ve got to take it back into our constituencies ourselves as well and put the motion into our Labour Party branches and clusters. Make this policy from within. Show the Labour leadership what the workforce require and no less.

Personally, I’ve done this at my own cluster and my own CLP and my own CLP have adopted it and I’ve sent it forward to the policy forum, but one cluster will not make it happen. It needs all clusters and all Labour Party branches to actually put it in and force the policy forum to actually act upon it and get it in the Labour Party policy. We need to show the leadership that this needs to happen. The Executive Council will send this to the TUC and we’ll give it to our parliamentary group, so we ask you to support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 34. You have to come to the front. What is it, a point of order?

Sister Apryl Walcott – Branch 450: Hi. Rule 22.9 for nominations for EC, nominees must be members of not less than, I’ve lost the sheet, not less than three years, so if we’re going for a Youth Delegate, you join at 20, you can’t do anything until you’re 23, you join at 24, you’ll never be able to do it because you can’t be older than 27. This is basic ageism, it’s discriminating against somebody for their age. How can you as a Union say you’re trying to get youths to vote if you give them a voice for three years, you are absolutely crippling this youth movement. The Youth Delegate position isn’t, it should be open for everyone regardless of whether they’re 20, whether they’ve been in for two years or one year, it should be for everyone.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Apryl. Listen, obviously the rules are the rules. Apryl . . . . . .

Sister Apryl Walcott – Branch 450: If there was a rule that was racist or sexist, you would take it out and you would change it.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right, I absolutely, Apryl, I absolutely understand exactly what your problem is, but until Conference brings a motion to change it, there’s absolutely nothing that, Apryl.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): Sorry, can I just say, if you don’t like the rules, change them.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Janine, we can’t change a rule because we feel like changing it. It has to come as a motion and next year, hopefully someone will bring that, now it’s been identified as an issue, as a motion, to make sure that it’s put right, but the only people that can change the rules are the Delegates to Conference who bring the motions. If we start changing rules up here, I think everybody down there would say we don’t have a right, so we’re not going to start changing them unless you tell us that that’s what you want us to do, because you run the Union, not, we only get elected to do the jobs on your behalf, based on what you’re asking us to do. We can’t start introducing new rules just because we feel like it and just because they’re wrong. You have to do it, that’s the way it has to be done. What is it?

Brother Dave Suddards: I’ve got to agree with the National President. There is, like he says, we put motions, we submit motions. I agree with the sentiment of the young lady, but I think she’s been misdirected. She should put it through a motion or an emergency motion or whatever but yes, it’s right, Ian’s right, we can’t just allow them to change things ad-lib, it has to come from a motion.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Warren Broomhall – Branch 390: We’ve just had nomination forms come down and, to be honest, I’m a little annoyed. I’ve just been recommended who I should vote for and if that has happened all the way down my table, of my Region, surely has that not polluted the election and personally I think it’s bollocks and ......

[APPLAUSE]

I will go and put some money in the Standing Orders for that.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You will have to go to Standing Orders, you can’t use that language. I mean, I don’t know who’s telling you to vote, we’re not sending anybody down and telling you to vote. Okay, obviously that’s something you need to discuss in your Region.

Okay. The motion is motion 34.

34 Rights at Work – 201 Hovis Avonmouth

This Conference agrees that no education or accommodation provider shall speak with a company or give a statement, regarding the company’s intention to discipline any BFAWU representative, for any incident or occurrence that happens, whilst the Rep is away from the workplace, without seeking prior permission, in writing, from the National President or General Secretary.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): We had an instance in my branch when one of my reps went away for training and was a bit silly and got asked to leave. It was nothing, well it was I suppose, it was a health and safety violation and they were on a health and safety course, but yes, he covered the smoke detector with a sock, that’s what he did, so he got asked to leave, came back from the course, went back to work. The company then, some little worm, decided to run to management and report him, instead of reporting him through the Union, through the complaints procedure, mind you granted he was my son, so they probably felt a bit intimidated by the fact that they had to complain to me, but I kicked his arse anyway so, anyway the company spoke to the people in Northern College and they quite happily gave a statement to the company about disciplining him.

Obviously I went in to an investigation meeting and quoted the Human Rights Act, because at the end of the day the company pays you for the eight hours you were there, not for the 24 hours that was your own time and everybody’s entitled to a private life in my opinion. My personal opinion is before they even spoke to the company, they should have spoken to the National Officers in the Union and got authority to do so, so please support.

[APPLAUSE]


Brother Mark McHugh – Branch 503 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): The Executive Council would ask Conference to support this motion. Whilst the BFAWU representative is away from the workplace on Union duties, they should be under the stewardship of the Bakers Union. With this in mind, the rep should conduct themselves in a manner which befits the Bakers Union reputation. This should cover how the rep conducts themselves from the time they are released from the workplace until the time they return to the workplace. This motion states any incident or occurrences that happen with the workplace should be taken through the relevant channels within the Union. At no time should either an education or accommodation provider be contacting employers to discuss any rep’s conduct without going through the National President or General Secretary. Our reps are having a difficult enough time with companies attacking facility time without any other external board adding to it, however we cannot give the employer any extra excuse to add to these difficulties. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Motion 35.

35 Rights at Work – No 5 Regional Council

We ask conference to support a motion on guarding against the growing use of focus groups to undermine the union on site.

Sister Sheila Hyman – Branch 582: Delegates, Platform, Mr President. That this Conference agrees to support this motion on guarding against the growing use of focus groups to undermine the Union. Management are using these groups as communicators to shop floor staff rather than involving the duly elected shop stewards on site.
These people are used as voices from management, but shop stewards are often left out of the loop, having to wait until
the group decides to roll out the information, then we have members coming up to us asking what and why have issues
been agreed at these meetings. We asked the factory manager on our site who has these meetings if he would allow a
shop steward to attend every meeting. His answer was definitely no, as he didn’t want his meetings turned into union
meetings and that we are at the bottom of the heap, when it comes to communicating. These groups are purposely
set up to undermine the Union and they often overstep the line, entering into a shop steward’s role, which agitates
members who they start questioning why are they paying into the Union? This needs addressing before we start to lose
members, which in my view is the management’s aim. I ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Here to second the motion. Major alterations to some of our
Ts & Cs back in 2012 on the back of a HR1 witnessed the drop in membership at work of approximately 20%. The
factory manager has used this opportunity to introduce several focus groups, as Sheila said, discussing topics that were
previously debated with the senior team of stewards.

He has also challenged our roles of communicating and dealing with any issues that members have, resentful of the
trust and support that we have in the factory. We have started to turn some of his actions in our favour, by improving
communication, providing a regular newsletter to clarify any issues and challenging his lies. We have attended some of
his group sessions, which are not debates but purely a means of spreading his lies. We need to continue to proactively
subdue his lies, I can’t read. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Yes, here to fully support this motion. As I said earlier, Hovis
employees, at Bradford anyway, have just been issued, I believe this morning, a letter inviting them all to a focus
group. The employers are using these focus groups as a means of consulting for terms and conditions and then when
the Union go and oppose it or grievance it, they’re saying well, your employees, we’ve consulted with them. It’s really,
really worrying, it’s a really worrying trend and we must do everything we can to stop that and put, give the trade
union the rights what they have within recognition. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis Bakery, Wigan): Here to support this, but also a bit of advice. They’re
using focus groups at work following the strike, but when an issue actually happens that reflects badly on them, so
Hovis has just become a separate company from Premier Foods, they’ve totally messed up the wages. They don’t want
to talk about it. You need to publicise events like that, because when people wanted to talk about that, in the focus
groups it was well, can’t talk about that, they don’t want to know. You need to counter what they’re doing as well,
don’t accept in principle that they’re using them. Where they make the mistakes, use it as ammunition to fight back
against the focus groups. Thank you very much. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers? Okay.

Sister Pauline McCarthy – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton) (reporting back from the Executive Council): We ask you to
support this motion. I’m the branch secretary at Manor Bakeries at Carlton and over the last three years or so we’ve
been doing site surveys. Now we know within the branch, within the company, that they do site surveys every year and
that they get scored down on the communication. Every year, every year since I can remember, they’ve been scored
down on their communication. Up until last year we had a HR manager that was a decent person, a human, now we’ve
got an alien that’s been born from the managing director, so what we do now is we go to a focus group meeting with
the general manager, who says tell me if you’ve got any issues, I’ll help you, I’ll sort them out, so off they go, he sorts
them out, comes back, we go into a shop stewards meeting or to see the general manager and he says you must send
your people to the managers so that they can sort the issue out at source and then if they don’t sort it out at source,
then they come to the shop steward. So he says we’ve got to run by the rule book, which is our rule book, which is our
collective agreement, but he can do what he likes because he’s the general manager. So off we go and let this twatting
person do what he wants [LAUGHTER], sorry, sorry I withdraw that, I didn’t mean to offend anyone, sorry. So we as
an Executive Council ask you to support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? You can’t now, because obviously the
Okay, 36.
36 Rights at Work – 580 Greggs Yorkshire

This conference agrees we should lobby the government to introduce legislation for collective bargaining between unions and employers to become statutory as they do in countries such as France and Germany.

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: Collective bargaining, as you all know, is a process of negotiations between employers and employees typically through trade union reps aimed at reaching agreements to regulate working conditions such as pay and working hours. Having legislation for this to become statutory, as it is in other countries such as France and Germany, would mean that we, as trade unions, could get rid of zero hour contracts ourselves without relying on this Tory government and we, as trade unions, could negotiate £10 per hour for our workers, meaning not only our members but all workers would have decent working conditions that we and other unions have negotiated with employers for them. Please support.

[APPLAUSE] Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Okay, the Executive Council would ask Conference to support the motion. I think Sarah has just explained it pretty well what it was all about, so to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 37.

37 Rights at Work – 417 Hovis Wigan

That this conference agrees to demand that the TUC and Labour Party work to outlaw the monitoring of and use of hand held scanners as a tool for disciplinary action.

Brother Nick Hughes – Branch 417, Branch Secretary (Hovis, Wigan): Morning, Conference, Platform. I apologise, I didn’t say yesterday that this is my first time at Conference. Right, hand-held terminals, HHTs as they’re known. I ask this Conference to support the outlawing of these and put pressure on the TUC and the Labour Party to conduct an investigation into their use, as we believe they’re a risk to health and safety, as demonstrated by the Amazon documentary, I don’t know if any of you saw it.

These tools are not used for scanning products, they’re actually used for micro-managing employees through unachievable work targets which none of them have gone through any health and safety assessments at all, sorry this microphone’s in my face. These scanners need to be risk assessed. I put pressure on the panel, TUC, Labour Party and anybody in here who uses them in their warehouse. They also tack it on with another thing called Performance Manager. The Scottish TUC in conjunction with Professor Phil Taylor from Strathclyde University, conducted an investigation into their use and they actually bring about mental health issues again through stress. They found that these scanners, along with micro-management, were detrimental to an employee’s health. They’ve been shown to have no use in productivity at all. I put pressure again on this Conference to support this motion, as I believe it’s a way of doing employees out of redundancy and sacking people. Thank you.


Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Here to fully second this motion and fully support it. These are the biggest scourge in the workplace in the modern day. For those workplaces that don’t have them, do everything you can to keep them out. Every minute of the day is timed, even toilet time, they’re a scourge. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, any more speakers?

Brother John Newman – Branch 247 (AB, Cardiff) (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): Morning, Conference, in support of the motion. Hand-held scanners, it could be those, it could be headsets, it could be other equipment, machines which record information. It’s the easy option. It’s called times and motions or another word for it, Performance Management Systems. So let’s cover the lot. Employers should manage performance with a process which is fair to all staff and decisions based on merit. Employers should also recognise that people have different ways of getting a good job done. Prior to any implementation of a Performance Management System, there should be a consultation of managers, employers and their representatives on the need, if there is one and any type of system and its operation. Those people expected to operate the system and those included in the arrangements should also be consulted, as they often have helpful ideas, but communications are a priority from the start.

People must be kept informed through as many channels as possible, with channels for feedback very, very important, but this is the important part for us. An employer must not discriminate against employees in the way they manage performance because of their age, race, sex, gender reassessment, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.
The Data Protection Act will generally apply to any information kept by its employers on its employees. Employees should be told what the information is for and what it will be used to do. They have a legal right to access this information that any employer holds on them.

Should an employer fail to comply with the process, it could result in a claim for unfair treatment of an individual or group of employees at the very least, but let’s be honest. We know the best way to get performance better. You treat people fairly, you apply dignity and respect and improve their terms and conditions. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Motion 37.

Apologies, 38 right

38 Rights at Work – Branch 405

That this conference agrees to recognise the great importance of support and solidarity given by other socialists and trade unions during times of strike and dispute.

Sister Janet Phillips – Branch 405: Good morning, comrades. Conference, I would like to forward the motion to this Conference agrees to recognise the great importance and support and solidarity given by other socialists and trade unions during times of strike and dispute. From people stopping, giving us biscuits and pies, which was a good contribution if you’re from Wigan. The teachers, social workers, trade council, left-wing groups, they were the ones who were with us at 2 o’clock in the morning, through rain. There was one night, there was a row of teachers between us and the police. We can’t stress enough how much help we needed and were given and it’s only by solidarity from other trade unions that we won the strike. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Williams – Branch 405: I totally agree with what Janet’s just said. The support of 417 Hovis, Wigan was the whole of Wigan. There were people from pizza places, pie shops, pubs all sending food, the local community were bringing round with pies and things for those on the picket line. A massive thanks to H for stopping the scabs from coming through.

[APPLAUSE]

We were supported there by other branches of BFAWU, Unite Left Union, fire services, teachers, who was it?, Against The Cuts, councillors, local MPs, branch officials, people from all over the place. I ask you to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Yes, I went to Wigan. It is the first time ever that I’ve been on a picket line and I loved it.

[APPLAUSE]

I went along, they asked us would we turn up at 2 o’clock in the morning to stop the bread vans going out, so off we went. My husband got home from work at half past 10, he does a 2–10 shift, we had an hour’s kip and then off we went up to Wigan and the police absolutely crapped themselves when about 70 people turned up at that time in the morning. We had detectives sat there in BMWs watching us, they sent for three dog units. I don’t know what they thought we were going to do, but all we were doing was walking about in the middle of the road so that the vans couldn’t go down. It was absolutely fantastic, never seen anything like it. Not just the Bakers Union, like they said, everybody else came together. What a fantastic moment. We did it again the week after, there were 100 odd of us the week after, absolutely fantastic. Solidarity at its absolute best.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405 (Ex-417) (speaking for the Executive Council): We’re here to support this motion, as we do need to recognise the solidarity of other trade unions and socialists whatever, but I believe it needs to go further and we need to support other trade unions and socialists. Get your branches to affiliate to the trades councils and help with their campaigns. Collections around your branches for any other strikers, they all need your support. We got that at Wigan and it helped us a hell of a lot. Leafleting town centres. We had Unite The Resistance and even the SWP, two buckets, yes, coin buckets down to the town centre and outside the football ground and they came back with loads of, buckets full of money, yes, to help us to get through that strike. These sort of things we need to do and they came as they said, they stood side by side with us on those gates and Marilyn was right, yes, the first time 70–100 people there on the first full night’s strike and then the following, when we got our act together again and everybody came in, 170–200 people on the gates.
The police didn’t know what had hit them, yes. The first night of the strikes three got arrested, but on that it wasn’t for anything they did wrong, yes. One girl got thrown to the ground by a policeman and she got that angry with it, she ran up and kicked the police van, she didn’t kick the policeman, she kicked the van, yes and she got arrested for it ......

[APPLAUSE]

…but these things are all about. I know we brought the DVD and we’re going to show it after, the last night of the strike, we’re going to be showing it this afternoon and hopefully you’ll enjoy it as much as we did, but you will see it second-hand, but send your messages of support, every little helps. When you’re there, you know that you’re not alone. That solidarity, throughout the workforce, it boosted the morale of the workforce and that’s what it’s all about. You’ve got to get in, get into your trades councils, because those trade councils can help you a great deal.

They pull down people, they get in touch with other trades councils like Unite The Resistance at the back, they pulled on people who we didn’t know and they came in. Support these people, yes and they will help. If you’ve got a dispute, they will come and help you, no qualms given, right? So all I can say is get active, support the causes and keep it solid, yes, solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

I’m of the belief we haven’t managed to get all the ballot papers out, so does Conference agree that we can obviously get the ballot papers out and move the time, which was told to us by 11 o’clock to 12 o’clock? Does Conference agree? All those in favour? Those against? That’s agreed, we move it to 12 o’clock.

Okay, tea time. Quarter past.

[BREAK]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Delegates, can you take your seats please. Okay, can you shut the doors please. Make sure everybody’s back in. Okay, Delegates. Can you take your seats.

Okay, Delegates. Just to make you aware that in dinnertime, at the end of Conference, the Greggs meeting is taking place and it’s going to be held in here, so as soon as the main Conference finishes, can all Greggs Delegates please stay behind for a meeting in here.

I’ve been handed a leaflet that I think’s been circulated around on the tables to make people aware that tomorrow evening Unite The Resistance is holding a public meeting in the Rastrick, food, sorry Scarisbrick, I don’t know where I got the Rastrick from, in the Scarisbrick, that’s going to be held at 5.30. There is a number of speakers, Lambeth College strike, who are currently on an indefinite strike, the Care UK strikers, who are fighting to save the NHS, the Ritzy Cinema strikers, who of course are fighting for the living wage, Ronnie Draper, the General Secretary, Sam Vickers, Audrey Glover from Lancaster & Morecombe NUT, Julie Sherry from the Fast Food Rights and Michael Bradley from Unite The Resistance and I also believe Nick Hughes, obviously from the Hovis dispute, will be taking part, so hopefully everybody can get along to that tomorrow because I think it’ll be an absolutely fantastic evening. The people that certainly help you in your time of need, when you’re in dispute. Half past 5, half past 5 tomorrow.

Okay, everybody got their Agendas back? Motion 39.

39 Rights at Work – 417 Hovis Wigan

That this conference agrees to work with the TUC and the Labour Party to regain the right to have lightning strikes.

Brother Nick Hughes – Branch 417, Branch Secretary (Hovis): We call on this Conference to put pressure on the next socialist Labour government to legalise the right for a union to withdraw its labour without giving notice in the face of a hostile management and in the breakdown of consultation process, i.e. lightning or wildcat strikes. After being in the unusual position of experiencing a strike under the old system and leading a strike under the current system, old school style, I can see the benefits of a return to a walk-out without giving the statutory notice of intention. A lifting of Maggie’s law would allow the Sword of Damocles to swing back over the management’s head and give the power back to the workforce.

The current law allows the company to plan and organise, which is detrimental to a unionised workforce. Lightning/wildcat strikes would prevent an extended loss of earnings and focus the management’s minds onto maintaining good working relationships and bringing the matter to a satisfactory conclusion. Any general will tell you that a side with the element of surprise usually wins. As a branch sec of a union that’s taken industrial action, we learned what works and what doesn’t. It is every working person’s right to withdraw his labour to bring about a change.
Unpredicted short, sharp robust action works, long projected action doesn’t. Thatcher’s government blunted our best weapon in the ‘80’s and subsequent governments since haven’t done anything to change this. They legalised this, because they knew its effectiveness. We are rapidly losing our skill and courage to take on management. As my members will tell you, taking strike action is like jumping into an ice cold lake. You know it’s going to be a shock, you worry about surfacing, some will get cold feet, but once you take that step, other unions and activists will be there to provide support. You will come out feeling invigorated and cleansed and saying why didn’t we do this earlier? As Bob Crow famously said, fight back, you may lose. Not to fight, you’re guaranteed to lose. I ask this Conference to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Okay, General Secretary to respond.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, Chair. Conference, you will be surprised …… Andy.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Andy. That was a bit slow of you there mate, a bit slow.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: A late night, was it?

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Supporting my branch secretary’s proposal. The amount of times in the past that management have done things that could have generated a strike there and then, they’ve really wound up the workforce. It happens everywhere. If we could strike when the iron was hot, when the issue was live, it would be so much better, you’d be able to carry the entire workforce, members and non-members with you, if we had the ability to do this, whereas we’ve got to go through the rigmarole of doing the votes, giving notice, people forget why we were doing the strike in the first place. We need the ability to strike while the issue is still hot, because like I say, that way we’ll be able to carry both members and non-members with us in our workplace and that would aid in recruitment because then they know why we’re there, because union members have got legal protection, non-members haven’t and that would definitely cause people to start joining the union. I ask you to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Colin Morgan – Branch 238: Comrades, I ask you to support this motion but let’s go a little bit further, let’s go back to that extinct group of people, because I was one of them, the flying pickets, can you remember them? Not the group, but the flying pickets and that’s what we need. We need action when we want action, not dictated by our bosses and our paymasters, we want action when we want action, so therefore let’s go back, let’s repeal these anti-trade union laws, let’s get back to giving us the power. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Okay, General Secretary to reply.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, Chair. As I say, not surprisingly the Executive are going to ask you to support the motion. Indeed it’s been one of those issues that we’ve campaigned for over many years. Many of you will remember Tony Richardson, who was a Delegate from the then West Yorkshire district and then No. 5 Region, who avidly campaigned through the Reclaim Our Rights group for the repeal of anti-trade union legislation, in particular that which was covering strikes and all that. Y’know, I’ve got to say we who sit around the Executive table once every three months have consistently and I mean consistently backed members in times of struggle and I promise you we will continue to do that, but being a bit sceptical, I ask myself, how bad and I’m sure Andy Moorhouse has questioned the same thing, how bad has it got to go before we get into a situation where a lightening strike is going to happen?

I, along with the President and many Officials in this room have seen terms and conditions eroded by greedy employers backed by a vicious Tory government that’s there to support them and to prop them up and I keep wondering to myself, how come industrial action hasn’t taken place? Me, with many other people in this room, in 1977 fought for the right for bank holidays. We took a 10 day strike, lost 10 days wages to get the right for bank holidays and what was the first thing that happened?, Branches sold them to get a few bob and to get an extra pay rise, which incidentally once you get a pay freeze, they’ve clawed back and the only difference is you’ve lost your bank holidays, so we’ve done this in the past. John Higgins and I, when you talk, Colin, about one of the flying pickets, we were one of Scott’s rent-a-mob, we’d go everywhere, we went and visited many of your branches when strikes were on in 1973 and 1978 in the national strikes and indeed Scott’s closed because we took lightning action against an employer who was trying to screw us, but with the exception of just a few, clearly the magnificent dispute at Hovis which was won and it wasn’t just a victory for the people in Wigan, it was a victory for the trade union movement as a whole, most of these things, I’ve got to say a couple, there’s been a couple that have gone to the brink.
I think Avana Cakes was one where they said to the employer you’re not going to take our terms and conditions, most certainly Gunstones was one, when I sat outside and got the results over the phone where there was a 97% yes vote for strike action and it caused the employer to back off, but they are few and far between, those actual instances when we actually want to take strike action, we force ourselves to, we’re in such a bad position that we want to do something about it.

I’ve got to say, comrades, the easiest thing in the world is to pass the motion and for Ian and I to go down to the TUC and talk to Frances O’Grady and the General Council about what we should be doing, we talk regularly about a general strike, we spoke yesterday, or we’ll go down to our Parliamentary Group Chair and we’ll talk about this motion and how we should re-introduce lightening strikes. Let me tell you, I’d take it even a step further. I would look from any party for the re-introduction of secondary action, because that’s the thing that also kills you, when we can’t give the support unless it’s at Hovis, like we had the magnificent secondary action there which did work, it’s illegal to do and I think we should be repeating that, so that we can at least take action against an employer who seeks to drive down the terms and conditions of our members, but I believe we would actually get lots and lots of support if we go down and if we talk to members here.

If we talk to the members of our Parliamentary Group, I think we’re talking to people of a like mind, that’s why the members of the Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union Parliamentary Group is chaired by John McDonnell, because that is the way that he thinks and that is the way that the people who support us think, so we would get a yes, but as he said yesterday, there’s only 27 people. I suspect that the rest of them, unless they’re trying to get elected a new Delegate who wants to be elected, because I met with one of the Labour Party candidates at the TUC last year and he promised me the earth, they were going to deliver everything, yet on readers blogs and none of those things seem to be in there, so I think we would get a deaf one cocked at us if we spoke to a party. Indeed, we spoke yesterday about the links between the Labour Party and the trade union movement and how they’re being brought into question.

So I personally believe, whilst I’ll put my hand up, I do believe politically we’ve got a snowball’s chance in hell of actually getting a political rubberstamp on our Agenda and as for the TUC, again they’ll make all the right moves, all the right noises, but then carrying out anything seen as being a bit radical or a bit to the left, it gets short shrift, but even, Delegates, if we were to perform that miracle and get these outside bodies to campaign and legislate for the right to have lightening strikes, we still have one other mighty, major obstacle to overcome and that is the obstacle of fear amongst our members. Many have been kicked so often by their employers without retaliation that they appear to have become immune to the cuts. We need working people to rise from their slumber like lions and fight back. We have the right to strike now, it’s enshrined in and not only that, I’ve been out quite recently on the picket line with the Fire Brigade’s union. I’m sure the police didn’t seem to know about that and they were there, supposedly upholding the law and didn’t know what to do about it and the best part of a month to do so. I’m not going to stand and go through every restriction put in place, but I just want to point out, Ronnie’s just mentioned about the General Strike, we’re never going to get a General Strike and it’s still illegal for secondary strike action. We need to get rid of these so that we can walk out and we can defend our members and get their rights back. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s unanimous, thank you. Motion 40.

### 40 Rights at Work –580 Greggs Yorkshire

*This conference agrees to lobby the government to reduce the restrictions on the Trade Union Act 1984, so we can properly represent our members.*

**Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580:** I put this motion in, as I think it should be on our Union’s Agenda year-in, year-out, I know it is and I know we work hard on it, but it’s not mentioned specifically. We should be able to support comrades going out on strike. Can you imagine how quickly the bosses at Hovis would have backed down if every single Hovis branch had walked out, closing down the company and even better, not having had to jump through hoops and wait the best part of a month to do so. I’m not going to stand and go through every restriction put in place, but I just want to point out, Ronnie’s just mentioned about the General Strike, we’re never going to get a General Strike and it’s still illegal for secondary strike action. We need to get rid of these so that we can walk out and we can defend our members and get their rights back. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Formally seconded?

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Obviously I’m here to support this. Secondary action’s illegal? Well the police didn’t seem to know about that and they were there, supposedly upholding the law and didn’t know what to do about it and not only that, I’ve been out quite recently on the picket line with the Fire Brigade’s union. I’m sure the police have noticed that I’m not really a fireman [LAUGHTER]. Support it.
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You look like a fireman to me, Marilyn.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, Delegates, Mr President. Conference, we have to wait and vote on 2015 to get these things done. If we do not vote Labour on 2015, you’re not going to get it under a Tory government, but you’ll get more of the same. Conference, support the resolution and vote Labour in 2015 and get Labour to do what they should do, represent us. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers? No?

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 566 (Warburtons) (on behalf of the Executive Council): Delegates, the Executive Council would ask you to support this motion. Any restrictions placed upon us should be removed, so we can properly support and represent our members. Comrades, we thought we were up against it when Maggie was in power, this lot are worse. Please support. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s unanimous. Thank you very much. Motion 41.

41 Rights at Work – 417 Hovis Wigan

That this conference agrees to work to change Industrial Relations law so that when management are found to be using falsehoods and misrepresentations, lying, action can be taken against them, either disciplinary action against the individual or civil action against the firm.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Hello again, Conference. Motion 41, that this Conference agrees to work to change industrial law so that management, when they are found to be using falsehoods, misrepresentations and lying basically, action can be taken against them, either disciplinary action against the individual or civil action against the firm. Industrial law is totally and utterly one-sided. If we’re caught lying in negotiations, I’m open to disciplinary action by the firm. Managers lie through their teeth all the time. We have documented it time and time again and nothing can be done about them. It’s time we at least had an even playing field. The law needs changing so that managers can be held to account for what they say and do, in the same way we are. Please support the nomination. Thank you very much.

Brother John Williams – Branch 405: I think this motion reverts back to the trouble that was at Hovis 417. If you need to know more about it, have a word with Nick and Andy to see actually what went on with that management there. You know, you can tell when a manager’s lying, he opens his mouth.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): The last speaker, I must say, the two idiots what caused it all were party to the trouble at Wigan. One of them came from Bradford and now they’ve promoted the two of them back to Bradford. Bradford’s in exactly the same position as Wigan was a year ago and we talk about lying, there’s people in here who knew Peter, Peter Barszczak, good activist, who’s just had the company appealed his disciplinary, sorry, his dismissal and they lost within four hours. They’ve told lie after lie after lie in that ......

[APPLAUSE]

As I say, what they get is promotion not action against them. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nick Hughes – Branch 417: I support this motion. I ask Conference to support this motion. I’m sure we’ve all experienced management lying. Without any repercussion for the management, they’ll carry on. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Well, they reckon you learn something new every day. Managers tell lies, well I’m shocked and stunned. Support it anyway.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. The Executive Council obviously would ask you to support the motion. I mean it is interesting to note, when a trade union takes part in a ballot and it jumps through all the hoops put in front of it, that the employer is then able to challenge that ballot, even though the people have had an opportunity to take part in a ballot normally through the post, because that’s how we’re forced to do them and then they have the ability to challenge that ballot on the basis that they have some belief or other that we haven’t conducted that ballot in accordance with the rules that they put in place. Those are the bosses ballots, they were the bosses that made sure that those ballots got put in place in the first place, the government that brought them in are the representatives of the bosses and I think it’s about time that they were held to account, so we agree, it is about time that the bosses were held to account. It’s about time that legislation was brought in that said that they had to comply and make sure that they were honest in relation to their dealings with their employees. So we would ask Conference to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]
To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Motion 42.

42 Rights at Work – No 5 Regional Council

That this conference agrees that we ask delegates for their support in demanding that the stress caused by employees undertaking the same work yet receiving different rates of pay be stopped. Equality should be prioritised in every workplace.

Brother Mick McDonald – Branch 577, No. 5 Region: Good morning, Conference. Moves that this Conference agree that we ask Delegates for their support in demanding that the stress caused to employees by undertaking the same work, yet receiving different rates of pay, be stopped. Equality should be prioritised in every workplace. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582: Here to second this motion. This motion is simply asking for equality in the workplace. We wish to see an end to any reduced rate on age, any lower rate of pay for agency workers and demand every worker is given dignity and respect. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andrew Dalby – Branch 3579, Region 3: Yes, in our workplace we have a grading structure for skilled operatives and non-skilled operatives, which is badly mis-managed and we’re getting skilled, sorry, operatives on the lower grade that’s been forever burdened with extra responsibility, so it’s obviously a problem, so I would support that 100%.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Here to support this motion and go further. Second generation contracts again, the scourge and that’s what we’re talking about with equality. They’re introducing them into a lot of companies, Hovis again is one of them at the moment introducing and they want people to work at the side of a guy 30% less, it’s going to cause stress, discontent in the workplace. Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Speakers? Clearly, Conference, the Executive Council would ask you to support the motion. When you think about the dispute at Hovis, I mean we’re going to keep going on and on about the Hovis dispute because it was such an inspirational dispute and that dispute was exactly what this motion is talking about, the dispute was about people who were going to be treated as second class citizens in that workforce and we’ve got to send that message loud and loud and clear that it’s not acceptable. It does cause stress, it’s caused stress to individuals who are forced then to live on poverty pay, it causes stress to the family home because they’re unable to afford to buy food and they’re unable to pay their rent properly or their mortgages, so it’s essential that we recognise the importance of not allowing second class workers in any workplace and it’s important that we take that message back to every single workplace that we organise in and say we’re not going to accept a second class workforce, either in second generation contracts, either in the forms of agency workers brought in to undermine the terms and conditions that have been negotiated by the trade union or by the use of some sort of slave labour scheme that the government has brought in and called Workfare to provide cheap labour, so I would ask you to go back to your branches and to make sure that if you do have people on less pay, tell them to join the Union, tell them to get organised and stand up and fight and if the company still wants to go down the path and pay them differently, do what they did in Wigan, take that to a mandate, get the mandate, take a ballot and go on strike.

[APPLAUSE]
To the vote. Those in favour? Against? Motion 43.
This Conference agrees that the ability of a company appointed Occupational Health Advisor to overrule a sick note written by a General Practitioner is abhorrent, and should be fought against at every level, by this Union.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I was very upset to find out one of my members who was on the sick got called in to see the occupational health adviser, who then told her she was expected to return to work the next day. She said to me, obviously I wasn’t there at the time, she gave me a ring, she said to me I’ve got to go back to work, I said well, when was your doctor’s note up, she said my doctor’s note is not up until Monday. I said so your doctor doesn’t think you’re fit to work, I said but the health adviser does and she said yes, they said if I don’t come back to work I’m going to be disciplined.

Obviously I took this up, but before I started kicking off about it, I had a little look at the law and I was very surprised to find out that it’s perfectly legal for somebody who’s employed by the company, for the company’s best interests, to be able to totally disregard a doctor’s note. I think it’s absolutely disgraceful. These medical people who are working for the company, the health advisers, they haven’t got the qualifications of a GP for a start, but I’m telling you now, we should just knock this right on the head or we’re going to suffer. Please support.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Obviously I’m up here to support this, but it’s not just occupational health nurses that are doing this, so’s ATOS. Your doctor says you are disabled, ATOS says you’re fit to work, go back to work. ATOS, I don’t know whether you’re aware of this, if you work for ATOS and you do overtime, you get £70 an hour. Now when I worked at Park Cake, I regularly did 10 hours a week, £700-worth of overtime. I could do with a job at ATOS, I’ll just do the overtime. Support it.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: I’m here to support it. Recently I was off sick, I’ve only been off sick once in five years. On the day that I was off sick I visited my doctor, he sent me straight up to hospital, then they advised me to go back to my doctor’s to get a scan. In the meantime I’d rung my manager, I’d rung the sick-line and I’d also rung the labour co-ordinated manager. Three days letter I received a letter through the post from head of HR, failure to keep in touch with the company. These people on HR, sorry occupational health advisers, they are there to advise, they’re not doctors. You know, a doctor sits for seven years and has a qualification to assess whether you’re fit enough to go back to work. How can a health and safety adviser overrule a doctor? They shouldn’t have the right to do that. If a doctor says you’re not fit for work, you are not fit to work. Please support this motion.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Here to support the motion obviously. Just to give you an idea of the scale of this problem, our original occupational health nurse has left rather than follow what the company wants her to do, as they’ve moved the goalposts and become more and more aggressive in trying to deal with people who are off sick, so the company nurse has left rather than do what the company wants. We’ve got another one in place now who doesn’t just argue with GP sick notes, she argues with consultants, saying the consultant is wrong when you have people with long-term sickness, who are away having tests at hospitals for sometimes life-threatening conditions and they are chasing people up, arguing with consultants. It is ridiculous. Please support this motion.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Janine, that’s a great resolution. Conference, Conference, no nurse or anybody else has a right to interfere with a prescription written by a doctor and if they do, or try to force it, they are committing a criminal offence against a human being and should be disciplined for it or sent for training or dismissed from their job for illegal practices. I support the resolution. Conference, I ask you to support.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558: Yes, I’m supporting it, it’s a favourite of mine. I do countless disciplinaries at work and when they start to interfere with doctor’s sick notes, I just say are you a doctor, are you a judge?, they’re the only people that can interfere with it, I believe. At the end of the day you’ve got to slap them about a bit and grievance them every time they harass your members when they’re on the sick.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool), (speaking on behalf of the EC): The EC ask you to support this motion. It is becoming more and more apparent that members who are off sick are being bullied and harassed while off sick.
This goes hand-in-hand with the government’s attack on the sick and disabled. It seems that in the company’s eyes, a fit note is not worth the paper it’s written on and that the company’s own occy health adviser knows best. Unfortunately since the fit note was introduced in 2010, new guidelines on the fit note were published by the government in March last year, which could allow employers to favour the views of an occy health adviser over those of a GP. The change was intended to cover situations in which, based on the knowledge of the workplace and the work, the employer knows best. Rubbish. They’re not interested if you’re not fit for work, they just want you back into work. If you have an accident at work, they want you in straight away, counting paperclips or are there enough holes on the top of crumpets, so it doesn’t go down as a sick day, or if you are off sick, they want you back and on light duties, the magical word “light duties” which never appear when you ask for them. At our last Regional Council, I spoke about the increase on our site of bullying and harassment while people are off sick, where members getting phone calls, asked to come in for an informal chat, when they get there they’re faced by the site manager, line manager and HR. I’d hate to see what a formal chat would be. They’re threatened about coming back to work. On our site, pay is paid by managerial discretion, so you know what’s threatened to these members if they don’t come back to work. This opened a debate at Regional Council on how widespread it was in our workplaces and one member of the Regional Council explained how one member was back in work on crutches. I sit on the National Health & Safety Committee and I brought this up at the last meeting and we decided that the topic should be discussed at the next Regional Council and maybe get a presentation from the Union’s solicitors on this matter, so members know exactly where they stand and the Union will support and advise members if they are off sick and being bullied and harassed. The companies pretend they care and they’re going to support you.

Are they going to support you if they make things worse while getting back into work? These companies have attacked our safety in the workplace, they’ve attacked our terms and conditions and now they’re coming after you when you’re sick. It’s not fair, it’s immoral and it’s not right and we as a Union need to support and advise anyone who’s forced back to work before they are ready. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried.

Motion 44.

44 Health, Safety and Welfare at Work – 417 Hovis Wigan

That this conference agrees to consult with the next Labour government for the full restitution of powers to the Health and Safety Executive.

Brother Clive Priestley – Branch 417 (Health & Safety Rep, Hovis, Wigan): I ask Conference to agree to consult with the next Labour government for the full, yes, the full restitution of powers to the HSE. All too often you hear and you read about this government what’s in power trying to water-down the powers of the HSE. We need the HSE on our shoulders, we cannot do the job alone. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Any other speakers?

Brother John Owens, Branch 432 (speaking on behalf of the EC): The EC would ask you to support this motion. We need Labour, when they get back into power, to fund the HSE so we can do and carry out what the HSE is supposed to do. Unfortunately under this government, there is a hostile political climate to health and safety that has resulted in the HSE being prevented from making pro-active visits to many workplaces, to check that employers are working in the ways that don’t put their staff at risk. The current upward trend in workplace deaths and injuries will not be reversed unless there is an increase in enforcement of the Health & Safety Law in our workplaces and full powers given back to the HSE, that’s what we want Labour to do. This government seem determined to water down health and safety laws, because they see it as a burden.

Despite recent increases in workplace deaths, it seems incredible that ministers seem unconcerned by the cut in the number of workplace inspections at a time when more people are dying and getting injured at work. Protection is more important now than ever. The HSE under this government is getting starved, it’s got a shrinking budget and its hands are tied. A 35% cut in funds will take full effect from 2015, this will have a real impact on those at work as well as those families and dependents affected by this. In addition to the cuts, there is likely to be an increase in the number of deaths and injuries. Enforcement is at a record low.
Recently Cameron told the Federation of Small Businesses his government would continue to scrap the overzealous rules and this government has already stopped needless health and safety inspections and enforcement, but much more of the red tape Cameron is slashing and thrashing, not imposed by mindless bureaucrats but carefully thought out and devised, evaluated and agreed by the HSE with industry and unions to protect not only the workers but the public. Martin Temple was handpicked to review the HSE. The government has high hopes that he will brand the HSE a burden-mongering stifling monster to be suddenly slain.

If Temple didn’t like what he saw, it could prove the end of the HSE, but that wasn’t the case and when the case came back, three months later I might add because the ministers didn’t like it and they tried to get him to change his mind, Temple reported that the HSE plays an important role in reducing injury and ill health caused by work. He stressed the importance of its regulatory role and called for a renewed push to prevent occupational diseases ought to be opposed. The government-driven dumping down of guidance simplicity is welcomed, dumping down is not, but most galling of all for ministers was the report’s outright rejection of the privatisation of the HSE, but I’m sure Cameron will ignore this. So let’s put pressure on the Labour when they win the next year’s election to support, fund and fully restoration of powers to the HSE. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried.

I now invite Mark Brooks from the Standing Orders to give a further report to Conference.

Brother Mark Brooks – Standing Orders: Turn to Agendas. Motion 51 stands, motion 52 stands, motion 53 stands, motion 54 stands, motion 55 stands, motion 56 stands, motion 57 stands, motion 58 stands, motion 59 stands, motion 60 stands, motion 61 stands and the amendment also stands, motion 62 stands, motion 63 stands, motion 64 stands, motion 65 stands, motion 66 stands, motion 67 stands, motions 68, 69, 70 and 71 will now be called composite 2. That is the final part of this Agenda. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you. To the Conference, do we agree to the report? Everybody, yes? No-one against? Okay, thank you.

Okay, motion 46. We understand that there’s an awful lot of people that are actually not taking part in the votes when you actually get your ballot paper. Right, sorry, they’re not voting on either for or against. If you’re not going to take part in the vote, you normally have to move to the side of the room, okay? Motion 46.

46 Health, Safety and Welfare at Work – 3579 Gunstone’s

This conference lobby government to re-introduce funding for care and support for teenagers with mental health issues.

Sister Sue Johnson – Branch 3579 (Gunstones Bakery): This Conference lobby government to re-introduce funding and care for support for teenagers with mental health. At the moment there is any, none at all, so we want plenty of funding because a lot are committing suicide. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Brother Gerry Corbett – Region 6: And I must say after a four year enforced absence through work commitments, it’s nice to be back at Conference, now that I’m liberated by retirement. I’m up here to support this motion and it’s a motion I believe that is applicable to our island as it is to this island. Indeed we have in Ireland one of the highest rates of youth suicide in Europe. Most of those suicides are young males under the age of 30. It’s frightening. We used to have a very, very high death rate on our roads and eventually the message got to the authorities to enforce the law and to have a crackdown. Since then, we have seen a dramatic reduction that now, thankfully, we have one of the lowest death rates on our roads in Europe. We just wonder if the same emphasis was put into mental healthcare for the youths, whose death rate is twice that of the fatalities on our roads, surely it would say if it can be done on the roads of the country, it can be done with funding for healthcare and that’s why I wholeheartedly support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529: Obviously I’ve spoken about mental health issues at this Conference before, specifically depression, but obviously the statistics are one in five people will be affected by some mental health issue at any point in their lives and that’s just the cases that people know about and there is, must be difficult for anybody to deal with anything like that, let alone young people who haven’t got really much life experience compared to older people, so they possibly don’t know who to turn to, even what’s going on with them, specifically teenagers, because obviously they’re going through obviously one of the biggest changes in their lives when obviously they’ve got hormones obviously affecting every aspect of them and a mental health issue on top of that must be really difficult.
Obviously young people are more likely to be, are the most vulnerable workgroup, well one of the most vulnerable workgroups that we have, because obviously employers take it upon themselves that they have the view that they can easily exploit young workers, that they can be bullied into doing obviously work for nothing, etc., things like that and especially with the zero hour contracts that obviously are amass everywhere now, I think that obviously if there’s a young person on a zero hours contract and obviously they will be exploited because obviously you hear tales that obviously they haven’t done something right at work, so the manager doesn’t like it, so then they’re threatened with no work for another two weeks, so obviously that’s going to have a toll on their mental balance and also we’ve got the cutting of the EME and the extortionate university fees, so obviously if they can’t afford to educate themselves and they haven’t got any proper job prospects, that’s going to have a mental effect for the rest of their lives and could probably mentally damage them for the rest of their lives, so I think it’s important that we have something in place for, well for everybody really, but specifically young people because they don’t know who they can turn to, what, how to deal with it, so I think we should support the motion wholeheartedly.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, Delegates, Mr President. Delegates, if it was war in some country where they were blowing it apart and they were asked and it was New Labour was asked it and they said whatever it takes, that’s what they would spend. There was no question about restricting the amount of money that they would spend, they said whatever it takes, while for these unfortunate people that has a disability that the rest of us enjoy, let’s do the same for them, whatever it takes, that’s what we should do. Support the resolution.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Cheetham – Branch 459: Delegates, President. First time to Conference. I think it’s very easy to support this motion because basically it’s another cut on the National Health Service, let’s be honest, by this government.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Brother David Byrne – Region 6 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): To support this motion. Paul Farmer, chief executive of the mental health charity MIND acknowledges this as a disgrace, that people with mental health problems are being sent miles away from family and friends and being accommodated in an appropriate setting when they are acutely unwell, however minister Norman Lamb does not acknowledge this as a problematic issue which needs addressing. In fact, the minister and the Department of Health have decided that there’s too much funding going into this area and has made significant cuts to these services. This is disgraceful, how can you justify putting lives at risk? Seriously ill patients on the verge of suicide or manic depression cannot access the services they need, because the government need to cut back. This is unacceptable. Unfortunately we in Region 6 have the same issues with regards to mental health and the young. We urge this government to re-introduce vital funding into the mental health services and to stop risking the lives of vulnerable people. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 48.

48 Health, Safety and Welfare at Work – No 5 regional Council

That this conference agrees to lobby government to ensure all people can get a free eye test.

Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees to lobby government to ensure that all people can have a free eye test. Just looking around the room, how many people are wearing glasses. Why should we have to pay to see if we need glasses to see, why are we discriminated against because we work? Some people get it free, some people don’t. We should have free eye tests for everybody. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: I’ll second this motion. I’ll take it one step further. It’s not just the £10. Once you’ve got your eye test and you need a pair of glasses, as my wife wears them all the time, they then charge you £400 for a pair of glasses. In my eyes that’s just profiteering. Nobody should be able to charge that extortionate amount for a pair of glasses. The eye test should certainly be free. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any speakers?
Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 566 (Warburtons) (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): Delegates, we would ask Conference to support. All eye tests should be free, as they could be used to identify diabetes which is a major cause of blindness. Thank you. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Okay, that’s carried. Motion 49.

49 Health, Safety and Welfare at Work – No 5 Regional Council

That this conference agrees to lobby this government to stop attacks on our emergency services.

Sister Helena England – Branch 568 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): This motion that this Conference agrees to lobby the government to stop attacks on our emergency services. Emergency services play a vital part in our communities, peoples’ lives can depend on these services being readily available. You cannot put a price on someone’s life and no-one should have to suffer or be in pain or danger because we have not enough ambulances, hospitals or police or fire services available. Every person should have the right to live a healthy, peaceful life without fear, knowing that if they need help it would be freely available. We all know that these cuts cost money, but I’m sure if this government digs deep enough, they could find ways of saving money on less valuable services than the emergency services. It looks to me that this government is bent on killing off the working class people and the vulnerable people in our society, because if they don’t get you by working you into an early grave or cutting benefits, they will get you by cutting vital services in your hour of need, because the working class people and the vulnerable people in our society cannot afford private health care, private insurance, private security or private fire services.

We have to keep fighting this for the right to have these services increased, not decreased and not destroyed by a ruthless, money-grabbing government. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: I’m here to support this motion. While I was sat down there, I just had a horrible thought. Can you imagine if they’re replacing the National Health with occy health advisers?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Here to support this, obviously. It’s a disgrace what this government is doing to the emergency services. In the next week or so the fire brigade’s going on strike again. Please support them. Get out there and support them. Why are they going on strike? It’s not for more money, it’s not for shorter hours, it’s to protect their pensions and their retirement age. At 55 they can’t be running around like kids, like they were. The injuries that those guys get, they’re like rugby players. You don’t see many 55 year old rugby players. They are fighting to protect their retirement date and their pensions, not their pay, not their terms and conditions, but their retirement, that’s what they’re fighting for. But to give you another example, the government’s attack on their pension scheme is to save £90 million. It’s turning out that G4S, in the various scandals it’s involved with in fiddling the government, may have defrauded as much as £300 million and G4S will be the prime firm to take over the fire brigade if it ever gets privatised. Do you think there’s a scandal there? They’re trying to save £90 million and the firm that would take over has fiddled £300 million and nothing is being said about that. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: I’m here to support this motion. I was on the Unison picket line not long ago, last week I believe and it was on the closure of mental health wards. This was at Bolton Hospital, but it’s happening all over the country and all these closures will affect us, so we’ve got to do something about it as well. Support them on the picket lines, support them everywhere, so please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried.

Okay, I’ve been made aware that unfortunately our office has broken down at the back, so we’re unable to get the documents printed that are required. All I can do is apologise. If anybody’s got a spare printer with them and they can lend it to us, we’d appreciate it. I don’t know if any of the stallholders have a printer, but we’re certainly struggling to get paperwork printed off, so unfortunately we’re not going to be able to provide you with the ballot papers, is the information that I’m being provided.

Okay? Motion 50.
That this conference agrees to put pressure on this Tory government to stop their attack on our NHS and its employees.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): That this Conference agrees to put pressure on this Tory government to stop their attacks on the NHS and its employees. I’ll ask you to support this motion, it’s an easy one, it’s what it says on the tin. The NHS is a fantastic institution. I was unlucky enough 18 months ago to have to have a major heart operation. The follow-up treatment, the commitment from the nurses, the staff was fantastic. As I say, but all we read is bad rhetoric about the, or NHS rhetoric in the papers that they’re not performing, it’s a fantastic institution. Support this motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded? Okay, any speakers?

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Delegates, Mr President. Conference, nothing will happen until 2015 and it’s then it will be done, because if we do re-elect this coalition between the LibDems, we will get more of the same. Please support the resolution, but vote Labour in 2015 and we hope to turn it all around. Thank you.

Brother Sean Molloy: I’m here to support this motion. Those who know me personally know I’ve had my fair whack out of the NHS haven’t I, so yes, support them.

Brother Norville Grazette – Branch 123, Region 1 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): Asking you to support this motion. Conference, we need to speak out and challenge this government who are not listening to us. It is our NHS. Working class people are being attacked by politicians who don’t understand our values and the values of the NHS and it’s our workers and our workers. Please support this motion. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Okay. If you want to close your Agendas, we’re going to finish for dinner. If everybody can be back here for 2 o’clock. If you’re with Greggs, could you please stay behind in the main hall, you’ve got a meeting. If everybody else, obviously don’t forget this afternoon at 2 o’clock we’ve got Ricky Tomlinson speaking, so obviously make sure you’re all back because he’s an absolutely superb guy, cheers.

Afternoon Session

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: What I think we’re going to do is we’ll ask Ricky, because obviously I know there’s an awful lot of people are going to want to have their photographs taken with him, so what we’ll do is we’ll ask Ricky if, when he’s finished speaking and answering questions, if he will be prepared to take some photographs and we’ll call a tea break after Ricky’s finished taking questions and answers and obviously giving his contribution to our Conference. If that’s okay with everybody? and in that case then can I ask you all to start taking your seats then, please. Having said that, obviously I’ll have to ask Ricky as well of course.

Okay, Conference, if you can take your seats. Obviously we can shut the doors. General Secretary to call the roll.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Right, before I do Chair, can I just say that the figures that we’ve had for the last three sessions have been wrong, we were given the wrong figure from one of the Regions, so I can tell you on Sunday am there was 181 Delegates, on Sunday pm there was 180 Delegates and this morning there was 180 Delegates, so we’ll do the roll, so Region 1, cheers Steve. Region 2. Region 3, thank you John. Region 4, 44? Region 5. Region 6 and Region 7, thank you. There’s 180 Delegates present, Chair.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Brilliant. Okay, Conference. Now clearly, I mean as everybody knows, the focus very much at this Conference has been about our Union’s fight back that was the inspiration of the Wigan dispute and we’re really pleased that sitting at the back of the room is so many of the activists and the people that manned that picket line who are now the shop stewards and we’d like to welcome to our Conference absolute heroes of the Labour movement.

[APPLAUSE]
Absolute heroes.

[APPLAUSE]

And obviously before we invite Ricky to speak to Conference, we’d just like to show a video that was taken of those disputes. It’s something that brings a tear to certainly peoples’ eyes when they see it and it really is an inspirational video and they’ve actually done it to music as well. Are you getting down to watch it?

[VIDEO PLAYED]

Conference, our amazing members at Wigan, absolutely superb, every single one of them.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, Conference, now obviously people will be aware of Ricky Tomlinson, the actor and of course a lot of people will be aware of Ricky Tomlinson, the trade unionist. I don’t know if some people have ever heard of some of the descriptions that were said about him, but on introducing obviously Ricky to speak, I mean there’s all sorts of things you could say, but I’ve got to say that in introducing you, I think there was one passage that spoke absolute volumes about how the establishment views trade union representatives then and today. It says before becoming an actor, Ricky Tomlinson was a militant trade unionist in 1973. He was imprisoned for 15 months for organising flying pickets as part of a workers strike. A MI5 and Special Branch file at the time described him as a subversive, a left-wing activator prone to violence and a political thug. Well, welcome to the Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union.

[APPLAUSE]

Ricky Tomlinson: Thank you very much, thank you. Thank you very much, cheers, God bless you. Can I first of all say I’m delighted to be here, invited here today because my father was a baker and he worked in a little tiny family-run firm, just him and his mate and he was on nights, 27 years permanent nights, but one of the good things that came out of it is he was always available then of a day-time to pick the bloody school football team, but I’ll tell you what, he’s been dead a long, long time. He died when I was 21/22, he was 55. I don’t know what they put on his death certificate, but we obviously know what he died of, working in them conditions in them days with no ventilation, no nothing, working with all the flour and stuff like that, but can I just say on behalf of him, how proud he would have been today of them lads and ladies from Wigan who won that fantastic, fantastic bloody settlement.

[APPLAUSE]

Well done and more power to your bloody elbow. Now, boys and girls, I’m going to speak for about 15 minutes because I’m going to tell you a little bit about Shrewsbury because there’s quite a lot of you here who weren’t born when Shrewsbury kicked off. I, by trade, am a City & Guilds plasterer, but I was working in Wrexham at the time, 1972 and I was working on McAlpine’s site as a glorified labourer attached to the safety team and I was living in a council house with my wife and two small boys and of course the builders’ strike came along and a lot of people don’t know this y’know, the way we’ve been demonised in the press and on the television and in the media is you would think we went on strike every bloody week. The strike we were involved in in 1972 is the one and only ever official national building strike there’s ever been, so the government weren’t really after us, what they were after was whipping boys to show the miners you behave yourself or what we’re going to do to these, we’ll bloody well do to you … .

[APPLAUSE]

…but what they done, they couldn’t have picked, they couldn’t have picked on two work people than me and Dessy Warren, because we said bollocks to you and I mean it, I meant it then and I mean it now.

[APPLAUSE]

When the strike was called, I was elected, although I was a Scouser living in North Wales, I was asked by the lads if I’d be the Delegate, the mouthpiece on the site for the whole of North, the whole of Wrexham and of course I agreed and I went to every meeting, went to every meeting and nine times out of 10 I would probably vote against the motion, because one of the motions was if, because what we were after was £30 for a 35 hour week and better health and safety conditions and some firms started paying it right away, so their lads were allowed to go back to work as long as they paid £1 a week levy into the strike fund. Well I said I vote against that, that’s wrong, that’s out of order. If you’ve got two building workers living next door to each other and one’s working and just paying £1 into the strike fund and the lad next door’s out on strike because his firm won’t come across, it’s going to cause trouble within because my understanding was one out, we all go out, one back and then we’ll all go back ….
...not bits and fucking pieces, we all go back. Well the strike, the strike was long and hard because as I say with a fragmented industry we were all over the place, three fellas working here, 200 fellas working there, 20 fellas working there, but we did get organised and in the end we had this fantastic day of picketing when we were asked to go as far as Oswestry and I want you to remember that because it's important. We were asked to go as far as Oswestry. Well, living in a rural village, I had to phone the local guy who owned the coach firm, a man called Tequin Price and say Tequin, can I hire the coach from 8 o'clock this morning until half 12 or 1 o'clock in the afternoon?, because he did the school run, he picked the kids up and he said yes, that’s fine and we went on the day’s picketing and when we got to Oswestry we had a distress call, could we go further afield, could we go down to Telford, to a particular site called Brookside, because it was a massive site, well it’s the size of the town, it’s Telford, that’s how big the bloody site was, could we go there and help out? So I had to phone the coach owner and say Tequin, look, I know I hired the coach for half a day, we’ve been asked to go further afield, can I keep it until 4, 5, 6 o’clock and sort the money out when we get back? and he said fine, I’ll get another coach to cover the school run. So that was it, I’m telling you that now because later on we were to be charged with conspiracy, conspiracy to go to this particular site and cause bloody mayhem. 

Well that’s okay, we had a wonderful day’s picketing. I was in charge of my coach from Wrexham, all the lads were on it, they all done what they had to do and we had a very, very successful day and part of the reason that we had a very successful day is we were accompanied by between 60 and 80 policemen, all day, all day. Now the site where all the mayhem is supposed to have happened, they were there with us on that day, they never took a name and address, no-one was charged and no-one was cautioned, so that was it, that was fine, we actually got congratulated on the day for the way we held the picketing and we’ve actually got photographs of the guy called Detective Chief Inspector Meredith shaking hands with Dessy Warren, Dessy Warren who’s no longer with us because of the treatment he got in prison and I’ve cover that in a minute. 

So the strike was over, no-one arrested, no-one charged, nothing, back to work, as I say I’m working on the McAlpine site as a glorified labourer and McAlpine’s came to me and they said look, we’ve been watching you work, what we want you to do, we’d like you to go to Portugal and manage a new road being built in Portugal. I said bloody hell, I can’t read a dumpy level, never mind bloody put a road in. Can you imagine me, so they just wanted me out the bloody way to Portugal, it would have been a good job, would have been a good job, but let me just tell you a little bit about what we were after. £30 for a 35 hour week and better health and safety, because the man in charge of the job was a 6ft 7 Irishman called Mick Mee and I know we’ve got a lot of Irish lads in the room today and do you know what? half the labour force were Irish and he treated his own men like bloody dogs, he was terrible, he was a bully, he was a bully and I’m driving around the site on a Monday morning in a little Land Rover collecting the subs off these lads, because they were living in bloody cement sheds, huts, old second-hand caravans, the lot, because they couldn’t afford proper digs and the only recreation they could have was to go and have a few pints of a night, so I’d go out on the Monday morning and collect their subs and I’m going around this particular Monday morning and this Mick Mee, 6ft 7, is giving that to one of the workers, to one of the gangers, a man called John Deley and John Deley was a big man himself and when he finished bollocking him, I went over and said what was all that about John? He said oh Rick, he said, it’s my own fault, I never turned out yesterday, I never turned out on a Sunday, I had the Sunday off, I had too much beer on the, this is 1972. I said well, there’s no need for him to talk to you like that John, I said I’ll go and have a word with him. No, no, no, he said, don’t, he said I’ve done it to him before. I said oh, was that the week before? He said no, in 1957. Two days off from 1957 to 1972 and to get talked to like a bloody dog and here’s what this, how Mick Mee was to me. He was in charge of this job because, as I say, he run it with brute force and he said to me one day, Rick, he had a beautiful caravan there where he lived because the site was going on for a couple of years, he said I want you to make me a cover, he said, get some big sheets and put me a thing round here, he said, to cover me from the site. I said what size do you want it, Mick? He said 1 metre, 2ft. So I’m still bloody working that out.

[LAUGHTER]

1 metre, 2 ft? So the only thing is, I can imagine is he must have been asked to build a panda crossing in Birmingham and it turned out as bloody spaghetti junction ......

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

...but I’ll tell you what, them lads were the salt of the earth, they worked in dreadful conditions and there were two brothers down the hall one day digging and one brother accidentally hit his other brother in the head with the shovel, giving him a terrible gash in the head and when I seen it I said quick, get in my Land Rover, I’ll take you to the Maelor Hospital. No, Christ, no, he said, Rick, no, no, no, he said, no, he said, I’ll get into trouble with the big fella. He said, I’ll go in my lunch hour. That’s what it was like, that’s what it was like. Now if you wanted to go the toilet and it was 8 o’clock in the morning, you had to find a pub, a village pub or get a cement bag and go behind a bush or a tree,
because this was the toilet, show them the toilet and I want you to come and have a look at all this after, show them that, that’s the toilet for 200 men, one toilet for 200 men with no bloody water to it, so what good’s that? That’s what it was like boys and girls, so if you went, if you found somewhere, if you went behind a bush with a bloody cement bag, you’ve nowhere to wash your hands, nowhere to dry yourself. If you got soaking wet at 8 o’clock in the morning, nowhere to dry your clothes, conditions were appalling and he said well, there was a few huts on the, show them one of the huts, that’s the huts and that’s what the inside of it was like. I’ll tell you what, I said then and I’m repeating it now, McAlpine wouldn’t be allowed to keep his bloody racehorses in conditions that his workers had to make all his bloody money in, he couldn’t do it …

[APPLAUSE]

…but let’s get on to the nitty-gritty, let’s get on to the nitty-gritty. Five months after the strike, five months after the strike, I was approached by two plain clothes detectives and said listen Tommo, we’ve had a look at your family background and we think that there’s going to be prosecutions, we’d like you to be a prosecution witness. I said how the bloody hell can I be a prosecution witness, I said I was in charge of it.

They said no, no, no, we’ve seen your background, because believe this or not, believe it or not, my family were from Netherfield Road in Liverpool, my grandparents, my granddad apparently was black, we don’t know whether he was African black, black Irish or black Spanish, we don’t know, but he was black and we thought it was because he worked on the bloody tarmac, because we were only kids …

[LAUGHTER]

…we were kids, because his name was Richard, so he was called Black Dick and my grandmother was like something out of a Charles Dickens novel, she was 5ft wide and 5ft high and she was an incredible woman, but they were conservatives, they had no arse in their kecks …

[LAUGHTER]

…they had no arse in their kecks, but she was a character, a Dickensian character, so much so that if there was any kids, any babies in the area who were ill, seriously ill, the doctors used to take them to her house. Her name was Fanny Hunter, in them days although she was Mrs Tomlinson, she always kept the maiden name. They would take these children to her and say Fanny, have a look at these kids, tell us what’s wrong with it, she was an amazing woman, an amazing woman and unfortunately I’ve got no autobiographies with me today because I would love you to read the sort of person she was, but anyway that’s my background.

I said to them how can I be a prosecution witness?, I was in charge. So they said okay, you’re not going to do that, we’ll have to prosecute you. I said well, so be it. Now five months later they brought 271 charges against us, 21 against me and 27 against Des Warren, because they were out to get us and they made no bones about that. Well the thing is, I thought how have they got all these, where have they got all this information from, where have they got all the statements from, all the witnesses from? I’ll tell you where they got them from, they hid 25 detectives in a hotel, in a fancy, fancy hotel on the North Wales coast around Llandudno and round there and they scoured the area and took 900 statements, mostly from scabs who’d been working through the strike and they whittled it down to 200 and that’s the evidence that was used against us at the trial. Now at the trial, I don’t know if you’ve got a photograph there, there was 4,000 police on duty on the day of the trial, they stood shoulder-to-shoulder and I was late getting there and they weren’t going to let me in and I said well, you can please your bloody self, I’m not too fussy whether I go in or not, to be honest with you.

[LAUGHTER]

Having said that, the trial got underway, so from nothing, 200 witnesses and we’ve learnt since that the statements that were used in the trial weren’t the originals, they were thrown out and lost, the witnesses were called in again, shown my photograph, shown Dessy Warren’s photograph and told what to write. So we’ve got the proof of this because we’ve got the best researcher in the world, what’s she’s found out sometimes makes me feel ashamed of being bloody British, because it goes right to the top, right to Ted Heath and we’ve got the documents to prove it and afterwards, when we finish, while I’m having a few photos taken, if you want to go and have a look at some of that stuff, please do, because it’s stamped either “secret”, “top secret”, “confidential”, “to be destroyed, for no-one else’s eyes”, “shred this document”, part of them are there, they’re there for you to see, because otherwise I could be telling you a pack of bloody lies. But anyway, the trial went on, but the morning it started we were called into what they call a holding cell, there was six of us, me and Dessy Warren and four others. Three of them I’d never met, I’d never met them, I didn’t know them and I’m charged with conspiring with them, to bring down the bloody British Empire …

[LAUGHTER]
So we’re called into a holding cell and John Platts-Mills and David Taylor-Samuels come in and they went look, we’ve done a deal with the prosecution, you plead guilty now, you’re gonna get fined 50 quid, the union are going to pay the £50, you’ll all be back home for 12 o’clock noon and the first four lads took the deal and they come to me and he said how about you?, I said you’re not on. I said I lived in the heart of Liverpool with me mam and dad in a two-up, two-down with three brothers, I said and we never, ever got into any trouble like that. We never had the police at our door, because we had too much respect for me mam, for Peggy Tommo.

So that was it, I wouldn’t take the deal, Dessy Warren wouldn’t take the deal, so they said okay then, the other four, give them their due, he said if you’re not taking the deal, we’re not taking the deal and that was the start of a farce, but remember, you must remember that £50 the union’ll pay for it and you go home. The trial lasted 55 days. It cost a £million. They brought, they whittled the 900 statements down to 200 and brought what they thought was the worse 200 statements against us and they gave their evidence. Out of the 200 was the 80 policemen who’d been with us on the day. Now I’ve been very, very lucky since I changed my career, I’ve won a few nice awards, acted in Ken Loach films, won awards for all sorts of bloody things and I’ll tell you what, I wish I could act like some of them policemen…

[LAUGHTER]

…they were built like brick shithouses and they were going I was terrified, I was terrified, I didn’t know what was going to, fucking shithouses ……

[APPLAUSE]

…shithouses. We’re supposed to have the finest police force in the world, that’s what we tell everyone else, we’ve got the finest police force in the world, I don’t, they probably are, there’s probably a great number of them are superb, but I want them to treat the working class the way they treat the ruling class and give them fair bloody play when it counts, when it matters.

[APPLAUSE]

Anyway, as I say, this is going to be a potted thing because we want some photographs. As I say, the trial lasted 55 days, as I say, I had 21 specimen charges, 27 and the lads lesser charges and the judge said how are you getting on? and the jury foreman stood up and he said we can’t come to a decision, it’s 8:4 to find them guilty, so he said and I want you to, anyone who knows anything about the law, I want you to listen to this, he said well okay, what we’re going to do, we’re going to send this crowd back to jail. We want you to go to a hotel, which is being sorted out ready for you and we want you to carry on discussing the case, that is totally illegal. They can only discuss the case in the jury room, but off they went, we went to jail for the night, come back the next morning, went into court at 10 o’clock, by half past 10 the jury had returned. They had a verdict, 10:2 guilty, 10:2 guilty. So they sentenced the lads, they got a couple of months suspended, suspended, suspended.

They come to a lad called Mackey Jones. Now Mackey Jones, as far as I’m concerned, although me and Dessy got heavier sentences than him, I think his was the worse sentence. He got imprisoned for nine months. Because he wasn’t even at the meeting where the conspiracy was supposed to have taken place, he wasn’t there. He was the treasurer, he come in, got a few bob that the factories had sent in and the steelworks, paid everyone their petrol money and got off and when his barrister said to the judge he wasn’t there, he said it doesn’t matter, he hasn’t got to be, he doesn’t even have to know about it, doesn’t have to know about it, a nod’s as good as a wink. Mackey got nine months. His wife had a baby, an 18 month old baby and she was in the last few weeks of her second pregnancy and his barrister gave that in defence.

The judge said get out of it and Mackey, God love him, suffered from claustrophobia, so that’s another little story but I’ll tell you later. So he come to me and before he sentenced me, I said I want to make a statement from the dock and I read the statement from the dock which I’d prepared, in which I said and thank God I said it now, I said this trial from the start to the finish has been political and we’ve been used as bloody scapegoats in one way or another and I said then, I said the way things are going, will it be a crime in the future to be a bloody member of the trade union, will that be a crime and do you know what?, the way it’s going, it’s getting less and less and less, that’s why it’s important that we have Conferences like this and we let them know we’re still around, we’re still around ……

[APPLAUSE]

…but when he sentenced me, I got two years on each of the three, two years on each of the three offences, no criminal past, no previous, nothing and he said to me, I’m neither going to increase nor decrease your sentence for making that statement from the witness box, from the jury box. With that, the jury foreman and his mate jumped up and physically started fighting with other members of the jury, knocking each other out and two of them got up, the jury foreman and his mate run out and the judge banged his gavel because he hadn’t sentenced Dessy Warren and apparently the jury’s got to be there, so they had to come back and sit there and one was in tears and Dessy Warren got three years on each.
He never only got three years on each and I’m going to qualify this even though I’m gonna make it short, Dessy Warren got three years on each and a death sentence. I’m going to repeat that, three years on each and a death sentence, because he never worked again when he come out of prison with what they done to him, with the drugs, the sleeping tablets and we believe now, the needle.

As I say, Dessy’s dead and gone now, but when he did come out eventually, he sued them, he sued them and he got a few grand, 5, 6, 7 grand in compensation, but he had to sign the gagging clause, he had to sign a gagging clause, so what we’ve done, we’ve asked for his prison medical records and they’ve gone missing, that’s a bloody surprise, isn’t it? They’ve gone missing, honestly they done him in and the last time I seen him was with Arthur Scargill in a place called Crook, I think it’s called Crook, up in Durham and he was strapped into a wheelchair, strapped into a wheelchair and he was shaking like that and when he died, not long after and I spoke to Pat, his wife, I said what did he die of, Pat? She said drug-induced Parkinson’s, drug-induced Parkinson’s.

What went on in that prison is another story and it would take me all day, but let me just sort of round it off. Me and Dessy decided to go on the blanket and Mackey Jones, he went to an open prison, but Mackey Jones has got two daughters, one’s now 43 and the other is just 41, because it happened 41 years ago and we had a meeting the other week organised by Eileen Turnbull, our researcher and these two girls turned up and I said to Eileen who are these? She said they’re McKenzie’s daughters, they’re McKey Jones’ daughters. I said oh, that’s nice. She said he only told them last week that he’d been in jail, that’s how ashamed he was of having been in jail, even though it was only for nine months. He went back to university, changed his job, he’s a high flyer now, he goes all over the world, he’s done tremendously well for himself.

The youngest picket was a fella called Terry Renshaw. Terry’s in his late 60s, I’m going to be 75 in September. Terry’s been the Lord Mayor of Flint, he’s on the police commission for 20-odd years and he’s a sitting councillor, but because of being involved in Shrewsbury all them years ago, he can’t get a passport to go to America. It’s absolutely disgusting, but that’s just part of the, but let me tell you this, while the trial was on, because some of you have been saying oh, this is all a load of bollocks, I’ll prove everything I say. I’m sorry if I’m using industrial language while I get upset. During the trial Dessy Warren said to the judge, now listen, my phone’s been tapped, that’s why you know everything. The judge said we don’t tap the phones in this country, it’s not allowed. 1973, remember. Dessy said well mine’s tapped, I’m telling you and the judge said I’m telling you it’s not and Dessy said and I’m telling you it is and the judge said ‘cause I haven’t paid the bill for three fucking years, that’s how I know.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

That’s how I know it’s tapped and they don’t let you off the hook there. They don’t let you off the hook there, because it was a couple of months ago I got a phone call from Scotland Yard to say that this News of the World business about the phone hacking and all the rest of it, Glenn Mulcaire, they had me down, I was one of them and they said to me what do you want to do about it?, I said nothing, I don’t want to do nothing, I’m not bothered. We know the phone’s been tapped, it’s been tapped through the Shrewsbury days right through and the News of the World might just have a separate bloody extension off them, I don’t know, but I tell you what, I’m delighted to be here and I’m delighted that struggle them kids have put up in Wigan because y’know what, unless we start doing something about it, because I’m terrified now, I’m terrified now that we mightn’t get a Labour government at the next election and the reason we mightn’t get a Labour government in the next election is they won’t tell us what they’re going to do for our benefit.

Are they gonna repeal the bedroom tax? Are they gonna do away with these zero hour contracts? I want them to tell us. If they tell us, then we’ll do something about it and support them. So if you know a MP, if your MP’s a Labour man, get onto him, say look, for God’s sake start leading from the front, start leading from the front, but as I say there’s a long journey to go, boys and girls. Thank you for the invite.

Just carry on supporting the Shrewsbury pickets and we’ll carry on supporting you. God bless you, thank you very much indeed.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Right, Ricky, wow, how inspiring was that. I mean, we all know your history and as I say, I’ve just finished reading your book and I found that y’know something that uplifted me before I came to Conference. Absolutely intrigued that your dad was a baker......

Ricky Tomlinson: He was, yes.

Monday June 9 afternoon: Motions 51–59
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: and we know the struggles that bakers have gone through in the past and we know the struggles that we as a trade union have taken on board to make sure that we promote better health, safety and welfare throughout the industry, so we want to give you, make a presentation to you to remind you of your stay here and I hope it takes some pride of place within your life, but will remind you probably of the type of conditions that your dad used to work in. What it is, it’s a pewter, limited edition pewter baker that shows the history of our trade. I don’t know whether people can, whether you’ve all seen these before, but they are absolutely limited edition and we hope you find some place in your home and ......

Ricky Tomlinson: I’ll treasure that. D’you know what it looks like, my bloody dad that, I’m telling ya. [LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

D’you know why?, because there’s nothing on the shovel [LAUGHTER]. I’m made up with that, made up with it.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I think more importantly, Ricky, I think it’s to remind you of the day that you spent with the Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union, a real campaigning Union and on top of that, we’ve got another one. This is probably more valuable, this is biscuits made by trade union members ......

Ricky Tomlinson: Yay, yay, yay, yes.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Fox’s biscuits, so ......

Ricky Tomlinson: God bless ya.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Enjoy them with your family.

Ricky Tomlinson: Thank you very much indeed. Anyone want a biscuit?

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: We’ve got millions, believe it or not.

Ricky Tomlinson: God bless ya, thank you all very, I’m made up. Anyone want a photie, grab what they bloody want.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Right, what we’re going to do is obviously, yes, what we’re going to do is ......

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: You going to do it down there?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Before we get the photos done, can we ask the ......

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: The Wiganists.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: all the people from Wigan, including the visitors and that, the Hovis strikers just to come down the front here and get your picture and we’ll get it on the website.

[APPLAUSE]

Yes, come on Geoff.

Right, if anybody wants a photo taken with Ricky down the front here, just form an orderly queue. We’ll just suspend Conference for a short while, while we do it and that includes if any of the visitors want their photo taken, you can come down onto the Conference floor and get them done.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: People, can I have an opportunity to ask a question and get an answer? I know everybody is always tempted when they come down to make a statement and we love them, but the problem is is there’s lots and lots of people, I would imagine, that want to ask a question, so come down, put your name, your branch, the question and then please go and sit down and I’ll probably take them in groups of four. Who’s the first four that wants to come down? Funnily enough, there’s Marilyn, there’s the second one, who’s, who else? There’s the third one, there’s the fourth one, come on Apryl. Okay. First question. Question.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Hi Ricky, I’m Marilyn McCarthy from 450 branch, Manchester. Are you going to do a sequel to the book ‘Ricky’?, because it’s absolutely fantastic.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, next question.

Ricky Tomlinson: A sequel to the book? Bloody hell love, I was lucky to get away with the first one.

[LAUGHTER]

Bloody hell. If you’ve read my autobiography, half of these women in here could be me bloody children, I’d be able to pack in.

[LAUGHTER]
Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558: I read Ricky’s autobiography when I worked at Hovis, Bradford, when the terms and conditions of employment there seemed a lot more favourable than they are today, but my question to Ricky is, not from the branch really, but from my mates I drink with. I live in a mining area in Leeds and we all know that Ricky’s a proper mush and we also know that he’s a womaniser, but what was Ricky’s thoughts, real thoughts when he was shoved up for a crime that he was innocent of really and the fact that he didn’t make any money from it, he didn’t injure anyone on it, what was Ricky’s real thoughts when that door slammed on him when he was shoved up. I’m dying to know, because it doesn’t say in the book, bearing in mind that his mate had ill health from it.

Ricky Tomlinson: I’ll tell you what our thoughts was, me and Dessy had made a pact. We weren’t going to soldier, we weren’t going to do anything, we wouldn’t work, we wouldn’t clothe, we wouldn’t wear clothes, we used to shit on the floor, I mean that, we were on the blankets and I can honestly tell you in here, all the time I was in prison and don’t forget I got thrown out, I didn’t get released, I got thrown out, I never once pressed that bell to ask them for any sort of assistance. I wanted nothing off them, I shouldn’t have been in jail, but let me just tell you how we got out of jail. I was in Leicester in solitary confinement, well in what they call a segregation unit, which was solitary confinement within solitary confinement and the governor came in and he was a real nice man, he was an ex-building worker, the governor of the jail and his hands were crippled with arthritis and rheumatisms and that’s why he’d left the building industry and he said to me Tommo, you shouldn’t be in here, he said, you know you’re a political prisoner and I said I know that.

He said have you read this book? and I said what is it? and he said it’s called the “Ragged-Trousered Philanthropist” and I read that book from front to back, from front to back. It changed my life, it changed the direction of my life and I’ve sent copies of that book all over the world from people who’ve read about it. I’ve even sent them to China, I’ve even sent them to China, but how I come to get out of jail is, I was about 15 or 16 months into my sentence and the governor come in to me and he said look, you’ve got a visit tomorrow. I said well, you can’t have visits, you don’t wear clothes, so you can’t have visits. He went no, this is a special visit, he said you’ve gotta come, he said you’re not having it in the hall, he said, you’re having it in my office and I went into, the next day I went up to his office in a pair of boxing shorts, sat down and there was three people there, Billy Jones from Liverpool, UCAT member, Alan Abrahams, UCAT member from Liverpool and a MP from the Midlands called Tom Litterick and they said Rick, we want you to go home. I said what, how, you want me to go home? I said I didn’t want to be here in the first place. They said no, you’ve got to go home, you’ve got to go home and I said why?

They said because Dessy Warren is in a bad way and y’know what Dessy is, if you do your full time, he’ll do his full time and he had another year to do and at that time I didn’t know he was getting the liquid cosh and the needle and being badly treated and we’d made a pact that we wouldn’t soldier, we wouldn’t co-operate and I couldn’t tell him why I was going home, so I had to send Dessy a letter saying Dessy, I’ve spoke to me wife, I’m missing me kids, I think it’s time we called it a day and I sent the letter to him and I got a letter back and it was like getting stabbed in the heart, it was like, he called me, he said you cowardly bastard and I couldn’t tell him and I never spoke to Des Warren for many years, not because of what he’d said, but because when I come out of prison, I couldn’t go to his house ‘cause there was things going on which if I’d have gone to see him in jail, I couldn’t have told him what was going on.

The nearest I got to show my solidarity to Dessy was when he was in jail going to the TUC Conference in Blackpool and demanding from the gallery that I be allowed to speak for five minutes on Dessy Warren’s behalf and Marie Patterson was the chair that day and she pointed up, we’ve got it on film now and she said if you don’t sit down, I’ll get the police to throw you out and I was ejected from the TUC Conference for wanting to speak on behalf of Dessy Warren, who was still in jail, so they said to me you’ve got to go home, so I had to agree to it, so two days later I was released at 8 o’clock in the morning to the world’s press, Paul Foot, the journalist, Jim Nicholls, the civil liberties lawyer, Peter Carter, the activist from Birmingham.

About three or four days later, Des Warren was released, he was thrown out the back door of his prison, I don’t even know which prison he was in, at midnight. Thrown out at midnight and it was only many years later I got a note under my door saying Rick, Dessy’s not too well, he’d like you to come and see him and I went to his house in Chester, knocked on the door and I walked in and Dessy Warren was lying on a mattress on the floor, with a rope from the floor screwed into one of the joists in the ceiling and he pulled himself up and he put his arms round me and he kissed me and he said Rick, you know how long it is and I said Dessy, I don’t and we both had tears in our eyes, because that’s the respect we had for each other and later on he knew why I couldn’t go and see him in jail and d’you know what, he was a stalwart, he was a tremendous, tremendous person and anything you hear detrimental about Dessy Warren, don’t believe it, because I fell for it once. I read in the Sunday papers that he had a Jaguar on the drive and that he had a holiday home and there’s me with two kids and a council house, with no arse in me kecks and I was right on the phone.

I said what’s this, Jaguars, holiday homes? He said come up and see me. I went up to his house.
He did have a Jaguar on the drive, it had no wheels on it, it had no engine in it, but it had a cat with eight kittens on the bloody back seat, but that’s what the newspapers done and that’s what we’re up against, divide and conquer, so remember that, whatever you read which is detrimental to the trade union or trade union activists, take it with a pinch of salt, take it with a pinch of salt.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, no, no, no. Next question.

Brother Mark Campbell – Hovis Belfast: Ricky, Mark Campbell here, Hovis Belfast engineer. If the establishment, looking back and the papers, the government or anything else offered their sincere apologies, what would you say to them?

Ricky Tomlinson: If the government come back and said to me we offer you our apologies, I’d say why don’t you fuck off.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Why don’t you fuck off, I don’t want an apology, I want justice to be seen to be done and I want the convictions quashed. We don’t want a public inquiry, we know what went on, we want them convictions quashed and what we wanna do and I’m delighted that me and Dessy made the stand that we did make because I think they’ve learnt their lesson, but let me tell you this, I even think in the end and this might go against the grain here, I even think by the end of our trial that the defence team were got at and let me explain myself. Our researcher, Eileen, went, a couple of little things first of all, she went to Kew and she’s going down the things and she found an article by a man called Lawrence Lustgarten in the, I think it’s the Hansard or whatever it is, anyway she found this article and he’s a law lecturer, he’s an American but he still practices at Oxford University and he said these sentences are illegal, the most these men could have got was three months. She then discovered a letter which we’ve got here, have a look at them before you go, she discovered a letter from the home secretary saying we’ve just found out from this article that the sentences are illegal, what are we going to do?

So they sent it to the attorney general and the attorney general read it and he said he’s right, they’ve had three years and two years, Dessy was still in jail, he said I’ll tell you what we’re gonna do, their defence team have missed it, so we leave them in jail, we leave them in jail, but it gets deeper than that and murkier than that, because later on at another place, Eileen discovered that my junior, a man called David Altaras, who’s now a high court judge, she found his papers, she found his archives and in it it said these sentences are illegal, the most these lads could have got was three months, so we’d been in prison for five months, we came out on parole for five months and we went back to the appeal court.

We were supposed to be heard by a man called Lord Justice Salmon, but when we got to the appeal court in London who’s sitting in the big chair but Lord Chief Justice Widgery. Now we’ve already read what David Altaras said and we got, two convictions were squashed and the third one, the judge asked our defence team do you want to challenge the sentences? and they said no, our defence team said no, we don’t want to challenge the sentences, so you can draw your own conclusions from that. I’ve already drawn mine, I’ve already drawn mine, they were absolutely got at, but let me tell you this, Eileen goes everywhere, she goes everywhere and she went to one, I think it was Kew again and there’s only two machines, two machines side by side and you have to phone up and tell them what you’re studying and they must put all the electronics in, I don’t understand, I can’t even use a bloody laptop whatever you call them, you have to tell them what you want, so rather than say she was going to look at Shrewsbury, she said I’m studying industrial relations 1972 – 1976 and so she went and she took her son with her to take notes and when she got there, there was an old chap sitting on the next machine and 10 minutes into her research she’s getting, this fella tapped her on the shoulder and he went what are you researching?, she said industrial relations 1972 – 1976, oh, he said you mean Ricky Tomlinson, don’t ya? She said what?, he said you mean Ricky Tomlinson. She said no, I don’t, I mean industrial relations. She said oh, by the way, what are you looking at, he said the Chief Constables of Shrewsbury.

[LAUGHTER]

She said why, do you know them? He said oh aye, yes. He said I was the judge’s bodyguard on the day their trial started, so how did they know Eileen was going to go there looking up the bloody thing? I’ll tell you what, her mail gets opened today. She’s been in touch with the post office, her mail gets opened and she thinks I exaggerate when I say to her Eileen, for God’s sake some of this stuff you’ve got is dynamite, when it comes out with the letter from Ted Heath’s office about the special units he sent up to infiltrate us from other stuff, I said Eileen, make copies of it and hide it, get them and put a bloody new alarm system in and change the locks on the door, because we’re getting that close to exposing whoever it was that they must be shitting themselves, I mean that, they must be, I’m telling ya. So honestly, take nothing with a pinch of salt. This Eileen is going, she’s doing, the work she’s doing and the things she’s discovering are unbelievable, absolutely unbelievable and that’s all to keep a couple of building workers in their place.
They’ll do it to us, they’ll do it to you, unless we stick together and bloody keep at it.

[SAPPLAUSE]

**Sister Apryl Walcott-Chow:** Hi. I was just asking, because I’ve been removed from many meetings and demonstrations by the police, would you serve your sentence all again?

**Ricky Tomlinson:** Would I serve my sentence again?, I certainly would, I certainly bloody would. Listen, I won’t pay a parking fine unless I put a fight up.....

[LAUGHTER]

I won’t, I won’t. I won’t pay a bloody parking fine unless I have a go. Listen, if you’re told to move on and you’re in an industrial dispute, don’t move, don’t move. Y’know we’ve got the worst trade union laws in the whole of the EEC here, the whole of the EEC, we’ve got the worst trade union bloody laws and y’know when you realise what the miners went through, the miners fought this government, they fought the army really, the miners, for a year, for a year and I watched it on the telly the other night......

[SAPPLAUSE]

…and I cried, I cried watching them, a year and d’you know what?, I know Arthur Scargill well, I know Arthur Scargill well and I told the lads a story before and I’m gonna tell it to you. Four years ago, just coming up to me 70th birthday and Arthur Scargill was in my house and we were having a couple of sandwiches and a cup of tea and I don’t know whether you know Arthur, whether you’ve had the pleasure of meeting him, but he’s a very funny man, very jovial man, he’s got a great sense of humour and I said Arthur, it’s me 70th birthday on Saturday, he said oh aye, yes. I said and we’re having an old fashioned birthday party. He said what d’ya mean? I said we’ve got a place, I said, it’s a free bar, drinks all night free, hot and cold buffets, all the local entertainers, all the big stars, they’re all coming, it’s gonna be a great night out. He said where are ya having, he said I think I might be in Liverpool Saturday actually, he said where are you having the party? I said in the Clubmore Conservative Club. He said fuck you and the Conservative Club.....

[LAUGHTER and SAPPLAUSE]

…and he wouldn’t go, he wouldn’t go. It’s only the conservative club in name, it’s only the conservative club in name, honest to God. I was going there ‘cause I wanted to buy it, I was going to burn it down.....

[LAUGHTER]

…but anyway, we’ve got our own little cabaret club now in Liverpool called The Green Room and we have loads of good shows on and we have meetings like this and we bring people in and we have speakers and Arthur’s actually been and spoken there and we’ve had Ken Loach there, Ken Loach come and done a masterclass, because we have a little college across the road where we have and another thing, just to digress slightly off the thing, I’ve got two partners in this club and it doesn’t make a penny, but it doesn’t cost us, well I put a few bob in but apart from that, but we’ve got, y’know when people say to me that kids of today won’t work, they won’t get up and have a go, it makes my blood boil because we’ve been open four years this month in that club and we’ve employed 35 youngsters, kids, some of them have been with us from day one, people come in every week with CVs for a job and we file them all and we take them on, they’re fantastic, give them a job and they’ll work.....

[SAPPLAUSE]

give them a job and they will work, I’m telling ya.

**Brother Colin Morgan – Branch 238 (ex-miner):** Thank you, Ricky, for your support you gave us when we were on strike, we really appreciate. You wouldn’t think I’d got a couple of things in common with Ricky would you? I’ve got a big belly [LAUGHTER], I was a flying picket and I have been detained at Her Majesty’s pleasure. Thank you.

[SAPPLAUSE]

**Ricky Tomlinson:** I’ve got some way to go yet though, fat arse.

[LAUGHTER]

**Brother Nick Hughes – Branch 417 (Wigan):** Ricky, at some time in the near future, how do you fancy a bit of picket duty?

**Ricky Tomlinson:** A bit of picket duty? Could you discuss it with my wife first?

[LAUGHTER]

Well, can I tell ya, I loved my, I loved him, an old fella, I loved him, honestly, he was wonderful, he was only a small chap and as I say he worked in an old fashioned bakehouse, just him and his mate and I remember going there occasionally and you’d go down the steps into the depths and there was everything there and he died at the age of 55.
Y’know and obviously I think on his death certificate it said cancer, but we don’t know what the, probably the conditions he worked in, but I was telling the lads before, he went on strike, he went on strike, but they still had to go in and bake for the hospitals, for the hospitals, so that was fair enough. So I remember going to school and I come in and I said aye dad, I said, someone’s scabbing it, he said how d’ya, what d’ya mean? I said all the kids at playtime in our class, they all had barm cakes, fresh barm cakes. He said was so and so one, so and so another and so and so another? I said yes. He said no, what it is, what it is, he said, I’ve took all the names and addresses down, anyone with kids I go round at 3 o’clock in the morning and put them through the letterbox.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

He was on strike and putting bloody barm cakes through the letterbox.

Listen, I’m going now because honestly I’ve got another booking in November and ....

[LAUGHTER]

...can I just say, honest to God, I love this, honestly. Oh, it stirs the old engine up when I come to a place like this, I absolutely love it. There was a couple of ladies there before, a couple of women there who wanted a little photograph of Jim, so I’ve got a couple of photographs of Jim there, but you want to be careful girls, because I’m in me vest y’know and ....

[LAUGHTER]

...don’t want anything like that to happen here, while they’re there y’know, but can I just say thank you from the bottom of my heart for the reception you’ve give me and them lads from Wigan and the girls from Wigan, they’ve done what they’ve done, God bless ya, power to ya elbow and next time you’re out on strike, give us a bell, I’ll be there.

[APPLAUSE and CHEERS]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, first off, can I ask the Scrutineers if they could go to Standing Orders to help count the ballot forms, please. Scrutineers to the Standing Orders room, yes? For everybody else, back by quarter to four.

[BREAK]

Okay. Okay, okay, Delegates, obviously going to re-start Conference, if you can get your Agendas out. Yes, Marilyn?

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Can I ask that the EC make £100 donation to the bucket collection on the door please, for Ricky’s charity? Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right, Ronnie’s not here, we’ve said yes.

[LAUGHTER]

Everybody got their Agenda’s out? Okay, motion 51.

51 Banking, Finance and Taxation – Branch 405

That this conference agrees to deplore the tax breaks offered to the fracking companies by this coalition government.

Sister Janet Phillips – Branch 405: Good afternoon, comrades. Can I put this motion forward, that this Conference agrees that a cut to the UK science budget by the Conservative government is both detrimental and counter-productive. By cutting science budgets to universities, the Tories have another market they can milk. If left to private companies, only limited fields of research will be covered. Only by new innovations and ideas can we, as a people, move forward and develop.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Yes, it was supposed to be, that was 51. Okay, can we re-wind the tape? Yes, yes.

Sister Janet Phillips – Branch 405: Hello, again. I would like to forward the motion that this Conference agrees to deplore the tax breaks offered to the fracking companies by the ConDem coalition government. Not only the tax breaks, but changing the planning laws and are attempting the land laws. Most of our infrastructure has been sold to the Tory toffs and their cronies and now they want the earth beneath our homes.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): Conference, we ask you to support this motion. Why should we give these tax breaks to these companies? Because all these companies do is actually put them, the money they get into their bank accounts and the bank accounts of their shareholders and all they give back to us in return is the pollution of our waters, air and land. They leave it for us, the taxpayer, to clean it up for them. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 52.

52 Banking, Finance and Taxation – Postal Branch 215

That this conference agrees, to lobby the Labour Party, and when they are in power stop all tax loopholes and tax havens.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Delegates, it’s a great resolution this and I must show you the picture before I start. You all remember that face, she led our country, she put Union Jack’s on backs of planes and everything else, but according to this in her will, she only put £4 million in it, but a £12 million mansion was put abroad in the Virgin Islands, so that we couldn’t get any of the money of it, that’s the kind of people they are and that’s the loopholes we have got to close and a Labour Party has got to close them. How will a Labour Party close them? Starbucks, McDonalds, all of them doing the same thing, they have their tax havens abroad. Cameron said oh well, if we put 50% on them, they won’t, they’ll take their money out of the country. They have outlets in this country.

The Inland Revenue can go to those places and pick up the tabs of what has gone through the tills and take the tax off them before it goes out of the country, that’s what they have to do, it’s so easy to do. If they say they can’t do it, why did they take the miners’ money, why did they follow them around the world and rob their pensions? Comrades, we have to have a Labour government that does this. I move this resolution and I hope you support it, put all our interests in it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: I was going to say, I’m not quite sure how I’m going to follow that, to be honest with you.

I read in the paper the other day, Gabby Logan, presenter on the BBC, she reckons that she put her money into some sort of company thing and all of and it was because she thought it was for charity. Not being funny, these stars aren’t bloody stupid, are they? Fair play, they aren’t daft at all. They know exactly what they’re doing. Pay your taxes. We have to pay ours, so you pay yours. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael Lynch – Branch 505, Region 5 (Northumberland, Durham): Comrades, recent scandals involving Amazon, Google and Starbucks have brought the issue of tax avoidance to the public attention. The sheer scale of this problem is a staggering £20 billion put away. There’s a treasure trove of £20 billion and these are in secret jurisdictions, better known as tax havens. Comrades, despite growing public anger over the tax avoidance in the UK, this Tory-led government has actually changed the UK’s tax laws to make it easier for companies to shift profits through tax havens. The treasure trove, comrades, what I said was tax havens for £20 trillion, if tax havens were abolished, this wealth would be subject to tax, generating more than the UK government spends each year on healthcare and education put together. £180 billion. The NHS could receive £109 billion of that and education £56 billion. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother George Tittensor – Branch 392 (Birmingham, West Midlands): Mr President, Delegates. I pay my taxes, why should anybody else have a loophole? I don’t mind to say, yes, I pay £60 a month on my pension, so I’m not grumbling, but if the rest were to pay it, then we’d be in a better place than we are. When you ask the government, they say there’s no money left in the government. You say if you did your job right and shut the loopholes and froze the bloody taxes, there’d be money in and we’d be a wealthy place and yes, if you want to get in, then give us a guideline and we’ll fight the path to put you back.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: The Executive Council would ask Conference to support the motion. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 53.

And while the mover’s coming down, I just want to point out as well, every single penny that was raised and is raised this week at Conference for the Shrewsbury 24, not a single penny goes to any of the people that actually are manning the stalls or doing any of the activities that that campaign does, it’s all to pay for all of the legal costs, so I mean it’s an
absolutely exceptional organisation and let’s make sure that if you can give any more money to help them pay for the
general costs, we’re able to do it during this week at Conference, so any spare change you may have, please make sure
you donate it to them by the end of the week. Thank you.

Mover of motion 53. Branch 450? It’s not like you to be late, Marilyn, what’s up?

53 Banking, Finance and Taxation – Branch 450

That this conference agrees that following a recent referendum in Switzerland regarding executive pay, the BFAWU
campaigns for UK executive pay to be restricted to ten times that of the lowest paid worker, at respective companies.
This would also be inclusive of bonuses. This is not a cap on executive pay it is merely a means of addressing an
ever increasing gulf in pay between top and bottom.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Sorry about the delay, I wasn’t supposed to be moving this one. This Conference
agrees that following a recent referendum in Switzerland regarding executive pay, the Bakers Union campaigns for
UK’s executive pay to be restricted to 10 times that of the lowest paid worker at respective companies. This would
also be inclusive of bonuses. This is not a cap on executive pay, it’s merely a means of addressing an ever-increasing
gulf in pay between top and bottom. Good idea. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Conference, I want this motion, I want to support this motion.
You get a lot of stuff in the press about benefits, people living on benefits and how do we get them into work? If you
pay minimum wages that are only just above the same as benefits, there is no incentive to go to work.
Increase what you’re paying the workers, that creates a gap between benefits and work and motivates people to work.
The worst example of this and I can’t think why it’s not been hammered in the press, all the major retailers have just
set up their own credit union for their staff, so that they don’t have to go to Wonga and all these payday loans. Hang
on, doesn’t that mean you’re not paying your staff enough, not paying them a living wage? We need the lowest paid
people to be paid more money, because life is just getting so expensive, yet the top people are earning more and more
and more and the gap between is going greater. Close that gap by dragging the lowest up, not pushing the highest up.
Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers, no? Obviously the Executive would ask Conference to
support the resolution. Those in favour? Against?
I’m going to call the movers of composite 2.

Composite 2

That this Conference agrees to lobby the government and the Labour Party to ensure all employers abolish Zero
Hour Contracts and, furthermore, close the loophole on the Agency Labour Regulations and stop using the
Swedish Derogation.

Brother David Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Mr President, Platform, Delegates. The use of agency labour
on zero hour contracts, one of the key campaigns of the Parliamentary Group and the Fast Food Rights Campaign,
launched by our Union, is gathering momentum, galvanised by the victory at Hovis, Wigan last year and further
encouraged by the growing movement in America and around the world. All we hope is that the movement continues
to grow in strength until over five million workers in the UK are given equal rights at work and have a future. Please
support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Here to support this motion wholeheartedly and go a little bit
further again. Agency labour regulations, they need re-looking at. The Swedish delegation, the employers, when they
were brought in, they were brought in, it was a good, the government thought they were doing well with them, but
they aren’t, they’re being exploited by employers, again to drive down terms and conditions. I know in my workplace,
we don’t know who’s on Swedish Derogation and who isn’t. I should imagine it’s the same in all workplaces. Support
the motion.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Michael Lynch – Branch 505, Region 5 (Northumberland, Durham): Supporting this. Conference, I don’t think we need reminding of this. We’ve seen the film this afternoon with our comrades, our brothers and sisters, the way they fought. We have them here today and can I say I am very privileged, proud to be in the same room as our brothers and sisters who took the stand at Wigan 417.

[APPLAUSE]
They are our heroes and they led the way and this Union wants to continue fighting it and what we need to do, when we get another government, like I said earlier before you comrades, I don’t want blue Labour, I don’t want pink Labour, I don’t want the right-wing of the progress, I want a socialist Labour Party coming in, a socialist Labour government and from day one Mr Miliband, take note, you’re in the Food Worker that I’ve got in my bag, saying when you wrote an article in our magazine, you would listen to the people. The Bakers Union in Southport are telling you Ed Miliband, from day one, bring a bill in to scrap zero hour contracts, no version, scrap them altogether.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Clive Priestley – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): I’ve got first-hand experience of zero hour contracts. I watched my daughter from the age of 16 sat at the side of a phone, day-in, day-out, no phone call in the afternoon. I’ve watched her get on the phone and beg for work, beg for one, two, three, four hours. A week that, not a day, a week. I said, when I came to this Conference, I would open my mouth about it. Miliband, if you can hear me, you get in power, stop it, quit, go, now.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558: That guy from Wigan’s just fired me up. Nobody in this country, in 2014, should be begging for work.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: General Secretary to reply.
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: To reply?
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Respond, to respond, sorry.
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Comrades, this is one of the most important motions on the Agenda. We have four motions dealing with zero hour contracts and we’ve composited them into something that is this big, but it really doesn’t tell the full story and why is it important? It’s important because it’s going to come to a workplace near you, if you don’t do something about it. If you let it happen, it’s going to happen. The easiest thing in the world is to promise, from the rostrum here, what we’re going to do about zero hour contracts. In fact, we could have spent the whole day talking about things that we could have done, but at the end of the day, any results are going to be down to the will of the workers to resist against the employer. There’s always been loopholes in employment legislation, talk to an employment lawyer, pick your company and you’ll know that there’s always been loopholes and there’s a loophole now and we’ve said the Swedish Derogation. Clearly not the best thing that ever came out of Sweden. When I said before, the easiest thing in the world is for us to promise what we’ll do on zero hour contracts, I was actually being slightly economical with the truth. The easiest thing in the world, comrades, is for you to put your hands up in unanimous support. That is where the difficulties start. We can spend the day castigating Tweedle Cam and Tweedle Clegg as much as we want and the rest of the no-good coalition, for allowing horrendous contracts to be inflicted on workers already hammered by the effects of the cuts.

We can vote to place demand on an in-coming Labour government to introduce curbs on employers, willing to exploit their workforce in the name of profit, because that is what they’re surely doing, comrades, they are exploiting their workforce in the name of profit, but the only genuine way of stopping zero hour contracts is by workers refusing to do them. Workers refusing to allow the employer to force zero hour contracts on fellow workers, just like happened at Hovis. Workers physically taking up a struggle to defeat what in reality is a cancer that is growing throughout British industry.

But you know, all these responses that I’m talking about, they need one magical ingredient. They need that magical ingredient called bottle. Bottle like we plainly saw and proudly admired amongst the workers in Wigan. Bottle that means sacrifice and bottle that means potential hardship. You know, our members at Wigan put their jobs, their homes and in many cases their relationships on the line in a fight to protect fellow workers, but by God did we win a magnificent victory, that is still reverberating around the trade union movement. We’ve heard how it’s been glorified in this Hall.
Like many others before, our members at Wigan could have rolled over and allowed second generation contracts to come, as it would not have affected the current workforce, but they had the vision to see that these contracts would have done, what they would have done further down the road. The day when all those second generation contracts would have been in a majority and they saw what it would do to the trade union recognition that they’d so proudly guarded, once it was called into question. Do you know, they could have accepted virtually free run for the company, so far as agency were concerned and could easily have allowed the rate of pay of those on a casual role to be eroded, but they didn’t. Instead, they took that courageous stance to fight, to protect what they had now and what they could look forward to in the future.

They captured the imagination of the left of the trade union movement and took their oppressors on. You know, let’s not under-estimate the role that unions like the National Union of Teachers, PCS, Unison, Unite and others played in this victory, as far as the movement goes, but without that first brave step taken by the people at Wigan to cross the threshold and take to the cobbles, there was no fight to rally round. This was the first time, that I can recall, that workers had rebelled against the exploitation that is zero hour contracts.

The people in Hovis, Wigan became the rallying point for all those who wanted to end this heinous way of working and they took charge of their own destiny, with heads held high and fire in their bellies. You know, I don’t exaggerate when I say that in generations to come, our members at Wigan and that Wigan factory will go down in the same trade union annals and Labour folklore as the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Chartists, the Suffragettes and indeed the Shrewsbury pickets that Ricky talked about ……

[APPLAUSE]

…and rightly so, but that’ll only come to fruition if others share, follow through, throughout the movement, that example and start that fight back. I talked in my opening address about the pride I felt when I was able to tell Brian Carlton, the HR director of Premier Foods that no deal would be done without the nod of the people and the members and that no comprises would be made to prohibit others from taking similar action. Well Mr Carlton has now departed the company, following the takeover of that Gores group and there’s a part of me that really passionately believes and passionately hopes that it was the Hovis workers from that Wigan factory who helped him fall on his sword.

They were an inspiration to all in our movement and I’m proud to say that they were Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union members. As I said a little bit earlier on in one of the debates, we can’t depend on politicians to be our salvation. I’m not entirely sure we can count on trade union leaders to pick up the cudgel, so it’s going to be down to us as individuals. At last year’s TUC Congress, we listened to Ed Miliband talking about outlawing zero hour contracts, but then I listened to what the news was saying and what the newspapers had written and it was something slightly different and so if I’m confused with what was being said, listening to two different things, then I’m sure everybody else is, but let us send a clear message out to Ed and to the Party that is ours, that we support the abolition of zero hour contracts and we don’t accept any fudged compromises.

[APPLAUSE]

We don’t accept any fudged compromises that allows an employer to ride roughshod over workers and I mean scrapping a zero hour contract and replacing it with the right to a one hour contract is a mishmash, we don’t want it. The only people who should determine whether zero hour contracts are signed will be the people themselves who actually want them, if there is such people who think they actually suit their needs. We want real jobs with guaranteed hours and a living wage, that allows workers a decent standard of living and the right to respect at work. We demand an end to exploitation of Workfare and the constant stream of free labour to companies ready to exploit at the drop of a hat and we demand that where agency workers are employed, that they are not used as a conduit to undermine established trade union agreements, they’re paid the rate for the job.

[APPLAUSE]

Comrades, none of these, none of these issues are given, none of these demands will be tamely handed over to us. They may need and we may need a little spirit of our forefathers, the things that people fought for to give us what we’ve got today and we need to keep that memory alive and use some of that spirit to carry on. You know, it’ll definitely test the trust and the courage of your convictions, you will be tested absolutely to the limit. So, comrades, when you raise your hands in support of this motion and all that it stands for, be prepared to also vote with your feet when it comes down to leaving this Hall. Comrades, you’re not just voting to justify the brave stance taken by the workers at Wigan or to appease the Executive Council or National Officers, you’ve voting for the security of your future and the future of your kids. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? Motion 54.

54 Banking, Finance and Taxation – No 7 Regional Council

That this conference agrees that where banks are found guilty of mis-selling or other improprieties and heavily fined, we should lobby the government of the day that all bonuses in that company are frozen for three years. Maybe this would teach them to be more respectful when dealing with the general public and a little less gung ho.

Brother John Halliday – Branch 701: Chairman, President, EC, Delegates. Banks are presently seen as villains and rightly so, but in my eyes they are gangsters and should have been jailed. If you and me had have done what they did, we certainly would have been jailed. The pressure they put on the working class was surely a result of their gross disrespect of us. They foolishly gambled with money that was not theirs. Did they apologise? Like heck they did. They haven’t, they got a bill out and went on their merry way. The present position flies in the face of a total lack of responsibility, responsibility for which they completely ignore.

Delegates, they continually pay bonuses on the belief that it encourages the best people. This simply does not work. At best it is an excuse to protect those at the top and their wage packets. Bonuses should only be paid when no wrongdoing has taken place. If it has, then the institution in question should have their bonuses frozen for years. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 703, Region 7, EC member: National President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. I am here to second the motion 54 and I’m speaking on behalf of both the Region and the Executive Council. I would ask Conference to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Motion 55.

55 Transport – No 5 regional Council

This conference calls upon the next Labour Government to work closely with both rail and bus companies to ensure a fair and decent service is provided to those most in need.

Sister Carole Golightly – Branch 506, Region 5: Hello. The reason I am speaking on behalf of this motion is the area I come from, the transport is bad, because people cannot get from A to B after 6 p.m. evening-time, because buses stop at a certain time and there is no train station where I live. Please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder?

Brother Michael Lynch – Branch 505, Region 5 (Northumberland, Durham): Comrades, as Carole’s just said, the bus services in some of our outlying areas, it’s ridiculous. Since de-regulation, bus companies have been running riot and cutting services, putting up fares. Gladly now back home in the North-East we have what they call a super council, five Tyne & Wear authority councils and Northumberland and Durham, which are all run under Labour. They’re getting their heads together and possibly bringing in what they call zero, sorry not zero, quality controls where Nexus and the councils let people know where the buses have to go to, instead of the bus companies. One thing I’ve always been worried about with bus companies and destinations, somebody might be able to help us, but after 6 o’clock at night there’s hundreds of them going to a place called ‘Sorry, Not in Service’. Anyone know where that is?

Conference, the government are moving that East Coast be privatised. This is unbelievable on the railways, because under public ownership, East Coast Rail have paid more back to the government than any private rail company has invested in its rolling stock. We need to bring back British Rail and give our people a fair and decent service. I’ve bought the T-shirt, join the campaign. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Hold on, are you moving the amendment? Are you doing the amendment? Who’s doing the amendment? Are you doing the amendment? Oh right, okay. No, no, you need to come down and move the amendment.

Brother Jack Lee – Branch 107, Region 1: President, Platform, Conference. A very nervous Jack Lee, Region 1, 12th Conference, first time as a Delegate, first time speaker. We believe that the amendment should read, add at the end of the motion, Conference agrees that a first action should be to re-nationalise the rail network.
Conference, if Ed Miliband wants to win the next election, he has to come up with some radical policies. You heard that from John McDonnell yesterday and the re-nationalisation of the railways is a good place to start. Recently Miliband has come under pressure to bring back the rail network to public ownership. There are calls for a gradual re-nationalisation as it would allow profits to be re-invested and services to keep fares under control. A bold move on the ownership of rail services is surely a vote winner, especially in the marginal seats in the London Home Counties where Labour must do well if they want to form a government at the next election.

Under the present system, these privatised franchises are receiving £4 billion of public investment every year. I’ll pause there, no I won’t, I’ll repeat it. £4 billion of your money goes to private franchises every year. Somebody tell me how that’s a privatised industry then. Yet for the last few years, every January, fares rise by 6% plus inflation. The next Labour government should copy the successful East Coast mainline, which is publicly owned since 2009, when Gordon Brown brought it back from National Express when they failed. Last year, the nationally-run East Coast line sent £30 million back to the treasury. We should extend this successful model across the rail system. In the next two years, these franchises are coming up for renewal and one by one we should tell them we’re going to take it back. They are ours.

Conference, we can’t have this debate without mentioning the late Bob Crow. Bob Crow was a great socialist and a passionate advocate of public ownership, especially in his own industry. So come on, Ed Miliband, grow a pair. Don’t be afraid of words like re-nationalisation or phrases like public ownership. Honour the memory of Bob Crow. Give us back a publicly-owned national railway system, because it’s not only the right thing to do, it’s the only sensible thing to do. I urge you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, is it, who’s seconding it? Is it formally seconded? Formally seconded? Okay, obviously do we accept the amendment to the motion? All those in favour? Okay. Anyone against? Okay, thank you. Debate.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Just a quick one. It just amazes me that we can spend £40 billion on a railway to get a businessman into London 20 minutes earlier, but we can’t provide a bus for an old person after 6 o’clock. I don’t understand it. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Helena England – Branch 568 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): Well as you’ve heard, again this is another service that’s like the emergency service, that is an important service to people who’ve got to rely on transport to get to work, hospitals and everything else that they need them for, but they’re being reduced again to save money and we don’t need this reduction, we need an increase the same as the emergency services, so transport’s available for all people to have access to the services they may need, so if there’s changes made they’re not going to be for the better are they? There’s going to be people kept in isolation. The cuts to any bus service or trains, the train system especially what they demand at the stations is not going to be any help available for people that’s vulnerable, disabled or need that help. They need that train system, they need that bus service to be part of a community. If they don’t have it, they’re not going to be part of the community or society, they’re going to be kept shut away because profits are going to become more important than people. Well, that’s not right to me.

Anyone could be put at risk without having transport available, employment, medical issues, isolation, by having regular local transport that’s cost effective and efficient for everybody to use. But does this government care? No, they don’t. Will Labour care if they win the election, would they call for re-nationalisation? I don’t know, but I would not hold my breath. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 56.

56 Transport – No 4 Regional Council

That this conference agrees that drivers should be given on the spot fines when using disabled parking bays at supermarkets. These are put there for a reason and not there for everyone. Please support.

Brother Michael Redshaw – Branch 459 (Greggs, Pennine): That this Conference agrees that drivers should be given on the spot fines when using disabled parking bays at supermarkets. These are there, put for a reason and for everybody else. Please support.
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Brother Craig Olley – Branch 529: I’m going to oppose this motion, just on the wording. All it says is drivers. You’ve got disabled drivers, non-disabled drivers. If it was down as non-disabled drivers are people without a badge, I’d be supporting it, but I’m just opposing it on the wording.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother George Tittensor – Branch 392 (Birmingham, West Midlands): Mr Chairman, Conference. I had the privilege of carrying a disabled person. I used the badge, but on entering the supermarket, somebody had jumped in and he said I’m waiting for the wife, to pick the shopping up. I said bloody tough, shift it. I’m parking up his arse, I’ll fetch the supervisor and he’ll shift it for you. Thank you. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Knight – Branch 105: I’m opposing it, not in theory but just so it’s not worded right. Who would get the money? It’s got to be re-worded and re-submitted as to who the money would go to if people were fined. Would it go to the supermarket? I don’t think so. So it should go to a worthy cause if, it’s got to be re-thought. I’m not against it in theory, but it’s just not put right. Thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers?

Sister Jackie Barnwell – Branch 331: Mr President, Conference. Responding on behalf of the Executive Council. The Executive Council would ask Conference to support the motion and I don’t know whether anybody has gone through this with family members, but for a disabled person to get a disabled badge for parking their car, they are put through the hardest criteria I have ever seen. You have to go through so many holes and squares and dot the i’s and cross the t’s, it’s unreal and they even send people out to that person’s home to still assess whether they have the right to a disabled badge.

When people park in these supermarket car parks in a disabled person’s spot, they don’t have a conscience, they have no morals, because it’s never affected them, it doesn’t worry them, it doesn’t bother them, but on the same token, I have to say and probably many of us have seen it, the disabled badge belongs to the individual who has the disability, it’s not registered to a car, so some people when they don’t have the person with the disability with them, still use that card and park in a disabled spot, which is putting that card at risk for the person with the disability, because it’s illegal and it can be removed from that person. So I would ask everybody to think when you do go to the supermarket or you do see somebody, because I’m one of them like George, it really grates against me and if I see an able-bodied person getting out of that car, I go and ask them to move it, because I can’t stand it, because of the pressure that the disabled person is put under to prove that they deserve that card. I would therefore ask you to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, right, there is a right to reply, do you want to take the right to reply? No? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 57.

57 Transport – 580 Greggs Yorkshire

This conference agree to lobby this government to reduce car insurance prices for all people and cap insurance company profits, so people can afford to drive.

Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees to reduce car insurance companies profits so people can afford to drive. The UK’s insurance industry is the largest in the, third largest in the world and the largest in Europe. The truth is, car insurance is a lucrative business. Between the insurers, made around £2 billion in profit from motorists in 2013. Direct Line had a 36% increase, Admiral had a 26% increase. Car insurance for us is compulsory, we don’t have a choice. We will be breaking the law if we don’t have it, but the law lets these companies rob us blind, with no consequences. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers?

Brother Norville Grazette – Branch 123, Region 1 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): To support this motion. Conference, it is quite clear that this government doesn’t realise the reality of the cost of car insurance. For people running a car, it’s becoming more and more costly and costing people undue hardship. Please support this motion. Thank you.
58 **Transport – No 5 Regional Council**

*That this conference agrees to lobby government to use Road Tax to fix our roads.*

**Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580:** This Conference agree to lobby government to use road tax to fix our roads. Where does the £32 billion go in car tax that the government take from us? Less than a third of that is used to repair the roads. This year the Tour de France is coming. They’re managing to find the money to clear all the routes, so they’ve got no potholes for all the bikes. Please support.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 58.

59 **Transport – No 4 Regional Council**

*That this conference agrees that new legislation should be brought in to make it compulsory for lights to be fitted to all bicycles being used on roads as too many people are being killed each year.*

**Brother John Fitzpatrick – No. 4 Regional Council, Executive Council Member:** That this Conference agrees that new legislation should be brought in to make it compulsory for lights to be fitted to bikes being used on roads, as too many people are being killed each year. A car can’t go on the roads without lights, a motorbike can’t go on the roads without headlights. Councils are turning street lights off early in the morning and early in the night-time, it’s pitch black. Most people are riding bikes in dark clothing and you cannot see them. It should be a law made that any vehicle or any, should have lights to make them visible on roads at all times. It’s a loophole in the law that should be covered. If a car knocks down a bike that’s in pitch black, it’s the driver of the car that’s fined and prosecuted. It should be for all vehicles. I ask you to support this and it will cut down deaths and everything. Thank you.

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool) (speaking on behalf of the EC):** The EC ask you to support this motion, as anything that improves the safety of cyclists and other road users is a must. Last year, in reported accidents, 19,000 cyclists were killed or injured, but surprisingly 80% were in daylight, but after dark you’re more likely to have a fatal accident. There should be an enforcement, as cycle lights come under the road vehicles lighting regs, which states that it is illegal to cycle on public roads, after dark and front and rear lights and reflectors are required between sunset and sunrise, but unfortunately this regulation is seldom enforced, but as a keen cyclist who has lights on the front and back and goes through the daily ritual of cycling on our roads, I think as well as all cycles having lights and using them, a bit more mutual respect on the roads is what is needed as well. Please support.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 59.


[APPLAUSE]

Executive Council young member representative, Rachel Mullen 70, Apryl Walcott-Chow 110, Apryl Walcott-Chow elected.

[APPLAUSE]

And there was two votes void. Okay.

**Brother Michael Lynch:** Just on that last note, Chair, as was raised earlier and rule 22.19, can I ask, have the two nominees for the youth EC member been checked for their length of membership?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** My understanding is that Standing Orders are advising us that it’s a valid result. Okay.

Ballot for the Labour Party Conference, Pauline McCarthy 127, Rachel Mullen 98, Dave Dash 69, Mandy Ambrose 61, Mark McHugh 47, Richard Hurst 25. Pauline McCarthy, Rachel Mullen and Dave Dash are elected as the Delegates to the Labour Party Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

I’m sorry, yes, sorry. Pauline goes as the Delegate, Rachel Mullen and Dave Dash go along as part of the four, four delegation that goes.

Ballot for the TUC, Pauline McCarthy 95, Joe Knapper 85, Sarah Woolley 70, Marilyn McCarthy 57, Pauline Nazir 54, Dave Suddards 47, Lizzie Dinning 39. So that’s Pauline McCarthy, Joe Knapper and Sarah Woolley at the TUC.

Okay, Conference. Thank you and this evening I believe it’s, the band kicks off at what time? The band kicks off at 9 o’clock, there’s a buffet and a disco. Have a great evening and a zany band from Liverpool. Half past 9 in the morning. Yes and anybody who’s at the Warburtons do tonight, we’re meeting at the Bengal, the Bengal, I’ll tell you in a minute, the Bengal lounge, which is on 12 Union Street and the table’s booked for half past 7 and they’re meeting in the pub next door.
Tuesday 10 June 2014

Morning Session

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: So please, Delegates, bear that in mind. Just before the General Secretary makes his roll call, I want to make Conference aware that last night Geoff successfully recognised how much the bar bill and food bill was from the Warburtons and his winnings of £26 for being able to successfully understand exactly how much it cost to buy a pint of bitter in that restaurant we were in, he’s going to donate to the Shrewsbury 24 campaign, so thank you very much for that Geoff.

[APPLAUSE]

Watkins & Gunn have asked me to make you aware that tomorrow, this evening at 7.30 until extremely late, an invitation to an evening of music and karaoke at the Victoria, which I believe is Stanley Terrace, over the road, yes, which is right opposite.

You should have all been handed one of these, it’s very, very important from a Union financial position that these are filled in. Yes? We need you to fill these in, otherwise the cost of Conference becomes very, very expensive for us. So we ask you to make sure that you fill these in and make sure that we get them, handed back into, yes. General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Delegates, what it is, it’s just a form. The difference between here and when we were in Bridlington was, in Bridlington we just used to go to the tourist board and say right, we’ve got 100 and or 200 Delegates and we want you to book rooms for those people and they knew which hotel everyone was going in. It works and we got the Hall, the Conference Centre in Bridlington for free. What happens in Southport is you don’t get it for free, you actually pay and I can’t remember, it’s about 8,000 quid or something to hire it for Conference, but then dependent on how many people we have staying in the town, we get a rebate back and so they have to be able to evidence that people stayed, otherwise we’d be putting down Mickey Mouse stayed and Donald Duck, the fact is and they were staying actually but if you fill them in, then give them back to us, we can actually go back to the tourist board with evidence that people were staying.

This is not going to be used for any other purpose other than just to demonstrate and to evidence that, for instance, Alan Milne stopped in the Prince of Wales, he says he stopped five nights, they’ll check with the hotel, did he?, yes, therefore there’ll be a rebate on Alan Milne’s, what Alan Milne did and then we will get that back. So if everyone fills it in and if somebody takes responsibility from the Region for collecting them, because the full-time Officials are going, but what I would say to the full-time Officials, I want you to fill them in as well, even though you’re going to the meeting, so if you can fill them in and get them back either to your Official or get them to me, it’s important that you do it.

Yes, sorry and guests as well, we want the guests to fill them in as well. Okay, well we’ll get some more, we’ll get some more printed off. I’ll get somebody from the Conference Centre, there’s a young, yes, it’s going to be done now, I’ve just had a signal. Okay, cheers, bye.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: And just one more, has anybody lost any car keys? If they have, we believe it’s a Kia. Are they yours? A company car.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: George has just asked me there, it does say on it cost of the room per night. Don’t worry about that, because it depends on whether you’re in a twin room or whether you’re in a single room, there’s different costs to it, so just leave that blank and we can, if they want to, we can evidence that later on.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, General Secretary to call the roll.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Region 1. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4, are you sure? Geoff, sorry you said one absent, well you had 45 yesterday morning and one didn’t turn in yesterday afternoon and now you’re down another one, so it’s two missing? Right, okay, thanks. Right, Region 5. Region 6 and Region 7. Okay, thank you. There’s 179 Delegates in the Hall, Chair.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you. Okay, Conference. I’m just looking for John James, did you want to…….? John James is just coming down to make you aware of well, I’ll let John James explain it to you.

Brother John James – Region 2: Conference, good morning. As you know, the ConDem government keeps on battering the working class and people in work. One of the things that they’ve done was change the legislation on tribunals and made it harder for people to take companies to court. It also made it difficult for the Bakers Union to operate because there’s £1250 to go to tribunal, but what we looked at is how we can make that better for the workers and the members
of this Union and one of the reasons, one of the things that we did was that we produced, we got Tribunal Officers, so Pauline who’s here and myself met with solicitors in respect of this and put together this package. The Tribunal Officers are Steve Finn in No. 1, myself in No. 2, John Higgins in No. 3, Geoff Atkinson in No. 4 and Alan Milne in No. 5.

We’ve been trained up to take it every step of the way, because that’s what we’re going to do as a Union now, we’re putting members first and that’s what this is all about, putting the members first, it’s not about anything else other than putting the members first. So if anybody’s been dismissed or got a grievance issue, you will be given a dedicated Tribunal Officer in your region and he will be with you every step of the way to help you though it, because as far as we’re concerned, this Union has decided that we’re taking this government on, we’re always going to take this government on and we’re going to look after the members that come in the Bakers Union.

So, we’ve got these leaflets, it’s a simple thing, if you’re dismissed or you’ve got a grievance, then you can text 67777, if you text ‘Help’ to 67777 or you can do it by email or you can do it by telephone, so for those who are savvy and got mobile phones it’s easier to text and then we’ll call you back, if you’ve got a computer you can do it by computer or if you haven’t got anything, you can just phone us up and we’ll do the rest for you. As I said, this Union is dedicated to looking after the members. This is another service that we are providing which is right for you and right for us and like I said, we’ll be with you every step of the way. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much for that, John.

Okay, I’ve been handed the results for Standing Orders. Region 1, Cecil John 94, John Lee 56, Cecil John is elected to Region 1 Standing Orders.

[APPLAUSE]

Standing Orders representative Region 2, Gloria Martin unopposed. Region 3, Mark Brooks unopposed. Region 4, John Williams unopposed. Region 5, Sarah Woolley 105, Michelle, Michael McDonald 51, Angela Shortreed 14, Sarah Woolley’s been elected onto the Executive, so Michael McDonald will be on the Standing Orders. No. 6, David King unopposed and Kevin Flood, Region 7, unopposed.

I’d now like to ask Mark Brooks to give a report to Conference.

Brother Mark Brooks – Vice-Chair for Standing Orders: Could you all please turn to your Agendas. Motion 72 stands, sorry, that better?, sorry, motion 72 stands, motion 73 stands, can’t hear? Is that better for everybody? Sorry, guys. Motion 72 stands, motion 73 stands, motion 74 stands, motion 75 stands, motion 76 stands, motion 77 stands, motion 78 stands, motion 79 stands, motion 80 stands, motions 81 and 82 will now be called composite 3, motion 83 stands, motion 84 stands, one second, sorry, sorry, sorry about that, I made a mistake, 81 stands on its own, sorry, 82 stands. Motions 83 and 84 are the composite No. 3. Motion 85 stands, motion 86 stands, motion 87 stands, motion 88 stands, motion 89 has been withdrawn, motion 90 stands, motion 91 stands, motion 92 stands, motion 93 that’s to be remitted. That is the end of this report and I thank you all.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, do we accept that report? All those in favour? Anyone against?

Thank you very much, Mark.

Okay, the full-time Officers are going to be leaving soon, so can the Executive make sure that they man the doors please. If we know who’s manning the doors?, because they’re going to be leaving shortly. Does everybody, I take it that all the full-time Officials know where they’re going, yes? You’re going in the Ramada, yes? So you know where you’re going, yes?

Okay. Everybody got your Agenda? Motion 60, please.

60 Government and Political – No 2 Regional Council

That this Conference calls on all its members to vote Labour and campaign for a Labour victory at the election in 2015. We have a duty to do so, to save our health service, education and social service from privatisation.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, motion 60, motion 60 is a very important motion and it’s going to be very important over the year ahead, to 2015 and it asks you people and before we go into what the Party should do, motion 60 is asking you to vote Labour and it is something we have an obligation to vote Labour this time. This time we have to stop what’s happening, the bedroom tax and all of these, we’ll be dealing with these things in other resolutions, but we have to vote Labour at the next election and if we don’t, you’re going to pay the price, you’ll pay the price economically, every way, in every way, even in your right maybe to move about, that’s how serious it is.
It is very serious and that will come at a price to the people of the Labour Party, because at the moment the Party is not very democratic, it is not democratic at all and I have to say we will have to ask the, call on the re-direction of the Labour Party under Ed Miliband, away from the present non-democratic system to the following: the restoration of the Labour Party Conference as the sovereign decision-making body of the Labour Party and (b) the restoration of the National Executive which was replaced by the policy, this policy committee that New Labour set up.

The restoration of the Executive Committee to be the Party in charge to manage the Party, oversee all aspects of policy, organisation and funds and remember now, that’s not giving them a free hand to do what they like. That we have an Executive in our, they’re responsible to us, they have to be responsible to Conference too, because they’re there to carry out government policy. Subject, subject, their work is subject to the Conference resolutions, the accountability of the leader and the elected representatives of the Party, all of them are representatives and the right and the right of constituencies to elect their own MPs, so that we will get MPs of our class into the, in the government.

At the moment what we have is researchers come from colleges and they drop into the House of Parliament, they become researchers, they’re indoctrinated into the system and then they’re sent out round the country as MPs, that’s what’s happening and them people are as far away from us as the Tories are, because they don’t believe us, they don’t think we’re there at all, they have a mind of their own and they’re in the Party and I’ll tell you now a great example of what I mean about people in our organisations being MPs. Down there in the bottom, who sits beside me, my very good friend Gary Johnson. He worked on the shop floor, he was a shop steward, branch official, he’s a full-time organiser now in our Union and he’s now a councillor and he works on committees, he understands the people, he understands everything that happens, because if you can run a part of the country, you can run the whole country, that’s no problem.

That’s what I mean, Gary Johnson has got all that experience, but first of all he has got our blood in his body and he knows us and that’s what we want in parliament, not these jump-jacks that jump in from college and tell us we’re stupid, we couldn’t represent the country. Yes, we could, yes, we could, we do it in wars, we do it in everything, they sit back. Yes, Conference, we can do it, that’s what I say when I say that. I have this leaflet here, it’s belonging to the campaign for Labour Party democracy. When I’m finished speaking here, I will give it to you, I’ll leave it on the benches and pass it around, because all the reform and ideas in it and all the decent EC members are on the back. Conference, that’s what we have to do, but remember we have a lot of paperwork here, I need a secretary I think [LAUGHTER], then all of these things are in position.

We must then with full and grateful heart, accept with grateful heart the one obligation we have. The obligation is to devote every effort of body, mind and spirit to lead our Party back to victory and our country back to greatness. Vote Labour on 2015. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Point of order.

Brother Kevin Flood – No. 7 Region: Sorry, I’m asking on a point of order on this because the motion reads that this Conference calls on all its members to vote Labour. Well No. 7 Region can’t vote Labour, because there’s no Labour Party in Northern Ireland and there won’t be, John McDonnell told us yesterday, well two days ago, a full-time Official asked him. He’s going to do something in Northern Ireland? No. His reasonings for it? Too murky, too much bother, we’re not going to do it. So I’m asking you now, because if you don’t we have to abstain as a Region. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. I mean, quite clearly, Kevin, I mean we recognise obviously that both in the North and obviously in the Republic of Ireland that, yes, no, we do understand, we do understand, but obviously the mover’s moved it. If he wants to remit it at the end, I’m sure he’ll make that recommendation, but I do accept the fact that, we want to make sure that the people in Northern Ireland have the opportunity to vote for a Labour Party, but one that offers socialist policies too. Okay, seconder? Is that you? Okay.

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: Morning, Conference. I’m here to support the motion. I just want to say a couple of things. We cannot be complacent. The Labour Party cannot be complacent. For some unknown reason they automatically, at the moment, because of what this ConDem government are doing and how p’ed off everybody is with this ConDem government, the Labour Party seem to think that it’s their automatic right that they’re just going to get straight back in and they’re wrong. They have got to show that they are going to repeal things like the bedroom tax and other legislations which have come in to affect us, the working class.
Ed Miliband needs to be quicker with his policies. He was too slow to say he would repeal the bedroom tax. He was too slow to fight against the energy companies and it’s wrong and the problem you’ve got is, if they, if he doesn’t up his game, then my concern is that we’ll end up with another ConDem government again and that is not what we want. So please support this motion.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Sorry, I’ve got a sore throat, don’t know how. I’m up here to oppose this and I’m up here to oppose this on two reasons. One is, I was under the impression we lived in a democracy. Nobody is dictating to me who I have to vote for, nobody. My mother never told me what to do successfully and you’re not starting doing it now and the other one is, we haven’t got a flaming Labour Party, we’ve got a watered down Conservative Party. We’ve got MPs ......

[SAPPLAUSE]

…we’ve got MPs telling us we shouldn’t be going out on strike, I brought this up the other day, it’s not our first weapon of choice, it’s the absolute last. They’ve no right to be telling us we don’t come out on strike. They’re watered down, they’re millionaires, they’ve never lived like we’ve lived, they’ve never wondered how you’re going to pay the rent this week because the electric bill’s coming. No, I’m up here to oppose this.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother Steve Nevin – Branch 504: Morning, Conference. I’m here to oppose this, I’ll tell you why. In 1906 the ILP, Independent Labour Party, won 29 seats in the general election and adopted the name of the Labour Party, when they’ve had Liberal pro-capitalist leaders from the outset. The Labour Party was based on workers’ organisations, there was a sense it belonged to workers and it was a mechanism through which they could organise both politically and industrially. This is no longer the case, but for socialists and trade unionists today, formation of the Labour Party offers lots of important lessons about the approach we should take as we again fight for independent political representation for working class people. That’s the Labour Party of 2014.

Can they save our health service, when there’s 37 Labour peers on the payroll of the private health people? Under Labour through the PFI deals, the Private Finance Initiative, the private sector exploded in the NHS. Can it save our education? The Blunkett review extends the process of undermining of schooling even further. Academy change will become the dominant provider of schools under Labour. Do you really trust the right-wing Shadow Education Minister, Tristram Hunt? He walked across a picket line, for goodness sake. Can they save our social services? Where is Mr Miliband, MP for Doncaster? The Care UK workers in his town, facing savage cuts to their wages and working conditions, that could see people even lose their homes. Where is he with his support? Why should we support Miliband when he doesn’t support us? A defeat, said the United General Secretary, Len McCluskey, was likely if Labour went into the 2015 general election promising a pale shade of austerity. He outlined a 10 point plan to save Britain from the Tories. It included building 200,000 homes a year and removal of the private sector in the NHS.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Excuse me a minute, comrade, could people please quieten down while the speaker’s on the rostrum?

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother Steve Nevin – Branch 504: Thank you. Including the re-nationalisation of the railways, removing all anti-trade union laws, but chuck out Umunna, the Shadow Business Minister, who ruled out such a commitment in Labour’s election manifesto. The Labour leadership is pro-big business, not pro-working class. In reality, Labour run councils around the country, it is austerity, red in tooth and claw, that Labour is administrating at this very moment, leaving millions of working class people devastated.

We do have some good Labour MPs. John McDonnell spoke the other day, spoke well, but how many Labour MPs are socialists and how many are millionaires who are closer in thought to Cameron than us? The trade union movement must launch a new workers party, a workers party that would be able to cut across the growth of the far right racist UKIP, who would be far more effective in exerting pressure on Labour and all capitalist parties. The late, great Bob Crow saw that vision and helped form TUSC, Trade Union Socialist Coalition, this is the party that should be funded and supported by the trade unions, not the pro-cuts Labour Party. Thank you.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother John Cheetham – Branch 429: Delegates. I’ve got the right number this time, apologies for last time. We strongly oppose this, due to the fact I have members who actually served in wars that stopped dictators from telling us what, who we should vote for and who we shouldn’t vote for, so we strongly oppose this. So please oppose it.
Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region:

Delegates, Mr President. Delegates, I put the case for voting Labour. You make

Okay, Conference. I think everybody would agree in this room, one thing’s for
certain, we need a change of government. I think anybody who’s seen the devastation that’s happened to our country
in the last four years under this ConDem government recognises the absolute desperate plight of the working class
in this country and while I agree with many of the people that oppose the motion in the way that they express what
we expect from our political leaders, at this moment in time the issue in front of us is this. At election time we’ll be
faced with a choice, a party that absolutely detests us as individuals because we’re trade unionists and we’re part of
the working class and a party that doesn’t seem to think there’s any benefit in representing us, the working class and I
think what we have to make sure that we do at the next election is fight to get a government in power that is going to
serve in the interests of the working class people in this country and currently we believe that that will be best served
by supporting the Labour Party which, at this moment in time, this Trade Union is affiliated to.

It’s the Trade Union’s position to be supportive for the Labour Party. Whether we want to change that or not, until it’s
changed, that’s this Trade Union’s position, we affiliate to the Labour Party. Now obviously we took part in the Collins
Review earlier this year and our position was to maintain the collective link within that Labour Party. Unfortunately,
we weren’t given the opportunity to speak and we weren’t given the opportunity to make sure that the Collins Review
was brought back to our Conference to be debated, because this is where that Collins Review should have been
discussed. It shouldn’t have been me invited to a special conference to take part in a parade of yes, it should have been
you, the members and activists of our Trade Union taking part in a debate about the future of the Party that we, the
Trade Union Movement, formed. That’s how democracy works.

That’s why the Labour Party seem as disconnected to working class people, because it seems to believe that it can
operate in the interests of big business and without the concerns of ours that have to be heard. We recognise the
importance of bringing down this government, which is why this Union is calling for a general strike. It’s the reason
why we believe that the Labour movement should be mobilised to bring this government down as soon and as quickly
as possible to reduce the damage. But when we bring the government down, we don’t want to replace it with a party
that believes it can offer us a slightly less softer version of cuts and we don’t want a party that believes that the best
future is to offer a Tory vision of one nation.

We believe the Labour Party, when it was at its best, which was after the Second World War, when it was led by a guy
called Attlee, gave the working class people in our country an opportunity to aspire and that aspiration was built on
creating a NHS, on ending poverty, on building homes and do you know, the thing that socialists always get attacked
for is suggesting that we want people to live their lives on benefits, when all we’ve ever wanted to do was give people
an opportunity and that’s why that Labour government did more than any other government by committing to a
policy and the sooner the Labour Party understands its role to give people opportunity and commits to a policy of full
employment, to make sure that people have a life opportunity and not to have to live their life on the dole or as a person
forced into a Workfare scheme or as a person that’s forced to be exploited by an employer, the better, because that’s
what we expect from our Labour politicians, that’s what we want from our Labour politicians, houses, jobs, security,
employment rights and making sure that when our children want to go on to universities and colleges, it’s free. That’s
what we want to hear from the Labour Party and that’s what will bring the working class back to the Labour Party, but
we would ask Conference to support the motion.

Right of reply. Right of reply, Pat?

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region:

Delegates, Mr President. Delegates, I put the case for voting Labour. You make
the decision and you live with the result. Don’t vote Labour, vote Tory and UKIP and they’ll have the handguns
and everything back on the street. That’s what he wants. It may be a coalition of them people that you’ll have, that
would be a great thing to have. Yes, I know that the Party has to change and I tried my best to tell you there that that
is what we want, a reformed Labour Party and it’s on that paper I handed round and that’s why, that’s why I moved
the resolution on that and it’s too late now in this one year to start fighting and tearing the Labour Party and tearing
ourselves apart and the Tories will get the fuses in and set the fires for us. Conference, we must vote Labour in 2015
and then work for the changes we need, we must vote Labour in 2015 or we will suffer the consequences. Thank you.
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

Motion 61. That was carried. I take it that’s an abstention. Thank you very much.

Can I just make this announcement, that all substitute ballot papers be filled in and collected by the Scrutineers and delivered to Standing Orders no later than 12 o’clock. Thank you.

Motion 61.

Brother Kevin Flood – No. 7 Region: We already made our point of view that we were abstaining from the vote, but we weren’t given time to clear the room, under rule (?).

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sorry, I will try and go a little bit slower.

Brother Kevin Flood – No. 7 Region: So you should be.

[LAUGHTER].

61 Government and Political – No 7 Regional Council

That this conference agrees that our support for the Labour Party should not be unconditional.

Brother Kevin Flood – No. 7 Region: Motion 61, motion 61. This Conference agrees that your support for the Labour Party should not be unconditional, sorry, should be unconditional. I’m not anti-Labour, not at all, that isn’t the point. The point is, some of the speakers above said, including Pat, including the National President, they don’t deserve our support, because they’re not doing the stuff they’re supposed to be doing, they’re not fighting for the working classes, so why should we fight for them? Unless they do what they’re supposed to do. Even John McDonnell, when he was here the other day, he said ah, we’ll do this, lead for the front and Ed Miliband will follow. What is he, a sheep? He’s going to just follow what we do? He’s our leader, supposed to be. He should then say what he’s going to do. We should then support it. I propose that we don’t support them on the concept of they don’t do the work. So please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Obviously we want the seconder and then obviously we need the mover for the, for the mover of the amendment, yes? So after the seconder’s been on, we need the mover of the amendment.

Brother John Halliday – Branch 706 (Hovis, Belfast): Here to second this motion. Platform, Delegates. We brought a motion similar to this to Conference several years ago and it was lost. Conference, we had a chance then to send a message to the Labour Party that Union funding and support was not unconditional. We brought this motion today because the Labour Party has failed to change. They pretend to be the party representing workers, but do little to enhance the rights of the worker. They have to return to their roots, repeal anti-trade union law and the discriminating nasty bedroom tax. We have to send a message. You need our backing, well it’s not unconditional. We want something in return. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Jack Lee: Mr President, Platform, Conference. We would like to add to this motion, add after the word unconditional, the phrase ‘but conditional on support for the repeal of anti-trade union legislation’. Conference, it has long been the policy of this Union to support only those candidates who support the repeal of anti-trade union legislation. The general election is coming up and this is the last Conference before the next general election in 2015. We believe that it’s timely to reinforce the existing policy, we are not seeking to change any Union policy, rather to reinforce it.

This Union has a proud history of fighting for socialism, along with such outstanding comrades as Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill, Bob Crow, John McDonnell. Central to any working class success and for the defence of the welfare state and fairness and justice, is a free trade union movement. The Tories know this and that is why they seek to weaken unions. It was central to Thatcher’s anti-union legislation to strengthen the employers and weaken working people. Blairite Labour sycophants went along with this, as they cozied-up to the odious Murdoch media. That was why they refused to free unions from the straightjackets of Tory legislation. It is also why the Union adopted the policy of only supporting candidates for the repeal of such obnoxious legislation.

We urge Delegates to support the amendment and the motion to reinforce our belief in the freedom of unions and their right to organise. Defend their members, protect our essential services. We support candidates who support unions. We should not be giving members’ money to those who refuse to support the freeing of unions from these shackles. Know your friends, find out who they are, but equally know your enemies and then deny them your money.
The Tories are very good at this, they look after their friends. We should be equally good at supporting ours. Support the amendment and reinforce existing policy. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

Brother John Halliday – Branch 701: Chairman, General Secretary, National, Delegates. Everyone knows that I cannot vote for the Labour Party, but I’m a devoted trade unionist and have been all my life and as a member of this Union, I feel that I can put forward a motion which this Union can act on for the greater good of you, the Delegates and our members. Unconditional support means we give our total support. We must remember that previous Labour governments did nothing to repeal Tory laws. The way forward for us is to have a totally committed party fighting for the working class, a party entrenched in working class values, not one which pays lip service to get elected. Can we trust the Labour Party? I, for one, cannot trust them.

Anyone who stabs his brother in the back does not deserve my support. I live in Northern Ireland and the result of this general election next year, whichever party wins, I still have to live under those laws. I would much better have a Labour Party win, but a Labour Party that was repealing certain acts, acts which harm me, my neighbour, my friends, all you people out there and the public at large, especially if you are working class. The Tories, we must remember, reward their backers when in government and keep attacking the working class and their abilities. With less than one year to go to an election, the Labour Party is silent on an agenda which has our values as an essence of their manifesto. Delegates, I ask you to think carefully when you vote on this motion.

We, as a Union, should make it clear that our support should be conditional. As Ronnie said in his speech to us, on our behalf the Labour Party need to take back our national assets and repeal Tory laws which are detrimental to us. Only by being given assurances that the party is committed to our agenda, should we be fully supportive. We should also encourage all unions to speak with one voice on this. Only by giving conditional support will the party take notice on your behalf. Delegates, we don’t want New Labour, we want the Labour Party, our party back.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Also up here to support this. It seems to me that this Labour Party’s forgotten where its roots started and therefore we should not give unconditional support until such time as they start to give us back our rights, such as clause 4, they outlaw zero hour contracts, the right to tribunal from day one, reverse the legal aid issue that’s been brought in by this coalition and many other restrictions put onto working people and trade unions that give them less and less say in the workplace and finally, that they restore the thousands of public sector workers’ jobs that have gone, especially the 5,000 health and safety. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Hamid Lubega: President, General Secretary, EC members, ladies and gentlemen. I’m a bit disturbed with this motion. First of all, I don’t know who the Labour members are, either become Labour members by default of birth or by employment and there is no way that’s going to change unless there is engagement. People from the grass roots have to connect with the Labour, otherwise if they don’t connect with the Labour then there is not going to be any success. We talk about Labour and only referring to the elite, the leadership of the Labour Party and then we disengage ourselves from Labour. Until there is this connection, where we start from the grass roots, we push it right from the bottom, that’s when we shall get what we want. As long as we can do that, then we will achieve our objectives.

Having said that, here today I have colleagues who voted UKIP, but they are here. The question then is, why did they vote UKIP? Is UKIP a better alternative? Is Labour a better alternative? There are reasons, fundamental reasons as to why that disconnect exists. Some other speakers alluded to the fact of that, especially my dear friend, Pat Rowley, who said that getting these college boys who have been catapulted to become MPs, how do you expect someone who has never lived in your locality to be a MP? He doesn’t know the language, he doesn’t know the culture, he has to be educated from A to Z. So ladies and gentlemen, much as I love everybody to vote Labour, it’s our responsibility to prop up Labour and build Labour. We should not disengage ourselves from Labour, but that’s what exactly is happening. We talk about Labour as if we’re talking about Ed Miliband. Let’s talk about ourselves. Let’s start with ourselves. Let’s build within ourselves. Talk to your neighbour, talk to your work colleague, talk to your friend and then build the chain. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference. Yes, this is a good resolution, but this resolution should have been here two years ago or three years ago. We should not start a fight when it’s just coming up to election. Basically if you do, you’re doing a favour for the Tories.

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Now, in the resolution I moved, I moved all the aspects of the party that we wanted and I have over many occasions asked here why do we, why do we hand over our money to the Labour Party and then start arguing with them. Argue first and then hand over our money, but Conference, it’s very late in the year now to be starting a fight about the Labour Party. It’s wrong, we must now save the Labour Party this time, we must vote Labour in 2015 and we must all be on the one mind and if we’re not, but a resolution like this would have been better here 2–3 years ago, so that we could work through it and get the policies we want. Now, Conference, I’m not asking you which way to vote, you have your minds, you know what to do, vote for what you think is best now. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. One of the concerns we had with this motion is obviously the motion calls for the Labour Party should not be unconditional, then the amendment calls but conditional. I mean, we’ve had a bit of a big debate whether it was right or not because we thought that it changed the fundamental part of the motion, but obviously the Standing Orders have put it through, so we’re going to put it to the vote and the Executive’s position is more of a point of information, just to make you aware that this Trade Union firstly doesn’t fully affiliate to the Labour Party, it uses the political funds that we have to support those MPs or prospective MPs that do support the repeal of the anti-trade union legislation, that do support the issues that we believe are the right ones for them to fight on, such as John McDonnell and the likes of Jeremy Corbyn and Ian Lavery, so we already do operate a system where we only actually give finances to those MPs who do support the position of this Trade Union, so first off going to the vote on the amendment, do we accept the amendment? Those in favour, accepting the amendment, please show. Okay. Those against? Okay, so we’ve just got to vote on the motion. Those in favour of the motion? Those against? That’s lost. Thank you.

Motion 62

62 Government and Political – 253 Greggs Treforest

That this conference agrees that through our Parliamentary Group we lobby the government to do more in helping people find affordable renting i.e. tackling robbing private landlords.

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: That this Conference agrees that through our Parliamentary Group we lobby the government to do more in helping people find affordable renting, i.e. tackling the robbing private landlords. I’ve written this motion, as more and more people are finding it hard to get affordable housing. There are not enough council homes, Thatcher sold them all off. I can’t believe Blair and Brown never started re-building them and Labour was wrong there. The working class are now finding it harder to get a mortgage. How can people ever save with the rising cost of living and no pay rises? The private landlord market is flooded with what I call robbing landlords and robbing letting or tenancy agencies and I’ve fallen foul of this.

In Cardiff, where I live, the average rented house flat costs about £600 per month. Before you even move into the house flat, you have to pay the £600 per month, plus around £750 in a deposit. That is a month and a quarter of the rent. Then as you go through a letting agents, you have to pay around £100 for agency fees and credit checks. So before you pick up your keys, you have to pay around £1500, that’s a person’s wages. How on earth is anyone going to ever afford to do this? Also, if you fail your credit check, which is quite possible in this day and age where more and more people are in debt, you have to find a guarantor. Who’s going to be able to guarantor paying their own mortgage or own rent and then guaranteeing that they’d be able to pay somebody else’s rent? You’re not going to get it, are you? So, let’s fight to help people get the homes they deserve at the affordable price. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Are you seconding? Okay.

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: Chair, Platform, Delegates. Here to totally support this motion. Young and old people with low paid jobs cannot afford to rent at the prices the private landlords are charging. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael Lynch – Branch 505, Region 5 (Northumberland, Durham): Conference, I’m here to support this as well. When we say everywhere they talk about affordable homes for people, affordable homes could be okay for somebody in one area but not in another. What we need is, we need the government to allow councils to borrow from the banks and insurance companies and have a massive house building programme and council housing. Council housing has been put back on the agenda for long enough and even now when we get councils building houses, just so many, a small percentage of that goes to what they call affordable homes. We need a massive council house building programme. Thank you.
[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you coming down to speak? No, okay.

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (replying on behalf of the Executive): Obviously the Executive would ask you to wholeheartedly support this. Obviously when this situation now because of the few reasons that obviously my comrades have highlighted, obviously Thatcher selling off the council houses obviously was a knock to working class people being able to achieve living in their own homes and also you’ve got the banks that aren’t giving people mortgages any more because obviously people can’t afford it, because they’re in such poor working conditions and haven’t had a pay rise, like obviously my comrade pointed out, so they can’t afford to have a mortgage so they’ve got no option other than to rent and the landlords are just taking full advantage of that. Obviously it’s in the NeoLiberal agenda again, the free market, something has to give sooner rather than later. Obviously we need to lobby the government to do something about the greedy landlords, like putting a cap on private rents, so that they don’t escalate to the point where people can’t actually afford to live in a house by themselves and not have to rely on family or friends or whatever. Of course the best answer to this wouldn’t be capping the rent but would be building more council houses and social housing, so that the working class people can afford to live in a house of their own. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

Motion 63.

63 Government and Politics –No 2 Regional Council

That this Conference agrees that privatisation isn’t everything. It’s time to stop running down the state and idolising free markets.

Brother Pat Rowley – No . 2 Region: Mr President, Delegates. Conference, the resolution says Conference agrees that privatisation is not everything. We must stop demonising the state which protects them all. Conference, the state spends billions of pounds on research and development that directly benefits businesses. Tax payers subsidised, privatised rail network is a classic example. How our modern economic system works. The government splashes out many times more money than in the days of British Rail and yet the most efficient run rail franchise is publicly run, the East Coast Line, that says it all. Privatisation is better, sorry, sorry, sorry, nationalisation is better [LAUGHTER], is better than privatisation, make no mistake about that. Conference, it’s the best run in the companies, benefit from the, these franchises, private franchises benefit from the explosion of state spending, state-funded education, who do they want, business, depend upon for their workforce, state-funded education. Many companies pay poverty wages, leaving the state to subsidise them with billions of pounds in tax credits. The G4S for example, which failed to provide the security for the Olympic Games, leaving the state to come to the rescue. Free market triumphism is epidemic among the elite, but rarely challenged. It’s time to expose it for the sham it is. There are people who demonise the state but have to be subsidised by the state. Conference, we have to call for more nationalisation and bringing in of all our services under state control. The state is better than the private, I won’t make a mistake this time. Conference, the state is better than the privatisation. Privatisation means profiteering, profiteering at our expense. Conference, support the resolution.

[APPLAUSE]


Brother John Newman – Branch 247 (Allied, Cardiff): Morning, Conference. Last November there was a poll undertaken by YouGov of UK adult citizens from all backgrounds, walks of life and political persuasions and the headline of it caught my attention and it stated “Nationalised energy and rail companies, say the public”. The majority of British public, including the majority of Conservative voters, support nationalising the energy and rail companies. Labour’s plan to freeze energy prices for 20 months has re-ignited the debate over the role of the government in markets, with Conservatives arguing that intervention is a con, while Labour claim the state should reset the market. It has been suggested Labour are open to re-nationalising train services, however YouGov research for the Centre for Labour and Social Studies finds voters of all politics united in their support for nationalisation of energy and rail. 68% of the public say the energy companies should be run in the public sector, while only 21% say they should remain in private hands. 66% support nationalising the railway companies, while 23% think they should be run privately.

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The British people also tend strongly to prefer a publicly-run National Health Service as it is now and a publicly-run Royal Mail service as it was until sold off by the ConDems. Supporters of nationalising the energy companies include 52% of Conservative voters and 74% of UKIP voters and again 52% of Conservatives are pro-nationalisation of the rail companies, as are 72% of UKIP supporters. The recent Labour and Conservative governments have opened the NHS services to privatisation. 84% of the public say the Health Service should be run in the public sector. Only 13% of Conservative voters say the NHS should be run privately.

More divisive is the recently privatised Royal Mail, however while the public support it being run publicly, 67% to 22%, Conservatives divide almost evenly by 48% to 43%. Views are also less clear on whether the government should have the power to control prices of more traditional private markets. The public is split 45%;43% in favour of government having the power to control private sector rents and are opposed to government having the power to control food prices by 55% to 35%. Rail prices have been rising above inflation at an increasing rate since 2004 and the TUC claim average fares have risen nearly three times faster than the average incomes since 2008. Labour nationalised the railways in 1948 and they were returned to the public sector by John Major in 1993. Tony Blair dropped plans to re-nationalise in 1997, but Labour have launched a review of their policy this year, but it would appear that Ed Balls is dragging his feet over this issue, saying the right-wing press were portrayed as a lurch to the left, well of course they will, of course they will, but rail nationalisation makes sense on every level and has widespread public support.

Better still, it would send a clear message that finally Labour intend to challenge the economic model, leave it to the market of capitalism, which has given us de-regulation mania and privatisation, which has led us from everything from horsemeat in burgers to zero hour contracts, global meltdown and Dickensian levels of inequality. Strangely enough, the city doesn’t agree with the public’s opinion and says the results are terrifying, but what they do agree on is this. Supporters of a market economy have a very big problem. Unless they address the concerns of the general public, they will be annihilated, so what do we say? Stand up, speak up, organise, protest, stand together, strength in unity. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. 64.

64 Government and Political – 405

That this conference agrees that a cut to the UK science budget by the Conservative government is both detrimental and counterproductive to the future wellbeing of the British people.

Sister Janet Phillips – Branch 405: Good morning, comrades. I do apologise about the mix-up yesterday, almost in the words of the late Eric Morecambe, I did all the right speeches, but not necessarily in the right order.

[LAUGHTER]

That this Conference agrees that the cut to the UK science budget by the Conservative government is both detrimental and counter-productive. By cutting the science budget to universities, the ConDems have another market they can milk. If left to private companies, only limited fields of research will be covered. Only by new innovations and ideas can we, as a people, move forward and develop. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council and seconding this motion): President, General Secretary, Conference. In the 2013 budget speech, George Osborne described research and development into all science projects as absolutely essential to Britain’s economic future. He then announced that the UK science budget would be frozen in cash terms, which is a cut of 10% over the next four years. This is quite the opposite of other nations, who are increasing their budgets. This flat cash will see our young scientists feel the cut the soonest. Major science budget cuts have scared the science industry into fears of a brain drain of UK researchers to countries that have chosen to invest in science, such as Germany, France, the United States and Singapore.

The biggest missed opportunity is in energy efficiency. The insulation of buildings to bring about the high energy efficient standards, combined with the small scale generation and smart (?) grids. This will bring the carbon levels down and will create jobs at all skill levels. Government research establishments have been run down over the number of years and private sector research and development has been little used. Most of our research and development is done within our university science bases. This will hinder the education of our students, making the UK fall further behind our competitors in this field if this budget is cut. Please support. Thank you.
**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Speakers? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 65.

### 65 Government and Political – 580 Greggs Yorkshire

*This conference agrees to lobby the government to create a legal definition of bullying in the UK.*

**Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580:** There is no legal definition of bullying in the UK. This is wrong to me. You can report harassment to the police and let them deal with it, but if you’re being bullied, you can’t. Where is the justice for the ever-increasing number of children committing suicide after being subjected to months of bullying, or the employees in workplaces being bullied day-in, day-out by their managers and other staff. Bullying is different to harassment, harassment is based on something that defines you, your race, age or your sex. You can be bullied just because one person does not like you. Please support this, so a voice and a system for the victims of bullying can be put in place on the back of it.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Formally seconded? This is what you do to me, Marilyn.

**Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450:** Yes. I’m up here to oppose this and I’ll tell you why. I do not approve of bullying, but if you ask for a definitive description of bullying, it will not encompass all the various forms of bullying that there is. Look at bullying and harassment in the workplace. It’s your perception. If you believe you are being bullied or harassed, then you are. If you think that somebody walking along every day and grabbing your backside and pinching you is acceptable, then it is. It’s quite dangerous this, because it might leave a lot open to interpretation and therefore fail as a legal thing. That’s why I’m opposing it.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** No other speakers? Okay.

**Brother John Fitzpatrick – No. 4 Region (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** The Executive Council are asking you to support this. Bullying in the workplace has grown and grown and it doesn’t affect the individual, it affects the family and can last for their whole lifetime as well. We ask you to support it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Right of reply? Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

Okay, Conference, just before we went for tea break, I’ve just been notified that the CWU is confirming that it’s looking at taking industrial action if they’re forced to deliver The Sun and I think for the Bakers Union Conference, I think we should also send a message of solidarity to the Tilbury dockers who are fighting against zero hours, to the Ritzy living wage people that are going to be appearing tonight and talking about their dispute over at the Scarisbrick, to the Lambeth ULU lecturers who are on an indefinite strike and of course those fantastic Doncaster care workers fighting for the NHS and every other trade union and worker that’s currently in dispute, but those ones obviously I’ve mentioned in particular.

Also, what we’ll be doing today is we’ll be taking bucket collections on the doors to give to Unite the Resistance, who are collecting for people who are out on strike and obviously, as always, solidarity is so, so important and making sure people aren’t starved back to work is critical, so we’ll be holding a bucket collection and we ask Delegates to give us as much as they can afford to give. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]
Okay, moving back to the Agenda. Motion 65. 66, I was just testing you.

66  Government and Political – 215 Postal Branch

That this conference agrees, that the bedroom tax is a clear breach of your human rights, and should be scrapped immediately.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Mr President, Delegates. Conference, this resolution that’s before you now, that this Conference agrees that bedroom tax is a clear breach of human rights and when human rights are breached like that and these are vulnerable people, they’re mothers and small children, babies, they can be put on the street because the houses they live in, two medium-sized bedrooms and a small one and they have the cheek and the audacity to say that they should be cut £14 a week in their benefits because they have an extra room in their house and they spend billions, millions on boy George, your future king, they spend millions making five room places and huge places for him to be brought up.

Conference, we have an obligation that we should not walk on the other side of the street and say alright, this doesn’t affect us, but it affects vulnerable people that are not able to fight for themselves. We should have been out long ago like Camp Bristol and all of those places and been on the street and brought that terrible legislation down. We have to do it, Conference and if we don’t win this election, what are we going to do then? The Tories will tell us well, you have no right, you voted for us and we carried it out and we carry it on. Conference, we have a duty to bring this down. I ask you to support the resolution. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Are you seconding?

Sister Monica Currie – Branch 508: I’m here to support this motion. Scotland have already got rid of this bedroom tax, so it can be done. It’s time the rest of the country followed suit.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: I’m also an active member of Axe the Bedroom Tax Federation. Nothing to do with me, I live in a one bedroom flat and I’ve bought it, so it’s never going to affect me, but on the other hand it could quite well have been different, but it just hasn’t been thought out when they brought it in, they didn’t do the research before they implemented it. There’s not enough smaller places to go around. Well, I understand the idea behind it that you’ve got maybe one person living in a five bedroomed house and people with a lot of children that are struggling in a two bedroomed place, fine, but there isn’t enough smaller places to move people into, so therefore they’re getting absolutely hammered with this extra tax that they’re paying and people cannot afford to eat. It’s an absolute disgrace. Please support this.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): In the spirit of our previous Branch Sec, Anthony Sedgewick, ‘the bedroom tax, it’s bollocks’.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers?

Brother John Fitzpatrick – No. 4 Region (EC member, speaking on behalf of the Executive): This tax has been thought out, they know what they’re doing, it’s just attacking the poor and the disabled. There’s been a few on the telly where they’ve had to change the one bedroom to fit the lift in and they’re still getting penalised. The councils have fitted the lift in and where disabled people can’t sleep in the same room, they’re forcing the tax on them. They know exactly what they’re doing, they’re taking the benefits back off them. The rich, how many bedrooms do they have? It should be a tax on the rich bedrooms. If you’ve got more than six bedrooms or whatever, you should have the tax on that. That’s aimed at the rich. Thank you. Support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 67.

67  Government and Political – 215 Postal Branch

That this conference agrees the BFAWU campaign and do away with Workfare. Working for nothing don’t boost your self-esteem. Working in Poundland where everything is worth a pound, except you. This is 21st-century slavery.
Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, Delegates. Working for nothing is great, isn’t it? Get up every morning, go to work for nothing. Who wants to get up and go to work for nothing? We go to work because we want a living wage. That’s why we go to work, so that we can provide for our families and for all our needs that we have. That’s what we do. Conference, this resolution is simply nothing more than 21st Century slavery and oppose it and oppose any such thing. Support this resolution. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers?

Conference, obviously Workfare is abhorrent. It’s not finding work for those faced, that take this, it actually is costing jobs. The government knows it’s failing, but so desperate to fiddle the unemployment figures, Workfare is used to manipulate the rate of unemployment and it needs to be stopped. I ran into a bit of trouble with a guy called Andrew Neil, obviously he’s a fighter for workers’ rights and freedoms for the civilised world, so I thought well, I’d better do a bit of research and so I looked in the dictionary to find out what slavery actually is and slavery is also called Thraldom, it’s actually an economic system. In it, some people must work for no pay, these people are described as slaves. Thraldom, enthralment, slavery, bondage, servitude refer to involuntary, subjective to another or others.

Slavery emphasises the idea of a complete ownership and control by a master, to be sold into slavery. Bondage indicates a status subjugation or captivity often involving burdensome or degrading labour. In bondage, a cruel master, Ian Duncan Smith. Servitude, a compulsory service, Workfare, often such is required by a legal penalty, sanctions, a penalty servitude for a mile or master. A state, a condition of being a slave. A civil relationship whereby one person has absolute power over another and controls their life, liberty and fortune. The subjection of one person to another person, especially being forced into work. The condition of being subject to some influence or habit. Work done in harsh conditions for low pay. I believe that completely explains what Workfare is and I believe the use of such programmes should be called exactly what they are and that is state slavery.

We need real work, we need real pay, not enforced labour schemes. We demand that people are not just offered work experience, but wage experience and let’s confirm our commitment that if they bring their Workfare schemes into our workplaces, we will have a branch meeting, we will get that mandate and we will tell the companies we will go on strike. No Workfare, no second class workers in any Bakers Union organised workplaces. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. General Secretary would like to ......

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Yes, comrades, just a thing I meant to say earlier on. We talked during Conference about the goings-on on D-Day and we saw the brave heroes who’d fought for our country to give us the freedoms that we have now and with those chests full of medals and absolutely deserved, but it also saw the likes of Prince Charles wearing a uniform with all the regalia and probably more medals for doing absolutely nothing and I do question that and I don’t think they are deserved, but there’s one person who I think should have a medal, who absolutely deserves it for everything that they do, really, really magnificent job and that’s Debra Hodson at the back, because today she’s been married, she’s been married for 25 years to our President ......

[LAUGHTER]

and if that doesn’t deserve a medal, nothing does.

[APPLAUSE]

When he was talking on the last motion, he was talking about bondage and servitude. I actually thought he was going to tell you himself he was married 25 years ......

[LAUGHTER]

but, comrades, we’ve got a little presentation for you. As I say, 25 years married. I know what it must be like, Deb, I’ve been with him for three years and I’m already ready for another divorce.

[LAUGHTER]

We have a cake that’s been done, I believe, by one of our members, John Wade, as a gift for you, so you can stay in tonight and just munch away on a cake. So, Ian, if you want to go down and we’ll get a photo of you anyway. Deb.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very, very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Motion 68. No, it’s not, is it? It’s 72.
72  Government and Political – 580 Greggs Yorkshire

This conference agree to lobby this government to make the minimum wage a living wage in line with inflation.

Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees to lobby the government to make the minimum wage a living wage in line with inflation. What I would say, it should actually be above the minimum wage. Everything these days is more expensive, but the wages do not come in line to represent it. So please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? That was really lovely, it really, really was. Britain needs a pay rise, but don’t expect this Tory government or any Tory administration to introduce legislation to achieve it. Under Cameron’s Tories, his policies for hard working people have left ordinary working people with fewer rights and some of the worst employment practices in the UK which has ever been known. In fact since the election, despite the rhetoric, working people have never had it so bad.

On average Britain’s working people will be, for the full five years of this government, £6,600 worse off. So asking this anti-working government for positive moves for hard-pressed families is a non-starter. History shows us, when politicians won’t listen, when its main players are firmly against even the slightest improvements, then it’s left to us, the Labour movement, to make those changes happen. It is the decline of the trade unions that has led to the drop in pay, the worsening employment conditions and working people now enduring a decision to inflict poverty by the greed of those at the top to protect their wealth at the expense of those that are seeing huge rises every time we are seeing another 600,000 children being forced into poverty. It’s a political choice, it’s not on a fact but on greed, the determination to exploit working people because they believe they can do it without a trade union. Without trade unions workers are vulnerable.

Even with the politicians have in many ways muted our ability to get a fair deal, although union workplaces do have better pay and conditions: non-union ones, according to data released by the Department of Business, says the average union workplaces are £4,000 a year better off and that must have gutted the Tories to actually admit that. I said on Sunday that our Union has, since its founding, agreed that our members should be paid a living wage and we have declared a figure and I think we should send that message loud and clear to the members in our workplaces. This Union is a fighting Union. No longer should our members have to suffer poverty. No longer are we going to accept second class workers. No longer are we going to allow our terms and conditions to be hammered. If you want to take the Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union on, we want £10 an hour. You will sit down with our members and you will sort out how that’s going to be achieved.

[APPLAUSE]

Conference, please support the motion. £10 an hour for everybody in the food industry.

[APPLAUSE AND CHEERS]

Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? £10 an hour, that’s what we’re fighting for. Okay. 73.

73  Government and Political – 529

That this conference agrees that there should be no age discrimination within national minimum wage and Jobseeker’s allowance. We should lobby the government to get fair pay for all regardless of age.

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (also responding on behalf of the Executive): That this Conference agrees that there should be no age discrimination with national minimum wage and Jobseekers Allowance. We should lobby the government to get fair pay for all, regardless of age. Quite self-explanatory really, I mean the current rates for national minimum wage are, if you are 21 or over, it’s £6.31 an hour, if you’re 18 – 20 it’s £5.03 an hour, but if you’re under 18 it’s only £3.72 an hour and if you’re on apprenticeships, which I would say the majority would be, young people, it’s £2.68 an hour. The Jobseekers Allowance current rate is £57.35 if you’re 16 – 24 and if you’re 25 or over it’s £72.40. Now, it should be the same for everybody and everybody should be brought up in line with the 21 and over rate or the 25 and over for the Jobseekers Allowance because at the end of the day everything costs the same, regardless of how old you are. You don’t get a loaf of bread 20p less because you’re 18 or an 18 – 20 year old, so I think we should just support the motion to make it fair for everybody, regardless of if you’re 16, 25, 45, 55. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded? Speakers?

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: I spoke on something similar to this at the Youth, the TUC Young Workers Conference at the beginning of the year. Young people don’t get a discount on their gas bill or their electric bill. Young people don’t get a discount on their rent or their mortgages, so why should they be paid less for doing the same job as somebody who’s older than them? Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, it’s about time we got these things sorted out. We’ve had resolutions here many times over the year about the minimum wage and the minimum wage. It’s poverty wages it should be called. It’s called poverty wages and not only the £3.60 that was, it was brought down to £2.90 for young people. Why are young people, they’re discriminated against, they have the same body and soul as the rest of us. They are human beings, we are all people and they are as powerful as we are, you can see them in footballing and every other sport, they’re there and when it comes to the army, these young people at 17 years of age, they’re not told to stand back at the back because they’re too young, they’re told to get out on the front line where the boys with the age wouldn’t go, they wouldn’t go there.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 75. 74, 74, 74.

74 Government and Political – 505

This conference calls upon the TUC to hold talks with the Labour Party now to introduce a living wage when it returns to government.

Brother Michael Lynch – Branch 505, Region 5 (Northumberland, Durham): Conference, I think the President when he mentioned there, he set the precedent, £10 an hour that’s what we need to go for. Conference, a living wage is a difference between people having money to put food on the table or rely on food banks. How disgusting it is, this is one of the richest countries in the world, when we’ve got more food banks, people are having to go to food banks to feed their families. It’s an absolute disgrace. Conference, this is not new policy. In 1925 a socialist MP from Scotland, James Maxton, introduced a living wage. It was official party policy of the then Independent Labour Party. Let us make it official policy of the next Labour government to bring this through. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Speakers? I mean quite clearly Conference, we would ask Conference to support. Just as a point of information, Frances O’Grady from the TUC recently pointed out that the living wage of £8.55 in London and £7.55 in the rest of the UK only means that people can maybe save for their childrens party or family holiday. Well, I think what the Labour Party should be considering really, really seriously is whether working class people should maybe be able to save for a childrens party or maybe be able to save for a family holiday. I think they need to really seriously consider that the Labour government that we hope gets into power next year should be delivering an aspiration politics and that aspiration politics means that workers should be able to afford their childrens party and afford a family holiday, that’s what we believe that the Labour government should make sure that it endorses the call of this Union and other organisations for the £10 an hour living wage and we’d ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

You’re not speaking on this motion, Marilyn, are you?

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: No, point of information. Can we stop talking about the working class? The definition of not working class is somebody who lives in a house that is paid for and doesn’t work, that’s me. I am not upper class or middle class. I’m what people would call working class. We’re not working class, we’re workers, different thing. We need to scrub this class society, we’re workers.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I assume that was a point of information or a point of order. I mean, I think if that’s a point of order what I would say to you is this. I believe there’s two classes in society, those that own the means of production and the rest of us. I think the working class is a description that describes working people in this country and I think we should all be proud of being working class.

[APPLAUSE]

I think the problem we have, the problem we have is the politicians have stolen, have stolen and tried to divide, I’m not going to let you come back, Marilyn, your voice was gone this morning, but I think the working class have been lied to and misled when people are being told, are being told that there is a difference between a hardworking person and a not hardworking person, that’s about division. We are one class, we are in a, we’re not in a classless society. We’re in a society with those people at the top and taking the Michael out of the people at the bottom and we all want to join together, we stand together, we’re going to win together and that’s why the working class is important because it needs to understand there is no division, there is no division whether you’re in work or out of work, that’s what they want, they want mass unemployment so they can have mass exploitation and the working class is the group that we belong to and you might not agree with me, but I will continue to be proud to say working class and I think most people in this room would agree with me.

[APPLAUSE]

To the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 75.

75 Government and Political – No 5 Regional Council

That this conference agrees for every door that closes (for example old folk’s homes, children’s parks and play areas, public libraries, swimming baths to name a few) another door opens – like a food bank – is this good? Surely being one of the WEALTHIEST countries in the world this government cannot be on this planet when working out the balance of fairness to the general British public or is it the medieval saying of let them eat cake.

Brother David Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Morning, Conference. I was rung up last week by Duncan Dale to forward this motion. It’s something what he’s very passionate about, so I’ll read the motion. That this Conference agrees for every door that closes, another door opens. Is this good? For example, old folks homes, childrens parks and play areas, public libraries, swimming baths, to name a few. Food banks open surely. Being one of the wealthiest countries in the world, this government cannot be on this planet when working out the balance of fairness to the general British public, or is it the Medieval saying let them eat their cake? I don’t know if anybody got the chance yesterday to catch Despatches on Channel 4 about half past 7 or 8 o’clock, but there was a woman on there last night, working full-time, two children and she was left with the indignity, I suppose, of paying either her rent or going to a food bank. She paid her rent and her gas bill and chose to go, undignified she said, to take food from a food bank to feed her children. That can’t be right. Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Okay, formally seconded? Speakers? I think Dave summed it up really, really well. I don’t think I need to add anything to that, Dave, so just go to the vote. We ask Conference to support the motion. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 75.

76 Government and Political – 215 Postal Branch

That this conference agrees, MPs selected on gender only, is not equality. It should be on merit, not gender. The best person for the job.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, the resolution as far as I’m concerned discriminates, it discriminates against whoever it is. There should be no discrimination on age or anything else, or ability or anything else, but to have it on this basis is discriminating against one sex against another and if I wanted to run now as a MP in Bristol, all three constituencies are on a gender basis, be that right or wrong, but I am much older than many of you here, I never discriminated against anybody on sex or any other form of belief and that’s why the resolution is here, it came from the branch and I am from the branch and I have to move it and I believe and if it is wrong, if yes, maybe in times past there was, when there was a lot of male people, like one time there wasn’t a lot of women coming to this Conference, but there’s more women coming now because, females, because they work in the industry and therefore they’re coming to Conference and it might have been, but there’s no discrimination in the wards.
You go round the wards in the constituencies and you will see if there’s maybe a couple of dozen men there and women can’t get a say, that is not so. Some wards have two, some wards have three and the most at any ward meeting is five and there’s no reason, no reason at all to stop anybody from coming there. Two or three women could take over any ward, then they go take over the constituencies, that’s how it works and as far as I’m concerned that’s the way it is, but the resolution is before you now. You will hear speakers maybe in different ways and you will make the decision after. Thank you. I move.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201: I’m here to support this motion, because I believe in equality and equality goes both ways. We can’t as women say we want equality, but then we want to be parachuted into seats above men, because it’s not fair, it’s not fair, it’s not appropriate. There’s nothing to stop a woman running for a MP’s job, the same as a man. Unfortunately it’s my belief that the only people who get parachuted in, the only females who get parachuted in are middle class posh people anyway, so I don’t believe that as trade unionists it benefits us at all, so please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: I’m actually sitting on the fence with this one, I’m not really sure which way I’m going to vote, to be honest with you. I can understand where the Labour Party is coming from when they’re saying they want more women in parliament and I agree with them. We should have a more equal balance and it’s great to see that on our side of the benches we’ve got a lot of women. Tory LibDems have hardly got any and I am very pleased with that, but how far does it go? As you know, in Wales we have the Welsh Assembly. Julie Morgan, the Assembly member for Cardiff North has openly come out this week and said that she would like to see all female shortlists in any contested Member of Parliament seats in the whole of Wales. This is absolutely totally wrong. If she had her way, we wouldn’t have any male MPs in Wales and that’s wrong, that isn’t equality at all. There has to be a balance, but it should be the right person for the job as well.

There’s another factor which Janine’s just pointed out. We don’t want to be seeing people being shipped in from London, from the middle classes, because they’re the right people. Stephen Kinnock, who’s Neil Kinnock’s son, has just been shipped in to Neath, Port Talbot area and won this seat. His wife is the Prime Minister of Denmark. How on earth is he going to (1) keep his marriage going, if she’s in Denmark and he’s over in Neath, Port Talbot and (2) how is he going to serve his constituents where he hasn’t been for the vast majority of his life? So, I’m on the fence, but thanks for listening.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Cheetham – Branch 429 (Warburtons, Burnley): Delegates. We support this motion wholeheartedly and one of the reasons being is Apryl came up yesterday and was on about equality and all the rest of it and age discrimination. We stand firmly behind her. What she said yesterday should stand today and we support this motion because of that reason.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Apryl Walcott – Branch 450: As like Chris, I’m a bit on the fence on this one. I don’t necessarily think the wording is correct, because when I’m at politics meetings or I’m at Labour Party meetings, there must be about 10% of females. Now, I think people should get the job on merit, but I think there needs to be an equality of opportunity when it comes to men and women and there needs to be a push for opportunities for both men and women.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

Sister Helena England – Branch 568 (speaking on behalf of the Executive): This motion that says that MPs selected on gender only is not equality, it should be on merit not gender, the right person for the job. I struggled on this motion because I thought people standing in constituencies were voted on whoever got the most votes, but obviously I don’t know a lot about politics anyway, but what I do know there should be, everybody has got a right to equality and yes, there will be certain jobs and certain prospects where maybe it is better for a female or a male to do it, maybe like care homes and places like that, that prefer their own gender looking after them, but everybody’s got the right to equality and everybody should have that right to equality. That’s what equality’s about, it’s not giving everybody equality, it’s having the right to equality and everybody deserves that and if people aren’t going to be picked for jobs or promotion just on the gender they are, that can be belittling and degrading for the person who loses out in that position and could affect their future job prospects. We’ve come a long way down the equality, but we’ve still a long way to go and we can all take a part in that, so I ask you to please support this on the fact that everybody has the right to equality and right treatment. Thank you.
[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Okay, motion 77.

77 Government and Political – 505

This conference questions the role of Progress within the Labour Party.

Brother Michael Lynch – Branch 505, Region 5 (Northumberland, Durham): Conference, the word progress means go forward, advance, but certainly the Progress organisation within the Labour Party I do not want. Progress is what I would call a party within a party, having own membership, subscriptions, they have their own conference apart from the Labour Conference and I joined the Labour Party when Adam was a lad, I joined one party, I didn’t join any groups inside. Yes, you have your voice from different organisations, but the policies that they put forward, they even get advice from Tony Blair, well that would put me off straight away and also one of their former chairmen is Lord Adonis, an architect of academies under Tony Blair. The only thing that Lord Adonis was ever elected to was milk monitor when he was a kid. Conference, I ask you to support this because what we need, we need a party of socialist values and socialist MPs. Please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Okay.

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: Totally here to support this motion. I think Progress is another way of just getting another Blairite and Brownite and that’s certainly not what we want to see from our next Labour government. We need to progress, but make sure that not progress in the way this branch of the Labour Party want, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Conference, the Executive would ask you to support the motion. I mean, what’s quite interesting is that under Kinnock of course everybody will remember that fantastic barn-storming speech he gave with Derek Hatton and the militant being chucked out of Labour. I mean, but what’s really, really interesting is Progress is a party within a party, it’s a party that was set up in 1994, that’s when it came into being and of course it’s close to the leadership, it’s close to the Blairite tendencies within the Labour Party. It was formed by a very, very close friend of Peter Mandelson, who was called Derek Draper. I’m reliably informed he wasn’t any relation to Ronnie Draper, but after he’s been off in secret for the last couple of days, I’m not so sure. He was employed, like I say, as a researcher for Mandelson.

They don’t publish the membership list and it’s controlled by directors and surely after the attacks on the trade unions and the trade union link, we have to ask why is such a secret society allowed to operate within the Labour Party? If it’s good enough to expel a militant, then we believe it’s good enough to expel Progress and if we can’t have a collective voice inside the Labour Party, then we shouldn’t have to have Progress, an unelected and uncollective representation of people that just have the ability to buy and finance the policies which the leadership then says is what we want, because the Progress policies, I don’t believe, are what working people want or working class people need. So we would ask Conference to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 78.

78 Government and Politics – No 4 Regional Council

That this conference agrees to lobby the government of the day to ensure that any proposals to withdraw from the EU will not take place before a referendum.

Brother Roy Tysall – Branch 414: That this Conference agrees to lobby the government of the day to ensure that any proposals to withdraw from the EU will not take place before a referendum. I was a bit unsure after I wrote this motion because Farage and Clegg had the debates on TV and they committed to a referendum in 2017. Our Labour Party leader, Mr Miliband, as far as I’m aware, is still yet undecided. This issue must be debated by the British public. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers?
Brother Gerry Corbett – Branch 602, Region 6: I’m just on a point of information, Mr Chairman. I remember when Britain went into what was then the EEC and it was a referendum of the British people that took them in there and I’m just questioning of the necessity for this motion, because surely if it was a referendum that took them in there, it would require a referendum to take them back out again, that’s all. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thanks for that. Any other speakers? Okay. The Executive would ask ......

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Must have upset him over that cake, he doesn’t want me to speak on it. Briefly, Chair, I’m not going to take too long, I’m going to ask Conference to support the motion and I agree with Gerry, it’s like any form of democracy, if you vote something in, you also vote to take it out or whatever, the same with strike ballots, we have a strike ballot to take action and before we call the action off, we take another ballot to make sure that we represent peoples’ views, so the one thing I will say, I’m not going to get involved in this motion on the next debate of whether membership of the EU, or I’m not going to steal anybody’s thunder on the in-out debate, I think that’s something we’re going to talk about in a minute. What the Executive would talk about is supporting the principles of democracy and the right of our members to have a say in that process and that’s broadly as far as we go. The right to have a say in determining the answer to a question that will continue to shape the lives of every single working family in this country.

Why and it is a question, why should a majority of 651 politicians who sit in Westminster, elected by very few people, be allowed to determine our future without asking us first what our views are? and even worse, even worse would be for the decision to be made for us by a party that can’t determine whether it likes Europe or whether it doesn’t like Europe, because it has so many inner fights within its own cabinet, within its own benches and that would then come down to the vote of the individual and the convictions of that individual rather than the millions of people that it will affect. Comrades, by all means support the motion and do it because it allows the UK people to determine their own destiny and not to be dragged kicking and screaming along a path determined by the right-wing press, the privileged few and a small number of politicians elected on issues other than Europe. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Apologies, Ronnie. To the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 79.

79 Government and Political – 215 Postal Branch

That this conference agrees, that the UK must stay in the European Union – the biggest market in the world.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region (South West): Mr President, Delegates. Conference, the resolution asks us to stay in Europe, to stay and not to leave the European Union. The European Union started way back in 1948, that’s when it first started. Everything starts with humble beginnings and then it grows and grows, the same as our Union grew at one time to 50,000. Now, Conference, to leave the European Union as the UKIP wants and the only sad part is that there’s far too many of them in Europe at the moment and they’re taking the European Union more or less right-wing. The UKIP and their MPs, why don’t they leave Europe, because they don’t like it? They won’t leave, because of their huge expenses and the huge money that’s involved in it, they’ll stay there and do that. Those people don’t even go to debate for England on any occasion. What we want there is MPs that will speak up on our behalf and change policies when they want to.

Of course Europe is open to change in policies. It’s not a closed shop or anything like that, but these Euro-sceptics, as I call them, want out of it. We’re Britain, we want to stay. Britain now is, it’s three countries, England, Scotland and Wales. You are now three countries, not an off-shore island, because you can walk to Europe now through the tunnel, you can go on a bike on a cycle path, you’re hooked up, you don’t have to travel. You’re only an island when you have no way of getting there, only by boat or plane, so we are hooked up to Europe by road through the tunnel. Conference, I move the resolution now. You know the score, you’ll hear the views. There isn’t enough European education for the people, a lot of people don’t vote for Europe one way or the other because they don’t understand and they don’t bother going to the polls to vote for it, but Conference I move the resolution, now you make a decision and when you make a decision, there’s right and wrong and always remember, you cannot have them both. Thank you. I move.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?
Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558: I’m here to oppose this. Believe it or not, I watch a bit of telly and I watched Question Time and I saw the late Bob Crow going on about the EU and he said we should pull out because he believes, as a trade unionist, that it’s undemocratic.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Here to support the motion. The EU has a lot, a lot of problems and it needs a lot of reform. You won’t get any reform if you’re not inside it. We need to be inside to change it, plus a lot of the problems that are blamed on the EU are nothing to do with the EU. Most of the problems that Britain’s suffering from are either our own, problems of our own making or worldwide ones, not the EU’s. Yes, they have problems, yes, it needs changing, you’ll not be able to change it from the outside. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): I’m on the shelf with this one, yes, on the shelf. I don’t know which way because I was lucky enough last year to go to the TUC and like the last speaker there said, not the last one, the one before, the late Bob Crow, God bless him, he was looking on exploring at forming a party to oppose UKIP, but it was also to come out of Europe and I went to a fringe meeting and listened to Bob speak on it and he wanted to keep all the friendly laws that come out of Europe and I do believe currently we still need to be in Europe and I agree with the last motion, we need a referendum to come out, but there’s nothing to say that we couldn’t explore, there’s nothing to say that we can’t trade with the rest of the world. I think, as I say, I’m on the fence with it, it’s a difficult one to decide on.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: What you’re talking about there with Bob Crow was TUSC and I was a member of TUSC until I went down to a meeting in London and it was what they were saying, we need to come out of Europe and I went oh, hang on, this is where nearly all the good legislation that we’ve had in the workplace has come from, it’s come from Europe, it hasn’t come from our parliament, so you need to think long and hard about coming out of Europe and think about your positions at work. Your minimum wages, working hours, holidays, it’s come from Europe. Think long and hard about this.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: The minimum wage never came from Europe, the minimum wage came from the Labour Party in 1997 but yes, in Europe, Europe during the Thatcher years did send a lot of positive legislation that protected workers and we’re very grateful. The Union’s policy is actually to oppose membership of the European Union, so it won’t be any surprise for people here to know that the Executive are asking Conference to oppose the motion. Our Union policy has been to leave the EU not because we’re little islanders fighting for the sovereignty of our country. This is our birthplace, not by choice but through accident and it’s not because we don’t recognise, like I say, some of the benefits that have come from the EU, which have been in place for many years, but because it entrenches us, in us, a free market capitalism.

It restricts our ability to give industry much-needed funds, as the community rules restricts governments from doing anything seen as giving an unfair advantage. The whole rise of UKIP isn’t because people want to stay or leave the EU, it’s a debate designed to divide and cause fear, blame those people over there. It really doesn’t matter who they are, but let’s blame those people over there, let’s blame the unemployed, let’s blame the poor, let’s blame the housing and our poverty on those people over there. There is not another low-paid person that wants to see another low-paid person in poverty. It’s absolute nonsense and it’s just an excuse to actually hide from the people the real culprits of the poverty that we see in our country and the low pay and the issues that we face on a day-to-day basis and again the reason why we urge you, urge you to oppose this motion is just imagine, in 2015, Ed Miliband failed to inspire the working class people to vote Labour. David Cameron walks in, he then goes to the EU and re-negotiates and takes away the Working Time Directive, reduces down to zero the protection from health and safety that we rightly recognise as a successful and major benefit of the European Union.

That because of his re-negotiation, he allows the corporate to then further privatise, through legislation brought in by the EU, our NHS. Imagine as this trade union then has to go out and tell our members to vote to stay in it, because if you pass this motion, by the time that referendum would come, our policy would be to support the EU in whatever shape that re-negotiation had taken place, because our rule book would stop us from being able to change the rule. So we urge Conference to oppose the resolution and if the EU is an issue for us in the future, bring that motion back and let’s debate it, but I urge you don’t, don’t put us in a position where we’re unable, unable to do anything about what he may do to the benefits that we currently have in Europe.
Right to reply.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, Delegates. I thank the supporters that supported the resolution, because they can see the benefits of the European Union. He doesn’t see them, he doesn’t see them. He’s a leader of a union, he should be always preaching unity and preaching unity with the working people across Europe and he’s not doing that, he’s not doing that. He’s preaching a policy of wanting to get out of Europe. He thinks he’s a British Empire again, he’s not. The British Empire doesn’t exist any more and Europe is not an Empire, it’s 28 nations getting together, sitting down and talking their policies. Believe you me, in this last episode of the downturn in the economies, if we hadn’t 28 countries sitting down together, we would have 1939 back again and a whole World War would have broken out. 70 years of peace and prosperity we have it in Europe and 60% of all our exports go to Europe and we’re together, we’re together, even Ireland. Cameron says we can trade with the rest of the world. The Republic of Ireland is among the top 10 people working with Britain, we’re among the top 10. More business is done between the Republic of Ireland and the UK than there is with China, Japan and Brazil and all of those countries. Conference, support the resolution, now I’m asking you to support the resolution now, on the basis of what he said. Support the resolution and we will have prosperity again. Europe didn’t cause the banking crash, the bankers caused that. Conference, support the resolution.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That was a right to reply, sorry, Sean. Okay. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s lost. Thank you.

Okay, Conference, you can close …..

I’m very proud actually that Unite the Resistance are sitting at the back of the Hall, because like Unite the Resistance, Youth Fight for Jobs and the other organisations that we’re working with on several campaigns. Unite the Resistance has been playing a very, very important role for supporting our members and supporting other trade unions’ members, so I’m really, really pleased that they’ve been able to be here this week and obviously demonstrate some of the stuff that they get involved with and I’m really, really pleased as well that the next speaker has agreed to come and speak on our platform, because during the Hovis dispute, during the Hovis dispute, obviously we needed to seek the support of many organisations and our next speaker was so critical to making sure that the support that those people received on the picket line arrived, so I’m really, really proud and pleased to introduce a friend of our Trade Union, a friend certainly to those people that were on the picket line in Hovis and an absolute great comrade, please welcome, Conference, to Michael Bradley.

[APPLAUSE]

Michael Bradley, Unite the Resistance, addresses Conference:

Cheers. First of all, I wanted to say thanks to Ronnie and Ian and everybody to let us come along and say a few words today. There’s two times when you shouldn’t want to speak, I suppose, first thing is just before lunchtime, so I’ll try to keep it brief so that people can get their lunch, but the second thing is as well is after having some brilliant speakers and I was just listening to people talk about Ricky Tomlinson, speak yesterday and stuff and how inspiring and stuff that was and I think Ricky Tomlinson is inspiring to listen to, because what he represents is when working class people stand up and begin to fight back, what can happen. I’m also on as a bit of a warm-up act, to be honest with you, because tonight there’s a fringe meeting we’re organising and speaking at and the Walkers Union are organising, where a number of speakers are coming up from the disputes that are going on around the country and you might have read about some of them.

There’s a little college in South London, Lambeth College, they’re on an all-out strike at the moment, the workers there, because their contracts are being ripped up and new workers are asked to come in on completely new contracts, worse holidays, pay, conditions and the rest of it. There’s someone coming from Care UK in Doncaster, they’ve been out on strike, the care workers, for 34 days over the last few months because they are facing thousands of pounds in pay cuts and there’s a young bloke coming up from the Ritzy Cinema, which again is in London right, it’s one of these posh art-house cinemas right and stuff about it, where you go in and you spend £6 on a cup of coffee, the problem is, is the people who work there don’t get the living wage, right and stuff and these people are coming up tonight to try and talk about their disputes and to try and ask people here for their support.
I suppose particularly in the week where the World Cup is about to start and if you try and advertise something you normally need a celebrity don’t you and I want to start with a little celebrity story, because on Saturday I was in Hackney in East London at one of these cinemas that the Ritzy owns right and stuff, a place called the Hackney Picture House and they were putting on a do for Amnesty International, brilliant cause, raising money for people around the world right and stuff who are facing oppression and the rest of it and Eric Cantona was opening it right and stuff, the ex-Man United Player, Eric Cantona, he’s an actor now was opening and stuff yes, all the main, all the Man City supporters started to boo in the corner right and stuff about it, but he went in and he did a brilliant thing really, because rather than just bowing through, being a big wig and the rest of it, the workers stopped him and explained what was going on and instead of Eric going inside, he came out and he joined the picket line and there was a bunch of 20 year old strikers shouting “Ooh, ah, Cantona!”. [APPLAUSE]

It was a marvellous thing to watch and I think that spirit of solidarity is something we’ve got to try and rebuild and there’s a lot of reasons to do this. I walked round yesterday, I was on the Lambeth College picket line at one point, then at lunchtime I went down to see a bloke called Bryan Kennedy, I don’t know if anybody here’s heard of him, he a rep, a Unite rep at a place called One Housing, a housing association. He organised, he unionised the place, then a successful dispute and so, of course, what have the employers done? They victimised him, right, they victimised him but the workforce aren’t abandoning him, they were out on strike yesterday right and stuff and people were out supporting him. In Central London there were cleaners out yesterday right and stuff, mostly migrant workers right and stuff, they work at the University of London. University of London is worth millions upon millions of pounds, it’s one of the top two universities in Britain, but it can’t pay its cleaners a living wage. It’s a disgrace right and stuff about it and also they’re now making them redundant and we were saying earlier on, the fact that at Tilbury Docks right and stuff, it’s like going back 100 years literally.

Dockers used to be the original zero hours contracts workers. You used to queue up and get your work that day or get sent home. The fact that now this is happening at Tilbury in the 21st Century, they’re re-introducing what we won 100 and odd years ago really, sums up why we need to talk about fighting back and this week it seems to me is the beginnings of a fight back on quite a big level. You look at it, on Thursday the fire fighters are out on strike again over their pensions, the ridiculous argument that fire fighters are supposed to shin up ladders until they are 65 whatever and stuff and this is all okay by the government and on 10th July, it looks like there will be 1½ million people coming out on strike in the public sector over pay. [APPLAUSE]

Now, you don’t need me to go through the horror stories around this stuff. Why are there strikes over this?, because most people in the last four or five years effectively have seen their wages go backwards, that’s what this is about, it means the things we gained are being ripped away from us and people have raised things, but a couple of little facts and figures here right, there are 1,000 people in this country now who have got as much money as a ½ of the entire national wealth, 1,000 people have got that kind of money. I saw a photograph yesterday, in a number of towns now, I don’t know if people have seen them, they’re introducing these studs now on the roads and stuff, so homeless people can’t sleep in front of doorways, that’s the result of it, we’ve got homeless people but now instead of dealing with that, giving them somewhere to go, giving them a house or anything else, you just make sure, like they were pigeons or something, that they can’t lie down and make a mess of things and when the government talks about trade unions going back to the bad old days of the 70s and the rest of it, where we are is we’re back to the bad old days now of the 1870s, if you’re workers in this country ...... [APPLAUSE]

… because that’s how long the attacks have gone on for. Now, I wanted to talk about a couple of things really. Obviously what your whole Conference is about is what do we do about this and of course we want to protest about these things and there are some big protests that are coming up. People’s Assembly have got a demo in London on 21st June and the TUC have called a demonstration in October, Britain Needs A Pay Rise and they’re really, really important things, but I don’t know if people heard it, a couple of years ago, Mark Serwotka, who’s the general secretary of the Civil Service Union, said something really good. He said it’s great if we march together, but imagine if we struck together too right and stuff about and this is in lots of ways the bit I want to try and talk about, because industrial action, what happened at Wigan, collective power that we’ve got inside the trade unions, the potential and the rest of it right, is still there and we’re told all the time that it’s not, we’re told the trade unions are dinosaurs, they’re things of the past right and stuff about and actually people remember before Christmas, there was a big debate over the dispute that went on up at Grangemouth in Scotland about whether the unions were too weak now to be able to take on the employers.
I want to say a couple of things about that really. The first thing is – who makes the wealth in this country, who makes the wealth? We do. Who keeps the buses running, who keeps the trains going, who cleans the hospitals, who looks after the sick, who teaches the kids and the rest of it? We do and so when they talk about the gross national product and the rest of it, that’s our sweat, that’s our work right and stuff about that, hasn’t changed no matter what the jobs are that we do. The second thing is we can win stuff. I mean the reason why people talk about the Bakers Union all the time at the moment is because of Hovis right and stuff about it, the idea that you can beat zero hours contracts when everybody, they were writing whole theses in universities explaining to you why you couldn’t beat zero hours contracts and then you lot went along and beat them right and stuff about it and therefore it starts opening up a real debate.

[APPLAUSE]

See, it’s true that our side is weaker than it once was, we know this right and stuff. If you look back, in 1979 there were 13 million trade unionists in Britain right and stuff, at the moment there’s something like 6½ million. There used to be 300,000 stewards in Britain, at the height of the miners’ strike in 1984, now there’s probably 100,000 or so and we know particularly in the private sector there’s 14–15% industrial, unionisation right, this isn’t great in lots of ways over it, but actually lots of the stuff that Ian was talking about earlier is important, because there are millions of people, millions of people, particularly young workers who would like to be in a trade union, who would like to see their jobs defended right and stuff and actually what we have to try and talk about is how do we break into the sectors where those people are and unionise them and actually one of the things that you’ve been talking about all over the weekend, what’s happened at Greggs, the Fast Food Rights Campaign, the rest of it and stuff is about how do we break into places that we’re told are impossible to organise, because there’s a simple thing isn’t there really about it, is people join trade unions but they join trade unions when they think the union does something for them and that they can win and just look at when people join unions, it’s when unions are fighting.

On a local scale, people join, the last couple of weeks I spoke to somebody at Edinburgh College, little college up in Scotland, they had a massive win against their employers right and stuff, their union branch went up by a third, but in 2011 when big strikes were happening over pensions, unions put on hundreds of thousands of members in this country. It wasn’t about mergers, it wasn’t about the idea that we just had to keep re-shuffling the deck chairs, people joined unions, it seems to me, when unions fight. The issue of the anti-trade union laws has been brought up. We all know that they devised it to cripple us, to make it difficult for us to organise and the rest of it. Of course we’ve got a campaign against them laws and the rest of it, but also sometimes you can break them right and stuff about it and actually quite often they’re only as strong as we can allow them to be.

One thing I was involved in, people might have read about it a year or so ago, was the big dispute where electricians were fighting a big attack on their conditions, the BESNA agreement, that was going to see their pay cut by something like a third. There were occupations, there was an unofficial action, there were all sorts of activities went on, which I know can sometimes make you worried if you’re leading the trade unions and stuff, but also it’s interesting that they won their dispute and unions themselves, Unite and other unions themselves were not taking any chances. Of course it makes a difference who runs your union, don’t get me wrong right and stuff about it, the reason why I kind of left these like me invited up by Ronnie right and stuff or Mark Serwotka or other trade unions, it makes a massive difference who leads your union, but to be honest with you, even the best general secretary is only as good as rank and file, that’s the truth of it, only as good as how organised people are on the ground and the argument we want to try and raise really inside the movement is how we improve and get together the confidence of ordinary workers, both inside individual unions, but also across the unions and what Unite the Resistance has tried to do is three things I suppose, is to try to build solidarity for people when they are out on strike and fighting, secondly to try and build support, real support, for people when they need it on the picket line and the rest of it, like at Hovis and at other places, but also providing a place where we can talk and debate what the best way, what the best way forward is.

There’s just a last couple of things I wanted to say. Lots of people have raised it in a discussion. One of the things I think at the moment that is happening is there’s a real systematic attempt to divide our side right, they’re trying to do it really in two ways, one is over benefits. At the moment you would believe that, for example, disabled people in this country were terrible people who really just want to take your money all the time, because always there’s stuff on the TV about Living Allowance, all the rest of it, they try and divide that way. The second way is what lots of people have written, what’s come out of the European elections with UKIP and the rest of it right. What they want us to do is turn on each other and blame one another, so we’re supposed to blame migrants, different workers, etc., etc. The truth of it is, is most of us know right, I mean personally it might be people in a different room right. I’m one of a group of 7 million migrants in this country, we’re the Irish right and stuff about it really, this country’s been built on migration at every stage and stuff about it, people who work in the hospitals and schools etc., etc.
If we let these people divide us, if we do turn on each other and start blaming, the only people who’d benefit out of that are the Tories and the bosses it seems to me and it has to be a central message and one of the arguments from people talking about Labour, I think Labour have to come out strongly against this stuff and I think the problem of it is that Ed Miliband, over the last period, hasn’t been.

Last two things really, there was a brilliant debate I thought this morning about the issue of Labour and people in the room have obviously got lots of agreements and disagreements on issues about whether to fund Labour, to remain supporting Labour etc., etc and stuff about it, but there’s one thing I think we should all try and agree on, is we can’t wait for Labour right and stuff about it, for two reasons. First of all because the attack on us is now, we know that, every time we go to work with bullying employers, the attacks on our pensions, pay and everything else, but the second thing is, even if Labour are elected as they are at the moment, Ed Miliband said something simple. He said we’re going to stick to Tory spending laws, pledges and that’ll mean no matter whether they want to do it or not, there will be cuts, there will be attacks and we’re going to have to talk about how we fight back and that’s why we do need a fight back on a big scale.

Over the last couple of years I’ve been to lots and lots of trade union conferences where motions have been passed about the idea of co-ordinated strikes and general strikes. Why is that? Not because people are just doing it for the sake of it, because all of us know one basic thing really at the moment, that it’s crazy not to stand together right and stuff. We’re much stronger when we come out together and stuff and organise together and co-ordinate and at the moment I think we’ve got the chance for that again right and stuff about it. On 10th July if there are 1½ million people out, it’s the chance for us to start to co-ordinate things again and get a real movement going against the employers and the government really and stuff. If they say they’re not worried about the unions, why do they keep bringing in more anti-union laws if they’re worried about the unions, that’s the truth of it and stuff and we’ve got the chance to get this going again, but last time round it seems to me, in 2011, some people at the top of some unions didn’t want to push it as far as it could have gone right and stuff about it and we’ve been paying the price for that, I think, over the last period of time and this time round, I think we have to say that it’s time really to start talking about taking on the government in a really serious way, starting to co-ordinate the fights and start to show them that the unions have got teeth and just to finish really, I just want to go back to Eric Cantona in a way, because if you think about the kind of arguments that have been brought up really over the last period about the trade union movement and stuff, that it’s a dead donkey in many ways, they can’t attract new layers of people and the rest of it.

If you saw what the picket line looked like at Hovis, or you saw what the picket line looked like at Ritzy, you saw at Lambeth College and other places right and stuff about it, you can see the potential in lots of ways for a new trade union movement right and stuff, that starts being the people who you look to if you want social justice, who you look to if you want to see someone who’s going to stand up for you, but also that can have a real, real effect on improving working class peoples’ lives, so I really encourage as many people as possible to come along tonight to talk to the Lambeth people, to talk to the Ritzy strikers, to talk to the Care UK people and stuff and there being solidarity from Unite the Resistance to the Conference. I hope you have a brilliant rest of the Conference, but I just think you can’t underestimate the issue around Hovis and what it meant. You guys might be fed up a little bit with talking about Hovis, it gets brought up and all the rest of it, in the movement people aren’t at all, because it seems to me it gives people hope that no matter how bad they try and smash up our contracts, how bad they try to treat our young people, how bad they try and attack us, there is an answer that working class people have got and that’s strike action, it’s solidarity, it’s the ability really to pull the plug on the employer and to beat them.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Michael, obviously, thank you for what was really an inspirational speech and of course, there’ll be lots and lots of Delegates who probably haven’t seen you before, but I would echo everything that Ian said about that the work that you do in support of workers, not just within our Union, but I’ve most certainly seen it first hand the work that you’ve done with us and not just the Hovis dispute. I mean, you’ve been there when we’ve been doing the fast food stuff and wherever there is a problem, you’re always willing to help us. So what we’d like to do first of all is we’d like to make a donation to Unite the Resistance from the Union and whilst it won’t keep all the fights going forever, what it will do it will most certainly help in some of the campaigns, so ....

[APPLAUSE]

…and probably even more valuable, is a tin of Fox’s biscuits made by trade union members who brought these, they donate them to the Conference and we’ll see whether equality whether they’ll last until you get home and you share them with your partner when you get back, so enjoy, enjoy Michael, thank you very much.
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Because you’ve been very nice, you can go for your dinner and come back for 2 o’clock. Right, just before you do, I nearly forgot, Scrutineers, when you come back, straight into the Standing Orders room please, you need to count the ballot.

Yes, tonight’s half past 5, but we’re going ......

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, can we shut the doors. Everybody in their seats. Okay. Just to let you know, the collection for Unite the Resistance raised £117, thank you very much, Conference.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I’m sure people are aware that obviously Alan Carr’s wife got taken into hospital last night. Our understanding is that she’s okay, she’s got fluid on the lung, she’s going to be in hospital for about three days, but I’m sure Conference would like to send a get well message to Alan. I don’t know if he’s managed to get in this afternoon, I know he was going to try and get in, but obviously I think we should convey our message of get well soon to Margaret and obviously hope Alan’s okay, because I know he was pretty distressed this morning, so we’ll pass that message on from Conference.

I’m looking for the General Secretary, anybody seen him? He’s behind me. General Secretary. Roll call.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Region 1, we tried to correct that Steve. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4, okay can you send them to Standing Orders please. Region 5. Region 6 and Region 7. At the time of closing the doors, there were 178 Delegates in the Hall.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, I’ve just been ...... Sorry, wrong information, misunderstood. What do you want? What do you want? Okay.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Point of order. At break times we’ve been provided with tea and coffee and there’s also biscuits there for Delegates and guests to Conference, guests at Conference, for consumption at Conference. People are taking handfuls and bagfuls home for their kids. Stop it. If there’s any left at end of Conference, we can donate them to a local charity or a food bank. Behave yourselves.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can you keep the noise down, please.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Right, comrades, we’re just going to take just a few minutes out of Conference just to make some presentations, so first of all I’m going to ask Tom Jones, who’s one of the senior partners from Thompson’s Solicitors to come down and he’s going to make a couple of awards. Which one have you got, Tom, first?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can you keep the noise down, please.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Right, first of all we’re going to, every year as you know, well for the benefit of new Delegates, our lawyers every year, different lawyers, promote different activities within the Union and we come up with a way of representing those successes that we’ve had during the year. The first one we want to do is the organising award. I think it’s probably one of the most prestigious awards that you can get and it’s something that not everybody can win, but we’d like to think that everybody will be a candidate for it at some time or another. We do get quite a lot of nominations for this and there’s some very, very prominent people within the Union who’ve won this before.

So I think first of all, let’s, to say that the recipient this year is going to be Ann McGothigan from No. 7 Region, who works at Moy Park and whilst I don’t know exactly the amount of numbers that she’s organised, there seems to be quite a lot of pride from Laura when she’s telling me about Ann and it’s been one of those branches that’s been really, really difficult to organise and I know in the past we had a lot of conflict with another union, should we say and Ann’s great stiring work has ensured that she’s become this year’s recipient and so I’m sure Tom’ll give you that award Ann, if you come forward with the same pride that the Executive nominated you.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I gather Ann, if she’d been told about this before she got on the plane, wouldn’t have come, so she’s embarrassed to get it, but did very well.

Tom Jones, Senior Partner, Thompson’s Solicitors: I gather Ann, if she’d been told about this before she got on the plane, wouldn’t have come, so she’s embarrassed to get it, but did very well.
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: The second one, again, it’s one of those awards we haven’t had for too long but it’s something that gives you a pride in the, we’re showing progress as a Union in the achievements we’re making and that’s the youth award winner. Again, we’ve had some fantastic recipients and it actually changed the ethic of the Executive, because we were always in a situation where we would, you would get foreign trips, Egypt, wherever it was, Israel, Uganda, it was always the domain of the Executive, so it was always Executive members who went, or it was maybe some of the full-time Officials who went and we changed that about three or four years ago, maybe five years ago, to look to reward whoever won the youth award and we would send them on, if there was any foreign delegation, we would send them, if you like, as young ambassadors for the Union. Craig, you went to Cuba, didn’t you? I know Rachel, I think, went to Israel. I think Sarah Woolley went to Israel and whatever, Chris Lay, he’s been out there, so we’ve tried to reward youth ones and this year God, it really worried me because this year’s recipient is Rory Beesley from Wigan, Hovis, Wigan. Now this guy did a fantastic job but we discussed ….

[APPLAUSE]

I was going to send him to Israel, I was going to send him to Israel and Palestine on a delegation in a few weeks’ time, but unfortunately because of family commitments he can’t do it, but knowing his madcap zany ways, I think it might not have been a good thing for Israel and Palestine anyway, so Rory, I mean thank you for the work that you’ve done as a young person, I’m great, I think you’ll be a fantastic ambassador and when we do get the opportunity of sending you somewhere on a trip, we’ll do that. We’ll make sure it’s a return ticket as well, mate.

[Laughter and applause]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Hey, Ronnie, if you’re going to do Sedge too, mate, you’ve got to speak, you’ve got to speak. Oh ….

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Right, we do have one more award that we’re going to give. Normally we would have an Executive guest to Conference, but unfortunately the Executive guest that we’d picked this year, after a lot of soul searching, was Tony Sedgewick, but he actually dropped out of Conference, but the final award that, which is sponsored by our lawyers, is sponsored by Walker Union and that is the health and safety award. Again, it’s not one that we’ve done for many a time, for much time, but we have to recognise the fantastic work that’s done by unsung heroes in the workplace, the health and safety reps. When you think of the difference that they actually make to peoples’ lives and have done, in particular since 1974 and the Health and Safety at Work Act, has been absolutely remarkable. All unpaid heroes, do an absolutely remarkable job and in particular, having spoken to the branch secretary of this branch, that the recipient this year has done an absolutely amazing job, so please can I ask Alison Braun from Fox’s, Batley to come down and receive the award from Neil, from Walkers Union.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Alison Braun – Branch 568: I’d just like to say, this safety award is for every safety rep, because we all work as hard as each other. I’d also like to thank Helena, but I didn’t know she’d put me up for this award. I’d like to thank the EC for giving me it and I’d like to thank Willie Colquhoun for my health and safety training. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, just before we go back to the Agenda, I’ve been given another message that Conference sends its support to the Brazil transport workers, who are getting tear gassed and batoned and have been getting tear gassed and batoned over the last five days, so they will go back to work before the World Cup starts. I think we will send our solidarity to those Brazilian workers that are standing up for their rights over in Brazil and it’s absolutely appalling what’s happening to them.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, mover of motion 80.

80 Government and Political – No 2 Regional Council

That this Conference agrees that the government should spend on aid at home as well as abroad.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: In actual fact, this is No. 1 branch resolution. Conference, we ask the government of the day or whatever government it is yes, we spend aid and send aid to many countries. Britain is a great supplier of aid to other countries, but it’s all lost, it’s all lost. We’re do-gooders, but when you come to home, then you have at home you have people then the bedroom tax. Now, is that right, to be giving aid and showing ourselves as great people and then turning around and saying to our own people sorry, you won’t have a bed to sleep on tomorrow night, you’re on the street.
That’s what’s happening. Conference, we must spend aid at home as well as abroad and look after the people at home, because if you don’t look after your own people, you’re a sham sending money around the world to other countries. Imagine China getting aid from this country, India getting aid from this country and what are they doing?, building up huge armies, that’s what they’re doing. They have the money to build up huge armies in these countries, they have the money to look after their people too, but they don’t do it, but they expect Britain to pay, to send aid to these countries. Conference, we must spend the aid in this country. If we stopped all the wars that we’re getting involved in, we wouldn’t have to have bedroom tax, we would have the money to look after the people. If we close the loopholes and got the taxes off the rich people that is evading tax, evading tax and Conference, we have to do these things. This is what we have to do, is spend more aid on our young people and bring them up in the world that they’re going to face. Conference, I move.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: I’m here to support this motion, but the problem I have is that aid should be given to everybody, but in Britain why have we got 3,000 food banks? If people are giving aid abroad, it should be given to these people that are queuing outside food banks as well. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Speakers? Okay, Conference, we’d ask you, the Executive would ask Conference to oppose the motion. Aid is something that is given voluntarily. We understand the aim, but we don’t want the unemployed receiving aid, the sick being issued with food parcels, pensioners awaiting for some charity to pull up outside so they can be fed, even though that’s the way of Cameron’s big society. We pay tax, we pay national insurance and when we go off work sick or find ourselves out of work, then we should receive benefits that we have paid for. The whole idea that people are scroungers or taking something for nothing is designed to cause division and loathing. We defeat it by refusing to toe the line and questioning what’s happening to the money that we’ve paid in. It’s been spent on bailing out the banks, it’s filling and who’s going to be filling the gaps left by the tax cuts to the wealthiest and all those companies who put their tax avoidance measures in place to avoid paying their tax to the country.

We don’t want aid, we want benefits. People are entitled to them, they paid for them. Your national insurance means that you, when you find yourselves out of work you should receive it as a right. It doesn’t make you a scrounger, it doesn’t do anything but give you what it was intended to do in the first place, which was to make sure you didn’t fall into poverty and the sooner they remember that’s why that welfare state was put in place, the better. So we would ask Conference to oppose the motion on the basis that working people in this country deserve to get the benefits that they’ve paid for and not aid that’s handed out because they feel it’s something they can do as a charitable approach.

[APPLAUSE]


81 Government and Political – 215 Postal Branch

That this conference agrees, that there should be a police check for immigration coming to the UK.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Mr President, Delegates. Conference, we ask you to support this resolution, because there should be, it says border police, police check here, they should be border controls so that people can be checked leaving and coming to the country. This is not a resolution to ban people from coming to this country or banning what they call foreigners, I don’t know what the foreigner word means, all people are acceptable to me and to be honest about it, there is people that is doing things today that is trying to destabilise things, like radicals, you know. I don’t mind religions or any other type of form of things, but that type of thing may be important to them, but it’s not to us.

Conference, I ask you to support the resolution that there should be checks, so that we know and could catch up with these criminals and people that are coming in to the country. This is the ones we have to sort out, but for other people that come in, honestly I believe in the movement of people, I believe in the free travel and I came to this country, I went to America, I came back again, I would like that freedom and of course everybody else likes that freedom, but we have to have checks on certain things to catch up with these people who are wrong and also if these people that are coming into the country, we can be, that can be exploited by labour because they don’t know the system and they can be enslaved in this country today, that we can get in contact with these people and get them into our movements and get them to be with us and that way we will have a good society. Conference, I move the resolution.
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Funnily enough, I’m up here to oppose this and I’m up here to oppose this because there’s a lot of bent police forces in this world, so if you knew somebody in the police force, they could give you a glowing report and say what a good lad he is, when actually he was part of the mafia. No, I’ve got to oppose this.

Sister Carmina Kaszoni – Branch 716, Region 7: Hello, my name is Carmina Kaszoni, I’m from Branch 716, Region 7 and I would like to sustain this. I’m Romanian, I came here in 2008 and I’ve worked since then. I’ve never been one day out of work, I’m paying all my taxes and I don’t think that people which are criminal in their own country, they will emigrate in another country to go and work as a normal person and pay all their taxes, so I support this resolution. I consider that everybody has the right to travel, that discrimination shouldn’t be, equality is a major term in our day, so we are talking about equality and diversity. Yes, I understand and I appreciate diversity, but always we have to make sure and we have to, we need to make sure that we are in between the people which are not criminals, okay, so I would like for you to support this motion and I don’t consider that just UK need to control their borders and need to have a police check, all European country need to do so. Thank you very much.

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201: I’m here to oppose this motion. I think it’s absolutely dreadful. I don’t want to be part of a nanny state where people are told they can come here or they can’t come here. At the end of the day, let people come here on their own merits, right and just be just people, we’re all just people man, doesn’t matter where you come from.

Sister Apryl Walcott – Branch 450: Yesterday when we heard Ricky speak, he’s got a criminal record. How many trade unionists around the world have criminal records because of their government? We cannot put a blanket ban if you’ve got a criminal record.

Brother Gerry Corbett – Branch 602, Region 6: Opposing the motion and if people think that they’re not checked coming in here to this country, I can vouch for just last Saturday morning as we got into Liverpool Airport, being stopped and questioned about my movement, where I was going, how long I intended to stay here and as it was pouring down with rain at the time, I told them if it kept raining like that I wouldn’t be here for very long ......

...but worst still, a number of years ago going through Manchester Airport, after the Conference in Bridlington and we got back to Manchester to get the flight to Dublin and while everybody else could go through into the International Arena, we were stopped and told we couldn’t go through until there was a police check. We were treated separately. Our baggage was photographed, we were photographed as if we were criminals and it’s when you get abuse like that, that you realise how belittling this is. You need reasonable checks, yes, but you give power to police, too much power to police and they will abuse it, so I oppose this motion.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Here to oppose the motion. I understand the spirit of it, but the wording of it is very poor and would, is very open to abuse. As the previous speaker says, systems are already in place. That, the wording of it is very poor, it is just open to abuse by the powers that be, if you give them carte blanche with a blank cheque like that statement. Please oppose this motion. Thank you very much.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Here to oppose this motion. I can remember only, I think it was three or four years ago we had a guy, he works at Suma Foods, came here as a Delegate who had a death sentence passed on him in Columbia, what, he was classed as a criminal in his country, when in actual fact all he was was a campaigner. Oppose the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: General Secretary to respond.
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, President. I’ll tell you what, talk about a motion that causes soul searching and debate and all that, we went through every emotion at the last Executive Council and still, before just now, we couldn’t come up with a decision whether we were going to go one way or the other, but I do believe that we have a duty as an Executive to make a decision on voting and give a leadership in the way we are and I’ve got to say that having listened to a full spectrum of opinion and do you know, there’s nobody been wrong in what they’re saying, but I think on the balance of power and the balance of the debate, that the Executive would ask Conference to oppose the motion. On one hand we see, we clearly see the need for checks on those coming into our country to ensure they’re not allowing hardened criminals to settle here, but on the other hand we very, very much focussed on the wording of the motion, I think Andy said it before, it says police checks and we came at it from maybe a slightly different angle, in that at present the checks that are done on people coming into the UK are done by fellow trade unionists who are members of PCS and I’ll tell you what, they have come under absolutely massive pressure.

You see it now, the queues in airports, the queues around baggage terminals is all down to the cuts that they’ve been involved in and I think if we do allow checks to be just done solely by the police, then we would see we were actually condemning thousands of trade unionists to job losses and I don’t believe that that is our role to do that. You know, the immigration services, as I said before, are already stretched to the limits thanks to those cuts, imposed by government policies and the need to cover the backs of the bankers who brought the country to its feet. You know, I would put those people down as criminals, the people who did that, but you know, they’ll be the people who’ll be safe if they tried to wander to outside shores. I should think we should let some of those bankers go and not let them back in, if we’re going to have proper police checks.

[APPLAUSE]

The, as far as, the immigration services do an absolutely fantastic job given their limited resources and they do, if we’re honest, keep our shores relatively safe from criminal elements, both serious and serial criminals, but none of us, let’s be honest, none of us are naïve enough to think that the police are not involved in immigration at this moment in time. There are international police forces co-ordinated through Interpol, who have an integrated strategy that brings all the prevention agencies together, working together for that common good and that has to be better than a one size fits all, which this motion seems to promote when it comes to protecting the shores of our country. What exactly are these police going to be looking for in these checks? You know, are they looking for a terrorist, somebody who’s going to come and blow up, are they looking for a murderer who’s trying to run away from a state into ours, are they looking for a murder’re’s drug dealers, or are they looking for drivers who are convicted of having no insurance, non-payment of television licence, what powers exactly will these police officers have in immigration? You know, would they be looking for terrorists?, because in some countries if we’re talking about terrorism, students activity is seen as state terrorism and if they get that black mark against their character in their own country, that could well prevent them from coming in and of course trade unionists, the trade unionists who’ve been involved in civil disobedience, anyone could have been arrested on that Hovis picket line, wanting to go abroad, with a criminal record against them for picketing, for secondary picketing which is outlawed, could potentially leave themselves open to not being allowed visas to travel and I can remember, I’m old enough and I know some of the Officials here, but there’s probably some members in here, looking at a couple sat at the back, years ago when we had speaking from, not this rostrum but the rostrum in Bridlington, a guy who probably most of you will never have heard of, but you’ll all know, every single one of you will know and that was the guy who stood in front of the tank in Tiananmen Square, that guy’s name is Wang Weilin, he spoke at our Conference and gave an absolutely impassioned speech, but he had a criminal record because he was seen as being a subservient in China. I

If we have police checks and we were trying to stop people coming in to this country and they did block people with police records, he would be one of those prime targets for not being allowed into the country and all he did was represent the views and the values of students in China and to try and put down an oppressive regime that’s there. Comrades, I’m not sure, so sure, if we spoke to the Police Federation that the already stretched police force that we have would actually want these extra duties, nor do I believe that we would want to turn our immigration services into an extension of a police state. I can’t guarantee that they don’t want that, but I don’t think they would want it.

The Executive, comrades, believes that we should be funding the excellent immigration services that we already have and making sure that we’re committed to making that grow, so that they can carry out the proper checks that are needed, so we’re not only taking every other person who comes in, we can actually, our immigration service can do proper screening. The Executive want that funds should be allowed, should be allowed to ensure that our borders are monitored properly, to prevent this constant flow of illegal immigrants who are coming in through France or whatever in the back of wagons, because remember there are no checks done on these people once they get into the country.
It’s like, sometimes, dropping a bag of marbles and they scatter. The best way of controlling illegal immigrants coming into the country is at the point of entry, within the ports and the only way we’re going to do that is with a proper funded immigration service. We protect our borders by knowing who is coming in, how long they’re going to stay and whether they’re allowed to stay and no amount of police checking is going to alter that scenario without the numbers and the funding that we need. Comrades, the answer has to be proper funding of those whose job it is to control our shores and an integrated policy of bringing all the protective agencies together for the common good and as I said, if you want to ban some criminals from this country, there’s thousands of bankers who brought us to the brink of bankruptcy, so comrades please support the motion. Sorry, oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply? Oh, he’s here, I was looking for you.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, yes, everything that Ronnie said there is quite right, but I did not say in the resolution, the resolution is from the branch, the resolution come here, I’m the Delegate and I am here to move it and to try to put it through Conference and if I didn’t do that, I shouldn’t come to Conference. I should let somebody else come that would take it on. You will come here at times and you will have resolutions as well that will not pass or will be voted down and as regards travelling and all of that, now I have to say to Gerry Corbett, Gerry you travelled to Manchester, yes and you turned up at the airport and you were pulled up and if you turned round and jumped on a plane at Manchester and you headed for America, you wouldn’t be let into the country at all because you didn’t have a visa and you hadn’t everything and you hadn’t gone to the American Consul and swore allegiance to the flag and everything before you go to America, all of that. I can see what you say, the points you said yes, that does happen and also that Ronnie said here yes, there is a police, it has a police check in it here, it is a bit, it’s not, it could be better I think, yes, but that’s beside the point, the resolution came here and it’s my job to do what I have to do for the branch that sent me and I still say I did not oppose the movement of people. I believe as the young girl said, in the free movement of people through Europe, that is part of life, because I would want to travel all over Europe if I want to, if I was a younger person I might want to do it, so Conference, I move the resolution and it’s up to you when you vote, vote the way you want to. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you, Pat. Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against?

That’s lost, thank you. I now invite Mark Brooks to give his final report to Conference.

Brother Mark Brooks, Chair of Standing Orders: Thank you, Mr President. Giving the final report to Conference.

Could you all turn to your Agendas, please. Motion 94 stands, motion 95 stands, motion 96 stands, motion 97 is withdrawn, motion 98 stands, motions 99 and 100 we now call composite No. 4, motion 101 stands, motion 102 stands, motion 103 stands, motion 104 stands, motion 105 stands, motion 106 stands, motion 107 stands, motion 108 stands, motion 109 stands, motion 110 stands, motion 111 stands, motion 112 stands, motion 113 stands, motion 114 stands, motion 115 stands, motion 116 stands, motion 117 stands, finally but not least 118 also stands. That is the end of this report.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, do you accept that report? Those in favour? Anyone against?

Thank you, Mark.

Okay, motion 82.

82 Government and Politics – 417 Hovis Wigan

That this conference agrees to request that the Labour Party fully organises in Northern Ireland.

Brother Andrew Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Chair, Podium, Conference. I move motion 82, that this Conference agrees to request that the Labour Party fully organise in Northern Ireland. As you’ve seen today in Conference, it calls for Labour Party action, within Conference have caused issues because people in Northern Ireland cannot vote for the Labour Party. They can become members of the Labour Party, but the Labour Party itself does not organise in Northern Ireland. It has an alliance deal with various, I’ve forgotten which party it is, but with one of the minor parties, so I request that this Conference back this motion and get the Labour Party to organise fully in Northern Ireland. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Are you seconding it?

Brother Kevin Flood – No. 7 Regional Branch: I ask you to support this motion and I’ll tell you a story why.
Obviously you know I’m from Scotland, but live in Northern Ireland, so for the last 30 years I’ve voted Labour, so I go this year, a few weeks back, local elections, European elections, they vote, they gave me my card, photographic ID, go in, get my ballot paper, it’s this length, all the Northern Irish parties are there, Sinn Féin, DUP, so on and so forth, all the way down, Conservative, UKIP, even that shite the BNP, no Labour. Where are they? Where did they go? Why are they not in Northern Ireland? Seriously, where did they go? They’re supposed to be there, there are working people in Northern Ireland, the same as there are working people in Scotland, Wales, England. Where are they? Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Dunwoody – Branch 711 (Belfast): Mr President, Conference, Delegates. I’m here to fully support this motion. People who know me, the last few years I’ve been to Conference, I’ve been a very, very strong advocate of the Labour Party setting up in Northern Ireland. I have been a very, very strong advocate of this since my early teens and as you can see, it’s been a very, very long time. The point is, I’m just asking for the Labour Party to set up because I want to vote for the Labour Party, I want to be involved with the Labour Party, I want to advocate their policies, the policies, the socialist policies that you and I aspire, but the point is I’ve been told on numerous occasions, even by a MP here two days ago, that they have a sister party in Northern Ireland called the SDLP and they want me to vote for that because it’s a sister party. What do they not understand? I do not want to vote for the SDLP. I want to be a member and I want to vote and I want to settle a constituency party of the Labour Party. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother George Hoy – Branch 703, Region 7 (Irwins Bakery): I’m sitting on the fence here, so I am. I’m up here to inform Conference that the Labour Party has no plans to organise in Northern Ireland, as we were told the other day by John McDonnell, the MP. The Labour Party won’t organise in our county, we asked why. Are they afraid of getting a bloody nose in a fight for democratic change, I don’t know, who knows? They have all said in the last couple of days that we’re not sheep, but according to the branches and regions on the mainland, at next year’s Conference when Mr McDonnell or any of our Labour parties are here, speaking our mind and ask for the truth from them about the Labour Party’s plans for Northern Ireland and you’ll find the truth yourself.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Yes, No. 2. Conference, Mr President. Conference, I support the resolution. We had a resolution similar to this here some years ago. Why it hasn’t happened that we have not a Labour Party in Northern Ireland, a Labour Party that takes in people of all denominations and has no, has no allegiance to any religion or any culture or anything else. People are all people and there should be a Labour Party in Northern Ireland long before now. We should have done it when it was here before, but nothing happens. We have political funds in the trade union movement and that could be diverted, some of it could be diverted to help get a party started on the road in Northern Ireland. I want to see a full scale Labour Party in Northern Ireland, a socialist party that we can all belong to. They are part of us and we are part of them. Conference, support this resolution.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. The Executive would ask you to support the motion. It is actually policy already of the Union to argue that for the Labour Party to organise in Northern Ireland and obviously what this will do is make sure that we continue that fight inside the Labour Party and we will put it on our Agenda of our Parliamentary Group as well, so when John McDonnell reports back next year, he’ll report back on any progress that we’ve made in that fight as well within the Labour Party, so you’ll see that we are keeping up that argument that it should be happening and we ask you to support that position. So, to the vote. All those in favour? Anyone against? That’s carried.

Composite 3 – Energy

That this conference opposes fracking and agrees to support the anti-fracking campaigners.

Brother John Halliday – Branch 706 (Hovis, Belfast): Conference, Platform, Delegates. Conference, we have an Executive Council policy opposing fracking, but we need to make it a Conference policy. In Northern Ireland, the only area that’s been deemed suitable for fracking is County Fermanagh and it’s a lakes area, a region of outstanding natural beauty. We need to stand against this brutal type of oil and gas extraction. The dangers will be covered up by all those with a vested interest. We must stand against this, we cannot allow this molestation of our country. Pollution from this type of extraction and the side effects will be seen and felt from day one. We cannot stand by and let that happen. Please support.
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Sister Janet Phillips – Branch 405: Comrades. That this Conference agrees to support the anti-fracking campaigners. The Tory press would have you believe the campaigners are all pot smoking, lazy hippies and anarchists, they are not, they are just ordinary people trying to protect their homes and environments from damage and pollution. The police lies, brutality and false arrests at Barton Moss, near Salford has been shocking. Only one protestor has been found guilty of a crime, but you’ll not hear about this in the mainstream media. Lord Howell, adviser to William Hague, ex-adviser and George Osborne’s father-in-law, said frack the desolate North East. There’s nothing desolate about the North East, there’s nothing desolate about Lancashire coal fields or the rest of the areas marked out for drilling. Please look into the facts about fracking. Support the motion and join the protectors.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Here to fully support this motion. By the time the fracking’s retrieved the gas, we’ve got the gas, the water’s pumped into the waterways, it probably won’t be our generation what’ll be suffering, it’ll be our childrens and our childrens children. The people who have made the money will have got it banked squat, wherever they take it, it’ll be long gone. They’re not telling the truth about fracking, as I’ve put in my motion, it’s going to be the biggest environmental disaster of the 20th/21st Century. Support the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers? Okay.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): Conference, we ask you to support this motion and we’re glad that it has been brought up at Conference, to make it a national policy, because we’ve only got it as a policy, as you said, on the EC and we’re asking you to support these campaigners in any way that you can, like giving donations, where mostly really they need warm, dry socks because when they’re sat there, they actually get really wet and they have to change a lot of socks and they need, so if you can actually get them some socks there, it’d be great. Go on the demonstrations, write to your MPs and council.

Let them campaigners know that we stand with them. Showing this solidarity gives the people hope in their fight against large corporations, as you saw what we did at the Wigan Hovis demonstration. The campaigners are fighting for us. The campaigners are saving our homes. The campaigners are saving our planet. We know we can win and we can win together. Now Ronnie, Ian and myself actually speak at various events on fracking, well against fracking and the Executive has affiliated the Union to the One Million Climate Jobs Campaign. Let’s stop the use of all these fossil fuels and let’s use the renewable energy. Let’s save our planet together. Please support.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

85 Energy – No 5 regional Council

That this conference puts pressure on this government or any government that enters into deals with oil and gas companies to allow fracking in any town or cities in the United Kingdom. This will be the biggest environmental disaster of the 20th and 21st century.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Sorry about that, I thought mine was composited in with that one as well. It goes without saying the motion’s there, you can read it, it’s pretty much the same as the last one. Fracking will be the biggest environmental disaster of the 20th and 21st Century, so I ask you to support this motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Alright, okay.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): I’m seconding this motion. Conference, we do ask you to support this motion and again, Conference, this is down to all of us. We need to send our letters to the MPs and councils to show our disgust for them allowing it to happen. Yes, it will be the biggest environmental disaster to this country. Water pollution, air pollution and then not being able to use the land after it’s been finished. French children wrote to me the other day, I’ve left the letter at home, but I have copied it and put it down here, yes and it says I have a dream that one day fracking does not exist in this country or any country. I have a dream, keep calm and frack off. I have a dream that fracking won’t go anywhere near my house, because we’re only one mile from the red zone.
If anybody knows what the red zone is, that’s closest to the fracking sites. I have a dream that IGas, because they’re from my area, is put out of business. Now this is what they put, not me, yes, hey you police, have you had your five arrests a day? IGas go away and never come back again, because they’ve seen first hand of what these fracking companies are doing. They’re using the police to actually bully the campaigners, put them out, yes and as Janet said earlier, these campaigners, nearly, all of them have gone to court and they’ve all been thrown out except for two and those two are going to appeal that decision and the young kids who actually wrote me the letter was Dillon, Erin, Benjamin and Ruby, Lawrie and they’re only ages 6 – 11, yes and if they can write to me to actually say no, we don’t want this going on in our backyard, can we not do that ourselves to our MPs and our councils?

Let’s do it, yes? Let’s just do it, let’s send that message out there, to get this terrible industry banned, yes? We don’t want this going on, it’s no good. The things that the fracking does, the earthquakes and it does, even Ian, well him and Debbie they felt a shudder the other night in bed, but it wasn’t, it was the earthquake in Blackpool, yes? So they know and these young kids, they know the dangers of what this fracking can do. If these young ones can pick up a pen and write to me, as I’ve said, we can do the same. So, please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Motion 86.

86 Education – 580 Greggs Yorkshire

This conference agrees that we should lobby government to ensure school academies are not just profit-making organisations, but establishments that give our children a decent education that they deserve.

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: My little boy goes to high school in two years, which is quite a scary thought, but what scares me even more is in Wakefield all our high schools and even some of our primary schools now are academies. I haven’t got a non-academy option for my son to go to. The nearest three schools, one of which is my old one that I attended, have poorer results now than when I was at school. One of them is even celebrating having their best ever GCSE results last year, even though they’re still at the bottom of the league tables in maths, English and science. Don’t get me wrong, the schools look lovely. They’ve all had refurbs, they’re all shiny and posh, the uniforms look nice, but that doesn’t mean my son’s getting a better education. I’m sorry, a business manager running a school to make a bigger amount of profit for his pocket, knows nothing about education and it’s wrong. Kids deserve a decent education, they shouldn’t be profit-making organisations, they should be education centres. Thank you. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558: Actually I’m here to support that as well, because funnily enough, Sarah, my son goes to an academy and I’ve kept my eye on it and he’s got a smaller class size and that but, as you say, they’re in competition with other schools and look at the league tables, but I think I’m supporting this mainly because as parents you’ve got to make sure that your children’s education’s right in the first place. I’m fully in support of it.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nick Hughes – Branch 417: I’m here to oppose this. Academies are a Tory idea. There’s nothing wrong with proper schools, with properly qualified teachers.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. General Secretary.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Sorry, comrades, I mean the confusion there is that I was going to speak on 88, but we think that 86 and 88 are similar, so whilst we didn’t get a composite through Standing Orders, the address that I’m going to make on academies now will basically composite my thoughts, I won’t be speaking on 88 and I take on board what Nick’s just said as well but comrades, we’d ask Conference to support the motion.

We’d ask that our members who are parents, grandparents, relations or family friends to actively campaign against this debacle that is academy schools and I suppose the question is why? Well, first of all, we believe they’re a disruptive element to our children’s education, they’re damaging to the morale of teachers and damaging to what goes on in our communities and also because a long standing member, a long standing school governor like Pat Rowley says so as well. You know, all the teachers unions oppose them and build very convincing arguments as to why, not least of which is that they hand over our state schools to the highest bidder, who act then as a sponsor.
Creating academies in place of community or foundation schools involves the transfer of publicly funded assets to unaccountable sponsoring bodies, who set the school up as a company and run it like one. Instead of the local education authority getting the funding to run the school, the sponsors receive the entire school budget directly from the government. This legalised corruption by government has the effect of transferring billions of pounds worth of publicly-funded education assets in the form of buildings and land into the hands of their rich friends. One of the shocking realities is that these sponsors don’t have to pass a suitability test, they don’t have to have any suitable educational expertise to do this.

Somebody who George Atwall and them will know, David Samworth of Samworth Brothers, a major company, that great bastion of trade union rights and workers education at Ginsters, where we’ve been trying to organise for the last 35 years that I know of. The last time we started that, Pat Rowley was in short pants, that was when we started. We still can’t get on yet. That person can run an academy and does. The guy who owns the Carphone Warehouse and Sir Peter Vardy of the Reg Vardy Motor Company are all raking in government money as educational sponsors, it’s a load of crap. In October 2009, the Times educational supplement reported that a businessman who failed to pay a fine of more than one million pounds had been appointed lead sponsor of a new academy, raising serious concerns over the government’s selection process. David Hughes, who has been named as the main backer of Birkenhead Boys Academy in the Wirral, where John and I’ll know, was involved in a price fixing scandal when he ran the All Sports chain of sports shops.

Comrades, government appointments are not meant to give sponsors a business advantage, or to allow them to push their religious beliefs, but by God it has happened. Two united learning trust academies in Sheffield are being described as inadequate by Ofsted. Union learning trust also has a controversial track record of removing staff. More than half of the head teachers have been replaced within two years of those academies opening and when I talk of people from the educational unions about, or when I talk to them about the academies, they tell me about the de-stabilising effect that they have on the capacity of other neighbouring schools to achieve a balance of abilities amongst their pupil intakes.

The academies are promoted at their best, supposedly delivering the best education, they have the best publicity both in written word and in the visits that are regularly paid by government ministers, but the reality of attaining, comrades, is somewhat totally different. There’s a wide diversity of practice regarding admissions, which make it difficult for parents to make a balanced judgement when it comes to choice and another reason for opposing them is the effect that they would have on the living standards of teachers.

All academies are able to set their own support, their own pay, their own conditions and working time arrangements for newly appointed teachers who’ve joined that academy. In some academies, pay and condition arrangements for such teachers is similar or identical to those of teachers in local authority maintained state schools, but in others teachers pay and conditions are very different. It’s a national profession being treated as separate bodies and you know in some unions, they’re not allowed to be recognised and because of the provisions of TUPE when things are set up, with the newly set up ones, provisions do not protect staff against the loss of employment in the event of a reorganisation, after the academy’s been established nor during the process of establishing an academy.

Changes can be made if they’re justified for clear economic reasons. How many times have we heard that before?, but on top of that, for technical or organisational reasons. Working conditions, which are not contractual terms, are not protected in academies. Academies are based on a flawed premise that standards will be raised simply through designating a school as an academy and by transferring it to a sponsor. There’s no independent evidence anywhere that academies are delivering significantly improved results at a faster rate than state schools. There may be anecdotal evidence out there that we can show certain ones do it, but in reality there is no evidence, there is no concrete evidence and what about the people like Pat Rowley, who’ve acted as school governors on state school appointments throughout their local authorities? People supporting your childrens education, accountable to both parents and the local authorities, but of course when it comes to academies, the sponsors appoint their own governors in much the same way as a company appoints directors to the board, a case of who pays the piper calls the tune.

Academies can create or reinforce local hierarchies of schools. The entitlement of academies to select 10% of their pupils, means that they are more capable and more able to choose the more successful pupils in the area and let’s be honest, this government has been a disaster for our children’s education. If the truth is known, they want state schools to fail, so they can put their academy money into the hands of their supporters, in just the same way as they’ve done with our National Health Service, piecemeal privatisation. Our children only have one chance to have a successful school education and we need to listen to the experts who work in education and amplify their demands and they're not massive demands.
The first one is, return academies to maintained status. Halt the expansion of the academies programme. Engage in a dialogue with teachers, parents, governors, local authorities, trade unions and other stakeholders on how such schools can be supported in the future and how the principle of local accountability comprehensive education provision can be enhanced. If companies like Samworth Brothers want to play a part in education, then do it as part of a partnership, not as a money making takeover. Sit down and talk with people like our learning services and see what they can do. The last, let’s legislate, but all state funded schools to apply national pay and conditions for staff, including trade union recognition.

Comrades, academies have proved nothing other than the fact that they are an established expensive ego trip for those who sit in government doling out the cash. Oh and they’ve proved one thing, that sometimes clowns like Michael Gove do get to run the circus. Comrades, please support the motion.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: I agree with what Nick said, we shouldn’t have academies at all, but unfortunately they’re here and all the motion is saying is that we want to ensure that whilst we’re having to put up with them, we want our children to get a decent education. We don’t want them, but we’re having to put up with them. Please support.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Thank you.

Motion 87.

87 Education – No 5 Regional Council

The school curriculum is not fit for purpose. We ask delegates for their support in demanding a new educational program that will benefit all and prepare our children for a demanding future.

Brother David Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Mr President, Platform, Delegates. There are several reasons why we believe the present school curriculum is not fit for purpose. We witness constant meddling from government for their political benefit, so we first ask for a return to local authority control. We then require a more modern curriculum to better prepare our children for an extremely challenging future. Yet we also would like to see industrial relations taught to every child, galvanise the youth to engage them more politically in later life and then with an improved education standard in place, we can safeguard against any possible religious extremism and provide children with the best education in the world. Please support.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Sister Carole Golightly – Branch 506, Region 5: Hello. I support this motion, as schools should have a new educational programme that would benefit our children for a demanding future. Please support. Thank you very much.

[SAPPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers? Okay, Conference, the Executive Council would ask Conference to support the motion. To the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 88.

88 Education – 215 Postal Branch

Education, Education, Education. That this conference agrees, that the Academies are not working, and Free School have failed. Lesson not learned from the past.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, Delegates, Mr President. All three resolutions are much the same, they’re in the same, all in the same category. Conference, education, education, Conference agrees academies are not working. They’re the first step on the road to privatisation. Why take schools? Now, there’s only one thing good about it, the schools are grouped and when the schools are grouped, you can have a couple of teachers extra, so that you can bring children that are failing along and help them. Now I’m a school governor since last November, in a school in Bristol which is in an area where it is 75% poverty or low wage, poor. Now, Conference, they do nothing about it. Now most of the people there, I think about 80%, are Somali people, between them and others, the white is very small in the school. It was put into, the education authority took it over and special measures were introduced, because the school was failing. The school was failing because the head was not doing what he should do and the governors were not doing what they should do, question what was happening in the school. Well, I got there, I attended my first meeting, the head walked in, made his report, I’m sorry, he said, we’re not taking questions and he walked on.
Now, that is not a way to run a school, how can governors run a school if they can’t question the head or ask him or find out what’s going on in the school? Then later on, we called a meeting with the parents and all the parents turned up, 80 or 90 people turned up and most of them were Somali people. They are just as interested in their children and interested in their education, they’re not looking for special schools or anything else of any kind. They are there, they were there for the education of their children. The head and the chairperson, which were next head of schools, they started to take over the meeting and tried to take all the questions. I put my hand up several times to get in and I couldn’t. Then the chair of governors came to me, he said well, what do you want to do, what do you want to do? I said I want to speak and he walked away. I went to him again. He said well, what do you want? and I just pushed him out of the way. I said, I’ve got to speak here, because there’s something wrong and I got up and I took them apart, because I was a new governor I could do so, because I wasn’t involved in what was happening and I took them apart and I told the parents that they have to come to the school, I said, don’t take these people as your master. I said, these people are your servants, they’re here and they should be here to look after the education of your children. Just imagine them people, they have to get up every morning, dress their children, clean them, give them breakfast and get them to school, six hours at school and they come home with nothing. Is that the way to run a school?

Academies, academisation, what’s the, change the name over the door. Oh, this is an academy now, it’s going to work wonders. Academies are not working wonders, they’re big, the one that they built in Bristol is not producing what it should do, it is not. Now, academies are schools and they have sponsors. Now, we had two sponsors come you see and I asked, I said what are sponsors for? I said are they going to put money into this and develop the school? Ah no, we have no money. They’re paid by the central government for these academies, governors and they just come and they’re paid. There’s one from Ireland, we had, at our school it’s Educate Together, it’s called. There was another one. There’s one from, they said they’re not a profit making organisation, but they get paid, but the Swiss have an academisation, they are a profit making company and that is where education is heading, for the stock market and it’s going to happen that it will be in the interests of the shareholders and not in the interests of the children in the school.

That’s why I opposed it, I opposed the academisation in Bristol. I believe it’s wrong and if free schools, now these free schools, they’re not free, they’re paid for. Now, radicals can get into a bunch in an area and they can get a school, you can teach what you like, you don’t have to have teachers in them, you can teach what you like, teach as you want to. Some of them haven’t been stopped and you know, some of them have been closed down, because the finances were out of line and they weren’t right.

Now, comrades, that kind of thing, there’s only way is to have state education with local authorities and no matter how many governors or academisations you have within that school, if you have the teachers just the same as you have mechanics in a garage, is in that school, you have the teachers, they’re the people that do the job and the head is responsible for the school and responsible for the education in that school and has to be held to account for it. Now, two months after I got there, I pulled him, he said, year 3, he said, was top last year, he said it’s bottom this year. I said, what’s wrong? He said, bad teaching. I said, what did you do about it? He made no answer, made no answer. You see, if you have that thing going on in the school and I am not sure if there wasn’t a backlash just because there was this amount of foreign people in the school that things weren’t working right. I cannot prove anything like that, but I was annoyed but those mothers that morning I spoke and I advised them, they didn’t see me as a traitor or anything else, they came to me, they were glad of my support and I told them to come to the school and to demand the education, because they’re entitled to it, it’s paid, they paid their taxes and whatever else they had to pay. Conference, I move the resolution.

APPLAUSE

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconded? Formally seconded? Speakers? Conference, the Executive would ask you to support the motion, as previously outlined by the General Secretary. So, those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 89. Okay, withdrawn. Motion 90.

90 Education – 580 Greggs Yorkshire

This conference agrees to lobby government to abolish UCAS fees.

Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees to lobby government to abolish UCAS fees. The government have already put up student fees, which is causing students to be in debt for longer, so why should they have to pay just to apply to do the courses that the government want them to stay in school to do? It might not seem a lot of money, £23 for up to five choices, but why are we making it harder for them? It should be easier for them, because they have to stay in education longer. Please support.
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Okay, the Executive would ask Conference to support the motion. To the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. I’m working without an Agenda now. 91.

91 Education –253 Greggs Treforest

That this conference agrees that through our Parliamentary Group we lobby the Government to stop the selling of the Student Loan Company.

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: That this Conference agrees that through our Parliamentary Group we lobby the government to stop the selling off of the Student Loan Company. I have been fortunate enough to go to university, however I had a £9,000 loan to get me through that, through the Student Loan Company. Currently I pay £64 per month from my wages. I’ve been paying this sort of figure since 2006 and if my wages increase on a monthly basis, for instance, when we get our profit share through Christmas time, this figure normally rises with my wage increase when I have a bit of a bonus. So I’ve been paying this sort of figure since 2006 and my recent statement showed that I’ve only paid just £3,000 off it and this is mainly because of the 1% interest rate which was already on my loan.

Can you imagine if we privatise the Student Loan Company, how much a private company would charge our students in the interest rates? Somebody like the robbing bastards like Wonga would charge us about a £3,000, 3,000% interest rate. The FibDems have already folded to Cameron and his posh cronies, who don’t have to worry about loans as their mummies and daddies pay for their loan. The FibDems said we would never raise tuition fees, that was one of their manifesto pledges. Within a year or so of them coming into government, they tripled tuition fees to near enough £9,000 a year. They are lying, robbing, bastards as far as I’m concerned.

[APPLAUSE]

How on earth are our youth supposed to get, go into the higher education and what sort of start to adulthood to have a debt of between £27 – 36,000, depending on the length of your course, it may be three years, it may be four years. Any of our solicitors are possibly in there for 7–10 years, whatever courses they do, the prices will just go up and up. If you think about it, that’s a deposit for a house or if you live in some areas like the Welsh valleys, you can buy a house for that amount of money. Please stop the privatisation of the loan company, but also let’s scrap tuition fees full stop and give our youth the chance to succeed. Please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: I’m here to support the motion, having had two lads go to university and what the cost incurs. It’s not just the cost of the student fees, if you’re not fortunate enough to go to a local university, you’ve also got the cost of accommodation and it runs into many thousands of pounds. You know, if you look into the future, these loan companies, it’ll make a one-tier system. The poor people won’t be able to afford to go to universities like they are now, because the amount of loans and the payback money that they’ll be paying these individuals, it’ll be beyond their reach to have further education. I ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers? No? Okay.

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (responding on behalf of the Executive Council): We want to obviously support the motion because it’s just ridiculous that they’re not just privatising companies and the railway services and things like that, they’re privatising debt. Where will it end? I mean, it’s just pushing education further out the reach of young people, young working class people more to the point, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried.

Okay, we’re going to go for tea. Back for 25 to, please don’t be late, because we want to ...... Is it? Okay, well we’ll go with quarter to, the General Secretary’s being very kind, but can I make you aware, because he said you can go at quarter to, we’ve got another bucket collection on your way out, so obviously when you’re leaving here today, you’ll be asked to put some more money in the bucket.

[BREAK]

I believe that, I believe people have been concerned about the papers that were issued in relation to what they were. Having sought clarification with Standing Orders, I can clarify that the papers that you were issued previously were the nomination papers. What you should be receiving will soon be the ballot papers. Okay?
[BREAK]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** So we’ve been given the, which I’ll read out when Conference has taken all its positions on your seats, please. So if you can come back and sit down, that’ll be really, really helpful.

**Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region:** Conference, when I spoke on the resolution on immigration, I misquoted a person here in this Conference, Gerry Corbett and I would not like ever to do anything like that to Gerry, because he has been a great Delegate here over the years. I misquoted him on speaking that if he was going to America he would have had to have passports and all visas and everything, but Gerry was speaking on leaving this country, so I was wrong in quoting that and I apologise to Gerry. Thank you.

**[APPLAUSE]**

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, while the General Secretary’s just coming downstairs, right, these are the nominations that I’ve been handed, this is for the substitute EC.

Region 1, Larry Stone, John Lee and obviously now I know who you are, John, that’s Jack, Norville Grazette, okay, withdraw, Cecil John was elected anyway, wasn’t he?, yes. Okay. So in Region 1 it’s, that won’t be a ballot, will it? There’s two of them, yes, so there won’t be a ballot in that, so in Region 2 you’ve got John Harding, Chris Lay and Michael Andrews. Substitute Region 2 EC, yes? All standing? Okay.

Region 3, Ian Haywood, Kevin Clarke, Warren Broomhall, Imran Hussain, Kashmir Dosanjh, Damian Sawa, Paul Mahon, okay?

Region 4, Sandra Carr, Marilyn McCarthy, Des P, Michael Redshaw, Roy Tysall and Mandy Mason.

Region 5, it’s got Joe Knapper, but Joe Knapper’s on the EC, so Richard Hurst, Dave Ratnik, Angela …… Dave Ratnik withdraws, okay, Angela Shortreed, Helena England, Craig Olley, Sarah Woolley’s on the EC so she’s obviously not going to be a substitute, Alison Braun, Dave Lawrence, Ray Rose, Ray Rose withdraws, William Brennan, withdraw? Dave Suddards, Dave Suddards withdraws, Darren Lock, Darren Lock, okay.

Region 6 …… On Region 3, Paul Mahon withdraws, withdrawals, withdrawals, okay. Region 6, Gerry Eccles.

Region 7, Kevin Flood, Noel Mullen, withdraw? Okay. So that’ll be Noel Mullen, won’t it?

Okay. Substitute female Executive member. Natalie Kelly, Dawn Scott, Janine Cokayne, Janine Cokayne withdraws, Agnieszka S [LAUGHTER] no, it’s definitely not Smith that, it’s definitely not a Smith, Lukasz where are you when I need you?, Mariamne Birkin, Marilyn McCarthy, Mandy Mason. I’m reliably informed it’s Agnieszka Szadkowska.

**[APPLAUSE]**

Thank you, I’m learning. That must be, yes, it’s just a boat ride away, isn’t it. Rachel Mullens, Rachel Mullen withdraws, Helena England, Sarah Woolley obviously not, Angela Shortreed, Alison Braun, Alison Braun, okay.

Substitute Executive young member. Rachel Mullen, obviously it can’t be Apryl, Chris Lay you’re too old, Marilyn McCarthy?

**[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]**

You’re young at heart, you’re young at heart. Natalie Kelly, Dawn Scott, yes Dawn Scott, yes, yes, okay. Rita obviously Kalnmale yes, Sarah Woolley obviously not, Gary Heald, Simon Evans, Helena England [LAUGHTER], Damian Sawa. Okay. That’s them all. General Secretary.

**Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary:** Just quickly Chair, I’ve been asked to present a 20 year badge to one of our comrades in No. 5 Region. It’s one of those really pleasurable things you do, because it’s about loyalty to a trade union. I say this when it’s a 40 year badge, but it’s just the same for a 20 year badge and some years ago we moved from a 25 year badge to a 20 year badge because it was very, very difficult with job losses within the industry and people moving to different industries totally, to sort of guarantee that people would stay within one union, but to attain something like this, it might not be the most expensive piece of silverware, but what it is, it means an awful lot to us giving it and the spirit that we give it in. I hope it means a lot to the person who’s the recipient of this, because it shows the achievement and the dedication they’ve had to the Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union. So can I ask Paul Thresh from Speedibake to come down, please.

**[APPLAUSE]**

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, just another bit of information. Obviously, Conference, you’re very, very generous people. There was a list going round for the Doncaster care workers. Well done, you’ve raised £276.10, fantastic, well done.

**[APPLAUSE]**

Right. We’re on motion 92.

92 Education – 505

This conference supports our teachers in the vital role of education for our children.

Brother Michael Lynch – Branch 505, Region 5 (Northumberland, Durham): Across the country our education system is being undermined. This government is no longer requiring schools to employ qualified teachers. It’s rushing through a new curriculum without resources and against the advice of many teachers and introducing expensive and unnecessary new tests for five and 11 year olds. It is also reducing young peoples’ opportunities by trebling tuition fees and abolishing the EMA and wasting the Olympic legacy by undermining sport in schools. Creating chaos for parents by allowing neighbouring schools that have different term dates and school holidays. Building free schools for secondary age children in places where they’re not needed, instead of primary schools which are needed and paving the way for private companies to make a profit from running our schools.

Comrades, in Newcastle where I come from, there are three free schools. They’ve been given £80 million by the government and have 80 pupils in their school. Each pupil in a free school is getting £1 million in schools at the expense of our other schools which are controlled by the city council. This is causing chaos in teachers’ pay, pensions and making teaching a less attractive prospect for young people. This is not a recipe for high quality publicly funded education to help every child do the best they can. Conference, when it comes to education, we really are all in it together. Let’s stand up and campaign together for high quality education. A good local school for every child, a qualified teacher for every lesson every day, an exciting curriculum and well supported teachers doing the very best they can. Now is the time for the government to stop, listen and reflect. Our message is loud and clear to the government. We all want the best for our children, current policies make that less likely to happen. Now is the time for change, now is the time to act. Let’s stand up for education for our children, the future of this country. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, we must support this resolution, because as it says, our teachers play a vital role in the bringing up of our children. Conference, teachers have a very, very, very stressful job, because they’re in a classroom with 32, maybe 35, it used to be 40 small children in a classroom and without the proper help, there’s no way one teacher is able to look after that amount of children, because they have, well they have assistants that helps them when the little ones have to be taken to the toilets and different things and to make sure that they’re not lost around the school, but even that, teachers have to, very stressful six hours at a school trying to get the children into line and get the education for them and get it done and if there isn’t, a school isn’t run properly, they won’t be able to do that, because you heard all about academies and all about this, but the teaching is done in the school by the teachers and teachers are suffering from stress and when a person suffers from stress that also falls back over on the children and it causes problems in the school and causes problems to their education.

Now, we have been talking with the teachers and I’ve been asking them, because I want to get from them why it’s happening because, you know teachers go home, the school closes at 32, at 3.30 and then the teachers work begins, sorting out the paperwork, planning tomorrow’s day’s work, there’s hours of time after school that teachers spend. You might think it’s a 9 – 3.30 job, it is not, they have to be there in the morning early and they have to take work home with them at night. Conference, support this resolution. Teachers need our support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Maurice Cunningham – Branch 238 (Burtons Biscuits, Llantarnam): Good afternoon, Conference. First time Conference speaker.

[APPLAUSE]
Thank you. Right, the right of every child from four to 16 is to the best education that this country can provide, everyone should have that. Some say the parents, after the parents, the teacher can be the most important and influential person in that child’s life. They, I’m sure in the room that you all know the names, a name of a teacher who taught you or a group of teachers. They sort of cajoled you into working harder, they inspired you and some even drove you bananas, but everyone had their choice. The teachers these days, they’re highly trained professional people. Let them do what they do best, which is teach and I’m with this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558: Yes, I’m here to support this motion, but I’ve been looking through this brochure and I’ve made a couple of notes. We’re talking about education, but this Trade Union should be putting pressure on this government to bring back apprenticeships, because it comes under organising your trade union, heavy industry, more apprenticeships means more people in all trade unions. The guy from Unite the Resistance said earlier that the trade union movement’s being decreased and members have gone down by x amount. It’s missing a trick. Push and lobby for apprenticeships, you’ll get more members.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers?

Sister Helena England – Branch 568 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): We’ve heard a lot about education, debates about how right or wrong it is or how good or bad it is, but as this motion says, this motion is calling for support for teaching the vital role of your children, well our children. Our children are our responsibility from the day they’re born, but once your child starts school, the teachers play a vital role in their lives and can have an influence on them as they go through their schooling years. We have to make sure that the teachers are given support from the parents, the headmaster and the school governing bodies, in the trust and the education of our children. It is getting harder and harder for the teachers out there.

Schools are changing that much in the education system with the cutbacks that are being made in education services. Teachers are finding themselves stretched, with bigger classes and no time to devote individual time to children that may be lacking behind, because there is always that one or two children that aren’t as quick as others, but there’s no time to teach them, so they get left behind. Some teachers have reached breaking point. I’ve been to the Conference where I’ve heard this and they’re that stretched, they’re just stretched that far that they can’t do any more. We have to support the teachers in their quest to teach and educate the next generation. Every child’s education is important and we have a responsibility as parents firstly to make sure our children receive the education that will take them and set them on the right path into their adult life. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

Motion 94.

94 Welfare and Benefits – 215 Postal Branch

That this conference agrees, that’s all the winter fuel allowances be stopped for expats and pensioners living overseas in warmer countries.

Brother Pat Rowley – Branch 215: Conference, Delegates, Mr President. This again is a postal branch resolution and it’s got to do with winter fuel payments, where ex-pats as it says, I have no proof that it’s happening, none whatsoever, but it’s on the Agenda and it has to be taken. Conference, that winter fuel payments be stopped for ex-pats and pensioners living overseas and drawing the winter payments at home. Now, I don’t know if anything like that would be happening. You know, the house could be let and they could be living overseas or things like that. These are things you’ll have to make decisions on, because I will move the resolution. Conference, the resolution is moved. Let’s hear what you have to say on it and then we’ll take it from there. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Cheetham – Branch 429: Ladies, gentleman, Conference, President. I apologise for my language, if I explode, I’m awfully sorry. I’ll give you two stories, right, I was in Villamartin last year, having a nice pint, Guinness, in the pub with two lads, both of them from Burnley, Lancashire. One’s a NUM member at 65 years old, crippled arthritis, both knees done, both hips done, doctor recommends he lives abroad. The guy was on the picket lines for over a year, lost his wife and two kids because of it. So I’m having a Guinness with this lad. The other one’s Cross Butchers on Burnley Road, in Burnley, 40 years working in butchers trade, crippled with arthritis, doctor recommends living abroad. Now any attack on a pensioner by any union is a disgrace. If they’ve earned this money, they’re damn well entitled to it.
They’ve paid their taxes and they should bloody have it.

Brother John Halliday – Branch 701: Mr Chairman, General Secretary, NEC, Delegates. I’m here to oppose this motion. As the previous speaker said, it goes against the trend that we are attacking old age pensioners. Also, if we think about it, it’s Tory policy. Why should we be supporting a Tory policy, something that was leaked by the renegade Duncan Smith, is it? Who puts things out so that pensioners living in Britain are saying why should those people be getting it?, so we’re making a split. Oppose this. Pensioners are entitled to it, they’ve worked all their lives for it.

Brother John Cheetham – Branch 429: Sorry, I apologise for that. Just a quick one, I’ve got to stand on a picket line with Cloughy’s son, who’s a fireman, as well.

Brother Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: I’m up here as well to oppose this. If I was fortunate enough to go and live in Barbados when my husband retires, no I wouldn’t need the winter fuel allowance, but I’d need a lot more money for my water and if we both were out there, we would still only get one payment even though two of us have paid into the system all our lives. I ask you to oppose this.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No more speakers? Hold on.

Brother Gerry Corbett – Region 6: I don’t quite fit the bill, in that I’m not an ex-pat living in warm climates, but I am living in the Republic of Ireland and for 15 years I lived in this country. I paid my tax, I paid my insurance, I never drew one day’s sickness, unemployment or any other benefit. I do get a partial fuel allowance, naturally I don’t have sufficient payments to qualify for the full amount. Thankfully I do under the Irish system, where I get six months at over €10 a month and I get partial British and I make no apologies for accepting it, because I’m only getting back some of what I paid in and the same would apply to all the other people that would be in receipt of it. I oppose the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else?

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 566 (Warburtons): Up here to oppose this motion on two fronts. First from my branch and from the Executive Council. I have paid into this system since I was 15. Anyone who knows me, knows that I like the occasional holiday abroad and that I am hoping to live mostly abroad in my retirement. I hope that I will still be entitled to the winter fuel allowance, because I have previously stated I have paid into it all my life. Thank you. Please oppose.

Sister Sandra Carr – Branch 408: That this Conference agrees that measures need to be put into place to stop attacks on people’s benefits, who are too ill to attend benefits meeting.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply? Right of reply mate, yes.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, when I spoke, I told you that the resolution was from a branch and I had to move it. I will always do that if a branch instructs me to do something. Now, I told you that I had no proof of any such thing happening, but Conference made the decision, they made the right decision and I accept that wholehearted.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Very nice of you to concede defeat, but we haven’t had the vote yet, Pat. Okay, to the vote and obviously Pat was giving you a suggestion I think. Those in favour? Those against? Well done. Lost, yes. Motion 95.

95 Welfare and Benefits – No 4 Regional Council

That this conference agrees that measures need to be put in place to stop attacks on people’s benefits, when people are too ill to attend benefits meeting.
Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Yes, obviously I’m up here to support this, second it and support it. You’ve got people now where they’re getting sanctions against them if they don’t turn up to sign on for unemployment, even though they’re ill and they know full well that a lot of these people, it’s ATOS’ fault, they’re even in the Jobcentre in the first place. They weren’t fit to work, ATOS have decided that they are fit to work. They can’t get to the Jobcentre, they’re stopping their benefits. It’s an absolute disgrace. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No more speakers? Okay.

Brother Mark McHugh – Branch 503 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): Any attack on the sick and disabled needs to be supported and I’ll give you a few examples of why the Executive Council support this motion. A man was forced to give up work with heart problems and had his benefits axed for failing to complete a capability assessment after suffering a heart attack during the examination. During his appointment he was told he was having a cardiac arrest, forcing the nurse to stop the test. Two weeks later he got a letter from the Jobcentre Plus saying he had withdrawn from the assessment and as such was being sanctioned.

The second case was a woman who was sanctioned after missing an appointment, despite phoning on the morning of her assessment to explain that she suffers from widespread arthritis, needs two knee replacements and cannot use her thumbs and struggles to write, but the Department of Work and Pensions wrote to her saying they doubt the reason she provided and asked her to write, informing of her illness, meaning that she was sanctioned even though she followed the correct procedures. Earlier this month it was reported that ATOS wrote to a woman in a coma, asking her why she was not working. I think this says everything you need to know about ATOS. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You seconding it, yes? Okay.

Brother Carlton Thorne: I’m here to support this motion. Very soon I’ll be in that pension range. When you look at the cost of prescriptions for the elderly, going to £8, just for one item. If you’ve got two or three items at £8-odd a time, that’s way beyond the pensioners means, just to get the tablets and the medicine that they need for things like arthritis and other serious conditions. I think it’s imperative that anybody who is reaching old age is entitled to free prescriptions and free TV licences. They’ve worked all their lives, they’ve paid in their stamp, it’s about time we gave them something back. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: Totally here to support this motion. My nan’s just coming up to her 90th birthday this year, luckily at the moment obviously she’s got the free transport and free TV licence at the minute, but without that free transport she wouldn’t be able to get around anywhere. Fair play, she hops on and off buses amazingly, she’s probably fitter and more healthier than any of us in here, to be honest with her, bless her, so yes, so please support this motion. Let’s help the elderly. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, support the resolution. It is good. We are, happen to be among that bunch. We are getting free, old age pensioners, well I don’t know whether I’m old or not, the right to have a yearly heating allowance, free transport, free TV and free prescriptions. We have these at the moment and also, Conference, to make sure that there is no cuts in anything we get. In fact to make sure that we get everything else that’s needed in, what we need in our healthcare. Please support the resolution.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers?

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 703, Region 7 (EC member): National President, General Secretary, EC and Delegates. Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council, asking you to support the motion. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. 98.

98 Local Government/Social Services – No 5 Regional Council

That this conference put pressure on this Lib Tory government to stop the cuts in council care both in council run homes and care at home and give back some dignity to our pensioners

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): That this Conference puts pressure on this LibTory government to stop the cuts in council care, council-run homes and care at home and give back some dignity to our pensioners. I’ve brought this motion for the last, I believe, three or four years and I bring it because it’s more of an update, because things are just getting worse. My wife works for Leeds Council as a home care, they’ve changed their contracts, they aren’t home care now, they are reablement and they’re designated a number of hours, weeks, until a person can just about stand and make a cup of tea and then they’re moved out of the house. She comes home with horror stories, what she says, tells me. She works a double shift, she starts at 8 in a morning, well 1 o’clock and then she’s out actually now because of cuts, well 10 o’clock, sometimes on her own. They wanted to introduce them into mental care as well, ladies on their own and in the care homes. They’re keeping them in there just long enough until they can get them back into reablement and well, in my opinion, dump them.

These, I often, as I say, the dedication, I talk to my wife a lot, pack it in, she won’t pack it in. She says even if we won the lottery, she would keep caring and for that, this government has given 1%, they got 1% last year and they’ve had, they had nothing for three years previous to this and they’ve offered them again another 1%, a pay cut. I’m surprised there isn’t more motions in about cuts, because we must all have parents, family in these care homes or for home care, but yes, it’s horrifying what goes on and what the care workers have to put up with. I know she came home with a story telling me she was looking, she was getting, reabling a lady who had dementia. She was getting her up in the morning, give her her breakfast, go back at 1 o’clock, give her dinner and help her and go back at tea time and then put her to bed on a night. Between them hours, the lady decided to get up for some reason, nobody knows why, it was the middle of winter and probably tried to reable herself and fell against a gas fire, to which she was there for up to four hours. As I say, support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Also up here to support this. Proud mother of three daughters and the youngest one is now doing home care and she travels about. They give them 15 minutes in a morning to get somebody up, washed, dressed, cup of tea. You couldn’t get me up, washed and dressed and a cup of tea in 15 minutes, never mind somebody who’s not as mobile as I am and with a few less faculties than me. Please support this.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, any other speakers?

Sister Pauline McCarthy – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Up here to support on behalf of the Executive Council. The National Health Service and all the carers, nurses, doctors and people they look after, our sick and elderly, have been shafted by this government and are going to continue to be shafted until this government are kicked out and we need to support them as best we can. When you go to see people in a hospital or at home, I’ve got some older Delegates that are poorly and need looking after and they have a carer coming at half past 8, 15 minutes to get them out of bed, a cup of tea, there’s nothing for them, there’s no time, there’s no time to care anymore, they don’t give them time, they don’t give them money to care. How more soul-destroying must it be for those workers, because they’re in the job because they love it and to be treated so badly and such a load of, it’s just appalling, so I’m up here to support this. Please support.

Composite 4 – Crime and Justice

That this Conference agrees to lobby parliament to introduce not only a more consistent approach when handing down prison sentencing, but also sentences should be seen as adequate in relation to the crimes committed.

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: If you commit a crime that results in you being sent to prison, the system should ensure that not only is the length adequate, but that it’s consistent up and down the country, so that two people committing the same crime with the same conditions receive the same sentence and one that reflects the severity of the crime that’s been committed. Please support.

Brother John Halliday: Mr Chairman, General Secretary, NEC, Delegates. Here to second the motion. Again you read every day in the papers about these senile judges going haywire on how they sentence people. One gets one sentence, another gets another, some get let off, it’s ridiculous and until the government steps in and does something about it, that sentencing should be seen to be fair and equal, all across the board, because the people and I know people, I want to mention one newspaper but on that, but they keep hammering on about sentences all the time. Not enough newspapers take up on it. It’s only when the public react that something is done about it. We should react and make sure. Do the crime, pay for it, but make sure it’s right, the sentencing is right. Thank you.

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711 (Belfast): Conference. I’m here to tell you a story about a crime that was committed in Northern Ireland about four months ago. Anyone who knows me and has known me for a long time, I’m a real animal lover. I am a doggy person and to be quite frank with you, those who know me would say that I’m more dog than person. There was a case in Belfast a few months back where a father and his three sons and his nephew had got attack dogs and they were chasing down dogs, shaking cats out of trees and they were videotaping them, dogs slaughtering dogs, other dogs, cats, badgers, foxes.

The case went to court, at the Belfast High Court, and the judge gave them a two year suspended sentence, because they had shown remorse and anyone from Belfast who’s seen the scenes coming out of Belfast High Court, they were jumping, they were whipping, they were doing all sorts of stuff, so a petition was put on line by Dog Lover Northern Ireland and they got almost 45,000 hits, but they said it just wasn’t representative, so they’ve done an actual physical ballot and they were getting names and they put it through our justice minister and our justice minister refused to overturn it. They were got off because they had shown remorse and anyone who wants to have a look at them coming out of court, it’s on YouTube and it’s an absolute disgrace. In this country, the sentence should fit the crime.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference. Supporting the resolution, yes, yes and the sentence should fit the crime and we have seen very high up people recently in government, ministers getting babies sentences, but then you see a person caught for a few bob claiming wrong, claiming on benefits or something like that and you see big sentences handed out to them. The sentence job is not adequate to what the people do. I mean, I’ll take two people, Vicky Pryce and her husband, they got sentences, she’s now going to write about, telling us about life in prisons. Now she got eight weeks prison, but she was in a mansion out in the country, she wasn’t stuck in one of the tough jails in London, she was in a mansion out in the country, that’s where she got her sentence. She’s going to tell us what life is like in a prison, she’ll tell us it’s five star. Conference, support this resolution.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Okay.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool) (speaking on behalf of the EC): The EC asks you to support this motion. There doesn’t go a day when you read or hear of a criminal being sentenced to a term of imprisonment, unfortunately these sentences do not always fit the crime. If you’re a victim of crime and the culprit is found guilty, you want to see justice done, you want to see the time fit the crime, but some of the prison sentences are a joke. Whilst sometimes the judge’s hands are tied, but sometimes they are a joke or inconsistent. So what we need is a consistent approach and an adequate prison service, sentences in relation to the crime.
I’ll give you two examples. Michael Wheatley, skull cracker, 13 life sentences in 2002 for armed robberies, not a problem with that. 12 years later, he’s out on day release and does a runner, but while he’s doing a runner, he robs another building society, joke. Last week in Liverpool, there was two ladies in court who had two dogs, never fed the dogs for three days and they went out and left the dogs in the back garden. A 79 year old man was cooking his breakfast next door, with his back door open. The dogs smelt the food, burst through his fence and mauled the man to death. 12 months prison sentence they got, an absolute joke. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried.

Okay, you can close your Agendas now. I’m going to make a, where’s, he’s not behind me is he? Has anybody, has anybody seen the General Secretary? He’s over there. Hello, Ronnie. Ronnie to Conference. Conference to Ronnie. Hello? Okay, Conference, as he makes his way across, can I make you aware obviously tonight’s a really important night really, from the Bakers Union perspective, because it’s, we don’t normally host events for other trade unions and other workers in dispute so, I’d like to thank obviously Unite the Resistance for organising the event and obviously I’d like to absolutely thank Walkers Union for sponsoring it.

When you go in there tonight, obviously at half past 5, there will be food available and it will be being served at half past 5 and I’ve also been made aware and I thought Conference might also like to know, which might be another reason why you might want to go there rather than go anywhere else, I’ve been told it has the cheapest bar in Southport, so if you are thinking of going for a drink, then that is the place to be, I believe and I’d also like to thank, but I’ve just noticed there’s nobody from the Watkins & Gunn stand, but obviously Watkins & Gunn as well, because Watkins & Gunn have actually sponsored the person that’s coming from Lambeth, the Lambeth strike, a lady called Nia, I believe. It is Lambeth, Nia’s from Lambeth, isn’t she? Ritzy, the Ritzy Living Wage Campaign, who are in dispute, so I’d like to thank obviously Walkers Union for sponsoring it and Watkins & Gunn for sponsoring, so an individual who’s on strike can attend and tell you about their plight as well and I do hope everybody can get across there at half past 5.

The General Secretary’s going to make an announcement. Thank you.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, Chair. I just said before that when you’re doing presentations for 20 year badges it’s great, because it shows the loyalty that members have shown to the Union. Last year both Steve Finn, the No. 1 Regional Officer and myself received our 40 year badges and when we joined the Trade Union, the Bakers Union as it was then, there was probably about 100 unions that operated within the country and so you can see the massive, the massive choice that people had to join a trade union of their choice and there was lots and lots of competition then, as there is now, just less choice now and it’s great when you can present a 40 year badge to anyone, I think it’s absolutely a fantastic achievement. If you think it’s a lifetime in work and what it takes to actually achieve 40 years in work, having gone through all the Thatcher years and all that when jobs were cut, factories were closed, people were thrown on the dole, so to achieve 40 years in work is an amazing achievement, but to achieve 40 years with a single union and showing loyalty to that union that is shown, I think shows a little more than just loyalty.

It’s my pleasure, although he is a full-time Official of the Union and has been for well, longer than me, I think there’s three Officials who’ve been longer serving, full-time Officials, than me, Steve Finn, John Vickers and Tony Lewis, who’s the recipient of a 40 year badge and it’s my really great pleasure, Tony, he’s a mate as well. We have our moments, but I’d like to ask Tony to come down and collect his free card, his cheque for £150 ...... [APPLAUSE]

…his certificate and of course his 40 year badge.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Tony Lewis: Thank you, Conference. I’ll say a lot more tomorrow, when I make my final speech, but that’s what 40 years do to you, but it’s been absolutely brilliant being part of this great Union and as I said, tomorrow, all things being equal, when I make my final speech, because I retire in three months time, I will say a lot more about this. Thank you, Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you, Tony. Okay, Conference, half past 9 in the morning. If you can, please get over to the Scarisbrick, show solidarity and support and enjoy your evening. Thank you.
Wednesday 11 June 2014

Morning Session


Okay, everybody in their seats? General Secretary, roll call.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Region 1, okay. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4. Region 5. Region 6 and Region 7. 175 Delegates present.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, I’ve got a couple of announcements. After the close of Conference, the EC meeting will be taking part in the Lakeside Suite, so everybody that’s newly elected and obviously the EC that’s remaining will, if you wait in here at the end of Conference, we’re then going to be escorted to where the Lakeside Suite is.

I’ve been asked to make you aware that on 21st June there’s going to be a People’s Assembly and obviously it’s an important day to raise the issues of poverty, the attacks on people that’s happening in this country, so if you can make it along, it’d be really, really good.

Union T-shirts, there’s only a few of them left, which are extra-large, but will be good for the demo events and obviously bearing in mind for the one on the 21st June and of course the one on the 18th October, which we’re hoping to get a million people on the streets for.

The Shrewsbury 24 total collection from Conference, as always Conference you’ve been very, very generous and it raised a total of £330, so well done and thank you to all of you.

[APPLAUSE]

I believe now that the ballot papers are, if they haven’t already come out, they’re on their way out and Standing Orders have asked if the Scrutineers can make sure they get back in by the tea break, okay and I’ve also been made aware that last night there was an individual that was found in a serious condition, we believe the person was a student and thanks to one of our Delegates here, he could have potentially saved this individual’s life and I think we should give a massive thanks to that health and safety representative, Mark Campbell, well done.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, Conference, also I just want to say thank you to everybody that came across to the fringe meeting last night and as I did make an announcement from this platform and said it was going to be the cheapest, cheapest drinks that anybody could have ever had in Southport and those that attended would have found out that was because the bar was free, so obviously well done to everybody who turned up. Thank you for supporting those excellent people that are fighting back to make sure that they stop being exploited and ending the race to the bottom in their workplaces. Thank you very much to Walkers Union for sponsoring that event and putting the food and that free bar on and obviously thank you very much to Watkins & Gunn for sponsoring some of those people that are on strike and making sure they could get down to that fringe meeting and obviously put them up in accommodation, so thank you very much, well done.

[APPLAUSE]

Motion 101.

101 Crime and Justice – 417 Hovis Wigan

That this conference agrees to request the Labour Party and government to change the law to prevent the abuse of the court process in relation to the changing of pleas from ‘not guilty’ to ‘guilty’ as the case starts. This is to get a reduced sentence, as highlighted in the case of Stuart Hall. Experience has shown that this playing of the system is widespread and also very costly.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Morning Conference, Chair, EC, Delegates and visitors. Good morning. I’d just like to start with a quote from Dean Martin that might be relevant. “I feel sorry for those who don’t drink. When they get up in the morning, that’s as good as they feel”. Me, it can only get better. So bear with me.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Motion 121.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: 101.
Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): 101, sorry.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Things can only get better.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Like I said before [LAUGHTER].

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We’re nearly there.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): This Conference agrees to request the Labour Party and the government to change the law to prevent the abuse of court process in relation to the changing of pleas from not guilty to guilty as the case starts. This is to get a reduced sentence, as is highlighted in the case of Stuart Hall. Experience has shown that this playing of the system is widespread and very costly. Now, the personal experience I have of this is I’ve done jury service three times and repeatedly during those times, we’ve been, the jury’s been summoned, that’s been sorted, the judge is there, the witnesses are there, all the court apparatus is there and the accused guy stands up and says I’m changing my plea to guilty, because they get half the sentence they would get if they’re found guilty at the trial itself and this repeatedly happens. You can imagine the cost of having everybody, bringing everybody in, all the witnesses and everything. If, what I recommend is that if they change their plea at that time, they can’t get a reduced sentence, it’s the full sentence. If the day before, before everybody’s been brought in and all that expense has been incurred, they can change their plea, no problem, because then all they need to do is the judge, the accused and the legal team and do the sentence there in an empty court, you don’t need the jury, the witnesses, all the legal process. So, please support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Conference, the Executive would ask the Conference to support the motion. To the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. 102.

102 Crime and Justice – No 5 Regional Council

That this conference agrees to lobby government to update and amend as a result the grounds upon which people can plead insanity in the British legal system.

Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees to lobby government to update and amend the grounds on which people can plead insanity in the British legal system. What is wrong with the law? The Kemp 1957 case brings physical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes and brain tumours or any such conditions that mean you don’t have enough oxygen passing through your brain. Having any of these physical conditions, you can be deemed insane in the eyes of the law. Sullivan 1984, during an epileptic fit, a friend tried to help, who was kicked by Sullivan, who was then tried for GBH, but got off on the grounds of insanity. Having an epileptic fit does not make you insane. Punishment for murder for an insanity plea means indefinite detention in a mental institute. How can you be treated in such an establishment for a brain tumour or diabetes? Further issues, only by looking at whether the defendant was legally wrong means some people with evident medical health issues are not protected under the law. It’s wrong for people with these conditions to be able to claim insanity. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Okay, in that case then I better find out, hadn’t I? The Executive would ask Conference to support the motion. To the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 103.

103 Crime and Justice – 580 Greggs Yorkshire

That this conference agree to lobby government to make prisons a punishment, not a reward.

Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees to lobby government to make prisons a punishment, not a reward. Prisons should be a deterrent for a crime that you’ve committed, not a holiday camp. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Brother George Hoy – Branch 703, Region 7 (Hovis Bakery): Not surprising, Platform, Delegates, standing here today to wholly support this motion and ask the Conference to back us.
All I’ve seen back home in Northern Ireland is repeat offenders, overflowing prisons for no reason at all, putting pressure on prison officers and the system, who can’t look after the vulnerable people who do go into prison. These people go in and treat it like a type of holiday camp, or something similar, basically laughing at the system. It’s a disgrace, so it is. If the sentence was made more of a punishment, then these repeat offenders would think twice about doing what they’re doing and also the taxes that are wasted on these people could be distributed back into the NHS or emergency service. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, Delegates, Mr President. People go to prison for many, many, many causes and if all of us in society committed crimes, they say that there would be a massive amount of the population in prison, because they don’t get caught for what they do. Prisons should be a punishment in some ways, but it has to be some ways too to rehabilitate these people and in prison you have human rights as well. Now, Conference, the resolution is before you. I’m not going to tell you how to do it, but I will leave it with you to make the decision on the evidence before you. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Conference, I mean, I mean obviously the wording of the motion caused a lot of debate on the Executive Council, but we understood what the motion was trying to ask for. I mean, the belief and the feeling was that prison actually should be about rehabilitation, not actually about punishment. The Executive thought that none of us actually wanted to go to prison and nobody admitted to actually going to prison. You hear in the papers on a daily basis as how easy that life is, yes, now that the prosecuting Coulson, Brooks and all of those people, they’re fighting like hell to stay out of prison, so after telling us what a holiday camp it was, they don’t appear to want to go on holiday in there, so we understand the reason behind it. We do believe that prison should be about rehabilitation, but we accept that we think that that’s what actually the motion was actually asking for the Union to lobby for, so on that basis we believe that we feel quite okay with Conference to support the motion. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. 104.

104 Crime and Justice – No 2 Regional Council

That this conference agrees that legal aid cuts are a real threat to justice for all. It is crucial that the defendant whose liberty is at stake has access to legal advice and representation.

Brother Pat Rowley – No. 2 Region: Conference, Delegates, Mr President. Conference, this Conference agrees that legal aid cuts are a real threat to justice for all. Now, people are entitled to legal aid, there’s people who have no money, there’s, when they have no way of defending themselves and they need to, it is crucial that the defendant, whose liberty is at stake, has access to legal aid and representation. We’re all innocent until we’re proved guilty. I move.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Any speakers?

Brother David Byrne – Region 6 (speaking on behalf of the Regional Council): To support this motion. No justice system is truly fair unless everyone is able to fight for their rights, but through cuts to the legal aid, Chris Grayling and this government has removed the cornerstone of society. The government’s changes to legal aid will put justice out of the reach for many ordinary people. Legal aid fees in criminal cases have been cut by 17.5%. These reductions are part of the Ministry of Justice’s drive to save £220 million.

This government has already taken £320 million out of the annual legal aid budget. Legal aid in England and Wales was established in 1949. It’s an integral part of the British justice system. By ensuring the right to counsel, it safeguards equality before the law and the right to a fair trial. This government will have to answer politically for the destruction of a system that was once admired throughout the world. Many lawyers working in legal aid, both civil and criminal, say that this is the tipping point and the system could soon become almost entirely unsustainable. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against?

105.
This conference agrees products that are specifically designed for the health and wellbeing of children should be made cheaper so all children can access them.

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: Have any of you recently looked at the price of suncream, toothpaste, baby milk and even nappies? They are extortionate. The prices rise year in, year out and for some children this means the chance of their parents being able to afford them is slipping away fast. Products designed for the health and wellbeing of our children should be made cheaper so all children can access them and I don’t mean a cheap naff version to be made available that ends up doing more damage than good or ends up more expensive as you have to buy twice as many to compensate for the lack of quality. I mean the likes of Calpol, Actimel and Pampers should reduce their prices. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? It’s got that Wednesday feeling. The Executive would ask Conference to support the motion. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

This conference agrees there should be a cap on the hourly rate of childcare as it is wrong that parents are having to spend as much, if not more, than they earn going out to work to pay for it.

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: My little boy’s childminder was brilliant, she became part of the family and I would have paid her anything that she asked. She never got full marks on her Ofsted inspection though, as she wouldn’t put her prices up. In the seven years Paul was with her before she retired, she put them up once for 50p extra an hour and wrote to us a letter to apologise at having to do so. I was lucky with Sheila, but most are. I have members that work 16 hours a week and call in favours two shifts a week to save themselves some money, as to pay for the four days worth of shifts would result in them paying more out to the nursery or childminder than being paid by Greggs. This is ridiculous. People should not be put in the position of asking themselves if it is actually worth going to work part-time, because they will be worse off doing so for paying childcare. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Delegates, please, please keep the noise down. You know, when somebody’s speaking, it would be really appreciated if you could actually not speak while they’re speaking and listen to what they say and that includes you over there, George, okay? George, George, shush, thank you very much. You can’t whisper across a field.

[APPLAUSE]

Seconder? Formally seconded? Okay, speakers?

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (responding on behalf of the Executive Council): The Executive Council would ask you to support this motion. Obviously it’s all, it just makes economical sense, because if you’ve got more, if the hourly rate is capped, more people will be able to afford to provide childcare whilst at work, so they will be paying into the system through their taxes. If they’re at work, the likely chance is that they’ll have more disposable income to put back into the system to help the economy again and not only that, if there’s more people in work so there will be a demand for more childminders and obviously people that work at nurseries and things so they will be paying their taxes into the system, then people will be contributing through their disposable income, but the only thing with the government is that they see it as interfering within the free market and it’s part of the race to the bottom and we need to stand up and put an end to it, so everybody can go to work and especially with it being predominantly females that are left minding the child whilst obviously men go out to work. I know that’s not the case all the time, but that’s what it typically is and obviously it’s just a barrier to women going out and being in the workplace and going out and just contributing and having a working life. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried.
Conference agrees that the government of the day should look after working married families and couples in a stable relationship much better than they do now, given that single mothers who repeatedly have children are given priority in all social matters e.g. housing, nursery provision, school placement etc.

Brother John Halliday – Branch 701: Chairman, General Secretary, NEC, Delegates. Conference, I feel that the present rules discriminate against married couples and those in stable relationships. DHSS rules give unmarried mothers an advantage over stable couples. They’re receiving work points in the system, which enables them to be in front and on top of lists for social housing. They get priority in regards to schools and nursery places. In putting this motion forward, I am no way condemning single parents. I’m condemning the system. Everyone should have the same rights to housing, schools and nursery places. No-one should be discriminated against. Previous governments were too lenient with the rules and so this anomaly has festered over the past few years. It also gave the Tories ammunition to use this system to turn people against each other. Delegates, a fair system in allocating social needs needs to be addressed, giving all the same opportunity in housing, nursery places and schools. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Up here to oppose this. When you see a single mother of several children appear near where you live and she appears to have waltzed in from nowhere to social housing, school places for her kids, etc., don’t judge her until you know why she’s there. She could quite well be the victim of domestic violence and had to be moved hundreds of miles from where she normally lived. Think about this and I ask you to oppose it.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Saddurs – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Married for 34 years. I’m here to oppose this motion. It just plays into this Tory government’s, the big society and demonising people. Oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Apryl Walcott – Branch 450: I’m also opposing the motion and I think the last sentences of this motion are absolutely vile. What does repeatedly have children mean, is that one child, two children, three children, four children? My mum gave birth to me at 15 and was a single parent and now I’ve just finished my university degree. Never discriminate against a single parent.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: I’m also here to oppose this motion. I am a single mum and I have not had any priority in social matters at all. I haven’t had a council house, I haven’t had priority over nursery provision or school placement, so please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael Lynch – Branch 505, Region 5 (Northumberland, Durham): Conference, I oppose this motion just on the wording of it. Working married families and couples in a stable relationship, what do we call a stable relationship? Some people might be seen in public as nice as nine pence, but when they get behind closed doors things change and when we come to single mothers, as a former counsellor, I used to have to deal with a lot of people, single people, single mothers, who are fleeing violence. I was threatened five times by the so-called fathers and again this is another thing, it mentions single mothers who repeatedly have children and are given priority. It mentions nothing about the men who help to make those children. When I went to school, it used to take two to tango, let’s put it right. Thanks very much, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Cheetham – Branch 429 (Warburtons, Burnley): Delegates. I oppose this motion and Warburtons do, because basically it discriminates against single mothers. I know a few single fathers. Where do we stand with this? At the end of the day it’s discrimination, you shouldn’t have it and that’s it, it should be thrown out.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, the Executive Council would ask Conference to oppose this motion. I mean, we talk about equality and obviously it’s saying that we want an even playing field for married families, but the reality is what’s an acceptable family, what does an acceptable family look like? It’s an irrelevance, it’s an absolute irrelevance what that family looks like. The family is the family, however that family is formulated, whether it’s a couple that’s married, whether it’s an unmarried couple, whether it’s a couple of the same sex, it makes
absolutely no difference and I don’t believe anybody gets treated any better or any worse. In fact, under the Tories, everybody gets treated as badly as each other and I think one of the things that we must do, we must do, is not fall into the trap of the Tory, the Tory mantra that it’s all the fault of somebody else. The fault of the crisis and the fault of the poverty that people of this country are living in, is down to the bankers and the government that’s put the policies in place, that made sure that people are in struggle. That’s made sure that people are out of work, to create mass unemployment so they can be used in slave labour schemes.

[APPLAUSE]

That’s the reason why people struggle in this country. It’s not because of any individual group or any individual person. The problems are the people at the top, who refuse to give people rights. That’s why we struggle, so please oppose this motion and don’t fall into the stereotyping of it’s their fault, it’s not, it’s the people who make the policies. Please oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

You’ve got the right of reply. Right of reply?

**Brother John Halliday – Branch 701:** Delegates. I want to make it clear. I’m not against unmarried mothers. I’m not against single parents. I’m against the system. Where I live, in Northern Ireland, day and daily single parents jump to the top of the list, that’s unfair. It’s the system that’s wrong. Whether it be a father or a mother or what has happened to the family, whether the woman has become a single parent, that’s irrelevant. It’s the point that she already then gets put to the top of the list, over and above a stable, a married couple. The system’s wrong. It’s nothing to do with married couples or unmarried couples. I’m fighting against the system. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That falls.

Okay, motion 108.

**108 Miscellaneous – No 5 Regional Council**

That this conference agrees to lobby companies which support our union to come in line with our union rule book.

**Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580:** That this Conference agree to lobby companies which support our Union to come in line with the Union rulebook. With the Union rulebook, it states that our branch can bring six Delegates to Conference, so why do two of our Delegates have to take holidays or lose time to come to Conference, because our employer will not pay for their time released? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580:** Here to second this motion. We are entitled, as Angela said, to six Delegates to Conference, yet only four have been paid to come by Greggs. Two have taken a week’s holiday and I know our branch isn’t alone in this. If our and other companies come in line with rules such as this, how many more members would be able to attend Conference, as I know not all companies will allow holidays to cover attending Conference. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Kumran Khan – Branch 303 (Greggs):** Good morning. Chair, Platform, Conference. I’m here to support the motion. The bakery management tried their utmost best to stop union organisation in my workplace. I believe unions should demand all sites to recognise our rule book and our policies. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201:** I’m here to support the motion because I think it’s a good motion. However, I think maybe we should get our own houses in order first, so how about if the EC actually abide by the rule book? Rule 22.18 says the EC shall have no power to override a Conference decision relative to Union rules, okay? 22.2 says branches elect Delegates. They overturn decisions made by branches in the May quarterly meeting because of appeals, which is a breach of the rules. Start getting our own house in order. Support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother John Cheetham – Branch 429 (Warburtons):** We support this motion and like the lady said there, we should get our own house in order. If you say 11 o’clock the ballot papers are in, that means 11 o’clock. You can’t change the rules the next day.

[APPLAUSE]
Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: And I’m up here as well to support this. I ask you to look at your rule books at rule 14.15 and then tell Ian Hodson what you think it means.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: General Secretary to respond.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I’m not really sure what that had to do with the motion, to be honest, nor the previous speaker. To be honest with you, when we had the debate, because of the way the motion’s worded, we never had a clue what it meant about companies who support our union. I don’t know any companies that support our Union. What, very, very briefly, we do support the motion now that we understand what it means, but I mean I can go back to Greggs and we can talk to Greggs about release and Conference and all that, but the vast majority of negotiations now take place at local level, so it’s going to be very much down to those local teams to take this message back and not depend on the Executive, because to be honest with you, if it’s somebody like Allied Bakeries or Hovis even, even though we have national meetings, because those negotiations take place at local level, you’re going to have to do the release. I mean, I’ve just done one company’s Conference release because I happened to be there, but I can’t, I don’t see every company, so yes, we support the motion. Yes, we will do it where there’s national negotiations, we will take it up on behalf of those reps or with those reps, not on their behalf and always say to full-time Officials who are in here and activists from the branches, when you go back remember what you passed at Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. 109.

109 Miscellaneous – No 3 Regional Council

That this Conference deplores the practice of tour operators, who increase their prices during school holidays, which is putting a burden on parents, as valuable holiday time is lost.

Brother Warren Broomhall – Branch 390: Mr President, Platform, Delegates. Moving motion 109. A recent survey has shown that over half of parents believe that travel companies should have a cap on their holiday prices. It’s simple economics that prices should rise and fall during certain times of the year, the real question is to what extent? Parents shouldn’t have to make the choice whether to pay extortionate holiday prices or face fines by their school and also putting their child’s education at risk. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: I’m here to support this motion. You know, I work with a lot of young families and colleagues over there, that come summer time when they can only go while their kids are on school leave. You know, to charge an extra 50 – 60% extra in them times to a young family, it’s the difference between being able to afford to go on holiday and not go on holiday. Why should these families with young kids and families be penalised because they can’t get out of school? and like I said, it’s the difference between going on holiday and not going on holiday. If you go out of season on holiday, your holiday price will probably drop by half, but like I say, young families with kids and that have to go in school holidays and for tour companies to racketeer their prices at this time of year both on any school holiday, it’s just racketeering. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Brooks – Region 3: I’m here to support this. My daughter’s back at home at the moment, so I get to see her in a day’s time, so I can’t wait, but I can take my daughter luckily enough any time this year and luckily enough I don’t have to pay, but next year when she’s three, £400. If I take her in a quiet period, I get fined £50 a child. It’s absolutely ridiculous that you can’t actually choose when to take your kids because tour operators charge you extortionate rates, 33% extra. You hire a car, it’s the same. How can you actually say that demand is there? My daughter won’t eat £300 worth of food and she’s not going to cost that much on an airplane, she’ll probably sit on my lap. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: Totally here to support this motion. I haven’t got any kids at the moment, but recently I just booked a holiday, I say holiday, it’s my honeymoon, what do you want?, here you are then ……

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Point of order. I thought that Standing Orders weren’t Delegates to Conference and if that’s the case, then he shouldn’t have been up speaking.
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: If you are a Standing Order, Assistant Standing Order Delegate, any branch that’s got them can elect the extra Delegates, I can tell you the rule if you want, it’s in the rule book, branches can have an extra Delegate and they are Delegates, as long as they’re elected by their branch.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Okay, I stand corrected.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Marilyn, I’ll dig it up and I’ll show you. It’s in the rule book.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Hold on a minute, we’ve got … . He’s here. It was a point of order.

Brother George Tittensor – Branch 392 (Birmingham & West Midlands): I moved that vote of no confidence, out of order. If you’d read your rule book, the same as the General Secretary says, if you’re a Standing Orders and you’re an elected Delegate, you have the right to speak from this rostrum. If you’re not, you don’t. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, right, I’m going back to the motions. Thank you for clarifying that, but obviously the General Secretary has pointed out that there is a rule in the rule book, so obviously Chris, come back to the motion please, cheers.

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: I’m going to carry on now. Yes, so just onto book my holiday. I found out, when me and the better half were working it all out when you’re looking in the brochure and whatever, we saw the price and thought brilliant. When we got there, when we got to the travel agency and she put it all through for us exactly what we wanted, it was a grand and a half more than what we’d already thought of. When we went in and investigated this further, it was literally because when we were due to fly back, it was going to be Easter Sunday, the Easter Bank Holiday weekend, a grand and a half just for two people, so for adding kids onto that, that is absolutely shocking. Fair play, so please support this motion.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Here to fully support this motion. As any Delegates here who follow my Facebook page, you’ll know that holidays are dear to me, but also having, I have three daughters, nine grandchildren and most daughters, well all my daughters and all their husbands all work full-time. They’re out, they work odd hours, their family’s fractured in a lot of cases, they get two weeks a year to bond as a family, that’s why these holidays are important to families. Support this motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, General Secretary to respond.

Brother Ronnied Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, Chair. Conference, the Executive Council would ask Conference to support the motion. This, as far as I’m concerned, this practice demonstrates the same contempt for working people right across the spectrum by the Tory government. So long as they can keep the money rolling into the coffers, it really doesn’t matter what the effects on society and the exploitation that they cause. As the government departments give greater flexibility to councils to vary term times, meaning that children from the same family can be on holiday at different times, very often without an overlap, so holidays together are becoming a luxury. Having gone through years of austerity with this government and near depression, families who manage to scrape together a few pounds to get away from the drudgery of work find themselves exploited to the full by tour operators and you know, to make it worse, where does the situation of one or more of the parents subject to holiday planning at work, that could involve vacation time being outside school term time, then the parents face punitive sanctions should they take their children out of school and I listened to a debate on Radio 4 a couple of weeks ago, where the mother was a teacher, the father was in the army and they had two children, one who’s at an academy school and one who was at a primary school and all four of them had different term times and so to get a holiday together was almost impossible, so we end up with a situation where one parent may be, or maybe both parents take time out of work, outside the holiday planning, so they can have that holiday and they get disciplined at work, or they take their children out of school, outside of term time and we find they get disciplined by the state. That’s sort of rubbing your hands or rubbing the hands until the tills swell by the tour operators.

Mind you, don’t worry comrades, because if UKIP make any inroads into politics or the Tories get back in again in 2015, we’ll not need to worry about holidays, Chair, because they’re looking to get to do away with the amount of holidays you’ve got, so you’ll not need to worry about what you pay for holidays, because you won’t have them. If Labour won… I went through a big long list during my opening address to Conference, which talked about simple easy vote winners for Labour, like building extra houses, like getting rid of bedroom tax, simple things that they could do that would generate mass votes for Labour.
Well, I’ll tell you what, this is one. Pledge that you will, you’ll make a manifesto pledge that will bring an end to the equality of holiday costs during term times and I’ll tell you what, I know there’s people in here who would absolutely guarantee Labour votes there and I know thousands and thousands of parents who’ve got children in school, they would be there forming a queue to vote. We’ve got to make, call an end to the penalisation of people for no other reason than the fact that they have children, because that’s what it is, it’s discriminating against people who have children. It is about time we stopped this positive discrimination of the people and ended the sharp practice of inflating prices based on the opportunity to profit from when people have no other choice and let’s be honest, it’s not just when it comes to holidays.

Think about it, if any of you are going to go to a concert or you’re going to go to the Labour Party Conference, when there’s a big event on, what happens with a hotel? They keep advertising Premier Inns on the news, on the television, £29 a room. I’ll tell you what, if the Roundhay Festival’s going on in Leeds, you try getting a room in a Premier Inn at £29, or when the Labour Party Conference is on, when it’s on in Manchester, Chair, in the middle of Manchester, it’s about £170 a night, now where did that happen? It’s only got two sheets on the bed, the same quilt, you only get two tea bags, two little things of milk, you get nothing else extra and yet and yet you’re paying nigh on £100 more for a room, it’s absolute exploitation at its worst. I promise you that what we will do, we will raise this issue with our Parliamentary Group and we’ll talk to John next week and we’ll hope that if we do get a sympathetic government and it’s elected, we will ask them to recognise the values of family life and why that we should protect those people from the serial exploitation metered out by many of these tour operators. We ask you to support, Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 110.

110 Miscellaneous – 450

That this conference agrees to put pressure on football’s governing bodies to give us our national sport back to the working class people of this country. The working class people are being priced out with high ticket prices and ignored by new club owners and belittling club fans while protesting against these high prices and changing club names and shirt colours and by supporting football club unions like the Spirit of Shankly.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool): Moving this motion and speaking on behalf of the EC, who support this of course and I hope it doesn’t bore too many people. That this Conference agrees to put pressure on football governing bodies to give our national sport back to the working class people of this country, sorry Marilyn. This working class people have been priced out with high ticket prices and ignored by club owners and belittling club fans while protesting against these high prices and changing club names and shirt colours and by supporting football club unions like the Spirit of Shankly. Football clubs get more money now than they could ever have imagined, especially in the Premier League. Under the new TV deal announced last year, Sky Sports and BT Sports pay £3 billion to show premier league football, where each team get an extra £14 million per year. This season has just finished and the top four teams in the Premier League, Liverpool, Man City, Chelsea, Arsenal and how I wish that they’d finished in that order. Never mind, there’s always next season [LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Always next season.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool): Mind you, jumping from 7th to 1st must have been harder than sliding from 1st to 7th.

[Laughter and applause]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You’ll never know.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool): The top four teams in the Premiership received a combined total of £381 million. Even smaller teams in the League, like Man United and Everton received £174 million.

[Laughter and applause]

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool): There’s more.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, I thought there would be.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool): But despite this new-found wealth, I do accept that outside the Premier League, teams are struggling. Ticket prices have risen, on average, 715% since 1989. At Anfield, they’ve gone up 1,108% in that time. To put that in perspective, the Bank of England official inflation rate for that period is 77%.
It’s clear that the price of football exists in its own bubble. Using this rate of inflation, a £60 ticket at Anfield in 1989 should only cost £106 today. Last season it cost £725. If it continues to increase by the same rate of inflation, the same season ticket will cost me £8,000 in 20 years, so I better start saving now. In the Bundesliga in Germany, season tickets are a lot cheaper and at Borussia Dortmund you get a free local transport to and from the match and three champion league games included. Man United are going to rule out bringing this in for next season, oh sorry, they’re not in the Champions League, are they?

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

These ticket prices rises would be easier to understand if the payer supporters who buy the tickets are kept up with the same rate, but we know it hasn’t. The Taylor report after Hillsborough said tickets should remain within reach class terms to those supporters who stood on the terraces and ask yourself, is this the case? Football fans from all over the country are proud of their team colours and names and yet when new owners take over and plough money into a club, they seem to think they can do what they want without consulting the fans. Take Vincent Tan who took over Cardiff City. Yes, he put money into the club to change, he put money into the club, but to change the shirt colours from blue to red, did he not understand that their nickname is the bluebirds? He changed the colour, because in Asia red is a sign of success, festivity and joy. I don’t see any of that there now. They’ve sacked a decent manager, got relegated and put the season ticket prices up.

Hull City have got a new owner and yes, he put money into the club, but he wants to change the name, a name that they’ve had for 109 years, to Hull Tigers, because he thinks the word City is common and when the fans rebelled over this, singing ‘Hull City ‘til I die’, his reply was they can die for all I care. That’s what these new owners think of the fans and probably there are more stories like this. The Spirit of Shankly was the first football club union to be set up in the dark days of those two Yank cowboys, Gillett and Hicks, who owned Liverpool. I like to think we helped get these two cowboys out, because they were skint, they put us in debt and they lied. When Arsenal wanted to charge us 60 quid for a FA cup tie last season, we again put pressure on Arsenal and they reduced it to 40.

At Liverpool, an under 16 cannot purchase a ticket without an adult. We deem this unfair and working with the club, they relented on this for cup ties this season. On 16th June last year, when the fixtures came out, the Spirit of Shankly organised a protest outside the Premier League, where fans from all over the country stood side by side to tell them enough is enough. So take this message back to your clubs, supporters of all clubs can work together for the common good. Our unity will give strength and give us power. The time for diversions and tribalism will remain in grounds, in pubs, on message boards, in work and at Conference, for now we need to stand together and work together, for if we don’t, football will change beyond recognition. Football and other sports are nothing without fans. I do apologise for any egg chasers or people who just hate footie for boring you for the last few minutes and also the football banter about Man United and Everton, but I do love footie and I love my club and please support it anyway and justice for the 96.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you seconding it?

Brother John Fitzpatrick – Branch 430, No. 4 Region: How can I follow that? Just to remind you, football is a working class sport and we should never let the owners forget it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: Totally here to support the motion, but also I want it to go a step further. It’s about time these Premier League and all of the football clubs decided to put something back into the grass roots football. You see many parks pitches now which the council owned, where there’s either inadequate or lack of changing facilities, which aren’t properly maintained, never seem to be clean, also the pitches aren’t any good, so how is our youth supposed to, not only get into the game of football or any other sports, but how are they also then supposed to use their exercise and stuff like that, because that’s what it was about for me, it was about having a kick-around with my mates, having a good laugh, but then also getting a bit of exercise going through. A lot of people now, especially like middle-aged, played their 5-a-side footballs just to keep going. We’ve got cracking 5-a-side football pitches, but why can’t we have proper 11-a-side pitches in the council areas? Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558: This is quite topical. I take my son to Elland Road, for my sins. Recently, I looked at buying him and his girlfriend a season ticket, he’s 14. They were 70 quid at the time for the pair of them, so it’d been 140 quid. I went to buy these season tickets for him and his girlfriend and the club turned around and said to me well, you’ve got to go as well. There’s two tickets for two teenagers there, 140 quid I thought was a reasonable price, but apparently they want me to pay 350 quid as well.
When I turned around and said to them I can’t make that, I do shifts, I can’t commit to a season ticket, then they turned around and said that I couldn’t buy the two child tickets. It’s a working class sport and it’s losing its identity rapidly.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. Motion 111.

111 Miscellaneous – 450

That this conference agrees that we lobby our MPs to re-open the Remploy factories when this government is telling disabled people that after 182 days they no longer qualify for job seekers payments.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: That this Conference agrees that we lobby our MPs to re-open the Remploy factories, when this government is telling disabled people that after 182 days they no longer qualify for Job Seekers payments. This motion was put in before the Jobcentres decided that they would start sanctioning people left, right and centre. These people don’t necessarily get Job Seekers and can’t claim disability benefits if, for instance, they’re Down’s Syndrome. They’re not ill, but quite often they’re not acceptable in the workplace, as they can be quite childlike. It’s ridiculous to penalise people when this government has closed down the Remploy factories that helped vulnerable adults to be useful members of society and proud to have a job. I ask for your support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Second? Formally seconded? Yes, yes, I said formally seconded, yes.

Sister Sandra Carr – Branch 408: I support this motion. Yet again, what are the government doing? It’s not just the, we need to rally these MPs, it’s everybody, all the unions, not just our Union, every union, because they’re just attacking not just disabled people but everybody. So I support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sandra, can you just say your name into the mike, so we get it on tape.

Sister Sandra Carr – Branch 408: Sorry?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sorry, Sandra Carr, 408.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 417 (Hovis, Wigan): Here to support the motion. This reflects also on what we’ve discussed earlier in the Conference. ATOS, the ATOS assessments of disabled people, saying that they can work. Where’s the work going to be? There are no jobs out there. The biggest employer of disabled people was the Remploy organisation, which the Tory government has shut down, so where are the people who are disabled going to work? It’s a huge scandal. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers?

Brother Mark McHugh – Branch 503 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): The Executive Council would ask that the Conference supports this motion. The closure of Remploy factories was a disgrace and an easy option for government. It clearly didn’t care about the people with disabilities. The closure of these sites does nothing to help the self-esteem of disabled workers, who find it nigh on impossible to enter the mainstream workplace. There is also a stigmatisation of disabled workers in the press as work-shy scroungers and fakers. The UK government could do a lot worse than follow the example of the Scottish government. The Scottish government have set up a supported business task group to look at how best they can support these businesses.

The government have introduced a supported business framework documenting outlines to every supported business and the goods and services they supply. This has been sent out to every public body procurement office in the country. The government have also made an agreement with the NHS to give new supported business, in sterling £1.5 million of work a year. This new supported business will employ 60 people by October. North Lanarkshire council, with the pressure of a trades council, have opened up a Remploy factory that has closed and RSBi in Glasgow have taken on some extra employ/Remploy (?) workers. These factories don’t need handouts, they need work and this can be done through public procurement and Article 19. This is EU legislation that allows public bodies to reserve work for supported businesses. The definition of a supported business is that 50%, 51% of the workforce are disabled.
We do not need to go back to Victorian times, there is an alternative and that is to move into the 21st Century and treat our disabled brothers and sisters with the respect they deserve. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

Just before I introduce the next motion, I want to make you aware that on the Union website, under the learning section, there’s where you can download a learning needs analysis form. This learning needs analysis form is something that can really help the people in your branch to identify what they would like support on and gives our learning people an opportunity to debate and discuss issues around learning needs within our branches across the country and it’s really, really important information that can help the Union go forward, because we can make sure that we provide (1) the learning that they require and need and want and also it provides us with other information, such as those people who are actually not in the Union and how we can maybe attract them to maybe joining the Trade Union, so when you go back to your branches, if you can encourage people, members absolutely, but non-members as well, to fill in these learning needs analysis, it could really help them as an individual and also give us a bit of a benefit as a Trade Union.

Okay, we’re on 112.

112 Miscellaneous – 580 Greggs Yorkshire

This conference agrees that youth clubs should be as common as they were 10–15 years ago. We should be lobbying the government to encourage councils to be setting them up.

Sister Sarah Woolley – Branch 580: I went to an amazing youth club, it was 50p a week, I went on trips, I played ping-pong ball, made friends with people that otherwise I wouldn’t have met and had experiences that I wouldn’t have had. One of my general assistants tried to set up a youth club last year in her local area, an area rife with groups of kids congregating at night and causing trouble because there’s nothing else to do. She spoke to parents, schools and even her local council and got nowhere. I understand there are guidelines to adhere to and there would be a lot of work to put in, but surely this work is worth it when it means that young people have a place to go on an evening, rather than hang around on the streets looking intimidating. We could do it when I was a kid and when many of my Delegates were children, so why can’t we do it now? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: Maybe five years ago, I had the honour of running a youth club for seven years. I live in front of an estate and there was this young particular lad, who used to come to the youth club. You couldn’t have got a rougher kid. His nickname was ‘Druggy’, you know because he was only 14 and he was on the cannabis. Nine times out of 10 he’d come to the youth club because his mum and dad were at the pub. I believe that youth clubs are vital. They go on about drugs in our society today. I know it’s a lot harder for the young ‘uns today with drugs and other issues than when I was a young lad, you know a lot of years ago, but now I see that lad, he’s in his 20s, he’s no longer on drugs. He has two young kids and he’s just passed his car test. He doesn’t wear ragged trousers anymore with his arse hanging out, he’s a very smart lad and I believe that in going to the youth club put that lad on the straight and narrow. Please, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Here to fully support this motion. Some of the best times of growing up in the 70’s I had in youth clubs. I didn’t know they actually still existed, I thought they had fallen by the wayside. If they have in some towns, they need to be resurrected and got going again. Children will only congregate on streets if they’ve nowhere else to go. If they’ve somewhere to go and something to interest them, it’ll get them off the streets and keep them out of trouble. Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Imran Hussain – Branch 301 (Greggs shops): As a vice-chair of a youth club 10 years ago, our funding was stopped by local councils as they found our success a threat to their council seat, so children now are missing out because councils are making political decisions. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 253 (Memory Lane Cakes): When I was younger I used to go to the youth club for three nights of the week and it was fantastic and I was lucky in Cardiff, we had about five youth clubs all over the district and when the Conservatives came into power and cut all the budgets, it was reduced from five to one and this is the reason why we can expect kids to walk around the streets, because the one youth club, which is in a district of Cardiff...
that’s not easily accessible by bus, is atrocious and I just, I really support this motion. We need more youth clubs, get
more kids doing stuff on the street, because it makes them better, because the children who went to this youth club are
now dancing instructors to performing arts and things of that nature. I fully support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Sean Molloy:** I’m here to support it as well, basically because youth clubs don’t just get kids off the street, they
instill a bit of discipline in sports events such as if they run football teams and swimming clubs and stuff like that so
yes, I fully support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any more speakers? No?

**Brother Norville Grazette – Branch 123 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** Morning, Conference. Speaking
on behalf of the Executive Council, for you to support this motion. This motion says 10–15 years. I think for me it’s
got to go back further than that, but I spent my days in a youth club, hoping, as the last speaker said, three evenings
a week. It was somewhere we could have gone and played pool, have a game of snooker and socialise. They should,
please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. 113. It’s a nice
Diggers shirt, that.

113 **Miscellaneous – 405**

*That this conference agrees to continue to support the annual Wigan Diggers festival of music and poetry held in
celebration of the life of Gerald Winstanley, one of the first socialist thinkers.*

**Sister Janet Phillips – Branch 405:** Good morning, comrades. That this Conference agrees to continue to support the annual
Wigan Diggers Festival of real music and poetry and we’ve got real ale as well. It’s held in celebration of the life
of Gerrard Winstanley, one of the first socialist thinkers. It’s on Saturday, 13th September, 11 – 9.30, so you can use
public transport and enjoy our real ale. There’s children’s activities, other socialists and activists and did I mention the
real ale? Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Are you seconding that?

**Brother John Fox – Branch 405 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** And seconding this motion. Comrades,
we ask you to support this motion. It’s a great event, it’s been going now for three or four years and it’s been growing
in statue throughout well, each year. Last year, the Union had a stall on this event and it actually helped with the Wigan
strike, because we got the message out throughout the town. Not only that, we actually made a couple of members
there, because where it’s situated is right in the centre of the town of Wigan and all the fast food outlets are there and
they were just coming in, with it being on all day, they were just coming and going and as Janet said, it’s a fantastic
event of music, poetry, re-enactments and also we have, they have an awards as well, which last year Tony Benn won
and that’s for all people with social values.

I know the recipient of this this year is Maxine Peake, so hopefully it’ll be good. Oh yes, I was going to mention that,
Janet, you’re alright. The Wigan Diggers has got a Facebook page, yes and I just can’t remember the what’s-a-name
of it because I’ve not put it down on my notes, but they have got a Facebook page and a Twitter page, which you can
go on and find out who’s coming on. The bands are absolutely superb and I can tell you this, Ian came last year and he
was on Thatcher’s demise and he loved it, especially the Thatcher’s demise, it’s like an 8 point something cider and he
quit the demise after drinking that, but that’s another thing. It’s a great day of entertainment, music and learning about
the life of Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers and it’s, as I said, it’s going from strength to strength. Last year over
2½ thousand people attended it, so there’s plenty of people who we can actually get out and about onto this and get
our message across to these people and there’s all sorts of other political parties there as well and you can share views
and ideas and it’s a great, another way of networking with all the different people, so please support and as Janet said,
this year it’s on 13th September and it’s the nearest Saturday, it’s always the nearest Saturday to the date of his death,
so please support and attend if you can and you’ll enjoy yourselves. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.
Can we make, I take it everything that was supposed to be collected has been collected and there’s nothing left outstanding and everything’s been taken into the Standing Orders room? Has everything, yes? Everything’s been done? Not bad, it’s Wednesday. In that case then, let’s finish for a break and let’s get back in here for 11 o’clock.

[BREAK]

… that you fantastic people last night managed to raise for the Velindre Cancer Hospital, I do apologise for my pronunciation, £300 at the Watkins & Gunn do last night, so absolutely fantastic to you, well done.

[APPLAUSE]

The winner of the Lighthouse Financial, now it’s got on here HSV, so I’m not sure what HSV is, it’s what? Oh, it’s High Street Vouchers, we’re not allowed to use acronyms, you passed a motion …

[APPLAUSE]

… and it was Kashmir Dosanjh, Darren Lock, Steve Cook and I can verify that it was done properly and it was done by, verified by Watkins & Gunn Solicitors and I believe drawn by John Vickers, so anybody who’s in the bar and sees John Vickers who’s just benefitted from a High Street Voucher and John says he’ll always welcome, making sure that a pint comes his way for making sure that you got those vouchers.

Okay, also I know when people finish Conference they like to go to the bar, but if you drive a car with the registration X903 JPB and you’re in room 305 or if you’re in FX52 GHO in room 117 or BV53 NZO in room 29 or FV07 MKA, we haven’t got a room number for that, pardon? 215, okay, thank you [LAUGHTER]. I know you’re young at heart. Could you move your cars first please, because there’s some people that need to get their car out and they won’t be able to get out or they might hit your car trying to get their own out, so if you could do that when Conference finishes first, before going and enjoying lovely Southport.

Okay, we’re on motion 114.

114 Miscellaneous – 450

That this conference agrees to buy aluminium or another similar weight of metal frames to hold our banners for the mighty Bakers Union when we are on a march.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: You’ll be pleased to know I’ve nearly finished getting up here.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. That this Conference agrees to buy aluminium or another similar weight of metal frames to hold our banners for the mighty Bakers Union when we’re off out on a march. The first march that we went on a few years ago was in London and 10 out of 10 to my husband, he carried that banner all the way round and it was damned heavy. Anybody that was on the other end did a little and then said somebody else do this, somebody else do that, Geoff did it all the way, 10 out of 10 to him. We need lighter weight frames and then we can get out there with our banners. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201: I’m here to fully support this motion. Anyone who’s ever been on a march knows that those big wooden frame things to hold the banners are too heavy. I can’t see that it’d be a massive cost to get something light and durable to actually be able to carry the banners for any significant length of time. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers? General Secretary to respond.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Chair, just very, very briefly. It’s obviously buggered your idea up, hasn’t it, those scaffolding poles we saw last night …

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I know, I know.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Yes, we’d ask Conference to support them. At this moment in time Adrian Stewart, who’s our finance officer, is ringing around trying to find companies who supply them. It would be helpful if anyone knows any companies that do supply them, yes, everyone in Northern Ireland waves and the other thing is, we’ll need to know what banners, because we’re not absolutely certain what banners we’ve got out in the regions and, of course, what ones would need aluminium poles.
I know we have some very, very small ones which we put broom handles on, but we will do it. You let us know the sizes of your banners and we will get the poles done for you, but if you know somewhere that does the poles, let me know and we'll make contact with them and get them done. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 116. 15, getting ahead of myself.

115 Miscellaneous – 580 Greggs Yorkshire

*That this conference agree to lobby government to reduce prices for theme parks for all people.*

Sister Angela Shortreed – Branch 580: That this Conference agree to lobby government to reduce the prices of theme parks. Prices at theme parks, such as Alton Towers, Thorpe Park and Legoland have soared in the past four years. Fewer parents can afford a bank holiday or a half term because of the rises. The financial pressures on families is already a concern, when combined with escalating costs of attractions and transport. The family day out is increasingly under threat. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]


116 Miscellaneous – 450

*That this conference agrees that we will not tolerate racism in this trade union. If you are a racist, there is no place for you in this union.*

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Again. That this Conference agrees that we will not tolerate racism in this Trade Union. If you’re a racist, there’s no place for you here.

[APPLAUSE]

When you start to refer to an Asian Delegate as Gunga Din, that’s a racist remark, it’s not funny, it’s racist.

[APPLAUSE]

Some of our members post racist comments and so-called racist, so-called jokes on Facebook, pictures of the white cliffs of Dover with chuff-off, we’re full, it’s racist. I find this sort of behaviour revolting. You know who you are, hang your heads in shame and the rest of you I ask for your support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder?

Brother Steve Nevin – Branch 504: Hi. Racism is rising. The BNP and EDL vultures are circling round the racist UKIP. I have marched against the EDL scum, they are nothing but vicious thugs. There was a guy stood here the other day and he said he knows people in this room who vote for the racist UKIP. If so, what are they doing in this room, what are they doing in this Union and what are they doing in society today? No place. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Apryl Walcott – Branch 450: I may be the whitest mixed race person you’ll ever meet, but I’ve been on the receiving end of racism at university. I’m not dead. Racism has no place in society. It certainly does not have a place in trade unions. We should be fighting for every single person, whether the colour of their skin, their sexual orientation or their religion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: I can’t stand racism in any form whatsoever. One of my best friends is Polish and I was lucky, I was invited to his wedding in Poland and the hospitality that these people give is absolutely amazing. They treat you as one of the family, not as a stranger, as one of the family. At the beginning of, when people get up, I hear this said often, brothers and sisters. These people are our brothers and sisters. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers? General Secretary.
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thank you, Chair. Just, obviously the Executive Council would ask Conference to support the motion, but I would also like to mention some of the organisations who’ve been represented in this Hall and who’ve also been represented through the GFTU, who we affiliate to. I think first of all Stand Up To Racism, it’s a great organisation to become involved with and if we’re going to win this heinous battle against people who are extremists. Show Racism the Red Card, which the PFA have been running through the GFTU, it’s again, my mate, Oshor Williams, is only down, he used to play for Man United, but he’s running an absolutely fabulous campaign and of course I would push the Stand Up To UKIP thing that Katrina Lawrie has got at the back and make sure before you go from the Hall if you haven’t signed the petition, make sure you do. I would just say while we’re talking about, yes, we’ve got them at the back there, just talking about Katrina Lawrie, I think it’s great that she’s here today, because she wasn’t going to be here today, because she was very near to being detained by Her Majesty in one of those little places with bars on the windows, for demonstrating against the fracking that was going on at Barton Moss and she, like many, many others stood and stopped police doing what they did there and got arrested and what she did there, they dropped the charge of obstructing a highway, but she obstructed an officer of the law and I think it was absolutely despicable and she should have been locked up. No, I’m only kidding, Katrina, glad that yesterday afternoon that the charges were dropped and she’s here to join us like many other people.

[APPLAUSE]

Comrades, it goes without saying that the Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union will not and have not tolerated racism and I’m pleased to say that’s going to be hopefully one of the major debates and points on the final day, but let’s go a step further and unequivocally state that the Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union will not tolerate any type of discrimination within its ranks. We’ll not give a platform to anybody seeking to disadvantage any individual or group on the base of race, colour, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, job status, poverty, length of their hair or on the basis they have pierces, tattoos or scars. What right has any individual got to discriminate against any other person, just because they happen to hold different values or look different to what they are? What a crap world it would be if everyone was the same, we were all clones of each other, thinking and behaving in exactly the same way. The Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union, as far as I’m concerned, is the best Union, not the richest ......

[APPLAUSE]

—we’re not the richest, we’re by no means the biggest, but one that has very, very distinct policies on how we treat people and how we treat each other in fairness. Those policies of fairness, equality, support and progression through society. No, Marilyn is dead right. If you’re a racist, you’re in direct conflict with the values of trade unions and in particular this Union. There’s no place within our Trade Union family for your beliefs if you’re a racist. A number of years ago, the Union was forced to put its money where its mouth was, when one of our branch secretaries openly admitted at Conference on a Saturday night that she was a member of the British National Party and after a lot of kerfuffle and screaming and shouting, she was due to get an award on the Sunday and we stripped her of that award and she left Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

She resigned her position with the Union and then decided to take us to court, because that is what the BNP do. They’re not worried about what goes on in unions, they just see us as a fast-track to get a few bob, plant a racist, get them expelled, take the union to court, get a few bob for the coffers and that will swell their fighting fund. Well, we took on that challenge with the help of Sue Harrison at Thompson’s and I’ve got to say a very good, if not expensive barrister, we defended the great name of this Union, left with both finances and reputation intact and justified why that individual was not re-admitted to our Union and will not be in the future. I know that day gave Joe Marino and I a great deal of pleasure, a sweet smell of victory. You know, for a cause that we both felt passionately about, something that we really believed in, but more importantly it sent a clear message that the BFAWU will not tolerate racist, we won’t tolerate bigots or xenophobes, irrespective of what that may stand under, whether it’s BNP, National Front, English Defence League or UKIP.

Chair, I would like to draw attention to an analogy. Comrades, I’m not religious in any way, shape or form, I’ve got friends at the back of the room who will absolutely testify to that, but I seem to remember from when I was a kid, somewhere in the Bible that it says that in God’s house there are many rooms and that one was being prepared for us all. To say we can tolerate differences of opinion, we welcome individuals’ views and can accept our members will have different political and society values, that’s very true, but there’s no room for racists in our house and there’ll be no compromise.

[APPLAUSE]
Comrades, don’t just support the motion, but go out and support those organisations I spoke of at the beginning. Help them to change attitudes and to make it a better society. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Against? That’s carried. 117.

117 Miscellaneous – 417 Hovis Wigan

That this conference agrees that parliament bring in licences for the ownership and breeding of certain breeds and types of dog.

Brother Nick Hughes – Branch 417, Branch Secretary (Hovis, Wigan): Conference, Platform, Chair, National President. Dog licences for owners and breeders, not a word is on the Agenda. I ask this Conference to support this motion. Dog licences were abolished in 1987. It’s my belief there was no such thing as a dangerous breed, just dangerous owners and breeders. As with cars and motorcycles, guns etc. need a licence and some form of background history check before issue, know the previous are dangerous until mishandled. I believe all potential dog owners should undergo basic training in all aspects, which includes training, handling, nutrition and health.

Any cases of maltreatment or having a dog out of control, then the licence can be revoked and to prevent future ownership or breeding. I would also recommend matching dogs to owners with experience. I own two English bull terriers, I’ve had four previously. I’ve also had other breeds all my life, mainly rescue dogs, all sorts from a Pyrenean Mountain dog to a three-legged Bichon Frisé called ‘Wicket’ and I know distinct breed strains (?) and all have distinctive characters, some say personalities. My first bull terrier was called ‘Blossom’ and as a breed they are headstrong, yes, originally bred for fighting, but they are loveable, clown-like, but notoriously stubborn and need consistent and careful handling, a bit like myself and not a breed for everybody.

I was recommended to a breeder by a friend, because I’d always wanted this. The breeder actually came to my house and checked out my house, me and my family and my experience with dogs before he would even allow me to go and see one of his pups. This impressed me. What I wanted to know was a bit more about the breed. He did his utmost to encourage me and told me how to handle them. Currently I have two bull terriers, one’s a rescue dog, she’s deaf. This was brought about by in-breeding. She has severe behavioural issues. She had the same father and same grandmother on both sides. I believe responsible breeders shouldn’t allow this and licensing would curtail in-breeding and such individuals who require dogs for street credibility and status, dog fighting or money made from puppy farms. I ask the Conference to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you seconding it, are you seconding it? Yes.

Brother James McNiven – Branch 432: Although I understand the intention of this motion and I agree with most of what my colleague’s just said, but it was the wording of the motion at the time. I’m asking Conference to oppose this motion, not because I think that current dangerous dog laws are fit for purpose, because I don’t, but based on current information available, I just don’t believe the changes suggested in this motion will have the impact that it was intended to have. In the same way that an angler who pays £27 a year for a licence doesn’t automatically make them a responsible angler. Licence of dog ownership doesn’t automatically improve dog ownership.

The dog licence was abolished in 1987 and at that time the licence was just 37p a year. It was abolished due to the fact that only a small number bothered to even buy it in the first place. Estimates suggest that it was less than 50% and it was too difficult to enforce. The licence was seen as a tax on dog ownership and did not encourage a more responsible attitude or help tackle dog problems in any way whatsoever. Current evidence of this can be found in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland they still have the dog licence and it’s still required by law to have one, but it’s estimated that only ⅓ of all dog owners actually obtain a licence. That means that two out of three dog owners still don’t bother and it doesn’t improve things. Northern Ireland still has this law, but still has the highest number of stray dogs per head of population than any other area in the UK. A staggering 34% of all dogs put to sleep in the whole of the UK come from Northern Ireland, even though they have this licence in place.

Dog breeders who breed any type of dog in the UK have to obtain a breeding licence if they intend to breed five or more litters a year, under the Breeding of Dogs Act, for which they pay a fee and it varies from region to region and they have to pay that every 12 months. Asking parliament to bring in licences which were only for certain breeds would be a step backwards for me, not forwards. There are plans to make changes to current legislation, aimed at strengthening current dog laws, later this year.
Over time this should promote responsible dog ownership and reduce the impact that all dogs create problems, on local authorities. These changes will make it compulsory for all dogs to be microchipped and extend laws to cover instances that happen on private property, not just in the public areas. It will never be possible to prevent every dog attack, but enforcing these changes for all breeds, not just a select few, will ensure stray and nuisance dogs will be united with their owners and as a microchip infers legal ownership, owners can be held accountable for the responsibilities under the Animal Welfare Act. This would seriously help dog wardens, animal charities, reducing unnecessary costs and re-homing, so as I said earlier, I do understand the reasons behind it and I fully support everything that’s just been said before me, but let’s support a motion, let’s not serve a motion that doesn’t serve no purpose. Experts like the Dogs Trust, the RSPCA, Defra and other organisations oppose this, so let’s please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: I had a Border Lakeland for 15 years, fantastic dog. I’ve got eight grandchildren and he could play with any of them, but when I took him into a field and there was another dog there, I could not let him off. It was just his nature, he’d go for another dog and I had to keep him on the lead all the time. I really strongly believe that dogs should be licensed, but the simple fact is that when you get a dog that’s done serious bodily harm to another individual or another dog, the first port of call for the owner, it’s not my dog. If they aren’t fit enough to have a dog, they shouldn’t be allowed one. To have a dog and look after it correctly and I keep hearing these horror attacks about dogs going out, I never let mine off the lead. If you’ve got a dog that’s temperamental, when you take it out, muzzle it. We had that incident the other day, the elderly gentleman that got badly mauled by two dogs that hadn’t been fed.

You know, if those dogs had just been muzzled, it’d probably have stopped them horrific injuries and then my hobby is motorbikes and I watched a programme on telly of a famous bike builder. He actually went on TV and bragged about his two fighting dogs, one of them’s called ‘Rudy’ and he said “Ooh, bad boy, Rudy”, he said, “…you’ve killed one of the other dogs”. To me, this individual from America should not be allowed to have a dog. They go on about fighting dogs and you get people like stars like them in America, they’re openly trying to get the fighting breeds to fight in front of a camera. I strongly believe that all dog owners should be licensed and if you aren’t fit enough for a dog, you don’t get a licence. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Larry Stone – Branch 116, Region 1: I’m here to oppose this motion. I feel very strongly about this. In principle I agree with the wording and my previous colleagues, what they were saying, but let’s face it, it’s the law that needs changing, not the dog licences. If you’re a responsible dog owner like me, who goes around picking up all the poo and stuff like that and you see these people that leave it and aren’t bothered. They’re the people you need to tackle. I think having a licence won’t change a thing, it’s the owners we need to sort out first.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Lay – Branch 253: I’m here to oppose this motion on the basis of the wording. What breeds are going to be licensed? and then are mixed breeds – the licence as well as owners? I have three dogs which are all mixed, but I’m not entirely sure what sort of breeds are in them. I know the one that’s got a bit of Staff in her, they’re supposed to be quite a dangerous dog, yet she is the softest loving thing you could ever possibly meet and also what’s the cost going to be? You know, someone said previously for a, the charities like the RSPCA, local dogs homes and stuff like that, if it’s going to be an expensive thing for the person, they’re not going to be rescuing these dogs which are going to sit there in these dogs homes, not getting the proper love and attention they need, so please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711 (Belfast): President, Conference, Delegates. This was kind of like the West Lothian doggie Commission for me. In Northern Ireland the dog licence is £5. I just wanted to talk about we have the highest percentage of strays than anywhere in the United Kingdom, but I work for an animal charity, I volunteer 15 hours a week. I love dogs. I’m here to support Nick, simply on the reason all dogs are capable of attack, but it’s people are not responsible. The reason there’s so many strays in Northern Ireland is the people just buy dogs like they would buy a bangle or they would buy something shiny. It’s a nice bit of street cred, but when they get fed up, the dogs are left on the street. Most dogs that I work with are microchipped. People are checked three times, they send two separate people to your house to check to make sure that you have adequate comfort for them, you have a secure area and you are responsible. Please, please, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]
Sister Janine Cokayne – Branch 201 (Hovis, Avonmouth): I’m here to fully support this motion for purely selfish reasons. My friend is a lovely, lovely girl, but a complete Barbie doll and thought it would be a good idea to get a Chihuahua because they’re cute and they fit in your bag, not realising that it was a dog and it needed to be looked after. After a couple of weeks she couldn’t look after him. She put him on Facebook, she needed him gone, she needed him rehomed. I got in so much trouble for taking this dog home. I can’t keep doing it. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Jon Waller – Branch 364: First time speaker. I’m here to oppose this motion. I don’t think we should stigmatise different breeds of dogs. I think it’s the owners that are to blame. I had a Staffordshire bull terrier for 15 years. People used to give me a wide berth all the time, thought it was a devil dog, never caused a problem with anybody. Yesterday morning I saw a Jack Russell playing up – I don’t know should all dogs be on controlled just certain dogs? I think it should be all dogs. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): I’m here to oppose this motion. Although I agree with the sentiment of it, the sentiment of it is absolutely great, but what I think is, what we need to do is actually bring the owners to task if they’ve got dogs who aren’t behaving or badly behaving. I’ve been a dog owner for the best part of 40 years, I’m on my third dog now, she’s fantastic, but what I would say is don’t give this Tory government another indirect tax, because that’s all it would be, another indirect tax if we’ve got dog licences. Yes, the sentiment behind it, I agree with the second speaker, the sentiment behind it is absolutely fantastic and dog owners should be brought to task if they don’t look after their dogs. Don’t give this government chance to tax us.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (replying on behalf of the Executive Council): We want the Conference to support this motion for the reasons discussed. Also we’ve heard about the attacks on people, other dogs, especially children as well. Every dog has the ability to strike and I think this motion is the first step in getting in control in regards to holding the owners accountable for their actions and I just want to reiterate what comrade Jake said, somebody said obviously about compulsory microchipping and I think that possibly as well in addition to obviously what we’re trying to achieve here, but at the end of the day a dog’s a dog, it’s got instincts and we shouldn’t be surprised, but at the end of the day we do know that certain dogs have a tendency to behave in a certain way and that might be the dog’s fault, it’s probably not, but I just wanted to let you know that we should go with the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply?

Brother Nick Hughes – Branch 417 (Wigan): I just wanted to clarify the wording of it. I did reiterate when I first came up here to say that it’s not just certain breeds of dogs and it’s a licensing for the owner, not the dog, as in the same way you can’t just go and get in a car and drive off without having a licence. I was trying to make the point that people who’ve never experienced having a dog, should undergo basic training. To go out and buy, for example, a puppy of my breed and they’re notoriously stubborn, potentially a fighting dog with another dog or even a dangerous dog to another person, it would be irresponsible for a breeder to sell that dog to anybody with no experience of a dog at all. The point I was making, again, is the fact that some people use dogs as status symbols. If that dog is out of control and they have a licence and they’ve undergone, for example, a puppy training class, the licence is taken away from them and that person will never be allowed to get another dog, for example the same way as you would if you got in a car and was caught drink-driving. I ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried.

Before we move to the last motion, I’ve got the results for the substitute EC. Larry Stone 10, John Lee 9. I know it’s Jack, but they’ve put John. Region 2, Chris Lay 9, Michael Andrews 7, John Harding 2. Region 3, Imran Hussain 9, Kashmir Dosanjh 7, Warren Broomhall 6, Kev Clarke 5, Damian Sohar (?) spelling) 5, Ian Haywood 2. Region 4, Des P 15, Marilyn McCarthy 12, Mandy Mason 5, Roy Tysall 4, Sandra Carr 3, Mike Redshaw 2. Region 5, Helena England 15, Dave Lawrence 11, Craig Olley 10, Richard Hirst 3, Alison Braun 3, Angela Shortreed 2. Region 6, Gerry Eccles unopposed. Region 7, Noel Mullen unopposed. The person that obviously got the most votes would be the first person that we’d call when an Executive Council member is on holiday or sick or unable to attend.

The substitute Executive young member. Rachel Mullen 86, Nathalie Kelly 29, Garry Heald 7, Simon Evans 8, Damian Sawa 4, Christopher Lay 26 and Dawn Scott 2. Okay.

Substitute Executive female representative. Helena England 45, Marilyn McCarthy 37, Angela Shortreed 18, Dawn Scott 18, Mandy Mason 17, Agnieszka Szadkowska 25, scouse here, did you know?, Nathalie Kelly 12, Marianne Birkin 6. Okay, there you go.

We’ll also be doing, on your way out of here, I mean obviously last night we had some amazing people, like I say Watkins & Gunn very kindly sponsored them to come and speak at the fringe meeting event from the Ritzy Cinema strikers, so we’re going to be doing a bucket collection. I know you’ve given generously already, but I hope you can find some more change in your pockets and put as much as you can into that bucket on your way out, because those people need our support and they need our solidarity and of course they also need cash, so they can’t get starved back to work. Mover of motion 118.

118 Miscellaneous – No 4 Regional Council

That this conference agrees to push the government to publicly apologise to Arthur Scargill that his message was right. His message was simple (Thatcher and her cronies intend to close the coal industry). It is now self-evident Arthur was right.

Sister Marilyn McCarthy – Branch 450: Definitely last time I’m up. That this Conference agrees to push the government to publicly apologise to Arthur Scargill, because his message was right. His message was simple. Thatcher and her cronies intended to close the coal industry. It’s now self-evident that Arthur was right and I’d like to go a bit further with this, I would like to see this Union invite him again to our Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

He’s one of the best speakers that I’ve heard. Not as good as Ricky Tomlinson, I’ll grant you that, but still excellent and I would really like to hear his opinions on where we’re up to with this now. I ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded?

Brother Michael Lynch – Branch 505, Region 5 (Northumberland Durham): Here to fully support this. Arthur was what you would call a modern day Methuselah, he saw into the future but nobody believed him. I think it’s the right thing to do to pass this motion today, seeing next week will be the 30th anniversary of the miners’ strike, Orgreave, where they were hemmed in and were charged. I was arrested three times on the picket line. I was an observer from the NUM and the Labour Party. I did it deliberately so they would cart me off instead of some of the lads and when I got to the station, when they searched my pocket, I had to let it loose, because I was just there as an observer. Comrades, the miners fought and when we talk about the mining communities, it’s communities that have never recovered, because the mining villages were, when the mines went, everybody lost out, the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker. Thatcher, hate the woman, but into that thing I had the privilege of attending the Civic Centre one day when she was a minister and I’m pleased to say that. Comrades, what I would like to do, I mentioned where I come from, Northumberland, Durham, I’d like you to visit and come along and invite you all to a little pit village called Durham City on 12th July and join the miners in the march against this government. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Carl Thorne – Branch 543: When you look at what Arthur Scargill did, he’s still today stigmatised by the authorities. They even tried to do him for his tax evasion, said he was tax evading. You know, this man gave a lot to miners. I hope you offer your support and that he should be apologised by this government and any other government.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558: I’m going to oppose this, basically as I don’t feel it’s enough. I mean there’s been a lot of attacks on the trade union movement from the 80s, arising from what happened in that strike. I mean, you’ve got to remember those metropolitan police waving their wage slips at strikers, yes, the thing at Orgreave, it’s not enough, I think it should be more.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers? Conference, at the beginning of the year, the Bakers Union naturally wrote to the TUC in relation to the release of the papers concerning the miners’ strike of 1984. What was abundantly clear, if we didn’t already know, is the injustice that those working people and their families and the mining communities had to suffer, based on nothing other than a pack of lies that was a deliberate attack on working people and in particular the trade union movement, orchestrated by the Conservative government of the 1980s.

Its leader, Margaret Thatcher, has used that dispute to undermine workers organisations in our country for the last 30 years. These lies, supported and championed by the right-wing media, have formed the bedrock of much of the anti-trade union restrictions and legislation that still exists today. The knock-on effect of this is the current situation that ordinary people find themselves in, where large swathes of workers have been unable to exercise their right to join a union and have consequently seen a collapse in their living standards. The demonisation of organised labour by Thatcher and spewed out by the vile media outlets owned by Murdoch and Rothermere has demolished many of the collective bargaining rights that working people had before.

We should not only demand an investigation into the conduct and behaviour of the Conservative Party at that time, it’s in the interests of the general public to find out exactly what certain sections of the Conservative Party allowed themselves to be duped or turned a blind eye to, ensuring misinformation was fed to the public via certain media outlets, that led to ordinary people being labelled the enemy within, simply for wanting to protect jobs and their communities. At the end of the investigation, we are simply asking for a simple apology to be made by the Conservative Party to the NUM, its leaders and its members of the mining community, that those decisions that they took, that demonised those fantastic workers, that actually, when you think about it, when you think about the jobs that those people did, when you think about the mining industry and for centuries that created our country. They were the backbone of our country and they certainly weren’t the enemy within.

They certainly deserve an apology and the TUC should call for a demonstration outside Conservative central office, if the Conservatives refuse to hold that demonstration and we, as the Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union should join that demonstration in support of that apology that they should give to those people that fought for the jobs in their communities and we ask that this Conference writes to their MP, demands that that MP supports the call for an inquiry, a public inquiry into the demonisation of the NUM, Arthur Scargill and what happened to the mining communities and we demand, we demand that the Conservatives are brought to justice and held accountable for the lies and the deliberate misinformation and we ask that the Labour Party stands up, recognises that those lies have led to the attacks on our trade union movement and repeals the anti-trade union legislation that was brought in on the back of lies.

[APPLAUSE]

So we ask Conference to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

There is a right to reply, Marilyn. Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Thank you very much, Conference.

Okay, we’re ......

You can put your Agendas away now. If you want to start tidying up your desks, we’re going to do one or two presentations. Obviously, we’ve got a rather dapper-looking Tony coming to join us on the platform. So, if we can ......

Don’t leave the room, nobody be leaving the room, no. We’ve got a, as I say we’ve got some presentations to give. Okay, yes, sorry, I didn’t realise you’d got down there, I couldn’t see you from up there. Absolutely, yes.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Pretty quick on my feet. Comrades, can I obviously ask for some silence just while we do these couple of presentations.

We’ve asked Jane Booker from Walkers Union to come down to the front. Many will know that Jane was the, one of the senior partners within Molloy Robinson and has worked for the Union for a great number of years and she’s now took the decision that she’s going to leave the law and does that mean you’re going to be lawless?, yes, she’s going to be lawless in future and we sort of set her up with a job yesterday at the Hungry Horse when she was taking orders on tables. Jane’s been a great friend of the trade union movement. You know, it’s easy to be a lawyer and to work with somebody for payment, but I think friendship and we do have friends within all the lawyers that we deal with, who make the relationship work much better than just a traditional customer and representative relationship would, so Jane, on behalf of the Executive and the Union can I ask you to come forward and we’d like to give you a little award, just to say thank you for all the years ......

[APPLAUSE]
…all the years you’ve been supporting us and as I say, yes, get them after, cheers.
So, we’re going to give you a pewter baker, which, she’s always wanted one, you could have bought one, so, Jane, it means a lot for us to give this to you and I hope it’ll take some pride of place in your home somewhere, because you won’t have an office in future, excellent and thank you very much for the job you’ve done for us and can I have a tin of biscuits as well, Ian, it’s on the chair or ….. and you also get a tin of biscuits and when your husband, who is also in the legal profession, is away, that’s the time to open them. Do you want to say a few words?, you can.

Jane Booker, Walkers Union: It’s a bit like Crackerjack.

Brother Geoff Atkinson: I won’t say too much. I had to get Jane down here on the false pretence that there was going to be an award made to somebody from Wigan what took part in the strike and she twigged as we got to the front and she was going to run away, but on behalf of Region 4, thank you very much for everything you’ve done for us over the years and we hope to continue seeing you for many more Conferences to come. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Jane Booker, Walkers Union: I certainly didn’t really want to be up here and I’m not going to say much. I’m just going to say I’ve obviously grown up with the Bakers and I’m not disappearing, I’m just giving up on the law side of it, so thank you very much, you’re all dear friends to me and John Fox is going to give me a membership form before I leave today, so thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, are you …..

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: I’m ready, yes, yes, yes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you ready?, yes, yes. I mean, because sometimes we know how difficult it is, don’t we, to actually get hold of him, don’t we?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: We absolutely do.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I’ll tell you.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Yes, yes, Ian, what we’re whispering there is we’re going, we’ve come to that part of the show I nearly said there, of the Conference where we honour full-time Officials who are going to be retiring before we next meet in a year’s time and I said to Ian this morning as we were walking over, I said do you want to do it or do you want me to do it? He said well, you do it, he said, because he speaks to you more. He said every time I phone him, he never answers the phone [LAUGHTER] and I think he’s right. We were talking about Tony Lewis, who’s sat on the end there.

Tony, I’ve just got to, it would be remiss of me not to say something about him, but Tony’s one of those Officials and I can say it now because he’s retiring, who has the power to exasperate you to the full, but make you smile at exactly the same time. I’ve never known anyone come up with so many plasters for so many cuts, but excuses, in my younger days when I was a regional organiser and I was also the Union rep, if you like, for the full-time Officials, I spent most of my time in front of the EC, he was the only one who spent more time in front of them because of disciplinaries, they’d be bringing them and it was always for the same thing. Tony’s from Grenada and his holidays he always used to take, his block of holidays together and I think at the time, Tony, it was four weeks we used to get, that was what the entitlement was and Tony was never back in four weeks and there was always an excuse. He had like, there’d be plague and pestilence and there’d be beri beri or the plane was cancelled or he had the wrong week or he forgot the clocks went forward or he forgot they went back, there were just millions and millions of excuses as to why he was late and discipline, they had a little space, the carpet was actually worn in front of the Executive Council where he stood to get disciplined.

He just said to me over there about, he said what time are you going to bring me up?, I said don’t, Tony, September, forget it. The EC have decided they want all that time you had on those holidays, we want it back, so you’re not retiring now until November and of course two weeks ago he phoned me up and we have an agreement with the full-time Officials that as they go into retirement, rather than have just the bang, the cut-off, like we did if you remember when Terry O’Neill went, Terry O’Neill lasted about three weeks and then we didn’t have him anymore, so we introduced a wind-down to retirement and Tony got on the phone to me last, two weeks ago and he said Ronnie, he said, when does this wind-down start before you retire, how long is it? I said well, Tony, for most Officials I’ve got to say it’s three months, three months wind-down to retirement. In your case it’s been 28 years, he’s been doing it all the time.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]
It used to be a standing joke, you always had the questions. I can remember, some of my first Conferences when comrades Steve Finn and Rob Herbert used to take the mick out of Tony. They used to say have you made that member you were going to make this year?, they used to take it because it was a standing joke with them that he didn’t make members, but now I’ve got to say, Tony is absolutely superb. I’ve got to say George Atwall’s obviously been a massive influence on him in that Region and now he’s a real stalwart as far as going out, going out, organising. I’m sure he doesn’t return those questions back to Steve, he’s absolutely fantastic at the organising. Tony, you’ve been a great comrade, you’ve given great service to the Union and you’ve been a great friend. You know I wish you and the EC do, a long and happy retirement. Tony Lewis.

[APPLAUSE]
Tony, Tony.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Tony Lewis: Thank you, General Secretary. Conference, I’m not usually a nervous person, but I always get confused when, I am confused, the Executive Council behind me, as Ronnie says I’m normally in front of the Executive Council when I was younger [LAUGHTER], but colleagues I, it’s been a great journey and a great honour and those who know me in this organisation knows that lack of words, taking on employers is not something that I am shy of, but Conference, before I start I’d just like to say a few words. I first attended Conference in 1980, that was in Skegness, as a Delegate and before I continue I can see some of, I see Chrissy Males over there, who was one of my colleagues, welcome to you Chrissy, Stevie Finn, who I remembered in 1979 when I was a shop steward at Henry Telfer’s in Northampton and Stevie, as we know, is our longest serving Official, but in the last 32 years I have seen changes in National Officers, full-time Officials, Executive Council members, but the format for a great Union and its annual Conference has not changed. We still have great democratic debates, with passionate speakers, also high drama, as we saw on Sunday with the issue of the collection of the ballot papers, that’s normal, trust me and it was worse 40 years ago.

I actually joined the Union in 1974 at a company called Henry Telfer’s in Northampton, a branch of 1,600 members and in those days collection was done by hand, 1,600 members, there was no check-off. When you are a steward or a committee you had to go around and ensure that you collect dues on the document, so it was difficult, but it was trade unionism at its best. I was active in my branch from day one. I became a steward, a Delegate to district mode, regional mode as it was called then, eventually being elected by the district as a district secretary in 1982. I’ve seen it all. My whole life since has been about representing, servicing and organising members into our Union. A bit of a maverick, a bit different, as Ronnie said, but we can’t all be the same. I’m Tony Lewis. I would like at this stage to thank our existing EC members for their service to our Union and those newly EC elected members. I would like to thank those from our region, newly elected, Jackie Barnwell for her long service as an EC member, Jackie’s been and Jackie and I existing EC members for their service to our Union and those newly EC elected members.

I would like to thank those from our region, newly elected, Jackie Barnwell for her long service as an EC member, Jackie’s been and Jackie and I existing EC members for their service to our Union and those newly EC elected members. I would like to thank those from our region, newly elected, Jackie Barnwell for her long service as an EC member, Jackie’s been and Jackie and I have been around a long time and Jackie has been a really great EC member over the years and she still is.

[APPLAUSE]

We have now elected Paul McGarry from Jacobs and I’m sure and I know Paul will be a most able EC member. Colleagues, for the first time we’ve got Lukasz Bemka, our first Eastern European member on the EC, what a journey.

[APPLAUSE]

Lukasz, as some of you might realise, with the growth in our organisation of members from Eastern Europe, be it Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, these are people who are coming, who are coming to our organisation now and as a trade union we have grown. Lukasz has worked very hard in the region, encouraging Eastern Europeans, especially those from Poland, to join our organisation. We can see the effects in our region and beyond in other regions, on the website that we have established, www.polska.com which is a part of and is a very good asset to our Union, as it gives information to Eastern Europeans about the services we as the Bakers Union offers to all its members.

I would like to thank all my colleagues in No. 3. I’d like to thank John Higgins. John, as you know, is John and he’s given me good advice, not when I go before the EC mind you, but [LAUGHTER] in the No. 3 Region I always call on John for his good advice. Haroon Rashid, again our newly elected full-time Official, he’s doing quite well and I know he will continue with the tradition of No. 3. He’s been brilliant in the Greggs shops to date. Last but not least, my great friend and colleague George Atwall, what do I say about George? You know, the story with George is me and my shadow. If you want to find Tony Lewis, you phone George Atwall [LAUGHTER] and if you want to find George Atwall, you phone Tony Lewis, but it begs the question and in my 32 years/40 years, I always ask the question, who is the best organiser? I have seen and worked with, in the last 32 years, some of you, the older ones will have remembered Mick Winfield, Mick was brilliant.
Our General Secretary, Ronnie Draper, he’s a good organiser, not bad [LAUGHTER]. John Vickers, there is John, in his days John was brilliant as an organiser. Ian Hodson, when he first started, our National President, but George Atwall takes the first prize, colleagues.

[APPLAUSE]

George could be all over the place at times, which is organising companies, when he’s organising, he’s all over the place, but I admire his drive, his stamina and hard work in organising. I always say thank God I did not teach him all I know, or he would be more dangerous. Remember, George, I recruited you into this Union when you were 16 years old. Some say it was the worst mistake I’ve ever made and I’ve made a few, but George, you’re an asset to our Union in the coming years. I will continue to give you a hand, but please let me call you, you don’t call me [LAUGHTER].

The future, colleagues, the future, colleagues, remember our great Union was formed in 1847, 167 years ago and has remained a proud and independent Trade Union. I know we will remain independent as our structure, Executive Council, full-time Officials and members will ensure we remain independent. On a political front, the issues that this country’s facing, in 1974, 40 years ago when I first joined our Union, it still remains today, the continued attacks on terms and conditions, vicious changes in employment laws, that’s a Labour government, a Labour government that came to power in 1997 failed to repeal and has given the bosses a tool to hammer our members in the workplace, issues like industrial tribunals, health and safety, zero hours contracts, low pay and restrictions in law, restrictions in law to take industrial action. The priority of any future Labour government must be to repeal all anti-trade union laws that restricts our abilities to help our members.

[APPLAUSE]

And it’s a little adage I’ve always used, I’ve heard it somewhere, I think it’s my son, but that’s a different matter. Power never concedes without a demand, remember that. In your workplaces, you will never get anything from your bosses unless you demand it. Power never concedes, your bosses, the Conservatives, the coalition will never, ever concede unless we as working people demand it. They will never concede.

[APPLAUSE]

On the issue of power, conceding without the demand. I remember in 1984, at a bakery called Fine Lady Bakeries in Banbury, where our members mostly of Muslim and Punjabi extraction worked day-on-night, 6 ‘til 6 days, 6 ‘til 6 nights and our branch secretary at the time, a great member called Mr Q Hussain, his son is here, Imran Hussain, there he is, we fought to get extended leave and I’m not talking about extended leave of one or two weeks, it was four weeks holiday plus six weeks unpaid, 10 weeks and it’s, we demanded it. We also demanded treble time for Saturday and as it stands now, this is one of the only branches that has 10 weeks extended holiday and treble time for Saturday. The employers, they tried to get it back …

[APPLAUSE]

…the reason they cannot get it back is because we demanded it and they will never concede until you demand. Austerity, people talk about austerity. You never hear austerity from bankers. The bankers were the ones and the bankers are the ones that caused austerity. It’s never working people, it’s never you, it’s the bankers and this coalition government that’s causing austerity. They’re doing well, bonuses. The attacks that we’re seeing now is based on attacks on working people, it’s never the rich. Throughout history, colleagues, as we now see in a socialist government in France, what has that taught us? A socialist government in France. The failure to take this issue and give working people a clear socialist agenda leads to the rise in support for the extreme rights, that’s what happens when we fail to have policies that support working people. You’ve seen the rise of UKIP, that is why UKIP is on the rise today …

[APPLAUSE]

…because a Labour government, a Labour government never put these things into place and the Conservatives will never do it. So the next Labour government has to put policies that favours working people, otherwise you will get the rise of the far right. I’ve seen the far right in 1974, with the National Front as it was then called, then you had the BNP, now you have UKIP, but that’s what happens when you fail to take policies that support working people. Colleagues, I’m coming to the end now. Finally, the struggle against injustice, be it in the workplace or wider society, releases the humanity in all of us. We are people with humanity. To be a shop steward, to be in a trade union movement, we have this humanity in us. That is why we are here, because we believe, we believe in the humanity and dignity of those we represent. When you return to your workplace, continue with that humanity and continue to push for agendas that support working people. Don’t worry about the bosses, they are looked after, they look after themselves. Colleagues, may God bless you all and thanks for the journey.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Just before you go, Tony, we’ve got a little presentation to make to you, but I was absolutely intrigued when you said you went away and negotiated the extended leave at Henry Telfer’s and what a miraculous thing it was. You got extended leave with the Executive without negotiating it [LAUGHTER]. Tony, you’ve done a lot of service and we would like to reward you with a pewter baker. I know this will take pride of place, it won’t be in your heart, that’s, maybe in your home here or maybe in your holiday home in Granada, you’ll find a little shelf where this can go and it’ll remind you of the time that you spent, not only as a member of the Bakers Union, but working with us.

Brother Tony Lewis: Thank you, Ronnie and Chair.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Thanks, comrade.

Brother Tony Lewis: Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: And a tin of Fox’s biscuits. I know you’re probably looked after for biscuits by Jacobs, but these are different ones, still made by trade unionists and if you keep them away from George Atwall, you’re a good ‘un. Cheers, Tony.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Tony Lewis: Conference, I still say it should be McVities or Jacobs, that’s my, that’s my, that’s my company, cheers.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, where are we? Okay, can I obviously thank Standing Orders and obviously the Chair and I understand that this year was obviously a new venue, we’ve had a number of technical issues and of course we were thrown into a bit of a dilemma because of the unfortunate illness of Olive, but I think the Standing Orders have coped well, they’ve done their best and I think they’ve obviously struggled because of some of the issues that we’ve had technically, but I think they have done an absolutely fantastic job and I think we should thank them for everything that they’ve done to make sure that Conference has run ......

[APPLAUSE]

…and obviously I’d like to thank my Vice President, who’s told me he’s lost, is it 10 lb you said just since Sunday?, oh, that was out of your wallet, oh, right, he’s lost about 10 lb running up and down the stairs, sending messages to everybody. Obviously the FTO’s, who’ve managed to keep everybody in order and everybody in the room, so I’d like to thank them for looking after the doors and for making sure obviously, well normally I would say for making sure that Delegates get here, but I think this year some of the states I’ve seen of the full-time Officials and obviously Roy at the bar, was something to behold, so I’d like to thank the Delegates for making sure that the full-time Officials and in particular Roy, who managed to find his way back into his room before he scared everybody when he vacated his room, thinking it was the toilet onto the landing, after he’d gone to bed, but at least everybody now knows what he sleeps in [LAUGHTER]

Obviously I’d like to thank our office staff and Jan and obviously Carol and obviously all those people from the Learning Services, Lisa and Janet and John, thanks for coming back off your holidays just to attend Conference, really appreciated it. Obviously we thank you for everything you do throughout the year as well. Obviously Jan is a whirlwind, I don’t know how she does it, I mean she goes out until 4 o’clock in the morning, gets up at 6 and looks like she’s just perfect all the time and she never seems to stress, so obviously and I’ve never seen anybody who can drink like six times their body weight, which is an incredible, incredible feat, you know.

Obviously I’d like to thank the office staff that work in our offices throughout the country as well and obviously making sure that you get the information when you require it. Normally I’d be saying as well thanks to John Vickers for doing the PowerPoint, but because he went on holiday we didn’t do one, so no, it’s not true, we didn’t have the facilities to do one, so maybe next year we’ll be back. Obviously I’d like to thank everybody who’s taken the time to set up the Conference venue in the morning. I think they did an absolutely phenomenal job of making sure our Conference, when you got here, everything was on your table, the water, the lights work, obviously the microphones, once we learnt how to speak into them, it was our fault, it wasn’t them, they were absolutely fantastic in what they did, it’s just that we didn’t know how to use them, so we’d like to thank all of the people that’s made sure that our Conference has been set up and run so well for us.

[APPLAUSE]

We thank all of the staff, all of the people that’s made the teas and the coffees and obviously the staff in the hotel and I think that the people in the hotels, at both the Prince of Wales and the Royal Clifton hotel who’ve made, I think, our stay here so very, very enjoyable. I think that they’ve done an absolutely fantastic job, making sure the food was there.
How they’ve managed to feed you all in the same place I’m not really sure, but they’ve absolutely been absolutely fantastic. Obviously I’d also like to thank the DJ and what an exceptional job the DJ did.

[APPLAUSE]

We often say, you know, obviously Jason, we’re going to Conference, we’re going to allow you to speak and he says I’m not going to speak, so we say well, okay then, you’ve got to do the DJ-ing for free, so we’ll keep continuously inviting you back, because free always wins.

Obviously we’d like to thank our sponsors. We like to thank obviously Thompson’s, Walkers Union, Watkins & Gunn. Obviously the people who supplied the biscuits, which are Fox’s Biscuits obviously and also Burtons have been very kind this year as well and obviously Warburtons who sponsor the teas and coffees.

I’d like to thank all of our stall holders, the Credit Union which has been manned wonderfully by Sam at the back there, I believe he’s raised a significant amount of money which we can go out and spend on some of his horses, I believe. Obviously he’s also been doing the T-shirt selling, so obviously thank you very much, Sam and thank you for running the credit union stall. Like I say, the Union learning people who’s been up there, obviously I wouldn’t go into singing, because I think Kendra will always beat you, Janet, you were bad, but I think Kendra’s is slightly worse and obviously Westfield, Walkers Union, Watkins & Gunn, Thompson’s Solicitors, the GFTU, the LRC stuff that’s been brought, the Right to Work people, Unite the Resistance people, the Payplan people, the Lighthouse, the Shrewsbury 24 Campaign, the National Shop Stewards Network and the Youth Fight for Jobs and Boycott Workfare who came here and put all that information about to make sure that you knew what was going on outside in our communities, also to Hilda who was here from Hazards. I think they do a fantastic job in coming to our Conference and making you aware of information and obviously giving freebies out which is also a plus as well. So I think we’d like to thank all of our stall holders.

[APPLAUSE]

And like I say, I think we’d also like to obviously thank you for your tolerance. I think sometimes we do have heated debates, but I think in the whole I think we’re all pretty tolerant of each other and obviously I thank you to, thank you to you and obviously thank you to somebody who saved somebody’s life last night, which was absolutely unbelievable, but now it’s my pleasure to invite Mark Brooks from Standing Orders to give his closing remarks to Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Chair of Standing Orders Closing Address

Brother Mark Brooks, Chair of Standing Orders (closing address to this year’s Conference): Thank you, Mr Chair.

Wow, what a Conference, lively, debatable, heated but most of all respectful to everybody. Without Sister Olive Molloy here, the Standing Orders team worked as a unified team and went through a varied Agenda in a professional manner, so I give a few thank you’s to the National President, the General Secretary for running this Conference in their usual manner. To Jan, Carol and Janet, working in the offices when we’re sleeping and leaving late, working their backsides off with a printer that, at the best, wasn’t up to the job. They got your papers out, it was a struggle but we got there. To the Scrutineers who did the job in the efficient way they always do, thank you as well. The fine for this year’s Conference was £27, we’ve decided to donate it to the Byng House, which is the British Red Cross down the road. This is a poignant year for everybody, 100 years since the start of the First World War and a Century since D-Day. Without the sacrifice of men and women around this world, this world would be very different to what we’re sitting in now. However you’ve come to this Conference, road, rail, air, I wish you all a safe journey home and I hope to see you all sometime in the future. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, obviously this year there’s been some substantial changes to the Executive Council as well and obviously I’d like to, because I often forget to mention the Executive Council and they quite rightly tell me off and this year I’m not going to make that mistake. I think, sometimes people think, the Executive Council is made up of people from factories, it’s made up of people just like you who work in factories that you elect because you feel comfortable and confident in their abilities to run your Trade Union and I think that on the whole, the fact that we’ve been independent since 1847, the fact that we’re still here, the fact that we’re still making a noise, is a tribute to the Executive Council that Conference elects and I think I’d like to pay a really big thank you to the people that I’ve worked with, certainly since the last election two years ago, I think they’ve done a phenomenal job for us and I’m really proud of what our Executive Council have done, the investments that they’ve made and obviously we’ve seen some of those decisions that they’ve taken flourish and I think I really would like Conference to show their appreciation for the Executive Council that’s been in place.
I mean it’s always a thankless task and you know, Noel, Noel Mullen has been an incredible EC member, he’s been a fantastic EC member, showed me how to drink vodka, which obviously I very much appreciate. Obviously Cecil, I mean what’s the EC going to be like without Cecil’s hat, I mean he’s an incredible guy and he was actually trying to show me how to dance the other night, but unfortunately he went past me and got my wife, so he did apologise afterwards and said obviously I didn’t see you sat there. Obviously Richard Wainwright, Richard Wainwright has offered us so much potential, so we’re really sorry to see Richard go. I think Richard and he demonstrated at his branch at Manor what a fantastic organiser he is and what a great guy he was, so we’re going to miss Richard as well.

And then of course, then of course there was Gulli. Unfortunately Gulli’s branch went, what a guy, what potential he had. We identified him as someone that we thought could go on to some great, great things, so we’re going to miss Gulli as well and then of course I’m saving this person to mention until last, because when you think about, when you think about our Trade Union and some of the biggest, biggest things that have happened in the last three years, I mean most of its been about young people, it’s been about making sure that young people get a voice, I mean and obviously our young EC member, who was quite rightly elected as our first ever young EC member was actually the person that was involved in making sure that young people had a seat and had a voice, quite rightly so, on our Executive Council and also was responsible for making sure that we set up young peoples’ forums to actually look at the issues of young people and how we can best organise them and also for the first time ever in our history put on a Young Workers Conference in Blackpool this year, so I really would like to pay tribute to Rachel Mullen, because I think she’s done an absolutely excellent job on behalf of our young members.

Okay, Conference. Now I’ve got into their good books, obviously I get the opportunity to invite somebody to speak who, you know, you’ve enjoyed Conference. I think obviously the pressure that he was put under to make sure that last year was the last year we were in Bridlington and you wanted to move, you made it perfectly clear. He’s been under a lot of pressure, he’s had to stay in a lot of hotels and enjoy obviously some [LAUGHTER] silver service, so from what I can gather he’s stayed in some very plush four poster bedroomed rooms and obviously he’s been able to find a venue that I think everybody is saying has absolutely been a delight and something that they’ve enjoyed, so I’d like to now invite our General Secretary, our comrade, Ronnie Draper, to make his final address to Conference.

General Secretary’s Closing Address to Conference

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Four poster bed? I’m lucky to get a bed with four legs on it, I’ll tell you. It’s been an absolutely fantastic Conference, but before I actually go into my address, I know it was obviously remiss of the President, but the one EC member he didn’t mention was Norville Grazette, who’s just sat along here. Norville’s been a member of the Executive for 10 years and he hasn’t mentioned Helena either. Norville has done a lot of work on the Executive and of course did loads of stuff with the black workers at their conference as well, represented the Union on international trips, fantastic friend, but I’ll probably say a little bit more when I come into my address and of course Helena, who’s done a marvellous job in the two years that she’s been here and I think she actually raised the bar for the female rep. She took on a lot of stuff and she was always sending through different like policies and meeting minutes that she’d been to, she really was a star when it came to representing the view and values of women.

And while I’m thanking people, I know the President did thank Jan, but Jan’s my secretary and I’ll tell you what, the jobs she’s done over the last few weeks has been absolutely amazing and she’s never, ever been faced with this before, because 16 years ago when we were last, when we went to Bridlington, Jan didn’t work for us and we had more staff and this time we’ve moved over to Southport and we’ve got less staff anyway and plus one of our staff went off on maternity leave and so I’ve got, I know there were times when she was dragging her hair out, so when it looks messy at the back, that’s because of the hassles, Ian, not because she’s been sleeping funny. She did an absolutely remarkable job, her and Adrian Stewart, who’s our finance officer, who’s not here, they did everything behind the scenes. It isn’t easy when you change Conference. Next year, if we’re here and I’d like to canvas your views if you believe Southport should be our Conference Centre next year.
So let me get into the body of what I’d like to say, I know that Delegates would like to get out into the Southport sunshine for a time. What I will say about this Conference, you know and I’m sure if you went back and talked to the stall holders who are at the back, whether it be lawyers or service providers or indeed groups who campaign for the values in society, if you ask them about this Conference, I’ll tell you, they will know that this Conference is something different. I believe our Conference is an example of how a Trade Union Conference should run. You know, Delegates in the Hall, on time, every time and remaining so. They respect the people who are talking and they vote accordingly. They take part in the debates and of course you then have to go reporting back. None of this and I see it, because I go to other conferences as well, none of this just turning up when you want, you fancy a lie in, don’t bother coming in. None of this taking cups of tea breaks outside of the official break sessions or holding talks within the Conference floor, which disrespect the people who are speaking down here. It’s a bad enough job to get down here and speak and to respect those people, you’ve been a credit. It’s, as Mark said, it’s been a great Conference. It’s had its highs, it’s had its lows and it’s been tinged with a little controversy, but God Almighty, it wouldn’t be the Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union if we didn’t have a little bit of controversy and a little bit of debate.

[APPLAUSE]

Despite the teething troubles though, comrades, we’ve seen lots of great debates down here. We’ve seen camaraderie at its best and I’ve got to say, with the people who are on strike, we’ve seen this Union show solidarity. You know, a good number of those debates gave rise to a wide spectrum of views and I’ve got to say one debate that I wasn’t due to speak on but I would, it was something that I felt passionately about, was the debate on the all women shortlists and where unfortunately the Executives’ view was portrayed wrongly. We said that we were against it and, sorry support and we were against it. That was actually done in the wrong way and I can only apologise, because now we have something for the next year that we have to pursue, but we recognise it now too late to change the decision and let me just spell out maybe what our views are.

It’s not me, before anyone says, I don’t want a point of order, not anyone saying you’re having a second bite of the cherry, I’m not, I’m talking about what we do, we’re coming into an election year and what we should be looking at. I personally and I know the Executive hold dear the values of equality, we’ve had a great debate on equality this morning, but in the British political system, equality is something that is only aspirational, it’s something we think about, we don’t actually carry it out. In a society that, in a society of 100, or more or less 50/50 gender balance, we have a government that not only totally, is totally out of touch with the society that they represent, they’re also totally out of touch with the gender balance, as far as equality in parliament goes.

You’ll have to forgive me, because I’m going to just mention Tony Blair, I promise I won’t do it again today, but one thing that we got with Tony Blair is that we did have all women shortlisting in certain seats, where people, sorry, where women could actually get to sit in parliament. I hated that trail that all over the place that we’d have Blair’s babes, because what did that make the blokes?, if the women were Blair’s babes, it was just an awful stereotypical sort of thing that we got with Tony Blair is that we did have all women shortlisting in certain seats, where people, sorry, where women could actually get to sit in parliament. I hated that trail that all over the place that we’d have Blair’s babes, because what did that make the blokes?, if the women were Blair’s babes, it was just an awful stereotypical sort of saying, but the fact is we got lots and lots of women into politics, but comrades now we’ve got this situation where we’re sitting, if we sit on the fence as individuals and as organisations, we’re going to end up with the same old, same old rotten system that we’ve got now, where we parachute in the old pals, the sons of former ministers, prime ministers getting their, or former prime ministers getting their sons into safe seats, it’s rotten to the core and until we change a political system that says that every five years we have to elect the best of a bad bunch, then what we have to do is we have to manage what we’ve got.

Whilst I’m talking about politics, Chair, I think we have to and I know it’s in the magazine, but we need to remember the fact that our political ballot, the Political Fund Ballot is running now, so when you get home, you will probably have ballot papers lying behind the door. I urge you, don’t put them behind the clock, they never get opened. Don’t put them in the recycle bin, because you think it’s junk mail when it comes from the Electoral Reform Society, it’s not some other political party. It is an absolute enabler for this Union.

In 1984, when Margaret Thatcher introduced the Political Fund Ballot, this Union and right up until the very last minute and I co-ordinated that ballot as an EC member, was the highest ever Political Fund ‘Yes’ vote, the ones who beat us were ASLEF at the time and they beat us by 0.1%, but this Political Fund Ballot enables us to do the very things that you’ve been talking about all week. When your motions say we urge the Executive to take this to our Parliamentary Group, that is political action and would be disabled if we don’t have a Political Fund. When you talk about taking stuff, speaking to the government, although they don’t listen anyway, so whether you’ve got a Political Fund or not, it doesn’t really matter, they always refuse to speak to us, but taking stuff to Labour, taking stuff to the TUC, taking stuff to the TUCG, which is the Trade Union Co-Ordinating Group, or taking stuff where we need to go and debate with councils, that is all political action and would be outlawed if we don’t have a Political Fund.
Motions that we’ve had on the NHS, solidarity action with other unions and other workers, council houses and all those sort of things that we’ve debated are all political aspects of this Union which would be outlawed if we don’t have a Political Fund. All dependent on you going back and us getting a majority ‘Yes’ vote amongst our members and I urge you that you go and do that. Ensure your vote, ensure you encourage the members in the factories and the shops and the workplaces where you are to vote and vote in the right way, irrespective of what their political affiliation is.

I’m not naive to think that everybody within our organisation votes Labour, I’d be crazy to think that, but this has got nothing to do with the colour of a political party, this is to do whether we have an active say in campaigning on the future of this Union, on the future of our members and on society in general, whether the lights go on and stay on in the street or whether they go off. I told you, 1984, the Tories tried to hamstring the Labour Party, by making unions vote for a Political Fund every 10 years, we’re in our fourth now, this is the fourth time we will have voted and every time we’ve got a ‘Yes’ vote. The Tories introduced it to reduce funding from going into Labour Party coffers from the trade union movement and it didn’t work. In fact more unions voted to have a Political Fund, who’d never had it in the past, they did a great job in turning the tide back towards Labour, but now we’ve got Labour looking to break the links with the trade union movement, which is actually having the adverse effect on the Labour Party the Tories were looking for back in 1984.

So, let’s get workers to vote on their companies rights to donate to political parties, because we never, ever have a say on that. All those workers in this room who work for Warburtons, who vote, who contribute and they’re not a bad company, but they contribute to the Tory Party. Well, if you’ve got to have a vote to say whether unions and you as individuals can contribute to Labour, let’s have one that says that workers have a vote as to whether their companies can donate to the Tory Party.

[APPLAUSE]

Comrades, as the President said, this year has seen seven changes to the National Executive, it’s the biggest change on an Executive since 1983, which was the year that I went onto the Executive when there was nine changes. Seven changes, as far as I’m, means seven friends moving away from the table and hopefully seven friends coming back around the table, but you know, when you look at what we’re faced with as a trade union in the future, it isn’t about those 18 people or 19 people sat around the table, it’s about the policies and the things that happen back down at the branches where you represent. All these people are is an enabler, they’re the ones who deal with the finances, they help to make those decisions that you’ve taken over the last four days to drive them down to branch level, but you as individual activists within branches will be the enablers to make sure that we fight the policies that the government are pushing for.

There’s loads of challenges ahead for us, absolutely loads. Don’t think that we’re going to get some sort of soft touch Tory Party over the next 11 months, because they’re frightened they’re going out of power, you will not. What they will do is try and appeal to their right but even pushing harder to take away the rights that you’ve got. There’s lots and lots of fights to fight, comrades and we’ve got to be ready to take those fights on and lots, more importantly, lots of victories to win. I would hate to think that I will retire from this Union thinking the best victory we ever had was the Hovis victory, that should have inspired workers everywhere to take action when it’s needed and we need to get more victories from that, but as I say, all those victories, all those battles, all those fights will be conducted by our branches. You can have the strongest leadership in a trade union that you want. You can glorify what they do and what we say when we go to meetings all around the country. It means not a jot unless when the call comes, the troops are behind you.

You know, the National President has talked long and hard about a general strike and about ballotting members. At least we ask our members the question, if there’s a general strike, will we support it? I’m not naive enough to think that everyone’s going to support it. I’m not naive to think that the TUC are going to have a call, but I’ll tell you what we can do and I said it at the meeting last night, we can look at co-ordinating action, because I’ll tell you what, there’s not one of you in this room, not one, who has not been attacked in some way by either the government or the company that you work for, whether it be pensions, terms and conditions, holidays, there will be something, or just changing disciplinary plans, there is fights to be had in branches and fights that you can win and fights that we can co-ordinate together to make sure that we put lots and lots of pressure on business.

As we go into the final 11 months of this rotten Tory government, Chair, think about it. Channel your frustrations, look at the exploitation that’s happened over the last four years and the misery that every household, working class, working peoples’ house, those people what they have suffered under this rotten government and channel that into getting rid of them. Channel them into getting the return of a Labour government, but we don’t want a Labour government that’s going to come with some sort of light touch austerity, we don’t want that. We want to get rid of austerity.
We need a future Labour government to represent us, to make manifesto pledges that match our aspirations. Pledges that meet our demands and we’ll make sure there’ll be plenty of demands when we go to our next Parliamentary Group. Demands on the National Health Service and the funding of it. Housing, not pledges to build 20,000 houses, we need 200,000 houses, not a few and they have to be affordable.

[APPLAUSE]

To scrap the bedroom tax, which is causing misery throughout society and driving people into poverty.

[APPLAUSE]

To rid us of these damned zero hour contracts and any other name you give it, that exploits workers to the full and that will damage this economy in the future.

[APPLAUSE]

And access to justice for workers who’ve been raped of it, it’s been plundered from us and I’ll tell you, you know it’s happening when barristers take to the streets, as I said on Sunday, when barristers take to the streets there’s something wrong with the legal system. We need those pledges, we need them from a Labour government. We need to be saying to them, if you want our vote, earn it. If you want our help to get into power, then earn it. We need a Labour government, but more importantly a Labour government needs a strong trade union movement.

[APPLAUSE]

As I said before, I’m going to finish off with this that, comrades, I’ve really enjoyed this Conference. It’s been a different venue, it almost seems as though every time I went to Bridlington I knew every inch of the stage and every inch of the hotels, I knew everywhere, I got sort of same old, same old and although originally I’m only from 12 miles away from here, I didn’t know Southport was so enjoyable as a place and I’ve really loved it and just to say that I’ve taken the liberty, I’ve got to speak to the Executive, but I’ve taken the liberty and I’d like to see how you feel about, I’ve provisionally booked Southport for next year, because that’s the best, we’re going to get a deal.

[APPLAUSE]

So I’ll take it that that’s a yes and I’m sure that’s good news for Southport as well, but they’ve done a fantastic job. Coming down, my partner and I coming down for breakfast of a morning and she’s never been to Conference before and we were looking at all these sort of blurry-eyed people all sat around and not looking too good, some people, before we came into Conference and I just wanted to remind you of a thing that was said by Mick McGahey, who was the leader of the Scottish Mineworkers Union. He said when you see people like this, he said and I’m one of them, he said, I enjoy a drink, he said and as long as people understand what causes you to feel like that, he said, I’ve heard it all, he said, it’s dehydration that’s whatever, he said, it’s not. It’s sleep, it’s sleep that causes it, he said, because last night, he said, I was out with the boys, he said, I had a really good drink, loads and loads of whisky, very, very drunk, felt fantastic. Went to bed, had a sleep, got up in the morning, I felt rotten. He said the only thing that could have made me ill was the sleep.

[APPLAUSE]

Chair, thank you for your indulgence. I’d just like to, I did want to finish off with a quote and I was thinking to myself what quotes can I use, Kiss me Hardy, no, that’s not really going to fit in with finishing off for a trade union Conference, or you know, we’ll fight them on the beaches and I thought well, it’s not really, we’ll fight them but, the beaches, is that really apt? Instead, I prefer to use Marilyn McCarthy’s quote and say, this is the mighty Bakers Union.

[APPLAUSE]

Solidarity, comrades.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox: Comrades, can I invite our National President, Ian Hodson, to do his final address to Conference. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

National President’s Closing Address to Conference

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. I never said I was perfect, I didn’t say I had the greatest memory in the world and if I forgot to mention two of the most amazing people, I really do humbly apologise. I mean, Helena, she’s done a fantastic job as our womens rep and as branch secretary at Fox’s, Batley, she’s working for the Two Sisters Group for God’s sake and she does an absolutely phenomenal job in making sure that our members are protected, so I really, really do apologise to you, Helena and I want to say that we are going to miss you on there.
Helena comes up with all sorts of amazing things to help her shop stewards and to help the members, from newsletters, which they hope to actually go out and actually write a newsletter and anybody who’s tried to do it will know that that takes a long time and it takes a lot of dedication and commitment to do that on a regular basis, to make sure shop stewards are kept up to date, but to make sure members also know what’s happening in the branch. So I do apologise for forgetting to mention you, Helena, I didn’t mean to, but obviously I do thank you for all the support and everything that you’ve done on behalf of this Trade Union and my buddy, Norville, that’s probably because I told you you couldn’t, you couldn’t not stand, but obviously Norville, I mean Norville’s phenomenal, he goes wherever we ask him to, he turns up on rainy picket lines, he turns up on rainy Conferences, he puts up with me when we go to Venezuela evenings where I get the pleasure of drinking obviously the rum and he gets the pleasure of having to listen to me, so absolutely Norville, you’ve been absolutely phenomenal, it’s at least 10 years, I believe, as well, isn’t it.

[APPLAUSE]

So I’m really grateful though that you did point it out, because I would have never have forgiven myself if you hadn’t have told me, so I really, really am grateful that you did mention it, because I would have been gutted if I hadn’t have done that. Obviously, tomorrow as well by the way, there’s the FBU are going on strike and obviously I think we should send a message of solidarity to those firemen. Those people run into burning buildings, those people run into burning buildings and save our lives. I’ll tell you what, I’ve never seen a politician do that yet, all they do is make our lives a misery, so let’s send a message of solidarity from the Bakers Food & Allied Workers to all those, all those fire brigade people who are going to go out on strike tomorrow.

[APPLAUSE]

I mean obviously Ronnie’s covered most of what’s happened this week at Conference, fantastic new first time speakers, fantastic new delegates, people that have never been to this Conference before. Hopefully they found it interesting, entertaining, see me under pressure, maybe a bit of under stress, maybe emotional too and I do apologise for that, but you’re absolutely brilliant and you choke me when you do nice things like that for me, so I’d like to thank you for that kind card and cake and stuff that you did for me, for me and my wife, so I appreciate that and obviously some of the speakers we’ve had, you know, I mean Ricky Tomlinson, I don’t know if he will ever be able to do that again, I mean, Ricky Tomlinson obviously disrupted Conference, but what a reason for disrupting Conference, absolutely incredible, incredible speaker, passionate speaker, someone who’s done it all, got arrested, went to jail, what an unbelievable fellow, standing up for workers, standing up for his workmates, prepared to go to jail, what a sacrifice, absolutely fantastic and we wish obviously our comrades from the Shrewsbury 24 pickets every success and good luck with your claim and good luck with your campaign.

[APPLAUSE]

And obviously, as always, John McDonnell, well what can you say about John McDonnell, the best prime minister we still have the potential to get. We need to get out there and fight for a Labour Party that actually starts representing the interests of working class people and then maybe we can get a proper working class leader at the forefront of that Party as well, so absolutely fantastic of John McDonnell and of course my buddy from Unite the Resistance, someone who has to put up with me and tolerate me, because I phone him up at stupid times and say we’ve got a bit of a dispute here, can you go and find some people to go and man a picket line for me somewhere, or could you maybe go outside and picket Marks & Spencers because they’re taking some work away and want to give it somewhere else and if anybody wants a picket line, you should just rely on me, those people will go out and they’ll do it for you. They’re an absolutely phenomenal organisation.

[APPLAUSE]

I’m really proud that Michael Bradley came, really proud that our organisation is linked with Unite the Resistance and obviously they’ve been giving out some stuff this week and hopefully, hopefully people who can get to Marks’ will go out and obviously enjoy that event, it’s a good event, you don’t have to join the SWP, but go and enjoy the event because the people who go to it are absolutely phenomenal. You know, as working people, we’re forced to face challenges on an almost daily basis. At times those challenges seem daunting, even frightening. They make us feel alienated, they make us feel the world is against us and there’s nothing that we can do to stop it, but I’ll say this, working people have always had to fight, we’ve always had to fight. The establishment’s never given us anything, we’ve always had to stand up and fight. You know, the governing classes, you name the last time that you went to your boss and said I’d like this and he said yes, okay, you can have it. They never do it. We have to stand up and we have to fight, but look at what we have achieved as working class people. Look at what we have achieved when we’ve come together, when we’ve stood together, when we’ve fought together.
I’ll tell you what we’ve achieved and this is what we did, this is what we did, our forefathers did. Working people, people like you, people like me, no different to us. The only difference was that they wanted to achieve it. We must want to achieve it and those people achieved this, because they stood together. They achieved the right to vote, they achieved working rights, they achieved health and safety, they achieved a NHS, they achieved full employment, they achieved council housing and do you know what?, if we all stand together and realise how strong and powerful we are, we can all achieve that again, because that’s the type of politics we need ......

[APPLAUSE]

...that’s the type of politics we want, that’s about aspiration, that’s about giving young people an opportunity to live in a society free and fair and that’s what we want, that’s the society we want and that’s what we want in all of our workplaces. Those in government, they seek to dumb us down, they seek to tell us that we’re and condition us into thinking we can do nothing, it’s untrue, it’s untrue. Recent history shows us yes, we can and we will and if they think we’re going to lie down and roll over, they’ve got another thing coming, because we’re coming ......

[APPLAUSE]

...July 10th, get on those picket lines with all of those public sector workers, get out there, stand by them, stand by them, absolutely, unbelievable people fighting for our NHS, fighting for our schools, fighting for a future for our children, get out there and stand with them, that’s where we should be, absolutely. You know, thanks to the decisions made by governments like Thatcher and Major and Blair and Brown and now Cameron, the fabric of our society’s been shredded. We live in a country where it’s okay to demonise the poor and the vulnerable, but it’s okay to say to the wealthy, let’s make the wealthy richer, well it’s not okay. We create the wealth, we want the money back, £10 an hour is a fair claim, let’s go out and get it ......

[APPLAUSE]

...let’s go and fight for £10 an hour. No single worker in our industry earning less than £10 an hour. Why should we accept it, never going to accept it. People are frightened, looking for answers, UKIP is not the answer. You know, I can’t say, Ronnie gave an excellent speech that UKIP is not the answer. They’re a Thatcherite Party, led by someone who’s not actually from this country, who has the, who has the ability to actually try and ask you to discriminate against people from this country. I mean, what sort of a man is he, what sort of a man is he? and we need to make sure that we explain to the working people who work in our branches, UKIP is not the answer and we won’t tolerate UKIP members in our Trade Union either, so if you’ve got UKIP members who are our members, ask them to leave, we don’t want them, we don’t want no racists, no fascists.

[APPLAUSE]

And we’ve always, we’ve always been the answer for working people and we should be the answer again. We should make sure that our message goes out loud and strong. We should make sure, because I’ll tell you what, I mean it’s been said lots and lots of times this week, I’ve never been prouder, never been prouder when I was able to go and stand with people from Wigan, never been prouder in my life. I stood on that picket line, watched those people, what an inspiration and they really are aspirational, you know and let me tell you why they’re aspirational. I’ve been on marches, I get invited to meetings because obviously of those fantastic people. It wasn’t me, it was them and they showed me, they showed me the power of working class people, they showed me our power, they showed me our strength, our determination, because the company said to them, they said to them, they said I’ll tell you what, we’re going to make these changes and there’s nothing you can do about it and they said yes, we can and the company said no, we’re going to make these changes whether you like it or not and our members said we’re not going to accept your changes and what we’re going to do is we’re going to stand up and we’ll do a deal with you that enables us to not have any redundancies, that’s what those people said. We’ll stand together and avoid the need for redundancies, because we don’t want the changes you want to make that’s going to mean that our comrades, our colleagues, our workmates, our friends are going to lose their job and the company said well okay, we’ll do a deal, so those people cut their pay, they cut their hours, to do a deal with the company and then within a week of those people going on less pay and less hours, how do you think that company rewarded them?

It said to them we’re going to make more redundancies now, thank you very much, we’re going to make more of your friends redundant and those people said you’re not making any of our people redundant and if you do, we’ll fight you for it, but the company made the announcement anyway and within 48 hours of making those redundancies, what did they do? They marched in agency workers and zero hour contract workers, so what did our members do? They said we’re not accepting second class workers here in Wigan, we don’t have them, we don’t want them and we’re going to fight you, because you’re not bringing them in, that’s what those people did, no second class worker in Wigan and the
company said you can’t do anything about it, because we’ve done it and our members said you watch us and so what did our members do? They had a meeting.

At that meeting they said we’ll give you a mandate Geoff, go out there and ballot us, because we’re going to take industrial action and we’re going to take this company on, because if they don’t think we can do anything about it, we’re going to show them yes, we can and yes, they did and I’ll tell you what, absolutely proud of every single one of them, because they wouldn’t accept, they wouldn’t accept zero hour contract workers, people with no contracts of employment, people with no work rights on their site, they wouldn’t accept that agency workers were going to be, going to be left with no pensions, no sick pay, on the minimum wage, they weren’t going to allow it and so they went on strike and the first week of the strike, in the run-up to that strike, the company threatened to close the factory and our members said well, I don’t want to work in a factory where the only people that get a job are on minimum wage. We’d rather be on the dole, we’d rather be on the dole than allow the terms and conditions of the good people of Wigan be taken from us and so they did what they should have done, which was the right thing to do, which was to man the picket lines and alongside them on the first day of that strike, those 24 zero hour contract workers, standing side by side, because they recognised......

[APPLAUSE]

…that they were standing up for their rights, standing up for their rights and the company said we ain’t going to change, but I’ll tell you what, we won, 24, who says striking doesn’t work, who says striking doesn’t work? We won, 24 full time employees, same terms and conditions, no zero contracts, zero hours gone, gone. Striking doesn’t work?, ask the people at Hovis, ask the 24 people that stood on our picket lines whether striking works, because yes, it does. 24 full time employees, absolutely fantastic, so the company thought, the company thought well, we can do a deal now, we can do a deal now, what will happen now is, you can come back to work and obviously everything can get back to normal, because we’ve given 24 of your people jobs and our people said we’ve had a deal with you before, we’re not going to accept a deal with you until we know that we’ve achieved all of our aims and our aims are this, we’re not having agency workers on less pay than us, we’re not having agency workers exploited, they’re to be on the same terms and conditions as us, so we ain’t coming back to work, we’re going to go back out on strike until you concede to that demand too and the company said we ain’t going to concede to that and then they tried to offer our people £1,000 each to cross the picket line and our members said you can offer us £2,000 a week, we ain’t crossing no picket line and we’re staying out until you recognise we have the right to work alongside people who are not being exploited. That’s what those people did at Hovis, they lost their own wages and turned down £1,000 a week to cross a picket line, because they’d rather stand on a picket line and lose money than be termed as a scab. Quite rightly so and Mike Harding ......

[APPLAUSE]

…who got prosecuted, let’s send a message of congratulations to him, because what he said was right, if you cross a picket line, you’re a scab, an absolute scab.

[APPLAUSE]

So when that company said we ain’t going to do a deal and obviously Ronnie explained it perfectly well, we’re in the republic and they couldn’t wait to do a deal, why?, because the Labour movement came together, because the strength and determination of our members at Hovis made them come to the table and made that offer and made sure that our people could go back and work alongside people who were no longer going to be exploited and we took a message from that, because those people, those people have written a new annal of our Labour history. Those people I’m proud to stand alongside and say thank you very much, comrades, because you’ve re-awakened our Labour movement, you’ve made history. You are the Tolpuddle Martyrs, you are the Suffragettes of the modern era, you are unbelievable. What you have done has re-sparked our Labour movement, it’s recognising the power that we have and you deserve all the plaudits you get, because it was your dispute, your victory and an absolutely unbelievable outcome, because you got what you wanted. Striking works, never let them tell you any different. Absolutely fantastic, wonderful people of Hovis.

[APPLAUSE]

Wonderful, wonderful people of Hovis, absolutely incredible.

[APPLAUSE]

So let’s be clear, let’s be clear, let’s be absolutely clear. When you go back to your workplaces and the company says we’re not doing a deal, tell them we’ve learnt from Hovis. We’re going to take you on, we ain’t going to allow second class workers, not in our workplace, not here, not now, not never, no second class workers in the Bakers Food & Allied Workers Union. Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]
Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Well done.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are we ready for a sing-song?

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Where’s Jack Lee gone? I’ve not asked him to sing, but it’d be a nice surprise for him when he comes back in. Where is he? Those of you who don’t know, John Cartain used to be one of the lawyers at Thompson’s and he took retirement, so he’s been swanning it in France for a few months and getting his voice. Have you got the words to this, John? Well, we’ll get you the words. I know what you’re like at making your own words up, mate. So, what we’re going to do, we’re going to sing The Red Flag, it’s a tradition that we always finish off with this and then right after it we’ll sing Old Lang Syne, so ...... Ian’s moved the mike, yes, yes, yes. Okay? After you, we’ll all join in John, when you start.

Brother John Cartain: Hope for the best with the key.

[THE RED FLAG SUNG ]

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: We just go for it, we just make our words up as we go, I don’t think we’ve ever sang the same song twice.

Brother John Cartain: Oh, alright. Right, you’ve all got to join hands now, whether it’s cross-wise or that way. Excellent, excellent, wow this is great. Are we right? I’d just like to say, on a personal note, that I come to this Conference of my own volition, because I’ve always had a soft spot and a massive respect for this Union, so long may you continue from my point of view.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Cheers, John, thank you very much.

Brother John Cartain: So ......

[OLD LANG SYNE SUNG]  
[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Cheers, John.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you, thank you very much.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: We’ll keep you on.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Have a great evening, thank you for everything.

We need the Executive to stay in here. Obviously enjoy the rest of the day and see you all next year.

Brother Ronnie Draper, General Secretary: Yes. All the new, all the Executive members, the new Executive, if you come down the front and then we’ll find out exactly where this meeting’s going to take place.

[END OF CONFERENCE]