## Unite the Union

Education Department

**Branch Administration Course.**

**RESOURCES**

**UNITE INDUSTRIAL SECTORS SUMMER 2021**

1. Aerospace and Shipbuilding
2. Automotive Industries
3. Chemical, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles
4. Civil Air Transport
5. Community, Youth Workers and Not for Profit
6. Docks, Rail, Ferries and Waterways
7. Education
8. Engineering, Manufacturing and Steel
9. Energy and Utilities
10. Finance and Legal
11. Food, Drink and Agriculture
12. Graphical, Paper, Media and Information Technology
13. Health
14. Local Authorities
15. Government, Defence, Prisons & Contractors Industrial Sector
16. Passenger Transport
17. Road Transport Commercial, Logistics and Retail Distribution
18. Service Industries
19. Unite Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians

****

**Unite Branch Administration Course**

**Summary**

The concept of this course is to develop Branch Officials within Unite. To provide Branch Officials with the knowledge, skills and passion to drive forward the ideology of our union, to develop our activist base and grow and strengthen our membership.

We are aware that particularly for new Branch Officials, the roles can be challenging and there is little information available to identify where and how support can be attained. We aim to change that and hope that course participants will see education as a tool for change and in that sense when something is identified as a need the course delegates will identify a route to raise that need in the union and influence change in order to shape the Branch Officials role, functions, training and support mechanisms in order that they are fit for purpose.

***A Branch secretary is a key player in the Unite team within the region and should be afforded access to all required services that Unite can offer.***

**Activity 2 - Unite the Union Structures**

Unite stands on a 3 pillar strategy which brings together the cultural identities and strengths of it’s predecessor Unions:

1. Organising collectively
2. Political Strategy
3. International solidarity

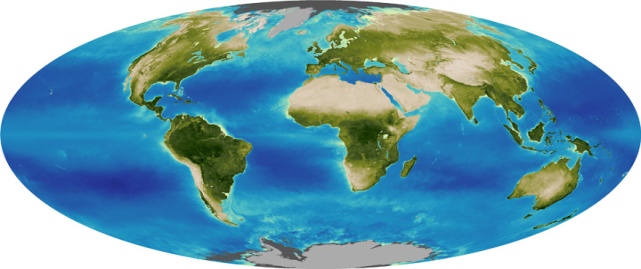
These 3 pillars are embedded in the cement of equality

**What is Unite?**

A member led union with 1.3 million members who work in every area of private, public and not for profit work

Unite covers Britain and Ireland but also has members as far away as Gibraltar and Germany and at any time will have members working in all parts of the world

**Unite – International strategy**

Unite is part of an international trade union organisation Workers uniting which comprises of Unite and the USW

Internationally Unite is also part of 11 international trade union federations

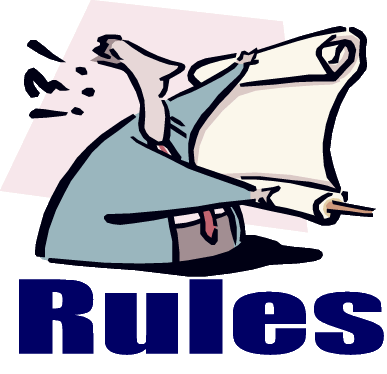
**UNITE Background**

T&G and Amicus formed Unite the Union with a T&G Section and an Amicus Section on 1 May 2007

Unite the union’s rules were agreed by ballot in 2008 and came into force on 1 May 2009

Following the Executive Council and General Secretary elections the union was established. Unite ran for the first few years with 2 General Secretaries almost as two separate unions in one

**Unite today**



Len McCluskey was elected sole General Secretary in November 2010 and a new Executive Council came into place shortly after. In 2021 Len McCluskey retired and Sharon Graham was elected as General Secretary

The Rules revision conference in July 2011 set the new rules for Unite and these have been revised at susequent rules conferences.

**How do you get involved in Unite – the union?**



**EVERYONE WHO IS A MEMBER IS IN A**

**UNION BRANCH**

Branches generally meet once a month

Branches are usually based on workplaces but can be based on industry such as the “Merseyside finance workers branch”

We also, from December 2011, have “Community membership branches” which are attached to Area activist committees (AAC) *Rule 17 – BRANCHES*

**How do I get involved at the workplace?**

Workplace representatives elected at least every three years

1 or more of the following:

* Shop stewards/workplace representatives
* Safety representatives
* Learning representatives
* Equality representatives

*Rule 18 – WORKPLACE REPRESENTATION*

**Unite Representatives**



***Workplace Reps / shop stewards***

* Reps make a difference in their workplace by supporting, advising and representing members
* Problem solving, communication, negotiating and influencing skills will be a key feature of the rep’s job
* Full training is provided e.g. Grievance and Disciplinary, representation skills, equality and problem solving
* Reps are allowed time off for trade union duties(ACAS COP)

***Health and Safety Reps***

* Fully trained in Health and Safety
* Undertake H&S inspections in your workplace

***Union Learning Reps***

* Raise awareness of the benefits of learning
* Encourages fellow workers to take up learning opportunities
* Support members in learning
* Provide advice and guidance on learning
* Secure equal opportunities in learning

***Equality Representatives***

* Understanding equality issues
* Developing knowledge of discrimination and the relevant legislation, policies and procedures
* Helping make Unite workplaces focus on Dignity at Work issues and outlaw bullying

**Getting involved in the union**



* To be a committee or conference delegate, you “must be an accountable representative of workers”
* includes Branch office-holder in employment, shop steward, health & safety, union learning and equalities representatives
* Takes account of industrial differences e.g. construction, leisure, agriculture *Rule 6 – LAY OFFICE*

**Lay Member Democracy**

***Local***

* Branch and Workplace
* Area Activist Committee - Elected in every region to represent workplaces, communities and industries in the Area

***Community membership***

* A new type of membership established in December 2011 in order to address the number of non-waged individuals outside the traditional union structures
* Community branches to be linked to AACs and supported by industrial structures

***Regional***

* Regional Committee

Every Region has a Regional Committee made up of Representatives elected from:

* + Area Activist Committees
  + Regional Industrial Sector Committees
  + Regional Women’s, Black, Asian & Ethnic Minorities, Disabled Members, and LGBT Committees
  + Observer delegates from Young Members and Retired Members

***Industrial***

* Regional Industrial Sector Committees

Elects representatives to:

* + National Industrial Committee
  + Industrial Sector National Conference

**Where are the UNITE regions?**



* North West
* North East, Yorkshire, Humberside
* West Midlands
* East Midlands
* South West
* South East
* London & Eastern
* Ireland
* Scotland
* Wales *Rule 8 - REGIONS*

**What are The Unite Industrial Sectors?**

1. Aerospace and Shipbuilding
2. Automotive Industries
3. Chemical, Pharmaceuticals, Process and Textiles
4. Civil Air Transport
5. Community, Youth Workers and Not for Profit
6. Docks, Rail, Ferries and Waterways
7. Education
8. Engineering, Manufacturing and Metals including Foundries
9. Energy and Utilities
10. Finance and Legal
11. Food, Drink and Agriculture
12. Graphical, Paper, Media and Information Technology
13. Health
14. Local Authorities
15. Government, Defence, Prisons & Contractors Industrial Sector
16. Passenger Transport
17. Road Transport Commercial, Logistics and Retail Distribution
18. Service Industries
19. Unite Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians

*Rule 7 - INDUSTRIAL SECTORS*

**Unite Policy & Rules**

***Policy Conference***

* Every 2 years
* 1 lay delegate per 2,000 members
* First in year after rules adopted (2010)

*Rule 12 - POLICY CONFERENCE*

***Rules Conference***

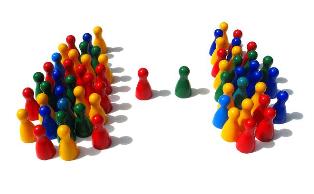
* Every 4 years
* 1 lay delegate per 4,000 members
* First in year after 1st policy conference (2011)

*Rule 13 - RULES AMENDMENT*

**Unite Executive Council**

* Elected every 3 years
* Delegates representing Regions
* Delegates representing Industrial Sectors
* National Women’s Representative
* National Black, Asian & Ethnic Minorities Representative

**Officer structure**



Unite has a series of regionally based officers (RIO) in teams in each of the 10 Unite regions

Those officers work to Regional Co-ordinating officers (RCO)

Each region has a Regional Secretary’

***Regional Secretaries***

* North West: Ritchie James
* London Eastern: Pete Kavanagh
* NEYH: Karen Reay
* South East: Sarah Carpenter
* Scotland: Pat Rafferty
* Ireland: Jackie Pollock
* Wales: Peter Hughes
* West Midlands: Ann-Marie Kilcline
* East Midlands: Paresh Patel
* South West: Steve Preddy

**Organising Department**

Each region has a team of organisers who work on the union’s key strategic organising targets and are managed by Sharon Graham Director of Organising’



**Regional structures**

In each region the regional secretary is subject to the regional committee, a lay elected body who run the affairs of the region.

Each region also has a lay body known as a finance and general purposes committee (FGPC) who deal with finance and day to day decisions.

***Regional administration***

The wheels of Unite are kept turning by an excellent team of regional and nationally based administrators who work to regional and national officers’

**Sector structure**

Each Sector is led by a National officer. The national officer will often be seen making statements around major industrial issues and will have a team of officers based in regions’

**Unite Senior officer structure**

General Secretary Sharon Graham is supported by a small senior leadership team consisting of:

* Steve Turner (head of policy)
* Andrew Murray (chief of staff)

There is a Deputy General Secretary post which currently remains unfilled’

***Assistant General Secretaries*** are:

* Howard Beckett AGS Servicing
* Steve Turner AGS Manufacturing
* Diana Holland AGS Transport
* Gail Cartmell AGS Health & Government
* Tony Burke AGS International & Labour Party

**Lay Executive**

The executive council of Unite is the senior policy making body of the union between conferences who deal with the organisation of the union, interpretation of rules and policy decisions, the chair of the Executive council and therefore senior lay official in Unite is Tony Woodhouse’

**Executive Council**

The executive council is made up of lay representatives from the 23 industrial sectors and regional representatives from the 10 regions, along with Equality members’

**Unite Departments and their Directors**

Campaigns & communications (Pauline Doyle)

Legal (Howard Beckett)

Research (Simon Dubbins)

Education (TBA)

Equalities (Diana Holland)

International (Simon Dubbins)

Political (Anneliese Midgley)

Organising (TBA)

Each department is based at Central Office in Theobalds Road, Holborn, London - most also have employees in the regions.

**Unite and the future**

Unite, like all unions, faces huge challenges and our structures will adapt as we go forward, but our values remain intact. An injury or injustice to one is an injury to all.

**Activity 3 - Unite in the Community**

Our community membership has now gone live and the contribution rate has been set at 50p per week for unwaged workers. There are several key individual benefits which are designed to support members in community branches however we envisage community branches will be based around our core principles of organising and campaigning and will be branches built upon activism.

The rationale for community membership can perhaps be summed up below

Unite’s mission is to organise people to strive for a society that places equality, dignity and respect above all else. But our union recognises that we can only achieve this if we bring people together from all walks of life.  
   
Even now in the 21st century, too many people in our country are being pushed to the margins of society. They deserve to be heard; they too deserve the support to organise collectively. It is with this in mind that Unite has founded its community membership scheme.

**Unite's community membership scheme brings together people from across our society.  Those not in employment are welcomed into the union family, adding another dimension to our strength in thousands of workplaces across the UK.**

Organising and activism are at the centre of strong communities, which is why Unite’s community membership provides a way people can find and use their political voice. Whether it is taking a stand against a service closure or coming together to improve your living environment, as a community member, Unite will be on your side.

These are seriously hard times for ordinary people. Incomes, housing, our health, education and legal services – the very pillars of our society for more than 60 years - are now under assault.

**It is only as standing together that we can defend and improve our lives.**

Through Unite’s community membership we will work to make life better; we will provide the platform to create a fairer society.  Our trade unions are the biggest voluntary group in the UK.  At 6.5 million strong, we are the Big Society.  At Unite we have 1.5 million members – just imagine what we can achieve together

There has never been a more crucial time for our union and our movement, the decisions we make today will have wide ranging repercussions for decades to come. The brutal attacks of the Tory Government on our society are directed in an ideological sense at the most vulnerable within our communities and show a callous disregard for current and future generations

The knock-on bonus for a Right-wing Tory Government focussed upon casualisation of the labour market, fragmentation and destabilisation of organised labour to create a “flexible” labour market in the interests of their friends in big business, will, if we fail to act be the decimation of the British Trade Union movement. This move to a more precarious form of employment creates a race to the bottom in relation to terms and conditions and includes a drive towards localised bargaining in all sectors.

The vicious attacks of the Conservative Government are self-evident and starting to impact upon Unite in several ways

* **A reduction in membership due to redundancy**
* **Reduction in our Not for Profit sector by means of Governmental cuts**
* **Huge job losses in Public sector inside and outside of Unite**
* **Reduced opportunities for young people in terms of jobs and education**
* **A move from paid to charitable status for the third sector**

There is a great anger swelling up like a tidal wave throughout our communities. That anger needs to be focussed and channelled productively. Unite, as the largest and leading Trade Union in Britain and Ireland should act as a catalyst for the disquiet which runs deep into our communities.

**Historically**

In previous periods of recession our movement has suffered as we have not worked in a proactive manner to embrace the unwaged in a relevant manner. The result of previous failures to engage with and organise unemployed workers in particular has resulted in significant seepage of membership, which has sometimes continued for decades.

In recent times we have witnessed the emergence of social movements which have captured the imagination of trade unionists by their innovative methods of campaigning and organising. Groups such as UK Uncut have challenged tax evasion and avoidance, the student protest showed our youth can be politicised when faced with relevant challenges, occupy has spread around the world challenging the nature of capitalism and looking for alternatives. At the same time events such as the 2011 riots and the sporadic violence which erupted on several demonstrations evidenced the desperation of many within our society who feel distanced from the mainstream and voiceless in every way.

**Job Losses**

At the very time when hundreds of thousands of workers are losing their jobs, the bodies capable of guiding them through the ever changing maze of benefit provision and steering them in the right direction regarding debt, are losing funding. Not only will these bodies loose funding by means of the reduction of legal services provision, they will also be subject to the loss of Local Authority funding as Councils find themselves under increasing pressure make ever deeper incisions into our communities

**Unite working for the unwaged**

If we are to be seen as the Union for Employed and Unemployed workers alike then we must provide relevant services to all those individuals. We are a union who operates along an organising model, this model would be ideally suited to an unemployed section.

The proposal is not to service our unemployed section but to allow the section to organise itself. We would need regional co-ordinators, who would be recruited into post on the grounds of their trade union background and experience in advice work.

We would work in conjunction with Unemployed centres where possible in order to avoid duplication of effort. We would develop teams of Unite volunteers and train them by linking our Organising and Education Department’s expertise. They would be trained in our organising model and in specific advice provision.

We would also utilise our Union Learning arm within Education to assist with re-employment issues such as Information advice and guidance (IAG), interview skills and CV writing, which may also have the bonus of aiding our ULF Funding figures and thus helping secure jobs within that area of Unite. Our learning organisers could set up job skills surgeries in our offices.

**Unwaged Section working for Unite**

The Unwaged section would become the shock troops of Unite, capable of operating in a flexible manner organising and co-ordinating collective actions in line with the very best examples that our student movement and the tax campaigners have shown us over the past few weeks. They would not be shackled by Employment legislation nor would they be subject to the watchful eye of an employer.

In terms of membership we are more likely to retain members if we are providing something that those members feel is useful and appropriate. There is no suggestion that all our retained members would engage in an organising fashion, just like we would not suggest that even in our most organised workplaces we would not suggest that the majority of workers saw themselves in that manner. A proportion however would engage actively in our campaigns Regionally and Nationally.

There would also be a good proportion of our members who would retain their membership because they saw us providing several useful services. We would also be likely to pick up new members who had been made redundant who were previously not members of Unite, or indeed in many cases, of any union.

**In conclusion**

In conclusion the establishment of an unemployed worker section would provide structure and focus to those members leaving work and to those unemployed workers thirsting for a route through which to vent their anger at a system which fails to hear them. *Providing a voice for the voiceless***.** Unite would be the union leading the way in these troubled times and recognising that our movement is a movement for all, not just for those in work.

The wider impact of this strategy would be to reverse the trend of decline within the trade union movement and within Unite in particular. We desperately need to halt our declining numbers, our declining influence and our declining perceived relevance within society. The previous Tory administration of the 80’s and 90’s oversaw the loss of 50% of our membership and their links with the media fertilised the ground for the birth of a stereotype of unions which still endures today, one of irrelevance and old fashioned. We now face a “last chance saloon” for our movement. This current Tory administration is set to continue that ideological crusade to create a country fit not for heroes but for the villains of corporate capitalism.

Community branches will be attached to our Area Activist Committees (AAC), but they will also need support from our active industrial branches and the experience, practical support and sharing of skills and knowledge between branches of our union will be vital.

**Activity 4 - Branch Structures**

**Model Structures of Organisation**

There are no 'tablets of stone' when it comes to workplace organisation. Different workplaces/branches will, through necessity, organise in different ways. For example, some of our members work in workplaces where ‘Unite’ is the only union which is recognised. However, some members work with four or five other unions on site, and, while some of you have branches attached to your own workplace, others belong to branches with membership spread over a large area, perhaps working in different industries, and, quite possibly, some of them without recognition agreements.

Your organisation must suit your circumstances. What works in one place, may not necessarily work elsewhere.

However, we have put together some models of organisation that you may find useful when examining your own branch/workplace.

**One Union Workplace Branch**

MEMBERSHIP

**BRANCH MEETING**

BRANCH

COMMITTEE

SHOP STEWARDS'

COMMITTEE

WIDER UNION

STRUCTURE

NEGOTIATING

COMMITTEE

**Branch Structure**

Pinch & Nick

Recruitment

#### **Workplace Branch**

Industrial policy administrative questions wider union policy

#### Composite Branch

Dodgy Contractors Plc

Ardmore

Engineering

##### Magic Roundabout Ltd

##### Industrial Policy

Mutly Ltd

Administrative Questions

Wider Union Policy

**Activity 6&7 - Organising Through Media & Communication Skills**

**How to engage with new media to combat the attacks of the current Conservative Government on our communities?**

We all recognise that the Tory government is set to deal with the budget deficit by making workers’ pay. Workers in the Public Sector will face the brunt of the attacks, swiftly followed by workers in the Not for Profit Sector who will be expected to plug the gaps of lost public provision with ever dwindling resources.

The private sector will suffer a direct knock on effect of the cuts in every sense. The loss of construction jobs being one of the first casualties of the cessation of the schools building programme. The people who are most likely to feel the effects of cuts are of course the most vulnerable in our society, the elderly, children, families reliant on benefits and the disabled.

The next few pages detail some methods in which we in Unite can campaign through modern technologies such as facebook and twitter

**Resource Building**

To start any campaign, we need to start from a strong factual base which means we need to consider what resources might be useful and begin to build those resources. I recall speaking to an officer about how he built for a Tribunal case. He told me he went to the library and spent a day trawling legal documents and reference books, this was not 20yrs ago it was 2005! Why I asked, did he not use the internet through sites like [www.bailii.org](http://www.bailii.org) to get full details of relevant cases or keep up to date with current issues in case law through email alerts from [www.emplaw.co.uk](http://www.emplaw.co.uk) or [www.thompsons.law.co.uk](http://www.thompsons.law.co.uk)

**Capture of Information**

Google alerts are a good source of capturing information on a regular basis about specific relevant issues [www.google.co.uk/alerts?hl=en](http://www.google.co.uk/alerts?hl=en) is a direct link to this facility Or just go to [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk) click along the top line “more” which provides a drop down box then click the last item in the drop down box entitled “even more” and the first item shown is Google alerts. The diagram below replicates what you will find and all you need to do is select what you wish to be alerted about e.g. “unite the union” then how often you want alerts and finally how many alerts you would like. You will then begin to receive email alerts on the subject you have chosen and up to date internet articles from websites, blogsites, press and media will be sent to your email.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Google Alerts](http://www.google.co.uk/alerts?hl=en&gl=)   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Search terms: | [Preview results](javascript:void(0);) | | Type: |  | | How often: |  | | Email length: |  | | Your email: |  | |  |  | | Monitor the Web for interesting new content Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic.  Enter the topic you wish to monitor, then click preview to see the type of results you'll receive. Some handy uses of Google Alerts include:   * monitoring a developing news story * keeping current on a competitor or industry * getting the latest on a celebrity or event * keeping tabs on your favourite sports teams   You can also [sign in to manage your alerts](https://www.google.com/accounts/ServiceLogin?service=alerts&hl=en&gl=uk&continue=http://www.google.co.uk/alerts/manage%3Fhl%3Den%26gl%3Duk)  Google Alert for today  Google Alert for this week     |  |  | | --- | --- | | From: | Google Alerts <googlealerts-noreply@google.com> | |

For business information using the traditional [www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk) is still a useful starting point; however a search of the financial times through [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com) is also often useful, as it may provide information about the company or organisation relevant to the issue at hand.

Labourstart - For trade union information there is no better way to start the day than with a look at [www.labourstart.org](http://www.labourstart.org) for an up to date analysis of issues effecting Trade Unions and workers

Left Economics Advisory Panel – For more detailed economic analysis of the recession and the Tory cuts agenda activists can turn to [www.leap-lrc.blogspot.com](http://www.leap-lrc.blogspot.com) This site contains comprehensive argument around an alternative economic model

New Economics Foundation (NEF) – A think tank with superb downloadable reports on aspects of social and economic interest can be found at [www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)

Counterfire – [www.counterfire.org](http://www.counterfire.org) is the site that brings together most of the articles and activities of various cuts campaigns and includes a wealth of video and documentary resources.

Touchstone – Touchstone blog is a resource site run by the TUC and produces high quality well researched papers to support our case against the public sector cuts and identifying the effects of the cuts on the economy. Email updates can be arranged by signing up at [www.touchstoneblog.org.uk](http://www.touchstoneblog.org.uk) The reports on this site are free and downloadable

Institute of Employment Rights – The institute provides useful resources and papers to substantiate our case against the cuts and on a whole range of other important issues within our movement and is an essential read for our activists, updates can be received via email alerts by signing up at [www.ier.org.uk](http://www.ier.org.uk)

Community and not for profit - business information can be obtained by linking up to Business in the community at [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk) this can supply activists with daily updated bulletins capturing media from several sources

The Morning Star – The website of the only daily paper of the left has won awards for its design and content and can be accessed at [www.morningstaronline.co.uk](http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk) Unite support the Star as it is the only National daily paper that supports our Union and our members within the UK

Surveys - When getting information from our members about the issues they are concerned about a number of online survey tools exist such as [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) which allow us to construct simple online surveys for free and more complex ones with the ability to translate the information into graph format, for a small charge.

**Getting the message over**

Unite - When it comes to getting the message over to members or to the public at large we of course have our own website at [www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org) and can post information etc in the relevant sections via our officers.

Blogs - To get our message out even further why not consider a blog site such as [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com) This site allows you to create a blog site and includes a simple 10 step guide to setting the blog up, which is very user friendly. There are numerous blog sites available free of charge and they enable activists to set up simple websites for distribution of information, often allowing debate by creating online forums

Websites - Your campaign may decide to invest in setting up a simple website which could include message forums and have a few email addresses linked into it. There are a few advantages of an actual website over a blog site in terms of interactivity and multiple users being able to fully develop content however a blog is usually enough to run a reasonable campaign and the big advantage is the zero cost of setting it up. If you are intent on creating a full blown website shop around on the net for a reasonable one and don’t expect to pay more than £25 per year for a website creation and hosting package which includes at least 10 email addresses, note prices can vary enormously.

**Social Networking**

Facebook – [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) is the social network of choice for millions of people in the UK and Unite is active on facebook in terms of running an official group, a number of branches have groups, some of our campaigns are using facebook such as “Unite the ports” which is our dock worker campaign, Unite Working Students also operate through facebook

The concern with facebook as a medium is generally one of security and privacy but once people become familiar with the security settings of facebook a successful private domain can be established, facebook operate “open”, “closed” and “private” groups and any new group can be set up so that membership is determined by invitation and in secret groups not only will there be no public wall, the group will not even appear in search criteria

We have just initiated a new facebook group for Unite members wanting to campaign against the cuts you can find it at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) searching for the group “unite the union, discuss the cuts, and organise!” In 12 hours, the group grew from zero to 130 members overnight and continues to grow at a pace

Unionbook - Social Networking as described earlier has been a revolutionary addition to our networking and campaign building capacity. Sites such as Facebook have changed our lives. The trade union movement has worked on developing its own version of facebook at [www.unionbook.org](http://www.unionbook.org) where trade unionists can network in a less public domain.

Twitter – [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) is the latest and fastest growing site in new media amongst adults and provides a method of following individuals or groups who post brief updates, similar to facebook status lines, which usually (in the case of organisations or media tweeters) provide a link to a bigger article, video, story or picture.

With Twitter the key is to follow people or organisations that you are interested in and keep up to date with their updates. This way we are able to obtain up to the minute news and information which can be relayed to campaign organisers or other comrades

By linking up to Twitter it is also useful to repost items or stories back to other social networking sites such as Facebook, thus creating a free flow of information between networks and spreading important information quickly and to a wide audience. For instance if I have 100 people following me on Twitter and 500 on Facebook then I can repost something I pick up from Unities’ twitter group back to Twitter so that my 100 friends can see it but I can then repost to Facebook so that a further 500 can see my post and they can potentially repost that out to their friends. It is obvious to see how a pebble can lead to a ripple and finally result in a tidal wave when we consider the multiplication involved here.

YouTube – [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) The peoples television network, Unite use YouTube to post items from Union TV and to post individual videos on our ongoing campaigns and once again videos on YouTube allow reposting to other social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. If we look below the video which we click on to watch, there is a “SHARE” button. The share button is common to many internet sites nowadays such as newspaper sites, television channel sites etc and clicking this opens the ability to repost the item to one of your networking sites.

By signing up to an account on YouTube members can capture their favourite subscribers and be offered videos in line with what they watch or subscribe to. Therefore, every time YouTube is accessed the member is provided with several videos which may be of interest.

Video content is particularly useful in spreading online campaigns as people are often reluctant to read lengthy documents or contributions but are happy to watch a short video and this type of content when transferred to a site such as Facebook is very user orientated, encouraging a wide range of group members to watch and share the content within their group of friends.

Posting video content – Users can also post video content direct to you tube using video cameras or the latest technology “flip video” The advantages of flip video cameras is in terms of the size and scope of the cameras but most of all the ease in uploading content without the need for wires and leads. The picture below shows how a flip camera plugs directly into a laptop or PC and is then able through internal software to directly upload to facebook or YouTube

Once content has been uploaded it can be sent directly to a range of social networking sites, blogs or shared via email with friends A video blog is known as a vlog



The value of using video content is that it is a medium which suits most users and potential users. Video is a very flexible medium and is becoming a familiar technique in the sphere of education.



People find video easy to associate with and messages which might be easily lost in a document or newsletter can be explained clearly in a short video clip. Videos are also easy to view on smartphones as well as computers.

**Value of Networking and Growth**

Social networking has the potential to reach huge target audiences. An average Facebook user has 130 friends however Trade Union activists using facebook tend to have many more than that on average due to the way in which they use the medium.

**People on Facebook**

* More than 500 million active users
* 50% of our active users log on to Facebook in any given day
* Average user has 130 friends
* People spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook

**Activity on Facebook**

* There are over 900 million objects that people interact with (pages, groups, events and community pages)
* Average user is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events
* Average user creates 90 pieces of content each month
* More than 30 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc.) shared each month.

**Mobile**

* There are more than 150 million active users currently accessing Facebook through their mobile devices.
* People that use Facebook on their mobile devices are twice as active on Facebook than non-mobile users. Smart-phones have created a social networking revolution
* Activists all over Britain and Ireland are identifying with the campaigns which are emerging against the cuts and it is up to Unite to lead the way, to engage with groups of workers, unemployed workers, people with disabilities, young people and old.

We are the largest trade union in Britain and Ireland and need to lead the fight back on behalf of those in our society whose vulnerability leaves them with no real voice.

In the 1930’s Trade Unions failed to support mass movements of Unemployed workers and paid for this with substantial decreases in membership figures which endured for decades. If we as the leading voice of organised labour are not there supporting workers and others in struggle, then those same workers cannot be expected to rally to our movement when they do attain work.

Our new community membership has opened the door for many unwaged individuals to become a part of our union and play an active part in the fight back.



**Unite Activists and the cuts –**

So finally, what can Unite activists do to build campaigns through New Media?

Well there are many opportunities for activists to spread awareness and build our own knowledge at the same time. We can share our experiences via blogs and discussion groups, widen our activist networks through social networking media, publicise our campaigning work, enhance our internal communications and much more.

When will we have time for all this extra activity is the question? Much of this activity can be done around the edges of the day. How often do we think we might have a half hour or so at the start of the day or at lunchtime, or on a break, on the way home etc These are the times when we all have a few moments to reflect and possibly to engage in some activity online. We have an opportunity perhaps to engage with people over a headline, to share a story we have picked up, post a picture of a demo, a video or just post a status which effects how we feel. It also provides an opportunity to publicise events such as marches, demos or protests or to highlight the need for a letter to be sent to our MP which of course can be easily done by logging onto [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com) which enables us to identify and contact our Member of Parliament, MEP, or local politician regarding an issue of concern

We should develop our skills in the field of IT through Unite Education, sharpening our abilities in this field in terms of producing professional presentations, reports and surveys to rival those of our Employers.

Through everything else we need to develop our skills as campaigners, both in practical terms and the virtual world to drive forward Unite campaigns in our workplaces and in our communities to defend workers and unemployed workers, the young and the elderly against the attacks of this Government before they condemn us all to a life of misery and despair

**Online Activism Checklist**

* 1. Set clear goals for what you want to achieve by setting up your online campaign
  2. Make sure goals are realistic, if you decide upon an online monthly newsletter make sure that is feasible
  3. Always ensure that content is updated and relevant, imagine buying a newspaper for 5 days which just printed the same stories, people get fed up quickly so content needs updating frequently
  4. Make your online space colourful and interesting, bold headlines, lots of pictures and simple bullet points
  5. Make it simple for people to leave posts and encourage them to do so, attention spans are short people need to be able to comment on posts and load content in “two clicks” This means that loading onto the site will take a few minutes only
  6. Ensure you have someone on your campaign team with the skills required to set up and manage your online campaign
  7. Ensure you have the time resources within your Unite team to handle email traffic and forum responses
  8. Ensure if you are setting up a free content fully accessible area that the site is policed with regularity to avoid any inappropriate content being uploaded
  9. Determine responsibility in terms of creating online content, newsletters
  10. Develop comprehensive databases of contact information in order to distribute emails, updates, links etc
  11. When developing traditional campaigns ensure you publicise the new media activities and provide contact information.
  12. When developing materials for campaigns provide the option for people to receive electronic versions of the documents

**How to engage interest**

* 1. The old maxim still applies, “man bites dog” makes a better story than “dog bites man”, look for the unusual or human interest story
  2. Remember to start email alerts or updates with the most important issue first
  3. Remember to use the 5 W’s – who what where when and why, in developing content in order that the article creates a story and provides the recipients with a fully rounded understanding of the issue
  4. Write good strong subject lines with a “hook” in the title
  5. Keep electronic communications as sharp, brief and to the point as possible
  6. Use hyperlinks to redirect readers to further information, if the hook is engaging enough they will click to the content
  7. Always include detailed and full contact information on every bulletin and on blog pages
  8. When developing online content pictorial content ensure that copyright is not being infringed
  9. If photos of Unite activity is required on publications use your own photos or take them from the Unite Facebook page which has a range of general photographs of demos etc
  10. Always use the BCC line when sending emails to multiple contacts in order not to identify email addresses to other recipients
  11. Develop separate contact lists for different types of communication, e.g. one for reps, one for committee members, branch members and a wider information contact list
  12. It is useful to create an online archive area of newsletters etc in order that new visitors to the site can trace back campaign activity

**Security and Safety - online issues**

1. Always save information on an external drive, back up on a regular basis (The IT rule of thumb is that information only exists when it is held in three places)
2. Use good quality virus software. There are some good free packages online such as AVAST which can be downloaded at [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com) to ensure protection from accidental or malicious intrusion
3. Make sure that at least one back up is held remotely from the main laptop or PC in case of fire, flood etc
4. If members are loading content especially in a potentially compromised area such as on a facebook wall, make sure they follow simple protocols
5. Ensure that we issue guidance to members that will protect them from loading content which may bring the Employer into disrepute
6. Build awareness regarding potential contractual breaches for individual employees
7. Recognising that the employer may have a subtle eye to activity in any online area
8. Be aware of accessing campaign sites or groups within the workplace unless the arrangement with the employer specifically allows for this
9. Be aware of any information which may be deemed as in confidence or be detrimental to the employers undertaking
10. When organising campaign activity online exercise caution in the initial planning stages and keep communications tight

**Old media vs. New media**

**Old Media**

1. The decorating table – out on the street campaigning engaging one to one with people
2. Meetings, public or Unite the Union
3. Hard copy newsletters, posters on notice boards
4. Public and member sign up – petitions
5. Lobbying – political lobbying and employer lobbying at AGM’s etc
6. Local, regional or national press and media

**Then Why Use New Media?**

1. Many people now regularly communicate electronically
2. Our organisations communicate electronically
3. Electronic communication is instant and flexible, can include images and offer direct immediate feedback
4. Works well in driving campaigns, recruiting new members, publicising existing activities, sharing information and helping to develop strategy in a collaborative manner
5. Draws in people who would not usually be involved in campaigns due to personal, domestic issues or disability

**Drawbacks of New Media**

1. Not yet a universal media form
2. In addition to people not having access to computers some may not be confident users
3. Can frighten some people from activity
4. Can’t always be sure if people read and understand communications
5. Depersonalises communication
6. Can be open to security breaches and employers prying eyes

**Solutions**

1. Develop multi layered campaigns which engage in direct and indirect media formats
2. Still operate the one to one and mass meetings
3. Produce hard copies of newsletters as well as electronic
4. Organise IT training for members through Unite Education Department

We have arranged for Union learning organisers to discuss your training needs with you in terms of I.T. and we hope you will take the opportunity of taking up Unite training in I.T. skills.

**Activity 8 - Creating Effective Teams**

Great teams start with Belbin! Belbin Team Roles is the language of teams. It helps people to identify and talk about their behavioural strengths in a productive, safe and non-confrontational way.

"I think we've always been striving to find a way of helping people to work together. When people work in effective combinations they achieve so much more than when they're working alone. But to do that, we need a language, and it needs to be a language which is shared and enables people to communicate with one another."  *Dr Meredith Belbin*

**Resource Investigator**

Uses their inquisitive nature to find ideas to bring back to the team.

**Strengths:** Outgoing, enthusiastic. Explores opportunities and develops contacts.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Might be over-optimistic, and can lose interest once the initial enthusiasm has passed.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They might forget to follow up on a lead.



**Teamworker**

Helps the team to gel, using their versatility to identify the work required and complete it on behalf of the team.

**Strengths:** Co-operative, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens and averts friction.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Can be indecisive in crunch situations and tends to avoid confrontation.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They might be hesitant to make unpopular decisions.



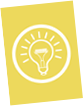
**Co-ordinator**

Needed to focus on the team's objectives, draw out team members and delegate work appropriately.

**Strengths:** Mature, confident, identifies talent. Clarifies goals.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Can be seen as manipulative and might offload their own share of the work.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They might over-delegate, leaving themselves little work to do.



**Plant**

Tends to be highly creative and good at solving problems in unconventional ways.

**Strengths:** Creative, imaginative, free-thinking, generates ideas and solves difficult problems.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Might ignore incidentals, and may be too preoccupied to communicate effectively.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They could be absent-minded or forgetful.



**Monitor Evaluator**

Provides a logical eye, making impartial judgements where required and weighs up the team's options in a dispassionate way.

**Strengths:** Sober, strategic and discerning. Sees all options and judges accurately.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Sometimes lacks the drive and ability to inspire others and can be overly critical.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They could be slow to come to decisions.



**Specialist**

Brings in-depth knowledge of a key area to the team.

**Strengths:** Single-minded, self-starting and dedicated. They provide specialist knowledge and skills.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Tends to contribute on a narrow front and can dwell on the technicalities.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They overload you with information.



**Shaper**

Provides the necessary drive to ensure that the team keeps moving and does not lose focus or momentum.

**Strengths:** Challenging, dynamic, thrives on pressure. Has the drive and courage to overcome obstacles.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Can be prone to provocation, and may sometimes offend people's feelings.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They could risk becoming aggressive and bad-humoured in their attempts to get things done.



**Implementer**

Needed to plan a workable strategy and carry it out as efficiently as possible.

**Strengths:** Practical, reliable, efficient. Turns ideas into actions and organises work that needs to be done.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Can be a bit inflexible and slow to respond to new possibilities.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They might be slow to relinquish their plans in favour of positive changes.



**Completer Finisher**

Most effectively used at the end of tasks to polish and scrutinise the work for errors, subjecting it to the highest standards of quality control.

**Strengths:** Painstaking, conscientious, anxious. Searches out errors. Polishes and perfects.

**Allowable weaknesses:** Can be inclined to worry unduly, and reluctant to delegate.

**Don't be surprised to find that:** They could be accused of taking their perfectionism to extremes

Source: - http://www.belbin.com/about/belbin-team-roles/

**Activity 9 - Leadership**

An ongoing debate in academic circles over the past 50-odd years relates to the correlation between **leadership and management**. Does a manager have to be a great leader? Does a leader need to have good management skills? What is the difference between leadership and management?

**Comparison chart**

|  | **Leadership** | **Management** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Definition** | Leadership means "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members." | Management comprises directing and controlling a group of one or more people or entities for the purpose of coordinating and harmonizing that group towards accomplishing a goal. |
| **Personality Styles** | Are often called brilliant and mercurial, with great charisma. Yet, they are also often seen as loners and private people. They are comfortable taking risks, sometimes seemingly wild and crazy risks. Almost all leaders have high levels of imagination | Tend to be rational, under control problem solvers. They often focus on goals, structures, personnel, and availability of resources. Managers’ personalities lean toward persistence, strong will, analysis, and intelligence. |
| **Focus** | Leading people | Managing work |
| **Outcomes** | Achievements | Results |
| **Approach to tasks** | Simply look at problems and devise new, creative solutions. Using their charisma and commitment, they excite, motivate, and focus others to solve problems and excel. | Create strategies, policies, and methods to create teams and ideas that combine to operate smoothly. They empower people by soliciting their views, values, and principles. They believe that this combination reduces inherent risk and generates success |
| **Approach to risk** | Risk-taking | Risk-averse |
| **Role in decision-making** | Facilitative | Involved |
| **Styles** | Transformational, Consultative & Participative | Dictatorial, Authoritative,Transactional, Autocratic, Consultative and Democratic |
| **Power through** | Charisma & Influence | Formal authority & Position |
| **Organization** | Leaders have followers | Manager have subordinates |
| **Appeal to** | Heart | Head |

Summary

Managing and leading are two different ways of organising people. Leadership is setting a new direction or vision for a group that they follow, ie: a leader is the spearhead for that new direction. On the other hand, management controls or directs people/resources in a group according to principles or values that have already been established. The manager uses a formal, rational method whilst the leader uses passion and stirs emotions.

**The Blake-Mouton Grid**

****

**Understanding the Model**

The following Grid is based on two behavioural dimensions:

**Concern for People** - This is the degree to which a leader considers the needs of

team members, their interests, and areas of personal development when deciding how

best to accomplish a task

**Concern for Results** - This is the degree to which a leader emphasises concrete objectives and organizational efficiency when deciding how best to accomplish a task.

Using the axis to plot leadership 'concerns for results' versus 'concerns for people', Blake and Mouton defined the following five leadership styles:

**Country Club Leadership - High People/Low Production**

This style of leader is most concerned about the needs and feelings of members of his/her

team. These people operate under the assumption that as long as team members are happy and secure then they will work hard. What tends to result is an environment that is very relaxed and fun but where results suffer, due to lack of direction and control.

**Impoverished Leadership** - Low Production/ Low People

This leader is mostly ineffective. He/she has neither a high regard for creating systems for

getting the job done, nor for creating a work environment that is satisfying and motivating. The result is a place of disorganization, dissatisfaction and disharmony

**Produce or Perish Leadership** - High Production/Low People

Also known as Authoritarian or Compliance Leaders, people in this category believe that

people are simply a means to an end. Individual needs are always secondary to the need for efficient and productive workplaces. This type of leader is very autocratic, has strict work rules, policies, and procedures, and views punishment as the most effective means to motivate. We see a good many of this type of leader over the negotiating table:

**Middle-of-the-Road Leadership** - Medium Production/Medium People

This style seems to be a balance of the two competing concerns. It may at first appear to be an ideal compromise. Therein lies the problem, though: When you compromise, you

necessarily give away a bit of each concern so that neither production nor people needs are fully met. Leaders who use this style settle for average performance and often believe that this is the most anyone can expect.

**Team Leadership** - High Production/High People

According to the Blake Mouton model, this is the pinnacle of leadership style. These leaders stress results and the needs of the people equally highly. The premise here is that people are involved in understanding organizational purpose and determining business needs. When they are committed to, and have a stake in the organization's success, their needs and the needs of the business coincide. This creates a team environment based on trust and respect, which leads to high satisfaction and motivation and, as a result, high production.

**Activity 10 - Organising Effective Meetings**

One thing central to any functional Unite group is regular effective meetings. In a healthy organisation almost all decisions will be made at these meetings and there will be a sufficient level of discussion to ensure all those attending have a good idea of the activity and arguments in the different struggles the organisation is involved in. Meetings might also have some time given over to education. Indeed, consider if seeking time for attendance from the Employer whether a training or legal update might be included to aid this process.

**Before the meeting**  
***Make sure everyone knows the time and place***A new Unite project or campaign or one engaged in a lot of activity might meet once a week, at the same time and day, to establish a consistent meeting day, time and location, as soon as possible so people can make it a habit. If they must search for you or keep track of an ever-changing meeting time, they're far more likely to forget or not to bother. You'll want a space that's private enough for you to have strong disagreements in and where only the members of the group will be while you are using it. This could mean meeting in one of our Unite District offices, a private room in a quiet pub or a specific meeting room which is privately hired out.

***Develop an agenda***An agenda gives people time to plan, to think over things that will be discussed, to bring necessary information and materials. It doesn't have to be set in stone - you can always add and adjust as needed, even during the meeting. The agenda should be printed and distributed, in advance or at the meeting. This helps keep people on topic and lets them know what will be covered and when. If it’s known who is chairing the meeting in advance it may be a good idea for that person to start the meeting with a suggested agenda.



**An agenda should include all the following items that apply to your Branch or workplace committee**

1. Chairpersons Opening remarks,

2. Minutes of previous meeting for accuracy, correction and agreement

3. Matters Arising from the minutes

4. Announcements and correspondence to be dealt with,

5. Treasurer's report

6. Committee reports,

7. New business.

8. Speaker

9. Any Other Business (AOB) or (AOCB)

10. Date time and place of next meeting

If there is any disagreement over the order of the agenda, then this should be quickly discussed and voted on at the start of the meeting. If the chair thinks there is a lot to get through it may make sense to set a maximum amount of time that can be spent discussing topics right at the start of the meeting.

***Make sure the room is open and set up properly***Have you ever arrived at a meeting only to find the door locked, and everyone had to stand around waiting while the someone scrambled to find the key? Or have you ever been in a meeting where there weren't enough chairs, and each time a latecomer arrived, they had to interrupt and search for one and move it in? Not especially effective ways of inspiring confidence and credibility or getting things done efficiently, are they?

**During the meeting**

***Start as you mean to continue***Make sure you start on time. This is especially important for new members or new Reps, who can get a bit put-off by the meeting start time being increasingly pushed back while people chat or wander around. First thing to do is make sure everyone knows who everyone else is. Perhaps consider going around the room and get people to say their names and maybe a bit of other info about themselves. Ensure someone is taking decent notes of the meeting. It’s important that the same people don't end up doing these tasks every meeting if possible.

***Minute taking***Someone should be responsible for keeping minutes of the meeting and preparing these to be read at or distributed before the next meeting. Minutes need not be very detailed, dependent upon the type of meeting, (you don't need to write down what everyone says). They should aim to include:

1. Who attended the meeting,  
2. Topics discussed,  
3. Decisions reached for each topic,  
4. Who has volunteered to do what,  
5. Items to be discussed at next meeting.

***Encourage group discussion to get all points of view***Turn questions back to the group for their input. Ask people to comment on something just said. Compliment people on their ideas and thank them for their input. Ask open-ended questions. You may need to ask the quieter people for their thoughts, and tactfully interrupt the longwinded ones to move the discussion along. Encourage people who just want to agree with a previous speaker to say "ditto" rather than taking the time to repeat her/his point.

***Stay on top of things***It's part of your job as chairperson to manage the traffic and help the discussion move along. If several people are trying to talk at once, ask them to take turns. It helps to have a pen and paper to hand for when things get busy- jot down people's names in the order they raised their hands. It can be a good idea to let people who have not spoken yet to skip the queue and put them at the top of your list. Make sure everyone gets their turn and things keep moving - you might have to start asking some people to keep it short! Often a discussion can become dominated by a couple of speakers, try and avoid this situation by inviting the rest of the people to contribute (going around in a circle and asking for people's views can help).

If the discussion is getting off-topic (i.e. it strays from the agenda), point this out and redirect it back on course. If someone is getting hostile, argumentative, or needlessly negative, tactfully intervene and try to turn the discussion in a more constructive direction. If necessary, ask the group to agree to a time limit on a discussion that might take too long. You might want to agree to limit each speaker's time or say that no one can speak a second time until everyone has spoken once.

If the group is spinning its wheels and people are only repeating themselves, restate and summarise the issues and ask if people are near ready to decide on the subject. If it just doesn't seem that the group can make a good decision right now, suggest tabling the matter until another time. You may want to ask someone to bring back more information or form a committee to work on the issue.

***Don't use your position as chair to impose your personal ideas and opinions on the group***  
If you have strong feelings on an issue, you may want to step aside and let someone else facilitate that discussion. At the very least, keep your own comments to a minimum, try to let others speak first, and identify them as your personal beliefs,

***Non-verbals are important, too***Be attentive to people who are speaking - look at them, lean forward, smile, nod. Make eye contact with people who may need encouragement to speak. Pay attention - people who are less confident about speaking will often indicate that they want to speak in minor way (e.g. briefly half put up their hand). A good chair will spot this and encourage them to speak

***Don't be afraid of silence***It's a very useful tool. It gives people a chance to consider and collect their thoughts. It may encourage someone to voice a comment they've been thinking about but hesitant to say.

***Guide the discussion toward closure***Restate people's comments to make sure everyone understands their point. Ask for clarification. Summarise what has been accomplished or agreed and what is left to resolve. Suggest when it's time to wrap up and make decisions or take action.

***Decision making*** You may wish to leave time for discussion in the hope of being able to reach consensus, only then moving to a vote, or you may wish to go straight to the vote. If time permits it may make sense to postpone making a contentious decision to the next meeting to give people a chance to think things over (and calm down)

***Take time at the end of the meeting to process***Reflect on what went well and what people appreciate about others' input and actions. Check out assumptions. Encourage people to share any lingering concerns or things that just don't feel right.

***End on time***Nothing makes people dread and avoid meetings more than knowing they're likely to go on and on and consume far more of their time than they want to give. Set a time to end the meeting at the very beginning and stick to it!

**After the meeting**  
***Minutes***Make sure the minutes will be written up, organised and then distributed among those who attended within a reasonable time scale.

***Follow up with people.***Thank them for their input. Make sure they understand the action points they are responsible for and have the resources they need to complete them.

**Activity 11 - Organising a Branch Meeting**

Introduction — The Chairman’s Role   
  
This chapter explains some basic terms and looks at how the chairman is elected and at his role.

### **Rules of debate**

There is no legal code of rules applying to meetings (except in the case of public authorities and limited companies, where the law specifies what can and cannot be done). However, there are certain procedures which are generally adopted, and which lay down the methods by which meetings should be conducted. Most of these micas are based upon the rules which govern the conduct of business in the House of Commons. They are usually referred to as the ‘rules of debate’ — that is, customs and practices which are in general use and which do not vary much from one society or body to another. These rules are fully discussed in chapters 3 to 7

### **Standing orders**

But it would be un-businesslike for any organisation to rely merely upon general customs or practices, even though they might seem well established. Disputes do arise in meetings as to what the general custom is, and every society needs rules for the guidance of its own members. Such rules, or standing orders, lay down in detail the way meetings should be conducted, and act as a code of practice which formalises and adapts the rules of debate to suit each society’s requirements. An example of a code of standing orders which can he amended to suit a society’s purposes, is set out in appendix C. The standing orders should make it clear that they themselves can he amended — ideally only at the societies Annual Meeting and by a two thirds majority.

### **Flexibility**

From time to time circumstances may arise which make it necessary for the standing orders not to be applied too rigidly, and usually the standing orders themselves provide for their suspension This is dealt with more fully later (see chapter 13).

### **Election of chair —for established bodies**

The standing orders usually (but not always) prescribe how the chairman, sometimes called the president, is to be appointed. Where it is not done by standing order, the constitution or roles of the society should lay down the procedure. The chairmen of trade unions and political parties — indeed any bodies which have regular meetings — are usually elected at the annual meetings and officiate for twelve months. In such cases it is only necessary to elect a temporary chairman when the regular chairman and vice- or deputy-chair are absent.

### **Election of chair —for special meetings**

But there are occasions when people who have never met before as a group are called together for a special purpose in will need to appoint their own chair. In such cases, the person who has convened the meeting should take charge temporarily and ask for nominations. That individual or some other person present may propose that ‘Christine Lewis shall take the chair. Another person will second this, and if there are no other names put forward she will he declared elected. If more than one person is proposed, the names must he put to the vote of the meeting. The individual securing the highest number will be elected. The various procedures for elections are described in chapter 8.

### **Know the rules and standing orders**

The chairman’s main job is to guide the course of a meeting and see that the business is transacted not merely in a proper manner but interestingly, so that the interest of members is held, and they are encouraged to attend meetings regularly and to participate in them.

Without a chairman the meeting would drift along aimlessly. This means that the chairman as well as having a thorough understanding of the rules of debate, needs to know the rules and standing orders of his society thoroughly. He should ensure that there is always a copy of these on the table during the meeting for purposes of reference.

### 

### **Chairs’ ruling**

Because the chairman’s duty is to uphold the rules and standing orders, he/she should never allow any member to break the rules where they are clear, If the rules are vague or ambiguous on a particular point, and there are no clear precedents, it’s probably best for the chairman to advise the meeting to delay action until he or the secretary has been able to get guidance from a higher authority — for example. a union’s regional office should be able to advise a union branch which has a problem of this kind. If the matter is urgent the chairman can make a ruling which the meeting should abide by unless it is successfully challenged (see chapter 13).

### **Impartiality**

Above all, the chairman must he impartial. Where there are differences of opinion, the chairman should give both sides an equal chance to express their views. There is a difficult balance to strike between being too firm and becoming almost dictatorial and being too weak, which can lead to rulings from the chair being questioned. The chairman often must exercise what may seem like an unnatural degree of tact and patience. The worst thing he can do is to lose his temper — that way he loses everyone’s respect.

### **Taking part in discussion**

Although the chairman will usually have the same rights in principle, as any other member to move, second or speak on motions, in practice he should intervene as little as possible in the discussion and should not usually express personal opinions — the less the chairman says, the less likely he is to be accused of taking sides. But if the chairman does feel impelled to take part in a debate as a disputant, he should leave the chair and a temporary chairman should be elected until the discussion on that subject has been completed. This does not apply in small informal meetings or in committees where the chairman’s opinions can be valuable, and where there is not likely to be difficulty in keeping order. Nor does it apply to any Introductory remarks which the chair may be required to make, for example at annual meetings. In such cases the chairman is not acting as a disputant and his remarks will be confined to a statement of the objects of the meeting, perhaps touching upon the various questions which are to be deals with.

### **Chairman’s action**

In the case of bodies which meet only two or three times a year, the chairman may sometimes have to take decisions without having them endorsed by the main group. For example, the chairman of the governing body of a school may have to decide on or endorse the appointment of a member of staff— otherwise the school might not function properly between governors’ meetings. This is known as ‘chair’s action’. The chairman should not act unilaterally but should consult members with a special interest and particularly the other officers — the secretary, treasurer and vice-chairman. All cases of ‘chair’s action’ should be reported to the main body for endorsement at the next meeting.

### **Attention to detail**

The chairman should set the tone by paying attention to details — for example by starting meetings on time, by permitting no cross-talking except in committees, by making sure that speakers do not exceed their time limit and by giving them warning that their time is about to ran out a minute or so beforehand.

### **Addressing the chair**

There is one rule which must always be followed — that every contribution from the body of the meeting should be addressed to the chair and not directly to any other individual present — but in other respects meetings of various bodies differ widely in their degree of formality.

### **Formality**

For example, should the chairman be on first name terms with his member, or adopt a more formal style of address? This will depend partly on custom and practice within the body in question — in general trade unions (and craft unions in particular tend to be more formal than political parties, and political parties more formal than local pressure groups.

So, a member of the Boilermakers’ Society will expect to be addressed as Worthy Brother’, while a member of a tenants association will probably want to be called by their first name. In bodies where there are representatives of various interests or political parties — for example, council committees or school governors — it is best to stick to formal titles.   
The degree of formality will also depend on the individual chairing the meeting. An older person may be happier calling someone Mr Smith; a younger chairman may prefer to call him John’. But consistency is important in this — it can lead to accusations of favouritism if the chairman calls one member by their first name and the next minute calls someone else ‘Mr’ or Brother’.

### **Remember names**

The chairman should make even effort to remember all his members’ names, and to learn those of new members as soon as possible. This should help to make them feel that they belong, and therefore increase participation. This comes more easily to some people than to others, but it is worth working at. Most teachers have to learn about 7 new names every year, so it can be done.

**Avoid jargon**

Too many meetings, especially in trade unions and the Labour Party, are conducted on a kind of shorthand which can he baffling to outsiders and — more important — which can deter new members from attending or participating in future meetings. For example, someone in a union branch might say of a proposed wage settlement “It’s gone through the NJIC but of course it’s got to be ratified by the EC” What that individual should really do is explain that the National Joint Industrial Council, which is the negotiating body for the whole industry and which consists of ‘representatives of employees and the trade unions, has come to a provisional agreement which has to be endorsed by the Executive Council or main governing body of the union. Many chairmen, who will often have been active in the body in question for several years are guilty of believing that everyone knows the ropes as well as they do. They should be wary of falling into that trap and if other old hands at meetings lapse into jargon then they, should take it upon themselves to explain things more fully to the remaining members in plain English.

### **Handling the media**

Increasingly trade union branches, political parties and local pressure groups are appointing press officers to publicise their activities, write press releases, and generally deal with the local press and local radio. In some cases, this job may be done by the secretary. But now and again the chairman may find themselves being rung up by a journalist who wants to know his views on an issue, and who may be looking for a newsworthy quote. In such circumstances the chairman should exercise caution, and if in doubt might ask the reporter if he can phone back in a few minutes, after he has collected his thoughts. But never be hostile to the press; most local papers are desperate to fill space and can be valuable allies. It can sometimes help to provide friendly journalists with background information and if the chairman says, “This is off the record”, no journalist will quote them.

### **The Chairs’ wider role**

From what has been said so far, and from the chapters which follow, it may sound as though the chairs’ role is mainly that of a referee: interpreting the rules letting the game flow smoothly and maintaining discipline. That isn’t so —unlike a referee the chairman is the most important member of the team. Running meetings efficiently is only part of the job, although perhaps the most important part. The chair should be active between meetings too. If the chairman of (for example) a political party fails to take a lead in stimulating discussion, fund-rising, recruitment of members, election campaigns and all the other things which go on, he should let someone else take over. It is unreasonable to expect ordinary members to participate fully in such activities if the chairman does not set an example.

## 

## Notice of Meetings, Quorum and Agenda

### **Notice of Meetings**

Members of societies should always receive a notice of the meeting requesting them to attend. Voluntary organisations — including political parties, trade unions and community groups — should as far as possible represent the views of all their members, and the best way of achieving this is to ensure that members are, encouraged to attend meetings regularly by sending them written notices. This should apply unless there are effective substitute, for example, by using notice- boards at the workplace for union branch meetings. To ensure maximum participation by members, at least seven days’ notice of meetings should be given, particularly when important issues are to be discussed or elections are to be held.

### **Notice should set out the agenda**

Whenever possible the notice convening the meeting should set out the agenda: that are the items of business which are to come before the meeting. To guard against accidentally omitting any item of business from the agenda and to allow for contingencies which may arise after the agenda has been printed, it is advisable to say on the notice summoning the meeting ‘The agenda will include — following items. Then follows the list of items. If this is not done, someone may challenge the right of the meeting, when it is held, to deal with an item which has not been specifically mentioned in the notice. Except in the case of an annual or similar formal conference (where it is desirable to preclude the introduction of ‘surprise items), the item ‘Any other businesses should he put on the agenda as an additional safeguard that if some item has been left out by accident it can be brought up under this heading. It also enables members to raise matters not on the agenda. Notices convening meetings should as far as possible contain every item on the agenda to enable members to judge for themselves how important it is for them to attend.

Although notices of meetings should wherever possible set out the agenda, they may vary widely in other respects. Some may be brief and formal, simply listing the items to be discussed. Others, as well as setting out the agenda, may give the background to an issue to be discussed at the meeting and encourage members to attend by arousing their interest.

## 

## Preparing for the meeting

### **Preparing the agenda**

In the case of branch or committee meetings, the agenda is usually prepared by the secretary and submitted to the chairman for his approval. If there is a difference of opinion between the chairman and the secretary as to whether any item should be put to a meeting, or on any other point concerning the agenda. it is the secretary’s duty to refer the matter to the committee or the body under whose auspices the meeting is taking place. It is then their job to decide the point, failing this, the full meeting must decide whether the item is to be included in the agenda or not.

### **Familiarisation with the issues**

The chair should prepare thoroughly for the meeting by familiarising themselves with any papers to be considered and making brief notes about any point which may come up. He should make a point of getting to the meeting place at least 15 minutes before the meeting is due to begin so discussing with the secretary any important issues which are likely to arise, and to familiarise himself with any correspondence which is due to be discussed and which he has not seen in advance. Otherwise he will have to do this while the meeting is in progress, which will mean that he will be unable to give his undivided attention to conducting the meeting properly.

### **The Quorum**

The standing orders or rules will specify the quorum — the number or proportion of member, who must be present to permit business to be transacted at the meeting — and no meeting should be allowed to start until the chairman is sure that quorum exists. The object of requiring a quorum is to ensure that enough people are present to make the meeting sufficiently representative of the association or body concerned.

### **Size of quorum**

The rules of societies should make provision for a Quorum, either by giving the actual number of members required or by stating the proportion of members which must be in attendance- in principle, a majority would be ideal because there would then be less chance of decisions running into objections claiming the meeting had not been truly representative. But in practice, participation in most bodies tends to be low and a lower figure is more realistic. There will not usually be provision for a quorum in the cases of public meetings called by political parties, local associations, religious or social bodies. or mass meetings of trade unions.

### **Time limit for quorum**

The important thing for the chairman to keep in mind is that if there is no quorum present at any meeting where a quorum is required by rule or standing order, the meeting should be adjourned to another date - if it proceeds, the business will not be in order and decisions will not be binding upon the members. The standing orders should state the time limit within which the necessary quorum should be present — for example. 15 minutes from the start of the meeting.

### **Proceeding in the absence of a quorum**

Can anything he done in the absence of a quorum? Common sense suggests that where routine business would be held up because of the absence of a quorum, and where there is no vital issue at stake, nothing would be lost by those present having an informal talk about matters. There may be some outstanding business which cannot be deferred, if there is no meeting, the officials would have to act on their own initiative and it might be helpful for them to know the views of those present. But in such circumstances the officers would bear the responsibility for any actions taken subsequently, and the chairman would have to make it absolutely clear that because of the absence of a quorum no binding decisions could be taken by those present - No record would appear in the minutes other than the bare announcement that no quorum was present and that the meeting had to be adjourned. If the officers are doubtful about the wisdom of even an informal discussion the chairman should note that as there is no quorum present, no business can be transacted. The secretary should record this in the minutes.

### **Members leaving break up quorum**

A quorum is needed not merely at the beginning but throughout a meeting. If at any time members leave, and this reduces the numbers below the required quorum, the meeting should be adjourned, otherwise any business, which was transacted afterwards would be out of order. The secretary should tell the chairman if it is discovered that there is no quorum, and the chairman should then adjourn the meeting.

**Opening the meeting**

Once he is satisfied that there is a quorum, the chairman should ensure that meetings begin punctually by rising promptly at the time for commencement and calling the meeting to Order. He may use a mallet for this purpose, but in larger meetings a bell is perhaps a better means of ensuring attention. Making sure the mallet or bell is at hand is the secretary’s job as is providing a carafe of water and glasses for the chair and for any visiting speakers.

## 

## Agenda

### **Specimen branch agenda**

The following is a typical agenda for a trade union Branch meeting:

**Agenda**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the previous meeting
3. Matters Arising
4. General correspondence
5. Branch committee reports
6. Applications for membership
7. District committee reports
8. Trades council or other reports
9. To consider: - motion by Bro C Shaw ‘That branch

meetings be held monthly instead of fortnightly.’

1. Any other business
2. Date & time of next meeting

### **Object of the Agenda**

The main reasons for having an agenda are to make sure that no item of importance is omitted; to provide that business it dealt with in the proper order; and to warn all members about what will come before the meeting, thus preventing items being sprung upon them suddenly.

If, as was recommended at the beginning of this chapter, a notice of the meeting setting out the agenda has been circulated in advance of the meeting by the secretary, then it is unnecessary to read the agenda to the meeting (although the chair might make sure that every member has a copy, and the secretary should have spares available for those who have forgotten to bring their agenda), If no agenda has been circulated, immediately after opening the meeting the chair should read the agenda to the meeting.

### **Any other business**

Apart from letting everybody know what is to be discussed, this enables members to prepare to raise points under Any Other Business’ which always comes towards the end of the agenda. At this point in the meeting, or at a convenient early stage, the chair should ask members if any of them will want to raise any points under ‘Any Other Business’, and what these points are. The chair should take these members’ names and when ‘Any Other Business’ is reached he should call on them in the order the names were recorded. If at this point someone else who has not previously indicated their intention of doing so tries to raise a new matter, the chair is perfectly entitled to rule that they may not do so. Insisting in advance notice in this way enables the chair to adjust the timing of the meeting, which might otherwise overrun. ‘Any Other Business’ should not be used to bring up controversial matters and if members try and use it to put forward motions for which they should have given notice, the chairman should role that these motions should be placed on the agenda at the next meeting.

### **Emergency motions**

However, ‘Any Other Business’ can be used to bring forward emergency motions. Such motions must concern issues which have arisen after the current agenda has been prepared and which are genuinely urgent — in other words that action needs to be taken before the next meeting. If the chairman is certain that the issue raised falls into this category (and experience suggests that most go-called emergency motions do not do so) he should take the emergency motion first under ‘Any Other Business, allowing rather more time for it than would he usual under ‘Any other Business’ as the subject will almost certainly be interesting and controversial. Like all other motions, emergency motions must be seconded (see pages 25 to 26.)

### **Items not on the agenda**

If any member has put forward an item or given notice of motion, and this item is not on the agenda, he should inform the chairman before the Stan of the meeting if the agenda has been circulated in advance (or immediately after the agenda has been read). If the item has been omitted by a mistake, the chairman should announce that it has been added to the agenda.

### **Timetable**

The chairman should have a timetable worked out before he goes into the meeting. Otherwise the meeting may spend a disproportionate amount of its time discussing trivial issues rather than more important business. If the agenda is a full one, it is the chairman’s responsibility to make sure that no time is wasted and once he feels that an issue has been adequately dealt with, he should secure the approval of members to the next item. He can also take responsibility for suggesting to the meeting that it might defer considering matters which are minor or not urgent so that the meeting can give proper attention to the mote important business. Even on important matters the chairman can suggest limiting the number of speakers and the length of speeches. Members will usually go along with him if time is short.

### 

### **Varying the order of the agenda**

Items should usually be taken in the order in which they appear on the agenda paper. However, the chairman can vary the order at his discretion, and if one individual (usually the secretary) is due to speak on several agenda items consecutively, it may be advisable to do so to avoid boring the members and to give the secretary a break. But where the order is varied the chairman should always explain what he is going to do and give the reasons for his decision. If he fails to do this, it may give rise to unreasonable suspicions amongst members.

A member present at a meeting may ask for an item to be taken out of order, either by being brought forward earlier, or deferred. The chair is entitled to exercise his discretion on this kind of request, but the meeting can insist if the chairman objects. In such a case a motion will have to be moved and seconded by members present to ensure that the proposed change is accepted and put into operation by the chairman. But this would be very unusual, and it should be possible to sort things out without having to resort to the formal procedure of a motion.

## Minutes and Correspondence

### **Minute book**

Minutes are a brief but accurate record of the business transacted at the meeting to which they refer. They are compiled by the secretary from notes taken by him/her while the meeting is in progress. These notes are later written out in proper form’ and may be entered into a book called the minute book, which is especially kept for that purpose. They may be duplicated and circulated to members, but when this is done one set should be kept separately in a file which takes the place of the minute book. When minutes are typed but not duplicated they should be pasted into the minute book.

### **What minutes should contain**

Minutes may vary in length. Some seek to record the remarks of those taking part in the proceedings, but this makes the minutes lengthy arid it is not always easy to summarise complex discussions. In the case of voluntary organisations where there is no full-time secretary, it is best to keep the minutes as brief as possible. The minutes should always be numbered, item by item or paragraph by paragraph consecutively, for case of reference and to avoid mistakes or confusion. The numbering may be started again for each meeting, but (particularly where the minutes are duplicated and circulated in loose-leaf form) it is helpful to number consecutively, starting at the beginning of each year .so that if the first meeting ended at item 8, the second meeting would begin at item 9.

Although every organisation has its own style of minute-writing, there are certain features which all minutes should contain. They are:

**Minutes**

* Apologies for absence
* All motions and amendments in the exact form they were put to the chair, no matter what their fate may have been. Even though they were withdrawn, superseded or defeated, they should be entered into the minutes (it is necessary to have a record so that the policy of the organisation is readily available). If a motion does not receive a seconder then it should not be entered, except for a committee meeting where standing orders provide that a seconder is not required.
* The names of movers and seconders of such motions and amendments.
* The numbers of those voting
* The chairs decisions on matters of order
* Date of next meeting

It is particularly important to include details of motions and amendments in order to give those who were not present the flavour of the meeting. For example, it would give the wrong impression if a sub-committee reporting hack to a parent body were merely to record that a motion had been carried, rather than that it had been passed by a narrow majority after an amendment urging an alternative course had been rejected by only a couple of votes.

**Dealing with Minutes of the previous meeting**

In compiling the agenda, the item ‘Minutes of previous meeting’ should come first or appear immediately after the formal item ‘Apologies for absence’. If the minutes have been duplicated and circulated in advance it is not necessary to read them, hut otherwise the minutes should be read at the beginning of the meeting by the secretary, strictly speaking there should then be a motion, moved and seconded from the floor ‘That the minutes be signed a true record’. correct record. But usually it is enough for the chairman to move a formal motion by asking the meeting if it agrees that the minutes should he signed as a correct record.

### **Signing the minutes**

Once the minutes have been passed, they should he signed by the chairman and the date entered underneath his signature. The chairman’s signature is a necessity in the unlikely event of the minutes having to be produced in a court of law.

### **Discussion only on accuracy**

No discussion should be allowed on the motion (or the chairman’s proposal) that the minutes be signed unless it concerns the accuracy of the minutes. Members’ are not being asked to approve of the decisions made at the previous meeting, but merely to say whether the minutes accurately state the business done at the previous meeting. Confusion about thus can be avoided by always including in the motion the words ‘as a correct record’. If there is a motion from the floor that the minutes should be approved it is advisable, but not essential, that it should be moved and seconded by members who were present at the last meeting, and who should therefore know that they are a correct record. Until the minutes have been passed no other business can be proceeded with.

### **Importance of accuracy**

Members should make sure that the minutes contain every resolution which was passed at the previous meeting. The minutes are the evidence of what occurred and if a resolution was omitted by the secretary in writing the minutes, there would be no record at all that the resolution had ever been passed. If the minutes had to be produced in a court of law or elsewhere as evidence, it would, in the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary be assumed that no such resolution had been passed.

### **Corrections to the minutes**

If a member believes that there is an error in, or an omission from the minutes, he should not interrupt the reading of the minutes, but when the secretary has finished, the member should insist on the error being rectified. Often the correction will be accepted by the secretary and inserted at once in the minutes, but if the error is not admitted, the member drawing attention to the point should move an amendment to have the minutes rectified.

The amendment should be seconded by another member and put to the vote by the chairman who may allow some discussion, if the amendment is carried, the correction must at once he inserted in the margin of the minutes and initialled by the chair. If there are no further errors, the chairman should put the motion ‘That the minutes as amended be signed as a correct record’; if there is a majority in favour, the minutes are declared passed.

### **No rescinding a minute**

Sometimes, in order to prevent a resolution passed by an earlier meeting from being put into effect, an attempt may be made to rescind that part of the minutes dealing with such resolution. This procedure should **not** be accepted by the chair; the expunging of a minute which is an accurate record of a decision previously reached is equivalent to destroying the evidence of the proceedings. The correct method of rescinding a resolution is explained on page 32.

### **Amending minutes of sub-committees**

Questioning the minutes of sub-committees which report back to full committees or union branches can be a problem, because when they are presented to the parent body they will not usually have been approved by the sub-Committee. If any member of a sub-committee doubts their accuracy they should take this before they are discussed by the parent body and fellow sub-committee members give support, the minutes can he amended.

Members of the parent body who are not also members of the sub—committee are concerned not with the accuracy of the minutes, but with their policy and recommendations. Therefore, sub-committee minutes should be dealt with on the lines of delegate reports, as explained in chapter 10. If any items have been referred by the sub-committee to the parent body, the motion for the acceptance of the minutes should read ‘That the sub-committee’s recommendations be endorsed with the exception of those items separately appearing on the Agenda’.

### 

### **Matters arising from the minutes**

Once the minutes have been passed, it is usual for the chairman to ask, “Are there any questions arising from the minutes?’ to enable members to ask whether any action has been taken on an item. The secretary or other officer may then make a brief report on what has been done. The chair should not allow any general discussion on the subject but must confine it entirely to points of information. If anyone wants certain action to be taken, they should notify the chair and bring the subject forward again at the end of the meeting under ‘Any Other Business’. Otherwise the meeting might go on discussing the minutes all night to the exclusion of more important business.

If the officers are aware of an important matter relating to something considered at the previous meeting which seems likely to lead to considerable discussion, it should be placed on the agenda as a separate item rather than dealt with under ‘matters arising’.  
After matters, arising from the minutes have been disposed of, the chairman should proceed with the other items on the agenda.

### **Dealing with correspondence**

There are three ways of dealing with correspondence which comes before meetings. The correspondences can be taken as a whole; each letter can be dealt with separately; or the letters can be grouped in subject form. The practice on this varies and may depend on the volume of correspondence. Where correspondence is small, the secretary might read all the letters (the secretary may summarise the less important letters to save time) after which the chairman might ask members if they have any comments or whether they wish to raise anything. The trouble with this method is that unless members make a note of points in the earlier letters, discussion may focus on the letters read last. To ensure that important letters are not overlooked the secretary should, with the chairman’s approval, put such letters down as separate stems on the agenda.

The method of taking every letter separately is surer, but can be unnecessarily lengthy, and probably the best method is to group together all letters dealing with the same subject and, if possible in the order most suitable for consideration.

As well as being speedier, this helps members to focus their minds on the subject and in logical sequence and enables the meeting to obtain a broader view.

### **Noting correspondence**

Whatever system is adopted, it needs to he recorded in the minutes that letters have been received, if no action on any of them is proposed, the chair should move formally ‘That the letter(s) be noted’. Any proposals for action arising from the correspondence will take the form of motions and should be dealt with accordingly.

## Model Standing Orders

1. **Quorum**

Unless otherwise decided, all meetings shall begin at (00) pm, and end at (00) pm. (00) members shall form a quorum. If within half-an-hour of the time appointed for the meeting to commence; a quorum is not present, the meeting shah be dissolved.

1. **Order of Business**

An Agenda shall be prepared by the chairman and secretary and shall be circulated to members (00) days in advance of each meeting. All items thereon shall take precedence over all other business, any member wishing to introduce business for the consideration of the meeting may do so after the business on the Agenda has been completed but must do so writing. Or may give notice of motion to be discussed at further meeting.

1. **Suspension of standing orders**

In the event of any matter of urgency, however, the chairman may accept a motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders. The member moving such suspension must clearly state the nature and urgency of his business, the numbers of the Standing Orders affected, and the length of time (not exceeding 30 minutes) he desires such suspension to last. No suspension shall take place except be a two thirds majority vote of the members present.

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting shall he circulated to members with the agenda. No motion or discussion shall be allowed on the minutes except in regard to their accuracy. After the confirmation of the minutes, they shall be signed by the chairman. and the members shall then be at liberty to ask any questions regarding matters arising out of them. Such question shall be allowed for purposes of information only and no debate on the policy outlined in the minute shall take place.

1. **Selection of Speakers**

Every member shall stand when speaking and shall address the chair as Mr (or Madam) Chair. When more than one member rises to speak, the first to rise shall be given precedence, the decision resting with the chairman, but the member who rose immediately after the first one shall have the right to speak at the close of such members address.

### **Chair’s ruling**

If the chairman rises to call a member to order, or for another purpose connected with the proceedings, the member speaking shall thereon resume his seat, and no other member shall rise until the Chair be resumed. The ruling of the chairman on any question under the Standing Order, or on points of order or explanation shall be final, unless challenged by not less than (four) members, and unless two thirds of the members present vote to the contrary.

### **Interruptions**

If any member interrupts, another while addressing the meeting, or uses abusive or profane language, or causes disturbance at any of the meetings, and refuses to obey the chairman when called to order, he shall be named by the chairman. He shall thereupon be expelled from the room and shall not be allowed to enter again until an apology satisfactory to the meeting is given.

### **Speeches**

No member shall be allowed to speak more than once upon any subject before the meeting, unless in committee, or on point of order, or explanation, except the mover of the Original motion. But on an amendment being moved, any member, even though he has spoken on the original motion may speak again on the amendment. No member shall speak for more than ten minutes at one time. Members wishing to raise points of order or explanation must first obtain the permission of the chairman and must rise immediately the alleged breach has occurred. Any member may formally second any motion or amendment and reserve his speech until a later period in the debate.

### **Motions and amendments**

The first proposition on any subject shall be known as the Original Motion, and all succeeding propositions on that subject shall be called amendments. Every motion or amendment must be moved and seconded by members present at the meeting before they can be discussed and, wherever possible, should be in writing. It is permissible for a member to make his speech first and conclude with a motion. When an amendment is moved to an Original Motion, no further amendment shall be discussed until the first amendment is disposed of. (Notice of any further amendment must be given before the first amendment is put to the vote.)

1. **Substantive motions**

If an amendment be carried, it displaces the Original Motion and itself becomes the substantive motion; whereupon any further amendment: relating to any portion of the substantive motion may he moved, provided it is consistent with the business and has not been covered by an amendment or motion which has been previously rejected. After the vote on each succeeding amendment has been taken, the surviving proposition shall be put to the vote as the main question, and if carried shall then become a resolution of the meeting.

1. **Right of Reply**

The mover of the Original Motion shall, if no amendment be moved, have the right of reply at the close of the debate upon such motion. When an amendment is moved he shall be Entitled to speak thereon in accordance with standing order number 8, and at the close of the debate on such amendment shall reply so the discussion, but shall introduce no new matter, The question shall then be put to the vote immediately and under no circumstances shall any further discussion he allowed once the question has been put from the Chair. The mover of an amendment shall not be entitled to reply

1. **Withdrawals and additions**

No motion or amendment which has been accepted by the Chair shall be withdrawn without the unanimous consent of the meeting. Neither shall any addendum or rider be added to a motion which has once been accepted by the Chair without such full consent. Should any member dissent the addendum must be proposed and seconded and debated as an ordinary amendment.

1. **Closing debate**

The motions for the previous question, next business or the closure may be moved and seconded only by members who have nor previously spoken at any time during be debate. No speeches shall be allowed on such motions. In the event of the closure being carried, the mover of the Original Motion shall have the right to reply in accordance with Standing Order number II before the question is put. Should any one of the motions mentioned in this Standing Order he defeated, (00) minutes shall elapse before it can be accepted again by the chairman, unless they are of the opinion that the circumstances have materially altered in the meantime.

1. **Adjournment**

Any member who not nor already spoken during the debate may move the adjournment of the question under discussion, or of the meeting, but must confine their remarks to that question and must nor discuss any other matter. The mover of the motion upon which the adjournment has been moved shall be allowed the right to reply on the question of the adjournment, but such reply shall not prejudice his right of reply on his own motion. In the event of such a motion being lost it shall not be moved again, except in accordance with Standing Order number 13.

1. **Voting**

The voting shall be by show of hands, except where a ballot vote is specified by the General Rules. Where required by such rules, or where deemed necessary by the chair, two scrutinisers or tellers shall be appointed by the chairman. The chairman shall not vote on any question, unless there is an equal number of a vote, when he shall have a casting Vote. OR. The Chair may vote on any issue as an ordinary member. If having done so, the voting is level, he may, if so decided, exercise an additional casting vote to decide the issue.

1. **Voting in Committee**

Where a difference of opinion on a proposition at a meeting of any committee occurs, a vote shall be taken (and the names of those voting for and against, and of those abstaining from voting, shall be stated in the minutes.

1. **Notice of motion**

Notices of motion shall be sent to the secretary in writing not than (00) days before the meeting at which they ate to be discussed. Such motions shall be placed upon the Agenda in the order in which they are received by the secretary.

1. **Rescinding a resolution**

No resolution shall be rescinded or amended at the same meeting at which it is passed. (00) days notice of its rescindment or amendment must be given, but the resolution shall   
not be rescinded or amended unless by the consent of two thirds of the delegates present at the meeting when it is considered. No resolution involving important issues of finance or policy shall he rescinded at any meeting unless every member eligible to attend such meeting has been duly notified and given the opportunity of being present.

1. **Amendment of standing orders**

These Standing Orders can be amended only at the Annual General Meeting by the consent of two thirds of the delegates’ present and voting, notice of motion having been sent as specified in Standing Order number 17.

**The Branch Meeting**

Branches have a variety of tasks to perform at different times of the year.

**There are routine functions all year round which include:**

* approving the election of shop stewards, and ensuring that all members are represented by a steward;
* monitoring branch finances and approving use of Union funds;
* receiving reports on the 100% campaign, strategy for growth, recruitment, organising
* discussing major policy issues, e.g.: low pay campaign, health and safety, campaigns etc;
* promoting the Union locally through Trades Councils, Constituency Labour Parties, etc;
* discussing motions for submission to the Trade Group Committee, etc.

**There are also items that must be dealt with at the Annual General Meeting which include:**

(i) Election of: Chair, Secretary, Branch Committee, Equality Rep, Auditor, Learner Rep and Organiser

(ii) Nominations for a delegate to the industrial sector committees

**Other duties occur throughout the year. These include:**

(i) Nomination from the branch for:

* Territorial members of the Executive Council
* Delegates to the Unite Policy Conference.

(ii) Discuss resolutions and amendments for the Policy Conference or the Rules

Conference.

(iii) Take part in procedural ballots on pay or other major issues (Branches decide their

own method of consultation).

(iv) Correspondence will also be received from the Regional Office, or the Regional

Industrial Organiser, and some of this will need Branch discussion.

**Branch Chair**

* to preside at all meeting of the branch, branch committee and AGM
* draw up the agenda in conjunction with the Branch Secretary
* to ensure that the branch meeting is properly conducted
* uphold the rules and standing orders of the branch
* sign all minutes of the branch and official documents
* be impartial and been seen to act fairly
* vote fairly (refer to standing orders/rule book)

**Branch Secretary**

* to negotiate terms and conditions of employment
* to convene and attend all meeting of the branch and branch committee to arrange for the minutes of the meeting to be kept in a proper manner and be available to all members
* to keep branch records in a proper manner
* to keep an up to date membership list
* to communicate with the members of the branch
* to ensure that the branch is aware of opportunities to participate in the activities of the wider union
* to act as a spokesperson for the branch
* to ensure that members receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled
* to keep accounts in accordance with the union’s rules
* to provide reports on the financial position to the branch
* to provide a detailed financial report for the annual branch meeting
* to provide quarterly and audited annual Branch accounts to the Regional Office for

inspection

* to encourage retired members to joined and participate in the retired members association

**Branch committee**

* to deal with routine issues, or
* make recommendations to the branch to save time
* to deal with issues in between branch meeting

**Equality Rep’s**

* to raise awareness at the branch in respect of matters relating to equal opportunities
* to advise and support the branch in respect of equal opportunities, organising and collective bargaining issues
* to advise the branch on the development and monitoring of recruitment and to achieve fair representation within the branch and workplaces
* to promote and support members and activists in relation to equality issues
* to promote education and for minority groups
* Encouraging more participation of women/ethnic minorities at all levels

**Treasure**

It is not unusual for Branches to elect a treasure:

* to deal with branch finances
* to keep the branch account in accordance with the rules
* provide reports on the financial position of the branch at branch meetings
* provide a detailed financial report for the annual branch meeting
* to provide quarterly accounts, in accordance with union rules
* to provide audited annual return of branch income

**Auditor**

* to oversee the financial records of the branch
* to undertake an annual audit of the branch financial records
* to report any financial irregularities to the Regional Finance Officer.

**Activity 12 - Branch AGM**

**Why hold an AGM**

* To ensure that the branch is organised and administered effectively
* To keep members informed of the work of the branch
* To give a voice in the running of the branch
* To enable elections to take place

**When should the AGM be held?**

* Should be held before 31st December

**Prior to the AGM**

* All members to receive written notice of the meeting
* All members should receive an agenda and other relevant paperwork in advance of the meeting
* Notice boards should be used to display information concerning the AGM, encouraging members to attend
* All members should be invited to submit motions. There should be a reasonable deadline for this so that any motions received can be circulated before the meeting and time allowed for members to submit amendments to them
* All members nominate and be nominated for union position at least four weeks before the election (as per rule)

**The Meeting**

* The meeting is formally structured with an agenda but should be relaxed and friendly and not overly procedural
* Members should be encouraged to take an active part in the discussion
* Any procedures and deadlines set out in the standing orders should be adhered to.

**What should be on the agenda?**

* Apologies
* Minutes of the last AGM
* An annual report of branch activities (summary of outcomes from the previous year’s branches plan)
* Audited accounts for the previous year
* elections of branch officers (as per election period)
  + branch secretary
  + branch committee
  + branch chair
* ratification of elections
  + shop stewards
  + health and safety rep’s
* any motions that the members wish to discuss
* any proposed changes to the standing orders
* proposed plan for the ‘strategy for growth campaign’
* any other business

**What to do after the meeting**

* Complete the appropriate forms and send them to the Regional Office informing them of the newly elected branch officers
* Inform the Regional Industrial Organiser of any newly elected shop stewards, health and safety rep’s etc:
* send the approved and audited accounts to the Regional Office
* implement any action agreed by the meeting.

**Activity 13 - Writing a Branch Motion**

**How to write a motion for the Unite POLICY CONFERENCE**

A motion to the Union’s National Policy Conference should either seek to establish a new policy; extend existing policy or, reiterate current policy.

(N.B. whilst a motion may re-affirm current policy it is not necessary to do this for a particular policy to remain in place. Once agreed policy is only altered by motions which explicitly seek to do so.)

Motions should not require the union to amend its rules and should not be specific to the business of a particular industrial sector

Any motion which seeks to commit the Union to spend money must be reviewed by the Executive Council before it can be enacted.

When writing a motion you should include the following key points:

* Introduction

Motion should commence with words “This Conference…” . This means that it should not start for example “The South RISC at its meeting in January agreed the following motion”. The RISC may wish to have the motion considered but it is the policy conference that the policy must come from.

* What it is you want to achieve

Make it absolutely clear what it is you want to achieve. For example this could be:

* + lobby the government
  + raise awareness among members
  + commit the union to run a campaign
* Why you want what you want

You should make it clear what the motivating factors behind your motion are. For example it could be

because:

* + members' jobs are at stake
  + members are suffering financial hardship
  + pensions are threatened
  + government is failing to address a specific issue
* Who you want to do it

You should make it clear who should be responsible for taking the motion forward. Possibilities are:

* + the union’s Executive Council
  + the TUC
  + the union’s officers or departments
  + government
* When you want it done by

Always make sure you include a timescale, otherwise it might never get done!

* What not to include

Try and keep motions to a reasonable limit of words (300 should be enough).

Remember it is not necessary to include all your arguments in the motion itself, these can be elaborated upon in the moving speech

**Activity 14 - Branch Political Life**

****

**Branch Secretary course political backdrop**

**Challenges of coalition / Tory Government**

The Tory led government has proved challenging for trade unions and working people in general, the knock on effect of cuts in the public sector have had an indirect effect upon the private sector. Employers appear to have grown in confidence and are taking a more aggressive approach towards trade unions.

Collective bargaining is under attack as are individual and collective rights of workers. Employment, safety and discrimination legislation is under threat of a “roll back”.

The time has come for Labour to stand up for working people and despite the political elitism of the new labour regime socialism still exists at the heart of the party.

We believe that the ideals of the trade union movement must be re-embedded in labour and that the people to drive that process are Unite activists

****

**Relevance**

As our General Secretary has often reminded us The Labour party only exists as long as it has relevance for working women and men and in so far as it meets their aims and aspirations.

Our strategy for some time has been to support Labour and utilise our activists network to become involved and active in the party. We have however taken few practical steps to deliver these aims. In a recent Unite political event it became apparent that less than 10% of attendees were CLP delegates. If we genuinely want to be the drivers of change in a left direction within the party, we need to do more than make speeches and attend rallies.

The time has come to develop clear strategic methodologies within our ranks to re-state the original founding values of the party which our trade unions established over 100 years ago, before the party itself is taken from us by those within who see no relevance in our movement.

We can be a fundamental element of that recapturing process

**Driving our agenda**

As a Unite branch secretary you may be familiar with the processes within the union that drive our political agenda, to aid your understanding the attached flowchart has been produced

Our political strategy is based on an industrial strategy which will no doubt be familiar ground to you all as experienced Unite activists

From the outset let us be clear we are not just looking to fill seats we are looking to change mindsets. Our union has in the past been accused of buoying up careerists, supporting people for seats without a clear perspective of the motivation of those individuals. The type of Unite candidates we want to support in the future are those prepared to initiate change, raise trade union issues within the party and make a difference in terms of the politics within the party at every level

Recently speaking to a Unite rep who sits as a deputy leader of his council in the Midlands discussing the need to educate our industrial activists politically, it became apparent that easily as much work needs to be undertaken within the wards and constituencies within the party regarding the role and relevance of trade unions.

Our members showed in the closeness of the vote to retain the current relationship with the party at rules conference (53% in favour), that they will no longer tolerate Unite being apologists for poor labour policies or a cash cow for M.P.’s who fail to support us despite our support for them. The debate within Unite is swaying heavily towards the question of accountability and influence. If we are not able to put measures in place to satisfy both of these demands then the time may well be approaching when our traditional relationship with Labour is under threat.

****

**Opportunity knocks**

Though we are painting a dismal picture here of the political landscape, all is not lost and we could use the severity of the situation to our advantage.

If we are stood looking over a political cliff edge, perhaps what we need to do is turn around and see who else is facing oblivion. Working people are all staring over that same cliff edge and just as we know all too well industrially, when people stand together they can change history.

We clearly need to identify with the wider public and change the public perception of our movement as projected by the press and media. We have an opportunity to do so by focussing our extensive experience and skill towards supporting community based campaigns which address the needs of ordinary women and men.

If we are seen to be leading the struggles against the attacks on our public services, we will show the relevance of unions. To do this we need to turn outwards rather than engage in circular conversations within our own ranks.

Unite education will support political initiatives within our branches and regions which take our political message forward.



**The politics of Unite**

**Background**

We live in turbulent times politically and arguably face the most severe attack on organised labour in decades. Economically the curse of neo-liberalism has gone into fifth gear as the current government drive their obsession with the market to new lengths embarking on mass privatisation of many areas of the public sector, selling jobs to the lowest bidder and making their supporters and friends in business very wealthy in the process. Even that which we hold most dear, the NHS, is under attack. In a matter of a couple of years the entire NHS will be removed from public control via the Lansley Bill and the £20bn cuts in the NHS will undermine its ability to remain competitive in an almighty “race to the bottom” which will see the decimation of services and professional standards creating a Health marketplace with a two tier system which allows those able to pay access to the better quality services and those who cannot pay access to what is left.

In 1900 the trade union movement confronted with employers buoyed up by the courts recognised the need for a political voice for workers. Unions then and now realise that an industrial organisation needs a political link. Lenin once said, “trade unions need policies and a party to pursue those policies” We recognise the need to influence government and legislature and also recognise that in recent times there has been a disconnect between labour and the unions.

**Recent challenges**

Our former General Secretary Len McCluskey challenged recent statements made by Ed Balls and Ed Milliband on the trade union link and on the lack of support for union members in recent campaigns especially relating to their comments regarding a public sector pay freeze being extended into a future labour administration.

We would be shocked if a GS of a fighting back union didn’t stand up for members when under such attack

When workers hear the arguments which Unite and sister unions such as PCS raise around austerity measures and call for an alternative economic strategy, those workers are prepared to listen, even despite the single narrative religiously fed to them in the mainstream media.

As Len McCluskey has often said, we often complain about how distant labour seems from us but how many of us attempt to change that? What have we done individually or collectively to argue our case within the party? Remember it was the unions who founded the party, it grew from the belly of our movement and the early leaders were also trade union leaders and activists.

If someone tried to wrestle the very ethos and principles of our union from us we would fight back, so we need to fight now when individuals and groups within labour attempt to wrestle from our party the values and principles it was founded upon and those it should still stand on.

We recognise that from the expulsions of socialists under Kinnock, through the Blair years and into Browns leadership radical changes have occurred in labour. We recognise that Blairism brought with it an adoption of neo-liberalism which narrowed the political boundaries to the extent that many workers feel alienated from the party, it is not that labour voters have migrated to other parties, as much as labour voters have started to question the value of voting at all.

During recent elections many of us would have encountered within our workplaces the cry of “they’re all the same” and though we challenge that position, our argument is frequently undermined by the words and actions of labour politicians. The most recent concerns around the welfare reform bill and labours acceptance of benefit caps merely serve to strengthen the belief that they are following the populist route of Blair.

The expenses scandal did more damage to labour than to the conservatives. In a sense, people who were left of centre would almost expect tories to have their hands in the till. Even a short term memory should be able to recall the final days of the last Tory government when barely a week would pass without another Tory minister being dragged before the courts and imprisoned for lying or stealing. Labour however were expected by those same potential left of centre voters to have principles and many people felt let down by their behaviour which resulted in a disconnect between the electorate and what is often seen as a political elite which has embedded itself in Westminster.

In examining the labour party we find an inordinate number of members of parliament from a narrow range of highly paid professions who dominate the political arena alongside those whose route to office has never included what we might describe as a normal job, researcher, aide, intern, politics degree, but rarely have any of them been ordinary workers let alone trade union activists.

If people feel a need for “real people” in politics then Unite should be doing all we can to ensure that happens. To that end we have considered how our industrial activists might also become political activists and in some workplaces whole teams of shop stewards have joined and become active in labour putting the trade union argument forward in meetings and becoming Unite delegates to constituencies in order to push through resolutions which support the case of working women and men.

The task ahead is a huge one and will be far from easy but it is necessary if we are to alter the political landscape.

We have in place at present a Tory led coalition with the most vicious series of measures in recent history ruthlessly attacking workers, unemployed workers, the elderly, women, children, people with disabilities, and many more. Looking and listening to the Tory party spokespeople such as Francis Maude Gideon Osborne, Eric Pickles and David Cameron is like stepping back into a Dickensian novel. Yet even with such odious characters and hard hitting policies nearly 2yrs into this government the labour leader is seen as less popular than the Tory leader and the parties get closer in the polls day by day.

We recognise within Unite that labour need to establish some clear blue water between their policies and those of the other parties and to work to regain the trust of the electorate, not further distance themselves from their core voters. This weekend school will hear from a range of speakers who are experts in their fields and will provide you as delegates with an opportunity to develop an understanding of the challenges that confront us in the economy, the NHS, in employment legislation and electorally. We will look at how Unite and Unite activists can make a difference, how we can raise our agendas and what practical steps we can take to reshape the labour party in order to more readily reflect the aims and aspirations of our members, their families and their communities. We hope you will play a positive and active part in the event and develop knowledge skills and confidence to put forward our agenda in a political context.



Unite stands on the 3 pillars of Organising, political and International, all embedded in the cement of equality. None of these pillars stand in isolation they are all inter-related and inter-dependent. Unite was founded on these key beliefs that working people standing together against injustice can change the course of history and out nettlesome task is that of organising our workplaces, our venture into our communities in terms of our new community membership extends that organising agenda even further, way beyond the limitations of industrial battles and into the realms of defending our class from attack. Our political agenda supports that organising strand by developing our political voice and establishing our political objectives in the wider labour and trade union movement. Our International perspective completes our 3 pillars by recognising that age old trade union principle of “an injury to one is an injury to all” those injuries extend well beyond national boundaries and we recognise the challenge of global capital demands an international response from our movement.

The lesson we must all take away is that activism is the answer. Unite in a few years has become the most recognisable trade union in Britain and Ireland, not just as the largest union but as the most vocal and as a union which is fast developing a tradition of standing up for workers in struggle. Activists within Unite have the ability and the confidence to take on the battles ahead let us stand together in these difficult times and prove that trade unions are a huge force for good within society, standing for justice and fairness at work and in wider society, providing a voice for the voiceless.

****

**Unite Political Strategy**

**Below is the current political strategy statement of our union as agreed by the executive.**

*The aim of our political strategy is clear –*

* *Winning Labour for working people*
* *Winning working people for Labour*
* *Building a broad alliance to defeat the Tories and their policies*
* *Winning a Labour government which will govern in the interests of working people and towards a socialism for the 21st century*

*But, for too long, Unite has talked; now we intend to carry through detailed plans to take forward our strategy.*

For several years Unite has, along with others, talked of “reclaiming Labour” for the values of ordinary working people and for policies which advance their interests. This reflects the fact that the record of the last Labour government was, for the most part, a bitter disappointment for all those, including Unites predecessor unions, which had such high hopes in 1997. Apart from the wider failures, ranging from the uncritical embrace of the City through to the privatisation of public services and the Iraq War, trade unions were generally treated with disdain by the government. Moreover, trade union-supported candidates found it harder than ever to be selected for parliamentary seats, something which has led to a huge change in the social make-up of the Parliamentary Labour party.

However, we must acknowledge that for all the talk of “reclaiming” the Party, little progress was made. This has led to great frustration within the union, the more so since the Party’s requests for financial support from our union and others have continued unabated. So it is time for a change.

The times are favourable for a renewed effort to reconnect Labour with the concerns of our members and the working-class more generally. The crash of 2008 has highlighted the failure of neo-liberalism to almost everyone. And in Ed Miliband Labour has a new leader anxious to put the “New Labour” years behind us and embrace a new and more radical political approach. There is also a growing recognition that Labour cannot win again without addressing the loss of at least four million working-class votes between 1997 and 2010. In reclaiming Labour now, we are pushing against at least a half-open door. The crisis and the Coalition’s reactionary austerity agenda is pushing millions of people to look at politics in a new way, and the “Occupy” movement has caught the public imagination. On the other hand, forces more-or-less openly hostile to our agenda remain strong within the PLP, and are well-financed outside Parliament by groups like Progress. The battle for Labour’s future direction is therefore undecided, and it is right that Unite, as the Party’s largest affiliate, should play the fullest possible part in the struggle for Labour’s soul.

We are therefore already reinvigorating our political work at all levels after a period in which it was over-concentrated on top-level contacts at the expense of any strategy. We have initiated the formation, with other unions, MPs and interested parties, of the Centre for Labour and Social Studies (CLaSS) as a think-tank which can develop the new ideas needed to shape a renewed socialist agenda in the 21st century. We expect it to start producing valuable work in the course of 2012. We have also made efforts to bring together a group of Labour MPs committed to reconnecting the Party with working-class communities – this has taken its first steps, although progress remains unsatisfactory to date.

Now we must do more. Our union needs a comprehensive strategy to advance our political work, reclaiming the Labour Party as an instrument of social progress which defeats the Tory Coalition government at the next general election and then governs in the interests of working people.

***Winning Labour for working people - Strategy and membership***

This require a detailed and concrete strategy, with strong leadership, properly resourced, but which is bottom-up, driven by our members. We will, therefore, early in 2012, initiate a new campaign, embracing all parts of Unite, to extend our influence in the Party.

**The basis of the strategy is three-fold:**

1. Advancing our agreed policy agenda through all constitutional structures in the Party (while also, of course, rebutting efforts from within or outside Labour to break the ‘link’).
2. Working with other affiliated unions to secure the adoption of trade union (or union-friendly) candidates in winnable constituencies in particular.
3. Increasing Unite members’ involvement and participation in local Labour Parties, without which progress on the first two points is implausible.

**This strategy will include:**

* A planned item, first on every Regional Committee agenda followed by presentations to every AAC and Equality Committee to discuss our work in the Labour Party. The aim will be to get full buy-in from Committees, but also to win new Labour Party members from amongst these key activists as a start. The Regional Political Committee should lead on ensuring this programme of meetings is carried through.
* A pamphlet to make the case for Labour Party membership and the case for this strategy.
* A drive to win 5000 Unite members to join the Labour Party by December 2012. Before we seek the 5,000, we will ensure that we have all these building blocks for retention and activity in place. This is emphatically not just a recruitment offensive to benefit the Labour Party with passive financial contributors – it is vital if we are to impact on constituency parties. 5,000 is a big number – but when broken down into the numbers needed by region and sector (see attached), it is more manageable.
* We will produce attractive and effective Labour membership forms specific to Unite which are widely available and Labour Party joining will be enabled direct from the Unite web-site. Senior officers in Region to be charged with responsibility of directly approaching leading lay members in region with a view to joining the party
* Each new LP member to receive a guide from Unite, to breakthrough the jargon and help and enable them to attend meetings and activities without intimidation and fear of the new.
* Early meetings of Unite Labour Party members in individual CLPs – an RPC and RPO responsibility.
* A regular LP members’ newsletter will be produced by the Political Department for all new members and for existing members who ask for it on our web-site. Targeted direct-mail, e-mail and texting will be rolled out. This will be spread over many weeks so that best practice can be developed.
* We will encourage branches to send delegate to CLPs with a new energetic push.
* We will seek to have a significant item at every RISC/AAC Conference next Autumn, led by a purpose-made film with the same dual tasks of winning members and winning leaders for new members.
* Scotland and Wales will be asked to develop early plans taking account of their situations. (This strategy does not apply to Ireland)
* As a first step, in each region we will seek to pilot a more detailed CLP – Unite membership development plan, which will involve key workplaces and further innovative techniques.

***Unite Political Organisation***

Growing the Unite membership in the Labour Party and winning conviction at all levels that we need to intervene more effectively can only be a first step. Our entire political organisation requires an overhaul. As a first step we will redefine the role and expectations of the Regional Political Officer – including a membership allocation of a maximum of 75% to provide sufficient time for their political work. Fresh appointments will be made to these posts early in 2012, to ensure that each region is best placed to deliver. For clarity, some or all existing RPOs may be confirmed in post, but we need to ensure that we have officers with the focus and time commitment to devote to this work.

Each Regional Political Committee and RPO will have responsibility for preparing *a Regional Strategic Political Development Plan* to carry forward this new strategy, which must be agreed by the National Political Committee. This strategy will be supported from the National Political Department – and regular reports will be made to the EC on progress

**We will also:**

* Ensure CLP and NPF delegates receive regular mailings including useful materials – our own pamphlets, other publications, solidarity campaign materials etc.
* Instigate annual CLP delegate meetings with open attendance at Regional, or cross regional level (except for the year of election of RPC) with a lively political agenda in line with National Political Committee objectives.
* Political Weekend (non-residential) courses to take place in every region annually
* Work towards CLP meeting open to all local union members invited in every constituency on an annual basis in line with Refounding Labour decisions. Start with pilots in first quarter of 2012.
* Develop and sustain a Unite Councillors network.
* Ensure that our new Community membership and branches are fully involved
* Charge RPOs and RPCs with auditing Unite involvement by CLP

***Developing candidates for Office***

We aim to end the discrimination against working class candidates, BAME and women candidates for public office. That only 4% of the MPs in Parliament are from manual occupations is a notable part of the crisis of working class representation. 55% come from the PR, Politics and the media. This must change – we have it in our power to do so. Unite industrial activists need to consider becoming Labour candidates at all levels

* Unite will launch a Future Candidates Programme (FCP). We will promote a new generation of Unite activists towards public office.
* RPOs, RPCs and senior officers and the EC need to identify potential candidates among our best activists, rather than careerists.
* The FCP will include regional training courses, individual mentoring and national initiatives.
* Enrolment will start in spring 2012. We intend to produce some potential MP candidates for selection by 2013 at the latest.
* We will also ensure that Unite members are taking up opportunities for council candidacy
* When Parliamentary candidate selection arises, there will often be good candidates supported by other unions who Unite will be inclined to support. Unite will do all it can within the strict rules governing candidate selection to assist.
* Open up the Parliamentary Panel on existing criteria in summer 2012

We are determined that this strategy will produce results and we will ensure that RPOs and the national political department adequately resource this work stream.

***Constituency Development Plans***

The Executive Council has previously agreed a process for CDPs. The union has followed the guidelines for these, but reality has turned CDPs into merely donations for a number of CLPs. The Political department will be drawing up new guidelines which will limit CDPs with CLPs with sitting MPs to a reduced number, and develop a larger number with key marginal CLPs. We will be very serious about expectations in relationships and activities expected in constituencies. New guidelines to apply from January 2013 after the boundary changes are confirmed (or otherwise) so our organisational and financial resources will be used in a targeted and effective way to ensure the defeat of the Tories.

***Policy Formation***

Unite remains concerned that the Annual Conference and the NPF process are deeply lacking in democracy - we will pursue rapid improvements in the next stage of Refounding Labour discussions. Whatever the process, we will seek to engage directly with the Policy formation process in the Labour Party to ensure that as many of our policies are adopted as possible. Winning the battle of ideas is really important – and developing our radical alternative as concrete policies.

But Labour Party policies are often determined by a small group of advisers – far too often dominated by old thinking, neo-liberalism and the organisation Progress. Unite will:

* Ensure we choose the best representatives for the National Policy Forum.
* Coordinate the work of our NEC members.
* Engaging in a planned way in the Policy Review groups
* Ensure through the Political Department that we originate papers and policies rather than simply commenting on bad papers and policies from elsewhere.
* Build alliances with other affiliates and community organisations and with the CLPs and appropriate pressure groups to win specific policies.

***Winning Britain for working people –winning the General Election***

We are deadly serious about transforming Labour – so that we can win the next election on an agenda for change. We will do everything in our power to organise, to mobilise our membership, working people in general and the broadest possible forces to the cause of victory for a transformed Labour Party.

Unite will place great emphasis on winning and mobilising our members to vote, and then to vote Labour.

We will use the modern and effective techniques -

* We will make phone contact with every member for whom we have a phone number in London – with peer to peer calls
* Continue contact with members after calling, including using text and e-mail
* We will seek to maximise voter registration – currently running at about 10% of union members not registered to vote.
* We will use various forms of interactivity to enable greater participation, and activist-run campaigns. New activists will be developed who will then get more involved in the party.
* We will use our workplace strength to maximum advantage. We will seek to utilise workplace organisation – flowing with existing structures but involving new people. New activism and workplace activism combining in the best way.
* Based on the experience of Unite4Labour and Unite4Ken, we will develop a new campaign leading up to the next General Election.
* We will have an organised presence at important by-elections from now on.
* Unite will seek to concentrate energy and resources towards key marginal seats leading up to the next General election. In the key seats, we will deploy the full force of new organising; mobilising trade union activists, not just from Unite, in effective campaigning – from leaflet delivery, street campaigns, community organising, door knocking and new methods at a level not previously achieved.

Unite will always be very clear that winning back the 5 million lost voters, reconnecting with working class voters, ending the crisis of working class representation, winning back Labour for trade union values are tasks that require profound organisational change by Unite and in our relationship with Labour.

Winning a Labour government which will govern in the interests of working people and towards a, socialism for the 21st century is our objective – the strategy outlined here is our best shot toward that aim.

Notes

Branch Vision

Communication skills

Notes

Organising out of recession

Notes

Organising through media

Notes