



**The
One Hundred and Fifth
Annual Conference
Yarnfield 2024**

ministry of
work
review

Verbatim 2023



**Official Report
of the
104th ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**Held at
Yarnfield Conference Centre
Yarnfield, Stone**

**from
Saturday 10 June 2023
to
Thursday 15 June 2023**

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Sunday

11th June 2023

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, if everybody can start to settle down. That's really great of you. Can we shut the doors? Thank you very much. Okay, if you can all take your seats, please. Just to remind Delegates, every morning, we will take a roll call, the General Secretary will then tot up and obviously if you're not here, you will be sent to Standing Orders, so you must be here at the start of each session unless you have permission not to be. Okay? So, General Secretary to call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, you should have 29. Region 4, Region 5, that's alright, it's better than George's. Region 7. Okay, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. Can I remind everybody, if you have a mobile 'phone, if you are waiting for an emergency call or anything, could you turn it on silent. If your 'phone does go off in Conference, you will be sent to Standing Orders, so please make sure it's on silent at all times. The toilets, I'm sure you all passed them on your way through, are just through those double doors and obviously to the left, always to the left isn't it, yes. Yes, there's definitely none on the right, not at this Conference. The fire exits are clearly marked. We haven't got any fire drills or fire alarm tests, but we do believe there is one on Wednesday morning, do we know

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Yes, it's just a drill, they'll announce it.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: There will be an announcement prior, so I'm not sure what time that is, but there will be an announcement, it's just a fire alarm test that's going to take place on Wednesday morning. Standing Orders Room is in Room 9, but obviously if you need to go there, make sure obviously you see your full-time Official and they will take you there, because it's normally out of bounds without going through the appropriate procedures. Obviously we have fringe meetings at half past 3 until 5 this afternoon and they can be read up on the door I believe

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Over there.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, on the table, on the table, on the table, so you'll be able to find, if you haven't already allocated yourself to a session, you'll be able to find where the sessions are and be able to make yourself available to them. They are part of Conference, so you are expected to attend them, okay? Normally, normally at the opening of Conference we invite the Mayor to open our Conference officially, but this year we decided that what we would do, with it being the 10th anniversary of the successful strike at Hovis, which turned back the use of zero hours contracts, we would invite somebody who was a key member of that workforce, that took part in that strike action, so I'd like to invite John Fox to officially open our Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox [Branch 405] Opens Conference

Conference, Mr President, General Secretary and the Executive Council. It's an honour and a privilege to open this Conference of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union and as the National President said, it's an honour that's been given to me for the 10th anniversary of Branch 417 Hovis strike in Wigan. At this time, I was the Chair person and proprietor along with my wife, Lorraine, of Fox's café. Although we were terrible business people, because we never made any money from it and the business was quite, it should have been quite profitable at the time, yes, this strike was never about money, it was about people. We, as Branch 417, did not want anything, anyone to become a second-class citizen. The directors of all this were jumping on the bandwagon of changing terms and conditions for the employees that hadn't got full-time contracts.

In Wigan, this was for 24 new starters, on short-term contracts, these new contracts started, stated, was terms and conditions at a lower rate of pay. I will pay tribute to Nick Hughes, who was the Branch Secretary at this time, as he noticed the changes in these contracts through the negotiation period. He also saw that the company wanted to use agency to cover holidays and sickness and notified our full-time Official then, which was Geoff Atkinson, who was also a former Branch Secretary of 417. We called a Branch meeting so that we could all discuss this and although the department that it was happening was totally separate from the rest of the bakery and the Branch, I didn't know many people in this department, as this was seasonal production and only a skeleton crew that was kept all year, it was decided to go through the Grievance Procedure, which was soon completed at factory level and these directors moved the meetings then off-site to a hotel in Rochdale. At this meeting, these directors abused our full-time Official, Geoff, at this meeting, so we packed up and walked out, because if you kick one of us, you kick us all.

The next meeting was with ACAS, who don't usually come down on the side of the workers, but they were very sympathetic to our cause. Alongside of these meetings with the managers, we continued to meet with Wigan Trades Council, The People's Assembly, Bolton Trades Council and a lot of other different organisations, which pledged their support to us. Then came our strike ballot, the rules not long being changed by the government and we, I think we might have been one of the first to actually do these changes, where we had to get so many percentage before you could go for the strike ballot. We got an 85% return for industrial action and our Solidarity never wavered and the support from other Unions and the local community strengthened our resolve.

We started our action on a Wednesday at 6.00 a.m. in the morning, where we gathered round the two gates, just standing there watching the wagons go in and out. We didn't know what was going on, we didn't know how to do this strike. We didn't know how to organise ourselves, but we were fast learners and we got the Wigan Trades Council, a lad called Terry Abbott, who came down and he started showing us how to actually do the industrial action. First of all, we stopped all the wagons going in and out and spoke to the drivers. This then became (sigh), I'll tell you what, it's quite emotional for me this actually, because it's going back and thinking about it, yes, it just, the Solidarity and the respect from every, the respect of each other on them picket lines just grew and grew and we can see that happening at other sites what we have, especially like at Allied, yes, John Owens' bakery in Allied, yes, where they were dancing even to no music, what's that all about? Yes, yes, great that, John, yes, but members of the public brought us food, tea, coffee, to all of us who stood on that picket line and not only that, everybody was invited to my back garden, as I said, Fox's café, because I only lived across the road and the girls and other people made the sandwiches, made tea, coffee, yes, which was all supported by our Union.

Teachers came from Morecambe in the early hours of the morning or very late evening, so they could stand in Solidarity with us and our members who worked in all different departments actually came together and started talking to each other, people who they'd never even met, because in a bakery, in such the size of a bakery, you don't see people in different departments, you don't actually know them, but they all got talking and the Solidarity and the friendships grew, loads of things happened on them gates that is such heart-warming, the friendship and the, it's just brill, yes. The local community became our neighbours, friends and comrades, because they came out and stood on the picket line with us, yes and this all took within, well, this all took place within three days and after this, the drivers wouldn't take their vehicles in or out of the bakery.

The management had to do it and then outside, because they wouldn't cross the picket line, they got in their vehicles and, into them, after they were brought outside. The police tried to break us up and stop us halting the vehicles going out the factory, but we had learned a lot that they couldn't stop us from walking in front of the vehicles, yes, in the main road, yes and the vehicles, it took the vehicles like an hour to get just down 300 yards to the (unclear), to the and once they got to the end of the (unclear), we had vehicles to drive slowly in front of the vehicles as they came out of (unclear) and as they were going up, up the hill, yes, they put out stalled and whatever else these vehicles did, it was really good. We did this again a week later and at 3.00 a.m. in the morning, around 400 people gathered around the gates. The police there were in force to try and help the vehicles out of the factory, but that morning, nothing and I mean nothing got in or out of them gates. The police, I don't know whether Sarah's got the video, have you got the video? You can get it up, right and the video actually showed you the police trying to push us forward out of the way, but we wouldn't budge.

It was, that was Solidarity at its best, not just from the employees, the members and the community, but further afield, yes, like Unite came, GMB came, they were all there to help us, but coming from nothing and not knowing what to do within them two weeks of strike action, we ended up solid, we ended up very, with loads of Solidarity, strength in numbers and that's what our badge says on our, on our logo, Strength In Unity and as I said, I've enjoyed John Owens' dancing over the past couple of weeks on the Allied picket line and all our flag waving, I think, to I think an imaginary beat as I've said, yes. I've enjoyed Duggie Johnson's speeches at Samworths, yes, brilliant, yes and I don't know whether Mick Black's here, but Mick Black, he's took up the mantle now at 417 and I think he will do an extra, an extraordinary job there in keeping up the great work that them Branch Secretaries before and I have done. Solidarity to all those and Solidarity to all who have disputes. Branches, yes, affiliate to your Trade Unions, Trade Councils, be active in those meetings, let them know what your struggles are, because they will help you and this is the start of your support in our Union. If we stick together, we will all win together. Solidarity, Brothers and Sisters.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. I think I forgot to turn the microphone back on, haven't I? Can you hear me now? Yes, absolutely. Thank you very much for that.

Obviously, besides opening the Conference, Mr Fox is also the Chair of Standing Orders, so I'd like to invite you to officially open our Conference for the week.

Brother John Fox – Chair of Standing Orders: Conference, Mr President, Chair, General Secretary and Executive Council, yes. On behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, I welcome you all to our Annual Conference.

It is the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee that the procedures for this year's Conference are as follows. Conference will be called to order each morning at 9.30 prompt until 12.00 and each afternoon, 1.00 p.m. until 3, followed by a fringe meeting today, tomorrow and Tuesday, from half past 3 until 5.00 p.m. Tea breaks, guest speakers and all presentations will be at the President's discretion. Each session will begin with a roll call taken by the General Secretary. Delegates not in the Hall for any roll call will be classed as late and will be sent to Standing Orders' Office to be fined. Full-time Officials are reminded to come to Standing Orders with the names of any absent Delegates. Will Scrutineers please collect all nomination papers for TUC Delegates and Standing Orders Committee as early as possible and bring them up to Standing Orders by 11.00 a.m. this morning. The Office door will close promptly at 11.

Tomorrow morning, Scrutineers are asked to collect all ballot papers and again to have them up to Standing Orders by 11.00 a.m. The doors will again be closed at 11, but members of the Committee will be on duty outside the doors to answer any questions. Any Delegate coming to Standing Orders on Conference business must have the support of their full delegation. Please carry with you your credential cards on your person at all times. If you leave it on your table at lunchtime, the Officials on the door will not let you through until you have been to Standing Orders and there is a strong possibility you will be fined as a latecomer. Be warned, yes. Finally, another reminder to switch off or put on silent all mobile 'phones during Conference sessions. Will you please now turn to your Agenda.

The first part of your Agenda is Rules which need a 2/3rds majority

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just remind them, it's the Final Agenda, so I'm just holding up the Final Agenda and it says, Saturday, 10th June to Thursday, 15th June and then it's got Final Agenda 2023 on the bottom.

Brother John Fox – Chair of Standing Orders: Motion 1 withdrawn, Motion 2 has been ruled out-of-order, Motion 3 has been withdrawn and Motion 4 has been ruled out-of-order. Motion 5, 6 and 7 all stand, with the amendment to Motion 6, which also stands. Motion 8 has been withdrawn, Motion 9 and 10 both stand, Motion 11 has been ruled out-of-order. Motion 12 stands, Motion 13 has been composited with Motion 32 and it will be taken at this time as Motion 13. Motion 14 stands, Motion 15 is composited with Motion 16 and Motion 21 and they all stand. Motion 17 has been ruled out-of-order, Motion 18 stands, Motion 19 stands, Motion 20 stands, Motion 22 stands, Motion 23 stands, Motion 24 stands and Motion 25 has been ruled out-of-order. This completes the first Standing Orders, apart from just one thing that I've just remembered. There's been a couple of mistakes in the printing of the Rule and it's Motion 86 and 11, it does say withdrawn in your books, but it's not, it's out-of-order, yes and 86 and 87, it says 86 is withdrawn but 87 actually stands, yes and will be debated, 85 sorry, 85 stands and 86 has been withdrawn. Okay, that's the end of the report, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, before you go, so obviously to the new Delegates, once the Chair of Standing Orders has given out a list of the motions that stand or have been withdrawn, we have to put that to the vote, for that to be accepted. You all have to take part in the vote to say whether or not you accept the Standing Orders. So, I ask you, do you accept that report from Standing Orders and then you all show. If you oppose it, then obviously you oppose it when I say, but it's very nice of you to be in advance, so all those in favour of the Standing Orders report? Okay. Anybody oppose it? Okay, that's carried, thank you.

Okay, Conference. Can I welcome our stallholders that you will see around the room. Obviously most of them have got signs up, but our official stallholders are Thompsons, Slater and Gordon, Watkins and Gunn. We have the Credit Union somewhere, or we will have the Credit Union somewhere at some point over the next few days. Lighthouse, which is, they're in a fringe meeting, but they will be in the room shortly. (unclear) Solidarity, right, they're not having a stall but they will be coming to speak. The National Shop Stewards Network, which is just directly at the back there. I haven't seen Bianca, is she here? Ah, that's 'cause you're hiding, that's 'cause you're hiding. The Ron Todd Foundation, very loud, very loud. Obviously Bianca from the Ron Todd, doing all sorts of stuff, I'm sure, over the next couple of days as well. Youth Fight for Jobs are coming to the fringe and we've got Janine Booth, who's from the Morning Star, doing the photographs and last but not least, is Stand Up To Racism, which is just over there and you can't miss them. So thank you very much for putting your stalls up.

Sponsors for Conference are Thompsons, Slater and Gordon and Watkins and Gunn and can I invite new Branches 348 Cofresh, 503 Moe, 521, I believe that was Mitsubishi, Mitsubishi, 522 which is GXO, Branch 600 which is the Sex Workers Union, Branch 281 which is Warburtons, Newport Abbey. So, can I welcome all of those Branches and the first-time Delegates.

So just looking down to see, so for those people who have come to Conference for the first time, they normally try and give me names I can't pronounce, so please don't be offended if I get your name wrong. I will try my best. So, can I welcome Neil Tampkins, Daragh Hughes, Dipesh Parvin, Ben Riley, Antoinette Mountjoy, Stu Keeble, Curtis Tierney, Robert Woodland, I think that's your real name, James Bartrop, Sharon Osbourne, Sharon Osbourne?, oh, Shannon Osbourne, sorry, I thought where's Ozzie? Jonathan Kay, Mark Allen and David Nash. Hope you enjoy your Conference. If you do need anything, please don't hesitate to ask.

Okay. Obviously the Executive Council and over the last two years, you'll have noticed we've shrunk and shrunk and shrunk to the people you see in front and obviously I'm not sure if you can, I don't know if Rachel can be seen, but I'm sure you'll see her, but obviously I'm sure we all congratulate Rachel who became a mum again in the last couple of months. So obviously we've got Rachel, who's our Women's Representative, we've got Tony, Tony who's stepped in for Pat Kelly in Region 1, we've got Nick, who's definitely there, definitely there, but obviously very smart today, no hat, no shorts, looking well, looking well. Dimitri which he's, he's just sat here, John Owens or the dancer and Conference can I just say, obviously the work that went in to what John Owens and his Reps and his members did at Allied Bakeries to create the atmosphere that they created to get the support from the community, to ensure that the workers' message could be heard, was absolutely inspirational and I want to thank John Owens and his colleagues for what they did and good luck to you in your dispute at Allied. Well done, John.

[APPLAUSE]

I can see the snapper, he's not snappy any more 'cause he's retired, so he's become peaceful Joe, I don't know if you've ever seen that side of him, Geoff, you've never seen him and his wallet? He uses it to stand on at the bar. Obviously, Pauline, unfortunately couldn't be with us because she's having an eye operation and my new Vice President, because I've gone through them like, I won't say what I was going to say, I was going to say like underpants, but obviously I'm not sure if you'd be wearing any, for those people who were here at that Conference, you'd know exactly what I'm talking about, but if not, I'm sure Laura's got a needle and thread. Sorry, sorry, your mum kept his, kept his trousers yes, kept his trousers on and obviously that's now currently our Executive, but I want to thank Nicolae and Lee Burns, who was our Young Members' Rep and of course Sean Welsby, who was our Vice President and obviously I'd like to wish all of those people that stood, but are no longer on the Executive, well in what they do.

Door duties, I believe today is John, Haroon and Gary and I believe it is and they're looking very smart, much smarter than I could ever look. The Scrutineers are Mushtaq Mohammed, Michael Maguire, Douggie Johnson, John Fitz, John Fitzpatrick sorry, John Fitzpatrick, Brian Dinning and Peter Algie.

Okay, so you should have a pack that looks like that, yes? and inside that pack, you'll find Conference Etiquette, which is obviously how we conduct ourselves and just a reminder that if you do smoke in your room, you will get fined, so please don't smoke in your room and treat it with the respect that you would treat anywhere. We wouldn't expect anything else of you. You can go through those etiquette rules, it's just about being courteous to one another, that's the most important thing. We're all together, we stay together and we stand together and we make sure we don't insult one another. We can fall out over football, we can fall out over all sorts of things, but one thing we should always be is courteous with one another, but also inside of there, you will find the nomination forms, yes?, the nomination forms, one says Standing Orders, the other one says the TUC Congress, yes?

What, for the new Delegates in the room, if you want to nominate somebody for Standing Orders, Standing Orders, as I've already said, they run Conference and they set the Agenda for Conference and obviously they sit in a little room at the back of Conference every year, to make sure that we're observed and managing correctly. If you fancy standing up to be on the Standing Orders, please put your nomination in there. If you fancy going to the TUC, which will be in Liverpool between 10th and 13th September and I believe John may actually be doing his dance show again at that event, maybe. If you fancy going to the TUC Congress, please make sure you get your nominations and all of these nominations have to be in by 11 o'clock. So if you can make sure they're collected and taken to Standing Orders by 11 o'clock, full-time Officials? Yes, full-time Officials, if you could do that, to make sure they go into the Standing Orders for 11 o'clock, we would appreciate it and the other bits that you'll find in the pack are all linked to the Credit Union, which I mentioned and obviously people will be aware that we relaunched the Cool It! Campaign again at the beginning of the year and there's some forms and a bit of advice to make sure that you can prepare your workplace in there also.

So finally, there will be photographs taken at Conference and like I said, we welcome Janine, who will be taking these Conferences, oh, Lukasz is doing the photos, oh right. Well, it said there, Janine Booth, Morning Star, cameraman. Oh right, okay, listen, we all make mistakes, it's Sunday morning. So, Lukasz is doing the photographs. For those of you who don't know Lukasz, he's the one with the camera round his neck.

Obviously these photographs will be used in the Foodworker. Obviously you're all Official Delegates, but if for some reason if you don't want to have your photograph taken and you don't want it to appear, perhaps obviously after a night out at the pub, I don't know, then you may say can you take one and make me look like, I don't know, Charlton Heston, so but yes, so they will be taken, those photographs will be taken and used in the Foodworker and now Conference, if we're going to do the obituaries and I think we're going to put them on the big screens and we're just going to hold a minute's silence and obviously if we could all be standing please.

[OBITUARIES PRESENTATION PLAYED – Minute's silence observed]

Thank you very much.

Okay Conference, just to remind Delegates, obviously I know some came in, they're first-time Delegates, we are now going to go through the Annual Report, so if everybody can see the Annual Report and the Treasurer's Report. There's a lot of good information that can be used in this book, that should be helpful in your workplace, but what we do as a Conference is, we go through the Executive Briefs which start on Page 44. Just to remind Delegates that I read out the pages and then if you want to comment on the page that I read out, you come to the front, you give your name and your Branch number and then ask your question and then go back to your seat. Unfortunately the, I don't know if I said it, I know I said it to the new people that came, but I don't think I mentioned it to everybody, when everybody was in the room. The other rostrum will be coming, but unfortunately it's not been delivered yet, so have we got steps up? We've got a step up to the stage, yes, you've got a step up to the stage and you're going to have to make it from there, okay? You'll feel the heat when you get onto the stage, because it's hot. So obviously you just come down to the front and you make your point there and the obviously off you go. So, Page 44, no? Page 45. Page 46. Page 47. Page 48. Page 49. Page 50. Page 51, okay.

Cool, so we're now going to go on to the Financial pages. So when we come to the Financial pages, they're still in the same book and we're going to start from Page 1. Are we going to do all 19 pages?, no, we're going to do up until, yes, 15. So, we're going to 1, Page 1 to 15 and then once I've completed the Finance Report, we then put it to the vote and then it becomes accepted by Conference, okay? Okay. So, Page 1. Page 2, yes, please Jules.

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Page 2, the third section down, Changing Plant Assets. Administration expenses have gone up £20,000 from 2021 to 2022, so I was just wondering why. £20,000, it's a large amount of money.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just so everybody understands, the General Secretary is the Treasurer of the Union, so will respond on the Treasurer's Report, just so you understand what's happening, okay? Cool. General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: So Julie, during 2022 we did a big piece of work on changing the investment strategy on the pensions, because they weren't performing as well as they should do, which incurred costs to do that. Quite a significant piece of work went into it and we also restructured some of the other parts of the scheme (unclear) and the work that they do as well. It will look different again next year because we've made some further changes, so that the money's condensed into one amount rather than bits and pieces everywhere and we're looking how we reduce the administrative expenses by us taking on more stuff, like doing minutes and stuff of meetings, etc, etc. So it was a big piece of work we'd done around the investment strategy that caused the significant increase, amongst other natural rises that we have, as everything goes up, doesn't it.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Anything else on Page 2? No, okay. Page 3. Page 4.

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Looking at the Charitable Donations, I know they say charity begins at home, but obviously 2021, £300 and then that's gone up to £1,050, so I'm just wondering why such a huge difference, that's three times as much?

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Generally the EC make charity donations at the request of members' organisations that we work with, so we get things through from Regional Councils that say can you, I think we've got some this time that are obviously not in this booklet, but around the NHS 75 years, so they'll be in the Charity Donations next time booklet, so that things that come from Regions as well as affiliates and organisations that we work with, that, everybody's in a similar boat, aren't they, at the minute, needing support and needing help and there's always people that are worse off than we are unfortunately, but that's where it comes from, Julie. Generally it's Regional Councils that send in requests.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Page 4, no? Page 5. Page 6. Pages 7 and 8 are just legal jargon that you have to put in, unless there's anybody got any particular question on any of the content of it, I'm going to move onto Page 9, okay. Page 9. Page 10. Page 11.

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Looking at the Organising Expenses, you know that's gone up from £1,085 in 2021 to £12,728 in 2022. Going down the list, if I can whilst I'm here to save me keep popping up and down, Foodworker printing and distribution cost, I thought we'd looked at massively reducing that and the amount that are actually put out to Branches, because it's now online and yet that's gone up from £17,832 to £24,746. Promotional Materials, we're always asking for it at Regional Council for people to come on our sites to promote the Union and Credit Union and obviously it looks like we've doubled what we normally spend, from £5,480 to £10,480 and yet we've still not had anything through at Regional Councils. Even the Computer Expenses and Websites, I know everything is going up and then obviously we've got another huge hike from the Officials and Delegates Expenses, gone up to £40,000. The expenses of the Conference of the Union, £91,000. I'm wondering what it's going to be this year, because obviously, you know, numbers have decreased and I'm looking again at the Legal and Professional Expenses as well, they've gone up quite significantly, from £36,000 to £54,000.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Julie, if you wouldn't mind doing us a favour, just to make sure, obviously the General Secretary's going to try and answer all of your points, but if she misses one, you might need to stand back up, okay?

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Apologies, apologies Julie. So, Organising Expenses naturally have gone up, because in 2021 we were still in restrictions, so we weren't able to go into sites, we weren't able to go out leafleting, etc, etc, for quite a significant piece of, part of the year, so 2022 when we were into more normal circumstances if you like and we were travelling around and we were doing more organising, it naturally increased the costs. The Foodworker, yes, it does look like it's an increased cost, but that's just from when we got the invoice for the last session of 2021, so it balances it out over the two years, the costs are the same, it's just when we get the invoice because we're not allowed to say oh well, we did that in 2021, we got the invoice in 2022, does that make sense? Promotional Material, there's all sorts of stuff in the Offices leaflet-wise. We did an audit a few months ago and I asked all the clerks to look at what was in their Offices promotional-wise, leaflets, etc, etc, but that also includes, you know, printing out things like the Right to Food Report that we did and other stuff, when we do booklets like that, as well as that includes the new recruitment video, because that's promotional, so the costs of doing that last year at Conference are included in those costs. Legal and Professional Expenses, things like, let me find my notes, Legal and Professional Expenses, some of that's just a natural increase in prices. If you look on the page before, where you see Legal Defence Costs incurred in Period, that's significantly reduced, that's gone down from £37,950 down to £9,633. We've changed how we do things so we're more efficient, but sometimes we've got things where we've got to say as a Union, we need legal advice on this, which costs. What else is it? Conference, £91,000, yes, it absolutely was and that's why we put the motion or tried to put the motion last year at Conference to say can we try doing a physical, digital physical, digital Conference, because we knew it was going to be a lot of money. We've changed things around this year, we've got to be out of the Conference Hall by 5 o'clock sharp on Wednesday, that reduces the cost significantly, it's still going to be £70 – 80,000 in total, that's the cost of Conference unfortunately. It is cheaper than it used to be because, you know, we used to have a lot more Delegates here and a lot more travel expenses to pay for and obviously the year before we held it online, so there was only really the cost of setting up the bought-in things and the Zoom accounts and stuff. I know you asked about something else, but I missed it.

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): It's the Computer Expenses and the Website and the Officials and Delegates' Expenses.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: So the Officials and Delegates' Expenses again is because we're now back into normal times, attending things physically and costs that are incurred with that. Last year we were still, as I mentioned with the other stuff, in restrictions and Covid restrictions. Computers, I'm trying to find it, I can't see it in my head, Computer Expenses and Website, that's just naturally increased costs over the year. Everything's gone up, hasn't it, we've all seen that at home and unfortunately due to inflation, so have the costs of the Union on things like paying for our computers, paying for the services that we have to keep our information and data safe and all of the costs that are accommodated with them.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers. Okay. Anything else on Page 12? No? Page 13. Page 14 and Page 15.

So Conference, now what I'm going to do is, I'm going to put the combined report to Conference. All those in favour? Yes, that's, great. Anyone against? That's carried unanimously. Thank you very much. Okay, cheers, great.

Brother ?: Conference, the National President.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That means I'm going to give an opening address, so you're going to have to sit down and listen to me for a little bit unfortunately, not that you haven't listened to me already.

The National President's Opening Address to Conference

Conference, welcome to Yarnfield. It's an absolute pleasure, as always, to spend the next few days with you, as it is all the way through the year. I mean, we're an exceptional Union with exceptional people and in the last week or so I've been able to spend some time with some phenomenal people at Allied in Liverpool. They are a real inspiration, just as the people at Hovis were, just as the people at Gunstones were, at Pennine were and quite a number of our sites that have taken industrial action over the years. Standing up because their managers, their owners, won't concede and pay them an appropriate wage or give them the terms and conditions that we should take as a right as workers, should take as a right as people, the right to be treated in the workplace with dignity and respect and that's the reason why the people at Allied have gone on strike, because unfortunately when they've actually looked at their wage and they've deconstructed their wage, because they're paid a consolidated rate, that gives an appearance of being above the minimum wage, when they actually deconstruct it and find out that their core wage is based on either £8.80 or £8.65, this Union needs to start realising and waking up that we need to take action and we need to support workers who find themselves in that place unable to force an employer to do the right thing and give them the wage that their labour should demand as a right and we have a duty, as a Union, to support those workers in their fight and in their struggle against Allied.

Now I know, obviously, in the last couple of weeks some of the Allied sites have settled, but we need Solidarity for those workers at Allied, because if we don't stand together, then we will allow those bosses to win against our members and that will also be a position that you will find in your workplaces which will determine whether or not you can succeed in getting a pay rise and improvement in your conditions or whether you will continue to see the insecurities rolled out right across our industry, which was highlighted and demonstrated in the recent food report that we released, which showed that actually, since Covid, our membership has moved from 7½% using food banks to 17½%. That cannot be satisfactory, when we see people, people we're working alongside having to go to a food bank to be able to put food on the table and sometimes you know, people suggest that it's about militancy, it's not militant to stand up and demand that workers get a fair wage, that workers get security of employment. That is not, that is not militancy. I actually think it's militancy when employers decide that they won't pay people the appropriate rate, despite having a company, especially in Allied's case, with £17 billion, £17 billion and they're paying our members less than the minimum wage, but unfortunately that goes for a lot of you in your workplaces where you've had your consolidated rate.

I can only think of one place, Warburtons, which has actually gone to the £15 an hour and that's got to be a demand that we fight for in every single workplace, because like I say, if 17½% of our members are coming to use the food bank, if 17½% of our members' wages are not sufficient to put food on the table in their own homes, then we have a duty to stand up and fight for each and every one of them, whether it's in our workplace or not, we have a duty to fight for one another, because that's what Trade Unionism is and that's what this Conference will be about this week, how we stand in Solidarity with one another, but I want to move on to another subject and the reason I want to move on to this subject is because our communities are getting absolutely ravished, they're getting ravaged. I went to a funeral and at that funeral I was talking to somebody, his wife was a school teacher. They told me this story, because this is the reason why we have to join together and we have to fight, somebody's story, about a young lad that was observed going into the dinner hall on a daily basis, over a few days and they watched him go in, get his food, wrap it up and take it out of the dinner hall and not eat it, so they reported it to the teacher. So they said let's see how long this goes on for, so they watched him for three or four days and then they decided to sit him down and ask. So they said to this young lad, eight/nine years old, you've been observed in the dinner hall, not eating your dinner, wrapping it up and taking it out, that dinner's for you at dinnertime to eat, why are you not eating your dinner? And do you know what his response was? My mum and daddy have got no money, they can't afford to put food on the table, so I'm taking my lunch home to share with them.

That is Britain in 2023, 2023, a young kid taking his dinner home to share. True story. That's why we, as a Union, have a duty to stand up and fight. That's why we, as a Union, need to agitate each other in our workplaces to understand what we're standing for, because if we don't fight back, they ain't going to give us anything. We have to be prepared to fight and it's the same as what they're doing when it comes to racism, you know. It's the same as what they're doing when they're coming to our workplaces and suggesting, it's that group over there who's responsible for you not being able to get better wages or when you pick up the daily newspapers and it says to you, oh, it's all these people coming in on these small boats, 40 people coming in on a boat, right, has caused your mortgages to go up, your credit cards to go up. The fact that people are having to use food banks, like I said, 17½% in our Union alone, it has nothing to do with people coming across here in small boats and everything to do with greed.

It's the greed of those people at the top, that's the reason why we're struggling, the politicians that come out with policies to ensure that our lives are made difficult and made hard. It was never a migrant that sold a council house, that was a Tory government policy that was continued under Labour. It was never a migrant that introduced a zero hours contract, that was politicians in Westminster looking at how they could pay back to the employers who funded their campaigns and their dinners and their visits to this country or that country and the big luncheons that they go to, every decision that impacts your life is made by a politician in Westminster and no desperate refugee coming to our country seeking asylum and this week, at this Conference, we need to understand why it's important that we stand with one another, we stand with each other and we recognise the importance of standing with people who look different from us, because if we allow ourselves to be divided in our workplaces, if we allow ourselves to be divided in our communities, then the 17½% will turn into 35%. That child won't be the only child taking food home to his parents, there will be more children facing taking food home from the school or to their parents, because what they want to present is the idea it's somebody else's fault, while they get away with all the money. It's our job this week to move motions in support of one another, to stand in Solidarity with each other and to fight for this Union and its members to get the wages that you all deserve. Have a great Conference, Conference – have a great Conference, Conference, there was a double one. Enjoy yourselves. Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, I believe, I believe now you've had to suffer that, it's brew time. 20 minutes? So if you can be back 5 to, 5 to.

[BREAK]

Okay, Conference, if we can all settle down. Okay, thank you. When we come back in the room and we're ready to start, we all get quiet. I'd just also like to welcome as first-time Delegates and I can make it look like that there wasn't an error made and say this is a second batch that we want to introduce, but I'm not, I'm going to be honest with you. We missed them off, unfortunately, the list. Can I welcome Jamaal Tariq, Philip Smith (aka Tilley) and Peter Horne who are also first-time Delegates and I hope you enjoy your time with us this week.

Conference, before we turn to the Agendas, I did indicate in my speech about the importance of Solidarity and understanding the reality of what's happening in society and the fact that politicians are trying to create this belief that other poor people are responsible for our hardships. We've been working for some time, I know there's a motion in the Agenda on Status Now, but we've been working with Status Now as a Union for some time. For people who aren't aware of what the Status Now is, I'm pleased to say that we can welcome our first guest speaker of the week, Lorraine Masiya Mponela and I tried, I still can't get it right can I? It's dialect, it's northern, so I apologise. Please welcome our first guest speaker, Lorraine.

[APPLAUSE]

Lorraine Masiya Mponela addresses Conference

Have you ever been in a bottle, a colourless bottle, with a top tightly closed? You can see the flowers and the trees, but you can't smell the roses, you are not allowed. You can see the bees and the insects, but you can't feel them on your skin, they are not allowed. You can see the cars drive past, but in muffled sounds. You exist and you don't. You touch, but nothing touches you. Sometimes you want to escape this prison with open walls, where I wear a tag that says I can't get a job, a life, a relationship or just be happy, because the bottle has rules. Am I going mad, thinking the trees lie when they sway to an invisible breeze playing with my mind? These soundless birds hopping from branch to branch, acting out a silent recital of my death, which is being in a bottle with a top tightly closed. I'm not being treated humanely for the biggest crime of needing help and therefore confined to a bottle, where I see everything but never touch. Oh, that juicy job flying by, that course I could do, that meal in a restaurant, all too good for one whose life is a bottle. I'm shouting, screaming for attention, tears streaming. I'm hitting the bottle walls with my fist (sigh), but no-one hears me and I can't hear anyone. The pain to know that outside of this glass bottle there is a life, a normal life. Will I ever leave again? Can somebody talk to me? Somebody break the glass bottle. I need to breathe fresh air too, like every other human being. Thank you.

That was my poem called From The Glass Bottle. It's from my new book, I was not born a sad poet. My name is Lorraine Masiya Mponela, as I have been introduced. I'm so honoured to be with you all today. I stand before you as a new (unclear) organiser for refugees in the UK, but my journey to get here was not an easy one. I spent many years in the asylum process, waiting for my application to be processed, refused, left homeless and stuck again and every step of the way fighting against institutional racism. As an asylum seeker, I was subjected to a system that was designed to keep me down.

I was denied the right to work and the right to live with dignity, but despite all of this, I never gave up hope. I knew that I had to keep fighting, not just for myself but for all other asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants, every one trapped in the same situation as me. This is why I am so proud to be here today, speaking to a group of people who are also fighting injustices in their workplaces.

People have no idea of how humiliating it is for an able-bodied person to beg for food, when they have the willingness and the capacity to work and feed themselves. I'm here speaking to you all today because I know how damaging living in limbo for a long time is. As a refugee who has experienced the harsh realities of the UK immigration and asylum system, I can testify to the pain and the suffering that asylum seekers and undocumented migrants are going through on a daily basis. I have been called illegal at some point. How on earth can a human being be illegal? The Justice for All Now Campaign was launched at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March, 2020 because we wanted to ensure that everyone had access to basic needs, such as food, housing and health care. The Campaign calls on the UK government to grant immigration status to everyone who needs it, everyone failed by the asylum system, everyone undocumented and everyone stuck in the asylum process. The Campaign has so far received support from over 150 organisations, including charities, Unions, community groups and is continuing to grow. We launch the Status Now for our Campaign to explain why status now for all without status in the UK and Ireland is a logical, rational and a just public health measure. Status Now for our Campaign is more so important now in order to save lives that have been destroyed by the hostile environment. We want Status Now for our network to develop with the direct and increasing participation, shaping and decision-making by people who have lived the experience of what it's like to live in the UK without status, alongside people with that status.

So how are people in the UK forced to become undocumented migrants? No. 1, wrong decisions by the Home Office, who are keen to deport people. No. 2, when you are unable to pay extortionate visa fees, many people slip through. Sometimes it's the exploitation by the employers that your visa is tied to and if you want to break away, you become stuck and become undocumented. Some people are on dependant visa, because of maybe spouse visas, marriages and that. If the marriage break down, the relationship break down, you get stuck. Sometimes it's because of poor legal advice, people get stuck, but also, most importantly, racism as we saw it with the Windrush scandal. I can go on and on and on the reasons why people are forced to become undocumented, so what are the implications? We have individuals amongst us who are denied access to essential services, they are living with no money because they are denied access to cash. People are in fear of getting medical assistance because they can't guarantee they won't get reported to the Home Office and yet health is a human right. Women are fighting off sexual advances for the promise of food or shelter. Getting bills and yet, hospital bills and yet you have no income. Refusing to stay, even if it's accepted that there's no safe route to return. In the fifth richest economy in the world, homelessness and sofa-surfing, relying on the charity of others, is the order of the day. Asylum seekers and undocumented migrants have lost dignity, which no human should be subjected to.

These situations leave people vulnerable and exploited. One of my friends, who has been here for 15 years now and has not yet legalised her immigration status, said to me and I quote, "All I need is one day when I can walk with my head high. I'm tired of walking with my head looking down". She has been made to live with shame. When people have put petitions out about legalisation of undocumented people in this country, the government always says there's already a route to undocumented people, which is a 20 year long resident route. That route is not automatic, you have to prove each and every day that you have lived here for 20 years and then it requires a further 10 years, which they say is 10 years lawful residence, in order for you to get settlement. So it's 30 years in total.

Recently I was talking to one of my friends who has been here 23 years, he's unwell and this is what he said to me. "Although I bleed but am not human, I only walk at night because I know the importance of exercise, but I don't want anyone to see me. I'm a prisoner. My friends can't recognise me, because I have become unrecognisable due to my both mental and physical health conditions. Even if they recognised me, living without a status, nobody takes you seriously. I tried to submit my application and I paid someone whom I believed to be a solicitor, but he disappeared after I paid them and I had submitted all the evidence that the Home Office requires. I have no energy to carry on". This is heartbreaking. Over the years that I have worked with asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, I have learned that resilience has a limit, so when I was talking to this friend, I knew that his resilience has come to an end, he's exhausted.

So talking about mental health in the asylum system and with undocumented migrants, again another friend said, who has been here 16 years, "I'm struggling, help me", but he really doesn't know what exact help he needs, because he can no longer understand anything around him. People are living with PTSD, memory problems, isolation, loneliness, depression, loss of relationships with friends, family and the community, self-exclusion in this case of the man who only goes out at night.

Regarding the right to work, one of the asylum seekers said, “We are easily identifiable by not going to work. We remain stagnant socially, despite being visibly intelligent and bright”. When undocumented migrants and asylum seekers are denied the right to work, they are denied the chance to support friends and their families. They are denied the chance to contribute to society and to make a meaningful difference in the world and worst of all, they are denied the chance to live with dignity and self-respect. We hear the UK has a labour shortage and yet able-bodied people are stuck in hotels and in detention centres and talking of detention centres, one of my friends, Agnes (? surname), who we live together in Coventry, she’s an anti-detention campaigner, who was locked up in (unclear) and her asylum case took seven years to win, she asks and I quote, “Why did I have to be put in prison when I have been a refugee since I arrived?”. It really doesn’t make any sense to stop people from working and get stuck into eradicating poverty.

Young people also are highly affected by the hostile environment. Statistics show that only 5% of the refugee population have access to higher education compared to 39% of the general population. A lot of migrant children get straight A’s in their exams. Is that a road to university? Unlikely for them. Resident requirements aren’t met, regardless of their abilities. Their hopes and grades amount to zero. This is on top of the threat of being refused to stay and now they are 18 and an adult who could be put into detention centres and get deported. I believe there should only be one criteria, to access education and regards, does the student want to do the course?, not where they were born from or how rich their parents are. Education is a right, it’s not a privilege. Let’s fight for that right.

As we are talking, meeting here today, in parliament they are discussing a Legal Migration Bill. This is where the UK government will be giving a one-way ticket to send asylum seekers to Rwanda. Exporting human beings is illegal. Sending people to Rwanda or indeed anywhere does not respect the dignity or well-being of those seeking asylum. It is a denial of the UK’s responsibility to welcome those seeking sanctuary. The UK has taken its responsibility and sub-contracted it to a country of questionable human rights record.

We have also seen the arrival of what they call the barge, I can’t even pronounce it, but activists are calling it the floating prison where asylum seekers will be housed. Many asylum seekers don’t want to go on boats again, because it’s a reminder of their dangerous journeys that some have been through already.

So, giving status to everyone will not only address the poverty, but also things such as gender-based violence, controlling behaviours, fear, exploitation and all other ills associated with the denial of immigration status. It will also address the issues of criminalisation for committing an offence, such as working, in order to buy food. People without status want to live fulfilling lives, just like everyone else. People want to not only to survive, but thrive. We want a world in which we can all thrive. Status Now 4 All is not asking something which is difficult to give. We are asking for freedom for everyone. We want people to stop dreaming about freedom, but start living in freedom. As we are aware, the asylum and immigration laws and conditions in this country are at the heart of racial disparities. Their reversal will go a long way in eliminating racial inequalities. We need to challenge the institutional racism that underlies the entire UK immigration and asylum system. We need to demand that this system is reformed from the ground up, so that it no longer discriminates against people based on their race and nationality. We also need to work together to build a society that is truly inclusive and that values the contributions of everyone, regardless of where they come from. We are asking status for everyone that is stuck in what Priti Patel calls a broken system and yes, I want to talk about Unions now.

So this week, I’ll be starting my new job, on Tuesday and I know that you are all here today because of your values, that every human being deserves to be treated with dignity. Unions help us as migrants in and out of work, Unions speak out for those who are denied the voice, Unions organise workers, many who are migrants like myself, for better pay and conditions and Unions are the biggest organisations in the UK. So as I said, I’m starting my new job on Tuesday. The first thing I will do is to join a Union. The second thing, I’m going to make others join if they haven’t already and the third thing I will do is to become a Union Rep. I didn’t work for seven years when I was going through the asylum system because this government denied me that right, but in my heart as a migrant rights campaigner and organiser, I have always been a Union and for years and years you stood with me.

To conclude, earlier speakers have already eluded to the importance of Solidarity and yes, Solidarity is our superpower. The Status Now 4 All is a campaign for common sense, it’s a call for common sense, a call for the UK government to recognise the humanity of all individuals. It is a call to end the exploitation and dehumanisation of undocumented people and give them the opportunity to live with dignity and without fear. This would enable them to access essential services including healthcare, housing and financial support for those who cannot work and provide them with an opportunity to work legally and contribute to the society. It is important call, it is an important call for justice and equality and a reminder that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their immigration status.

We must work together to create a Britain that is compassionate and just, a Britain that recognises the inherent wealth and the value of all individuals. As Benjamin Franklin once said, “Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are”. I challenge you all this morning, let us be outraged at the injustices we see around us and let us work together to create a better future for all. Status Now 4 All. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thank you ever so much for that inspirational presentation. The poem really touched, you know, a lot of us in the room, I know. Thank you for coming and joining us and taking the time to talk to us about Status Now. There’s a bag of biscuits here, made by our members at Fox’s, in Batley I think, thanks to Mark, so these are for you as a thank you and we’d also like to make a £100 donation to a charity of your choice, so if you let me know **(unclear, faint speaking)**.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, now we’re down to business. Apart from, apart from, I’ve just been given another list and I think this is done to me deliberately by the way, they’ve waited obviously to, but to be fair they’ve given me the hardest names all in one block, so I do apologise before I pronounce your names, but I’m going to try my best, my best. Jan Popescu, cool, right name, right name? Welcome to Conference. Ramona, Iona, is that, thank you very much and this looks like Virginia, no, no, okay, but welcome anyway, thank you for making that easy for me.

Okay, Conference. Obviously the Final Agenda is what we’re all now turning to. So, just to remind everybody, the first part of our Conference we deal with Rule changes. Rule changes have to be supported or opposed by 2/3rds of the room, yes? No, I didn’t, I shouldn’t have said the oppose bit should I, I should have just stuck to the support bit, right, yes, I’ll just stick to the support bit. Obviously, to pass, it has to be passed by 2/3rds of the room, yes? The difference between a Rule change and a general motion change is a general motion only has to be passed by a majority in the room, okay? So, we now turn and it’s No. 6 and who’s the speaker and so obviously Dimitri, go and get yourself ready. So it’s Motion 5, which is Rule 6.

5 Rule 6

Executive Council

6.1 a) Remove” Funeral Benefit shall also be paid for any one child of a one parent family on the same scale as on death of a Member’s spouse” and replace with:

Funeral benefit shall also be paid for any one child of a ones parent family and normal family with a low income or one of the parents being in a poor state (health issue or unemployed) the same scale on the death of a member’s spouse.

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton): Morning, Conference. Is it on? Yes, okay. My name is Dimitri Manole, I’m the Executive Council for, Executive Council Member for Region 3 and I’m here to move Motion 5 on behalf of the Executive Council. Obviously I wasn’t so eager to start the, to be the first one to start the session of the motions. Obviously this is a sad motion and I hope is going to pass on. So basically Rule 6, what it says, Rule 6.1a, remove funeral benefits shall also be paid, so remove funeral benefits shall also be paid for any or one child of one parent family on the same scale as on, as on death of a member spouse and replaced with, funeral benefits should also be paid for any one child of one parent family, a normal family, with a low income or one of the parents being in a poor state, health issues or unemployed, the same scale on the death of a member spouse.

Now the reason why we’re putting this motion forward, this Rule changes because we want that all our members to benefit from this, from this funeral benefit. Throughout the years, I had some cases in my Branch which some of my members, because of the wording, they wouldn’t allow to, they couldn’t claim these funeral benefits, so we had to find some loopholes and other long processes to help them financially getting through the tragedy in the family. So obviously those processes were very long, long putting in a grant, going to the Regional and then to the EC and the waiting was very long, like in the time frame and that’s why we want to, that’s why the Executive Council is proposing to change the Rule, to be more accessible to all of our members. So, support the motions. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It’s formally seconded by the EC. Any speakers? It’s Sunday, isn’t it. To the vote, all those in favour? Those against? That’s carried unanimously. Motion No. 6.

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 701: Can the Executive Council explain why this motion is allowed to go forward, to be discussed as calling for the same format as Motion 17? The whole aim is to save money and this motion should be discussed and 17, Motion 17 receive more money if it's passed. Sometimes the Union is penny-wise and pound-free, like the removal of the £5 Delegate fee. Please explain why both motions cannot be discussed as it worked as a meeting during Covid. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, I can do that, very, very clearly. It says Rule change. Motion 17 was a general motion, which was a Rule change as you've just confirmed, so therefore it was ruled out-of-order because it wasn't classed as a Rule change, because if it had been passed, it would have been just a general motion and it wouldn't have been, had any effect and actually the outcome, if Region 7 wants to bring that forward next year as a Rule change and identify the appropriate Rule, then it would be debated and it's as simple as that.

Okay, Motion 6.

6 Rule 4.1

Executive Council

The National Safety Committee shall consist of two representatives from each region, one of which must be female it will also include the National President and General Secretary.

The committee will meet 4 times per year two physical and two digital except in exceptional circumstances.

Only Safety representatives who hold the appropriate credentials issued by the BFAWU, Regional council can be Safety Representatives and serve on Regional and National Committees.

AMENDMENT: Replace Paragraph 2 with:
'after Rule 4.1

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool - EC Member): Before I read the motion out, I just want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us during our strike action and our dispute with the company.

[APPLAUSE]

The messages of Solidarity. I'd like to thank Laura for the flags and the hi-visi's, Joe and Tony from AB, Stockport who came along, local MPs, other organisations who stood there for hours, Sarah Woolley, Roy Streeter and Ian Hodson. Bless him, Ian turned up on the first day with about four bags of fruit, I think he'd raided the fruit aisle in ASDA. Unfortunately the fruit didn't go down very well and people were saying to Ian, do we look like we eat fruit?, but it didn't go to waste, it went to, you know, we passed it round some care homes and this, that and the other like and as the time went on like, the fruit changed to sausage rolls and pies, which is a bit more suitable for us, but thanks everyone anyway.

Okay. Motion 6. Moving this motion on behalf of the Executive Council, who ask you to support this motion. This is the change of Rule 4.1. The National Health Committee shall consist of two representatives from each Region, one of which must be female. It also includes the National President and the General Secretary. The Committee will meet four times per year, two physical and two digital, except in exceptional circumstances. Only Safety Reps who hold the appropriate credentials issued by the BFAWU Regional Council can be Safety Reps and serve on Regional Committees. There is an amendment to this, to replace paragraph 2 with after the Rule 4.1. We, on the National Health and Safety Committee, put this motion forward after receiving a document called Union Women and the Safety Rep Role, which was conducted by the TUC. The Focus Groups looked at why only 20% of Safety Reps are women and to help us better understand women's experiences of health and safety in the workplace, their engagement with the Safety Agenda and their Unions and how the Trade Union movement can better support them. We know that our health and safety concerns will exclusively affect women workers. We also know that additionally these issues have often been given less attention.

Issues that were raised, they felt unrepresented, they felt women's health and safety overlooked and a failure to understand women's experiences, issues, barriers and opportunities. Other issues that came to the forefront in the document were the menopause, unsuitable uniforms and PPE, menstrual health and access to free provisions, lack of welfare facilities or in poor conditions, flexible working for women on periods, menopausal, expressing milk and using IVF injections, personal safety from work and working late on night shifts, sexual harassment and stress and we have to be honest, us lads are not very good at some of the women's issues like, so we thought that having a female Rep from each Region would go a long way in helping our female members with these issues. I have sat on the Health and Safety Committee for many years now and I have only ever known two females on that Committee, currently from Region 1, Tatiana (? spelling) and Lizzie Dinning, who sat on the Committee a few years' ago for a couple of meetings, so it's always been top-heavy with males.

So as I say, this motion is to encourage females to come forward. The two digital and two physical is to try and keep the costs down and there will be an option for workers on the Committee if they want to join online instead of physically, they can do so. So please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded. Are you speaking? Okay, that's very nice of you, but we're formally seconding it. Speakers, any speakers? No? So, obviously there was an amendment put, so I have to put the amendment to the vote first. I know it's only a little amendment, right, but it's an important amendment too, so what I have to do is, I have to ask you if you support the amendment and then once, if you support or oppose the amendment, then we vote on the main body of the motion, okay? So, the amendment reads after Rule 4.1. Those in favour of that amendment, please show. Okay. Now, I put the full motion with the amendment in, so those in favour? Those against? Okay, that's carried, thank you very much. Motion 7. We need an extension I think, make it more comfortable.

7 Rule 14.3

Executive Council

Remove the current rule and replace with the following;

14.3 Union learner Representatives

Each Branch should elect Union Learner Representatives. The Learner Representatives must normally complete a Union Training course in Learner representative skills within 6 months of election. Upon successful completion of this course, they will be issued with Learner Representatives Credentials by the relevant Regional Council.

Regional Councils shall elect two Learner Representative per Region to attend the National Union Learner Representative Committee, one of which must be female plus a substitute.

The role of the National Learner Representatives Committee shall be to discuss the progress of the Union Learner Reps programme/learning activity within the Union/Industries and to make recommendations to the EC on these matters. The National ULR Committee shall not have decision making powers.

The National Learner Representatives Committee shall consist of two representatives from each region, one of which must be female it will also include the National President and General Secretary plus co-opted members when required.

Only Learner Representatives who hold the appropriate credentials issued by the relevant Regional Council can be Learner Representative under the Rule and serve on Learner Representatives Committees at whatever level.

Meetings of the National Learner Representatives Committee shall be held at least one week prior to the quarterly EC meetings. Two meetings will be physical and two digital except in exceptional circumstances.

National Learner Representative Committee Members will hold office for a period of two years, be eligible for re-election and paid fares and fees as per Regional Council Members. Where a Learner Representative Committee Member is unable to attend a meeting, substitutes are allowed.

Each Branch or Regional Council must include on their agenda the item 'Learning and Training' to encourage discussion of this important subject.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: I just need to lose some weight for next year. Conference, this motion is designed to help re-establish the ULR Committee, that has really struggled to function since the pandemic and especially after the removal of the English Union Learn Fund which operated in five out of our six Regions. By re-energising and re-vitalising the Committee and adding members to it in line with the National Health and Safety Committee motion that's just gone through, the hope is that we'll be able to re-focus and build back up the ULR network, ensuring our members are aware of the local education opportunities that are available to them, as well as being able to identify the educational needs of the membership. Continued adult education is best placed through Trade Unions, despite what the government thinks, but in order to ensure our members have access to it, we need a functioning ULR Committee that is driving the agenda for the wider ULR network. So the Executive asks you to support this motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: OK, it's formally seconded. Speakers? No? Okay. To the vote, those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 9.

9 Rule 5.2

Executive Council

Remove from second line 'the recognized state'

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: I should have just brought them both with me, shouldn't I. Conference, this is simply a tidying-up exercise.

It isn't legal any more for a company to force somebody to retire once they reach State Retirement Age, that is effectively these days the age in which you can claim your State Pension. This means that we have members who are working well past their State Retirement Age, during in the main not being able to afford to retire. The Executive therefore felt that it would be wrong to say no, our Rules say you can't receive sickness benefit, for example to a member still working but is past the age in which they can receive State Pension. The Executive ask you to support this motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, it's formally seconded. Speakers? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried, thank you very much. That's the end of the Rule changes, that was simple wasn't it? Okay, general motions. Motion 10, Branch 356.

10

Branch 356

This Conference declares that when a person is elected to the EC that should be given training in finance, recruitment, and pensions, and should fully versed in all these matters.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya. You'll get a lot of me this Conference and I will annoy the hell out of you, as I've been informed already. This is merely a motion that is not critical of the great work our EC does and they do great work, you know, they work very hard for all of us, it just means giving them some extra tools, so they don't only do great work but they do excellent work. It just means that I think summed up in a great group by Alexander Suvorov, train hard, fight easy and that's all I'm going to say. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Seconder? Formally seconded? Okay, cool. Any other speakers? Okay, because this is the first time it's happened, for the new Delegates, when the Executive responds, we respond when all other speakers have finished speaking. Now the General Secretary's going to respond on behalf of the EC. Yes you do, are you getting your steps in? So that's how the system works, okay? Cool.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, our current Executive, although depleted, are the first group to have had any sort of training on accounts, the investments, the role in general and this is going to be built upon in August when our new Executive meets for the first time properly, where we've once again added an extra day to the meeting in order to cover the role in detail and set out the training plan for the next 12 months. It's also why we attached, if you remember when the calling notice went out, the documents to the email, that prospective candidates were aware of what the role entails before accepting nominations because, you know, as an ex-EC member myself, when I first went on, I wasn't really quite sure what I'd signed up for. So the Executive fully supports this motion. It's something I personally felt was needed when I became the General Secretary. The role of the Executive is to run our Union between Conferences, ensure policies and decisions made this week are applied throughout, to engage in wage negotiations with employees and sometimes are required to make really difficult decisions, which need to be made in an informed manner and this can only be done if the Executive know what they are reading and are trained to be able to do it. So we ask that you support this motion, but we would also point out we've already implemented it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 12.

12

Branch 432

That this Conference agrees that the Executive council/ Union look at set payment rate for those members taking strike action. We have seen many members from different unions over the past 12 months who get a set payment while on strike which is some financial comfort to those taking strike action. While we accept this will have a financial impact on the union we are just asking for it to be looked at.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool - EC Member): Moving this motion on behalf of our Branch. That this Conference agrees that the Executive Council Union look at a set payment rate for those members taking strike action. We have seen many members from different Unions over the past 12 months get a set payment while on strike, which is some kind of financial comfort to those taking strike action. While we accept this will have a financial impact on the Union, we are just asking for them to be looked at. This motion was put forward from our Branch, because one of the questions when we decided to take strike action is that obviously will members get a set payment from the Union, because we've seen that with many Unions over the last 12 months.

You know, I tried to explain to the members that no, there isn't a set payment and explain to them why, so they wanted this motion going forward and the last line wasn't in it and what I said to them was is that if this motion goes to Conference without that last line in, I said it will fail, I said and then I said, that'll be the end of it, I said. So if we put that bit that we're just asking for the Union to look at it and hopefully you will agree for us to look at it, I said, hopefully it won't fail. I mean, the other day, on Friday, I went to a Solidarity social event which was linked to fights and I spoke there and there was a lady there from the PCS and she told us like that the PCS had paid out £5 million in strike pay. Now I know that we will never be able to afford that, nowhere near it. So I say, the motion is for the EC and the Union to look at it and to see if there's anything we can do, that we can give some financial support to those taking strike action. It's very difficult for people to take strike action at any time, but I think in the cost of living crisis at the moment like, it's even worse. So hopefully you'll support the motion and just let us have a look at it and see if we can do anything. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I keep forgetting to turn my mike on. Secunder? Secunder? Formally seconded, thank you. Speakers? Okay.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I think this is a little bit too early. I think this would financially cripple us at this early stage. I know it said that it's just to discuss it at this stage, but we're struggling as a Union at present, we're losing members and hopefully that will improve as the months and years go on, but I think something, I know strike action's being held and I know people like Unite they can afford it, they're a multi-million pound Union, but at this early stage I have to oppose this. It's something we can maybe look at in a year's time when we become stronger, maybe we can improve our membership, but I don't think we can afford to do this or even look at it at this early stage. So I oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: I'm asking you to support this motion. We're not actually asking for financial help at the moment, we're asking to look at it. I think it's very important that we do this for our members at this time, so I ask you to support it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: You'll be pleased to know this is the last one for a while. Conference, the Executive is happy to look at this and asks you to support the motion. If you remember, we levied the membership subs when they rose in January, 2021 in order to build up our National Strike Fund and that has continued during 2022 because we want to be in a position where we can support our members that are fighting back and taking action. What that looks like going forwards needs to be determined and something that we will look at if the motion is passed is a set payment, but it's important to be open and honest here, it would take time to build up a sufficient enough amount to be able to give striking members a set payment and it's also important to remind Delegates in order to manage expectations, that we're not as big as the Unions that currently do that, which is only really Unite that do it generally, GMB and PCS have done so in certain disputes but not all. Most other Unions operate a hardship fund where striking members can apply for support, like UCU, RMT and CWU and it's done on an individual basis depending on their circumstances, but this is all things that we need to look at and we will look at going forwards, should the motion pass. Thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. So just to remind Delegates, because there was someone that opposed the motion, the mover of the motion has the right to reply. Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried, thank you. 14.

This Conference agrees when a motion has been passed at conference then the same, or similar, motion cannot be brought back as a motion to the next year's conference. One full conference year must have passed before the same, or similar, motion is brought back.

Conference, we spend lots of time debating or speaking on the same motion's year in and year out, we feel a lot of this time could be better spent dealing with other union matters that conference can address.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716 (Executive Council): Morning, Conference. This Conference agrees that if a motion is passed at Conference, then the same motion can't be brought back as a motion at the next Conference, unless one or two years have passed between the same or similar motion is brought back. Conference, we agree that the time we spend on these motions, I know the last three or four went pretty fast, but sometimes they can go for hours at a time, so and they're important to people, we understand that as well, but to be fair all we're doing is we're taking the same stuff all of the time (unclear), same thing, we're doing it all of the time, so please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? You're all very courteous, normally you just come down and queue up.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I do oppose this motion because I think, you know, a motion can be opposed the previous year and things change, attitudes change, society changes, legality changes, politicians change and something can happen within that 12 months, I know it says well, let's let 12 months lapse and then we'll look at it two years' later, but I think it should be, especially if a motion is opposed the previous year, why shouldn't somebody bring that back because a situation has changed, so I oppose this motion. I think it's worth looking at motions the following year, there may be just a slight change to it and maybe we should look at people's attitudes and what's happening around the world and let's discuss it again the following year. So I oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, any other speakers? No? Right of reply? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? I think that was lost. Okay. I made a mistake as well by the way, thanks for not picking me up on it. It's composite, it's composite 1 and that should have gone before 14 but, I'm putting it in now, my mistake. I'll go to Standing Orders after and they can tell me off. So, what I don't know is who Yes, so who's the mover of composite 1?

Composite 1

The BFAWU calls on this Conference to organise with other Trades Unions for a General Strike, all unions and the TUC need to come together in a general strike to demand an end to austerity.

This conference also agrees that all anti-Trade Union Legislation is repealed and to have the minimum wage increased to £15 per hour.

Our parliamentary group and any other interested parties work to make the abolition of all anti-trade union laws happen.

Original motions: 13 [Branch 356] 32 [Branch 711] and 88 [Branch 405]

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Please support this motion, because there's only one way we're going to improve things in this country and that's fight, because power it concedes nothing without a demand. We're seeing every time our wages cost, our wages in real terms are going down and down and down. We need to fight, because power concedes nothing without a demand. It's time, if we had a minimum wage that was actually in line with the profits that they are making, it would be nearer £20, not 15 that we're asking for, it would be nearer £20, but we're not given anything, we're never given anything, because we're nice, good boys and girls. Here you are, we'll give you the minimum wage, we'll give you the vote, we'll give you equal rights, we don't give us that, we force them into taking it, because power concedes nothing without a demand and we're going to have to fight, because they will give us nothing, because they want more and more for themselves and less for you. It's time to fight, because power concedes nothing without a demand. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I might just leave the mike on, because I keep forgetting to turn it on.

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: Comrades, I'm here to second this motion. As everyone knows here, I mean I've been very active with other Trade Unions throughout the last two years back home, whatever you want to call it, Northern Ireland's six counties, fourth green field home. We need a concerted campaign here. I think the days of our Unions fighting single battles are over, I think it's time now that we as a Union and as Branches, we should co-ordinate our attack on companies and our employers and we should also work with other Trade Unions, i.e. the RMT, UCU, PCS, whoever it may be, Unite, we need to stand together comrades. It is absolutely paramount now that we work together and we stand together. So if you know if you have a day off and any other Union is on strike, please show up with your Bakers flag, please show a bit of Solidarity, build comradeship, you know, build friendships, because you know at the end of the day, they're going to come and support us. So comrades, on behalf of my Branch and on behalf of our Conference, I want you to back this motion please.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Mr President, Secretary, EC and Conference. I support this motion very much. It goes to back what I said earlier, when I opened Conference, about the camaraderie and what happened at Hovis in Wigan, yes, it's all the same thing. We do need to stand together, we need to get all these people backing us and supporting us. That is the TUC, our Parliamentary Group, getting into parliament and our own, even our own Trades Councils, yes. Let's support this. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, any other speakers? No? Okay.

Conference, not surprisingly the Executive would ask you to support this motion, but what we also want to add is this. It's no good calling on others to do the work that we need to do. We need to do the work in our workplaces. We need to make sure that if we put in a pay demand, we're calling for a minimum wage of £15 an hour for all of our members. We need to be making sure, if the company's not prepared to negotiate with us and treat us with the respect we deserve in those negotiations and tell us how they're going to make sure that we have wages in our wage packets that we can afford to live on, that we have to be prepared to stand up and take action, because it's alright asking others to do it, but if you're not prepared to do it yourself, why should they be prepared to do it with you? We have to stand up ourselves, but we have to work with others. We can't win anything in isolation. Trade Unions don't believe in working in isolation, they believe in working collectively and we are a collective organisation. Collectivism leads to us standing together and winning together and we have a history of it, we spoke about it this morning when we spoke about Hovis. We spoke about lots of different things that we've done as a Trade Union over the years, but they've done it and they've won it because they were prepared to stand up and you'll hear a lot of that at this Conference, the need for us to stand together and win together. So we ask you to support the motion, but recognise, recognise the importance of us leading by example too. Support the motion, Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

I'll turn my mike on. To the vote, those in favour? Those against? That's carried.

Lunch is 12, oh right, okay. I had the wrong information in front of me, I thought that lunch was 1, so guess what? It's lunchtime. So can everybody be back at 1 o'clock, please.

[LUNCH]

Okay, if everybody can start to settle down, take your seats. If you can encourage people to come in, we're going to shut the door in a minute. Okay, shut the doors, thank you very much. If you can all take your seats. Hope you enjoyed your lunch, the turkey I thought was lovely, the gammon was nice, good, good. Roll call.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5, Region 7. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. Just before I invite the General Secretary to give her opening address to Conference, I just wanted to make Conference aware. Delegates who've been coming to Conference for a lot of years will have known Harry McGarrigle that used to come, I've probably pronounced his name wrong as well. I mean he was a fun guy and he came from Park Cakes, he was an absolutely lovely lad. Unfortunately he's not here this year because he's been diagnosed with cancer, which has gone into his bones and I'm sure the whole of Conference would like to send our best wishes to him and obviously to his family. We understand the difficult position they find themselves in and we'd like to thank him for everything that he's done over the years and obviously to his colleagues at Park Cakes, you know, it must be a very difficult time because he was such a lovely lad and he's such a lovely lad currently, he's not gone yet but obviously he's going through a lot of suffering. So please pass on, I think the best wishes of Conference to Harry.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay. General Secretary. Opening address to Conference.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, addresses Conference

Conference, we are here today 10 years on from our historic industrial action at Hovis, Wigan. As we heard from this morning, those members took action not because they were going to benefit in any way from it, but because it was the right thing to do to make a stand in order to prevent future colleagues from being exploited and in that sense alone, it was an absolute victorious strike, one that our Union should never, ever forget, because that's what Trade Unionism is all about. Collectivising around an issue, regardless of whether you're impacted personally, to ensure those who are likely to be exploited have support and are empowered to make a stand themselves and 10 years on, we've got a similar situation, though not around the threat of an employer introducing zero hours contracts, but the threat of a once well paid group of workers not hurtling towards being paid minimum wage for the job that they do.

I know we've done it a few times today, but I want to give a huge shout out to our members at Allied, Liverpool who have just completed two rounds of 48 hours industrial action over pay. John and Jay did a fantastic job rallying the troops who turned up day after day, whether heavily pregnant, whether over retirement age and even after being advised to do the night shift as they'd been burnt to a crisp because the weather was so nice. The atmosphere was great, the support was fantastic, there were some really interesting horns from the lorries that we'll talk to you about later and it was a good reminder of the power of the collective. Those who have been there for years, coming together with younger, newer workers, to make a stand to ensure that those that come after them are not paid the minimum wage but are paid what they are worth.

Conference, we have got a special Union and it's one that we need to fight together to maintain and rebuild. It's no secret our membership has steadily declined for the last decade and we're not alone, the whole movement is shrinking. The government released figures at the end of May, which told us that Trade Union membership has fallen generally for the second year running and now is at its lowest since 2017. The majority of members who are leaving are women and older employees still make up the largest proportion of Trade Union membership and they're not being replaced by younger workers coming into the movement. I said last year and I'll say again over the course of this week, we've got to look critically at ourselves, how we work and how we operate, be clear about what isn't working without blame and trying new things, because we're going to continue otherwise in the same trajectory and I know none of us in this room want that, we wouldn't be here if we did. I don't think anyone in this room, not even Mahinder who's just, can we give a shout-out, has celebrated his 50th year of membership this year

[APPLAUSE]

I don't think anybody has been in our Union when membership has been as low as it is and just like when things are tight at home, we've got to re-evaluate things, ensure that we're making wise decisions that are sometimes tough to make and that the members are at the heart of everything that we do. We want to make sure that our members' hard-earned money is spent making sure they have access to the benefits that they signed up for and have made lots of changes, some of it you can see, some of them that you can't, to ensure that you, as members, are at the forefront of everything. We've been accused, whilst doing that, a couple of times, of becoming like the employers our members work for, which is a little unfair, we don't make millions of pounds-worth of profit, I mean it would be absolutely fabulous if we did, can you imagine what we could do as a Trade Union with some of the profits like Allied make or Hovis or Greggs, we don't.

What we try to do is ensure that there is a fair and consistent process in place, England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, a part-time worker in Greggs or a full-time worker in Fine Lady, that you are treated and respected as a member of the BFAWU in the same way, that you have the same access to services and benefits. We try to be more attractive to new members in the industry and beyond, as we've seen with some of the new Branches this week and younger workers, who do everything on their 'phones, I know my 18 year old son does, because it's those members that are going to be sat here in the next five and 10 years' time, making the decisions and deciding policy for our Union. We want to be attractive to women workers by being a safe place that they can turn to, without the risk of sexism or harassment and for (unclear) workers by being a truly anti-racist organisation.

We also need accountability, at all levels, whether you're a Shop Steward, a Branch Secretary, an FTO or the General Secretary, because our members pay in their subs and deserve nothing less, especially now when we're in a cost of living crisis and every penny counts. What we've been doing for the last 20 years isn't working, we're in a different world now in a lot of ways because of the pandemic and just because we've done something for so long doesn't mean it's right and doesn't mean we have to do it forever. I appreciate change is difficult, trying new things moves us out of our comfort zones, doesn't it, but isn't that the best, but isn't that what creates the best things that we experience? Vicky threw herself out of a plane a few days ago. I know for some of us in the room, trying Zoom meetings through the pandemic had that same feeling of dread, you know, when you're sat waiting to chuck yourself out of a plane, but we managed to get through and now we're in a position where we have removed the barriers for attendance to Conference and we've got Delegates that can now attend our Conference and take part in our democratic processes that wouldn't have been able to do just because they couldn't attend physically and that needs to be celebrated.

There are 4.1 million people working in the food and drinks sector in the UK, which means the potential for our Union is huge. Can you imagine if we got a 10th of that workforce, we'd be spinning wouldn't we. There are so many of those workers though that do not know what a Trade Union is, they don't understand what they're for and they don't understand why they should spend their money on paying in to one, so it's up to all of us in this room and all the Reps back in our workplaces to step up and explain that to people, celebrate our wins, show them why we are a Trade Union and they should be part of it and that's part of the reason why we changed the Annual Report, so you've got a document there that shows the stuff that we are doing, in your Region and nationally.

And we are doing, you know, it's not all bleak, we are doing some really good stuff. Just look at the work that's been done up in Scotland, I think the (unclear) Branch is up to like 70 members, which is phenomenal, the Reps in Greggs between them and I know Gary, you've been out a lot as well, have made over 250 new members this year, that is amazing and it just goes to show what can be achieved when we can get out and about and go back to normal. We've got our new Branch 600, made up of workers in the sex industry and in a couple of months we've over 90 members that have joined our Union and I know there are other Branches doing incredible work as well to increase their membership. The Organising Week Initiative in Region 5 looked fantastic, there were some great pictures and videos on social media and I'd really encourage other Regions to do the same and Branches, you can do your own organising weeks, it is within your remit as Branches to do that.

You'll notice, on your tables, there's piles of membership forms. I was going to give you 10 each, but I'd have still been counting them out and putting them out this morning and we've already done a lot of Conference. We want to launch a bit of a competition, or two competitions actually. The first Delegate that gets 10 paying members after Conference, into your Regional Offices, will win a prize. The person that makes the most members over the next six months will win a bit of a better prize. We want to try and get, create some competition and some rivalry and let's see which Region can make the most members in the next 12 months and let's grow our Union. Make sure you put your names on them though when you send them in, otherwise we won't know who they've come from.

I'm going to finish off, because there's a lot of business to get through, you're going to be hearing a lot from me this week because I've loads of motions to speak on and of course closing speeches, but change is a journey, we're not through that journey yet. I would ask that you embrace change and let's make sure that our great Union is still here in 100 years+ when we're all long gone, because it is only by coming together collectively as one Union that we grow and we enact change. We know we can't rely on anybody else. The current government's not going to do it for us, any future government's not going to do it for us and as Lorraine said earlier, if we want a world where everybody's thriving, not one where our kids are taking food home to share with their parents because there's not enough food in the cupboards.

I'm incredibly proud to be your General Secretary. There is some fantastic work done in our Branches that we need to be celebrating more. We don't shout about it enough. So thank you for everything that you do, day-in, day-out. It's a thankless task being a Rep, I appreciate that, even more so being a Branch Secretary, because you've got to be the expert at everything at all times and it's always your fault when something goes wrong, but together we will grow this Union back up. We will stand together stronger, we will be more powerful, our Branches will be bigger as a result. So Solidarity, enjoy the rest of Conference and just before I finish, Laura asked me to just make a quick announcement. The stuff on the table behind Region 7 is not for people to take away. We're doing a bit of a scoping exercise to see what merchandise people might want in the Branches. There's stuff over there you can help yourself to. Thank you very much, Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, back to your Final Agendas. Are you going to make a, oh right, okay. Chair of Standing Orders to make an announcement before we go back to the Agenda.

Brother John Fox – Chair of Standing Orders: Can you open your Agendas, Conference. The next report from the Standing Orders is from Motion 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31, all stand. 32 has already been done in a composite 1 and 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 all stand. That's the end of this report.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, so Conference, do you accept the report? All in favour? Thank you, Conference. Cheers. Back to your Agendas then and what number was I at? I was at 18, wasn't I? 18 and life's just started. Sorry, I was just singing.

18

Branch 356

That the BFAWU should name and shame any company that pays its workers less than the minimum wage.

Brother Duggie Johnson – District Branch 356: 18. I think the motion says it all really, doesn't it. We should name and shame these companies who abuse workers, who victimise workers, don't pay them the minimum wage. We should call them out. We should call out the things, because that's why we exist as a Union, that why the Trade Union movement exists, completely. It's time that we said no more, you will pay the minimum wage, you will not abuse workers. I think that says it all. Please vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? No? Okay, Nick.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates.

We are a campaigning Union, we spend every waking moment campaigning for fair pay for our members. If a company was flaunting health and safety we would expose them, so what's the difference? How long do we have to feel like I've just got paid, I'm broke? The Executive would ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. So who spotted my deliberate mistake? Nobody? Alright, we'll do composite 2 then. I would say it was deliberate, but it probably wasn't. So it's, composite 2 is made up, I believe it's 432? 356, 405 and the 356 again. So, who's the mover? Go on then. We always love a volunteer, Doug.

Composite 2

The BFAWU is committed to ensure the BFAWU campaigns and fights against any changes to employment and social rights which could have a detrimental impact on our members.

We as a union and membership should in the strongest terms fight any attacks on our trade union rights. Time and time again this tory government is attacking us to stifle us, and it must stop. The right to protest is enshrined in international law and this conference condemns the government's attempt to clamp down on it.

Conference agrees to work with all interested parties and our parliamentary group, to prevent the new anti-protest legislation, and to campaign for the removal of these anti-protest laws.

Original motions: 15 [Branch 432] 16 [Branch 356] 21 [Branch 405] and 97 [Branch 356]

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: I've written a speech for this actually, it won't be that long. The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bills is what can only be described as a draconian piece of legislation. It will allow ministers to write regulations starting with sectors of health, education, fire and rescue, nuclear decommissioning and transport. It will force workers to work during strike action and name notices, naming which staff will have to work. If they do not turn up for work, they could face dismissal. Unions could face damages. Do not kid yourself, this is only the beginning. This was only the start and they will come for the rest of us. The government's even own analysis says that it will not work and will cause more strikes. That's their own analysis.

Personally, I'm quite keen on striking against this government. They do not mention that when nurses, if you ever speak to nurses and people who work in the NHS, you speak to them and I speak to them quite often, when they actually have industrial action, there is better coverage than when they aren't on strike. That's how much they care about our NHS workers, the same that they were clapping during the pandemic. They do not, they mention that it's a similar case across Europe, but most European Unions disagree and I'll finish with this quote. The European Trade Union Congress says, the UK has among the most draconian restrictions on the right to strike in Europe and the UK's government's plans would only push it even further from normal democratic practice across Europe. Please, we've got to make a stand, please vote for the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: The Executive Council would ask you to support the motion, please. Well said Dougie, (unclear), well done.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. I'm going to go to the vote anyway, because we've spoken. To the vote, all those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 19. Definitely you, John. Did you say Bonjour? (in a singing voice), Will you dance with somebody

19

Branch 432

That this Conference agrees that we should use what ever means possible to call for the re-Nationalisation of our railways they are a shambles and possible the worst in Europe.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool - EC Member): Motion 19. Moving the motion and speaking on behalf of the Executive Council, who would ask you to support this motion. That this Conference agrees that we should use whatever means possible to call for the renationalisation of our railways. They are a shambles and possibly the worst in Europe. With high fares, possibly again the highest in Europe, late trains, cancelled trains, except for the Midnight Train to Georgia

[LAUGHTER AND SOME APPLAUSE]

...crowded trains and staff-less stations are all a common thing these days.

Britain's rail network was first nationalised by Labour's Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, in 1948 and butchered by Dr Beeching, Chairman of the Railways Board, who wielded his axe in the 60's and then privatised under John Major's Conservatives in 1993. Putting failing private operators in the hands of the public would improve services and lower fares. A poll from August, 2022 showed 68% of the public wanted railways brought back into the public ownership. Nationalising the railways has the potential to bring a number of obvious savings to the UK government; shareholders dividends. Over the last six years one billion pounds is being paid out to shareholders in dividends. Just last year, FirstGroup paid over 500 million to its shareholders.

Instead of being paid into shareholders' accounts, this could be put into the railways and reduce the taxpayers' contribution. Sub-contractors Transport for Quality of Life, estimate over £100 million could be saved on private sub-contractors. Thus the case for renationalising all of Britain's railways is a strong one. Privatisation has proved extremely costly and an integrated national network would be better value for both customer and government. The latest train company to lose its franchise was TransPennine, which have just lost that. In March, one in six services were cancelled and I think finally, the Tories are coming round to Jeremy Corbyn's policy a number of years ago, about renationalising our railways. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded? Seconded? Formally seconded, okay. Any speakers? Okay.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Yes, I oppose to renationalise the railways because I think what this will do is bring more pressure, I think it will impact the economy, I think will impact inflation. We have to pay the taxpayer, we have to pay the shareholders out, so there's a cost to us. There's going to be a cost to the taxpayer to actually run the railways. The actual, I go up and down from, I jump up and down from home, I live in, well I'm not, I'm from London but I live in Yorkshire, so I'm up and down from Yorkshire to London constantly on the trains and the prices are really quite good. I've never had issues with them. I just think what will actually happen, there won't be any difference in the cost to the traveller, I think the cost of the travel will increase, I think the, I don't think there'll be an improvement on the railways, we'll still have the same people running the railways and we still have, the government still has some kind of impact, because they have to be tendered for, so every five years or whatever, they have to tender for the privilege to run a, you know, a section whether it be LNER, whether it be Northern Rails or whatever, so we still have to a certain point, the government still has a little bit of sort of backing behind them to actually be able to control in some way, shape or form, but I just think there'll be an extra cost, I think it'll cost us in the future because to run the railways is going to be, I think, another way that, I'm sort of mumbling a little bit here because I just feel basically that I think it will cost us in the future as taxpayers and there won't be any savings in the long run and I think as well, there is the competitive market also, because I do feel the competitive market shows that the rail costs aren't that bad, I've never had an issue with it. I can get down to London for about £48, I can travel first class for about £80 - £90. I've never been, in the past you'd be paying twice that basically, so it's, no, I oppose this motion and I think it should stay as it is, a good competitive market basically and each, every five years the government does actually put policies in place to make sure that the railways are run correctly. So, I oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Mark, you couldn't be more wrong than anything. I'm sorry.

[APPLAUSE]

You couldn't be. I feel about, a little bit of déjà vu coming on here, you know, because I think at a previous Conference, I had to mention I can give you an example, it's called East Coast Line. East Coast Line has twice, not once, but twice had the rail operator just walk away and leave it and guess what happened, it was then nationalised and run from inside the Treasury and guess what happened? It actually started making a profit, it was such a success. It paid in over a billion pounds back into the Treasury, that's the truth, over a billion pounds and when they went to privatise it, I've never heard of all the customers signing a mass petition saying please keep it as it is, it is fantastic, we've never had our railway run so successfully, you know and I'm sorry, but we are subsidising the railways as it is.

If we'd have given British Rail the amount of money, the actual amount of money, that we give to these private operators, who then shift it abroad, don't bother paying their tax, because we know what they're like, yes, we've have had the most cheapest, most successful railways in Europe. It can be done, we know how to do it and I'll tell you what, I can, do you know what, this is kind of a little bit personal. My father came down from Glasgow to Leicester in the 1960's, yes, he also lived two years in South Africa and he told me, he worked at British Rail Engineering in Derby, there were 14,000 men worked in the loco works, 14,000 men worked in the carriage and wagon and when he lived in South Africa in the 60's, they were still using steam trains that had been built in Derby.

We can have a successful railway, but that means bringing it back to us, because it's our railway. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: I think that ticket price should be affordable for whole family. Now if you want to see your family in England and you try to drive from Scotland, you need to book that ticket in advance, but it's not like a day or week, sometimes you need to take a month before you, you know, travel, but if something happened, if you want to just, I don't know, go on a funeral and you want to buy a ticket overnight, the prices are ridiculous. I need to go to London one day for the personal situation and I tried to buy the ticket, the ticket overnight cost £600. Who afford to do that? Which family going to be able to afford to spend £600 per person? So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? You have the right of reply, because he did move it on behalf of the Executive as well you see, so just in case you missed it. Do you not want the right of reply? No, okay. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. So, motion 19, isn't it? 20, sorry, 20, 20, 20, 20, 20, 20, that's you, Doug.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I bet you're sick to death of seeing me, ain't you, you know, but do you know what, I look, I was looking up for this motion some statistics from Oxford, you know, while we're, if anybody's read the Gregson Report that was done on Right to Food, you know, it makes tear-breaking reading, it breaks your heart and yet we find ourselves in a world where the 10th richest men since the first two years of the pandemic, their wealth has doubled, from 700 billion to 1.5 trillion, that's a rate of \$15,000 per second or 1.5 billion a day and yet we find stories about children taking food home to their parents. We find stories about nurses using food banks. We find stories of, before Covid this is, Oxford University, not exactly an institution that's made for making up figures, carry out a study that found out that since the Conservatives have been in power, over 200,000 people had been killed by austerity, 200,000 people died from austerity and that's without the mess they made of Covid. It's time we changed things, it's time.

You only have to look at supermarkets, you know and the prices are going up, but the profits are going up and their wages are going up again and again and again. Now the Conservatives have, are shouting because inflation is below 10%, whoopee, whoopee do. You know what I mean, apart from that's a lie, that's RPI and we know that's the real CPI side, the real rate of inflation is RPI and that's 13.5%. More Tory lies. It's time we changed this. It's time the people can afford to live in dignity and respect and I put in respect for shop workers. Our General Secretary came out of a shop, you know, shop workers are constantly attacked, constantly degraded, it's time something is done to change that. Some shop workers live in fear, they're having to deal with people attacking and abuse. It's time something is done to change it, so please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: I ask you to support this motion. As a shop worker myself, it is absolutely right.

The girls know we've got security guards in some of our shops because the abuse you get is ridiculous. I'm sworn at most days, I've been spat at, I've been threatened, someone actually took a swipe at us over the counter over the price of food and it's absolutely ridiculous. So I ask you to please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? No? Okay.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. In a survey of our members in 2023, including people from all four nations of the United Kingdom, to quote the report, over 60% of the respondents, that's 234 people, said their wages were not currently high enough to meet their basic needs. 88% of respondents had reduced heating and energy use in their homes to save money. One in 10 respondents reported feeling cold in their homes all the time, with a further 38% respondents saying they never felt cold at home due to (mumbling) never felt cold in their own homes most of the time. By contrast, only 3.77% said they never felt cold at home due to the level of heating used. When asked about access to food, to feed themselves and their families, less than half of the respondents said they always have enough to feed everyone. Given the level of response to the previous question, it is sadly unsurprising that over 60% of respondents have already reduced the amount of food they eat. Just under half of the respondents, 45.43%, reported having skipped meals to make sure others could eat enough. Almost 17% of the food workers who took part in this research have had to use a food bank and we're the ones producing the food. What will it take for this government to act?

Maybe when it's cold and I've got nowhere to sleep, who knows? In this room, some of people, are some of the people from this survey. Also in this room and someone's already stolen some of my thunder over there, thank you, are some shop workers. I'm one of those shop workers. We can all give you stories of the disrespect, rudeness and abuse that we receive and that's without them giving us a cattle prod. A taser instead, I'm promoting tasers now. Sometimes it's about price, sometimes it's about the times that we open, sometimes it's about what's available and sometimes there's just no reason to it at all. For a bit, Shopwise worked, not any more. The full report is available on the website and it's a bit of a scary read. The Executive would like, ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. It's a long and winding road isn't it, that. To the vote. All those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 22. It'd be you.

22

Branch 356

This union should affiliate on a national level to the Peace and Justice Project.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I bet you're shocked to see me up here, aren't you? Okay. I think we should affiliate, we've already, to the Peace & Justice Project. Now I've got to say we're already affiliated in Region 3 to the Peace & Justice Project and I'll tell you what, yes, this is a relationship that pays up, that pays for us, you know, they've actually paid for leaflets, translated leaflets, into different languages. Paid to have halls, paid for where we can have meetings. They've given us, constantly on our Samworth campaign, Artin who is a godsend, for he's one of these people, even though he's not a member of our Union, believes in our Union. He's dedicated to building our Union. We've had Jeremy Corbyn, who set up the Peace & Justice Project, said on the, on his, on their website and on their twitter account, shouting about the relationship the Peace & Justice Project has had with the Bakers Union. It is a relationship that pays off. It is a relationship that will help us build the Union. Now I know we've had some difficult times and Sarah quite rightly highlighted we had a declining membership, you know, but our relationship with the Peace & Justice Project is going to pay off, it really will pay off and help us build this Union for another 175 years. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

[someone asks, off-mike], Douggie, I don't know what the Peace & Justice Project is, what is that? I've never heard of it).

It's a project set up by Jeremy Corbyn, yes, it's dedicated to building Unions, building community groups, building an anti-racist movement, it's dedicated to all the things we believe in, you know. It's Jeremy that's took his time out and we all know Jeremy, he's been a friend of ours for a long time, but it helps us push forward those ideas that we want. It gives us bodies, like Artin, to go places and say like, we've got an extra, come on, we'll go and get people signing up for the Union. It's a worthwhile project and because it's got Jeremy Corbyn's name, who's got national importance, promoting him through us promotes our Union. It's a relationship that can pay off and I think it's worthwhile we just say we're going to affiliate. So please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Secunder? Secunder? A few there, thank you very much, inundated. Any speakers? General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the Executive support this motion. To be open and honest, we're already a national affiliate Douggie, we made that decision last year, no, no, it's fine, we obviously didn't advertise that we'd done so enough for it to be common knowledge and we'll do some work around that in the post-Conference Foodworker and beyond so that, Mark, you'll understand what the campaign is all about, but just to give you some context, the Samworth Brothers campaign, as Douggie touched on, the Peace & Justice, Peace & Justice Project are fully supporting us in that, so they're providing administrative support, they take people to our leaflets and are putting things online to encourage people to support and sign petitions. We held a fantastic rally down in Cornwall that Robbie from Region 2 put together and Jeremy came down and we had some other speakers to try and build up the activism around the Samworth factory down there and they also do a lot of work internationally, so Jeremy has got international links that go back as long as he's been an MP, over the last 40 years and this is about raising some of those issues and building awareness and support, you know, for people in Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Palestine, everything and anything, it's basically what it says on the tin. Fighting for peace and fighting for justice for workers and we're very proud to be a national affiliate of an organisation that does exactly what we stand for as a Trade Union. So we'd ask you to support the motion and we will do some work to make sure that we get a wider understanding of what the project is about.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 23, that'd be me.

23

Executive Council

'Conference condemns the continued political and physical attacks on refugees, asylum seekers and others without their status in the UK. Conference accepts that many people, even with the right to work, are often in precarious situations due to their immigration status. Conference reaffirms the right of all workers to employment which is safe and secure and have access to justice against labour exploitation in workplaces.

We believe that migrants who are undocumented and working in the UK have the right to join trade unions and be protected from exploitation and modern slavery. To this end, Conference supports the call made by a number of migrant bodies, anti-racist, poverty eradication groups and others that all undocumented and people with insecure immigration status residing in the UK should be granted indefinite leave to remain.'

We resolve to sign up to statusnow4all, and our Union to become an organisation signatory and encourage our branches to join the growing coalition of organisations calling for the United Kingdom to act NOW and grant #LeaveToRemain to all undocumented migrant people.

Support all future petitions that promote the statusnow4all call and the aims and objectives of StatusNow4All <https://statusnow4all.org/about-status-now/>.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I'm not going to read out the motion, you can read that yourself. Conference, we know politicians want us to believe we're being invaded, they want us to believe that they're the cause of our cost of living crisis. This is all down to the fact that these illegal humans are arriving on our shores. They even introduced a bill called the Illegal Immigration Bill because they know the bill that they're moving is illegal in international law. I simply say this, every day the media pours poison into our ears, the written media creates headlines that misrepresent the truth. On our TV shows there's scenes that give an appearance of this huge problem, but yet when you actually look at the facts and let's look at some, without migrant labour, our NHS would collapse. Without immigration that arrived on our shores, we wouldn't have traditional British fish and chips and let's not talk about curries. They say we are full, yet that well-known woke left Ordnance Survey data that's produced has shown us there's actually, on buildings, in industry, uses 1.4% of the land. In fact, when the tide goes out, more land is revealed than we've built homes on. Think about that, because we could all go and live on the beach, we'd have to evacuate now and again, but we could all go and live on the beach and there'd be more room available on the beach than we currently occupy as human beings in the UK, but we're told it's full.

There's more golf courses that takes up 2% of the land in the UK than actually what we're given to live in, that's the reality. So when they tell us it's full, they're lying to us. It's to present a position that suggests that the people coming here, that have created the country that we live in, that built the country that we live in, are somehow the cause of all our hardship and it's not true, it's not true. Coming over here and taking our land nonsense, the country is full and I noticed the other day, the anti-woke media let slip that this year, despite the millions spoke about by Suella Braverman, coming into the country, that super left-leaning Daily Telegraph said there were 7,610 people that had arrived here by boats and after all of the millions we spent to the French, they had stopped more than had arrived on the coast and let's be clear about those people coming across on the boats, they're coming across on those boats because they are fleeing persecution, for fear because of war, because of climate catastrophe and climate disasters that are happening in their countries, they're coming here to seek support and safety from a nation that has always prided itself on supporting fellow human beings, a country that's gone round the globe, taking people's resources, never afraid to take what they've got, to leave them with nowt, but when it comes to supporting those people at their desperate times, we want to be told that we need to turn our backs on them.

When we think, when we think about the situation when we see on television about those people who are probably just fleeing from war in Afghanistan, when a bunch of right-wingers outside chanting names, making threats, how must that, how welcoming must that be in a so-called civilised society? We heard Lorraine talk about the need for people to be treated with fairness, respect and dignity. We heard Lorraine talk this morning about the suffering and when they talk about people being in the system for 12 months, two years, she actually told you, people of 16 and 17 years denied the right to work, the right to a decent life, the right to be able to enjoy the things that we all take for granted. The right to join a Trade Union, the right to be in a workplace where they're not going to be exploited.

This motion is about saying that we stand in Solidarity with all of those people who came to this country because they sought safety and sanctuary and if a Trade Union isn't about saying that we support people at their time of need, I don't know what it is. I hope and I pray that you recognise the importance of this motion and support this motion, because we should always stand in Solidarity with our fellow human beings. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Is it Vic's? Hiya.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It was formally seconded.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: You know what, I was sitting here and a brilliant speech by the way, Ian, it really, really captured it, although one must congratulate the Conservatives in finding a Home Secretary even more horrible and nasty than Priti Patel. I think that deserves a round of applause in itself. But I can't say here, stand here and not take it personally, because when I think how they demonise migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, I turn around and I think about my Sudanese neighbour. I turn around and I think about my Egyptian neighbour. I turn around and I think about the two young Afghan men that I often talk to in the lifts and I think that's who you mean when you demonise people. I think about one of my friends, Ian knows her, Jackie Lewis, yes, you know, Jackie works with refugees in Leicester City Council and she took us down once to meet, to meet some of the refugees, in 2017, they were from Syria. We met this young boy, this young boy, I look at him and I saw all these scars on his face and I couldn't help but tears welled up in my eyes. I thought what has that little boy seen, what, what has he seen in that war. You cannot help but take this personally, because these are the people they want to demonise. It doesn't matter to me whether a child is in pain in front of me or 10,000 miles away, a child is in pain and shouldn't be. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: It's very hard to

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can you introduce yourself.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Sorry, it's very hard to speak on the previous two speakers, they both are, I respect them, they both are, especially my friend there, he's a Region 3 and the President, but here I differ, right. I'm not against them, people, giving them shelter, I think we must help them plus doing something, we have to help them. Now talking about the people from Ukraine, right, I think we must help them. They are fighting against that tyrant, Russians, right, we must help them and those people are educated people. I've seen some (unclear) people, I'll give them shelter in their homes, right and give them everything and regarding the Afghanistan people, that was British fault, that used those people, that used them and then they left and, they throw them, they used them like a tissue. That's not, Britain is not fair, right. Now talking about, you mentioned (unclear), she is actually from Portuguese(?), right, I don't know but, she goes to a Buddhist temple, I think she's from, actually from Kenya and she was a Hindu and now she's Buddhist.

Now if the people are coming legally, right, legally, then we should support them. If the people are illegal, some of them die in the boats and they are not, they are not prosecuted, they are coming illegally right, but I still, I think we should support them, not put them in hotels, not put them in the local people. I know a couple of places where people have, I think it's somewhere near Walsall and they try to put them in a building and use building in Wolverhampton, people objected about that, right. Now, I still say if you want to support them, you don't have to put them in hotels when Tony Blair has got a big house, he can accommodate a few of those and Her Majesty the Queen, she got buildings all over the place. Why don't use that, right

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I would agree with that.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Why don't use that and why should we support, as a Union we are suffering, right. I was at a conference, black people conference, there were Asians, all sorts. I stand for liberty, equality and fraternity. I don't hate Muslim, I don't hate, I welcome the Muslims in Walsall and their people and they were butchered in 1947 by Hindus and their girls were raped and they done the same, right, so this Mr Tony Blair, I think you will remember his wife, Cherie Blair, who's an international lawyer or something, right, she was travelling on a train, right, travelling on a train and a black man, well, I don't mind if somebody call me black, blue or white, right, I know a lot of them, they take drugs, they take (unclear) and that person, he came two or three times, he knew that Cherie Blair is the wife of Tony Blair and he said any more tickets, any more tickets, she was doing, right and three or four times he said madam, pay your fee plus fine, right, so he was doing his job, right and what happened two or three days later, he was caught smoking.

He was smoking before, right and then the press went to the House of Parliament, Mr Tony Blair was making a speech and the press forced him to come out, right and he came out, he finished his, because press here, strong, press, they said what happened, that guy has been sacked and he said nothing to do with me, right, she's my wife, right. Again Tony Blair picked up a chairman for racial equality, his name was (unclear) Singh from, right and he was caught drunk driving his car in London, right and we have drunk people, I don't drink hardly but I do drink sometimes, beer, but and so Tony Blair came out and said it's nothing to do with me, right, just his wife, right, so help them, put some of them in Tony Blair's house, right and that's hold them. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, cheers, Mahinder.

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580: Unfortunately I think I'm going to have to vote against this motion. With what Ian said, I agree with a lot of it, with asylum and refugees and this lady's stories about the asylum process, it's unjust, unfair and unworkable at the minute. We don't have enough routes for refugees and asylum seekers to get to this country. That being said, it's the others, where if you come across in a boat, you are travelling from a safe country, France and technically it is a criminal offence, so I cannot support it. We want to be concentrating more on refugees and asylum, like Afghanistan, Syria, these people did not start the war. It's rich and powerful people dropping bombs on countries and civilians pay the price for it. So we should have safe and legal routes, across the world, for people who need it, but referring to people coming from France by boats, I don't quite support that because it's illegal and criminal activity and they're not vetted properly and we need better routes. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Right, I do not oppose this motion but I also do not support this motion. Now, I can say this because half of my family are immigrants, okay, I'm second generation, but first generation, half of my family are from India. Okay, I may have a posh voice and I've been here and went to school here, etc, but there is definitely an issue. We're approaching it as a government, we're approaching, we're not approaching it correctly, but there is definitely, it's a small minority that, the immigrants coming through, that can cause a problem in our country, but most who come are actually seeking asylum and they're seeking a new life and they're getting away from war-torn, from war or whatever, so it's not that I oppose this motion, but I almost can't vote on this either, so I will not be voting on it because I do feel there is an issue, but I think the government just need to deal with it in a different way. Thank you.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Freddie Velez – Branch 547: I feel very strong about this motion. I was an asylum seeker myself, I've been a refugee for a long time. I joined the Bakers Union the first week I joined in to my company. The Bakers Union

[APPLAUSE]

I always felt supported by the Bakers, welcomed by the Bakers, even when I couldn't speak any English, the Bakers were there for me. So we should support this. I feel very proud of being part of this Union, I couldn't put this in better words as you have put at the beginning. So I'm calling on all of you that we refugees are your colleagues, your friends, your everyday people. Please support it.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Okay. I will use my right to reply.

Hopefully I don't knock the stand over again, but you are insured aren't you, Sarah? So, Conference. The media, the politicians are ranged? against desperate human beings, they're ranged? against them. Why, why do you think that in a time of financial hardship and crisis, we are presented with desperate human beings as the reason why your children can't find a decent place to live, you can't have a pay rise in your workplace, your taxes are so out of control you're losing most of it when you get your wages, your credit cards are going up, your mortgage is going up, your rents are going up, so how, with all that going on, do politicians stand up and tell us we've never had it so good, or we wouldn't have had it so bad if it wasn't for that group of people over there, because believe you me, when they've run out of people to blame coming across the ocean, it's the sick, it's the disabled, it's the poor, it's the workers, it's the work-shy, whichever group they want to use to get you to believe are responsible for your problems, they will use until you're convinced your hardship is caused by some minority.

That's how the system's been working for centuries, centuries, to keep us in our place. Are you happy in your place? Are you happy that your children can't afford to live a decent life? Are you happy to hear stories of people using food banks and the justification is, it's these people coming over in a boat. Well, before those people coming over in a boat, it was all those Europeans coming over here, because we were members of the European Union and before that, before

that, it was all those Asians coming over here, all those Asians coming over here and taking up your jobs and before that, it was the Irish. They've always used somebody as a reason why your life is hard, always. We are a Trade Union that believes in humanity, because if we don't believe in anything else, we should believe in the right of the people to live and to exist. It's our duty, as Trade Unionists, to support this motion, to stand in Solidarity with fellow human beings. There is no such thing as an illegal human. We stand in Solidarity with every human, that's what makes us Trade Unionists. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried, thank you very much.

I need a brew, so we're going to stop and we'll come back at 25 past 2.

[BREAK]

Can we take, can we settle back down and take our seats, please. Okay, can we all settle down, please. Okay. Obviously we put that additional break in due to the fact that it is so warm in here.

Before we move on with the, back to the Agenda, I just want to read out the nominations for Standing Orders. Region 1, there wasn't one. Region 2, it was Michael Maguire. Region 3, Karen Plasom and Mohinder Badhan. Region 4, Peter John Fox. Region 5, Dave Lawrence and Glyn Tozer. Region 7, Jake Dunwoody. So there will be an election in Regions 3 and 5 and the ballot papers will be out in the morning, okay? For the TUC Congress, Lizzie Dinning, Nick Mead, Ian Banton, Peter Pine, Mohinder Badhan and John Fitzpatrick. If anybody doesn't want to be, didn't want to stand, could you let me know now, so we can let Standing Orders know, so your name doesn't go forward to the ballot and if I don't hear anything from those people, I'm assuming you're all happy to go forward for the ballot, which means there'll be a ballot in the morning, because three Delegates go, yes?

Okay, moving back to the Agenda, motion 24, General Secretary.

Conference notes with concern reports in the Sunday Times on the 15th January 2023 suggesting that, at a time of an acute cost of living crisis for households with food inflation running at over 14 per cent, UK supermarkets are set to announce higher than anticipated profits;

Further notes that Tesco alone is set to forecast increased operating profits of nearly £2.5 billion, significantly above its five-yearly average;

Shares the reported fears of industry insiders that the supermarket giants are benefitting from so-called "rocket and feather" pricing, where prices rise sharply in response to an inflationary spike, only to remain persistently higher than necessary as the rate of inflation falls;

Is scandalised that corporate shareholders should be making excessive profits and more and more households are forced to use foodbanks;

Remains concerned that, despite these rocketing profits, the big retailers in the food and drink sector continue to place undue commercial pressures on their suppliers, leading to a further squeeze on the terms and conditions of workers across the food sector, and more suppliers closing sites or going into administration;

Notes that food workers, like other low paid groups in society, are disproportionately impacted by the relentless increase in grocery prices;

Conference therefore instructs the executive of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers union to call for urgent regulatory action to tackle the plague of excessive corporate profiteering by the UK supermarkets, and urges the government to introduce a statutory Right to Food for everyone in our country.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, at a time when you, our members, food workers, key workers are saying you're embarrassed, you no longer ask for friends to come over as you sit in blankets, supermarkets are, maybe not today, supermarkets are announcing record profits, putting more cash into the pockets of shareholders and wealthy directors whilst BFAWU members are forced further into poverty and saying you are cold and poor, quite isolated and that in some cases your home has become a bit like a prison. BFAWU members, as well as other low paid groups in society, are disproportionately impacted by the relentless increase in grocery prices. You are being crippled by increases to energy prices on top of wages, terms and conditions, all being squeezed because your employers say there isn't enough money for more. We ran our survey back in 2021 around our members' access to food during the pandemic and as part of our Right to Food Campaign we set out clear demands. We are calling for a statutory right to food for everyone in our country and the quotes that I've just given are from our most recent survey which Delegates will get a copy of tomorrow and this report, I know it's been touched on already, paints a harrowing picture of the situation food workers, our members, are facing.

Over 60% of respondents told us that their wages aren't enough to meet their basic needs, 88% of them reduced their heating and energy use to save money, over 60% have reduced the amount of food they eat and the use of food banks in the two years since our last survey has increased by over 10%. This is a stark contrast, isn't it, to the successes that supermarkets are celebrating. Through our work with the Food & Work Network we know that the situation spans far further than the food industry, because after 13 years of austerity and cuts, we know the majority of our class is struggling to survive. Excessive corporate profiteering by UK supermarkets, their power to put pressure on the supply chains, squeezing and eroding terms and conditions of workers or simply just closing down sites has to stop. We need a statutory right to food for everyone, no-one should be going hungry. Parents shouldn't be going without meals so their children can eat, then working 12 hour shifts with empty bellies and no-one should be in a position where, I quote, we have blankets on all of our chairs to avoid using heating. We have gotten out of bed with hot water bottles in the morning. I earn more now than I have ever earned and I still struggle to cover the bills, I even stay late at work to avoid having to heat the house longer than I need. Conference, we're in 2023 and this is how workers are living. The Executive asks that the Conference supports the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded. Speakers? Are you speaking? Oh, thank you. Speakers? To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Thank you very much. 26.

26

Branch 405

That this Conference congratulates our Union Towns Project on winning new deals for workers in the Fast Food and Hospitality sector. Such as the Victory achieved at Cutlery Works, that won a 45% pay increase and abolition or Zero Hour Contracts and Youth Rates.

The Campaign that launched both McStrike and Spoonstrike have shown with dedicated organising strategy and methods, that no area is un-organisable.

Branch 405 asks that the EC looks at the model and how it can be adapted into building a sustainable union that delivers across both organised and unorganised sectors that we are involved in. Now is the time to put structures in place to build our mighty BFAWU, that will be here to build workers power for the next 175 years.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: That this Conference congratulates our Union Towns Project on winning new deals for workers in the fast food and the hospitality sector, such as the victory achieved at the Cutlery Works, that won a 45% pay increase and abolition of zero hour contracts and youth rates. The campaign that launched both McStrike and Spoons strike has shown with dedicated organising strategy and methods that no area is unorganisable. Branch 405 asks that the EC looks at this model and how it can be adapted into building a sustainable Union that delivers across both organised and unorganised sectors that we are involved in. Now is the time to put structures in place to build our mighty Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union, that will be here to build workers' power for the next 175 years. I don't want, because I think all that needed to be said, yes and all we're actually asking is that we congratulate this, our Union Town Project on winning these new deals, so please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Do I see a seconder? Okay. Speakers? I'll have to slim next year, because I think that

Conference, the Executive would ask you to support this motion and recognise the work actually that came about funnily enough following the Hovis strike. The decision to tackle the issue of low pay and zero hours was actually something that happened following the Hovis strike, when we realised what was happening to people in our industry, but also in areas that we believed needed to be organised and, you know, when you look over the years, the 10 years, that that project's been in existence, it's had some incredible successes. The first McDonald's strike delivered, for the workers of McDonald's, the biggest ever pay increase awarded by McDonald's in the UK, significant, improved people's lives. The first Wetherspoons strike delivered, when those workers went on strike in two pubs in Brighton, for all those people that worked in Wetherspoons, because believe it or not, if you worked at 11 o'clock in the morning or 11 o'clock at night, you got exactly the same hour rate of pay, no addition for unsocial hours. That strike delivered for every single Wetherspoons worker an additional payment of at least £1.00 an hour for all workers that worked past 9 o'clock in the evening. Incredible achievement for two pubs, which shows as well that when workers come together and stand together and take an employer, as mighty as they may be, whether it be McDonald's, whether it be Wetherspoons, if they're organised, they win, they win, but the victories don't stop there.

McDonald's was forced to recognise that they had to do something about zero hours contracts too and they were forced to make sure that they offered their workers, because of the activities of this Union, full-time contracts or part-time contracts that were no longer zero hours contracts. A victory for a handful of McDonald's workers delivered for every McDonald's worker, something that this Trade Union led on. Incredible achievement and still this year an even greater success probably, as important as those others were, is when you understand some of the issues faced by those women workers in particular, but not confined to women workers that were working in McDonald's, that told us harrowing stories about sexual harassment and, in some cases, sexual assault, where their employer didn't sack the manager, but moved the worker for reporting it. Where, in certain circumstances, a manager would actually target young girls, he would give them a number of hours to start off with, make them feel a little bit flush and as they continued to work those hours, listened to their conversations, listened to the plans they were making and then cut their hours, because he could, because they were on zero hours contracts and then he would take them to a cash machine and offer them money. You only have to imagine what he was offering them money for, because he was in a position where he felt all powerful and he had the opportunity to do it.

Our Union listened to those stories. We acted with those workers, many of those workers who believed they would never be believed, never be listened to and never see a result. This year, because of the action we took, this Executive took, you took, those workers got told their stories were believed and the first ever employer to be forced to sign an agreement with the Equalities & Human Rights Commission happened and now McDonald's are committed to making sure they treat their workers with respect and dignity and anybody who suffers sexual harassment or worse will be sacked and removed from their job and the employee, the worker, in some cases our member, will be given the respect and the dignity they should have had from day one without being forced down that path. So is it critical at times we, as a Union, understand the power that we have, even with a handful of people? Absolutely it is, because it only takes an understanding of workers coming together to change the lives of so many and you make that possible by your support, by your commitment, to the members in McDonald's that needed our assistance when they were asking for it. You made that possible by ensuring that we, as a Trade Union, made their voices heard, in their communities, in parliament, across the society that we live in, so we say to you this. This was an important campaign that also did deliver at Cutlery Works in Sheffield recently, that also was delivered across other places like Cathy's in Sheffield and Cathy's and Barrs? in Leeds. We say to you this, support this motion, recognise what we can do when we put our active energies into supporting unorganised workers, because there is no such thing as an unorganised worker and when we recognise our strength and power as workers and we act collectively, we can change the world. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 27.

27

Branch 356

The BFAWU should commit into issuing recruitment materials in the hospitality sector to all parts of our union with a view of building up our membership within that sector.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'm sorry, I'm up here again. I will make this short, I will. I think that, I looked at some figures in the UK hospitality sector. Approximately 143,000 businesses that employs 1.8 million people, 2019 generated 40.4 billion for the UK economy, but in a Union 3.3% of those workers. Now, some of you will know our great comrade from Birmingham, Adriana Khana?, who's in our Union, makes members, is a, to be honest she is one of my heroes. She is a godsend to this Union, brings in members all the time, helps run our Polski UK, our Polish Facebook page and the work she does in unionising hotel workers in Birmingham, you know, she works, she gets up at 4 o'clock in the morning, goes to work, comes back and then does Union work and it's a godsend. I think this is a growth area in where we do, you know. I hear stories sometimes about hotel workers in the hospitality sector. Me, Lukasz and George and I'm not going to mention the person, even though they're not in the room, sat in a room a few months, a couple of months' ago, where we had a Polish worker woman crying her eyes out, absolutely flooding with tears, as she had been sexually assaulted at work. There is a way of stopping this, there's a way of improving conditions and that's building the Union, so please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: I'm going to be oppose this motion, from the simple fact that we know the hospitality sector is massive and who going to be able to afford to sponsor all those leaflets, freebies for all the people and the materials given to them, right? So I think it's unrealistic to just, you know, issue all the materials for all the sectors.

We can just send maybe a, some of the campaigns and help our troops to organise those places, but definitely I don't think we're going to be realistically can send all the materials, right? Oppose the motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh no, it's not right of reply yet. Don't be so eager. Douggie, you're after Nick.

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: I ask you to support this motion. Look at what we've done in McDonald's, look at what we've done in Wetherspoon's. What more can we do if we go into the hospitality sector? I support the motion 100%.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? No? It's you, Nick. Follow the yellow brick road It's red.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. The Union is not an endless money pit. You've all had the opportunity to read the Accounts, but we also know we need materials in order to recruit. Sarah's already mentioned, we currently have a lot of items in stock, but for those items we don't have, you may not be aware, we have a form to request it. Sarah will happily email it out to anyone who wants it. We can make the form longer if we need to, add things to it, just let Sarah know. When we have a campaign, we request specific literature. Please use the form, the item you want may already exist. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You have the right of reply, Douggie.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Yes, I think, I can honestly, I understand where you're coming from, do you know what I mean, but much as I respect and admire you, I disagree, yes? We already have members in the hospitality sector. We are already getting members from the hospitality sector, because the good work we do, it shows. People jump on board with the Bakers Union because we are a good Union and it just means maybe an initial outrow?, yes and I'm not saying everywhere will eventually expand and multiply again and again and again, you know, that's how we're going to build, we're going to build by going for it, because I believe in this Union. I believe, with just a little bit more effort, we can make this, I think we could be bigger than Unite, you know, I think we could be bigger than UNISON. I know we're definitely better but

[APPLAUSE]

but I think we can. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion it's 28, it's 28. I think this is you, Raf. I thought you'd decided you weren't bothering then.

28

Branch 500

That this Conference agrees that we must increase use of social media outlets as a way of increasing membership. Any posts that mention BFAWU or campaign work by the union should be shared, or tagged fellow members and colleagues, to improve visibility on social media.

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: President, Secretary, EC, Delegates. This Conference agrees that we must increase use of social media outlets as a way of increase membership. Any person mentioned BFAWU or campaigning work by a Union should be shared and tag fellow members and (unclear) visibility on social media and I think it's quite true. The social media is one of the most powerful tool to organising. So last week, with our organising week, we did some videos which are on our Facebook page on BFAWU Scotland and we have nine shares, 10 likes. The Union have, I don't know, 18? thousand people. I know that some people doesn't use social media, I totally understand that, but many of you using the social media on a daily basis, a few times a day. So it's important to show the visibility of our action and I'm just going to leave it in line with what Sarah said previously. We need to share the good practice, we need to share with the people what we do on a daily basis. We can't just show up with the idea that we are the Union, but we need to have a proof what we done on a daily basis, because that's give us a strength to grow and that's why we need to ask people to share and also the following situations on social media as a constant. Thank you, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Come on, Rob.

Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 215: Cornwall Branch, to you English or Kernow to you Celts.

[APPLAUSE]

It's wonderful being in your country, it ain't bad, no border checks, no passports, not even chipped and came through, aye? I ask you, Conference, back this motion. Down in Cornwall, we've been using social media for two years, it's big and those people who don't follow us and don't know us, just check us out, share everything, like, spread it, set your own accounts. When you've got your own Branch accounts, your Regional accounts, follow other Trade Unions, follow social justice groups, they will then share your materials and it expands, it goes on, it goes on. That's the way we build. We will do it, we are the best Union and we will continue to be the best Union, because we care. We want to expand, we want to build and together we will do it. Conference, move this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: And you should have said Robbie, first-time speaker. First-time Delegate

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

...and done exceptional work for us down in Cornwall, absolutely brilliant, Robbie.

[APPLAUSE]

Anybody else? General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, we know that we can't rely on the mainstream media to get our stories out or report properly what Trade Unions are. We've got the Morning Star and I hope you're reading the free copies this week and will consider subscribing, but we know the Morning Star hasn't yet the reach it needs or deserves outside of our Trade Union movement, so the only way that we can get our message out, industrial action, organising campaigns, wage negotiation wins and all the other great stuff we do as a Union outside of own echo chamber and in to the vision of friends, families, neighbours, communities, young people, is to utilise social media. It's two seconds to like and share or post from another Branch and we should absolutely be sharing the victories and actions of others in our great Union and be proud to do so, because their victories are our victories as a collective. So the Executive asks you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Other good news for you, put your Agendas away, we're going to give you half an hour before you have to join the fringe meetings and I'll see you back here in the morning at half past 9. Thank you very much.

Monday 12th June 2023

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Everybody take their seats. Can we shut the door. Thank you very much. We'll be with you ever so shortly. After we've done, just to let you know, after we've done the roll call, we'll be bringing Ian Mearns on, who does our Parliamentary Group, the Chair of our Parliamentary Group, who will give you an overview of what's happened through our Parliamentary Group over the last 12 months. Ian Mearns is an MP and he's been working for the Bakers Union probably for longer than he wants to remember. I'm just filling in while Sarah finds her roll call. We're right, we're right. Okay, roll call.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Apologies for that, Conference. Region 1, thanks Frank. Region 2, did you get your ballot forms sorted? Region 3, can you make sure the one that's coming in, that's late, goes to Standing Orders please, because it's 9.32. Region 4. Region 5. Region 7. We've no Vice-President to tell me the online ones, but I'll check them in a minute. Thanks.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Chair of Standing Orders.

Brother John Fox – Chair of Standing Orders: Good morning, Delegates. This is my report for this morning. Can you turn to your Agendas please. Motion 40 is out-of-order, motion 41 stands but is composited and will be taken with motion 60, 62 and yes, that's it, yes, with 60 and 62 and we'll take that at 60. Motion 42 stands and 43 stands. Motion 44 is a composite with motion 48, motion 64 and they will be taken at this time, at 48. Motion 49 stands, motion 50 stands, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59 all stand. That is the end of the report for this morning.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, before you do, is it related to the Standing Orders report, Sean? Are you able to get him?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Can you hear me? Right, just asking for a friend. How do you sting people with a fiver if they're late, if they're online?

[someone answers, "We'll send somebody round"]

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): I know they do that. Is that Mark McHugh, I gather. I know they do that.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We'll send you round then, Sean.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Alright, I'm just testing the technology on all this.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just before you do, Chair, I never heard you mention motion 45, I don't know whether you missed that.

Brother John Fox – Chair of Standing Orders: Motion 45 stands.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cool. Okay, to Conference, all those in favour of that report? Anyone against? Thanks a lot.

Brother John Fox – Chair of Standing Orders: And Delegates, can you get your ballot papers in to Standing Orders for 11 o'clock. Anything after 11 o'clock will not be counted. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. Okay, listen Conference. Obviously we know items on the stalls are often there for you to take away. If we didn't make it clear enough yesterday, there's stuff on the stall at the back, advertising the merchandise, is not for taking away and unfortunately somebody has taken, is it a T-shirt and a hat? We understand accidents can happen and people can pick things up wrongly, thinking that they're free and to take, we understand that, but obviously if you have picked it up, if you could just return it, we'd really appreciate it, but just to remind you again, they are, they were for display purposes to say what you could order, if I remember correctly? Yes, so Okay. Just to also let you know, there's raffle tickets at £1 a strip, there's three prizes, Echo Show 8 with Alexa, I don't know what an Echo Show 8 is but there's an Echo Show 8 with Alexa, plus there's two gift cards and it's sponsored by Slater and Gordon.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: See me at the break and I'll start selling, unless I can get a volunteer.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Was that your deaf side, Geoff? That's why I like a volunteer, Geoff, thank you very much. It's okay, Dimitri's agreed to do it. Is there anything else?

Okay, I think Ian Mearns is going to magically appear now on the screen over there. Way-hey, Ian Mearns, obviously.

People who have been here before know, have heard from Ian Mearns and the fantastic, him and his colleagues do for us in parliament. You will have seen a lot of the early day motions that's been led by Ian Mearns, most recently in relation to the Allied strike and obviously Ian does an awful, awful lot of organising to get our voice heard across different sections of the different groups that meet in parliament that represent our interests. So, I'd like to invite Ian Mearns to give the report of what he's been doing in the last 12 months. Welcome Ian, nice to see you.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group, Addresses Conference via video link

Hello, Ian and nice to speak to you all and I'm terribly sorry I'm not there with you, but I've had a number of family issues to deal with over the weekend and I'm afraid to say the six hours it was going to take to travel down yesterday was just a bit beyond the pale in, you know, in helping out particularly my elder sister, who's not particularly well at the moment, so I did ask Sarah if it was okay if I (unclear) Michael Calderbank, so I apologise for not actually being with you in the flesh and Ian, it's nice to know that representatives of the Kleptomaniac Branch are actually in attendance as well

[LAUGHTER]

so I hope that the t-shirt and the hat are returned very, very soon.

Well, what can you say about the last 12 months in politics in general? You know, I'll speak first and foremost about what we've been doing in parliament as your representative Parliamentary Group and then I'll talk about the general political situation.

I'm glad to say that the Parliamentary Group now has 40 members, with several members of the House of Lords, but quite a few others who are interested in the work of the Group. There are, I would say, seven, eight or nine members of the House of Lords by the way, who have been very, very helpful on a whole range of issues to do with the legislative programme and are very supportive of the work of the Group. The Group meets every quarter and raises issues in parliament of concern to your members, constantly supported by Michael Calderbank and Richard Hanford of Solidarity Consulting, who work directly with your Head Office.

In terms of the food sector issues covered in the report, the key ones are, of course, the cost of living crisis and food price inflation and what's been come to known as greenflation as well, basically profiteering by supermarkets, by the energy companies and it's, that is what is driving higher prices and not a kind of wage inflation, which is lagging very badly behind overall inflation, making the living standards of your members and workers across the country much, much worse and that is why we have industrial action being taken not only by, you know, Rail Unions such as RMT and ASLEF, but also by the Royal College of Nursing for the first time in over 100 years and, you know, there are other industrial disputes going on around the country.

The impact of high food costs and energy on low income households and food insecurity is, it can't be overstated and there is a massive importance of fighting for better pay for your members, with other workers across the country and also we've seen now though, it's got to such a state for some families and for some members across the country that many, many more people who are in full-time employment rely on the use of food banks and that just can't be right in the 21st century, 21st century United Kingdom.

I'd also like to express Solidarity with the workers at Allied Bakeries in Liverpool who have recently gone on strike over pay and we placed an early day motion supporting them last week, with the co-operation of local MPs in Liverpool as well.

Of course there is support for the Food & Work Network with Birkbeck College University, London, bringing academics, Trade Unionists and community activists together, to discuss how the food system is broken and produce policy ideas to improve pay and conditions of employment and for food workers and address hunger in working class communities. Professor Alex Colas met with the group and group members have supported the workshop.

In my own area, we've actually seen redundancy and insolvency hitting Orchard House Foods in Gateshead, where directors have actually walked away and left the taxpayer to foot the bill and leave workers in the lurch for redundancy payments and of course, you know, we saw what happened with the major fire-and-rehire scandal of P&O over a year ago and, you know, the government promised all sorts of action to prevent employers from taking that sort of action in the future and of course no action at all has been forthcoming on the work of P&O and what they did to their staff, even though it's quite clear that they acted blatantly and illegally, but with the lack of action there, that has actually given the green light to employers like Orchard House to do what they've done and just walk away from a company, walk away from the staff and walk away from their requirements to look after workers in a redundancy situation and we've also had a campaign on sexual harassment .

A formal legal agreement was signed by McDonald's agreeing to improve the way complaints are handled. This is driven by power and equalities between permanently mostly male managers and vulnerable workers on flexible zero hours contracts. It's a dreadful imbalance and it's got to be something that we continue to campaign on across the whole of the sector.

In parliament itself, I think there's been four significant items of legislation, in what has been otherwise an incredibly quiet period for the parliamentary timetable. I'm not saying that politics has been quiet, but I'm saying the parliamentary timetable has been relatively quiet, with intermittent interventions on things like the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill, which really looks that the government there are focussing on particular the Rail Unions in order where they're going to take the next steps, once that Bill has completed the parliamentary ping-pong between the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The Retained EU Law Bill, where the government decided they were going to scrap all the EU laws and just have a cut-off point and then following advice from civil servants and from lawyers which are bounded, they then realised they had to grant an extension to many elements of that legislation, otherwise there would just be a legislative vacuum where there was no law covering a whole range of different things.

The Public Order Act, which is a really repressive measure, which is about basically fettering the right to demonstrate in public, a dreadful piece of legislation and really does mark out this government as being almost queerside fascistic in its attitude towards ordinary people, workers and their rights and lastly, the other important piece of legislation is of course the Illegal Migration Bill and I think it's a well-named Bill because it's quite clear that under international law, the Bill itself is illegal and will be challenged if it is enshrined in law at some stage in the future, but that again is another piece of legislation which is involved in parliamentary ping-pong, but apart from that, apart from those four pieces of legislation, we've actually been through a very fragmented period in terms of parliament and its agenda. We got through the early part of the year, sort of January, February and into March, you know, with bits of those legislations coming through but an awful lot of kind of, not downtime, but just general debates taking place where nothing is decided in the parliamentary process and quite a few bits of sort of minor legislation which were relatively innocuous and therefore not particular contentious, a lot of tidying-up legislation, but nothing massive apart from those four items that I've just described.

We then got past Easter and then had a Bank Holiday break for May Day, a double Bank Holiday break for the Coronation and then a short resumption of parliamentary business before the Whitsun recess. We then came back from the Whitsun recess and I'm not kidding, like last week, we might as well as not have been there. There was, on Monday, two general debates, I mean a general debate are debates which decide nothing, there are no votes on them, so two general debates. Tuesday was the only piece of legislation which the government had last week, which was a minor piece of legislation about tidying up some pieces of rules regarding previous immigration law, but I'm going to honestly say it wasn't important from that perspective, it was about retrospectively tidying-up what had become custom and practice in the way in which the Home Office operates. That piece of legislation took 50 minutes and on that day, the only day in which the government had legislation in front of parliament, the House actually adjourned at 2.20 in the afternoon and then on Wednesday we had an opposition day, which is obviously a day when the opposition put forward issues of interest to us and that of course, those votes on those issues are not binding on the government and then on Thursday we had two more general debates. So okay, every day there are departmental questions for the government to answer, every day there's an opportunity for urgent questions to be asked or for ministers to make statements, but I can honestly say that the parliamentary timetable itself has been extremely light and I can honestly see it going on like that now until at least the summer recess, which is some six weeks away, so that we'll have very little apart from the stuff which is being dealt with via parliamentary ping-pong between the House of Lords and House of Commons and other than that, I just don't see the government bringing anything forward of any significance.

So that's what's been happening in the parliamentary process, but apart from that, it's been a quiet year, nothing's happened has it, you know. I mean, we've had a situation where we've had a completely discredited and outlaw sort of mad government coming to end under Boris Johnson, the election of Liz Truss, the Prime Minister that lasted for 60 or so days and then the ditching of her and the coming to power of Rishi Sunak, but what we're actually dealing with here is sadly a government which have got a majority still of about 65 or 70, but a government which is totally out of control, totally out of touch with what's happening in the whole of the country and so afraid of itself that they can't bring forward a sort of legislative programme upon which to act and then of course, over this weekend, we've had the resignation of Boris Johnson as an MP, joined by two other people, I mean, Nadine Dorries has resigned as an MP, which almost looks like a fit of pique, you know, and of course Nigel Adams who, you know, I'm sure as a household name, in his own mind at least, has also resigned from the constituency of Selby in Yorkshire.

What we've actually seen during this period is a period of political instability of unprecedented dimensions and we've had, you know, three Prime Ministers, four Home Secretaries, three Foreign Secretaries, five Secretaries of State for Education, three Transport Secretaries and three Defra Secretaries, you know, which obviously covers a large part of the agenda which the Bakers Union are interested in and does anybody remember the tenure of Ranil Jayawardena when he was a Secretary of State for Defra, you know, what did he do, how long was he there for, did anybody notice he was there? I mean, I'm a member of the Education Select Committee, as I've mentioned at this Conference before and we've had five Education Secretaries, three of whom never even got the chance to sit in front of the Committee that answer questions. You know, it's been that bad, that fragmented, that much of a mess and, you know, as I say, over this weekend though, Johnson's resignation, because he doesn't want to face the consequences of a parliamentary investigation into his own behaviour during Covid and for him to call that a kangaroo court by the way, when that is a committee of parliament, the majority of whom by the way are Conservative MPs, you know, how can he call that a kangaroo court? It's actually, you know, okay there are members of other parties, but the majority of that committee are Conservative MPs and also, of course, up in Scotland we've had the resignation of Nicola Sturgeon and then we've just seen, this weekend of course, you will have seen that she was arrested pending an investigation into the financing of the Scottish National Party.

It has been a very, very strange year indeed.

I don't want to go and dwell, I'm afraid to say, on what's actually happening in the Labour Party and I'll make no bones about this. If I answer questions from you frankly, openly and truthfully, I honestly believe in the current climate that it actually could leave me liable to sanction by the current National Executive Committee of the Party, so I don't want to go into that if you don't mind. I will try and answer questions of course, but if I feel as though I'm going to be treading into territory which would make life difficult for myself, I will just tell you so.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much, Ian.

[APPLAUSE]

Just, just so I don't forget as well, Ian. We need you to tell us where you want us to send the charitable donation, of your choice, so we can send it to you at the end of Conference?

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: As always, Ian, it always goes to the Gateshead Foodbank, please.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, thank you very much. Now I know we've, we're going to do about 20 minutes of questions for Ian and looking at the current state of the Starmer Party, it's quite clear that anybody that speaks out is likely to face sanctions, so with the greatest respects, Conference, please refrain from asking any questions relating to anything that's liable to put at risk Ian's career, because Ian is a great MP that represents our interests and we wouldn't want to be responsible for anything that led to sanctions, even though I think if he stood as an Independent MP, he'd still win it. But the first questions, because we'd definitely be there, Ian, we'd be there for you anyway but we'd definitely be there for you. First question's online.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 575: I'm here. First-time speaker, first time at Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much. It's just a general question. I know under the Parliamentary Acts that we're not allowed to have another election before end of '24, beginning of '25. I was just wondering what the chances are of us having one within the next 12 months?

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Jonathan, the Parliament Act has been rescinded, so I mean, technically now the government could call a general election at any time, but they're sitting on a parliamentary majority of about 65 – 70. I mean, we have to keep on counting with the number of MPs who are diving out the window and also, by the way, the unprecedented numbers of MPs who are suspended from their own parliamentary whip. I think there are currently 16 MPs of different parties who are currently suspended from their own whip for one reason or another and so technically we could have a general election any time, but I'm afraid to say the one thing which marks out this particular government and its Party in parliament is, I can't imagine for one moment this bunch of turkeys voting for an early Christmas any time soon so, you know, while technically it could go to December next year, the way in which I would forecast things panning out is, that this parliament will limp on until July, there'll then be the summer recess, we come back on 4th September, we'll have about a fortnight in parliament before the Conference recess and something that I've never seen before, the government have timetabled the Conference recess to last four weeks, from mid-September to mid-October and I think we'll then have about another fortnight for them to just lick their wounds and do things before we then have the first King's speech of this parliament.

So there'll be a new parliamentary session starting probably early to mid-November, where they'll set up a parliamentary timetable for about a year and then do what they need to do for that year, probably curtailing with an election next autumn. I would love it if there was a general election, I sound a bit like Kevin Keegan then, don't I, I would love it if we had a general election, you know, as soon as possible, but I'm afraid to say these turkeys aren't going to vote for Christmas, so I can see it going until October/November. Technically, by the way and some people don't realise this, as long as they call an election before the 19th December next year, they could technically then hold their election in January, 2025 so, you know, it could go on that long, it's dreadful, you know. I mean, they are systemically ruining the country at the same time as almost like members of your Kleptomania Branch filling their pockets at the same time.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Ian. We've got

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 575: Thank you very much.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We've got another online, which is Dave.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: Morning, can you hear me now? Morning.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you at the seaside?

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: Yes.

[LAUGHTER]

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: He's got, you didn't go to Southport did you, Dave?

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: No, no, by mistake. No, my question is and I hope it isn't contentious, a number of years ago, John McDonald, who I rate massively, I'm going back to the Blair years, told our Conference we still have to be in it to win it, we still have to support the Labour Party. I just wondered on your views, or if you can answer that, if you can't, I would appreciate it, but I understand it should I say.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Aye. Well, Dave, I know that you're on Diane's iPad but I can (unclear), okay, mate. Right, look, I've been a member of the Labour Party since I was 17 and I'm afraid to say that was 49 years ago, right, so I'm sticking with it. I've seen the tide come in and go out again and come in and go out again in terms of the way in which the Party actually acts and reacts. All I would say that the left in the Parliamentary Party now are probably as strong as they've ever been but, you know, that doesn't mean to say that we're in a strong position given the current climate. My own position is, I'm sticking with it until something happens to me personally, if something happens to me personally, I would then obviously have to readdress my own personal position, but I honestly believe that it's going to be very, very difficult and I just don't understand or see how it's happened, because we've tried so many times before how establishing another Party out there would actually succeed from an electoral prospective. It takes too long to establish. Look, you can have loads and loads of activists, but it's then about convincing the public out there that the time for that is right and unfortunately you're also working in the face of a media which is very, very opposed to left-wing politics. So therefore, from that perspective, I'm in the Labour Party, I'm a Labour MP for 13 years, I was a councillor for 27 years, I've been a member for 49 years in total. This leopard's not changing its spots just at the moment.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is it Sean?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Morning. A couple of questions. I agree with what you're saying about staying with the Labour Party, I'm a big believer in staying with the majority, but my question I'm asking you is where does this actually leave you as a person, speaking at a Trade Union Conference that have pulled away from the Labour Party, where does it leave you personally, or with your fellow peers within that Labour Party?

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Well, I mean, in a fortnight's time, a fortnight today, I'll be doing exactly the same exercise at the RMT Conference at Bournemouth and I've done the RMT Conference for the last seven years and they haven't been affiliated to the Labour Party in the entirety of that time, so up to now, it hasn't had any detrimental impact on me, but watch this space.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Well, I fully commend what you're doing, mate. Well done.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, anybody else online? Okay, Dougie. Yes, yes.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hi, Ian. I'm sorry, but I missed most of your speech because I was collecting in everybody's forms so, I don't know if you dealt with this, but I'm, something is frightening me, yes, something and I want to know what you personally are doing about this.

Something is frightening me personally, in that I'm seeing this legislation coming through from this government about clamping down on my right to protest on the rights of Trade Unions again and again. I spend a lot of my time going to new sites where we hand out leaflets, we stand outside with banners, we talk to people about Trade Unions. This could come under, unless we ask the Home Secretary permission to go and oh, can we go here with our banners and give some leaflets out and we'll give you the start and time and we'll promise to be not this and can you tell us how noisy we can be, I am frightened about that. I could be arrested, I could be thrown in prison, just for asking people to join Trade Unions and I'd like to know what you are doing personally in parliament to fight this, plus the minimum service requirements. Alright, it's just in the state at the minute, but it's moving, it won't stop there, they'll carry it on and they'll push and they'll push and they'll push, you know, you give them one inch and they'll take a mile, you know. It just comes, I'd just like to know what you're doing to fight this, because I'm worried, I'm worried. I

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: If you allow him to answer the question, Doug, I think he's got the message. Cheers, mate.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Well, thanks, Doug and look, I mean, I obviously share your concern. I mean, you know, it's during recent months I've stood on quite a number of different picket lines, outside hospitals, outside railway stations, you know and it's very worrying that the Public Order Act in its form has been passed. Now the thing is, you ask me what I'm doing. Well, I opposed that legislation when it came through, but once it becomes law, it doesn't get discussed in parliament any more unless we raise it in general debates or unless we raise it in opposition debates, but unfortunately even if the House have a vote on something on an opposition day or during a general debate, those votes are non-binding on government and I'm afraid to say one of the sad facts about parliamentary democracy is that in between elections, the Party with the biggest number of MPs, in effect, has the right to legislate and take decisions as they see fit and when you have a parliamentary majority of 65 – 70, it was 80 when they first came in after the election, effectively what you're dealing with is an elective dictatorship, because they've got the numbers in a parliamentary democracy to do exactly what they want. Now, at the moment, the Labour Party are committed to rescinding some of this legislation. I'm afraid to say I think the front bench line on the Public Order Act has been a relief to say the least, but we will continue to campaign within the Party to make sure that if and when a Labour government is elected, that we do as much as we possibly can to rescind the dreadful Trade Union legislation and the Anti-Democratic Public Order Act, because it's quite clear that people's rights have been eroded to such an extent that it is very, very difficult now to voice concern or to voice dissent in a public way regarding the operations of this government, or anything else for that matter.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Ian. John.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Hi, Ian. Is the Labour Party going to actually bring back the Union Learning Fund, because it was a great thing that was, it was a great thing that we had for our Union, yes and it was a great benefit.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Yes, well I mean, Unionlearn was abolished by Gavin Williamson when he was Secretary of State for Education and it's something that I would certainly be committed to see being re-introduced. It was not a lot of money from a governmental perspective, but it was actually a very, very good fund for particularly helping older workers in educational programmes. So, look, no doubt about it from my perspective, it's something which we should re-introduce as a matter of urgency once elected and it's so innocuous from my perspective that it's something we should do without any contention whatsoever. I remember the Education Select Committee, we asked Gavin Williamson about it at the time when he brought in his proposal, it was just a ministerial (unclear), they didn't have to pass the legislation, it was just, you know, the stroke of a pen from Gavin Williamson when he was Education Secretary, but Unionlearn should be re-introduced and there's no impediment from my perspective and I can see why the Labour Party wouldn't be against that.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Yes, it's just that I feel that the people of England are now being discriminated against on this, on it, because we've got it in Scotland, we've got it in Northern Ireland, we've got it in Wales, but not in England, so I think we're being discriminated on.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Yes and that's because education is a devolved matter and only there in England, but unfortunately because it's a devolved matter in that legislation, it means that it's basically up to ministerial dictact? what happens within the DSE as far as England is concerned.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Good morning, Ian. Thanks for your time, as always. My question is, with you, well, it isn't such a question, it's a, you're saying that the left-hand side of the Party is the strongest you've seen for a while?

I want to know if maybe we are going to go, as the Labour Party, in a new direction, perhaps leadership-wise, from a strength. I'm trying to skirt around the question, without putting you in trouble, to see if we're going to go in a direction as a Labour Party.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Right, right. Glyn, I mean, I think what I was trying to say was that the left in the Parliamentary Party and the House of Lords was stronger than it's ever been.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Right.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: I'm afraid to say I'm not convinced that that is reflected in the Party generally across the country and where there has been, sadly, a significant evacuation of left members from the Party itself over the last probably 18 months to 2½ years.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Okay, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, thank you. I'm going to, I know you've got to get to parliament, Ian, so can I thank you very much for answering those questions and obviously for giving your address this morning to our Conference and obviously we thank you for all of the work that you've done and wish you luck in the future and obviously, you know, when you go into that election, you know, we'll certainly support MPs like you, that support people like us. So thank you very much, Ian, for that.

[APPLAUSE]

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Ian, as always it's been an absolute pleasure and I regard it as a privilege to be Chair of your Parliamentary Group. Thank you very much indeed. Take care now. Bye, bye.

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

[APPLAUSE]

Conference, just for your information, we've been joined on the platform by the Assistant General Secretary of the TUC, which is great for us to welcome you, Kate, and obviously you'll be hearing from Kate just before lunch. So if you could turn to your Agendas, we're going to go back, starting at motion 29. It's 356. Branch 356? Yes, that's you, Doug.

29

Branch 356

As we are a union that operates in a sector of industry that has a high level of migrant labour, we consider it a priority in building our union to have leaflets in languages other than English.

Brother Duggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'm particularly proud of our Union in fighting for the rights of migrants, for we see migrants as our Brothers and Sisters in struggle and I'm proud of that. We only have to look around the Conference to see the great work done by our migrant comrades. For 50 years of service by Mohinder Badhan, coming here from the Punjab in 1963. From the great work by Virginia, Ramona and Samona and others at Greencore. We need also highlight the great work done by Rafal in Region 5. The thing is, also, we need, got the right ones, we need more leaflets in different languages. We're coming across more and more migrants and it's great that this Union stands up for migrants, we need more and I know it always seems that I'm coming back every year and saying we need more, but we do and this is how we are going to build our Union, is by fighting for the rights of migrants. You only have to look at some of the reports that have been released recently by the University of Nottingham, by the Oxford University Migration Study Unit, by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. You've only got to look at the discrimination since Covid, is going up and up and up against migrants. It's getting worse and worse and we know the answer, we know the answer, because I'm going to give you some statistics done in the agricultural and food industry. 14% reported emotional abuse and threats, 11% said they had not been issued with payslips, work contracts, P45. A further 10% said they were working below the minimum wage, 7% not being allowed to take a holiday, 4% reported, experienced physical abuse. 41% said language made them fearful. We know the answer how we do this, we get them in a Union, so we need leaflets in different languages. Please, please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Secunder? Secunder? Formally seconded. We've got a speaker online? Alright, okay. Any other speakers? Cool.

Brother Peter Horne – Branch 393: First-time Delegate.

[APPLAUSE]

Delegates, I'm going to tell you a little bit of a story. As you may or may not already know, my factory has had two fires in the last nine weeks, one of which is going to put us out of action for about 12 months.

Now, when we had our first fire in Bread Plant 3, I brought it to the attention of my Health & Safety Officer but we have, on average, 35 – 40 people on-site that don't speak English and they have no signage for them that don't speak English. In fact, they all speak Mandarin. So we had all our signs done in Mandarin and I feel that this helped in our second fire, to make sure that those people were able to leave that building.

[APPLAUSE]

And believe you me, it saved lives and that was a massive fire that we had last week. Now, I would also like to bring to your attention that I have three members that only speak Mandarin and I have to have interpreters with me every single time that I need to speak to them and I've got no documentation in Mandarin. I can't communicate with these people and I know that they want to be Union members, but because I haven't got any documentation, I can't pass it on to them. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Do you want to speak? Mahinder, have you come to speak? Have you come to speak? No, alright, okay, because he was running about, I thought he wanted to speak. Come Mark, yes.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I would prefer to put this money into educating our foreign friends basically. I have, at my factory, probably 50% of my staff are from Polish, Hindu, Muslim, many, many countries basically, from Africa through to the Far East and the cost would be excessive, truthfully would be excessive. How many languages will we have to translate this into? If the cost is that much, why don't we put it into the education, in giving these people the chance to learn the English language and be able to be inclusive in our country here. So I oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Mark.

Sister Virginiya Matinzaitė - Branch 357: Hello, everyone. I am working at Greencore and most of our people is immigrants, you know. I can speak Russian, I can speak Polish, I can speak Lithuanian, I can speak English a little bit, but I need a little bit more of help, you know, I need some leaflets or something. Of course, in the future, we can get some lessons or something, but before we start to build our Union, we have to get some more help and it's my, I am asking to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you. First-time speaker as well, yes? Well done.

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: I'm going to support this motion, for the simple fact that we don't, talking about the like issue there for every single Branch different language, but talking about like if any Branch have a particular situation, they can ask for translated and dedicated leaflets, so that's what it's all about. So the Union should have an option to bring those information to the people, but more of that, also I know Mark was opposed this motion, however I agree with Mark as well. We should constantly support our migrant workers and give them a chance to learn the language, because they're living here, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It must be Monday morning, everybody's awake.

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580: First-time speaker.

[APPLAUSE]

I think Mark makes a good point about where we invest money from our members, but I think there's better ways as well where we demand companies, like the gentleman said, asking for safety signs which is health and safety, which is really important. In regards to Union members and obtaining them, we could PDS and send it by email to Reps, they could demand a company print it off on paper, fold it up into a leaflet and put it on the noticeboard. It doesn't always have to be about spending money on things. There's technology we can use to push stuff forward, to translate for our members and so attract more members in general. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Karen Plasom – Branch 356: Morning, Conference. As you know, I come from Learning Services Team. Years ago, TUC had leaflets printed up and they concentrated on our Asian communities, so we had leaflets in Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, is it Bengali and practically about seven languages for Asian community. So now, if you've seen leaflets on table and they're done for the European community. Let's have something that works together with employees and the TUC and the Unions to look at the languages, work together and get them all printed, but the employers have their part to play as well, because they are employing people from different nationalities.

The agencies are sending people from different nationalities and it's about time the agency took their responsibility as well. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other, right, okay. You're all being so courteous, you used to queue up, you know.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: I'd like to echo Mark. Basically the learning aspect, especially in England, we used to have support with the government, now we don't have it, do we, we still have it in Scotland so they still do courses in Scotland, which is unfortunate for the people that live in England. Now, we need to put more into maybe letting the Branch Secs have an online portal perhaps, where they can get the information in multiple languages, maybe on our own BFAWU website, where they can get the information in the different languages, print them off at work using the works money rather than ours and give them to the people that actually need them in the workplace, instead of an abundance of too many leaflets in one language or another. So, I do actually oppose this motion, although sort of in favour of it, but against it for now. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, yes.

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357: Hi, I'm here to support the motion. So obviously we know that in our site we got a lot of migrant workers from all over Europe, but here's a thought for the other Branches, not just leaflets. When you do your Branch mapping, you should look into people who are working from other countries and you should bring them to your Shop Steward Committee and that will help you communicate with the other people around you. Thank you. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: I'm here to support this motion. I was just thinking, could we not set up an app, like a translation app, I think there's translation apps out there and we could put the information out through our Union website and through our WhatsApps Groups. I know we're sitting here with loads of paper and stuff and I'm a bit of a heavy when it comes to sort of like recycling, there's a lot of paper here. We could set up that information there, plus we could set up an app where it sort of like runs down. My daughter works in IT, so I get a basic understanding of this, so we could run it down to the languages that are needed, so that we could send the information to our members. They could download the app, they can go down to the language that they require and then they can key in and all the information's there for them. I support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is there anybody else? No? No, you can't come back up yet, got the General Secretary to come first. Oh, it is Nick, sorry, Nick, Nick. Sorry, it was my mistake, my mistake.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. As I mentioned yesterday in motion 27, we do not have endless funds but where required, the Union would be happy to print in language other than English. Karen's already pointed out, thanks Karen. On your tables, there is a great example and I actually hadn't seen this until earlier this week, I have to say. Any leaflets that you need, we said yesterday, there is a form to fill in, it's simple enough, fill it in, get it sent back, you know and if you need it for social media, speak to Raf. There are over 4,000 written languages in the world and where would we stop if we just kept printing, you know and at the end of the day, we are the world, why do we need to keep printing them? But in showing commitment to this, we mentioned, we've got the form and the Executive would ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: (singing, We are the world).

[LAUGHTER]

You have the right of reply, Douggie.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Okay. Oh, Mark.

[LAUGHTER]

You know what I mean, oh. It is a valid point and I defend your right to say it and if anybody stopped you, I would lay down my life for your right to say what you say, even, I'm joking there, Mark, do you know what I mean?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: He wouldn't lay down his life.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Maybe that’s a bit, but yes, I would like us to teach people English. We used to have Karen and all the brilliant work they did at Unionlearn, you know, in ESOL classes, after the government had caught all the ESOL classes and there was a lot of work, with Stand Up To Racism and they’re screaming about migrant rights, you know and the leaflet, yes, I hand this out quite a lot, it’s a good start, it’s a good start, it’s a good start, yes, but we’re coming across a lot of Russian speakers, we need leaflets in Russian and we will be filling out the form and I’m probably, I probably am a bit of a pain in the arse because no, because we need it, we need it, because we need to draw people into the Union, you know and by the way, where does it end, 4,000 languages, it doesn’t end. I’m glad, because I’m one of those people who believes in what (unclear) in Paris ‘68. Be reasonable, demand the impossible. That’s what I believe in. I think we can do it, I think we can do it, as we build, we can do more and more and more. I believe we can get bigger and we can do more, because I believe in this Union. I’ll tell you what, I often go out, I don’t often ask for what do you call it, expenses, but I’ll tell you something, I had expenses during Samworth. Do you know what I did with the expenses? I gave it to the PJP to have leaflets printed in Gujarati. I’m on benefits, I need the money really. That’s how much I believe in this, that’s how much. I think we can go further, I think yes, let’s go. If we have to do 4,000 different languages, let’s do it, because I really believe in this Union and you, so support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Just to remind everybody too, about 2019 we started distributing what was called Mapping Your Workplace and in there, it asks you to make us aware of the languages that are on your site and the reason for that was so we could look at what resources were needed and it is important that we get that information back if we’re to put together an understanding of what languages are needed across the Branches, so could I just remind Delegates how important those documents are for you to complete, if you haven’t completed them, but if you provide us with that information, you know, we will look at how we make sure that those resources in the language that you need for your workplaces are made available. I was also made aware, there is an app and I believe our Region 7 Official knows about that app, I don’t know about that app, so I’m not going to go into detail because it’s probably technically above my level of intelligence and ability too, but what I can say to you now is, we’re going to go for a brew and we’re going to give you until 11 o’clock, because we realise it’s warm. See, recognise the Cool It! Campaign too and don’t forget to push that in your workplace as well.

We need the Scrutineers to go in to the Standing Orders, don’t we?

Okay, can the Scrutineers make their way to Standing Orders, please, to count the ballot, if you wouldn’t mind. So if you’re a Scrutineer, can you go to Standing Orders please. That’s you, John, yes, yes, that’s you, yes. You can hear in there as well, they’ve got it all set up, so you’ll be able to still listen to what’s going on.

Yes, I know, we’re not going to be calling that motion just yet though, Mahinder, we’re going to be having Kate come and speak to us first and then we’re going to go back to the Agenda. Yes, but you’re alright, you’re Standing Orders, you’ve got freedom to roam. That’s the amazing thing with Standing Orders, you’ve got the freedom to do whatever you want, just constrain the rest of us. Not a problem, not a problem.

Also, Lukasz is going to take group photos, so if you want a group photo taking, if I remember rightly, what he said was at lunchtime, so if you want a group photo taking, then Lukasz will do that for you at lunchtime, so you can have that photograph and obviously he’ll send it to you. You’ll need an email address, I assume, to where he needs to send those photos, but he’ll do them at lunchtime, if you could see Lukasz at lunchtime.

We had a request, just before Conference, from one of our Branch Secretaries, Andrew Wylie, after unfortunately an incident happened in his workplace, where somebody committed suicide, that we invited the Andy’s Man Club to attend. Unfortunately they couldn’t make it, but they have sent us a number of leaflets and posters where people can get assistance in the workplace and they’ve also committed to come to all of the Regional Councils, if we want them at the Regional Councils, so thank you, Andy, for introducing us to them and obviously, you know, I would encourage all Regional Councils to invite them to attend. I think you’ve got the contact details, so if the full-time Officials want those details, if you get in touch with the General Secretary, she will be able to put you in touch with the relevant person.

Before we turn to our Agendas, we’re going to have another speaker and obviously we’re really pleased to have Kate with us. Kate Bell is the Assistant General Secretary, who works with and supports Paul Novak at the TUC and can I say, we were very grateful to have Paul Novak turn up at the Allied picket line.

It was well received and he gave us a fantastic inspirational contribution, which went down really well with those workers. If you haven't seen it, you can see his comments on the Bakers Union Facebook page, but going back to Kate. Kate works with the external stakeholders on behalf of the TUC and is responsible for inter-Union relations, am I good, we're good, yes, we're good, good, good, yes. She also leads on internal TUC matters, probably we're not so good. Kate joined the TUC in 2016 as the Organisational Head of Economics, International & Employment Rights Department, so as you can see, they're very good at making really long names. Kate played a leading role in securing the furlough scheme, which we're very, very grateful for and obviously our members in Greggs in particular that benefited from that scheme, you know, it was an amazing thing to do. She's also lead the TUC's campaign for £15 minimum wage and common ownership of the energy sector and stronger workers' bargaining rights, all the things we've been talking about, but before joining the TUC, Kate worked as Head of Policy in Public Affairs for local authority. She has also worked for the Labour Party and for charities Child Poverty Action Group and Gingerbread, so you've been quite busy and also played a key part in the Low Paid Commission. We're really pleased you've found the time to come and speak to us today. Kate, welcome and please address the Bakers Union Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Kate Bell's [TUC Assistant General Secretary] Address to Conference

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Thanks so much, Ian. Thanks, Sarah. I'm sorry about the ridiculous job description you just got, I'm going to do something about that next time, because you don't need all of that, but I just want to say a big thanks to everyone for having me here. I have to say it's been really brilliant listening to the debates this morning. I've loved it, the spirit of you as a real fighting Union, where the spirit of debate has really come through this morning from me listening, so thank you so much for that.

Basically my job as, here on behalf of the TUC, is really to bring you Solidarity from right across the Trade Union movement. So that's 48 Unions, 5½ million workers, standing with you all today in your fight for fair pay, decent working conditions and the right to food and I really think we've all felt in need of Solidarity this year and I was reading your Foodworkers on the Breadline Report on my way here and there was one quote that really, really summed up for me. There was a worker who was asked how they felt about their living conditions and they basically said they were cold and poor. Now, nobody's feeling that cold today, but I thought what a kind of incredible description of the UK today, cold and poor. We've gone from a pandemic, where so many of your members kept the country going and were hailed as key workers, to the so-called cost of living crisis where you've got 60% of your members saying their wages won't cover their living costs and one in 10 workers saying their house is cold all the time, all the time. That really struck me and I think you all know that this situation isn't exactly an accident.

Now, of course we have had that massive spike in energy prices and that's been caused by the devastating war in Ukraine, but let's have a bit of a think about what else we've been coping with over the last decade. So we've seen a decade of wage cuts and the average worker's lost out on £20,000 since 2010 due to their wages not keeping up with inflation. We've got no sign of that £15 minimum wage we're all campaigning for and we know that's not an accident, that's because of government choices. We've had a decade of cuts to our social safety net. We've had £14 billion cut from Social Security over the last decade and so it's no wonder that now we've got over four million kids growing up in poverty and again we've got no sign of that decent sick pay which would have been so important in the pandemic and which I know that your members are fighting for too. We've got no action to ban zero hours contracts. Now, I know that your members took historic action a decade ago at Hovis to force zero hours contracts out of that workplace, but right now we've got 1.3 million people who don't know the hours they're working that week, who have their shifts cancelled at short notice, who don't know whether they're going to get enough shifts that week to feed their families. That's not okay and that is obviously the result of government decisions.

Of course we've had no action from our government to take our energy companies into public ownership. We've seen right across Europe that, in countries where they do have public ownership, like France, they've been able to control that spike in energy costs. Of course, our government hasn't done anything here, nor have they put in place that decent Windfall Tax, which could have taxed the obscene profits of the oil and gas giants and actually done something to fund our public services, or possibly to put the money back into that Social Security system, which has been decimated over the last decade.

So, what have we seen our government concentrate on instead? Well, as your Delegates were saying this morning, we've had that shameful attack on the right to strike. The so called Minimum Services Level Bill would mean that workers in health, education, transport, fire services, border services, could vote for strike action in what are already some of the most restrictive Trade Union rules in the whole of Europe and then they can be ordered by their boss to go back to work and if they don't go back to work, they face the sack.

It's undemocratic and you know that the whole Trade Union movement is united against it and of course it's not just the Trade Union movement that's united against it. We've had politicians from over 100 countries calling on this Bill to be dropped and I think it's interesting, I know how important international Solidarity is to this Union. Well, this year, we've been the people asking for that Solidarity, asking for people to stand up and raise their voices in support of workers in the UK, because it's us who is facing that undemocratic, draconian attack on our right to strike. Again, it's not just those international politicians, people from the House of Lords, the government's own committees, groups representing women workers, groups representing black workers, have all stood up against this unfair Bill and just last week, the government was defeated again in the House of Lords, who said that they had to think again about this fundamental attack on the right to strike. And make no mistake, the TUC is going to be fighting this draconian legislation every single step of the way, but I think it's important to remember why the government is attacking us now. It's because they know, in this year, in record numbers, workers have been standing up to say that they refuse to be poor and they refuse to be cold any more. That's workers like your members, Allied Bakeries and the whole Trade Union movement is with you in your fight for better pay, but it's also workers across the country, in hospitals, schools, railways, postal services, care homes, so many more people have been standing up and showing that if you don't want to be cold and you don't want to be poor, the best way to do that is to join your Union, stand up and take action and that's why I'm so, so pleased that the theme of this Conference is on organising, because we all know that if we want to keep winning for workers, we have to be stronger and this year, I know you've had falls in your membership and right across the Trade Union movement we have seen falls in our membership and that is really, really worrying.

We know that industrial action usually drives membership, maybe the figures will look better this year, but it's really, really worrying, you know, linked to the cost of living crisis, that fewer people are choosing to join Trade Unions rather than more and that's why the absolute priority for the TUC is building a stronger and more diverse Trade Union movement and I think it's really important to talk about that more diverse bit, because if we want to show that one in two women who face sexual harassment in the workplace, that their Union can help, we're going to have to show that every woman can be safe in her Union and we all know that too often across the Trade Union movement, that hasn't been the case and that's why tackling sexual harassment in the movement, so that we can tackle it in the workplace, is an absolute priority for the TUC.

We also have to show the millions of workers who face racism and structural discrimination, that their Trade Union has the answer to their problems. That means again we need to be better in our own workforces, in Unions as employers and in how we organise and recruit Reps and it was so good to hear that conversation about recruiting migrant workers, how important that's been in this Union and how that is helping you to grow and be stronger. The TUC's Anti-Racism Manifesto sets out our plans to do that and I really hope you're all going to be part of making that happen.

So, this year it has been workers that have been leading the way, in showing that the UK doesn't have to be a country where we're cold, it doesn't have to be a country where we're poor. Thank you so much for everything you're doing to build our movement and to show that together we can win. Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. If there's anybody that would like to ask Kate a question, she's more than happy to take some, so I'll take about 10 – 15 minutes of questions. Do you want to come down? You can come down. Well, if you know the question, that's good, because I don't know what the question is. Do you mean you think you know the answer? I hope you know the question.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I don't know the answer, maybe it's something I should ask you guys, but yes, Kate, Mark from Fox's Biscuits, 568. I've always wondered how the TUC is funded, because obviously we're funded from membership, but how is the TUC funded?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We know that.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Do you know that? Yes, it's maybe something I should have asked.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Your membership pays us, for us too, so every Union pays an affiliation fee to the TUC, so it's linked to levels of membership and it's linked to the membership rates that people charge and that's why it's really, really important that our fortunes are tied to the fortunes of workers basically, so if we're not growing as a movement, the TUC certainly isn't growing either.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: But you knew the question, that was the most important thing, you knew the question.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: And I guess one thing that is linked to it that is really important to say, is that the TUC isn't like an independent body, we're a democratic body led by our Unions basically, so our Congress sets our policy in the same way that your Congress sets yours, because, you know, you pay our bills, you're our leaders and we, you know, follow with what that Union movement wants and that's absolutely vital to what the TUC says and does.

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton): Hi. Also Region 3 EC member. There is a question about Union Learning Services here. Besides that we know you have a huge programme online, what about physical programmes and how, if there is a programme, how did our members can get to it? Thank you.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Yes, thanks so much. So we've been looking at Trade Union education – by the way, thanks to everybody who talked about the Union Learning Fund this morning, we're fighting to get that back – but this is, I think, a question about kind of direct Trade Union education and we have been moving more online, that has been partly cost efficiency and partly because that's how people told us we wanted to learn, they wanted to learn, but this year we are actually doing a review of it, because one of the things that happens in kind of, I think, in Trade Union education is, it's actually an opportunity to network with people from other Unions and to build that kind of inter-Union Solidarity and it's much harder to do that if you're on Zoom basically, so it's something we're looking at and any feedback you've had about what's worked, what hasn't worked would be really brilliant.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just on that point, I've got to say I mean, I've been to a number of Regional Councils this year and the issue of training has come up and we are struggling as a Union to be able to deliver the training and obviously, I mean I'm a product of TUC education, you know, I mean I learnt all my skills via the TUC. Yes, yes, yes, although they never taught me to read, they just taught me how to learn from the readings I had but, I mean, obviously there used to be a TUC Education Unit everywhere across the country, you know and obviously it was a shame when we've seen them disappear because a lot of Unions went internal. I mean, do you think that those Educational Units will ever reappear, is there a possibility that the colleges will allow you to be able to restore those? It used to be the Business Units if I remember rightly.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: So in some like regions, we've been managing to do deals with like the regional authorities, so in the North West we've been doing that, in Sheffield we've been doing that, obviously we've still got it in Scotland basically, so we're trying to kind of build those regional deals and get that TU Education in place because we know how important that is, but it's tough basically and it is a question of money.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: And we do understand that, I mean, because as you will have noticed, there's quite a lot of people in the room that English isn't their first language, fantastically well, whatever, when they speak English it's probably more understandable than mine, but when it comes to Zoom's they do struggle, trying to learn on a Zoom, so obviously, you know, that has been a big issue for training for our Representatives and obviously it's something we know, as a Union, we need to tackle, but definitely, you know, giving some feedback, I think that would be an issue that obviously we would see as a pretty important one to address.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Just a slight point of order on that, Sheffield is not in the North West, yes?

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Sorry, no.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Aye, get her told, get her told.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Sheffield is definitely not in the North West.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Sheffield is in Yorkshire, I knew that, where Sheffield is.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Yes, so that's my point of order.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Hot and bothered here.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No worries.

Brother Paul Hornby - Branch 367: I'm a new Branch Secretary, Nottingham 367, Hovis. First time I've been to this, I'm enjoying it. There's two things I've been listening to you about

[APPLAUSE]

there's one, I'm a trained Union Learner Rep at Stage 1 and Stage 2, never used in our bakery, because they shut the Learning Centre, yes. The other one you brought up was about sick pay. That is being altered, what I've been told, because we tried to bring it up on our pay rise to be took up. I spoke to one of these from Dagenham (unclear), where they're on about changing the talks now, re Hovis, so I don't know when it's coming into Nottingham. I spoke to Dave from Bradford last week and they actually refused it because it's over two years, not over a year.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just obviously, because Kate wouldn't know about the internal workings of our Trade Union and the issues of Hovis in particular, what Kate's talking about, she's talking about a national campaign that covers all of the Unions about sick pay. I think, so obviously I think Kate would respond about that rather than the specifics around Hovis, just so you understand that she's not ignoring your question, but she will talk over the whole of the Trade Union movement and the issue around sick pay, I think.

Brother Paul Hornby - Branch 367: I think the Union Learner Reps should be brought back, it should be one-to-one.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: We've got a network every other month, that meets online, to try and encourage and it was yesterday when I spoke about the importance of getting the Committee back up and running so we can help and support the ULRs, that's something that we will push forward after Conference, but I'll be in touch. If you're wanting to be an active ULR, you will be an active ULR.

Brother Paul Hornby - Branch 367: I'm actually Stage 1, Stage 1 I did at Barnsley.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: That's fine, that's fine, we will get you going.

Brother Paul Hornby - Branch 367: Alright.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: I'll just say something about sick pay, because although you're talking about, you know, the deal you're negotiating with Hovis and that's really important, the level of Statutory Sick Pay, which is basically what the government pays you, I think makes a big difference for that, because it's so low at the moment, it's worth about, just over 10% of average earnings your pay goes down to if you're sick and you only get the Statutory level and because it's so low, companies think they can get away with paying a low level of sick pay as well, because they say well, at least it's better than the Statutory rate, so we are doing that big campaign for better sick pay right across the country, but that should be a base on which company level bargaining can build to get actually decent levels of sick pay, you know, it should be full pay for everybody.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is there anybody else that wants to

What happened to coming down and queuing? I mean, we were famous for our queues.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I don't know if this is a

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You do know the question, don't you?

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Yes, I do know the question, I don't know if this is a bit cheeky but, so we, the Unions contribute to the TUC, what do we get for our money, or do we have to be, are Regulations stating that we have to be part of the TUC to be an affiliated Union? Is that the reason we pay, or do we get anything else for what we put in?

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: You don't have to be a member, but I do think you get value for money, so you get basically the strength of the whole Trade Union movement standing behind you, that's been really important this year I think, on those campaigns against the Minimum Services Level Bill. We've been uniting workers together and we have been managing to get the House of Lords to actually push back against that legislation.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: (off-mike) So it's more uniting us, a number of 40-odd Unions

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is this a conversation, Mark? Thank you, thank you.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: We've always said that together we're stronger, that's the basic principle of Trade Unionism and that's what we try and embody in the TUC.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: And just to remind you, you know, when our members at McDonald's went on strike, the support that we gained from the TUC and the online petitions they ran, the fact that we have online joining, it was the TUC that helped us and actually did that for us. That would have cost an absolute small fortune if we'd have tried to develop that ourselves and obviously we now see that as a major benefit for our ability to recruit and obviously most recently, besides all the other stuff we get involved with the TUC on, the research documents, the health and safety stuff that we do, Mark, that comes from the TUC. The reason why, you know, we think so highly of Shelley, I mean that's the TUC and obviously recently, you know, they came and visited our picket line, Paul came and visited our picket line and they said that they will set up, you know, a crowd well, it's not a Crowdfunder, it's a fundraiser, to be able to make sure that we can offer some more financial support to those members that take industrial action. So that's just an overview of some of the things, but obviously we need to do a better job of communicating that through our Foodworker, so you're clearer on that going forward. So, yes.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Thanks, Ian.

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Just here to mention about the TUC training. There's pros and cons to both of it. Obviously we had a Branch Secretary last year, a new one from our workforce, who did an online course because that's all that was being offered at the time, very little IT knowledge and really, really struggled. It was difficult to get the resources over to her and then to try and ring the College and say we've got a problem, there was issues with that, because every time we 'phoned, there was somebody else and at the same time, I mean, sometimes our members are their own worst enemies because we had another lady who was really interested in becoming a Health & Safety Rep and once she knew she would have to go to College one day a week day-release for the course.

She absolutely freaked out and said no, I'm past all that, I definitely can't do it and she didn't have the skills to use, to do the online course either, so it's so difficult for anybody middle-aged and above, it's great for the young ones because they're all brought up now with new technology, but I don't see any easy fix, you know, to try and get anybody sort of middle-aged onto the courses, whether it be done online or actually physically.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Yes, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I'm just going to say, if I bring Freddie in and then Glyn, Glyn will be the last question and then obviously you'll be able to answer the last three questions, if that's alright, Kate?

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Yes, course.

Brother Freddie Velez - Branch 547: I think. Kate mentioned how important is to build an inclusive and diverse Union, I think it's a question for both our Union and for you. For example, I got this form, you want to join my Union, they ask for your gender, it's only male or female for example, is no inclusive the way we are appearing to our members, you know. I had a person that wanted to join my Branch and say well, I don't fit in this binary categories, so I think we still have a lot to do. I would like to know what the TUC is doing to promote more inclusiveness within our Union. I also want to say that our Union is already diverse, you know, we have a huge number of foreign workers, so it's already diverse, what we need to do is make that visible to our members and to society, so it's a call for all of us to work on that.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Freddie.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Mine isn't so much of a question because I don't know the questions, like Mark. Mine is more of a statement. Having done Unionlearn courses and having done TUC courses, comparable between the two, both with the understanding of the teachers and the people that have taught us, being able to support other people in the classes is absolutely fantastic. Now, the TUC, I believe in my heart, is someone that we do need to keep with, obviously along with all the other Unions, because strength in unity and I'd just like to say thank you to the TUC for keeping us and looking after us as well. So thank you, from me.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much, that was a nice question to finish on.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Thank you, that's so kind and lovely. This is now my favourite Conference, although obviously at the TUC we can't have favourites, but just a couple of comments. Julie, thank you so much for the feedback on Trade Union education. I think like the dilemmas you're describing are really right, you know, it can be more convenient to do stuff online and it can be cheaper for people as well and, you know, if you're working different shift patterns, it can be easier to fit it around your job, but you can lose on, on some of that personal connection and if you're not confident using IT, it's much harder, so what we want to look at is how to kind of get the right mix and match approach and how we can actually deliver that. Thanks for the point about the inclusivity, it would be nice to hear that echoed. I won't comment on your membership form obviously, but one of the things the TUC has done recently is actually set up a network for Trade Unionists for Trans Rights, so trying to think again about how we can make sure we're reaching out to everybody to be in our Union and obviously that's about Solidarity, with workers who are often facing some of the most discrimination, but of course it's about growing and building our Unions, because if we don't look like we're there for everybody, how can we get those people into our workplaces and we all know that the Trade Union movement can be one of the most powerful forces against discrimination, against harassment at work, but we have to show that it's us that can deliver that and that means being as inclusive as possible, so it's been brilliant to hear about all the work you're doing to achieve that and I hope we can carry on working together and thanks again for the kind words about the TUC.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much, Kate. Thanks for taking those questions and thanks for your contribution. The General Secretary's just going to come over there now.

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Aww.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: So, by way of thanks

Kate Bell, Assistant General Secretary, TUC: Oh, my gosh, that's amazing. Thank you so much, that's really lovely.

[APPLAUSE]

Aww, thank you so much. That's really nice of you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. Mahinder, Conference is on. Standing Orders, freedom to roam, not freedom to start talking in the middle of Conference, unless you're speaking at the rostrum. Motion 30.

30

Branch 405

That this Conference agrees 'The future of the BFAWU' is dependent on delivering for members and building workers power in the food industry.

Organising is the key to winning, be it around Health & Safety or Terms and Conditions. Our union must put in place a structure that delivers these objectives. This means we need to have an organising team for co-ordinating across the union.

The loss of membership would suggest the old ways are not working, and we need a fresh approach to building a sustainable union that delivers for food workers across the UK.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Mr President, General Secretary, the EC, Conference. Presenting Motion No. 30. That this Conference agrees the future of the BFAWU is dependent on delivering for members and building workers' power in the food industry. Organising is the key to winning, be it around health and safety or terms and conditions. Our Union must put in place a structure that delivers these objectives. This means we need to have an organising team for co-ordinating across the Union. The loss of membership would suggest the old ways are not working and we need a fresh approach to building a sustainable Union that delivers for food workers across the UK. This, yes, we're losing factories, yes. The factories what we still have are, the technology is taking over, a load more AI in the factories, yes, so we're losing people in them factories, so we've got to look at different ways of actually doing our organising, yes and what we can do for other people around our industry. Now, our industry is quite wide and diverse, yes, from fast food to Warburtons, Greggs and many other factories. We had fish factories up in Scotland, yes, so to get, be able to get members to actually, into our Union, we need to do something drastic or a big change in the way we do things. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? Have you all gone shy again? Okay, no speakers. Nobody on there? No? General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, there is already an established core organising group that was proposed by full-time Officials last year and set up just after Conference. We agree, as I outlined yesterday, the old ways are not working. If they were, we wouldn't have been steadily losing members for the last two decades, but by supporting this motion, it means engaging with your Union, embracing the changes that we propose, suggesting them yourself and working together collectively and collaboratively to rebuild and regrow a Union full of activists. This Union isn't me or the National President, the Executive or the full-time Officials, it's you, the Branches, the members and without you engaging in the initiatives, such as the core organising group that's embarked on a national piece of work around Finsbury Foods or the surveys that we run to get a better picture of what campaigns that we need to put together, to embrace the changes we are making in order to keep the Union functioning in the most efficient way as possible, so that you as members get as much out of your weekly or monthly subs as possible, without you engaging in these initiatives and changes, nothing will change and we will continue in the same trajectory and I'm sure none of us want that.

An organising team doesn't have to mean a group of paid Officials travelling around the country. Every Official, every Branch Secretary, every Shop Steward, Health & Safety Rep, ULR and activist in our Union should be organising at every opportunity and with the plans laid out by the Core Organising Committee, as well as National Rep Groups coming together and making plans, we will see our membership grow again as we co-ordinate and focus our efforts, but we've all got to engage and work together. So the Executive agrees with this motion and asks you to support it, but support it by engaging with the Union. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Thank you very much. Motion 31.

31

Branch 356

This Conference says that since we have multiple Eastern European shop stewards in our union, we should make sure we have courses that are tailored towards them.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya. Surprising or not. What actually, I was having an interesting conversation about this motion with Rafa, who did bring up some really good points, yes, so what it actually says and what the spirit of this motion is, is it's to do with how each of us learn. Now, being, I don't know if you're familiar or not, but I am a little bit of a nerd at heart, so I remember learning in my sociology and social welfare classes about the different ways that people learn. It does not say in this motion that we should have separate lessons or things for Eastern Europeans, that would definitely not work, that means dividing people when we, as a Union, are about bringing people together, it's not about that. It's not about dividing, it's about looking at, we have specific ways of how we learn, you know and one of the things that is interesting in how we learn is often we, is cultural identity, cultural identity plays a massive part in how people retain information. What I am saying with this motion is that we take part, we take a look at helping people who are of an Eastern European background to make sure that materials and things like that, you know, aids them in the learning process. It doesn't say, you know, we're going to have, you know, dividing us between the Eastern Europeans have their bit and, you know, like we can have, it doesn't say that, it's not even meant to say that. It just takes part in how we learn and I want to expand how we learn and take up, look up cultural needs in how we learn together, we learn together, so I hope you support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. Before I call for a seconder, I believe I've got a point of order, online. I believe it's Mark. (off-mike) Are you speaking or what? Have you unmuted yourself? That's the best I've ever heard you, Mark. No, can't hear you, pal. Do you know sign language and don't swear. Do we know why we can't hear him? Try again, Mark. Have you got your volume on, on your speakers, to speak to us, your microphone, because I've got an echo? It'll be karaoke in a minute. (singing) Are you lonesome tonight That was for you, Andy.

[LAUGHTER]

But only if you wear your suit.

What? Write to us, what your point of order is, because we're alright here, it's something your end, Mark. I think you just wanted to show us your vest.

Put it in the chat, Mark. I might not be able to read it, but Sarah can and then I think you might have to close your Zoom down and start back up, because there's a problem on your side. I take it you don't want to raise your point of order now. Can you put it in chat? Put your thumb up if you can hear us. Oh yes, he can hear us, yay.

Can you write your point of order in chat and then what I think you need to do is, turn your Zoom off and come back in again. At this point

Right, okay, I don't think he wants to raise it because he's put his hands on his head, so I'm assuming we, are we okay, put your thumb up if I'm okay to move on.

Was that your thumb up to say we're okay to move on?

Looked more like a fist to me, but there you go.

I don't know, I don't know. Okay, so I'm going to, do you want to turn the volume down, I don't want to hear myself, I hear myself, yes, I know you've got to listen to me, I have to listen to myself too, twice, over the microphone and in my head. It's a difficult conversation. Right, is he? First off, we think you should get dressed, Mark, go on.

[LAUGHTER]

You're on microphone now, Mark.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Yes, but I'm not at Conference, so you can't fine me.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We've got your address, we know where you live.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): I don't care, it's been said before. Anyway, my point of order was, yes, as I did already put on the chat but it got ignored, is are we having problems seeing the Zoom colleagues with their hands raised and when we speak and stuff.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, we've brought them in when they have and the Ian Mearns part would confirm that.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Actually, I think Sean, he had his hand up 20 minutes, Dave Suddards, he had his hand up about 10 minutes. I had my hand up 10 minutes on a point of order and I couldn't get through for about 10 minutes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That's because we've had to 'phone you, but can I say that when we've seen the hands go up here, then we've brought them in. I mean unfortunately when Dave came in on the last motion, he came in after I'd called and asked whether there was anybody on the Zoom.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): His hand was up before that. You said, are there any more questions and Dave's hand was clearly raised.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It wasn't, it wasn't. Kevin's here, I mean, you don't have to take my word for it, Kevin's running it.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Kevin, get it in order.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, we'll pick you up on your point anyway, but we're going to have to get back to business, Mark, but obviously

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): I'm going to knock off Zoom and knock back on it now.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, pal. Cheers, mate. Thank you very much. Nice to hear from you, Mark.

[APPLAUSE]

Anyway, after that long point of order, did I have a formal or seconder? Formally seconded. I know it was a bit ago now, but Duggie moved a motion and I need a seconder. Formally seconded. Speakers? Thank you. Yes, well, follow Raf, you know where the queue is. Ready to rock.

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: I'm going to be oppose this motion, from the simple fact that why is only Eastern European citizens who should be cover the principles when you said to all our members, not only just exclusive one group from European Union or Eastern European Union, so please oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Do you want to speak? Okay.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Can you hear me? First of all, I want to say something before I speak. The last time I said something about, in the Chair, I was told about that, so I thought the Chairman, the President, my President and the last time I was looking for the Chair, right, to respect, right, so I'm happy TUC people are here as well, right. I spoke that motion and prior to my, from Region 3, intellectual and educated people, right, person and how am I to speak on this motion. First of all, you will know why people, those here, we have to learn, teach them, especially when they come to, how can they, if they don't know that, this and if they don't know the Trade Union movement, how can they serve you, right? So, I will speak on that and I also request that before I start on what I want to say, I'm happy that in 175 years we have found one lady Secretary, General Secretary, 135 years, sorry, 175 years we couldn't find one, but the world found some ladies, England had Margaret Thatcher, India had Indira Gandhi, right, so coming on to this. I wasn't actually coming because I got a bit of problem, but my brain works, ears work, motor works. Problem is minor, that's why the doctor advised me to stay strong state and before I came again, I want to cancel this and I went to the doctor again, he said, Mahinder, you're not going to do any wrestling there using mouth, right. I said, that's okay. Right, now I'm again, I'm in favour of this.

When I came to this country, although I went to high school, I had high school degree but my English was no good and now through Bakers Union, I can speak, I've done about 31, 35 courses plus Bakers Union own courses and the rest of the courses I have done through General Federation of Unions, which is an educational wing of TUC, so that I can speak, I've attended so many Conference, annual Conference. My first Conference was in 1979 at Margate and at that time there was a lot of racism, there was skinheads, so Joe Marino, he was General Secretary, I respect him, he strong speaker and he wanted to speak against the racist people, white people and then he was going round, is there any Asian who can speak, who can balance that in, so I said I will do that, but prior to that, I could speak English a bit, but I can, but I was speaking at various English functions, right and founder member, not founder member, I'm Founder of (unclear) Welcome Committee of (unclear), I can't say much, but check it on the duty and it's the oldest big organisation fighting for the rights of Indian untouchables and I have the honour to start that organisation. So, talking on this, I think we must teach them.

If the Union and the TUC can make me what I am, right, you can make them, right. I haven't got a degree but now I found that TUC's courses I've done, I've got, some of them are equal to A levels, which is about eight or nine, then about 10 of them equal to O level, then I have done loads of other courses, so we must help them, right, because I was nobody, I'm not saying I'm somebody, but I know because if there's anyone, I like to, I like somebody to ask me question and even if they're (unclear), BBC, TVC?, I can match all of them, right. The reason, because I suffered in my country, I've suffered, my people, millions of people so-called untouchable, I was untouchable, right.

So I didn't have the opportunity, but this country gave me starting from the junior and TUC, these people gave me everything and I was originally, at the start, I was Marxist, I've had Lennon, Karl Marx and all the people, Mao Zedong, I got a big

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Mahinder.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: about 2 – 300 books. I'm coming to this.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Coming to the end. Cheers, mate.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: So, these people should be trained, right. If they can work in the factories and then can serve, doing good thing, like serving the country and we must give them education, so they will absorb in this new society and so I don't think it's anybody can oppose it, but then if you don't, I myself, I, that is racism. Racism of any kind, colour, creed, religion or where they are from, to me that stinks like racism, if you're not, teach them, give them education, right, so they can play a part in society and British society. I'm not Indian any more, this is my country, host country gave me everything, everything.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That's great. Thank you, Mahinder.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: And I got my family, my daughters, my granddaughters, some are at university, some are holding big jobs in the Home Office and other, it's only me and education. Oh, thank you, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you, Mahinder.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: I salute you, salute you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you, Mahinder and Mahinder, you'll always be somebody to us. Cheers. I'm just going to bring Sean in, because he's online, just before you come on Kasha, if that's okay.

Sister Katarzyna Damek – Branch 515: Okay, that's fine.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): First of all, I'd like to say, the point that Mr Hilton was trying to make, you couldn't hear him, is that people have had their hands up online and been ignored. I hope that's not stage managed. Secondly, I'd like to oppose this because of what the National President said yesterday. You're doing your own dividing for them, you're alienating people. You need to stick to the game plan what Mr (unclear) said yesterday and get together. Now, you have Learning Services and stuff like that that can support people. Also, you know, I was quite annoyed this morning when I wasn't, when I couldn't get my point in that, because the TUC was there, I'm not going to withdraw the next motion, I'm going to keep it because it's a workplace issue and I think Trade Unions are about the workplace, workplace safety, protection of people in the workplace. The Welfare State supports people who are sick, disabled, unfit for work, that's why we have a Welfare State, in a period of positivity after the war, so I disagree with that comment yesterday, but I agree what Mark Hilton was trying to say. He had his hand raised, so did Dave, so did I and it was ignored, but I'm here to oppose that motion anyway.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thanks, Sean and well done for getting that point of order in and those comments, always appreciated. Okay, Kasha.

Sister Katarzyna Damek – Branch 515: So, I want to oppose this motion. I appreciate that you want to focus on one group but I think the Union already provides ESOL classes which are for people from different background to improve their English skills, so we can start from that point, then we can move to other courses which is working both ways, because it's upgrading our English skills as well and we need to include all nationalities, not only the Eastern Europeans. I appreciate that, but I do oppose that motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): I'm also here to oppose it, because Duggie, what you actually said in your speech is not what your motion says. It says, this Conference says that since we have multiple Eastern European Shop Stewards in our Union, we should make sure we have courses that are tailored towards them. That would be a massive cost to the Union, the TUC wouldn't be able to accommodate. The two examples that I gave earlier are both English ladies, that both have different styles of learning and struggles. You know, I'm half Polish, my dad was Polish, so I've nothing against the Eastern Europeans, but if we're going to start tailoring towards the Eastern Europeans, which is what that motion says, then we've got to start tailoring to every other race and creed and it just makes it untenable, you know and it is, does become racist because we're not including everybody, so, you know, I am here to oppose it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No. The Executive would ask the mover to withdraw the motion, on the basis that we understand the content and we understand the intention behind it and I think we originally read it as recognising we have a lot of Eastern European Shop Stewards, but obviously moving the motion and listening to debate, the Executive believes that actually it would be quite divisive, because it is aimed at just one particular group when we want everybody to be included. So we'd ask you to remit it, so we know what you're talking about.

Brother Duggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Yes, I've taken on board all the comments and I did write it poorly, I wrote it really poorly and I will remit the thing, the motion, you know and maybe bring a better motion that is along those sentiments, so I have taken on board and

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Sean, you're going to come after lunch I'm afraid. So, just before lunch, I've just been handed the Executive Council elections. The details of the elections will be sent to all of the candidates that stood. I'd just like to say thank you to all of those people that did stand in the Executive elections, for taking part. Obviously, as you've taken part in those elections, we look forward as well to your continuing working with us and obviously us working with you, but not everybody can win an election. We'd like to get more people included, but obviously Conference rules tell us how many people we can have on our Executive. So, in Region 1 election has been Peter Pine. In Region 2 elected has been Tony Mansell. In Region 3 election has been Michael Blundred and Dimitri Manole. Region 4 elected has been John Owens. No. 5 is John Martin and David Lawrence. No. 7 is Kevin Flood. The Young Member is Shannon Osbourne (? spelling) and the Women's Member is Rachel Mullen. So congratulations to all those who have been successful and obviously thank you for taking part to all the others.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, on Standing Orders the, right, okay, so on Standing Orders I'm just going to do the same again, I'm going to read out and there is no Delegate in Region 1, because there was no nomination. Region 2 is Michael Maguire. Region 3 is Karen Plasom. Region 4 is John Fox. Region 5 is Glyn Tozer. Region 6, sorry, Region 6, we haven't had one of those for a while. Region 7 is Jake Dinwoody, I don't know, I'm not sure who Dinwoody is. I know we have a Dunwoody. So they've been elected.

Nominations for TUC Congress, I do have to read out the numbers on this, so obviously the people with the highest votes, three of them will go along with the General Secretary and one of which does need to be a woman but I believe that that's been met anyway, so Peter Pine got 25 votes, Nick Mead got 66 votes, Mohinder Badhan got 15 votes, John Fitzpatrick got 76 votes, Lizzie Dinning got 74 votes, so the people that will be going to the TUC Congress are John Fitzpatrick, Lizzie Dinning and Nick Mead and again, thank you to everybody for putting their name forward. It is important that you all take part in activities and I've noticed it's coming up to 5 past 1, sorry 5 past 12, giving my life away and now I'm going to let you have lunch until 5 past 1. So, thank you for this morning.

[APPLAUSE]

Until 5 past 1.

[LUNCH]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, can we shut the doors, please. Okay, just to let everybody know that the raffle ticket money will be going into the Strike Fund and the draw will be Wednesday and the tickets, I suppose, will be getting sold until Wednesday, Dimitri, yes? Yes, okay, cool. General Secretary to call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4. Region 5, as are we, as are we. Region 7. I'll check the online in a second, the Vice-President's gone for a wander. Thanks, everyone.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. Back to the Agenda, aren't we. Okay, no speakers this afternoon. It's Sean online, I believe. Motion 33.

33

Branch 558

That this Conference agrees to encourage the use of the Brown Book and work to get it married into the Health & Safety act of 1974

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): That this Conference agrees to encourage the use of the Brown Book and work to get it married into the Health & Safety Act of 1974. Please support the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I need a seconder first. Formally seconded.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Right, good, good, right. That's alright then. Right, the motion says it all and what we're saying is, much as we like to think the government and workers, bosses are terrified of us, they're not. The one thing they are terrified of is the HSE, so get yourself a copy of the Brown Book, get it given to your manager, have a cheeky discussion with him and go, ooh, look at that. Let's get it in and get it sorted. Thank you.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Is it me? I'm here to support this motion. I'd just like to say that the Brown Book, it's the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act. At our Branch we have a set of Safety Reps what are second to none, absolutely second to none, but they use the Brown Book all the time. We write to the company and we ask, we don't ask, we request quarterly inspections, to which they're allowed. We write to the company and we request access to documentation, to accident investigations and we take them away and we give them time to inspect them and we do this all on the back of the Brown Book. Now then, going back to the last or two motions ago, of John's, he says the old ways don't work, or we need to think of new ways. I disagree with that. We have the old ways and established and like Mark's just said, they're established in law, through the HSE. What we need to do is drive Branches to use them, because they are on our side and they are for us.

We have no problems with health and safety, well, we have problems with health and safety but we have no problems requesting documentation and getting release to do inspections. So what I say is, what I call it and it's an active recruiting tool, because the members see the Safety Reps on the shop floor and I go back again to that motion and inspect the Branches what are 80, 90 and 98%, like 561, 98% membership. We have members what come and say, we need to join the Union because you lads are working. So, I'm here to support this motion. I'm here to have my say on the last motion, but I don't think we need new ways of working and if we do need new ways of working, I think somebody from either the Executive or the top table need to say what them ways are, because I don't think the loss of membership is due to the old ways of working. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just on a point of clarification though, Dave. When John was talking about the health and safety part, it's in a paragraph that is related to organising is key to winning and around health and safety or terms and conditions and he wasn't talking about changing the health and safety or anything, he was saying that we need to be organising around the issues of health and safety in the workplace, but obviously when he was talking about the ways that we do things, he was on about the ways that we currently organise, that's what that motion was referencing, not about

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): I agree, I agree with that paragraph, but disagree with the last paragraph. I agree, yes, I think we need more organising, I think we need more training on the Brown Book and health and safety, because I'd ask Conference if I was there, how many Branches actually go to the Brown Book?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Dave, I know you're on Zoom. If you were in the Conference Hall, when I give a point of clarification, you would know you'd still be sat down and you wouldn't, we wouldn't be having a conversation.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Yes, alright then, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No worries, pal. No worries, it's just to clarify that motion and I've got a point of order anyway now.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Point of order. Dave, I've got to say that that last paragraph says, the loss of membership would suggest the old ways are not working, not actually that they are working, yes. It's just that it's showing that, the way we actually organise at the moment is not working, okay?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, no, there's no responses to that. I give the responses. We're back to the motion, please. No, no, we're not back with Sean yet because obviously he moved the motion. Anybody want to speak? Sorry, I got a little bit confused then. Cool.

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390: Hello. I'm afraid I'm going to have to disagree with this motion. I don't think it's necessary. The Safety Reps and Safety Committee's Regs stand on their own. They were introduced in 1977. We do not need to marry that into the Health and Safety at Work Act. It stands on its own. It's a waste of time. We can use the Safety Reps and Safety Committee's Regs and the Brown Book as it is, it does not need any further enshrining in legislation. It's there for us to use now. That's it from me. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers. Any other speakers? No? We'll have John Owens first and then

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool - EC Member): Okay. The EC would ask you to support this motion. Companies and Health & Safety Reps should follow and use the Safety Reps and Safety Committee’s Regs, the golden Brown Book. You missed that one, Ian. They need to understand there are rules and rights in accordance with the Brown Book, to make our workplaces healthier and a safer place to work, whether it’s a Hard Day’s Night or day or a 9 ‘til 5, we should be safe and work in a safer environment by using the Brown Book. For those who don’t know, this is the Brown Book and these Regs give us the right to appoint and time off, companies to provide facilities and assistance, the right of information, legal protection for Reps, Safety Committees, the right to investigate, inspections of our workplace, to take up issues with employers, liaise with Health & Safety Inspectors and to directly talk to employees through elected Reps.

Time and time again at our Regional Councils and our National Health & Safety Meetings, we hear of cancelled Health & Safety meetings, not letting Reps go to meetings and time off for health and safety duties and consulting. Well, that’s wrong and the Brown Book tells us that’s wrong and we should be using the Brown Book. We have seen many attacks on our rights and legislation on health and safety, which companies have taken full advantage of, but we still have some left and we must use them. We, as Health & Safety Reps, the Union, must play our part in making sure that companies follow the Brown Book and our Reps use the Brown Book. Also, as a Union, we should make sure we educate our Reps to use the Brown Book. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sean, there was somebody who opposed it, so you have the right of reply.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Can you hear me?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Right, what it is, it’s basically what the EC have just said as well, you know, it’s about education and making sure that we stick to what, it’s not the (unclear) Trade Union activity is. The Brown Book is about safety, it protects people and also, if your Reps are active, it’s a recruiting tool. I completely get the, who opposed it and I can get what he, I do actually get what he’s saying, but this is what we want and what we’re about. This is about instilling beliefs, especially in this day and age, it’s a real Trade Union activity, health and safety, it keeps people safe. So, I’m glad it looks like it’s going to get carried, so thank you very much.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Sean. I hope you’re not driving that car.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): No, Karen is. No

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I was just a little bit worried there while we were talking about health and safety.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): No, my other half is. I’m doing this on the East Coastal (unclear), but being a dinner recess, so I’m making my way over there now.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Sean. To the vote.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): (unclear) Conference. Say hello, Karen (Karen says, Hello).

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: See, you wouldn’t have got that if we’d have all been in the same room together, would you. Thanks, Sean. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Motion 34.

That this Conference agrees that we lobby the government that all new estates that are built, are built with their own green renewable energy supply from either wind power, Solar Power, Hydroelectric or Geothermal. All which would be connected to a universal battery to store power for the dark and cold evenings, for that estate. Thus keeping the carbon footprint at a minimum.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Mr President, General Secretary, Conference and EC. That this Conference agrees that we lobby the government that on the new estates that are built around the country, are built with their own green renewable energy supply, from either wind power, solar power, hydroelectric or geothermal, all of which would be connected to a universal battery to store any excess power for the dark and cold evenings for that estate, thus keeping the carbon footprint at a minimum. We’ve been told that we’ve got to get our carbon footprint down by 2030, it’s a government thing. I don’t think we’re going to do it, but this is one way they can get that carbon footprint down, plus not only that, it’d be able to save bills for everybody, having their own electric power on their doorstep.

Yes and actually sorting all of this out, yes. So, that's all I'm going to say on this and please support.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Seconder? Formally seconded anyone? Formally seconded. Speakers? Are you speaking? Anyone? Oh right, okay, cool. Speaker, cool.

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580: Hi. I'm going to vote against this. The cost of the housing to build is only going to raise the prices of the houses and in the housing market we need cheap, affordable housing. We need to concentrate on pushing the government to put rent caps in on the private sector, so landlords charging extortionate amounts of rent and wind power, solar panel, geothermal, heat pumps are not as efficient as people think, are not as durable as people think and I recommend time should be spent on pushing for lower rents and better housing. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I advise you to support this motion. Every year we're getting the IPCC Report, every year the clock is ticking, 13 years we have to do something radical and different or we will not have the survival of human existence on this planet. Every year the clock is getting closer. Every year the Doomsday clock is being pulled closer. 90 seconds it is at, it is, 12 o'clock is when we, game is over, the human race is done. 90 seconds, it wasn't even that during the Cuban Missile Crisis, it was not like that during the height of the Cold War. We either do something or the human race dies out and I'm sorry to disagree with my comrade, yes, with all due respect. I'm sorry, but the prices of housing is not being forced up by the actual cost of building materials. What has happened and again, I am a little bit of a nerd and I like to read economics.

What has actually happened is that during Covid and times like that, when the government gave away £700 billion, that's equivalent to £14,000 for every adult man and woman in the country, I would like to know, is anybody £14,000 richer since Covid? Are you £14,000?, are you £14,000? No, no. What, where did that money go? It went to the richest people, the richest people in the country and what did they do? They bought property. It is the only other day that Sadiq Khan, hardly a radical, Mayor of London, went round London, finding out on property that had been bought by the super rich in London and Westminster, just in a couple of weeks they found out, not lived in, over £20 billion of property. They are buying it to force up property, because it's better than having money in the bank. That's what's causing, we need mass housing, I agree and we need an environmental policy that works. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Cool. No, no, you can only speak once, unfortunately.

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: I ask you to support this motion. If you think of cars years ago, 30 years ago, how many cars had sat navs as standard in price, how many cars had central locking as standard, it was always an extra, an optional extra. If we get the builders now to put these in as standard, in years to come all the houses will be built with solar panels, with wind power. It's got to start somewhere, so I ask you to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? It be thy, Nick. I mean, Douggie got that two minutes past, to midnight in, didn't he? Or it was 90 seconds.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. In September, 2022 planning was approved by North Tyneside Council for a battery energy storage system called BESS, which could help power thousands of homes with renewable energy in North Tyneside, the UK. The site is 3.4 acres. As times moves on and technology improves, the footprint for one of these units would decrease, whilst the storage would increase. We cannot stop the battery development. Many more homes and businesses can be served. The Executive would ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You have right of reply.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Right to reply. How do I start, yes? We've got, Douggie has actually said it all, yes. We've got, it's just short of nothing, things will start getting extinct, yes. We're all about the bees, yes, a lot of things, a lot of our animals will get extinct if we don't get it, get these temperatures down. Like today, we're all fanning ourselves, yes and we're really hot, sweaty, yes. What can we do, yes? We've got to sort this carbon footprint out, yes. It's massively, you know, I'm forgetting all my words now, yes, but yes, it's massively dependent on all the things that we need, yes. So please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

35

Branch 568

This Conference agrees that assisted euthanasia be allowed in extreme circumstances of illness, and of course is not considered to be a criminal record.

Brother Lukasz Bemka – Branch 568: Hi. Putting forward this motion. This Conference agrees that assisted euthanasia be allowed in extreme cases of illness and of course is not considered a criminal offence. It says record, but it's meant to be offence, sorry, I typed it real fast. Anyway, I'm going to keep this short and sweet because I could go on forever about this. I have family members who have died of cancer and the last few months of their life was hell on earth. They could not breathe, they could not sit up, they could not do anything for themselves. One of my stepmum's, she, the last few months of her life she was in a coma, because the pain was that bad that morphine wasn't even touching it. So I ask you, from my heart, to support this motion. So please support it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I'm obviously not here to oppose my own motion, but I'd like to tell you a story and I may need violins in the background for this, to understand why I think this is so important. So 30 years ago, my father was quite young when he died, so he had a little lump on his back and he went for his MOT, which was just a medical, which basically checks everything. It checks your blood pressure, it checks your heart, it checks, makes sure you're okay, but he had this little mole on his back and said, well, I've got this mole on my back, I don't think it's anything, but at the time skin cancer wasn't an issue. So they said yes, we'll have a look at it, we'll send you to the specialist, have a little look and see what it's about. Went to the specialist, they took a little biopsy and then a couple of weeks' later he got the results and he sort of called the family together, my brother was in America, he said you know, call Paul, you know, let's have a little chat and he said, sorry, he said he had two years' to live and he was absolutely fine with it and he said, made a joke of it and I've always been a jokey person, I said yes, right, okay, two years to live. He said yes, seriously, he says apparently I've got melanoma and we didn't know what that was, what's that? He said it's a type of skin cancer and he said, it's spread to every organ and we said yes, yes, don't be silly, we said surely there's things that can be done, but we're talking 30 years ago when skin cancer wasn't even an issue.

So then time goes, one year goes by and I'm sat in a bedroom, my dad's bedroom and this guy's six foot tall, he was, six foot tall, 15 stone and he says to me, give me your car keys, Mark and just leave me with your car keys and let me just go somewhere. He wanted to kill himself, because he was in that much pain. He was weighing about 7 – 8 stone and he was crying and I wished he could have just died there and then and I wished there was some law that allowed him to do that, but he wasn't and he lasted another three months in absolute agony, tears every day and I used to visit him, go on visiting and I just wished there was a law in place that allowed him to just take him away, so for the first time I'm asking you not to oppose this. So please open your minds and support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Karen Plasom – Branch 356: Okay, Mark, you've set me off. [unclear – speaker distressed] is not unlike (unclear). Please oppose this motion, because even your loved one, if they want to do, we don't want them to, that's not being selfish, it is not being selfish. I love my sister to bits and her brain is still alive, so be careful, be very, very careful what you're saying. Who wants permission or was it (unclear). Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: I'm going to support this motion, because I believe people should have a choice. People should make their own decision and decide what they want to do. Reflect on the situation, their family, reflect on the doctor opinion after the consultation, they should have a choice to make the decision, but also if the person is not able, the family should have a choice to minimise the suffering for our family members, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): I'm sort of going to sit on the fence on this one. I spoke several years ago on this same thing, my mum had terminal cancer, sorry and I do believe the medics do make that choice at times, you know. The nurses came that morning and administered my mum some extra morphine to send her on her way. Some of the medics do this already when people are in hospital, they make that decision to withdraw treatment. They did something similar with my dad, he had a medical condition, you know, do not resuscitate.

So, we've got to be very, very careful because medics already have that choice to do that and it's not always easy for the individual. My mum, like I said, you know, didn't speak for two weeks, she was just absolutely drugged up on morphine and it was terrible to watch, but I wouldn't have wished her to go any sooner.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Like Mark, I lost my dad to cancer. He was given a year, within three months he was gone, but every day of that three months he wished he was gone before, he wished he didn't have to suffer. We wished he didn't have to suffer. So I'm asking you to support this motion and I think maybe we should have a chance to write it in our wills and given legal options to say that we actually want to go that way to stop our families suffering watch people degradate down like that. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers? No?

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts): Going back a year, I know last year my mum passed away, but going five years before that, she was diagnosed with a brain tumour and I lived with her all my life and every day when I left her she went, Mike, you don't understand, I'm in pain, I want to do myself in. I said, Mum, you can't. She goes, I just want to get tablets and end my life. She goes, I hit 60 years old, I was an active person. After 61, she was 75% disabled. She couldn't get out of the house very much. We had to, not last year, before moving to a bungalow because her mobility was so bad, last year she passed away, but we reckon she passed away because of all the worry she had because she just wanted to go, she was too scared to end her life and all the worry but it's like, you know, she was going, you don't understand. In her mind, she wanted to do her life in because, you know, you've worked all your life until you were 60 and then you hit a brick wall and she went to me, as you're my son, but you don't understand what I'm seeing. She goes, I'm walking round the house, I can't do what I used to do. So I support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Conference, the Executive decided to leave this open and there was emotions obviously on both sides, as we've just heard, for and against. I mean, this is a personal issue for people that's going through serious situations about how they want their loved ones dealt with or believe they should be dealt with, but obviously, you know, it's not an easy decision to make either way, seeing people struggle or suffer. So Conference, we would obviously ask you to vote with your conscience and what you strongly believe in and I'm just going to call the vote.

So all those in, unless obviously the mover does have a right to reply, I don't know if, okay, I nearly forgot, I do apologise, it was a very emotional debate.

To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 36.

36

Branch 356

This union should make it a priority in supporting our comrades with mental health issues.

Brother Duggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Mark, by the way, I've got to say that was one of the most heart-moving things I've heard at this Conference and I know we've disagreed on motions but, you know, you really touched my heart, you know. My heart goes out to you. Thank you. Alright, thank you very much.

This Conference, this Union should make it a priority to support comrades with mental health issues. One in four and I'm sorry, this is going to be another emotional thing, one in four people in the UK will suffer from some kind of mental illness this year, one in four. I'm one of those one in four. People know at previous Conferences I've spoken about my struggles with mental health, my struggles of self-medicating through heroin and crack. I must now make a confession and I haven't even told George and Lukasz this. Last year, I went back to my home and I disappeared off the scene for a long time. Last year I disappeared and I had another attack. I relapsed again for two days on heroin and crack, I relapsed. I attempted suicide again. I'm just asking for some support. It's the first time I've ever spoken about this. I'm just asking for some support from my comrades, that only you can give. I'm asking for some support to listen to this demon. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: I'm here to support this motion. As you know, I never miss Conference, but I missed Conference last year because unfortunately round about St Patrick's Day I had an episode and I had a nervous breakdown and which I've sort of been on medication, non-alcohol and counselling for the last 15 months, but I got something out of it and it was through my Union comrades.

We started slowly but surely, a little breakfast club, it started off with three of us who were my friends who I worked in the bakery with for 40 years and I swore that when they left, I wouldn't let them fall off the face of the earth, so we started away for breakfast together and slowly but surely we started this weekly breakfast club and it's now 18 of us, all former members, retired members and members of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union and it has been an absolute godsend for me and for the guys around it. We meet once a week, we have breakfast, we talk about our illnesses, we talk about what medication gives us the runs, we talk about our aches, we talk about our pains, we talk a lot of old BS, but at the end of it, we talk about what's really wrong and it's hard, you know, because I work with tough guys and I've worked with them for years and they've certainly held on to these really tough macho sort-of beliefs from their backgrounds, tough working class areas, but after about three or four months they all started to break down and started to explain what their problems was.

Now it helped me, because three months into it I sort of had my breakdown and we sort of like worked through with the breakfast club. It's now been successful for about 15 months. We are very, we have an outreach programme where we help various charities. We have helped dementia, we have helped the Belfast Homeless, we've bought Christmas dinners for people less fortunate than ourselves and lately, unfortunately it wasn't enough, John and I would apologise to you, I wish it had have been more, we made a donation to John's Branch for their Strike Fund. So comrades like, I know we do a lot of work inside the Union, but there's that wee bit of outreach outside where we can go out and we can talk and we can meet.

I'm just going to give you a wee tale that I heard during my counselling, right and this has sort of stuck with me since, right. One comrade fell down a hole, right and he was there for a while and he was destitute and he couldn't get out. One day he looked up and he seen his doctor and his doctor looked down and says, Jake, are you alright? I says no, doctor, I'm going through a tough time, so he threw me down a prescription. Stayed there for a while and the next day my minister came past and he says, how are you, Jake?, he says. Reverend, I'm in a bad way. He says don't worry about it, Jake, I'll say a prayer for you. So three days later, I looked up and there was my best mate and he jumped in the hole beside me and he says look, mate, we're both stuck in here now, he says, don't worry about it, Jake, I know how to get out. So comrades, if you're stuck in a hole and you want to get out, come and speak to me, come and speak to us all. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: Chair, EC, Delegates. Mental health is a terrible thing. Almost every one of us suffer with our mental health sometime in our lives. I've personally suffered with mine and will always struggle with it. Comrades, talk to one another, talking is a great tool. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Vicky Bassett – Branch 253: How many of you are (unclear) in this room, listening to these stories?, you know, it hits you hard and this is close to my heart as well. We all know someone, yourselves, your family members, your friends, somebody has suffered with some sort of mental health issue. Are we doing enough? Are we, as a Union, doing enough to support our Brothers and Sisters? What more can we do? Talk to each other, help each other, get in that hole with them and support them and help them. You can be smiling and you can be hiding so, so much. Please, you never know what somebody's going though. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Me? Is it me?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, yes.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Yes, yes. I'm here to support this motion. Unfortunately, because of tragic circumstances, we lost a member but I think it's testament to this Union that the General Secretary turned up at his funeral. We could have done a bit more, could have spoken to him, but we really don't know what goes through people's minds in dark times, in the light, so yes, I fully support the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thanks, Sean.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts): This time last year, I was in a really bad way, because when I lost my mum and I felt like I wanted to do my life in and all that, but I'm a lot better now, but what I'm saying is everybody's, just spend five minutes or even a couple of minutes just to talk to the person beside you, just have a word, a person you might not even know, just spend five minutes talking to them, because that can help everybody.

Just them five minutes, talking to somebody, can help somebody else's mental health, because you having a word with them, that's, sometimes they might want to give you a talk, they just want to have, you know, open up and that's what I found, by speaking to other people I didn't know, it helped me a lot and when I was like here last year, even at work, even out of work, it helped me a lot and by spending five minutes by talking to the person next to you, saying, just having the five minutes, it can do a lot of help to everybody. So, support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Sick of seeing me by now, but I was on this podium last year and I came out as mentally impaired because I was struggling. I told everybody here, the people that have known me for years, that think I'm super strong, that I was breaking down inside. Once I did that and once I reached out and asked people for help, I got help. My Brothers and Sisters couldn't do enough for me, just a chat, just a coffee, just an arm around my shoulder, any of this helps anybody that is struggling. Believe it or not, you'll think oh, well, what's two minutes of my time going to do to help them? It helps, honestly helps so much. I couldn't be where I am now mentally without the help and support I got last year. So, thank you to everybody that helped me on my way and please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: First of all, thank you all for sharing your views on the subject, but to focus on the motion on its own, I think we already proved as a Union that we care about our people, for the different programmes, different courses. We delivered the mental health courses for our members. I think there should be some kind of way to get the money from the government and the courses should be ongoing, available for everyone, whatever their need, but from the Union perspective, I believe the Mental Health First Aider should be on every single site, on every single shift, because very often you don't want to speak with your manager, you don't want to speak with your colleague, but if you have someone you can trust, that's the person who can help you and maybe give you a chance to listen and try to give you some backup. So, strongly, I ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? Kevin. Sorry, I should have said VP, shouldn't I, really, sorry, sorry about that.

Brother Kevin Flood (Speaking on behalf of the Executive): Wow. Respect. So, what I'm going to ask you to do. Check out and support it. Please support the motion, cheers.

[APPLAUSE]

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

I'm going to give you a break, it was a bit emotional, wasn't it, you know, the last couple of motions, so we're going to come back for 10 past 2.

[LUNCH]

Can we take our seats. Okay, can we settle down. Doors shut, everybody's back in. Before we turn to our Agendas, we misled you before when I said there wasn't anybody else coming, that's because I've lost my paperwork and I don't know where I've lost it, so I do apologise, it's probably because I'm messy as well, but we're pleased to welcome the, Her Excellency Guisell Morales, call you Sister, how's that, that's much, much better, who's Nicaraguan Ambassador to the UK and to Ireland, so if you'd like to take to the podium and address our Conference. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Her Excellency Guisell Morales [Nicaraguan Ambassador] Addresses Conference

Good afternoon. Thank you to all for inviting me here and stay with you today in your Conference and to share with you social economic advances of Nicaragua and in clinical transformation that has taken place in my country during the last 16 year, with priority given to health, education and housing and policies which benefit the many rather than the few and with workers and your Unions at the heart of the policies and advances, because (unclear) value every person, farmer, worker. Their contributions for us are vital, particularly those that feeds the nation, like you. So, you might think why is the Ambassador of Nicaragua at my Conference? Well, I think it's important that workers know what other workers are doing in another place of the planet and it's important the Union internationally, you know, to recognise that we are in this fight for the same thing, you know, to live better, to have a better life and to have a better, a nation that value us as workers. So, on behalf of Nicaragua, I will tell you about our fair, human, Socialist, Solidarity model.

Your Union, the Union, the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union, has been fighting to end this course of food poverty in communities and workplaces across the country, by challenging low pay and demanding the Right to Food be enshrined in the law, so I am going also to tell you about my country fight against poverty, to fight our fight against hunger and to achieve food sovereignty. Despite being a developing country, with labour-intensive agricultural production, we have made important progress in addressing multiple subjects such as meeting human needs for food, education and healthcare, reducing poverty and improving the environment. Since 2006, after 16 year of (unclear) government, 16 years of following (unclear), it was a change of government and (unclear) party to cover, with President ? at the helm and this has brought huge positive economic and social changes, such as reducing the poverty by half, becoming the 7th most gender-equal country in the world, being the safest country in Central America and the Caribbean, with one of the lowest homicide rate in the Americas Continent. Free health for all. We have built the largest hospital network in Central America. We had the lowest mortality rate during Covid of the region and life expectancy has increased and infant mortality has been drastically reduced. Some of this may be, is something that you already have, but we didn't 16 years ago, so why is important for you to know, because workers have been doing this, this is the result of all workers, Trade Unions pushing and working in hand with the government to achieve this. Free education and health for all. Literacy has vastly improved and the country offers free education from pre-school through college through university and professionalisation.

It has been 16 years of evolutionary transformation of education, where human being is at the centre of the objective, placing people, girls, boys, families in the centre of the policy. Expanding opportunities to better workers to go to university, for our communities to have their own university, to be technical professionals at any educational level. This year, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education has implemented the healthiest school plans 2023, to bring to schools, to the education community, healthcare, so they don't have to, because that is part of the preventing movement, so they don't move the kids and the teachers and the families around don't need to go when they are sick. We prevent they get sick and if you know, I know you are fighting to achieve the Right to Food for all and free school meals, so let me tell you that my country, a developing country, makes a priority providing free school meals to more than one million, two hundred thousand children. We are a country of 6.5 million, so do the math. We have say no to hungry childrens in school, for that within the model of Solidarity, family and community, the Ministry of Education provides the basic food, the schools have food gardens and health patio, some with fish ponds and chickens. Parents cook the meal, so kids get to know and value the journey the food takes from production to plate, something that you know you are doing too.

Nicaragua has virtually eliminated hunger and attained 90% self-sufficiency in food production, whilst also increasing food export, by improving agricultural practices, promoting climate resilience to mitigate the impact of climate change and we have achieved this while decreasing our per capita greenhouse gas emissions, which were already 1/8th as much as, for example, United States. Moreover, Nicaragua has managed to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, caused mostly by developed countries. In 2006 we produced only 26% of our energy from renewables, now we are producing 70% and sometimes 80 when there is good weather. Despite facing illegal US sanctions and interventions, Nicaragua economy continue to grow steadily across all major sectors. People often say Nicaragua is the (unclear) poorest country in the hemisphere of the America, based on the per capita JVP and they are right, but the JVP measure only measure totality of the economy activity, not whether people's basic needs, basic human rights are met. When you consider that Nicaragua has the second lowest poverty rate in Latin America and that the poor have access to good quality basic healthcare, food and free education, you might say that my country is one of the least poor countries in the Americas hemisphere.

So, after 500 year of Colonialism interventions in our history and Nicaragua clear lacks, we lack the infrastructure needed for our most developed country, we are underdeveloped, that's true, however because of the choices we made in recent years, our economic activity, well, we developed that infrastructure, is targeted towards meeting the needs of the entire population, instead of only serving the interests of the wealthiest, Nicaraguans and foreign corporations and this means that instead of targeting our economy to develop weapons of war, security of civilians and consumerism, we have focussed on healthcare, education, infrastructures, roads, electricity, portable (unclear), hospitals and parks, for the enjoyment of the family and you say well, but electricity's normal, everybody has electricity here, not in my country. In 2006, only 50% of the population had electricity, now we have 99% of the population has electricity and that changed the life of the people.

If you go to Nicaragua and travel around, you can see agricultural production everywhere, you can talk to farmers, agricultural environmental experts and communicate, Trade Union leaders. You will obtain luscious fruits and vegetable and savour an amazing biodiversity, but you will also learn about laws to promote equitable and efficient development, like the Agricultural Law or the (unclear) Hunger Law. That will be kind of what you are trying to achieve.

This Law provides incentives and education to small farmers, create markets for them to sell their goods, provide plants and old chickens to establish a small-scale farm enterprise and provide low interest loans and programmes to foster the less common communities so we don't lose the native fruits, the native grains, so that are not commodity. So, for example, dragon fruits, something that you know is very expensive here but over there is just common. So, we will learn about about the (unclear) Democratic People's Centre approach of making this issue and implementing change, where Trade Unions have played and are playing an important part historically to achieve liberation where people is the precedent, with government that rules by dialogue and consensus.

I know you have to go on with your Conference, you have many decisions to take, many things to discuss, so I thank you for just inviting me to listen to you and I will, allow me to say that like you, that fight food poverty and hunger, our fight is also against poverty, which is a crime against humanity and fulfilling the human right to life and development to a space to peace and prosperity. So, all this that I have mentioned are not the government, it is the people, people like you, Trade Unionists like you, organised people like you, families, those are the ones who make this advances possible. So, we will continue fighting for the right of our people to lead prosperous, to have a future in peace and also we will stand and like you, we won the war to achieve the human Right to Food, to make sure our children, our people eat healthy food, fairly produced by well-paid and protected staff throughout the food sector. So, because another war, fair and justice war is possible because we are not few, we are not few, because we are here, we have not giving up, we have not sold ourselves. Here we are, here are you, fighting for your dreams, for our dreams, the future, peace, the people, the planet, saying no to death, saying no to poverty, saying yes to prosperity, life and freedom. So, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thank you ever so much for coming and addressing Conference. There is a bag full of biscuits, made by our members, for you and a pewter baker that is a special edition, especially for you as a thank you.

Sister Guisell Morales: This is amazing, because this is what you produce, this is the food that the people needs and thank you. Thank you, that means a lot to me and also my grandson will be very happy.

[LAUGHTER]

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

We'll win through, we'll win through.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Absolutely. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

I think, Conference, as well, just to say, you know, obviously we've been speaking about this, of the importance of Solidarity and the issues that we face as people and the poverty that's ever increasing in our country and I think what we've just heard is an example why international Solidarity is critical if we're to fight against the ravages of poverty and obviously the reality of what happens in a country that concentrates on investing in its people rather than investing in a few at the top of the ladder. I think, you know, what we've just heard from our Sister, our Sister, you know, demonstrates that how life can be different if politicians make decisions in the interests of people, so absolutely, thank you very much for bringing that message and please take back our message of Solidarity. Thank you.

Sister Guisell Morales: Just because I'm conscious of the time, just allow me to say that our Trade Unions, congratulations on this occasion, because you are standing up for your rights and we are with you, in the international arena we are with you and here and the last thing is also, it is important the politic fight, not just the rights, the politics is important. We have achieved this because our Trade Unions are members in the parliament. The president of the parliament is one, is member of a Trade Union for health, so the thing, the structures is where the voice of the workers are being listened and their rights are being built up. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, Conference, back to your Agendas. It's motion 37, which I believe's online, isn't it.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): That this Conference (unclear) the vaccination process for people under the age of 18. The vaccination has not been clinically proven and people are having to make their own minds up on this. Now, (unclear) every destination, I'll tell you where this is about. I believe people didn't have the time to make their own minds up concerning this, because like the Health Service, we were all (unclear) key workers. I've had discussions with my family and my partner and it seems that I'm the scab, because I've actually taken the vaccination (unclear – bad communication via Zoom). The world's greatest tennis players refusing to take it, we've had sports people having heart attacks at major tournaments due to it's not been clinically proven to be successful and I believe that we've been, it's been, Covid's been a source of divide throughout the world. It's been a source of divide throughout the workplace. So (unclear – bad communication via Zoom) Conference's support of this motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Sean. Seconder? Any speakers? Okay.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Thank you.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Back to normality. Of course I oppose this motion. I think the medical breakthrough and the effort that went into this worldwide, in our worldwide Health Authority absolutely, I was, is unbelievable. I know there are side effects, there are side effects with any kind of vaccination, all the way back to MMR basically, there's many side effects that can happen with any, it depends on your condition, depends on the kind of person you are, you may have underlying issues, but I thought it was amazing what this world did basically, from America through to Australia, unbelievable to actually get a vaccine out in whatever, 12, 18 months. I know usually it's supposed to be 10 years of testing, but maybe it was around 10 years of testing with the thousands of hours that went into it and the people who were involved. It's unbelievable, so that is why I oppose this motion. Sorry, Sean.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Virginiya Matinzaitė – Branch 357: I will ask to support this motion, because our children is our future. Without children, we no have future and as you know, that vaccination is wasn't prove to safe. How we let our children to be guinea pigs for them? We have to fight for them, to make them safe. It's my duty, I am a mother of two, I will do everything in my power to keep them safe and not only for my children, for all childrens and I am asking, no, I am begging you to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Jones – Branch 568 (Fox's): First-time speaker.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you.

I'd like to oppose this motion. Being clinically vulnerable myself during the Covid situation, I have two under 16 children and I said to them, it's your choice what you want to do. If you choose that you want to have the vaccine, that's fine, that's your choice. If you choose that you don't want to have it, then that's also your choice, but they're all going to have to make up their minds at that point. Both my children decided that they wanted the vaccine and they both had it. They had no issues. It was one of those situations where trusting your children to have their own beliefs and their own support networks in you as a parent, it's the right thing to do, so I oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just for the verbatim report, we thought you said 216, you had 216 children.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Jonathan Kaye? - Branch 575: Hi, Sean. Unfortunately I'm going to have to oppose this, purely because we were stuck with holidays, under 16 kids and we had to have our kids vaccinated before we could go abroad. I know a lot of other people have been in the same situation and also the countries abroad, they're still umming and ahing whether the vaccine's still any good. So it's purely a personal thing, mate, nothing to do with medical or anything like that. Both my parents were clinically and had to isolate due to limited (unclear) bodies and everything, so yes, that's the reason why I'm opposing, mate.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mike Andrews – Region 2 (South Wales Postal Branch): I'm going to oppose this motion, purely the fact is, I believe that anyone under 18 should have the choice if they want the vaccine themselves and not only that, please don't forget, three years ago, none of us were allowed in this room because of Covid and because of the vaccine roll-out, that's why we're here today. Please, don't support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580: I beg for everyone to support this motion. Covid, a disease so bad, in some cases you needed a test to know that you had it. There has been zero children being killed of Covid, so that fact that we're injecting young children with an experimental new technology, it's not a vaccine, it's an experiment, it's MRNA, it changes your DNA and this is proven. It causes myocarditis, (unclear), when the face droops and strokes, it causes all kinds of side effects and for adults, for the vulnerable, most people who it was dangerous to were over 88 years old, so there's no reason to be giving it to children. We're not, some children might be high-classed, asthma or other difficulties. I'm on the fence there, if it's a good idea or a bad idea, but in general, just pushing it out to children, I think it's the wrong idea. I hope you support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Turner – Branch 3554 (Fletchers): Hi. I'm here to oppose. All my family's had it, the injections and that, boosters etc, all my children, no problems. So, I'm here to oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else? No? Well, obviously you're going to have the right to reply, Sean. I'm just going to give the Executive's position.

The Executive position is that we've been consistent throughout, that the vaccine is an independent, individual choice and obviously a family, you know, has the right to choose what it believes is in the best interests of its children, so we've not taken a position on this motion. We've left it to yourselves, because we believe that's consistent with what we've said from National Health & Safety Committee, we don't believe in mandatory vaccinations, but we don't believe that people should be instructed not to have them either. So, our position is we've left it open, but obviously, Sean, you have the right to reply, because it has been opposed.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Thank you. I appreciate what (unclear) there. I think (unclear – bad communication via Zoom), but we are as Trade Unionists, we oppose and we question things. Now, during the Covid years, we weren't allowed that time to do so and one of the guys has mentioned that he wanted a, well, there's an element of blackmail and force and without stopping and thinking about this process, I mean, you've got the world's greatest tennis player refusing to take it, you've got serious athletes refusing to take it. Now, we've all got our own opinions on this, but given my time again, I won't be forced or rushed into anything, I'll take my mind, I'll make my own mind up about how it should be and I think the fact that everything was shut down, everything was locked down, there's an element of people having a gun held to their heads. If you're a key worker, you haven't got time to think about this. So I appreciate people opposing it, I appreciate what you're saying but, you know, my view is, having my time again, I wouldn't actually take it, that's my view, okay.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Sean. Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Okay. Those against? That's lost. Thank you. 38.

38

Region 4

That this Conference agrees to call upon the Government to work with the NHS to set up Non-Medical practitioner – led prostate cancer clinics and to fund prostate cancer research screening as a matter of urgency

Brother John Fitzpatrick – Branch 430 (No. 4 Region): Speaking on behalf of prostate cancer. It's been advertised on the telly lately and not that many males actually know about what your prostate is or where it is in your body, which was quite surprising. Prostate cancer is the most common cause in men, it's the second cause of cancer deaths. More than 52,000 men diagnosed with cancer in the UK. Every year, that's 143 men every day, diagnosed with prostate cancer. Every 45 minutes, one man dies from prostate cancer, that's more than 12,000 every year. One in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. Around 475,000 men are living with prostate, or after. Prostate cancer is a small walnut-shaped gland in the male part of the reproductive system in men and people assigned to men at birth, it's not removed. Many prostate cancers grow slowly and are confined to the prostate gland, where they may not cause serious harm, however while some types of prostate cancer grow slowly and may not need minimal or even no treatment at all, other types of prostate cancer are very aggressive and can spread quite quickly throughout the bones and the rest of the body. There are many different types of prostate cancer treatments. You may have different systems depending on the stage and the grade of your cancer. Warning signs of prostate cancer typically in starting to urinate, weakness, interruption flow of urine, urinating often especially at night more, trouble emptying the bladder, pain or burning during urination, blood in the urine or semen, you need to be checked out. Prostate cancer, there's a prostate cancer memorial proudly stands in Liverpool Lime Street Station. It's there from 23rd May to 25th September, 2023.

The prostate cancer memorial is a remembrance sculpture dedicated to the husbands, dads, uncles, granddads lost to prostate cancer. Making a difference, the striking 10 foot steel pyramid is a spectacular memorial display and celebration of many unique lives lost. I've actually seen it. One side's like the badge, it's all for prostate and on one side, from top to bottom, it's males that have lost their lives to prostate and there's two empty sides ready to be filled up with names, it's very sad. The prostate cancer memorial is to fund lifesaving research projects to find better ways to diagnose and treat men, thanks to researchers like Dr Kelly Coffey and her team at Newcastle University and are closing to making personalised prostate cancer. Thank you. I wish you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Seconder? Formally seconded. Okay. Speakers? No? Anybody on there? Okay, Joe.

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): I did have a speech, but John Fitz has already said it, so our position is, we would like you to support this and please, please me and support it.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It's great when someone comes up and takes all your speech away from you, ain't it, Joe. I'll tell you. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 39, thank you. 356.

39

Branch 356

We as a conference say that those who are suffering from long term COVID should be given support in dealing with this by the government.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya. Do you know what, I was sitting there and I was thinking about what to say and it's really, really sad that I even have to get up here and ask that we make a declaration that people suffering from long Covid need support, it is sad. It is sad days that we live in, that we have to demand for a government something that people went before us fought hard to get, the Welfare State, the NHS. It is sad that I have to say anything, that people who are suffering from the long term effects of this disease have to beg for support. Maybe if we actually had a government that thought about its needs of its people, like Nicaragua, a beacon of hope to the world, by the way and I've read a lot about your government and you are fantastic, you are, you know, your Solidarity and your people, you know, are brilliant, fantastic people, a government who believes that its people, you should operate on policy to do with need, not greed. It is sad that I say this and if you're angry, you should be angry and if you aren't angry, what the hell is wrong with you? Please, support the motion, it's just humanity. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I love to oppose your motions. This wasn't a government issue, the government didn't cause Covid basically and I think there are far more important things that the government can do and put something in process to protect people, mental health, etc, etc. I mean, long Covid unfortunately, some of us have suffered further afield, you know, we've had Covid and then, myself, I had Covid, it knocked me sideways and then for six months I found difficulty basically, it wasn't the government's fault, there was nothing the government couldn't do. The NHS were very good, I took medication. So Doug, I'm not actually sure what support we're actually asking from the government. What do you want the government to do? I mean, unfortunately illness and, you know, struggles with Covid unfortunately, as I say, wasn't something that was, you know, it was unfortunately one of those things that just happened to, you know, a pandemic that came round and it was nobody's fault and, well, a lot of people say it was China's fault, something came from China, it was man-made etc, I don't know, but I'm not absolutely sure what kind of support we're actually asking for there and so I oppose, I oppose a motion which I cannot understand what support we're looking for. Sorry, Doug.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just to remind you, as you go back to your seat, Mark, we passed at a National Health & Safety Committee that we supported the campaign for long Covid. You didn't, you supported it.

[LAUGHTER]

Any other speakers? No? I just thought I'd remind you, Mark, as you went back to your seat. Mark, have we got Mark?

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Yes, me. Can you hear me? Thank God for that.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It's been a long day, it's hot here. We've not all been sat in our vest.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Hello? Christ Almighty. Can you hear me?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Oh right, alright then. Sorry, I'm eating pizza.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hello? Mark, the fact that you don't understand this motion, Mark, I'm sorry and you don't understand the government's duties given that it runs the Health Service, it says everything, mate. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Short and sweet, Mark, we were expecting something longer there.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, anybody else? No? Joe.

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): Conference, we ask the Conference to support this motion. The long-term Covid is becoming more and more common every day, so please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. You have the right to reply, if you want to use it.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Mark, alright, alright. Let me tell you a story. It's short.

[LAUGHTER]

It will be short, honestly, you know. We fought in the worst war in history in World War 2 and when we came out of that war, we, the greatest government we've ever had created the National Health Service and the Welfare State, that nobody would fall into poverty, for need of medical procedures or for need of want. Read the Beveridge Report and if you don't know what support is, look at what's happening to our benefits system, look at what's happening when people who have been sick for a long time, including people with mental health, are put on trial every couple of years by companies like Capita, the amount of suicides and everything. So on top of being ill, you're put on trial, you know. Your own doctors are called liars. That's what I mean by support, by putting forwards the actual heart we made when we created the Welfare State, that's what I mean support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Listen, obviously sometimes we get heated debates on the floor and I know Mark, I mean he likes to create debate and I really appreciate that, because sometimes people will not get up until he has and makes comments, which he knows will cause people to speak, so I always appreciate that and we have great conversations at our National Health & Safety Meeting, but you can put your Agendas away. I know the heat's very hot and obviously we could tell, sorry, the heat is making us all very hot I meant and obviously we picked that up from you, Doug, it's getting a bit angry and we don't need any of that, but thank you for all your passion. So, after the fringe meetings, the Allied Delegates will be back in here, in this room, so if all the Allied Delegates could come back to this room after your fringe meeting's finished and we need the EC current members just to stay in here for a couple of minutes, because you've got something to sign. Everybody else, at half past 3, obviously go to the fringes, where are they now? Where's the table gone? So, the fringe meetings are over there, remember where you're at, remember where you're at and I'll see you in the morning at half past 9. Hold on. Hold on a second.

Sister Guisell Morales: One second, just one second before you leave. I want to let you know that we have here, to show our support to your Conference, we have Louise from Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign

[APPLAUSE]

She is the Trade Union Lead between Trade Unions in Nicaragua and Trade Unions here too, so on behalf, so she will show the Solidarity to your Trade Unions from our Trade Unions. If you want to know more about the work the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign Action Group does, she has all the information, she will be here today and I think, I don't know if tomorrow, but surely today, so please, when you think another workers express and think that the Solidarity is the strength that bonds workers around the world. So, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you. 9.30 in the morning, Conference.

Tuesday 13th June 2023

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Must have been that weather last night. Can we shut the doors now, please. Thank you very much. Preempted me, your watches are obviously synced with mine, which is perfect. General Secretary to call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4, I didn't know where to look for you then, Geoff, you're all over the place this morning. Region 5. Region 7. How many have we got on there? 10, bloody hell, ooh. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. You'll notice we've got another guest speaker. I only said yesterday, wrongly, that we didn't have a guest speaker yesterday afternoon, but we corrected that and what a contribution that particular presentation was, showing how politics can be done in the interests of people. This morning, we've got a young guy called Gaz Jackson, who is a RMT organiser for Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, for the past two years I believe? Yes, yes, for the past two years. He was previously a train guard and served on the RMT NEC and he was first on board the Pride of Hull 15 months ago, when the P&O bosses told the workers via Zoom they were out of a job and lifted the gangway so security couldn't pull RMT members from their place of work, which is absolutely brilliant and they didn't leave the vessel then until they got guarantees they'd sought were given them and he's obviously been heavily involved in the national dispute, leading from the front, not only fighting the companies but also the government who were trying to destroy the (unclear), but I've also got to make this comment as well. I was going to do a meeting in Huddersfield Trades Council and Sarah says oh, she says, my mate's there, she says, you probably know him, Gaz Jackson, you can't miss him, he's got loads of red hair. Obviously, when I got in there and I saw this bald guy, I thought no, that can't be Gaz Jackson, he's got no red hair. Please welcome Gaz Jackson from the RMT to our Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Gaz Jackson [RMT Organiser] addresses Conference

Morning, Conference. President, General Secretary, Delegates. Thank you for allowing me here to speak at your Conference, an absolute privilege.

Firstly, I want to express Solidarity greetings from the RMT to all Allied workers, Allied Bakery workers. Striking is hard, but you're not alone. Stand together, stand strong and you'll win. Your Union and mine are very similar in so many ways. We may be small in comparison to the bigger Unions, but what we make up for is with our organising skills and our will to fight.

I want to tell you the story about what happened on March 17th, St Patrick's Day last year, when 786 seafarers got dismissed from P&O Ferries. So on that day, which is quite weird for a Regional Organiser, I had a quiet day, I was just doing some emails at home, so I was quite looking forward to having a bit of a relaxing day. I got a 'phone at about 7.30 from my National Secretary, Darren Fox, when he told me, he said something's happening at P&O Ferries, he wasn't sure, because the crews had just come in from the continent and they'd obviously spoken to him. He said to me, I need to get to Hull. I live about 45 minutes away, I went, not a problem, Daz, get there. I just thought it'd be some sort of a, we'd be maybe looking at some sort of a restructuring, potential redundancies maybe, because that does happen, but to my surprise when I got there, I drive through the docks and on the right-hand side I saw two minibuses and what I saw outside them minibuses were people with handcuffs, with security vests on and they were going to come and take our members off the ship and when I got on board, we had about 10 minutes on there speaking to the members, you know they was really worried, really upset, because they didn't know what was going to happen.

They was halfway through a two week tour between Rotterdam and Hull, that's what they do, two weeks on, two weeks off, so what they was doing was preparing the ship for their outward leg on the evening that night. They received that message, then at 9 o'clock we all sat around in the concert hall on the ship, they pulled down the screen and then the boss said basically that's it, off you go, you've got 10 minutes, pack your stuff, if not, we're going to get these security guards to take you off and take you and your belongings off, kick you off basically and if you refuse, we'll get the police. So what myself, the captain and the onboard Reps decided to do was lift the gangway and, you know, I'm a child at heart and I've always wanted to become a pirate and that day I did.

[LAUGHTER]

Joking aside, it was absolutely the worst possible thing I've ever seen and, you know, you see it talked about on the news, but it was ten times worse because I was sat there with people that at been at sea for 40-odd years, you know, they had nowhere else to go. They'd been man and boy, but and girl, sorry, working at sea for all them years and they had nowhere to go. So basically what the company did, they said right, you've got to leave now, we're going to give you redundancy money and then we're also going to give you the same amount of money you would get if you took us to tribunal. So they ultimately bought them, bought their silence and I don't blame the people for taking, accepting the deal, but what they didn't do, on that day, was give them any reassurance, there was no paperwork. When we go into redundancy talks or consultation meetings, there's paperwork, you know what you're going for. So our members said well, we're not going to leave, we're not going to leave, because if we leave this ship, we'll be classed as AWOL and then the offer that they've made us might not be guaranteed, so we stayed on the ship and we was on there for 10 hours and you know what, I'd still be on there now if the members wanted me to be, because ultimately that's what Trade Union's about, we need to look after each other and stick together. You know, we tried to do everything we could, it was really difficult. We needed a political and industrial and a public campaign.

Unfortunately we couldn't have an industrial campaign because everybody was sacked. You know, the political campaign was okay. The public campaign was absolutely fantastic, I've never seen anything quite like it. I don't know if anybody knows Hull and the docks around Hull, but what we did is, we walked from the docks round to the prison, which is about two miles on a dual carriageway, so we basically shut down Hull demonstrating, to try and get our members back into work. You know, we fought for everything that we had. We tried our best, we did everything we possibly could. We travelled the country, we spoke to MPs, we spoke to businesses, we even got businesses to boycott people using P&O Ferries, so we were speaking to hauliers, don't use them and do you know what, the figures and the facts that the financials on P&O Ferries are absolutely through the floor and the only way they're surviving as a company is because they're supported by the Dubai government. Now, we don't stand a chance against them, they've got an infinity amount of money. What they wanted to do was destroy the workforce that we had on P&O Ferries.

I can remember going down to parliament a few days after and they had, I think it was Prime Minister's Questions and I remember, I think it was, I can't remember which Prime Minister it was then, we've had that many in between. I think it was Boris and he said that we're going to change the law, we're going to not let this happen ever again. Well, I'm still waiting, we're all still waiting. If anything, workers' rights have got worse. You know, they're looking at bringing in the Minimum Service Requirement Levels in the NHS and on the railway. Well, I would love a Minimum Service Requirement in the NHS and I'll tell you why, because they're understaffed and there isn't a Minimum Service Requirement in the NHS and our NHS is failing exactly for that reason.

You know, as a Trade Union movement, this was a line in the sand. We had two options, we either roll over and get our bellies tickled or we fight. If this happens again, I call on the TUC to call a National Strike of all workers across all affiliated Unions. Nobody should be left behind. We need more than a strongly worded letter, we need action to defend workers across all industries.

[APPLAUSE]

We must never forgive and we must never forget.

I've got a question. Does anybody know what causes inflation? We are told it's working people asking for a pay rise. It's absolute nonsense, because our members that came through the National Rail dispute have not had a pay rise for four years. We're told there's no money, there's no money to have a £15 minimum wage and there's no money to fund our NHS properly, but when our Prime Minister heats his swimming pool, there's plenty of money, isn't there. You know, there's plenty of money where they want it, not for us. You know, our members within the RMT started to fight back 18 months ago and due to the draconian anti-Trade Union laws, we've had to re-ballot three times. We have not only reached the thresholds, we've smashed them three times with ever-increasing turnouts and yes votes for industrial action. We've had enough, we've had enough. We've had enough of this government treating our people like absolute scum. All we want is a fair deal and I don't think we're a million miles away from it, but the issue that we've got is the government involvement. If the companies are allowed to negotiate with us, nine times out of 10, we get a settlement, but it's just impossible. We almost had a deal about six weeks ago, it was going to go out to our membership and then on the Monday, the government said, actually, no, you're not going to have that deal, you can have the previous one that was already previously rejected. So how are we ever going to end this dispute, until the government actually sit down and negotiate properly?

I believe that the RMT dropped a stone in a pond about 18 months ago and what we've been from that is a ripple effect of other Trade Unions coming onboard and taking on the bosses. You know, the working class are back, we're fighting and we refuse to be poor any more.

Unfortunately my members, like I said, aren't taking on an employer, we're taking on this rotten Tory government. They want to smash my Union. We're in the fight of a generation, a fight that we can't afford to lose. You know, it might be sounding like I want your sympathy, but what we want is your Solidarity. We need a change in the government, we must also work to kick the Tories out. I'm not the biggest fan of the Labour Party, but if elected in the next general election, we must make sure that they work for us. If they don't, we have the power to remove them. No ifs, no buts, no fudged answers, you're either with us or you're with the bosses.

[APPLAUSE]

And I know you've got a lot of business to get through and I don't want to stand up here before it gets too hot, because the heat, I can start feeling the heat coming through now, so I'm going to end on this and it's a famous quote that you've probably all heard, from our sadly departed General Secretary, who was actually, it would have been his 62nd birthday today and he once said, if we spit on our own, they'll just wipe you away, but if we all spit together, we can drown the bastards.

Victory to the Bakers Union and victory to the RMT. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, I know Gaz has said he would take, do about four or five questions if there's four or five questions.

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: President, I've brought everybody a present, I don't know how we're going to do it, but everybody, I've got everybody something in the room, so I'll let you sort that out.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Alright, okay.

[LAUGHTER]

Right, thank you very much, thank you very much, really appreciate that, but you've still got to do the four or five questions, yes?

[LAUGHTER]

Sean? Okay.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): I've a question to ask the guy. I was concerned with the P&O fiasco. You mentioned the Tory government. It wasn't lost on me there was a Saudi-based company that actually drew this or was behind and if you asked it would be (unclear). It wasn't lost on me and all that he was at, the Prime Minister was in Saudi Arabia and in the Middle East talking about the oil crisis at the time and does he believe that the timing of that was also in connection with him visiting these wealthy countries over oil?

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: I absolutely do. I think it was just an absolute stitch-up from the very beginning. You know, we saw loads of crocodile tears from people like Grant Shapps, Boris Johnson and they promised us the world and delivered nothing, so I agree, it was an absolute stitch-up.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Thank you.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561: Yes. Just to say, I was fortunate enough a few years ago to attend the TUC when actual Bob Crow called for a National Strike and the TUC jittered, but he managed to sway that Conference and got a vote for a National Strike. Sadly, the Unions jittered and the members, but it's just an opinion, do you feel the time's right now for a National Strike?

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: Yes, I do and it's my Union's position as well. I think if we need, you know, we've never been in a time like we're currently going through now you know, we're in a cost of living crisis, we've just come through a pandemic and people are really struggling. If we can't do it now then when do we do it?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? Is there anybody else in the room who wants to ask a question? Okay, Dimitri, you know where to go.

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton - EC Member): There is only one question and maybe you can, the question is, can you give us more insight on why the government is trying to negotiate when you have the contacts with the companies?

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: Okay, so obviously we have 14 train operating companies and we have Network Rail. Network Rail are the people that maintain and signal the tracks. The train operating companies is pretty self-explanatory, but what oversees all of that is a governmental department called The Rail Delivery Group and these people are the ones that offer out the contracts for the private companies to run the railway and they have to sign-off any agreement that you have with these companies. So that's what's making it very difficult, you know.

We've got, I think it's seven nationalised train operating companies currently around the country, because the privatised system on the railway is failing, you know. We've got the German state government running trains in our country, cross-country, that goes like from Penzance to Aberdeen, sucking all the profits out and then what they're doing, they're taking the money over to Germany and they're allowing the German citizens, which is absolutely fantastic by the way and I think we should do it if we ever got the opportunity, you can buy a ticket in Germany, well certainly last summer, in August, you could buy a ticket for 30 Euros and you could travel the whole of Germany for a month. How fantastic's that? How fantastic's that?

If I wanted to get a train from Doncaster to London, which I do regular, it's 250 quid, it's not affordable, you know, it's not and what the government are trying to do is make the railway less safe and less accessible for people that need to use it. You know, if I was a wheelchair user and there wasn't a guard on board the train, how am I going to get on? You're not, are you, because we run on a 19th century Victorian railway that's not designed to be accessible. You need staff there and people there to help people get on and off and board the trains and, you know, we've all seen incidents that have happened on trains recently, you know, where people have been harassed and the people that have stopped it are the people that are working onboard and, you know, it's important that we keep people there so we can have a safe, affordable and accessible railway.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Gaz. Jake.

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: Welcome, comrade. Just a question. You were talking there about, you know, the Labour Party coming into power in the next election, you know and I think we're all fearful about what's going to happen here with the Labour Party, the way they're heading at the minute. As you know, you're not a member, your Union is not a member of the Labour Party and we disaffiliated a few years' back, right. If the Labour Party do not help the workers, would you, like ourselves, advocate that all Trade Unions disaffiliate from the Labour Party?

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: So my AGM's decision was to, well, we got kicked out of the Labour Party and we, the AGM took a decision a few years' ago when Jeremy was obviously the leader and we said we'd try and align ourselves a little bit more with the Labour Party with Jeremy being there. It's just very difficult now because, you know, we had Ian Mearns speaking yesterday, he's an absolutely fantastic lad that was, you know, he was very cautious in what he had to say. Well, a Labour MP should be able to speak to workers honestly, you know, we want honest politics and if things are bad, we need to be told it's bad and if things are good, we need to be told things are good as well. So my opinion is, I think it, it's the same as anything, if a political party's not doing the job for the workers, then definitely, you know. We don't rely on any, we don't rely on any political parties, the RMT, we support people that support us.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You'll be the last one, Douggie.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: For a start off, I'm going to say thank you, because often when we do things in Leicester and we have things, we're getting great support from the lads at Leicester Station, you know, the RMT guys who are absolutely fantastic. They are real, proper Socialists, they're fantastic people, you know. I suppose it is a bit of a question, but it's so obvious, yes. We've had a lot of debate on climate change at this Conference, yes. Isn't it time, that when we're talking about travel, that we really talk about renationalising our railways, that we talk about investing in the railways, we talk about investing, that means investing not only in the rolling stock and the tracks and everything, we talk about investing in the people who run our railways and I've got to say, I like travelling by train, you know and your, the RMT guys are always, the people who run our railways are always brilliant. If you need help, you can always go to them and I know it's a bit of an obvious question, so thank you very much.

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: Yes, so obviously we would support, we support people using the railway, because it makes absolute sense when you can jump on a train. The issue that we've got is there's so many cancellations and that's due to mismanagement and it's becoming unreliable, the railway in this country and it's being done on purpose to make it look bad, so they can say right, we need reform. Well, what reform means is they're going to make cuts, so it isn't going to make it better, it's going to make it worse. So I absolutely agree that people should use trains and I agree that we should invest and nationalise the railway and make it for the people.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much for that. Sorry about that, we had a little technical, because obviously I said five questions and then people wanted to

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: That's alright. I'm here all week.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: What we're going to do is, we're going to tell them to put it in the chat and then you can answer it when we get back to our Agenda.

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: Of course.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: But thank you, Gaz and please take this message back from the whole of our Conference. We stand with the RMT in Solidarity during your dispute and we obviously will stand with you while you fight and we completely understand why it's necessary for your members to go on strike. So please take back our message of support and Solidarity and best wishes for a successful outcome to your current dispute.

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: Thank you, Ian.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much.

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: Cheers, mate.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Whenever we invite guests to our Conference, we make sure they go home with biscuits made by our members, so there's a bag full there, I'm sure that'll go down well and a pewter baker, a limited edition.

[APPLAUSE]

Gaz Jackson, RMT Organiser: And like I say, I've got everyone a little present. I'm not sure how we're going to do it, by maybe like I can stand at the door when you're going out on your break and I can just give everyone, I think that's probably the best way, so thanks for your, thanks, fantastic Conference, cheers.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Delegates, back to your Agendas and it's motion 42. Branch 390?

42

Branch 390

This Conference agrees that temporary/fixed term employees are being denied permanent contracts, and the associated rights, in our industry by being dismissed before they have completed two years continuous employment. This is a tactic used deliberately by companies to prevent employees achieving two years' service and getting their legal rights to claim unfair dismissal and redundancy pay. In an effort to deter this practise, we agree that full employment rights should be given after one year's continuous service. To achieve this we will instruct our parliamentary group to lobby for this change to the Employment Rights Act.

Brother Mohammed Islaam – Branch 390 (Stoke): Morning, comrades. This is the, I'll read out the motion. This Conference agrees that temporary fixed-term employees are being denied payment contracts under the associate rights in our industry by being dismissed before they have completed two years' continuous employment. This is a tactic usually used deliberately by companies to prevent employees achieving two years' service and getting their legal rights to claim unfair dismissal and redundancy pay. In an effort to deter this practice, we agree that full employment rights should be given after one year's continued service. To achieve this we will instruct our Parliamentary Group to lobby for this change to the Employment Rights Act. I myself was dismissed five times before the company gave me a permanent contract. I was a temporary worker. I joined the Union when I first started with the company. This is my first time as a Delegate.

[APPLAUSE]

Please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390 (Manor, Stoke): Good morning, comrades. We work for Premier Foods and this is a continual year-on-year issue with us. Whenever people come up to the 18 months or so period, just before the two years is completed, weirdly we have a production shortfall and we don't need all the staff any more. So, unfortunately, sorry mate, you've all got to go. Leave it three weeks, weirdly production picks back up again. It's deliberate. It's a tactic used to get people out of the factory before they have to be given a permanent contract. Please, please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Morning Conference, EC. 23 months in a job, bringing the Union to the workplace, a little bit of an accident, all your fault, time to go. Oh, we can't give you any more because you've not reached two years, 23 months, sorry about that. Fully support this, please, because we've just got no power in the workplace until we get to that two years.

We can't bring ourselves in, we can't support ourselves in that place, so I think this is a brilliant motion and we really, really should support it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: Good morning. I think it's quite important to understand that this situation with the two years' employment is absolutely a joke. I believe there should be a three months' probation on any workplace and after that, people should get a permanent contract and also reach their full employment rights and also I think that should be our next campaign, because we campaigned from the removal of zero hour contract, I think something like that should be on our agenda too. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: I'm here to support this motion, but I'd really like it to go further, yes, because when I started, it was 13 week and then you got a full-time contract, yes. This motion actually says 12 month, yes. I think we need to go back to go forward and let's get it back to 13 weeks for people to get full-time contracts. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? Kevin, Vice-President.

Brother Kevin Flood, Vice-President: We'd like to oppose the motion, on the concept of that we'd like it from Day 1. So, please oppose. Thank you, cheers.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Okay. Motion 43. 558?

43

Branch 558

That this Conference agrees that trade unions oppose fire & rehire, advancing to bring in a forum of consultation that creates win, win, which is then used as a blueprint going forward. A code of practise and guidance cemented by constitution and employment law.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Can you hear me? Can you hear me now? Right. Before I start this motion, I'd like to thank Bobby Basra (Branch 302) for his support yesterday when Mark Hilton was having technical issues with his computer etc. Right, onto the motion. That this Conference agrees that the Trade Unions oppose fire and rehire, advancing (unclear) a form of consultation that creates win-win, which is then used as a blueprint going forward. A code of practice and guidance cemented by Constitutional Employment Law. What I mean by this is, I've put a motion later on to this Conference about being educated. Now, we were sat as a Branch for the last year and a half where they were trying a process of fire and rehire and I went to a training session last year at that particular Conference, the one I've been exiled this time around, but I'm not bothered, right and the fact is that we were taught about fire and rehire. We learned that there's ways of opposing it through consultation and talking. The P&O Ferries was put up today and the bloke spoke fantastically about what he went through and how they organised around it. Now we were staring at this as a Branch and actually we opposed it. Jit Singh was involved and he was absolutely fantastic in it and we pointed out that it was fire and rehire and redundancy had to be put on the table. As soon as we started talking pounds and pence, they backed off with this and it's now been scrapped, but I really feel that we need to get something in place so there is a blueprint and guidance that anybody facing that situation and where you go for consultation and you try and get an atmosphere of win-win, because as you can imagine, the laws are governed for us not to get anywhere near this or get any kind of victory out of it. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Just, can you hear me now? Right. Yes, I'm here to second this motion. Obviously with everything we've been through, as Sean said, (unclear) and it does also go to the (unclear) about terms and conditions. At the minute, everything's open to negotiation, because there is no law cemented in about the fire and rehire and until we get that, everybody's at risk. So I'd ask you to support this motion and thanks to Gaz from RMT for what they've been through and Solidarity, mate.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Yes. Yes, we had a case of this last year at Bradford and they went for the weakest department, the lowest paid within the factory, our IG department and they wanted to lower the terms even further by hire and rehire or fire and rehire, sorry, which and it wasn't until we threatened them with industrial action that we would ballot our members to see if they would be prepared to take industrial action, which I was quite confident we would have got a 100% backing for it, did the company walk away.

What I'd like to, I support the motion, but what I'd like to say is, on my point to Gary, if we, if we ever get to a National Strike, we shouldn't be going on pay, we should be going on points like this. Get back laws enshrined. If we're going to strike about something, bring back power to the workers.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else on there? No? Okay, anybody else in the room? Did I hear someone say yes? No? Okay.

Okay Conference, the Executive would ask you to support the motion. Quite clearly we heard from Gaz earlier on about, who expressed the implications of fire and rehire. Obviously as a Union, we've been heavily involved with Barry Gardiner in his campaign that he's led in parliament, on behalf of the Trade Union movement, to end the use of fire and rehire. In fact, you know, when you think about it, we're celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Hovis dispute, the Hovis dispute was probably the first form of fire and rehire where they fired the workers on the Friday and then brought in zero hour workers on the Monday, because they could replace them with cheaper, more exploitative labour. So we would ask Conference to support the motion.

Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. 45, it's 582. We need Dave in from Standing Orders. Are you listening? [singing] Oh, eyes in the sky. See, I told you Standing Orders is always listening, always listening.

45

Branch 582

That this Conference agrees that decisions made at every level of each company should be totally transparent so there's no hidden agendas for both union and company management to negotiate and work together for the benefit of all

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Good morning, Conference. New EC member, thank you everybody for your support that gave it. Mr President, Platform, Delegates. Whatever work-related issues we become involved in, whether representing members on disciplinaries, debating updates or changes to our members' terms and conditions, discussions on health and safety in the workplace, negotiations over pay or shift rotas, we approach each and every one with transparency. Our aspirations may be set high, but nevertheless our objectives are simple, to achieve the best possible outcome for the benefit of our member or members within the rules and regulations that have been agreed on. We can often find ourselves though at a disadvantage right from the outset, due to ulterior motives not addressed until the very end, when finally some hidden agenda is revealed. The political manoeuvring behind a cloak of honesty is eventually made clear. We see this on a regular basis right from the very top, with dishonest politicians from every side hiding behind their cover-up and unless some mistake or witness reveals their misdemeanours or more appropriately criminal acts, the power, influence and money at their disposal helps to protect them.

What this motion is trying to address is that we see so many projects, decisions, changes, financial endeavours that waste so much time and effort in the workplace, that the only way to improve our working relationship, to bring honesty and openness to any and all negotiations, to truly work towards creating a workplace environment that benefits everyone concerned, is transparency from all concerned. I was going to quote several incidents over the pandemic at work, toilet facilities, shift pattern changes, pay mistakes on a grand scale and even a cheap redundancy package that has led to them now offering cash incentives to recruit just six weeks' later. Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy?

[LAUGHTER]

But I will listen to the debates and see if Delegates agree with the motion. Do we believe that creating an openness between management and the Union, with no hidden agendas, will give us a less toxic workplace? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? Morning, Mark. Missed you last night, were looking for you. Did you have an early night last night?

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Yes it was, yes. Right, this isn't to oppose, this is to make a comment.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You can't be doing that, you. What's wrong with you? It's Tuesday.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I know, I absolutely agree with that, but I suggest, what I've done with my management team, we have a monthly coffee shop. The general management team are there, the HR management team, the (unclear) team and we invite one person from each department. So I push this, it's every month, they're open with us, we can ask anything we want basically and I suggest that with every one of the businesses here. Go to your management and say, we want a monthly coffee shop where we can invite the general staff to come up and have a chat with you and it works for us, so we seem to be going okay on that side, but I agree yes, they should be open and open with all the staff to let the people know what's going on, but try that, it works for us.

The company, yes, the company, yes, the company buys the coffee and some biscuits, yes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We've just had a weather warning.

[LAUGHTER]

Okay. Anybody else? No? Nobody on there? No?

Okay, the Executive would obviously, you know, recognise the importance of openness and transparency in any negotiations and any consultations and by the way, you have legal rights as Representatives to have information provided by your employer. Sometimes they try and deny you that rights, but you can enforce those rights. I mean, we do provide resources, obviously they are available. I mean, if you contact your Union Offices, they should be able to provide you with materials that tell you about your rights to information in the workplace. Obviously if there's ever any issues, then obviously through your Officers was, can obviously contact the solicitors, who would be able to confirm whether or not the information that you're being denied should be provided and whether you have a legal right to that information, to enforce it. So it shouldn't be something that they can keep hidden from us for a long time. We recognise also too that in negotiations they're not going to tell you what their remit is, just as we're not going to tell them what ours is, so there's always going to be that debate that takes place, but we recognise the sentiment behind the motion and we had a debate about it, but we'd ask Conference to support the motion.

So, those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Thank you. Are you doing a report? He's here, isn't he. I'm not, who am I to deny, I can't deny. I know my place.

Brother John Fox – Chair of Standing Orders: Turn to your Agendas, Conference.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Shush at the back.

Brother John Fox – Chair of Standing Orders: Motion 61 stands, motion 62 is at the composite and that will be done at, with motion 60, at 60. Motion 63 stands, motion 64 is a composite, it's composite 4 and that will be taken at 47. Motion 65 stands, motion 66 stands. Motion 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78 and 79 all stand. That's the end of this report. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Hold on a second, there's a, right, okay, to the Conference, everybody in favour of that report? Anyone against? Thank you very much.

Where was I, where was I before I was interrupted? 47, 253. Morning.

47

Branch 253

This Conference agrees to work with members of the union and their employers, to look at ways of reducing undue stress and pressure in the workplace, and restoring a work life balance

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: Morning, Conference. Chair, EC, Delegates. That this Conference agrees to (unclear) member of the Union and their employers to look at ways of reducing undue stress and pressure in the workplace and restoring a work/life balance. Let me give you some symptoms of stress: irritable, angry, impatient, being overburdened or overwhelmed, anxious, nervous, depressed and uninterested in life itself. A good work/life balance means that precious time spent with our family is being robbed. A good work/life balance has reduced stress and less chances of burnout. The pressure that our bosses put on all of us is getting to breaking point. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded. Speakers? Anybody on there? No other speakers? There's our Nick.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. Before Covid, before lockdown, we all had targets that we tried to meet, working 9 to 5, a 16, 24, 39, 42 hour week was just that. Through those dark times, you ordered a bit extra to keep (unclear) flowing. Speed forward three years, targets are back, but harder, shifts are extended due to staff shortages. The pressure to perform is unbelievable. Now throw in extended trading, all the time eroding our personal time, but enough is enough. Let's work with the employers and get the balance back. The Executive would ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried and obviously then I got confused, because obviously I've got composite 3 a bit further on, but Standing Orders have given me composite 4 here, so we're going 4 and then 3, so composite 4. So the mover of composite 4, you're doing it?

Composite 4

This conference condemns the Governments legislation that restricts workers right to withdraw their labour. All unions should stand as one to defend and further attacks on our right to strike and campaign to remove many of the restrictions already in place against our freedom to take industrial action.

Conference therefore agrees to call upon the Trade Unions Parliamentary Group to oppose the anti-strike legislation (Minimum Service Level Bill) as the impact of this bill could mean that Employers are able to effectively disregard strike action and representatives dismissed for taking strike action

Original motions: 44 [Branch 356] 48 [Branch 582] and 62 [Region 4]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Do you know what? We have one weapon in our arsenal. We have one weapon in our arsenal. They have the army, the police, all the bands of armed men to smash us, but we have one weapon in our arsenal and that is we will not, we will withdraw our labour. It's our right to withdraw our labour. It's our duty to stand together and say, when we see unfair practices, say we will not accept that. It's too long that we have accepted laws that have trampled on Trade Unions. It's too long that we have accepted draconian legislation to stop us having a voice, to stop us saying we will have decent health and safety, we will have decent wages, we will be talked to, treated with dignity. It's too long. It's time that every good person says no, we will have legislation, we will be treated, our Unions will be treated with dignity and respect and by that way we create a better world. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody from that composite 4? Seconding? Anybody seconding it? Seconded, formally seconded. There you go, Mahinder.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Chair and members. This motion, I must tell you, most of you know, Union rights are human rights, that's right.

[APPLAUSE]

Union rights are human rights and forcing us, telling us not to strike then what have a Union if we can't fight. We should fight because, I'll tell you one thing, bad Tories are Labour, they are the same people, because Labour Party, it is not what it used to be, right, even those people, I don't want to speak on that, but we must, must stand together and it is in the human rights that, it's about human rights, so attacking our human rights, then what we are left with, right, so we must and also on that, I was at a course at Scarborough and we discussed the Union, these things, right and on this issue, I was interviewed worldwide, BBC Radio, right and that interview was taken and it was on the BBC World Service. I could not hear it, but the person who was there, I got a letter, I'll read it. It was, Mohinder Badhan, it was a pleasure meeting you and discussing issues of race relation and our Trade Union movement rights, so it's degrading when we let people do that and our fight and he left a letter congratulating me. So I used to be Labour, right, but I'm sick of them, right. Tories are the same, they are same going one other side, the right, so it shouldn't be we, it should be the Labour Party fighting. If they don't fight, Labour Party was founded by the founder members of this and these are, right, so must stand. Who are they to tell we cannot strike for our rights, right, it's dictatorship. So if we accept it, then there's no point of having Union. Thank you very much, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: Friends, comrades, Conference. I'm here to support this motion. I don't know if any of you are aware, but this is the 200th anniversary of the Combination Acts that were brought in by the Tory government to restrict, if two people got together, two business men got together and decided to form a co-operative, the government forbade it. It was repealed in 1924, but a lot of Unions went on strike and it was re-administered again in 1825 (incorrect dates quoted?), so we've been fighting the same battles here for 200 years and it seems to be that this cycle keeps repeating itself. I think this is a small, I think it's the thin end of the wedge for Trade Unions because there's about six sectors that are under this minimum level and I think somewhere along the line here, we know companies, we know bosses, they will use the law to get that thin end of the wedge to open the door and it'll open up for all of us and it'll stop us having a strike because it's difficult enough to go on strike now with the loops you have to jump through, so I would support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I know you're all probably going to kill me for this, but I do have, I'm a little bit worried about this. As somebody who's ran a business for 20 – 25 years, employed 41 people at my peak and there are sometimes difficult decisions to be made as a business.

It was only a small business, I was a travel business, but there are, I just think there shouldn't be a free for all. My colleagues here probably think what the hell is a Union man saying this for basically. We should be given rights to actually withdraw our labour, if we feel that there are occasions when the company is mistreating us and I do agree with that, but in extreme circumstances. I think if we were given a free for all, that some organisations or some workers could take advantage of that. So I do oppose and I know, I know it seems really an odd thing for me to do as a Bakers Union Representative, but it's just running a business and understanding the issues, I was always on a fine line between success and collapse and there were some difficult decisions that I had to make as a business and to think that my employees would have a free for all and be able to, because I had to make a decision, would be difficult for me and could, in some ways, in some cases, my business might just disappear, so that's why I oppose this, in a small, in a small manner. Apologies. Oppose this.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Any other speakers? No? Okay.

Conference, obviously Pauline McCarthy would have been speaking on this motion but she's having an eye operation this morning. Obviously you know Pauline McCarthy, she sat on our EC for many, many years and I'm sure we'd like to all send our best wishes for a successful eye operation.

Conference, Mark, obviously it all comes down to consultation. Workers don't go on strike with respect and dignity. This motion is about government legislation that will force workers to accept terms and conditions, to accept being sexually harassed in the workplace, to accept being discriminated against, to accept poor health and safety, to accept all of those things that we, as Trade Unionists, recognise makes poor workplaces, makes poor management decisions and actually in the long run, impacts on employers. It impacts on employers and I'll tell you why, because they become overbearing, overburdening and they think they can get away with whatever they want and that's how bad decisions are made. The right to strike, the right to strike, as Mahinder said, is a human right, it's enshrined in legislations around the world, but the government wants to take it away from us. Well, let me tell you, the difference between a worker and a slave is the right to remove your labour. If you can't strike, then you are no more than a slave

[APPLAUSE]

and let's be clear, let's be absolutely clear. The Trade Union movement must, on this issue, because we are forced to pay an absolute fortune to ballot our members, to give two weeks' notice to an employer, so they can be prepared to act against the interests of the workers that are loyal, that produce the benefits and the profits that those companies make, that the shareholders live on their luxury tax havens in and if we are going to be denied our rights to be able to strike legally, then we must be prepared to break the law and strike if we feel that we are being mistreated in our workplace and then all of the other Trade Unions across our movement must be prepared to stand with us to make sure we all succeed. No way, ever, should we be forced into work against our will because we have a grievance with our employer. We stand together in Solidarity. We must insist that we are treated as people, that recognise our rights as people to withdraw our labour and we should be angry, absolutely angry that this government wants to remove and restrict our right to take those necessary actions. Conference, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

We have a, excuse me, Mahinder, thank you very much, but we have the right of reply, unless you just want me to go to the vote.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'll just do it quickly, I will be quick. Oh Mark, we began so well. No, no, I was just joking, I'm just joking, you know what I mean. We often, you know what I mean. I often get up in the morning and I think about the place I live and I go and look at the calendar to check what date it is, to check what year it is, I go and look at the calendar and I look at it, it says, is it really 2023? I mean, well, I never thought I'd hear the repeal of the Combination Acts do you know, quoted, is it really? It's not the kind of country that Friedrich Engels wrote his piece The Condition of the Working Class in England about, it isn't, where we're told, where we can withdraw our labour and willy-nilly. I'm sorry, but a Trade Union is a democratic organisation, the Trade Union is controlled by its members and nobody wants to put their jobs at risk or businesses at risk, they just want a fair day's work for a fair day's pay and to be treated with dignity. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried and what I'm going to do is say back in here for 10 to 11. Thank you very much. Oh, hold on a sec, hold on a sec. Let the guest speaker do a bit of work and get to that door first.

[BREAK]

Thank you very much. Alright, cool, that's great. Thank you very much. We're going to move back to motion 49, which is Sean.

49

Branch 558

That this Conference agrees that terms and conditions are not for sale to the highest bidder, within pay negotiations, thus setting a benchmark post BREXIT This should be then aligned to TUC policy and made a National Code of Practice for all trade unions.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Can you hear me? That this Conference agrees that terms and conditions are not for sale to the highest bidder during pay negotiations, thus setting up a benchmark post-Brexit, this should be then aligned to TUC policy and made a National Code of Practice for all Trade Unions. What I'm basically saying is, we protect what we've got. I think Brexit was a smoke screen, as I believe was Covid, to undermine everything, to take away everything that we have and to start, businesses have been making more money and giving us very little back. They want us as working slaves and I think, you know, terms and conditions need to be protected all the time. We've sat in pay negotiations where they were going on about breaks. We've gone down from five to four, but people are still taking six and seven because they can't manage it, but the point to it all is, at the top of our pay negotiations we've put breaks are no longer up for negotiation. I think we've got to fight to keep what we've got, because the next thing is second generation contact and lower rates of pay. There's a massive drive to bring in anything, everything backwards instead of forwards and I think our voices need to be heard across the scale. You've heard a guy from the RMT today. Basically enough's enough. We put our foot down and we stop it now and we align to TUC policy, turn round and say, when we get to pay negotiations, it's about a pay rise, not selling Ts & Cs. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Is Mark seconding it? Okay.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Yes, can you hear me? Hello? Wave if you can hear me. Right. Yes, the motion is exactly as it says. We have just gone through this. A wage negotiation should be a wage negotiation and we're asking for money, usually a rise, based on the massive profits these people are making, yes? But what we're seeing, all the time, is well, we've actually no money, we can only give a pay rise if you agree to sell your sick, sell your holiday, sell a break, whatever and unfortunately at the minute, I mean it's a legal offer, it's an offer the company can make, but as Sean says, what we would like to see is the Unions put this to the TUC and get some backing and let's get it sorted. Let's basically say a pay negotiation should be on pay, nothing else. Thank you. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Morning, Conference. Yes, I'm here to support this motion, but rather than for the TUC, I think as a Trade Union we miss a lot of tricks. A lot of our employers, Allied, Warburtons, I think Warburtons and I'm not sure about Greggs are the only two what do national negotiations, but in actual fact Hovis and Allied probably do national negotiations, they come out with an amount what they want every site to accept and then go round those sites individually and try and get them through. The only ones what have properly stood up to them this time has been Belfast and ourselves, at the moment we've just rejected the recent pay offer, a massive 93½% rejection, but I think as a Union we miss a trick. We should be going out first, we should be getting together and going with what we want nationally, especially at Hovis' time, because 90%, if I'm not correct, the dates were all around the 1st April. We could have co-ordinated it better and got every site a fair deal rather than hanging sites out to support themselves. I support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers. Any other speakers? Okay. I don't mind you queueing, you know.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: I'd like for you to support this motion because we give them enough, they take enough from us. All the time, it's what they want, what they want, what they want. It isn't about them any more, it's about us. We are the ones that matter to this bloody country, sorry, language, but you know, we're the ones that run their businesses, give them the money that they sit on their luxury yachts and their fancy cars, so it's about time we got something back and stop giving to them. It's for us, not them any more. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

The Executive, obviously when we looked at the motion, we got what we thought was the gist of it, but what the problem was is where it relates to the Brexit issue and obviously where it talks about the National Code of Practice for all Trade Unions.

Clearly the Trade Union has been working with the TUC and we have and at the last election, actually had it actually inserted into the Labour manifesto for sectoral bargaining, to set standards within sectors which obviously the food industry would have been a sector, so we would like to ask the mover if they would withdraw it, because we're prepared to work on it as an Executive, but obviously if you don't wish to withdraw it, we'll leave it to an open vote, because we will work obviously in relation to what I was just outlining, but we'd just prefer you to withdraw it, Sean.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Now, I get what you're saying, Ian, but the reason why I'm not going to withdraw it is because the Union was threatened with de-recognition on our site. They were quite prepared to take us all the way through to Acas, which we went and then due to the agreement we've got on-site, so I get common sense will tell you to withdraw it, but I'm not, because what they did, they tried to threaten us, they tried to threaten us with de-recognising this Trade Union on-site, because we wasn't playing ball and that's why we got to the break situation. So, unfortunately, I want to put it to Conference to vote on this, because, you know, we're being pushed about and nobody in that room likes to get pushed about, I'm quite sure of that and when terms and conditions are up for grabs and they're trying to use legal wrangling and using their solicitors due to the wording of an agreement, I'm not going to withdraw it, I'm going to put it to the ballot at that Conference Hall, if you don't mind.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, that's fine, that's fine, we just thought we'd ask you. To the vote. Those in favour? That's carried. Those against? You were right to do so, Sean.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Thank you very much, Sir.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Motion 50.

50

Branch 356

The BFAWU should be committed to Lobbying the Government to strengthen the Agency Workers Regulations, to prevent employers from introducing "At Will" contracts by the back door.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: The BFAWU should commit to lobbying the government to strengthen agency worker regulations, to prevent employers from introducing at will contracts by the back door. Let's just put it this way, we all agree, agencies are wrong. We agree that, we voted at previous Conferences, nothing to do with the hard working agency workers, but agencies are used to smash our terms and conditions. They're used to smash what gains we've made. I remember going to Manton Wood, to see this kind of thing, where I saw Romanian migrant workers walk five miles to a factory gates, fives miles to a factory gates, only to stand there, wait to see if they were going to be given some work and when they weren't, they'd walk five miles back again and if they were, they'd work a shift and then walk five miles back again. It's time something is done about these agencies. I want rid of them, but this is just a step in the right direction to improving the lot of agency workers. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Hello, can you hear me?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Can you hear me, whey. Right, I'm here to technically support this motion, however a bit of a bug-bear of mine, I'm just questioning the bit, the BFAWU should be committed to lobbying the government and it comes up in quite a few motions. Explain it. The BFAWU should be committed to lobbying the government. Who are we and who are they? They're the Tories, the Capitalist bastards, they're not bothered if we lobby them, so what form of lobbying can we take? That's my question, but Dougie, I support your thoughts on this. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Mark, you do know if you come to Conference next year, you're already in a negative balance. You've sworn a couple of times now. Conference, the Executive asks you

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Yes, I know.

[LAUGHTER]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: It's like a comedy sketch, isn't it. Conference, the Executive asks you to support this motion and Mark, we appreciate the government is no friend or ally of ours, but we have a Parliamentary Group of MPs for a reason and it's their duty to lobby the government, however difficult that may be, to ensure that our members' voices are heard in parliament.

They raise early day motions, they have debates on our behalf, because otherwise we would have no voice in that really posh, expensive building down in London that people like to visit. I'm not going to go into any more detail, because Dougie eloquently outlined the reason for the motion. The Executive would ask that you support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 51. Did I get that wrong, motion 51? Yes, it is 51. I didn't have my glasses on when I said it, you see, I was guessing. It's good to know I'm keeping up though, isn't it.

51

Branch 500

That this Conference agrees that Defibrillator are in all workplaces and in public places where there is easy access to this life saving piece of kit. In both instances of workplace and public places where the defibrillators are situated there is a core group of people fully trained, and updated yearly, in the use of such an important piece of life saving machinery.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: We ask that this Conference agrees that defibrillators are in all workplaces and in public places where there is easy access to this life-saving piece of kit. In both instances of workplace and public place where the defibrillators are situated, that there is a core group of people fully trained and updated yearly in this use as such as important piece of life-saving machinery. Now, defibrillators in the workplace, you'll be lucky if you get two people on a whole shift that know how to use it. Now, if you get poorly-trained people that don't know how to use the bit of kit that can save someone's life if they have a heart attack say, like in my old place where a guy had a heart attack on a forklift truck, there were two people again that knew how to use it, neither of them were on the shift, neither of them were there, one was off ill and one was on holiday, so there was nobody there that knew how to use the piece of kit to save his life. The ambulance crew tried to save his life, unfortunately he didn't stay with us. Now, we need more than one or two people on a shift to be able to use this piece of kit. We need a core group, four or five people, a manager, someone from an office, we need a lot more people than one or two because, like I say, life circumstances. If we're ill, if we're on holiday, if something happens in our lives and we have to leave work and you're trained on that piece of kit, you're not there to save someone's life. So I ask this Conference to support this motion so that we can get in-work, so we can save more of our own lives in the workplace by having more people to use this piece of kit. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Yes, is it me? I'm here to support this, because I made my views on vaccinations yesterday, but I've noticed that since the vaccination process has been rolled out, there's a lot more of these defibrillators everywhere. They're on the bottom of streets, they're appearing everywhere. So people do need to be able to use them, so as the fact that these things are appearing more and more often, yes, I fully support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Is it me? I'm here to support most of this motion, as I did a lot of campaigning on defibrillators and got the ones in Hovis, Bradford many, many years ago. We now have three, but what I've got to disagree with is, I've done a, I actually, it was my job to look after the defibrillators for a time and most of these defibrillators talk you through, step-by-step, the process of use, so while I agree we should always have plenty of first aiders and they should have training on them, it should not be a negative for having defibrillator training. The defibrillators do talk you through how to use them. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580 (Leeds): I urge Conference to put this forward. This is really important, is this and I know at the Bakers Union we talk about our workplaces, but this is about society as a whole as well. We need to put defibrillators in workplaces, on corner shops and local community centres. I've been a first aider for 10 years and I've been first on scene without a defibrillator and I've been first on scene with one. Having that at the side of you when you are doing CPR, when someone's had a heart attack, it makes a massive difference, a massive difference. If you 'phone an ambulance, because a colleague or a family member has had a heart attack, we speak about the, how hard it is for the NHS and what the Tory government have done to the NHS, if that operator tells you that ambulance is going to be over 15 minutes, the chance of that person surviving is less than 10%. If you've got a defib in your workplace or at the end of your road, at the local post office, your chance of that person surviving is over 70%, that's the difference a defib makes.

It does say in this post here, which I agree with, that it should be in all workplaces. There is a cost to it, so it is difficult to justify it, depending if you've got a very small workforce. If you've got over 50 staff who are on the older side, it's worth getting. If you've got over 100 staff of mixed ages, it's definitely worth getting. When we talk about cost, there's a one-off payment for the defibrillator itself and the battery does run out over time, you do need to replace the batteries every year and a half or so and there's a misconception that people have said that we need people fully trained. You do not need to be trained to use a defib. What happens is, you go to the area where it is, get it off, sometimes you have to 'phone through to a, like a receptionist and she asks you your name, your details and then she'll give you a code to unlock it on the wall and then you take it away.

Only one person needs to be trained correctly and, or formally, where this where we go to a course, it's normally about £300 for two days and you go to this course and they'll teach you how to use it. That person can then go to a room, like this, full of lots of people, with a defib, press start and it will explain everything. It will tell you where to put the pads, where to put the cables, what buttons to do. The only thing that we should be concentrating on training mainly is CPR, CPR is very important, because it's not just a case of getting a defib and putting a defib on, we have to perform CPR while we're waiting for the defib to arrive and while we're waiting for the defib to charge to shock again. I support this motion, but I think it should go further, where we should be training first aid, defibs in schools in this country. If you look across Europe, in places like Sweden, you start learning this in primary school, you learn it from a very young age and I support this motion but I do think we need to go further as well with training for our younger generation. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): As a trained first aider, I agree with this motion. It can double somebody's chance of life if you've got one on-site. Like when I did my training, re-done my training last year with St John's Ambulance, we had, they took us through it and it's so simple, like when you open the pack, it tells you exactly what to do on that, stage-by-stage and it'll tell you when it shocks and it'll tell you when to stand back, it'll do the shock and then it'll re-tell you to start doing the compressions again, but it's one of them good things to have on-site. Even outside, the communities, you know, getting somebody's life, you can double their chance and like the last comrade said, I'd agree with everything he just said, you know, getting it out in schools and all that, because it can increase, you know, everybody's life, if that thing, until that ambulance gets there, you know, you've only got one life and, you know, at the end of the day, if we can make your life, save it as long as we can, that's what we're trained for and I'd like to support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool - EC Member): I'm here to support this motion, but just a point of information really, that a couple of years' ago we had a motion very similar to this and we had a collection and we were supported by Clive from Watkins & Gunn, who made a donation as well, to the Oliver King Foundation. Oliver was a 12 year old boy in Liverpool who suddenly had a cardiac arrest and died. His dad, Mark, set up the Oliver King Foundation, which is supported by the Jamie Carragher Foundation as well and if anyone needs any help, support or anything like that, just get in touch with Mark at the Oliver King Foundation like and he'll really help you. I've seen him on television loads of times, talking about defibrillators, so if anyone needs any help getting them, setting them up or training, just get in touch with the Oliver King Foundation and they'll help you. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: I agree, I support this motion, we do need it but I do think we need people trained on it. It's alright saying that these things tell you what to do, but when your work colleague, your friend has just dropped in front of you, if you're not confident in using these things, you can think that you're making it worse and that person needs this, because everyone knows in a situation panic can set in. I do believe you must have at least one person on a shift who knows how to use these machines. God forbid that you do have to use them, but if you do, I do believe training needs to be implemented. I support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? Nobody on there? Okay. Over to you, Nick.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. A defib costs between £700 to £3,000, depending on type and the housing it's sitting in. £30 roughly a year running costs, it depends if they keep putting the energy charges up, £50 to £200 every two to four years for replacement pads if the machine has not been used, plus the battery. Cost of saving a life, priceless. In this day and age we should never be 10 minutes away from a defibrillator.

When calling 999, they will tell you where the nearest registered unit is and if it's behind a coded door, they will even give you the code and the best thing about them is, you don't need to be trained. I know some of you have had concerns today. Some units talk to you, some have some really good picture instructions and if still in any doubt while you're on the 'phone with the 999 operator, they will talk you through it, but most first aid courses as of this year cover it, so if asking for training, let's ask for the full first aid course not just a defib course and keep the rhythm of your heart going. The Executive would ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 52.

52

Branch 558

That this Conference agrees to stop the discrimination within companies policies against unvaccinated workers, it is a basic human right to have a choice and make a decision without the pressure of the worlds chemical production suppliers increasing their profits and buying and bullying politicians to get their wares out on the street.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): That this Conference agrees to stop the discrimination within companies policies against unvaccinated workers. It is a basic human right to have a choice and make a decision without pressure of the world's chemical production suppliers increasing their profits and buying and bullying politicians to get their ways out on the street. Now, what I mean by this is, Covid's real and people have a choice whether they want the vaccination or not. We had a debate about that yesterday. My concern is, companies, particularly our company, will slip it in policies through the back door and if somebody wasn't vaccinated and if they're off with a Covid-related illness, if they wasn't vaccinated, they weren't prepared to pay them, but when I challenged this to the company of who's been consulted about this, they went, all Unions, no, we haven't, when did you discuss this? I went back through every JCC note, couldn't find anything. Spoke to Jit, he couldn't find anything, so I grievanced it and anyone who was off with Covid-related that they stopped paying, who hadn't been vaccinated, they got their money back. Now, my first port of call here is, how would they know if you've been vaccinated or not? You don't have to declare that to your employer and obviously you've got a basic choice with the vaccination as we discussed earlier. So really where it sits with me is, you know, you cannot discriminate or play God with people's lives. Sick pay is sick pay whether you're vaccinated or unvaccinated and as a qualifying type of sick pay anyway, so anything that becomes Covid-related because you're not vaccinated, you're not getting paid, this Trade Union and all Trade Unions to be honest, should be rigorously opposed to it because it's discrimination of the highest order. So please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Okay. Yes, get up and yes, yes. No, no.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Chair and friends, comrades. I'm not a doctor, I'm not a psychiatrist, right, I can't give a, say something, but on this I must say something, right. Since the last 50 years, I am involved with the Human Rights. This human right, if somebody refusing to have the vaccination, if he want the vaccination, don't want the vaccination, fine enough, but it's my human right, because if he's unvaccinated, he will give that disease to me and at the age of 77, surely I will go to the so-called Heavens, which I don't want to go, right, so it's, I can't make judgement on the majority of the person, I can't say what I want to say, because I'm not physically ready to fight with somebody, right, so it's wrong, wrong, wrong. If they are vaccination you, it's for your life, to save your life, right, so where this human rights come from, I don't know. Thank you very much. I oppose this wholeheartedly.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I agree with my colleague. I think something's that been given to the world, that probably protects the population of the world I think and there is, there is things in place that (a) if you are vulnerable, in extreme cases, with some kind of respiratory situation, have a respiratory situation then of course you would be advised not to take that vaccination, but I feel that, I mean we got rid of smallpox when you're at school, back in the, when I was at school back in the 70's, we had vaccinations to protect us for the rest of our lives and I don't think you should be discriminated against, but I think people should have the vaccination, I feel people should be not forced but advised strongly that anything that protects your colleagues and my colleagues here, my colleague here that may be in their 70's or elderly or who are vulnerable and that might protect them later on then yes, you should, you should have the vaccination and you should push to have that vaccination, so it's not talking about, Sean, I'm sorry, about human rights, yes, I think you should have a choice, but sometimes I think people are having the choice just to be, how can I put it, it's almost as if they're, you know, why should I, basically.

It feels childish to me. Sorry, Sean, it feels childish to refuse something that protects the nation and protects the world. So, I oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Hello everyone. Wave if you can hear me. Good. Right, you're all missing the point. What Sean has said isn't that you shouldn't have the vaccination or should have the vaccination. Myself and Sean and the Branch had quite a big conversation about putting this motion. The motion is only about companies discriminating against people that haven't had the vaccination, by cutting sick pay which, as we've stated, shouldn't be an issue. That is the sole point of this motion, that people are being discriminated against, by withholding sick pay, which is not part of your agreement. Sick pay is sick pay. That is the motion. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Peter Horne – Branch 393 (Northwich): People, read what the motion says. It's not about should I or shouldn't I have the vaccination. It's about your human right to work if you've had it or not. Please read the motion and support it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is there any other speakers?

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (Responding on behalf of the EC): Hello? Can you hear us?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We can indeed.

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (Responding on behalf of the EC): Like the previous couple of speakers alluded to, it's not about whether we get the vaccination or not. I know obviously the Union has stated that we support the right to choose. It's about discrimination, pitting workers against other groups of workers, which is not what this Union is about. We support our members to the point, no matter what. We wouldn't support, you know, discrimination with other health-related issues, for example smoking and drinking, that could have a detrimental effect on your health and it's a choice, just like the vaccine's a choice, both are similar if you argue against, for or against the vaccine, that could go on for ages. So, please support the motion, it's about the discrimination against workers, not the freedom to choose between the vaccine. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sean, you have the right of reply.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Thank you, Ian. Going back to what Mark Dickens said, we're not here to force people to take vaccinations. If you're not getting paid sick money and you're not getting paid the same as your fellow colleague, whether you believe the vaccination process is right or wrong, you're encouraging that discrimination within your Branch. Now, everybody's got their own views on the vaccination process, I fully get, but if you allow this, as a Branch Secretary, you allow this to continue, where do we stop? Someone with a broken ankle, he doesn't get sick pay, somebody with asthma, he don't get sick pay, somebody with arthritis, he don't get sick pay. So what you've got to realise is what are you allowing to happen within your Branch? To allow somebody who has a democratic and basic human right to make a choice on company sick pay, if you allow him, allow them to get away with that little stroke, you're opening the door for everything else. So therefore, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Motion 53. 568.

53

Branch 568

This Conference agrees that zero hours contracts be outlawed, and all contract are given a minimum weekly rate. This could be as little as 10 hrs, then atleast all workers would not have the same financial worry, and businesses would find it far easier to fill vacancies. This would apply to agency workers, which may encourage employers to source directly.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: My first motion, hurrah. Yes, this Conference agrees that zero hour contracts be outlawed and all contracts are given a minimum weekly rate. This can be as little as 10 hours, then at least all workers would have the same financial worries, or less financial worries and a business would find it far easier to fill vacancies. It should apply to agency workers, which may encourage employers to source directly.

Now, we did have in place about five years ago, we had temporary Fox's contracts if you worked for Fox's Biscuits and so they were given a minimum contract of three months, six months, nine months, whatever, but we then decided to go down the route when 2 Sisters took over from us that they wanted agency workers put in there, because it gave them that option financially to basically play around with people's hours and, you know, we've got three lines running today, we need 20 people, 30 people, we've got one line, we need 10 people and what I think they could do, they could have a zero hours contract still in place, if that's what the government wants to keep there, but they would be guaranteed a minimum of, what, 10 hours, whether they're working or not, so at least their, at least there was some kind of financial positive for them to actually, so I think it should be outlawed but they don't want to outlaw it, literally put a minimum rate in or a minimum hourly or minimum period of work that they were guaranteed, whether they're there or not. I know we've sort of skimmed on this on others, talking about zero hours contracts, but this is more specific. Let's say that yes, zero hours fine, but you will be paid 10 hours irrespective, the minimum of 10 hours, so that's why I think this is a good idea and support this. I can't imagine anybody will oppose this, but I'm waiting for it, you never know, but please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Now, as an ex-employee of Fox's, where Mark is Branch Secretary and God, basically I started there the same way a lot of people start there, on staff line, as an agency worker. I went in there, proved my worth, applied for a job, got a job there and moved on and became what I am now within the Union. Now, I support this with Mark, we didn't often agree, but in any workplace again, the management shouldn't be given the right to play with people's lives, which is what they're doing here. They're saying you can come in and you can work for four hours, six hours, nine hours, 20 hours this week oh and then going, hang on a second, no, we don't need you, stay at home. That way, we're not getting what we need for people. People are not having the money to pay their bills, feed their children, like that story that was said so eloquently about that little boy that took food home to his family, this should not be happening in modern society, this should not be happening in our society and we should stop this happening, so I support this motion. Please support it.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: It's brilliant, I'm on the same side as Mark. What a day. Alright, Mark. No, I thoroughly support this motion. Zero hours contracts are a damn disgrace, they are a shame, a stain on this country. Now I know, I'm going to come at it from a little different angle, yes. I know that the people, supporters of this often use the example of university students say, oh, university students like it. Have they ever bloody well talked to a university, I'll go to Standing Orders after, even talked to a university student, have they ever, do you know what I mean? They want a decent wage each week, you know. It's a disgrace that they have to work part-time anyway, that they end up leaving university and saddled with over £40 thousand-worth of debt. Nobody wants to do that, nobody wants to gamble each week whether I'm going to get hours, nobody wants to do that, you know. It's a great way for bosses to say listen, you do as you're told or we're going to give you sod all hours and then you'll be desperate. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I'd agree with this motion. Like a couple of weeks ago with my girlfriend, she works in B & M, she's on a 16 hour contract, zero hours, she came in to work, I dropped her off, she rung me up and goes Mike, could you come and pick me back up, she goes, oh, they don't need me today. I went, you what? She got all dressed, got her into her work and I went, what happened? She does 6 at night until 10 in the evening. I go, lucky you, we only live five miles away or like that. I said, I go to her, what happened? If you had to get a bus to go home and it's like in all our industries, what happens if your staff come into work, got told oh, we don't need you today, so they've got to get a bus maybe to get back home, on night shift, how do they get back home? Is there a bus to get them back home? And if it's a woman, standing on their own on a bus, it's not right, we should stop companies doing this. So, support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Anybody on there? Okay.

The Executive would ask the mover to remit this motion and for the following reasons. Following the Hovis strike, the Union policies were to campaign for the abolition of zero hours contracts. The problem we have with this motion is it refers to 10 hours. We are an accredited Trade Union that signed up to the Business Charter, through the campaign Zero Hours Justice, which obviously people can get to online.

On the Fair Business Charter it lays out what it is that we have set the standards of abolishing zero contracts to be, with all of the protections that are required for employers who do use them to protect workers as we seek to end their use on a permanent basis. So we would ask the mover to remit the motion, to enable us to maintain the accreditation that the Trade Union has, because we signed it up, because we have continued to campaign against the use of zero hours contracts from the time of the Hovis dispute. So we'd ask the mover to remit.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: (is speaking off-mike).

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: And I get that, Mark. I mean if you want to say something, you can say something.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: (is speaking off-mike).

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much, really appreciate it, but thank you very much for the debate and it is really an important debate about the use of zero hours. We need to keep them out of our industry and it's good to hear people are prepared to fight against the use of them. Thank you very much. So, motion 54.

54

Branch 558

That this Conference agrees that companies who deliberately target the elected representatives of a trade union are publicly shamed.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Yes. Hello, comrades. That this Conference agrees that companies who deliberately target the elected Representatives of a Trade Union are publicly shamed. Right, in regards to something Ian said yesterday, can you hear me by the way? Wave if you can. Can you hear me? Yes, so, right, with regards to something Ian said yesterday about naming and shaming and wanting people to do our jobs for us, that's not what it's about. What it is is, as you are probably all aware, for the last three years we at Rathbones have been targeted, our elected Officials have been targeted, hauled upstairs for investigations, threatened with de-recognition, threatened with disciplinary action and it's not just our place, I know that. Right, we actually, because we're a local firm based around Outwood in Wakefield, we have a, and we're connected to a greater Morrisons J41 site, we actually got our (unclear) alert in the local community about us being targeted. We even got onto Work Express?, social media, things like that and I (unclear) want us to keep doing it. We need to get these people (unclear) because one thing that we don't want is a bit of negative publicity. In our case, while Morrisons are smiling and going oh, fair day pay for a fair day work and we're a family firm again, more reasons to shop at Morrisons, they need publicly embarrassing and shaming and we, as a Union, should use every means at our disposal to fight the class war and protect our Reps. Thank you. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Here to totally support the motion. The Reps at our Branch were completely targeted. I was on a sticky wicket personally at the time, but that's another story. However, taking Representatives upstairs, putting them under investigation, because somebody or they had an inkling that somebody had told somebody else about a pay offer when we were in a period of confidentiality, is a major concern. Mark McHugh was involved at the time and believed that a Branch should be able to talk to its membership about such things that affect them. They came out with a very gullible attitude towards all three of us on the negotiating committee and other Representatives as well. They made it quite clear that they were going to stand for no nonsense and I believe it was a form or an attempt of Union bashing. I personally went on the sick for two months because of this, because they issued me with another final warning, then they started to talk about an unsavoury pay offer immediately after they issued out that final warning. I did my shoulder, bought myself some time, because I thought there's something more to this than just Union bashing, there's a reason why they want this and low and behold, after a month of me being on the sick, the business was up for sale, to sell to the highest bidder. Does that sound familiar? And it was debated about in parliament by the way, but they were relentless in the fact that they wanted this pay offer through. I came back to site two months after, in August, 2021 and I kept well away from that pay ballot.

When the ballot was rejected, they held the Representatives in that room for eight hours, so they could not communicate to anyone until the company had issued out a joint statement where it had failed. Now, everybody has to report to the man above, the guy at the time was reported to the man above. How you work and how you rebuild relationships after that onslaught is very difficult and we're in the process of doing it now, because there appears to be a level of, shall I say, positivity towards the Union Reps at the moment, but it's only because they want something else from us. So I'm here to fully support this, because the three people that are in the mire with me, we stood strong and as Mark said, using other sources, social media, the local Express, I even branded my sister's name about, Angela Morton, Branch Secretary to the Daily Mirror.

I even had to write to the CEO of that company to get them to call off their harassment and because the threat of me going to a paper such as the Daily Mirror was a real threat and to the contacts she had down there, they backed off, but you really, really shouldn't be putting up with this. We're elected to do this, we don't do this for ego, we do this because we're elected by our fellow peers to do it and when you see people being treated like that, companies who behave like that should be named and shamed and attacked at every, every orifice they could do. I'll see you in a bit.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I'm not sure I quite understand this because I'm in the process of, basically the company targeting me for something that's happening. Over two years, we changed our grading system, so basically completely revamped, it's terrific now actually, it's far fairer basically, it's straightforward black and white, but it took a lot of beatings. In the meantime, about three weeks ago, they suddenly tell everybody that you will no longer be given extra money for training, training pay, so that's a machine minder training another machine minder to run a piece of kit and they tell everybody that this is what Mark signed off, this is what Mark agreed to. So it's, now that gave me the idea, I didn't mind that because well, I did mind it but it gave me the opportunity to refute that. First of all, I wanted to see where I'd actually signed this off and when, going back to the general management team and saying well, Mark, it must have been one of the, out of the 50 – 60 meetings that we had with the general management team, I might have missed a meeting or two, I might have been on holiday or whatever, it might have been at one of the meetings that you weren't at. So you would actually agree or decide, when would, how would, why would I ever agree to not pay somebody or reduce somebody's pay? So that has given me, now, I've opened up a can of worms here because the whole general management team, including finance, HR, when I get back to work I will be in a meeting with them to refute this first of all basically and to ridicule them on how you can possibly, there are a number of aspects to this about, we had a new department start about 15 years ago, called BA7, fully automated department, highly skilled operatives to actually run this department, completely automated, terrific pieces of kit, but we had to send four staff to the United States, Detroit, America, Detroit to actually train on these pieces of kit, because we had nobody in place to do this.

So my argument is, the cost to the company is £38 a month, that's the extra, it works out at 40p an hour extra to be a trainer and they're arguing on the point of that. So what I'm saying, it does give me the opportunity, if a company tries to bring me up in and use me as a scapegoat, it gives me the opportunity to actually bang that company or bang the management back down. I do have a good relationship with my management, I must admit, but there are occasions where they have used me and actually used me as the excuse that Mark's agreed to this. It doesn't, it causes me a few problems with my members, but once I have my sort of annual meetings or my quarterly meetings etc, I refute this and hopefully, you know, my members understand. So that's why I don't support this, because it does give me the opportunity to reverse it. Thank you.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Mike Andrews – Region 2 Postal Branch: For what this actual motion means, it actually happened to me about eight/nine years ago when I was literally suspended on a bullshit charge, apologies and I was left out of the business while it was literally going through a massive change, terms and conditions, shift changes and pay and after a ballot, which all members declined, I was suspended immediately and while I was suspended, they got everyone in, one by one and made them sign the new deals and literally that's why I'm so passionate about this motion and I want everyone to support this, because that Branch is Branch 258, Memory Lane Cakes, part of the Finsbury Food Group. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): I'm here to obviously fully support this motion. I'm fed up that they didn't, one of our fellow colleagues could have come and told you about it from Hovis, Bradford. Peter Barsac, the Peter Barsac? case left a bad taste in everybody's mouth at Bradford. I, myself, have been subject to it over the years. It isn't nice, in a good place. I don't think, as a Trade Union, we do enough to refute these companies when they do and when they're caught out. I know with Peter's case, it was cleared in court. I'll give the Union their due, they supported him financially, but I don't think we took the opportunity to refute the company on how badly they treat a fellow member, just for being a Union Rep. Again, his was a bullshit charge, so I'm here to fully support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'll tell you what, I'll publicly shame a company. Samworth Brothers. I'll publicly shame one. Let's talk about Kumaran Bose. Those who are new to Conference won't remember Kumaran. Kumaran worked 13 years at Samworth.

Kumaran had an exemplary record, no disciplinaries. Kumaran then started, when we went for recognition at Kettleby Foods, Kumaran went in early, told his workmates, let's vote for the Union, this is good for us. Kumaran used to go in early, it was one of the reasons he was dismissed, despite having exemplary attendance, exemplary disciplinary record, he was dismissed. If he'd have been going in late, would that have been okay? I don't know. Kumaran, by the way, is now blacklisted, they might deny blacklisting, but it's going on. He hasn't been able to get a job since. George Atwall and others of the Bakers Union have been going down to give him food, so he can feed his family. So I'm going to name and shame Samworth Brothers and please, if you weren't at the meeting yesterday, go on and join our campaign. Please help us and we can help the workers. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Rachel.

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (Responding on behalf of the EC): Hello? Can you hear us? Yes, lovely. The Union would obviously ask you to support this motion, as we don't want our elected Representatives being targeted and harassed. Some of the stories that obviously the speakers have shared about themselves or their work colleagues being harassed is, it's just a disgrace and obviously if we can have, to say, you know, if it comes to that, you know, stop it or we will publicly shame you and I think that's only a good thing, so please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply, Sean, because there was one.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Mark.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, it was Mark, sorry. Sorry Mark, yes, I meant you, Mark.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Oh, thank you, Ian. I'm glad you can tell the difference.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, you never know.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Yes, I know. Well, to coin a phrase, my good friend, Douggie Johnson, oh, Mark.

[LAUGHTER]

They've targeted you, mate. They're trying to bash you, they're using you as an excuse, just like they've tried with us. This motion is about defending elected Representatives, this ain't a paid job, it's a calling, it's a passion you feel. This is what we do and if we have to name and shame them, then we name and shame them. This government and all the big companies have made it clear, they are intent on bashing us. Well, I think it's about time we bashed back, by any means necessary. Thank you. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Unanimous.

Okay, I'm going to end that there, but I've got some messages before you go for your lunch. Will the people who have just been newly elected Executive members, please wait behind. Okay, scrub that message. The Greggs debate Delegates, debate's on my head, yes, yes, you'll have a debate, in here at five 'til six this evening and the quiz starts tonight at 7.30, that's the first information in relation to remind you the quiz is on tonight. Other than that, back in here for 1 o'clock. And don't forget, buy your raffle tickets.

[LUNCH]

Okay. Are we ready? Okay, General Secretary roll call.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4. Region 5. Region 7. Online? Thank you, Conference.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, before we get onto the Agenda, I'm just going to announce there has been a winner of the quiz from Watkins & Gunn and it's Kashmir Dodswa (? spelling). I've probably pronounced that wrong, Branch 333 anyway.

[APPLAUSE]

And Conference, I have an announcement and some congratulations to offer. This has been sent from Region 7, but I'm sure the whole Conference would join us to congratulate Kevin and Laura on their 20th anniversary of being together.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Obviously Laura, I'm sure we'll find a medal, because obviously putting up with Kevin after 20 years is an incredible achievement.

[LAUGHTER].

[Kevin says, off-mike: Thank you very much]

Congratulations. Just to remind you as well, yes, yes, it's live online, yes.

[LAUGHTER]

Just to remind you as well, I said before break, obviously tonight is the quiz, it starts at 7.30 and that's followed by your opportunity to strut your stuff and sing on the karaoke, which will be following the quiz, so make sure you've got your Elvis gear on, because obviously you'll be, you'll be your teddy bear tonight

Special appearance by Elvis later on.

We will be stopping at 3.15, sorry we won't be stopping at 3.15. Conference, obviously I've been letting you stop at 2 o'clock for a quick break, but what I thought I'd do today is rather than stop at 2 o'clock, I'll take you through to 2.45 and then I'll finish Conference at 2.45 or as close to, depends on you, at 2.45 and then obviously you'll go to the fringe meetings at half past 3. I'd just thought that'd make it easier than stopping and then coming back in again. Okay? Everybody alright with that, yes? Cool, cool.

We are now going to, before we go to the Agendas, as I've just been reminded, we're going to present the awards.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, every year we ask for nominations so that we can celebrate the work of some of our Reps. We have a National Health & Safety Award, we have the Pat Rowley, as we renamed it last year, Organising Award and we have the Unionlearn Rep Award. We also have the Olive Molloy Young Members' Award. Unfortunately this year and I'll get that out of the way first, we didn't receive any nominations for the work that our brilliant young members do, so I would encourage you, as somebody who received that Award a few years ago and I was a little younger than I am now, I would encourage you, you know to empower and support your young members and get them to get the recognition they deserve for the work that they're doing in your Branches, because it's a shame that we're in a position where we've not got a nominee when we've had three fantastic people nominated for our Young EC Members, we've had no nominees for our Young Members' Award winning this year. So next year, I'm expecting the EC to have a full list of young members that we've got to choose from, but we'll move on to the Awards that we have got nominees for. We'll start with the National Health & Safety Award that's sponsored by Slater & Gordon, if you want to come down and the recipient of this year's Award is Ian Banton from Greggs, Enfield Branch 110 and the reason the EC chose Ian as the winner was the nomination said Ian has committed himself to learning as much as possible around health and safety, attending the Level 1 and Level 2 Reps courses and is now doing the diploma through the TUC. It said that he's brought a positive approach and attitude of understanding of health and safety between management and colleagues within the workplace. He now has a seat on the JCC meetings that are held quarterly at the Enfield Distribution Centre and in the two years that he's been in the role, he's been a positive influence in the workplace and has raised and resolved issues that have been brought to his attention and raised with management. He's well liked and respected by his peers and he portrays the BFAWU in a positive light and our commitment to health and safety in the workplace. So can we give a big round of applause for Ian Banton, please.

[APPLAUSE]

Do you want to say anything, Ian? I don't want to put you on the spot, but go on.

Brother Ian Banton – Branch 110: First-time Conference, guys.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

It's not only just a Health & Safety Award I was doing it for. I went in the role because I was homeless, so I wanted to give something back to the homeless people, so as a Greggs driver, I drive round to shops, see homeless people, I 'phone the number and say oh, I've got a homeless person and they come out and pick them up, that's what I've been doing.

[APPLAUSE]

So you started it yesterday. Right, that's it. Thanks a lot, Sarah.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Our next Award is sponsored by Thompsons Solicitors and we, as you may remember Delegates that were here last year, we renamed the Award to call it the Pat Rowley Organising Award to commemorate Pat who is no longer with us, who you would always find on a protest, on a picket line, trying to organise young workers. Even in his 90's, he could move around a dance floor faster than I could when I was 16 and he was just such an inspiration to our movement and it was only right that we renamed and Conference chose to rename this Award in memory of Pat.

This year's winner is Ramona from Greencore Branch 357 and in her nomination, the Executive was told how she enabled the Union in Greencore to get recognition at a part of the site where we'd been previously denied recognition. It took Ramona and the Union over three years of constant work in which she was able to persuade her work colleagues to join the Union and during this period, she supported members in various meetings so that they were able to see the clear benefits of being in a Trade Union. It is because of her hard work that Unit Care now has full Union recognition, so the Union is now able to negotiate terms and conditions and wages on behalf of the workers in Unit Care and she's now working really, really hard to get 100% membership density in Unit Care. So Ramona, please come and get your Award, it's very well deserved.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Ramona Patuleanu – Branch 357: Hello, my first Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Excuse me, because my English is not good. I have, I'm nervous, I have more emotion. I want to say thank you for Award and thank you very much to our (unclear). Enough.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thanks, Ramona and our final Award is sponsored by Watkins & Gunn and it's the Unionlearn Rep Award and this year's recipient is Kasha Damek (? spelling) from Johnstone's, Branch 515. Kasha works at Johnstone's Food Services, which is part of the Finsbury Good Group and Kasha is the Branch Secretary on site, the Health & Safety Rep and also the Unionlearn Rep, I don't know how she finds time to fit it all in. Her dedication to the Branch is unparalleled and part of that dedication is upskilling her members through the Learning Project. Progression of ESOL classes that have been built up in stages with certification have only been possible with Kasha's drive in her Branch. Kasha has also worked with the SCQF, I don't know what that is, so apologies for the acronym and her Learning Organiser, Rafala Bremski (? spelling), in driving through change that, at that site, that credit-rates their particular roles within production. This has been the first of its kind in the food industry in Scotland and the second one across all industries as part of the Scottish Government Initiative. Well done, Kasha.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Katarzyna Damek – Branch 515: Thank you very much, I didn't expect this. So, I'm working in the environment where we have a lot of migrant workers which language skills are not the best, so we needed to find support for these people, to understand better what they are expected to do at work, especially considering health and safety, so with the help of Rafal, we organised for them ESOL classes. We SQA? programme which Sarah mention, what is that? It's, many people have skills that they gain at work and they are not supported by any certificate, so we got to work with SQA? to get for them recognition of, so they can put their skills in the framework which gives them recognition for that, for their skills, so that can be equivalent for Level 3 from the college, or something similar. So I want to say a big thank you for everyone who was involved, especially to Rafal, without whom we couldn't achieve that and thank you all.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much for that. I believe it's 56. Oh not it's not, it's 55, 55. Thank you very much. Branch 500, yes, cool.

55

Branch 500

That this Conference agrees to ensure any worker working in late night premises are given a lift home from their employer or there is a taxi account set up to ensure workers get home safely outside of train and bus times.

Sister Katarzyna Damek – Branch 515: Moving this motion on behalf of Branch 500. So, that this Conference agrees to ensure any worker working in late night premises are given a lift home from the employer or there is a taxi account set up to ensure workers get home safely outside of train and bus times. So we have many workplaces that can be shops, restaurants, shops like Greggs or factories operating 24 hours, like the one that I'm working in and sometimes you have like the last bus is running 10 minutes after your shift finishes, so you're not really in a good position, because when you work in the food factory you not always can just leave your place at the line bang on half past 11, as you should. You need to wait for someone to come and cover you. So if that person is late, you need to run straight to the changing room, get off your coat, change your shoes and run, in our situation, to the nearest bus stop, but if you are late, there is nothing else, because that's the last bus. If you don't have money for taxi, people are walking home, they are walking home from East Kilbride to Glasgow, it's nearly 12 miles, in the middle of the night and then they need to come back to work the next day. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Vicky Bassett – Branch 253: Seconding. I'm working with a company that now is trading into later evening. We've got our concerns. We are half nine. From personal experience, myself as young as 16 working at half nine in the night. Now, we've heard some examples from other shops where staff's buses are at a quarter past nine, they don't finish until half nine, they've got to wait an hour at that bus stop, in the dark, on their own, for the next bus and then what happens, we know what public transport can be like, what happens if that bus does not turn up or that train doesn't turn up. I'm asking you to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Is it me? Hello? Before I speak on this motion, I have no issues with the Conference ending at quarter to three, because I'm not in a very warm Conference Hall, with the heat of Guadalajara, I'm sat on the decking in Reighton Sands in a caravan. Now, I'm going to support this motion and I'll give the reasons why. Over 30 years ago, I joined Hovis, Bradford, I came off a building site. On that building site I was working and I used to get picked up, when I started at Hovis, Bradford we had to do shifts and within doing them shifts, there was a guy called Maurice Pemberton who used to pick us up on a Sunday morning and drop us off on a Friday morning, considering that it was unsociable hours. Now, he said it was the best job he ever had, picking up from West Leeds, picking up from Pudsey, through Thornbury, down Leeds Road, then on to the factory and when he was dropping off, he'd be dropping off at places like Studds Nightclub, gambling dens and so on. It creates good camaraderie and they have and I support the fact that they should have a right to get you to work if you're working unsociable hours. They could do it then, why can't they do it now? Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: I ask you to support this motion from the simple fact that very often people who work on a late night, they're working some days on a very, very rough areas on the cities and it's quite scary to go back home, especially when they don't afford to have a car or don't able to back by a bus. So it's a few element of the situation when the employers make a profit, billions of profits and they rely on those workers, but they don't care how they come or how they go back from work, which is crazy and that's why I ask you strongly to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: We live in a society of 24/7 and gone are the years basically when we didn't work weekends, Sundays. I don't think a company should be responsible. If you decide to work night shift, weekends or whatever, unsociable hours, you made that decision. I don't see how we can force a company to be responsible. I feel yes, there is an area of responsibility, let's say you're doing overtime, the company asks you to stay back, absolutely, then they should be responsible for getting you home, but if you are a night worker, unsociable hours, then I wouldn't want, I wouldn't want to be forced basically for that person for being there, when they've made the decision to actually be a night worker or unsociable hours, so I oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Again, I say oh, Mark.

[LAUGHTER]

But I cannot but speak up for this motion, I can't but not speak up for this motion. It's also not a case of only being right, but it's a case of showing Solidarity with one of my friends and Sarah's. A young woman called Claire Trevor, who's a comrade in Unite. Unite are now running a campaign Get Home Safe and I advise you to watch their video, in which our friend, Claire Trevor appears. She works at TGI Fridays. Many times she reports about young women being followed home by people who have been in TGI Fridays. They are frightened, just imagine that, a young woman, on her own, late at night, being followed home by some kind of stranger. What can happen? Anything could happen. It's terrible. Something and by the way, you do, employers have a duty of care to all their employees.

[APPLAUSE]

And that means that they can get safely to and from work. It's a duty of care, it's being a good human being. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): I'm here to support this motion. I'm just here to correct Mark and all. One of the first Union courses I ever did, with good old Willie Colquhoun and I'm sure, I don't know, the Solicitors are there, but the first thing we was taught that the company have a vicarious liability to all its employees, both travelling to and from work.

So to avoid claims on this, which I believe the Trade Union should pursue if any of our colleagues are or members are hurt, they should provide safe transport. Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Well, cheers Douggie, you stole the oh, Mark, but how would you, Mark, or anybody else in this room, love to walk 12 miles at 10, 11, 12 o'clock at night, through woods, through areas you don't know with shady people around, idiots driving cars like idiots around, yes? I can't see a single person raising their hand that wants to do this, including you, Mark. So, sorry, oh sorry, I thought you said something, Mark. Our, the duty of care is there, from the employer. We don't all choose to work these unsociable hours either, Mark, unfortunately, sorry to aim at you, but you said you choose to work those hours, you don't, you don't always have to choose them hours, you have to work them because you've got to provide for your family, you've got to provide for your bills, you've got to put a roof over your head, heating if you can afford it, but you can't do that if you say to your employer well no, I'm sorry I can't work those hours, oh okay then, next person, yes? So you can't pick and choose your hours unfortunately, everybody can't do that, yes? So, please support this motion and think about that walk home, any one of you. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: Oh, Mark. Oh, Mark. Oh, Mark.

[LAUGHTER]

Really? I work in the shops and you have a weekender who has a four hour contract, because they can only work a Saturday, they don't choose which shift they get, they can start at five in the morning, a parent might be able to drop them off if a parent works night shift and they're working 'till 10.30 at night and they miss their bus, they can't afford a taxi home because they're only working four hours a week and it'll take the whole cost of their shift, so please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Like they say, we have a duty, the company has a duty of care towards its employees. They can afford, at times, for managers to get a taxi to a different shop, to run that shop, to help the business, because that shop needs to open, yet they can't give an allowance for a person to have a taxi to get safely home from work. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580, Leeds: I'm going to encourage everyone to vote for this. I actually agree with you, Mark, about personal responsibility. I also think it throws up a couple of questions about what happens if you have 70 staff, are you going to get a taxi for everyone? If you've got 100 staff, are you going to arrange lifts for everyone? There are some questions marks I have about the way this is worded, but that being said, if you want to read it again, at the end it says outside of bus and train times, that's the difference for me, that's when you can't get a train regardless, you can't get a bus regardless between 11 and is it 5? So it should be on the employers to have a conversation about how they accommodate people getting home safely, which is very important and it's a lot harder for women as well if they walk in an area by themselves, in pitch black, just walking past groups of lads for example can be intimidating to women, it can be intimidating to men as well and while there is question marks about it, the fact that it's outside of train and bus times is very, very important. So I encourage everyone to vote for this. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool - EC Member): I'm here to support this. I'm not particularly interested whether there's a law that covers this or regulations or whatever. What's happening about caring for people and looking after people and making sure people get to and from work in a safe manner and people sometimes, as the last speaker or the speaker before said, don't have a choice of what hours they do, they're forced in some of their hours, they could have childcare and they can only work certain hours or they could be a carer for an elderly relative and they have to do certain hours. What amazes me is, isn't it funny how these companies can pay for buses to get scabs over picket lines, but they can't look after their own staff?

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else? Anyone else? No? Anyone there? No.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. People's safety is a primary concern. Our employers have a duty of care, doing anything reasonably practicable is a legal requirement, that means doing what is reasonably able to be done to ensure the health and safety of workers and others.

This takes into account and weighs up all relevant matters including the likelihood of a hazard or risk occurring, the degree of harm from the hazard or risk, knowledge about ways of limiting or minimising the hazard or risk, the availability (unclear) to eliminate or minimise the risk and the cost. That was a direct quote. In my view, this will include getting people home when there is no other transport available to them. Myself, my last bus home is at 5.45, my first bus in is at 7.45. I start at 6 in the morning and I can finish up to half past 7 at night. I have no bus choices. The road is long and I cycle home. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Kasha, you have the right of reply. Okay, to the vote then. All those in favour? Those against? That's carried.

Listen, I understand the importance of debate, I do, I really, really do and I've just realised I haven't got my mike on, but you probably heard me anyway and one of the things that we do encourage is people to have opinions and I know it's only meant in affection in the way that we speak, but people reading the verbatim report will think this Conference is aimed at undermining Mark, right?

[LAUGHTER]

So we can refer to somebody who we disagree with as the previous speaker or the speaker that opposed, but could we take the personalisation out of it. Listen, if it hasn't been for Mark in quite a number of occasions, we would have had no debate and we want people with different opinions to speak, because it's the only way we can make sure we have the right outcome of those motions that are put on the Conference floor. So we appreciate everybody's opinion and we accept that when we vote, we vote on the basis of what the content of that motion is. So, I know Mark isn't bothered, but that's not the point. We have to make sure that we do it in a way that we are not personalising any of the remarks that are made. Okay, thank you, Conference. Obviously we're moving on to

[APPLAUSE]

motion 56.

56

Branch 582

This Conference agrees that more flexibility in the workplace should be allowed, giving employees and their union representatives a chance to look at an opportunity to work shorter or a more favourable working week

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Mr President, Platform, Delegates. At last year's Conference, I moved a motion on a four day working week and I'm pleased to say that the results from last year's trial in the UK were deemed an overwhelming positive result, with 30% of those taking part making a permanent change and overall 90% of the 60+ companies that took part, stating that they could continue to operate a shorter working week. However, the trial didn't suit every business, some abandoning the idea and others looking at alternatives around obstacles to their business, like taking a day off the working week every other week or in smaller firms, allowing staff to choose their hours of work, that would be nice and the number of days worked each week. We've seen some similar styles trialled at work, a night shift rota where staff worked an extra two hours each shift for three weeks then took the fourth week off and a two-tiered pattern with extra hours condensed in the peak period of five months from August, then a week-on, week-off pattern for the remaining seven months, but unfortunately both of these are no longer in operation. We are planning on approaching our pay negotiations this year by discussing a four day working system and I have started using this as a recruitment tool, stating our strength potential, with stronger membership. We just need a little less conversation and a little more action.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

I think I've covered everything. Someone spoke on the debate last year that it had been a century since the radical idea of a five day working week had been fought for and it's well overdue for a shortened and flexible new approach that doesn't increase work loads or stress and instead brings about a healthier and sustainable system of work. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Can you hear me? Hello? Wave at me. Hello? Right, sorry. I was actually, I've had some (unclear) raise a point of order on what Ian said earlier, if you will allow me? Thumbs up if you will. Right, sorry Ian. We were discussing, I get the thing with Mark Dickens, yes, but we've just had motions where we've agreed to name and shame. That doesn't stop with firms and companies, with our members as well. When they say things that are very, very ridiculous, sorry, I have to say it, there you go.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Mark, I wouldn't agree that was a point of order. I just think that's courtesy and it follows the etiquette of what we treat each other with, which is respect. You can disagree with me if you like, that's fine, I have no problem with you disagreeing with me

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): I do.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I'd just be obliged if you'd follow the request of the President of the Union to act with courtesy with one another.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): My God, it's grim up north, ain't it lads. Right, I'm here to support the motion. I think recently myself and Keith (unclear) did a workplace survey, which the company are now trying to be (unclear) against were encouraged. We were sat there for two weeks (unclear) coming out, we got a lot more flexible working requests in, we got a lot of guys doing two jobs at that workplace for whatever reasons, a lot of overdrives and stuff like that and it was a good recruitment tool and I agreed with (unclear) to actually put this motion forward. You know, it is a good recruitment tool. If you're smart and you can get away with things, that's how you do it, you organise around that. So yes, I fully support the motion, but I'd just like to say, watching this online, I feel a bit like Alan (unclear), you know, from Match of the Day, being a bit of a pundit and the previous speaker who opposed the last motion, is having a bit of a shocker today, isn't he. You take care.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Never misses an opportunity, does our Sean. Speakers? No more speakers? Vice President. Oh, Julie, Julie.

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): In an ideal world, yes, this motion would be fantastic, but we're not living in an ideal world, you know, we're working for companies that want everything their way and when you talked about doing the four day working week, our company tried to implement that on two shifts, at a detriment to anybody who takes that shift on.

They'll be working Saturdays, Sundays, Bank Holidays, no extra payment whatsoever. Low and behold the company were absolutely gobsmacked when none of us on the old contracts would take that shift on. They then came up and said, anybody who works the 11 hours day shift, we'll give you an extra £20, nights you won't get that because you get a shift premium. So people started taking on these shifts on the new generation contracts and low and behold, they're leaving. They can't recruit fast enough. People come in, they might not even work a full shift, they're doing a few hours and saying, this isn't for me, I'm sorry and off they pop, you know. Same on days, they've got a massive issue. They did this on one plant and I just dread what would happen if they tried to roll it out across site, you know.

Production is suffering, the ladies that used to work the shift on days, that used to knock out thousands, Colin the Caterpillar, you know, you've all seen the adverts and you've all heard about the issues we had with Aldi and the court case, you know, the ladies were doing a damn fine job. The company would not accommodate them extending their shift, you know, they were promising we'd work Saturdays, you know, please don't alter our shifts, keep us on the terms and conditions we're on. They've now moved those ladies to other departments and, bugger me, when these new shifts, people are ducking and diving or not turning up, they're asking these ladies to go back into that department, please help us out today, we're not hitting our targets. We've got to be so, so careful what you wish for, because yes, they're offering four days on, four days off, it looks great and they've dressed it up and said it means you get so many extra days at home, but at what cost? You're not seeing your families at the weekend, you're not earning the time and half and the double time, so really be careful.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, any other speakers? No? Vice President.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: The EC's going to oppose this, on the concept of, you stole my thunder there a wee bit. So before we oppose it, we'd actually like to remit it and come back and look at it again and take into consideration the money part of it, because you mentioned hours, which is fair enough, but if you want it to come back and say just hours, that's okay then, you'll lose your pay. So if you want to consider remitting it and rewording it, you can bring it back next year, but if you don't, we have to oppose it.

[APPLAUSE]

Good stuff, thank you very much.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: 57.

That this Conference agrees that the financial mismanagement of employers, who knowingly leave their loyal employees high and dry with no pay, redundancy, or other agreed payment through the consultation process, are held to account through legislation that ensures that they are not fit and proper to take ownership/directorship of a company again. The impact this has on so many working families, especially during a cost-of-living crisis is further compounded by having to apply to government to access statutory redundancy, whilst owners and directors pay themselves bonuses before disappearing leaving a trail of destruction behind them.

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: Mr President and Secretary, EC. I move the motion 57. I'm only just read part of it, the more important part. That this Congress agrees that the financial mismanagement of the employers who leave their loyal employees high and dry without no pay, redundancy or other agreed payments through the consultation process, are held to account to the legislation and ensure that they're not fit and proper to take the ownership and directorship of any company again. I think the pure example of the situation we have last year in Dawnfresh and the managers know what's going to happen and the managers exactly know what the company planning behind the Union back. A few days before they announced to the workers, Alastair Salvesen, which is about one of the richest men in Scotland who's owned Dawnfresh, he coming over, empty his office, take all those fancy paints and goods and also pay off the management and leave and next day, our members and workers at Dawnfresh, it was announced that that's it, thank you for work, but they not get any redundancy which was a part of the consultation, they just said, you can use pay process, which you have to reply, so over 90 left without money, without nothing, so we have to organise everything for them.

So that's why I think it's quite important that those bosses, those millionaires, those billionaires, the management who held them to cause those problems to the workers, abandoned them after years of loyal service, should be put on account. They should be stopped from start another business straight away, they should be stopped to do anything like that in the future or several years, because they fail, they already failed because their business collapsed, so when they fail, they shouldn't give another chance to build the same situation and cause another problem. So I strongly ask you to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390 (Manor, Stoke): This morning, when we had the speaker from the RMT, talking about P&O, that sound familiar? They made that business decision to hang those sailors high and dry with no backlash. The guys responsible for that should be banned from becoming a company director, end of.

[APPLAUSE]

Go away, don't do it again. Please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, last year, 200 workers at Dawnfresh Seafoods in Uddingston had the rug pulled out from under them. Mark McHugh, who unfortunately is not here with us this week and he's suffered a couple of bereavements over the weekend and I'm sure Conference will join us in sending our condolences, our thoughts and our Solidarity to him and his family at this sad time, but Mark had worked through the redundancy consultation and apologies to Raf, some of this will overlap, but I had to nip out for a second, only for the owner, one of the richest men in Scotland, Alastair Salvesen, to put the company into administration out of the blue. Our low paid, weekly paid members were in on Tuesday, 1st March, some on overtime shifts, when administrators came in and told them to go home. They didn't receive any pay that week or the week after, in fact they didn't receive any pay for weeks. Those on holiday or off sick who were expecting wages that Friday, were left with nothing and weren't informed that their wages weren't coming.

Whole families, multiple generations, Sisters and Brothers and their families worked in that factory and were plunged into absolute poverty overnight, with no support system, no way to even get in the weekly shop, let alone pay the bills that were due. Whilst Salvesen, a multi-millionaire, made sure he'd removed his expensive artwork out of that factory the day before, so that it wasn't taken by the administrators. He then continued to be a director in many different places, including a charity. To add insult to injury, those workers were eventually told they'd have to work with PACE? and apply for statutory monies that they were owed, so they didn't even get the negotiated redundancy settlements and the government was more interested in who was going to buy the site than supporting those workers.

Not so long ago, we had another group of members up in the north east working for Orchard House Foods and they went through something very similar in the weeks before Christmas, leaving families with nothing as we came up to Christmas, can you imagine that, no wages, no salaries, no jobs, when energy prices were rocketing and the cost of living crisis was in full swing. Salvesen, Elaghmore who owned Orchard House and other wealthy directors that behave like this, don't have to worry about whether they can pay their bills, feed the kids, keep going, but the workers who are bearing the brunt of their poor decision-making absolutely have to worry about it, don't they and it's abhorrent at any time, but after a global pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis, where people are struggling already, it's absolutely disgraceful that directors are able to do this over and over again, leaving workers in poverty and the taxpayer to pick up the bill.

These employers need to be held accountable. They should be disqualified from being directors, they're not fit or proper to take ownership or directorship of any company. They should receive significant fines, the amount of which the redundancy payments would total to, for leaving their loyal workforce high and dry, when they clearly have the ability to pay, because anything less than a significant fine like that would not be a deterrent. Conference, the Executive would ask you to support this motion and support workers that are left high and dry by these rich people.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. So that makes it 58.

58

Branch 500

That this Conference agrees that the spike in holiday prices is curbed during school holidays. This makes it unaffordable to families to take their children away during this special family time.

Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill): Moving this motion on behalf of Branch 500. That this Conference agrees that holiday prices is (unclear) during the school holidays, thus making it affordable for families to take their children away during a special family time. Just recently there was an article in the newspapers, where a family of four went on holiday to Florida out of the school time, saved themselves £8,000. Then were then fined for taking their kids out of school and that fine was then worth taking because of the saving they made on the holiday. Me and my wife don't have kids to even afford to go on holiday whenever we feel like it. One of the weeks overlapped to a school week, so they decided to change the dates to save themselves over £1500. It's about time the travel companies realised that there's a cost of living crisis, so at a time the government's decided to cut this. People are losing education for their kids to save money on holidays because they need that time with their families. This has to stop. This is exploitation and it needs to be curbed. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? I see you, Mark.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I'm a bit scared now.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I doubt that, very much

[LAUGHTER].

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Yes, I think I told you earlier, I was in the travel trade 20 – 25 years and unfortunately the travel trade it on its knees at the moment and understanding how the system works, I mean, I've had airlines, tour operators going bust over many, many years, some of the biggest in Europe basically, ILG which some of you may or may not remember, Dan-Air, Freddie Laker, there was a number of organisations that disappeared. It's a difficult business to be in and what we do is, when they, how can I put it, when they rent or hire a plane or an organisation to fly their clients out through a year, they have to do that over a whole 12 month period, so in the low season period those flights are going out with maybe 10%, they'll have 10 – 20 people on an aircraft, which will cost them whatever, £90,000 to actually get that out with fuel etc, the expenses and they're making a loss on that. The only time they actually survive is over the children's break. I

f you want to blame anybody, blame the government, where they brought this, whatever it was, 10 – 15 years ago, where they fined parents for actually bringing children out of school. I understand that, when we're in O level years basically, GCSE's years, absolutely, the children should be at school, but younger children, to fine a parent. I have grandchildren, eight and two and 12 year olds basically and they will find and they can't afford to go over the children's break basically, so they take the children out and they pay the fine. So these fines shouldn't be in place for children, say, under 13 years old. Once they start their O level, GCSE time basically yes, absolutely fine, they should be in school, but it's a difficult business to be in.

I pulled out of the business around about 10 years ago, it was unaffordable for me. Thomas Cook, the biggest tour operator, the biggest travel business in the world, owned by the Germans and even they collapsed. It's difficult for the industry at the moment, so that is the only time they can actually build up the money and there's tens of thousands of people within the travel industry that actually rely on this and so we're taking, we may even be taking people's jobs away by forcing this through, so I oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any speakers? Any speakers? No? Go, go.

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580: We've spoken about international holidays, but are we also including our seaside towns where, if you look at some of our seaside towns, they're derelict, they don't have a load of business. The school holidays is a big source of revenue for them, for their staff, to keep their business afloat and I just don't think it's a good idea, so I won't be supporting this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 215 and full-time rebel:

[APPLAUSE]

Me handsomes, I come from part of this nation where we have a little bit of a tourist industry and I'm telling you, they rip us, us off disgustingly, disgustingly, not just during school times but throughout the full holiday seasons. Now we, the local residents who live in Cornwall, between April and October, we spend our time moaning and groaning, tourists, they disrupt our lives. They eat all our food, we can't park anywhere, but I'm telling this Conference, I would sooner have my life turned upside down and disrupted by the working class having a cheaper holiday, when they can and can afford it, because it's a little luxury we all de-serve

[APPLAUSE]

and I, we in Cornwall know and are seeing more and more the rich and elite moving in because you, us, the working class can't afford these holidays. Now I'd sooner have you walking around, eating your ice creams, having your kids having fun than some rich, elite prat eating caviar, drinking champagne with his plumb thumb up his arse, because we deserve better.

[APPLAUSE]

We, the working class, deserve a little luxury and we must fight for our little luxuries together. Please pass this motion. Thank you, my handsomes.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: I support this motion, but why can't the people spread it out evenly across the year, yes? Why should there be high spikes or pay nothing or pay a sum of money at any one time for these holidays? They should, one week about £100, yes, then say in January, then July or August should be the same price, £100, yes? Then people can afford it, yes. So, whether it's January or July, August, September, holiday pay, they should all be the same price, whether they up the price within the outer season time and drop the peak season price down. Please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Yes, I'm here to fully support this motion actually, it's common sense. I mean, for years, for years and years they've been extorting working class families for holidays, making it exceptionally hard to go away, take your children away, because of that, I come from an Irish background, I only went to Ireland until I was 18, until I could afford to take myself away abroad and it was an experience. Secondly, somebody touched on holidays in this country. Now if you go to the coastline in certain parts of this country, I put in, I've put in motions to this Conference in the past about county lines, drug gangs, (unclear) heads all over the place. Who on earth would want to bring their children into that sort of environment? I mean, the country has had a divide, places like Blackpool, no disrespect to the National President, but places like Blackpool are shocking, I go there for food festivals and stuff like that. You would not entertain bringing your children anywhere near these places. It's about progressing and improving things for your children and giving them a better life. The prices that when you're out in the school holidays, going abroad, are absolutely extortionately high, so I know Chris Magill's (unclear), but I'm here to fully support that motion, it's an absolutely fantastic motion, well done.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh right, okay, sorry.

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560: Up here to support this motion. The previous speaker states that sometimes planes travel 1/3rd full, with only about 15 – 20. I can tell you, I've never been on a plane with all the 15 or 20 people on, so there's no justification whatsoever for bloody putting it up like that. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else? Any other speakers? Okay, Rachel.

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (Responding on behalf of the EC): Obviously we all know that Joe Knapper has been on a lot of holidays, so would know pretty much about Leeds being full or empty. A lot of what I was going to say has pretty much been said by the previous speakers. Obviously in a cost of living crisis, holidays should be affordable for everybody, not just those that can afford the higher prices, i.e. not the working classes. I'm a school governor and we get like reports of how many parents have had to take, well, either requested holidays or just took their kids out and being fined anyways and, you know, I'm supposed to be objective about that, but I can fully understand why people do that. I mean, obviously I've got young children, I was not looking for holiday prices when they are in school, but even myself, I was recently looking for holidays, even in this country like, you know, caravan parks, mid-September was £339 for like Monday to Friday and then in school holidays it bumped up to £789, that's more than doubled and people, you know, people are struggling and will have to save really hard to get, you know, maybe take their kids away outside of school holidays, never mind inside them. So I fully, we fully support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply?

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: Thanks very much. I can take on board that people want to oppose this and answering the question about holidays in this country, in the UK. I come from Scotland obviously, I don't know if any of you could tell that, it's just I wasn't sure.

[LAUGHTER]

I had to put it out there. So Blackpool has always been a big thing for the Scottish people, massive holiday place for Scottish people. I don't know why, they wouldn't take my money, they don't understand us and they don't sell good drinks, so

[LAUGHTER]

I can't get it at all and there are some dodgy characters coming from Blackpool, but a couple of years ago, me and my wife took my niece down to Blackpool for four days, nearly £1,000, nearly £1,000. There isn't a lot to do there apart from put money into machines or go on rides. Now they want to charge you for a wristband for rides. So holidaying in this country is just as expensive as holidaying abroad, do you know what I mean? If you don't drive, train fares, as we spoke about earlier and the guy from the RMT was talking about today, train fares are through the roof. To travel to Scotland from England on a train, it's a couple of hundred quid. So you add that onto your holiday and during holiday season, as we've heard, they're all at the caravan parks and stuff and prices double, treble sometimes, so it's just as easy to go abroad, but it's still expensive no matter where you go and the whole point of the thing, the whole point of the motion is that we cut this expense, whether it be here, whether it be Spain, whether it be Florida, whether it be Mexico, wherever, we need to stop it. We're working class people, we deserve it. As my friend from Cornwall said, we deserve a luxury as well. It's not just for the rich, it's not just for the famous, we made this country, we made it as it is and we deserve a luxury. Please support it.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 59. Can I also say, Blackpool's a lovely place.

59

Branch 405

That this Conference agrees to demand the government raises the payment levy for the Feed-in Tariff from the energy companies as we believe these companies are now stealing from us, due to the energy crisis. As we have paid for the solar panels and the energy companies are not passing on the profits, they are making from the excess energy that is being produced.

These companies have put their charges up by over 82% in the last 12 months, and a further rise planned in April 2023 of 20%.

This information is from the Houses of Parliament Library published Friday 25th November 2022.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405, Press & Postal Branch: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Conference. That this Conference agrees to demand the government raises the payment level for the feed-in tariff from the energy companies, as we believe these companies are now stealing from us due to the energy crisis. As we appeared? for solar panels and the energy companies are not passing on the profits they are making from the excess energy that is being produced. These companies have put their charges up by over 825 in the last 12 months and a further rise planned in April of 2023 just gone, of 20%. All this information's from the Houses of Parliament library and this was published on Friday, 25th November in 2022. Our house is in the middle of our street

[LAUGHTER]

it is and I've got solar panels on it, yes and I've got solar panels on it, but I don't have a battery for storage, yes. The solar panels have cost me £7,000 to put them on the roof. A battery for these solar panels would cost me another £7,000. These companies pay, I think it went down and down and down to what they actually pay to people who had the solar panels put on, I think I received 12p of whatever it is now, yes, whatever it's called, but they've not put the actual monies up, they've put their monies up, yes, they're charging you guys, yes, extra money for your, usage of your, but they're getting all of this very cheap energy, the surplus energy that all these houses are actually making now, especially when the weather's like this as well and they're making all these profits. They make, I've forgotten how much it was now, they made billions, they're making billions every quarter, yes, off the backs of these solar panels, the wind power, because farmers and thing have the wind power and they generate their own electricity, but they're not passing that cheapness over to us, the customers, that's you, that's me, that's even our National President, yes, he's a bit dodgy, he sometimes doesn't pay like

[LAUGHTER]

yes, but yes, I'm going to ask you to support this, yes, with all my heart, that we need to get these companies either drop the prices for people throughout the country or put the people who are making that extra level levy, put the feed-in tariff up so we can get paid a bit better. Please support this, thank you.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? Speakers? I thought there might have been a bit of Madness there, you know what I mean?

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. When energy companies made an excess of £32 billion in 2022, we should be demanding a share of the honey pie. Even more so when we were contributing to that profit, but this should go further. Any sitting government, see I didn't put it on one, all of them, should be creating a true, honest scheme, not a grant, to help make life more affordable and decrease our carbon footprint. The Executive would ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. I believe we're at composite 3 and I think it's probably the first time I've got it in the right place. So I'm learning. It just goes to show, even from Blackpool, you know. Who is composite 3? Douggie. Please do praise Blackpool.

Composite 3

The BFAWU condemns how the energy companies have been making record profits and giving out historical high dividends to shareholders, while working class people including pensioners are afraid to turn on the heating. We as a union call for the immediate renationalisation of all energy providers and presses the government of the day to do a u-turn on the cost of energy prices, and to bring them back to the level of 2020's costs and that energy companies reduce profits and pass savings onto the consumer. So that vulnerable people wouldn't have to choose between having to eat or heat.

Original motions: 41 [Branch 432] 60 [Branch 580] and 62 [Branch 405]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: It's alright. I'd like to just say something. It's a, whatever I said, like, anyway, sorry, whatever I said, I do not mean anything personal or angry against Mark, who is a great comrade and a good friend, you know, although I've got to treat the National President with dignity, oh bugger.

[LAUGHTER]

He is from Blackpool, you know.

[LAUGHTER]

Yes, energy companies, they are making, we just heard, billions of pounds every year and it's going up and up and they're doing nothing. They're paying out share dividends and like and where are these shareholders, where are they? They don't live in Britain, they like live in New York, they live in Paris, they don't care if like pensioners are afraid to turn on their heating in the winter, they don't care. If people are bankrupting themselves, parents are going without food, because they can't afford to heat their homes. Read some of the comments of like the teachers and they're turning up, kids are turning up because parents don't want to send their children to school in messy clothes and because they can't afford to turn on the tumble drier, they're sending them in wet clothes and teachers are having to put clean clothes, dry clothes around for the children getting there, constantly again and again. I say again, this is 2023, not the 19th century. It shouldn't be like this, you know, we should nationalise the damn things to be honest, we should nationalise it. It was good when it was in our hands, all the profits were going to us to pay for things like schools, yet these guys, the government says yes, governments can own the energy companies, it's the French government or the German government, just not the British government. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you seconding? Okay, that's cool.

Sister Angela Robinson – Branch 580: I remember years ago when Keith Hutchinson was at Conference and one of my first motions, I ever stood up, was about energy companies and things have still not changed and it's getting worse. We need to do more and we need to do it now. We're all vulnerable people. It says vulnerable people in the motion. Who here is not vulnerable people? We're all working class, we're all vulnerable, we need to do more now. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Chair and comrades. The same sort of motion came at the Black People's Conference. I did, I supported it, but the language which was used, I was, I criticised it. The language, the bills, energy bills are hitting more black people than white people, so when an energy bill drops in your hole, it doesn't white, black, white, right, so I support it because it's hitting everybody, right. I live on elderly people estate, right, I get very emotional when I see them walking and when I ask how are your bills, you can't pay, so the people who stop white, black, black, right, fight for all of us, right, so we should, I don't know if there is any motion on this, the water companies, Severn Trent, dumped so much raw sewage in the rivers and now they say it will take 20 years to pay, but consumer have to pay it, so we have to fight this, so it's their fault, right, they dropped the rubbish in the rivers, right, so nobody's speaking against it, right. We should vote as Unions, right, all this rubbish, why should we pay it, because their fault, they shouldn't just pay it, they should be fined and sent in to jail. Thank you very much, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Mahinder.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: I ask you to support this motion. One of the biggest energy companies in this country is EDF. EDF is owned by the French government. When our government sold it off, the French bought it. Our energy prices last year went up by 48%. Do you know how much the French's went up? 4%. The money we paid for our energy subsidised the people in France, so they kept their prices down. It's absolutely ridiculous. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? No? Is there anybody else? No? Okay. General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the Executive asks you to support this motion. Delegates have clearly outlined the reasons why, so I'm not going to add anything other than it's a long and proud tradition of our great Union that nationalisation of the energy industry, along with other utilities and services, is absolutely what we should be driving towards and campaigning for. As I mentioned earlier, private companies, their shareholders and CEO's should not be making millions of pounds worth of money, whilst our members, people of our class, key essential workers, are going cold and hungry. We would ask you to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. That means it's 61, 356.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'm sorry again. You know, the building and banking sector, they're a bunch of shysters, they are. They are an absolute bunch of con artists, you know. They literally don't give a damn when they lumber these charges on to somebody, that they probably don't realise they're going to end up with, they do it in such sneaky ways, they are such sneaky sods. They want to keep you in debt. You know, to us, a debt is something to worry about, we worry, you know, I'm in debt, I worry. Do you know what they regard debt as in finance? Because you want to speak to them, it's an asset, it's an asset to them. Your mortgage, yes, your mortgage to them, that's their asset and if you fail in paying it, guess who guarantees it, it's us again, they'll take it, the government will pay for them. Let's remember 2008, who caused the crisis? It was them, it was them, guess what they want, they want more for themselves, because they think they deserve it all. They don't give a damn if you live in poverty, they don't give a damn if you end up homeless, they just want their money, because they think they deserve it. Well, I don't think they deserve it. I think you deserve to live in dignity and be able to feed your children. So I say, support this motion, please.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Speakers?

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Hi, Douggie. I'm trying to understand this motion, is it to the new regulation that came in to stop arranged overdrafts, is that it? Because arranged overdrafts are vitally important. People are struggling financially and to have an arranged overdraft where you're guaranteed you will not pay excessive charges and to make sure people are protected, because people don't understand, they're worrying basically, they're worrying about their finances and to have that little bit of cushion with an arranged overdraft is, now I have an arranged overdraft, I've never had to use it luckily, but you go into your financial, you go in to see your manager, he will look at your finances basically and he will put arrangements in for you, to make sure that you don't struggle. If you go over that, then obviously they do charge, but I was quite, I was just trying to understand what the motion was, that I do think arranged overdrafts are a good idea. I do think that to have a word with a financial adviser or your bank manager to make sure that you understand how much this will cost you and to me it's in there as a protection, so that's why. I may have got the motion wrong, but that's why I oppose this motion. Thank you.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, I thought you were getting up to speak. Any other speakers? Last minute substitute? Money too tight to mention. No? Okay.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the EC: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. Money makes the world go round, but let's keep some more of it in our pockets. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Do you want the right to reply?

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Yes. What it means like with overdraft charges, the overdraft charges they've been actually doing is that sometimes what the financial institutions have been doing, is that we all know we're in a cost of living crisis, yes. They've been taking out money from like people's, you know, standing orders and things like that, they're taking them out earlier, yes, not when they're getting paid and then they're slapping on overdraft charges that are wildly excessive, you know, not just a couple of quid but I'm talking like, you know, hundreds of pounds, they're earning billions out of it. They don't want to stop it, because they are earning billions out of it, while we're worrying, oh my God, this money's come out now and somebody's worrying to hell with it, they're worried to hell. That's what it's about stopping, it is a dangerous precedent.

Let's face it, I'll put this one point, being like 2008, yes, the subprime crisis which is typical of the behaviour of the financial institutions, yes, is, was caused when they got people who didn't realise, they thought oh, I'm getting a mortgage, I can be safe in my house and what they would do was put in like teaser rates, yes, for their mortgages and they would think oh and they would tell them, they would sell them as like, you know, you're only going to be paying not much more when your teaser rate expires, yes and by the way, a lot of them actually targeted migrants, they deliberately targeted migrants because of the English skills and nobody really reads, you know, financial mortgages unless you're a lawyer or that, but what they did, when the teaser rate expires, their mortgages shot up so people couldn't afford it and then they ended up homeless and you ended up with like millions in poverty right across the world. So, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thanks. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. It's you again. Motion 63. I just want to get your steps in.

The BFAWU demands the abolition of Section 21 of the 1988 Housing Act thereby putting an end to ‘No Fault’ evictions which is the number one reason for homelessness in the UK.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Yes, I’m actually, I’m actually going, you know, I’ve got to remit this because the government and I’ll make this point, yes, the government’s actually bringing in legislation that is going to get rid of Section 21. Unfortunately it’s not nice legislation and it’s doing it a different way that’s going to cause homelessness in a different way, so I’m going to remit this. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, cheers. 65. Yes, 64 was part of the composite, it just wasn’t mentioned in here. So it’s 65, a bit earlier than expected. It’s always nice to drop it on you.

This Conference agrees that public bus transport should be a cheap and effective way for people to avoid having to use private cars. As such we ask our parliamentary group to lobby that the price cap of £2 per single journey that is scheduled to be introduced from 01/01/2023 to 31/03/2023 be made permanent. This scheme should also be nationwide, not limited to only some companies.

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390 (Manor, Stoke): Comrades, this Conference agrees that public bus transport should be a cheap and effective way for people to avoid having to use private cars. As such, we ask that our Parliamentary Group to lobby the price cap of £2 per single journey that is scheduled to be introduced from 1/1/2023 to 31/3/2023, to be made permanent. This scheme should also be nationwide, not limited to only some companies. Obviously this was written last year and recently the price cap has been extended to 31st October this year, brill, but again, still it isn’t nationwide and it’s not all companies. A little bit of background information. The number of miles driven by local buses in England fell 27% in the 10 years to ‘21 – ‘22, that’s from the Department for Transport. The number of live registered services fell 9½% between January ‘22 to January ‘23. That’s from the Traffic Commissioner. We’re rapidly running out of local bus services and the ones that are in place are too expensive to use. Speaking personally, the only real time I use public transport really is to get to the pub, but it’s cheaper for me and my wife to go in a taxi than use the local bus service. It’s crazy, yet we’re trying to reduce our carbon footprint by using public transport that isn’t there. This price cap is a really good scheme, but it needs to be made permanent subject to economics, Mark, err, previous speaker. We don’t want companies to go out of business, all we want is fair fares that people can afford. We’re not after a Venga? bus for everybody, we just want cheap fares so that we can go about our business, get to work. Please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded. Speakers? No? Anybody on there? It be you, Dimitri.

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton): Yes, speaking on behalf of the EC. We ask to support the motion, but just to give an update to our speaker, which he spoke earlier on this motion, is basically it’s been extended to 13th November and from my research, from November the cap will be raised to 250 and from my knowledge, it’s nationwide, it’s applicable to all the bus companies and the reason I am saying that is because I always travel on the bus, because I always using the public transport because I don’t own a car and I don’t drive a car and I don’t have a driving licence, so since 2015 when I came to this country, my way of moving around was the public transport, especially buses, so I have a lot of knowledge on this one. Now obviously we need to push this one as soon as possible to the Parliamentary Group, because to be honest, it saves a lot of money, especially to the working class which are going to work and coming back from work and they don’t own a car or they cannot afford a car or they’re not able to drive a car and yes, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Dimi Mahinder, he was responding on behalf of the EC. I called for speakers, unfortunately you missed it, mate.

[Mahinder is speaking off-mike]

Oh right, okay. It’s a shame you didn’t get that in, but I’ve got to go to the vote now Mahinder, I’m awful sorry. To the vote.

Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. 66.

That this Conference agrees that free transport be available from the age of 16- to 25-year-old for all. This would take in trains, buses, subway. Given that this age bracket is often discriminated against in terms of youth rates and apprenticeship pay, this would ensure that this age group could attend studies or work.

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: Moving the motion 66. President and Secretary, EC, Delegates. That this Conference agrees that free transport be available from the age of 16 to 25 for all. This would take trains, buses, subways. Given that this age (unclear) of the youth rate and apprenticeship pay, this would ensure that this age group could attend studies or work. I think motion defend itself. We need to bring people and especially young people an opportunity to go to work, to studies. Why not given a chance to move the public transport for free? I think that's one of the best idea you can get because they don't have to pay for the transport, they can save the money, so maybe can go somewhere else, afford to go to other work. So I think it's quite important to support this motion, so please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Absolutely I oppose this motion. The money should, I've got a motion in later on about bus passes for pensioners. The cost would be excessive basically and the previous motion is actually better to cap. I'm from London, so I go into London regularly. We have a cap down in London, it's £1.30 any trip, any bus basically, any distance and that's what we should be doing nationwide. 16 – 25, okay 16 year olds they're quite young, basically up to 25, half the 25 year olds will probably be earning more than me anyway, but it is, it is basically too, the cost would be massive, the money would be far better put into improving public transport and decreasing fares basically nationwide and capping the fares, so absolutely oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Sister Katarzyna Damek – Branch 515: I want to support this motion. Actually we have something like that in Scotland already because both of my children, which are aged 12 and 20, they have Scottish entitlement card and they can travel for free, so that's easy, accessible for everyone. It could be also expanded for everyone who is up to age 25, not only for students and pupils. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): I'm here to oppose this motion. Like the previous speaker, I totally agree with him. We can't, we're struggling to get pensioners free bus travel, let alone youngsters. I started work at 16, I was just 16 and I cycled to work. I only stopped cycling to work about four years ago, after having heart problems. The kids need to be out on bikes and out walking, running or cycling should I say, they should be out there getting the exercise, otherwise I don't think in this day and age some of our youngsters will reach our age. Get them off their 'phones, get them onto bikes and get them exercising. I absolutely oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: I ask you to support this motion. At the moment it's like, say, it's only £2 for any bus journey, which is absolutely ideal for people, but I live in Durham, I live seven miles outside of Durham City Centre, a monthly bus pass for Durham is £350 a month. Now, if you're a youth worker, you can't really afford that. A one-way trip into Durham is £7.50, it's like £1 a mile, it's absolutely ridiculous. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Turner – Branch 3554?, (Fletchers): I oppose this. I've got five children, all adults now. I can see with students, 16 – 21 yes, fair enough, I think you already have student passes, but 25, like someone said, some of them are on more money than me. So, I oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Passes for 16 – 25. 21 year olds, they're cut off now in Scotland. 20 year old daughter at university, already costing her a fortune, she's going to have great debts to look forward to, so why can't we help her that little bit more whilst she gets that education, so she can help us out in the future? So, I support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers? No? That'd be Nick.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. We are in a cost of living crisis and we expect our young people to pay full child and young people rates for travel. The government clearly understand we are in a cost of living crisis, as they introduced the £2 fare cap for adults.

Note adults, there is no cap on the child fare. It's been extended twice so far, nothing for younger people, who probably use our travel systems as much as the grown ups. My son's bus fare to get the same bus as me, he's 16, is £1.90 and I pay two quid. It's time for them to get a ticket to ride. Please support this motion.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Fair play, fair play. To the vote. Oh no, the right of reply, sorry.

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: I respect the opinion, but it's going to be cost, right, but I know as example of Scotland that can be manage. How you want to encourage the people to go to work if they cannot afford to go there? Some of the guys, as previous speaker said, oh, he can take a bike. Okay, if you live 12 mile from the city centre, it's going to be hard to drive a bike every day. So, that's why I'm just asking you to support this motion, to help our youngsters to go back work.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Okay. Those against? That's carried. Thank you. I'm just debating whether this next one's going to be a big motion. How many have we got left? So guess what Conference, I think it really is an important motion the next one, so we'll start it in the morning at half past 9. Thank you very much. Yes, it did, from here it did, from here it did.

Alright, okay. Those in favour of the last motion? Okay. I mean, you're welcome to come down here and stand up and see what I see. Those against? I mean if you want to call for a card vote, I mean if you want to start counting people up, happy for that to happen. Well, if you're going to do that, then what you'll have to do is you'll have to have a count, if that's what you want. I mean, like I say, I mean, if you, if one of the people that doesn't believe that what I'm seeing, if they don't believe what I'm seeing, you're welcome to, then all we have to do, we'll have to do it through the appropriate way, which is obviously the Scrutineer will have to go round each Region and get your votes. Okay? Is that what you want? Okay, so Scrutineers from each Region, can you put your hands up if you was in favour in Region 1? So I'm going to do Region 1 first, Scrutineer from Region 1, count up the numbers. Okay. Those that are for it, okay. Those that are against it in Region 1? Okay. Have you got the numbers Region 1, Scrutineer? Have you got them? Okay.

Region 2. Those in favour? Have you got them? Yes? Those against? Okay, got those numbers? Okay.

Region 3. Those in favour? Those against? Okay, you got those numbers? Yes?

Region 4. Those for? Those against? Have you got those numbers, have you written them down for me? Thank you very much.

Region 5. Those in favour? Have you done them? Those against?

Region 7. Those in favour? Have you got them? Those against? Okay.

Online?

[(Kevin Flood speaks off-mike) Online, so for, put your hands up. For? Right, put your hands down. Against? Put them up. So against, Mark. Take your hand, if you're against or for, mate. So Mark, put your hand up. Right, that's it.]

Five for, one against online. Right, so Region 1, tell me your numbers please. Four yes, one against. Region 2. Region 3, 15 for, five against.

Yes, Region 1, those in favour, Region 1? Right, those against? So, there's two, there's two against, Region 1? So Region 1's got twoJust a bit of order please.

Four for and four against? Oh, right. Right, okay, okay, that's fine. So, Region 1 is now four for and four against, okay?

Region 2 is 10 for, six against.

Region 3 is 15 for, five against.

Region 4, six for, eight against.

Region 5, 14 for, 10 against.

Region 7, four for

Can I just say, my eyes are working perfectly well. It was Oh, glory me. (singing, Oh, don't challenge me). It was 58/37. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

See you all. Don't forget your fringe meetings, don't forget if you're in Greggs, then you're back in here at 5 o'clock and obviously I'll see you all in the morning.

Oh and don't forget, quiz night, half past 7 and get your clobber on, for all your singing.

Wednesday 14 June 2023

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, if you can shut the door please. Anybody that's late now, send them to Standing Orders. Okay, roll call.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4, oh, gets around town then. Thanks both Johns and Laura. Region 5. Region 7. Thanks, Conference.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. I think we're going to have a video. Is it ready to rock? So this is Mark, singing last night.

[LAUGHTER]

No, it's not. We've got a version of The Blues Brothers, I believe.

[VIDEO with music, PLAYED)

[APPLAUSE]

Obviously you was putting yourself forward for Blues Brothers 3, yes? That was well done. I think that was a great little video and obviously, I assume it's on BFAWU Scotland? Not yet, but it will be, it will be soon and then obviously if you're not following BFAWU Scotland, they're on Facebook and let's get it shared as wide as possible obviously, you know. Future film stars I think we saw there

[LAUGHTER]

...but congratulations, absolutely fantastic initiative, absolutely fantastic.

Standing Orders, sorry. Pen, my pen. Before you start, I need a pen. Cheers, mate. Okay.

Brother John Fox – Chair of Standing Orders: Right. Turn to your Agendas please, Conference. Motion 72 has now been withdrawn, so we start now on motion 80 stands, 81, 82, 83, 84 and 85 all stand. Number 86 is withdrawn. Number 87 stands. Number 88's already been taken, because it was composited at 13. Number, motion 89 is out-of-order. Motion 90 stands. Motion 91 is now composite 5 with motion 93 and it will be taken at motion 91. Motion 92 stands. Motion, as I say, 93 is composited. Motion 94 stands, 95 stands, 96 stands. Motion 97 has already been done and that was composite 2 and that was at number 15 and the following all stand, which is 98, 99, 100, 101 and 102. That is the end of the report. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, everybody accept the report? Anyone against? Thank you very much. We are back to 67.

67

Branch 356

This Conference says that with Britain being the 5th richest country in the world we demand that the government should end homelessness forthwith.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Thomas Jefferson declared, these truths we hold to be self-evident. We don't vote Tory, because they're scum, or you're better in a working class person, is better in a Trade Union, or as my youngest comrade in the Hall, Amy, who's walking over there, points out, you never cross a picket line.

[APPLAUSE]

It's always good to see young people learning the right lessons in life, isn't it. But there's also, it's also self-evident when I walk around a town and I see every shop doorway being used as a bedroom. I see beggars everywhere in states of desperation. I say this is not right. I could tell you about facts and figures, that the average age life expectancy in the United Kingdom is around 81, for the homeless it's half that at around 41. I could tell you that if you walk, in just two weeks, wandering around Westminster and London, Sadiq Khan found over £20 billion-worth of property empty, not being used by the super rich who have just bought it as investments. I could tell your hearts about a few years ago, I bumped into a couple of friends who themselves were homeless drug addicts and they were looking after a 15 year old girl, living on the streets, nowhere to go, 15, nobody bothered picking her up.

We've already talked about, we've already talked about the dangers people, mainly women, face late at night, so I'm going to pull your even string, hearts even more. I'm going to mention her name, Nikki Higgins, nobody would know that name. I will tell you Nikki Higgins was my friend. Nikki Higgins was a good person. Nikki Higgins was homeless. Nikki Higgins was murdered in a Stoke-on-Trent graveyard. So I say to you, I do not ask, I demand that we end homelessness. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Are you speaking? Go on then.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Good morning, comrades. Sorry, I always forget. Chair and all my friends. I don't want to say too much on this. My friend, Douglas, Douggie has already said. It's hard to speak after him. I'm supporting it, because if Britain is the richest country in the world, right, they should help people. Now, I'll tell you something else. Now you got the Prime Minister, Sunak, right, he has got a lot of money, he's a rich person. I read in the newspaper that he tried to write cheques, right and that's, all the rich people do that, right. Now I know his background, I know his background, he's from India, he's Indian/Pakistan, I'm not sure whether he's Indian or Pakistan, but I know he's from Pakistan, Punjab and they shipped him to India and now his father-in-law is a very rich man in America, so he can, he was educated in a private school and he's a very educated person, but he is (unclear) Hindu and he brought this contagious disease of class system to this country.

I don't want to say, you can do it, have a search, there's a temple in London, Shivalin? Temple and every time he go to parliament, he goes there to worship Shiva, right. I don't want to say much about Shiva, because my daughters and my sisters are here. If this class system, he will bring it here, these Hindus have destroyed India, divided India into two sections. Pakistan was part of India, Muslims are my friends. When I go anywhere, they respect me, I respect them, right. They were butchered. India and (unclear) are being butchered. A few months back, farmers had agitation and 700 were killed. They were demanding their rights and one Hindu leader's son brought a van and murdered some people and so-called democracy have not charged that man because he's the son of that man, right. So we were, we were

[APPLAUSE]

if you let this man run your country, he will destroy you and any of these people, authorities, where there is Indian class system, where there is people butchering Muslim man, brother, people, those who are butchering other people. Let us get together. It's a Trade Union, be as a fighter, we should fight for them. I have just appealed my thing in there and I have got a message from my home that you have got message from Chileans?, they have asked me to go to their Conference, Black People Conference. I was invited to do their Conference and (unclear) their ambassador and, you know, Cubans are fighting, you know, fighters, so I salute the fighters. Anywhere where the people are standing against the dictators, I salute them, I salute them. Thank you very much, Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Peter Horn – Branch 393 (Northwich): This is very, very close to my heart. I have been homeless and I have also served in the British Army. There are thousands and thousands of people out there that are ex-servicemen, that have given their lives to this country and this government and yet they won't do bugger all for them. Excuse my language. Not only should we lobby the government against homelessness, we should make the government stop homelessness. Support this.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Is it me, I gather? Before I support this motion, I'd just like to say I hope everybody down there's drinking plenty of water and I hope people are looking after themselves because it's going to be scorching today and I think that people who are speaking ought to be mindful that it comes over negative? when delivering this kind of stuff. I'm here to support this motion, because funnily enough there was a thing called Covid that hit this country and hit the world and being a key worker, we had a piece of paper that gave us the freedom to move about when we were all under house arrest and curfew and I noticed in Wakefield and in Leeds, the homelessness had disappeared, we didn't see anybody sleeping on the streets during that period. We met at Water Lane/Boat Lane? and asked for a pint, you couldn't have (unclear) a few cans, social distancing of course and three or four people who had come into town with me said the same thing. There were no people sleeping on the streets during Covid, so where were they put? Now this has been eradicated or gone on the back burner, the homeless have appeared again. So I'm here to support it. They did it through Covid, so why can't they keep that process continuing? Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580 (Greggs, Leeds): Of course I support this motion. I think anyone who doesn't support this motion is probably in the wrong room. We've heard some excellent points about homelessness disappearing during Covid, about the empty houses that are available and the veterans as well, but there's no magic end to this. I wish I could click my fingers and end homelessness today, but let's not kid ourselves.

If we end homelessness today, by next week there'll be more homeless people because of this corrupt government's policies, but policies of zero hour contracts, the high prices of rents, the price of energy, even something as, all politicians say oh, we want to help everyone, but then they charge everyone a TV licence, the poorest in society have to pay a TV licence to watch TV, they tax us to watch TV, which it might only be a little bit to some people, but to the poorest it's a lot, it could be a week's-worth of shopping and then just in general high taxes. We always mention about wages needing to be higher, that's because of the cost of everything and when we end homelessness, we need to tackle all these crises as well and I'm the first one to criticise this corrupt government.

This government, the last 12 years of government, have not been Conservative, they've been criminal and I don't like the term Conservative voters. Half of the population are Conservatives, I am a proud Conservative and I think we need to be mindful when we're trying to attract members and stuff like that, about how we speak about Conservatives, but speaking about the government, definitely, but you can all remain calm, you don't need to panic, at the last election the most Conservative candidate was Rachel Reeves, so I voted for her. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other Okay. Any other speakers? Are you speaking? Vice President.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: Morning, Conference. Everybody (unclear) has been through. People shouldn't be living in a box in 2023, they shouldn't be, it's just wrong, everything about it is wrong. We're one of the richest nations in the world, we could do something about it. The point that Sean made is correct. What did they do when Covid was here? They must have went somewhere, who took them, where did they go? As soon as Covid was over, they were back. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. 68. Branch Just caught you there, just caught you there.

68

Branch 580

That this Conference agrees cyclists using mobile phones while driving/riding should have penalties just as car users do.

Sister Angela Robinson – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees that cyclists using mobile 'phones, whilst riding bikes, should have penalties just as car users. Holding a 'phone to your ear while riding a bike is not against the law. The Highway Code says you should avoid any actions that could reduce the control of your cycle, but it's not law. So if you can drive a car, you can't drive a car using a mobile 'phone, why should they be able to ride a bike? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Here to support, second this motion, but I do own a couple of bikes and use a hands-free carrier for my mobile, as I do when driving, but I never operate it when I want to ride my bicycle.

[LAUGHTER]

It took many years for the government to impose fines for mobile use when driving a vehicle, so maybe it's time to introduce this to cyclists. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Very good. Any other speakers? No, I know you are, I know, but before I bring you on I mean.

Brother Jonathan Kaye – Branch 575: Can you hear me? Right. I've noticed a lot of difference between cyclists in the present and cyclists in the past and the amount of cyclists. When I was younger, we did the provisional cycling test and I've got to vote with this motion because the amount of cyclists that just do not care about how many car drivers they're impeding as well. I've just got to agree with the motion that more needs to be done to protect car drivers as well, because nine times out of 10 if a car driver hits a cyclist and it's the cyclist's fault, the law doesn't see that, it's the car driver's fault. So I go with this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. I'm a cyclist, there's nothing I hate more than a person not taking responsibility for their own safety. Cyclists can be their own worst enemy. Come on, let me ride in safety. The law states you must not ride in a dangerous, careless or inconsiderate manner. I believe the risk and danger posed by cyclists, using their 'phones, can be just as devastating as a driver. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers?

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool - EC Member): Speaking on behalf of the EC, who ask you to support this motion. As two of us who sit on the EC are keen cyclists, it is only right that one of us spoke on this from the EC. Some might say oh, another fine, but this is a serious matter. When cycling or driving on British roads, the safety of road users and pedestrians is paramount. Holding a ‘phone while cycling isn’t against the law, that doesn’t mean it’s a good idea. The rules for using a ‘phone whilst cycling is different from using a ‘phone while driving. If I hold a ‘phone while driving in my car or sitting in the driving seat in stationary traffic, I will be in breach of Rule 149. The standard penalty is six points on your licence and £1,000 fine. The same penalties apply for motorcyclists, but not for cyclists. The Highway Code says you should avoid any actions that could reduce your control of your cycle, but if you were involved in an accident while riding one-handed, ‘phone pressed to one ear, you could be used as evidence against you in court. The Code also says you must not ride in a dangerous, careless or inconsiderate manner. Riding one-handed while talking on a ‘phone or taking a video call or texting or playing Candy Crush could very easily be deemed careless, with a maximum fine of £1,000. So there is potential for a fine anyway. When I have no particular place to go, I like to ride my bicycle

[LAUGHTER]

and I believe I cycle in a safe and correct manner and expect all cyclists to do the same. People have been known to be killed by cyclists. My only concern is how this fine will be managed. Would the police really stop you and fine you or would they just send a message in a bottle?

[LAUGHTER]

I remember a few years ago, there was a motion regarding our National Officers to go round on bikes or a bicycle built for two

[LAUGHTER]

thankfully it fell. Can you imagine the cost to the Union in fines? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You’re going to be the winner. You’re going to be a winner, going to be a winner. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. 69.

69

Branch 405

That this Conference agrees to work with the Parliamentary group and any other interested parties. To ensure that private security firms are never given the power of arrest, as this would lead to the creation of private police forces in this country. Something that must be resisted.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: That this Conference agrees to work with the Parliamentary Group and any other interested parties to ensure that private security firms are never given the power of arrest, as this will lead in the creation of private police forces in this country, something that must be resisted. In America, they all have these, yes, private security, yes and the kids of America always are getting frightened in this, yes. Well, if you can’t beat ‘em, you got to join ‘em, don’t you, yes. So, all I can say on this is please support this. If we get like America, on these private police, security firms, you can arrest people. We’d not be doing ourselves a favour. We must keep going and resist these at all costs, because those kids in America again, it’s not, I’m not really, yes, they’re frightened, yes, around these people because they don’t give two hoots, yes, they’ll get their guns out, yes and they’ll frighten them, yes. So please support this. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded. Speakers?

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I oppose this motion. I think it’s actually quite a good idea. Our police forces are stretched to a limit and there doesn’t seem to be any more money going in, so if there’s a way of actually improving or helping them out at no cost to us, because these are private firms, I think that could be a good idea. I mean, obviously these people hopefully will be trained to a specific or minimum requirement and, I mean, we already took away corporal punishment back in the 70’s, I went to school back in the 70’s and there seemed to be no respect from the general public and I think anything, I truthfully think anything that will help the police force at, as I say, no cost to the tax payer possibly could be a good idea and it’s, I think it’s a way forward, but I’m sure there’ll be restrictions on this, if it went through, that they would only be allowed to do up to a certain point, but calling a police officer out to maybe somebody that’s stolen, I don’t know, some perfume at £9.99 they, you know, if a private firm has the option there to hold that person and then decide whether that person goes on to the police station, yes, I think give it a go. So I oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): I'm here (cuts off). Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Right. I'm here to support this motion. Who remembers Covid marshals? Covid marshals, all over the place. Jumped up security guys. My son is at Leeds University, he was at Leeds University during the Covid days. They had security guards on that campus. The students of this country were trapped shockingly. Young people being put in army-style conditions by jumped up security guards. I went to pick him up one day, this guy said, is he in your bubble? I'm not letting him out the premises. I said, I'll tell you what it is mate, if you don't let him out here, there will be emergency services on this site and it won't be Covid related and it won't be for me.

[LAUGHTER]

You cannot allow people to make arrests without jurisdiction or law, otherwise they're turning into a police state, which I believe they attempted back in 2020. So I'm here to fully support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Morning, everybody. I want to support this motion because rogue police officers are bad enough sometimes, we hear it in, you know, the news, one's gone nuts, hurt a woman, killed a woman, attacked another person, put their knee in the wrong place in someone's neck, etc and if you put security guards that are not trained as highly as police officers out there on the streets, who knows what they're going to do to us, who knows what they're going to do to our children and our neighbourhoods. We can't let them through our barricades. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: It's a very serious matter here, although I'm in spirit with what's going on here today, I have a little take on it later. No, I'm against this here, I'm vehemently against it. I've seen, sort of over the last few years here in Britain you know, people kicking down doors for meters to be put in, I've seen bad policemen manhandle protestors, I've seen guys being picked off the streets, I've been in a yellow vest, protesting and had my name taken, people wanted me to know who organised it, was I an anarchist, was I an anti-fascist, was I this, that and the other and so I'm vehemently against this here. I mean, having private law here is really, really bad because I mean the security forces here and the force of law and order are really, really bad and I've been on the firing end of it because I have fought the law and the law won.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'm going to support this motion. You know, John has mentioned that what is happening in the United States. What he didn't mention is that some of the deaths of the young African-American, who were gunned down in the United States, were caused by private security guards. Trayvon Martin, remember him? Unarmed, gunned down, just because he was African-American. Do we want this here? Listen, I have a lot of problems with our police and how they operate, but some of the private security involved in the deportations already, there has been deaths caused by the way they've acted on flights when they're deporting people that are terrified of going back to the situations they face in their countries. I've spoken and I have an example, I've spoken to the Prison Officers Association and they've already got privatised prisons here and they're talking where they are trained to deal with things and have experience. These privatised guys, they're just given a few weeks' training, right, off you go. It's haphazard, it's a way of saving money, we know what it is about. The police are a problem, I admit that, but what the privatised thing, the police are, technically, supposed to act with favour to none. Privatised prisons, privatised security firms are about making profits and they will act for whoever's paying them. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: I ask you to support this motion. Okay, private security people such as bouncers say, yes, have training, they have licences, they have to show them on their arms and things like that, to prove that they have training, but did that stop a security man at an under-18 rave grab a young girl by the throat and forcibly remove her from the building in front of people? It was all over the news, it didn't stop him doing that. What's going to stop them from abusing their power, arresting a young girl, taking them to a room and they could do anything with that girl when she's handcuffed. I ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Freddie Velez - Branch 547: I'm here to support this motion. I think this is generous for us to think that private security will provide safety to people. You know, if we consider that sectors of the police had been described as institutionally racist, homophobic and misogynistic, misogynist, so let's think what people who are not properly trained could do.

In my experience, countries that allow paramilitary forces or security that is supplied by private companies, only allow for human rights abuses. So it's very dangerous for us to think that we should support this kind of forces, yes.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Nobody on there? No? Cool.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. Just because a policeman's lot is not a happy one, does not mean they need additional help. Every one of you in this room has the power of arrest and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, Section 24A, arrest without warrant of other persons; (1) a person other than a constable may arrest without a warrant (a) anyone who is in the act of committing an indictable offence, (b) anyone whom he has reasonable grounds for suspecting to be committing an indictable offence. I could go on and read the whole section of the Act, but in short, the police don't need any extra help when they've already got individuals who can do it if they needed to. The Executive would ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: There is a right to reply, because it was opposed. I don't think he's in the room. Going once, going twice, going three times. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 70.

70

Branch 568

This Conference agrees that if you buy something off the internet that is not faulty. The company has a legal right to just give online credit, and not a refund. This may persuade people to use retailers and support jobs within that industry.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: That this Conference agrees that if you buy something off the internet that is not faulty, the company has the legal right to just give online credit and not a refund. This may persuade people to use retailers and support jobs within that industry. It's, I don't use the internet at all to buy anything, I think it's destroyed the, you know, the general retail industry within this country. We're also adding to the carbon footprint. I know people say well, you've got to get to the shops, doesn't that contribute to the carbon footprint? But if you buy five items and I've seen it with my daughter, she'll go and buy five items off the internet and send four of them back, so there's four items that need to go back, so that contributes to the carbon footprint. We're also destroying the retail, I look at the shops, I look at local towns, with shops just closing down, shut down, it's, it disheartens me, it saddens me and the people that are losing jobs because of this and the only people who are making money are these big firms, Amazon, etc, etc, etc. So, why don't we give these firms that are making, yes, okay, that's almost contradicting myself there, because they're making money already, but hopefully it'll get people away from doing that and start going back to the high streets and doing a little bit of shopping and knowing that they're not actually going to get the cash back, that they'll just get a credit note and they have to go back to that online retailer, may make them go back to the online or to the shop on the high street. So, I think it's a good idea but probably a lot of you do shop on the internet and may disagree with me, but think of the carbon footprint and think of people's jobs. So, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Again. I'm here to oppose this motion, sorry.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Before you do. Seconder? Formally seconded.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Sorry, I got the thumbs up to come up, Ian. Yes, I'm here to oppose this because without these online shops, these online retailers, we wouldn't have made it through Covid, it's that simple. People would have not got their groceries, yes, we had waiting lists etc to get them, but we wouldn't have got them without those people in those jobs, in those trucks bringing that food out so your families could eat, etc and I know Mark's, sorry, the previous speaker, mentioned Amazon etc, there are things on Amazon that people need too and, but if you want to put your cash into something and it's not what you need or what you wanted when it arrives, you should get your cash back. You don't want to have to go back to them online shops, so you need your cash back, so you can maybe go to the high street and buy the item you want. We all make personal choices to go shopping wherever we go shopping, now Covid's over a lot more people are returning to the high streets, to the supermarkets themselves, but a lot of people in their jobs are finding it a lot easier still to shop online. So either way round, we need the online shopping and we need our cash back from it, if it's not the item we want.

So I oppose this motion, sorry. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Turner – Branch 3554: Hi, I'm here to oppose this (recording cuts out). Sorry, I find it a lot easier now to shop online. Years ago, before Covid, I never went online, but obviously now I'm getting old, like a lot of us and I find it a lot easier to do my shopping online and through my serious accident I had last year, so I oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): I'm here to oppose this motion as well. We buy stuff online sometimes because it's cheaper than what it is in the local shops, you know, even with delivery or pending how much you're spending, you're getting free delivery anyway. So, lots of us do online shopping. You know, I don't agree with credit notes. If I've bought something, rightly or wrongly and it doesn't suit, I want my money back. There's no point getting an online credit note, you might not want anything else from that retailer. You know, I've ordered stuff from China and it's come and it's not been what's advertised, it's tacky, it's cheap, it's nasty, it's not worth the money you've spent and you send it back. I sent it back at a cost to myself, but at the end of the day I thought they're not getting away with the rest of my money, it's not right, it's not fair. I mean, they do that in this country and a few years' ago, I'm going back quite a few years when my kids were smaller, I went to a local shop and bought an outfit, bought it on the last minute, I was going out somewhere and I thought that'll do, like you do, didn't try it on, got home and I thought do you know what, this looks atrocious, I'm taking it back. So I took it back to the shop the day after and said, can I have a refund? No, you can have a credit note. I don't want a credit note, I don't want anything else in your shop, didn't like the fit, don't like it, please can I have my money back? No. Right, okay, so I went home, made myself some sandwiches, a flask and I went and sat in the middle of the shop and I was saying to people

[APPLAUSE]

you know, don't buy anything from this shop, because if you bring it back, they want to give you a credit note. You lose that bit of paper, your money's gone. So I sat in that shop and my lads came and they kept topping me up with drinks and stuff and they said mum, I can't believe you're doing this and I went, I'll stay here all day, I haven't got a problem. Security came, they brought the guards and said, you need to remove this lady and I said, I'm not going anywhere until I get my money back. So I then stood by the till and said to people, what are you buying, what's the value of that product you're buying? I'll tell you what, use part of my credit note to pay for it, I'll have your cash, thank you very much. They relented in the end and I got my cash back, but I took, I made a stand, you know, my lads talk about it now

[APPLAUSE]

...and laugh, so oppose this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Hello. Yes, sorry, I was just unmuting. I'm here to oppose this motion. While I agree with some of the sentiment about high streets, I think we've gone too far and the high streets were decimated not by Amazon and online, the supermarkets started and pretty much did a great job in decimating supermarket, sorry, the high street, so yes, it is as it is. I'm here to oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 252: I'm here to oppose this motion. Like the previous, previous speaker, at the end of the day there's laws in place, the Consumer Rights Act that protect you, the consumer, against any retailers. So passing this motion will obviously go against that and risk your consumer rights. Consumer rights are there to protect you. Please oppose this motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Joe-seppi.

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560: Here on behalf of the Executive Council, who would ask you to oppose this motion. I don't know if you've noticed and people have already eluded to the fact that most towns now are like ghost towns. Every shop you go past now is either a hairdressers or a charity shop or like nail salons, 'phone shops and that's all we've got in our towns now. If we got a refund and we could start going and spending our money back in the high streets, it might help. So, please oppose. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You do have the right of reply. I could see Joe getting his nails done.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Did I tell anybody not to buy online? That's not what I said, basically. I said buy online, absolutely, but it's just a free for all. I mean, people just don't, you know, you just go on and buy, buy, buy, buy, buy, 20 items turn up, basically, it's almost as if people don't care. They know they're going to get their money back, basically and we're almost contradicting ourselves as well. These big operations, they're one of the biggest people that have zero hours contracts as well, so we're contributing to that. I am not telling people and Covid is no excuse.

Yes, I know we had Covid and yes, we needed online buying basically, but I'm not telling people not to do that. I'm saying, I'm just saying control yourself and saying there's, you know, exactly, what you said there about all that's on the high street are this, this and this, that's because this is happening also, because people aren't buying and actually helping, helping the retailers and getting out there, but I am not telling people not to buy online. Absolutely fine, things are cheaper. I'm just saying control yourself, basically and if you can't control yourself, then basically give the operation or give the retailer or the online retailer the option to actually give a credit note. I mean, I know the lady here said she went back, it is unusual, usually, I mean, they do say in some shops that they will only issue a credit note unless the item is faulty, but that's another point. If the item isn't faulty, why are you buying 20 items? Just thinking, I'll just have a look at them and then I'll just, I'll probably send 19 of them, well, I will send 19 of them, I'll just check each one. So it isn't about not buying online, yes, absolutely do that. I'm saying it's supporting the retailer, we're not contributing to the carbon footprint basically and literally it, hopefully it will stop people just going crazy with, you know, click, click, click, click. So, please support this. I know I've had, I deserve an opposition, I deserve to be opposed, I understand that basically, so, but

[LAUGHTER]

but I think that, I don't think you absolutely got my point, that it isn't about getting rid of online buying, it's about how people buy online. So, please support this. Waiting for the vote.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the, go on

Brother Dimitru Manole – Branch 357: Chair, would you please be so kind and remind Delegates when they come to speak at the microphone, to say their names and the Branch, please. It's not you, it's not you, it was, can I point it out? It was that way.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I never noticed, I never noticed.

Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's lost. You might have had a better chance, Mark, if you'd have gone buy, buy Baby.

[LAUGHTER]

One for the future. Motion 71.

71

Branch 580

That this Conference agree bikes with motors should not be used on paths, as they pose more danger than push bikes

Sister Angela Robinson – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees bikes with motors should not be used on paths, they're more dangerous than a pushbike. For example, Leeds City Centre, bottom of Briggate, they all hang around in a crowd, set off like a bat out of hell

[LAUGHTER]

eBikes are twice as heavy as regular bikes and while most can only travel at 15½ miles per hour, they can be modified to go much faster. So by law, we cannot ride a motorbike on the path, so why should we be able to ride bikes with motors? Please support.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you seconding? Okay, cool.

Sister Ruth Stevenson – Branch 580: I second that emotion

[LAUGHTER]

but not just bikes with motors, but scooters with motors. They whizz past you so fast and if there's two of you walking on the street, side by side, you don't stand a chance. Pushed into the road by scooters flying up and down the path, it's a wonder they don't push you into a wall.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Here to support. Although a long, long time ago

[LAUGHTER]

I can still remember when pedestrians and cyclists were sharing pavements without any major issues, but as Angela stated, eBikes are considerably heavier than a normal mountain bike. Barnsley Council have provided a lock-up in the bus and train station, £10 for life and an electronic key for access. It's a great means of getting people safely into the city and out and more cycle lanes should also be introduced to encourage even more, but it is illegal and you can be fined for

cycling on a pavement and abide by the rules, but you know sometimes words have two meanings. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Here to support this motion. I don't think it's gone far enough. We've got youngsters now riding the hoverboards down the pavements, we've got the electric scooters, absolutely horrendous. It's only a matter of time before somebody is seriously injured. So I do support the motion, but I believe it could have gone much further.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: I thought we were all here to debate serious motions and all I can hear continuously is mockery and saying, mentioning songs and I find it a bit irritating, I've got to be honest. That's my point of order. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I understand that. I don't think anybody's demeaning the debate, I think what it is is obviously it's a bit of joviality. I mean it's obviously, you're able to make the comments that you wish to make. I mean, we're not going to stop that.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Yes, like previous speakers have said, these kids flying around like they're bats etc, they're going to take people out and you're going to get a little old man or a little old lady come round a corner and end up with serious, serious injuries, if not death. We can't have any motorised vehicle on a path. We shouldn't have cycles on paths, that's what cycle paths are for, you know. We should really, really just make sure there are not vehicles on anything except a road, yes and I know it's not safe for kids to ride on roads etc, but it's just going to keep spiralling out of control and they're going to crash into people and hurt people more. We want no vehicles on the path, we want safe walking space. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Nobody online? Cool.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. As previously said, I am a cyclist. I have a bike with a motor, I also have a bike without a motor. They're actually the same weight, just making that point. If I crash into you, you're still going down. The legal speed on a motor on an electrically-assisted bicycle can only go up to a maximum of just under 16 miles an hour. After that, it becomes a motorbike and subject to the rules of the road for a motorbike under the Road Traffic Act. The issue is cyclists using any kind of bike on paths that they're not allowed to under the Highway Code. These are covered under Highways Act 1835? Section 72 and the Road Traffic Act 1988. If they're going to sweep the pavements in the park, then they deserve to get the fine. As somebody else, previous speaker, has said, it should go further. I'm not going to go onto scooters, because that's a different motion, but they should have helmets. I believe that all bicycles should be licenced. I believe everybody should do their cycling proficiency, there are adult versions of it out there. The Executive would ask you to please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I'm turned on. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 72 was withdrawn, so motion 73.

73

Branch 568

This Conference agrees that speeding fines should be increased dramatically, but only for excessive and dangerous speed, for instance 20 miles over the legislated limit. If there was say, minimum £300.00, this would hopefully reduce accidents, and not reward insurance companies. Insurance companies overuse the points system to charge people excessive premiums.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I think I just put motions in that people are going to oppose, because I know you're going to oppose this one. That this Conference agrees that speeding fines should be increased dramatically, but only for excessive and dangerous speeds, for instance 20 miles over the limit, legislated limit. If I say a £300, £400, £500 speeding fine, this may reduce accidents and hopefully not reward insurance companies who use the points system to their advantage. The points system is a weird thing, it's on the back of this. I don't think I've explained this exactly, because why are we giving police more power?, but it's just basically to reduce accidents.

If people, I see youngsters, I'm not saying just youngsters as well basically, it could be anybody, you know and driving down private roads, sorry 30 mph limit roads doing 60 – 70 miles an hour, basically putting people in danger and then they get, well actually if you're over, you can lose your licence, yes, if you're over a certain limit, but I feel that if, let's say it's 20 miles over the limit and you got a £400, £500 fine, it may make people think, you know, gosh, this is financially going to cripple me, so I have to be a little bit more careful saying that, I don't think it'll care, but people break the speed limit, they're going to do that. I broke the speed limit once. I've been driving for over 40 years, I was doing 35, I was on the way to golf one time, I was doing 34 mph, it was proved I was doing 34 mph in a 30 mph limit at 7 o'clock in the morning and I was caught by a mobile police officer. Okay, I didn't get any points on my licence, I went to one of these driving training schools, which apparently show me how, you know, how you should drive and the danger of speed and they were telling me, in fact there were about 30 – 40 people there and we were all discussing it and saying oh yes, I was doing seven miles over the limit, I was doing eight miles over the limit basically, I said I was doing four miles over the limit and they said no, you cannot get a speeding fine for doing four miles over the limit. I said it's apparently, everybody was saying it's three miles an hour plus 10%, so they won't give you a speeding fine.

The instructors were listening to this and when we started the course, the first thing they said oh, I was hearing, listening to a number of you discussing speeding fines. They said the speeding limit, if it's 30 mph, if you're doing 31 mph, you're breaking the speed limit and you will be fined. It'd be extremely unusual that you'd be fined basically, but 30 mph that's it, that's the cut-off point. It's not I was just one mile or two miles over the limit, but if I, no, I didn't get any points on my licence, but friends of mine have got three points on their licence for doing just a few miles over the limit and suddenly their insurance goes up dramatically by 30% the following year, even though the insurance company tells you that that's not going to happen, if you just have three points on your licence, nothing will happen. So what I'm saying, almost what I'm saying here on the back of this is, let's get the points system, get rid of the points system for anybody within sort of five – six miles an hour, but give a fine, but anybody at excessive speeds, the fines to be enormous. Yes, so minimum £300, £300, £400, £500. So I want you to support this motion, just basically to hopefully reduce accidents on the road. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Right. I'm here to oppose this motion and the reason why I'm here to oppose it is, I know Mark lives in Birstall. I travel from Pudsey to Wakefield more or less daily, my partner lives in Wakefield and have you actually seen the state of the M62? People have, they've cut the speed down, tightened the lanes and you're down to 50, right? Now, I've seen more accidents on that M62 since they started digging it up and reducing speed than if they had the thing flowing in the first place. So, until they get the road sorted out and the infrastructure right, I completely oppose what you're saying, because I don't feel that it's a safe environment to travel in anyway, it's absolutely outrageous. Everywhere, every city you look at is being dug up, there's roadworks everywhere, speed restrictions in place, but they're making the roads and the highways dangerous, more dangerous to put people off travelling by car anyway. So, I'm here to oppose that.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: I'm here to actually fully support this, because I think speed out there kills. I think I'm right, look at the figures, they're just unsurmountable. The faster we go, the easier it is to kill somebody. So I think excessive fines are going to slow people down. Unfortunately I don't fully agree with one of the previous speakers about the state of one road or several roads and slowing down will not cause more accidents, I don't understand that because I think slowing down will cause less accidents, but if it happens it happens. Now, if we're not willing to slow down ourselves and we want to drive faster, fine, take a fine for it, cripple yourselves financially. So, I actually support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): I'm here to oppose this motion. The reason I'm here to oppose this motion, I believe any punishment should be corrected. Being a Union Rep for as many years as I have and we deal with this all the time with different things in the workplace, smacking somebody with a hard or a fine what they cannot afford, possibly afford, is not going to correct behaviour, it's just going to make people vulnerable and angry. I believe that education through the online courses or the courses what the police offer and as I say, not the punitive route, yes, for second, third or fourth time offenders then yes, a punitive route but no, I believe a more corrective one is, would be better, so I oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: I'm going to go oppose this motion. I'm not the best example of the, you know, the driver, I was speeding, but the thing is, that's not going to prevent those accident. The accident cause by the lack of education of the road, people not using their indicators, blocking the road flow, speeding is the one of the part of it. So as Mark said, if someone's speeding, if I'm going to fine £500 or £300, that's not going to change anything. There should be a proper punishment for that or maybe prevent people like me to stop, but overall I don't think this is going to happen. So, I'm going to go oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Turner – Branch 3554: I'm going to oppose this motion. Speeding kills, just stick to the speed limit, that's all I say. Sorry.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: I'm going to try and not get emotional here, but I'm going to tell you a story. Four years ago, my husband was killed in a road traffic accident. Speed does kill and like Mark says, it's excessive speeds. We're not talking a couple of miles over the limit, we're talking, but car manufacturers now make cars go 180 mph, you don't need to go 180 mph, the speed limit is 70. So I ask you, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the Executive had a really good debate about this at the May meeting. We are looking at whether it was right to support an increase to fines when we're in a cost of living crisis and members may already be struggling. We had a discussion about the impact of the General Secretary's finances, having been caught speeding twice and what the impact that may have, the National President reminded me of that in the meeting, but we fell on the side of agreeing and asking you to support the motion on the basis, as it's already been mentioned by a couple of speakers, of the deterrent it would create for people to speed, therefore making it safer on the roads for all. So we would ask you to support the motion, on the grounds of health and safety.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply?

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: There's an old expression, if you can't do the time, don't do the crime. So basically, it feels like by opposing this is occasion you speed. The nickname, from my friends, is Miss Daisy, if you remember the old film Driving Miss Daisy. I literally toodle up and down the roads. I will, I came here, Lee was in the car with me and I toodled down the motorway 60 mph, I never break the speed limit basically, okay, I did 34 mph over a 30 mph limit but I was driving safely, there was nothing on the road, it was bright sunshine, in the middle of summer, so and very occasionally I have to overtake and it can be safer to pull yourself out of a situation, but that's my, basically. I know people, we're in a cost of living crisis, I know it can be difficult for people, it might put people in a difficult situation, but just don't speed and I'm talking about excessive speed basically and to lose somebody to that, the lady over there basically, my heart goes out to you. So, please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? You're in luck, Mark. Those against? That's carried.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

So, I'm going to give you until 10 past, but please be back ready to start at 10 past, because obviously we've still got a lot of business to get through.

[BREAK]

Okay. Everybody sit down, please. We need to start back. Okay, as you're coming in and sitting down, we've received a message from actually two people, that met at Conference and got married and have been in a relationship for a long, long time. Many people who have been to our Conference over the years will have remembered our little mighty Marilyn and obviously her other half, Geoff and they've sent a message of Solidarity and they've wished us well for our Conference and obviously we wish both Geoff and Marilyn well and obviously we wish Geoff and Marilyn well in respects as well as Marilyn's ill health and if we can have that message sent back from Conference, I'm sure they'd both appreciate it.

[APPLAUSE]

Also today, I mean as the Morning Star's got on its front page, is the anniversary of that tragedy at Grenfell, which needn't have happened and also today's the start of another round of strikes unfortunately by the junior doctors being forced to take industrial action because of the treatment by this horrific government and I think we, you know, we stand in Solidarity with the junior doctors and the BMA at this time and, you know, we call on, we call on the government to give those, to give those doctors what they're worth and if they're asking for 23%, I'll tell you, everybody who's ever used the Health Service would agree, they're worth every single penny and we stand in Solidarity and hope they get their true and just pay for the work they do in saving our lives. So, I think we send them Solidarity from the Bakers Union.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, we're back on motion 74. It felt like déjà vu for a minute.

74

Branch 580

That this Conference agrees motorised scooters need some regulations on who and where they should be ridden, they are not toys and can kill.

Sister Angela Robinson – Branch 580: That this Conference agrees motorised scooters need some regulations on who and where they should be ridden. They're not toys and they can kill and they have killed in the wrong hands. To rent one, you have to have a provisional licence or a full licence. Privately owned e-scooters should only be ridden on private land, but as we all know, that's not, that doesn't happen. Linda Davis was the first pedestrian who was struck by an e-scooter ridden by a 14 year old boy, the first person to die with an e-scooter last year. We need to do something now, before more people get injured.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? Any speakers on there, Kevin? Okay, cool.

Sister Virginiya Matinzaitė – Branch 357 (Northampton): I will support that motion, because it's very dangerous in our town. We have motorbikes, company, if I'm not mistaken and young people, driving so fast, I'm going to work on foot for 35 minutes and all the time, I have to look after my shoulder, because I scared to be hit by them and I see young people driving that scooter two, three children on that, it's must to be stopped and regulated somehow. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? No?

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee: Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. Let's start with them currently being banned from being carried on all UK railways, they are explosive. Some facts. It's fully legal to buy, sell and own an electric scooter in the UK, however, it is illegal to operate them on any public road, pavement or cycle lanes as of 25th July, 2021. With the landowner's permission, you can only ride an electric scooter on private property. As you've said, we know it happens. As of now, there is no specific law pertaining to the use of electric scooters in the UK. This is the reason they get categorised as what is called powered transporters. Therefore, under powered transporters, all the usual rules and regulations concerning powered transporters apply to electric scooters. It means that an electric scooter's owner is subject to all the same legal requirements, which include licencing, MOT, tax, registration, construction and servicing. It's important to note that previously said rules apply to privately-owned electric scooters. The laws change when it comes to a rented e-scooter, which are part of government trials in the UK. There are national scale trials, concerning scooters, which allow people to rent them and use them legally. These rented scooters are, of course, to be used according to the local rules and regulations. Riding a privately-owned electric scooter in public can have legal consequences. You may be reported to local authorities for several traffic policy violations, which can lead to your scooter being seized. Sometimes it's hard to recognise a mistake when the law is not displayed at the time of purchase. The Executive would ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 75.

75

Branch 356

That the BFAWU acknowledges that Migrant workers are often subject to discrimination in the workplace, and we should see this is an equalities issue which should be addressed when it comes to shaping our policies.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya. The BFAWU acknowledges that migrant workers are often

subject to discrimination in the workplace and we should see this as an equalities issue, which should be addressed when it comes to shaping our policies. We've often fought for equalities. We've fought strongly for the rights of women to be treated equally in the workplace. We've often fought against racism. It is commented, not by me, but by the University of Nottingham who have carried out a recent study on how migrants are being treated in this post-Covid world. Things are getting worse. It is time we did something. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, not me, a highly reputable organisation, found that migrants were, often had threats of physical or actual harm, restriction of movement, debt bondage, withholding of wages or excessive deductions, experiences of forced labour in the UK food industry, retention of passport and identity documents, threats of denunciation to the authorities. They were often deceived by the employer into debt slavery and other illegal practices. There was fear, breaches of lack of contracts, psychological harm, excessive working hours, payments below the minimum wage. They were often forced into crowded accommodation, confined to the workplace. It's not me saying this, this is reputable organisations that have carried out study after study into finding how our migrant comrades are treated.

[a mobile 'phone rings]

Oh no. You naughty boy there, John.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I think Standing Orders will want a word.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Yes. We, we must do what we are here to do, defend our comrades. Migrants are our comrades, they are our Brothers and Sisters in struggle for a fairer world, so please, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: The Chair, I forgot something I must say which Region I'm from, I always forget it. I actually am Region 3, but because I'm in the House of Lords, so I represent all Regions, so I'm a Rep all the Region. About migrant, right. I live in Wolverhampton, there are Polish now, there are Polish people, right and they work in the farms, bring the food, right and they are hard workers, right, they are not illegal, right and their wives sell the fruit cheap from, they bring it from the farms and they sell it cheap and I buy sometime bananas from there. If I go Tesco, because the doctor told me to eat not too much banana because, many bananas, because my body needs calcium because I got a problem, right and if I, when I go the shop, I get 4 – 5 lb, if I go Tesco, £1.30 - £1.50. Now, those people bring (unclear), on one hand they say we should have them during the season, because it's a cheap labour, right. Okay, if you don't want them, what about those people like me, I'm 77, I can do that, so I think they come here, they are nice people. I know some Polish people, I know, I've met them, I can speak some of their language, when I speak to them in their language, they look at me, right. They are our Brothers. At the Bakers Union, if it's fighting for the worker, we should stand by them. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? Where is Dimitri?

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton): Speaking on behalf of the EC. Comrades, there is nothing I can say that already has been spoken by our previous, our previous comrades. All I can say is that our policies are the same for everyone and it shows in everything that we do as a Union. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 76.

76

Branch 568

This Conference agrees that bus passes for pensioners can be used at any time, and not just at weekends and off-peak periods. We have many over 65s who still work or may have hospital appointments.

Brother Lee Jones – Branch 568 (Fox's, Batley): This Conference agrees that bus passes for pensioners can be used at any time, not just at weekends and off-peak periods. We have many over 65's who still choose to work and may have hospital appointments they need to attend. I had a conversation with a fellow I work with in my department, who's over the age of 65 and he's chosen to carry on working. He recently developed COPD and then suffers two bouts of hospitalising pneumonia, so he's now chosen to retire. But he has a bus pass and I had a conversation with him, how do you get to and from work?

He said to me, because I work on the night shift and our shift is 10 by 7. He said he travels on the bus to work for his

10 o'clock shift, but when he finishes work at 7, he walks home. I said, why do you do that? He said, I have a bus pass but I choose not to support the fact that I can't use it. So although he's got these ailments, he wants to, he's got no voice, but he wants to fight and he does it by walking. So I ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? No? Where's our resident pensioner?

[LAUGHTER]

We've just been talking about when the torch transfers over, it'll be Kevin you know.

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560: Here on behalf of the Executive Council. I ask you to support this motion, because as a bus pass holder, I feel fine, but I've got a ticket to ride and I should be able to use it at any time. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 77.

77

Branch 356

The BFAWU says that those affected by domestic abuse should be allowed to take paid sick leave.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Domestic abuse is something that is often never talked about. Domestic abuse is often hidden away. So far, on average, in the UK two women are murdered each week by abusive partners. By not allowing people to take sick pay, sick leave, what often happens is when people wish to leave an abusive partner, they are often trapped in a home, they are often left there, not knowing a way out, not knowing what to do. I've said, some of them, mainly women, end up being killed by their partners, by their abusers. Others end up breaking and committing suicide. It's time we give people a chance to break away from these abusive partners. I speak as a person who grew up in a house where domestic violence happened. I knew my house was different from others, but nobody ever spoke to me why this happened, nobody ever said this is wrong, I just thought there's something wrong here and nobody spoke to me about this. So please, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: I'd like to make this as quick as I can, because it's not going to be easy for me. As big as I am, hard as I am, I take on a fight when it comes my way, but as soon as a woman hits me, I can't do anything. I was brought up never to hit a woman. I think anybody that hits a woman is a coward. That's my opinion and I don't care if nobody likes it. At the end of the day, I've been in two relationships where I have been domestically abused, thrown against a radiator, stabbed and pushed around, thrown down the stairs, hit for being 10 minutes late from being in from work so I'm having an affair, etc and any abuse in any relationship, male or female, because males do suffer but suffer in silence, men. Tell people, get help. So support this motion, please. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580 (Greggs, Leeds): Please, Conference, support this motion. I 100% support this motion, I actually don't think it goes far enough. Not only should domestic victims receive sick pay, but it should also be in good faith. Employers shouldn't be asking for photographic evidence, they shouldn't be asking for police reports, which I've had someone come to me before where they wanted proof, which I think is disgusting. Employers should also be forced for it to be confidential. Someone coming forward with something like this, it's so hard for that person, so for them to come forward and speak to someone at the head of the company, or for that person to tell their supervisor, the supervisor tells the manager and then before you know it, everyone on the shop floor is talking about it. I fully support this motion, but I think companies should do a lot, lot more for individuals who come forward. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: I want to, sorry for coming again and again. This issue of abusing woman, girls, I'm very, I am very hurt about that when the women are abused, but we must know, we all know that women, without women, the house you can't run, but if we give women freedom, I'll give you a couple of examples, if it can fit here, but it will. You have heard the name of Malala Yousafzai, from Pakistan was it, was she? She was organising in support of women and she was shot and she lost one eye and I thank British people, they brought her in a special plane and she was, got a degree now in university and you must have heard Mother Teresa, she work, very hard work in India, picking up children from the roads and getting them educated and I must say, I missed something. I thank the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union for, that after 175 years

[APPLAUSE]

...they have elected my Sister General Secretary. At that time, it was a Conference in the June, I don't know who said it, but we are proud of being, electing the first General Secretary for 175 years. For 175 years, we couldn't find a lady, that means that all these ladies are unfit to run that and India picked one strong woman, Indira Gandhi. As your country, I don't care which parties they come from, you picked Margaret Thatcher, right, so if you give chance to them, right and I appeal to my Sisters and the children, my daughters, stand up, stand up against these people. Males are running this country and I want a few more on the seat, right. I'm 77, I get threats from, I do not care. Thank you very much, thank you very much all of you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (Responding on behalf of the EC): Thank you. Obviously the EC would want you to support this motion. You know, as highlighted by the speakers, it's ...

[CHILD SAYS, "that's mammy"]

Can you, shush, yes, that's mammy, sorry

[LAUGHTER]

...both women and men are affected by this issue and I think it's only right that, you know

[CHILD SPEAKING]

shush, be quiet, please

[LAUGHTER]

I'm fighting a losing battle, apologies. If, you know, if there's something that affects you physically and mentally, you should be able to take sick leave. Thank you, I'll just leave it there. Please support.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thanks, Rachel. You do a fantastic job as a mother, by the way. Obviously to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 78.

78

Branch 568

This Conference agrees that ladies reaching menopause should be treated sympathetically under the discrimination act. As this can in some cases have an extreme effect on capability, your mental, and your physical wellbeing. Time off may have to be taken, or workload assessed. This should have no detrimental effect to your record.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: That this Conference agrees that ladies reaching menopausal age should be treated sympathetically under the Discrimination Act, as this can in some cases have extreme effects on their capability, your mental and your physical wellbeing. Time off may have to be taken, or workload assessed. This should have no detrimental effect on your record. Apparently, I found out today by going to one of the courses, I think they're brilliant, or one of the fringe meetings, that it's actually been lobbied twice already, but it has been rejected by parliament. Maybe, I'm not sure why it was rejected by parliament, maybe it's too wide-spreading and they need some more, I think something that may be a little more direct, or what do you actually want from this, from this proposal? So, I'm not sure how it'll work, because I suppose they're looking at will some women use this as an excuse, which is absolutely not true. My wife started going through it sort of eight, nine years ago, she's very irritable constantly and yes, probably it's me, I know and as I've said before, I seem to irritate her constantly. I was told that it can occur for up to around 12 years plus, it can go on for the rest of your life, so I've got, basically I've got another four years of this, so I'm not looking forward to that, but we need to, I don't know if we need to be more specific with the government of how this is going to look, but something needs to be done. My workforce, on average, 40% of my workforce are over 50 surprisingly and we have around 670 staff on the shop floor, so it's a big, it's a big issue for us and ladies of a certain age do struggle, especially on the shift pattern, so please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): I'm not going to keep you here too long, because I know it's very warm in that Conference Hall, it's warm up here. I'm here to support it. I think common sense will tell you that it, menopause is like sleeping patterns, it affects temperament and it's very hormonal.

I feel that if there is blokes that are in that workplace and if we hadn't slept and had to go to work the next day, how would our temperaments be, how would our behaviours be towards each other, because I know when I've had no sleep, I'm not a very good person. So I'm here to fully support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: Chair, EC, Delegates. I'm really passionate about this. Of course I'm here to support this motion. Symptoms must be taken seriously. The debilities and effect it has on women, we need to educate workplaces and they need to do more to help women. 44% of women leave work early, or even end their working life, because of the symptoms of menopause. In Greggs, we've introduced a menopause policy and everybody has had the training, which I'm really pleased about. I hope all the rest of the workplaces take it on board. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Katarzyna Damek – Branch 515 (East Kilbride): I'm here to support this motion. See, we need to have a way to force our employers to accept the fact that not everyone is the same and not everyone is going through the changes in their body, in their lives, in the same way. So there are people who are struggling more and they cannot be the subject to the disciplinary policy based on that. Thank you very much. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Amanda Bailey – Branch 390 (Manor, Stoke): Obviously I'm here to support it. There's things you can do in your workplace. You can ask for fans, you can ask for more breaks, you can ask for thinner overalls. Speak to Health & Safety Reps, speak to Occupational Health, get them all on board and get something done for these women. There are over 100 different symptoms for perimenopause, for the actual menopause itself. There's another 100 symptoms, some ladies sail through it, don't know they've gone through it, for others it's horrendous and I mean really horrendous. You can get that mad you can want to kill people, that includes managers, whatever but yes, speaking from experience myself, mood swings are terrible. Somebody can speak to you and ask you to do something and because you haven't slept or your hormones are all out of balance, you can get angry very easily, it's just really, really bad, but there are things you can do. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Anyone online? Oh, sorry, Jules.

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Here to support this obviously, the menopause. You know, they do say that males go through it as well, but obviously ladies, it's more hormonal and it does affect how you behave and you're ratty and irritable and things that wouldn't normally bother you start niggling away and before you know it, you know, it's a much bigger problem than what it was. You know, it's all very well our management team and our health and safety team doing what they can, but some of it is governed by our customers. I work in a fresh cream environment and obviously summer time, especially temperatures like this, we like to dress lightly. You might have a thin overall, but you're having these hot sweats, the less you've got on the better and they've barred us from wearing shorts in our department. You can wear them anywhere else on site, any other department, but you can't wear them in high care. Why? Because the customer is saying no, it's a high care area, we're not allowed. We've got overalls on for God's sake, what's going to drop out my shorts? You know, I honestly can't see what the difference is.

We had a gent wearing shorts and the manager came to him and said, you've got to go home and he said why, what's the problem, I'm covered? No, you need to go home, you can't wear shorts in this department as of this date and he said, I can't afford to go home, so they sent him to the linen room to put on a pair of waterproof pants, nylon, you know, in hot temperatures and it's like, what's going on? So sometimes it's the customers that are demanding that you've got to follow these rules and regulations and Park Cake, my employer, is saying fair enough, we don't want to upset the customer, that's how it's going to be. You know, if you're not happy with it, transfer to another department. It's not the answer. You know, I'm sure women go in supermarkets, we see other people wearing shorts, you know, we're supplying those supermarkets. My lad's a mechanic, he can wear shorts in his workplace, you know, you're not telling me that that's any different than anybody else going to work. So, please support, but just bear in mind sometimes, you know, it's our customers that are saying you've got to abide by these rules and it's wrong. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: You're probably sick of seeing me again. Menopause in ladies, so eloquently put by all the ladies that have stepped up and said something. I've been on two courses now about the menopause, the one that's just been given by Watkins & Gunn was very, very informative. The fact that I found out that doctors, trained professionals, don't really know or care about the menopause. In 10 years of training, they do two hours of training, elective two hours of training.

They don't have to do it, they don't have to understand what ladies are going through, which is ridiculous. I think we should push the government to train more, let people know more and give every person in the workplace the same opportunities to get the care they need. We can't have ladies that are pushed and offered oh, you're alright love, here's a fan, you'll be okay. The natural response, not acceptable any more, so please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (Responding on behalf of the EC): Obviously the EC would ask you to support this motion. It is important that everybody has a better understanding of what exactly the menopause is

Because obviously like the previous, like speakers have said, it affects a wide range of issues, physical and mental and obviously, you know, employers don't always have sympathy or understanding themselves, so I think it's important that we support this and that it could be classed as a, under the Discrimination Act. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried unanimously. 35, what am I on about, 35? I'm on about motion 79. It is 356.

79

Branch 356

The BFAWU says that it must be a legal right for disabled people to have a space on buses.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I, on this motion I will try and be as short as possible, as Henry said to his wives. So, disabled people are part of our communities, they should have access to everything that able-bodied people should do. They should be able to use, to go to the cinema, to use transport, to go where they want, to use public transport. It is just good sense to do this. It is just a decent thing, because I believe in community and that means everyone who is part of our community is allowed to take full access, full use of all those amenities that is, that is provided to the community and that means disabled people. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton): Speaking on behalf of the EC and also supporting the motion. Now, the thing is, I'm a bus driver, I travel the bus every day, towards work and everywhere, so as soon as I get on the bus, I will have seen the signs for the disabled people, they have a space, prams and buggies as well and for the senior citizens and it is in the law, so obviously I understand these concerns to our previous speaker, but the law is there and the places for the disabled people are there. So, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 80.

80

Branch 568

This Conference agrees that you must be at least 21 before being allowed to consider a tattoo. In some cases, tattoos are done through peer pressure and regretted in later life.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Good luck with this one, Mark.

[LAUGHTER]

This Conference agrees that you must be at least 21 before being allowed to consider a tattoo or have a tattoo. In some cases, tattoos are done through peer pressure and regretted in later life. Now, I can see virtually, probably the majority of our people here, male, female, have tattoos, I don't know when you had the tattoos, but I do feel under 21 you're still lacking maturity, which maybe a decision can be made later. Now saying that, both my children, who are all grown up, had tattoos at 18, 19, my daughter and my son, neither of them regret it, my daughter probably, they're all hidden I must admit, apart from my son has a sleeve and my daughter has tattoos which are hidden underneath in other areas, but I still felt, I mean we couldn't reject it, myself and my wife, neither of us have tattoos and neither of us, our families, have tattoos, it was just the two children. Now the argument might be you can vote at 18, you can drink at 18, you're regarded as mature, you're an adult in the United Kingdom, but I think something that can be, I know it can be removed but something that really is permanent to a certain point, why not wait until you're 21 or the other option is, as you can have a tattoo from 16, with the permission of a parent, why don't we make it the permission of a parent up to 21?

But there again, lots of people leave home at 18, 19. I left home at 16, so I would be classed as mature in my own way, I would make my own decisions, but I still feel you're a little bit young, a little bit immature and it's not hard, basically, to hang on two or three years until you feel that maybe, you know, this is the right time. So please support this motion. Thank you.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, the trepidation on your face, Mark. We won't talk about the tattoo that you had, aye?

[LAUGHTER]

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

[LAUGHTER]

Secunder? Secunder? Formally seconded.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Hello. Can you hear me? Thumbs up if you can. I'm here to oppose this motion. Mark's actually given you, sorry, the previous speaker, has, or proposer even, has given you several reasons to reject it, namely you're an adult at 18, simple as. Other thing. The idea of prohibiting something does not stop it happening, yes? If you ban people from getting legal tattoos until they're 21, they'll go and get one off their mates or whatever, or indeed people that aren't adhering to the proper procedures and hygiene regulations that do actually exist. So, it's not going to stop people, it's just going to create worse bad work to be honest and that's really about it. I mean, obviously I've got one or two tattoos and I've had them all over the place, not bodily and I've had them since well before 18 and one that I actually regret, I think I was 37 when I had it and that was the ex's name on my neck and I had to cover that up. Getting older, it doesn't make you wiser necessarily, so please reject this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: I'm going to oppose this motion, from the simple fact 18 you're adult, you make your own decisions, that's it. Second thing is, if you're not happy, you can also cover the tattoo and also you can remove the tattoo and do it another one. So, please oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): It's you.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): I'm here to oppose this motion obviously. Firstly, I'd like to comment on Mr Hilton. He says he's had them all over. I've shared with Hilton and he has got them all over, he's got them in places that we didn't know had places in. I'm here to oppose it, basically because you think about the armed forces, people go into the marines, people go into the paras, people join whatever regiment, they get tattoos. We can send people to war at 18, they can die, yet we can't allow them to have a tattoo. So, it's very nanny state. Sorry, but I'm here to oppose it.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: The previous speaker just stole a little bit of my thunder about the armed forces, so I won't go there now. I was 12 year old, I went into the care system, because my mother didn't want me, etc. Anyway, so in the care system, funnily enough, (unclear) available and a needle, so I get my first tattoo, 14 years old. I do it myself, in a little locked room, with a blue light on. Don't regret it, carried on, carried on, carried on. 30-odd tattoos later on in my life, I don't regret a single one, even though there are ex's names all over my bloody body, but never mind, personal choices. So, at the end of the day, it's personal choice when you get to the age of 18, but I believe it should actually be lowered to 16, because you're allowed to smoke, you're allowed to get scratch cards, you're allowed to leave home, so why aren't you allowed to do whatever you want to your own body? So, I oppose this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Yes. I'm here to oppose this motion, simply on how would we police it? Would it be £500 for the first tattoo, if you were caught with one and then £700 for the second tattoo? Who would police it and how would it be policed? No, I'm here to oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (what was Bellshill): You can kind of guess I'm up here to oppose this motion. I've got one or two tattoos myself. I think everybody's right, it's their body, they can do what they want, at a certain age.

The previous speaker, proposer, spoke about making it 21, the parents' permission before that, other people don't have parents' permission, other people don't have parents at that age. They should be allowed to make their own decisions. I got my first tattoo when I was 18, don't regret it, this false leaf here, it was a cover-up job because I made an arse of one of my tattoos, excuse my French, but it led me to get a full sleeve, chest, back, I've got my legs done, up in my neck, don't regret any of them. It was my choice, I made that decision, I was old enough to make that decision. It shouldn't be anybody else's choice what you do to your own body. Please oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Vicky Bassett – Branch 253: A lot of my speech has been said. I had my first tattoo at 17, with my mum, that has meaning to me. Remember now, some tattoos, we have them for religions, we have them for meaning. I'm opposing.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Turner – Branch 3554: I oppose this. My wife went with one of our children and had a tattoo at the same time and they've got some really good tattoos as well. I've got five children and most of them have all got tattoos and one of them started from the age of 16 and they're good and they don't regret them. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? Okay.

Brother Muhammed Islaam – Branch 390: I want to know the medical side, opinion on this, because I don't know about tattoos which like, you know, got side effects or medical. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529: I ask you to oppose this motion. Sorry? No, sorry, no, another one

[LAUGHTER]

It's a personal choice and you can go on holiday abroad and kids are encouraged by unlicensed people to have henna tattoos, which can be actually more damaging, there's different types of henna, there's brown henna and there's black henna. If they use black henna and they go out into the sun, they can actually be burnt, their skin's burnt. These kids, some kids went round walking with scars on their arms and things like that. When they go to a tattoo shop, it is a licensed tattooist, they have a responsibility and care of duty for the people. So, I ask you to whatever, yes

[LAUGHTER]

support, or whatever, I forget.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Is there any other speakers? No? The EC's position is that, as Mark outlined, you know, all the things that an 18 year old can be expected to do, we believe it's a personal choice and we believe it should be a personal vote on whether you choose to support it or oppose it, so we've got no position on it, but Mark, you have the right of reply?

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Yes, my team says you're not going to reply to this, are you? Yes, I am.

[LAUGHTER]

What Sean's saying about the forces, etc and religious beliefs, etc, you know, a friend of mine was in the paras, he's a similar age to me now, he's nearly 60, but he was almost expected to have, he wasn't into tattoos, a tough guy basically, you didn't mess around with him, but he's nearly 60 now and he says, truthfully Mark, never into tattoos, but it was expected, I was in the paras, I had to have my para what-do-you-call-it all over my arm, didn't really want it but, you know, that's what was expected of me and I think that's, it's a lot to do with peer pressure as well. I'm not saying ban tattoos. I think tattoo artists are amazing people. I mean, some of the stuff people have shown me over the past, they're unbelievable artists, but I just think there should be some restrictions in. I do feel 18, I know the argument is you can vote, well, in America you have to be over 21 to drink, so here we have it at 18, but I still think you have some kind of immaturity at that age until you're maybe a little bit later, but it depends on the person as well. Some people are very mature at 15, 16. I went out with a young lady, basically lost her parents at 13, well, her mother at 13, she became the mother at 13 and extremely mature, so people mature at different rates, but I still think just hang back a little bit and look at what you're actually doing for the rest of your life. So, please oppose. Thank you.

[CHEERS AND LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, you can either do, you can either do as the mover said or you can do as the right of the reply mover said, it's your choice.

[LAUGHTER]

Those in favour?

[LAUGHTER]

Are you sure? Those against? That's lost.

Can I say there was a competition by Watkins & Gunn and we've got two winners. One is Ian Gregory

[APPLAUSE]

and the other one is Dawn Scott.

[APPLAUSE]

And it's the last chance to buy raffle tickets at lunch and I'll have you back in here for 1 o'clock. Thank you very much.

[LUNCH]

Oh right, okay. We are going to do the roll call first, so Region, oh no, it's not me, it's you. General Secretary, do the roll call. I do the counts.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4, thank you both. Region 5. Region 7. Online. Thank you very much.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, as they're just preparing raffle tickets, you'll have heard Frank consistently say how people he's got, plus one guest to Conference and that's Vinny. Obviously his full name is in front of me and his name is Vincetti Manose (? spelling) or whatever, I can't pronounce it, I do apologise, which is why he goes by the name of Vinny. Obviously Vinny worked at Hovis and British Bakeries for 42 years. He joined the Bakers Union in the 90's, he was a Shop Steward, then was voted in as a Branch Secretary, he did the job for 15 years. During those years, he increased the membership from 50 to 162. He also managed to get a learning centre on-site, a caravan for praying and later on that was changed to a resting room for all workers in the bakery. He was also involved in many rallies around London and he's attended many Regional meetings and Conferences too. He's joined up with Frank Loveday, campaigning for zero hour working hours, against, not for them, sorry, campaigns against the use of zero hours working, to support the McDonald's, the Burger King and the Greggs organising campaigns. He's previously been a translator for the Cubans when they came to us for a visit, we took them all over London and many bakeries around the country and the offices of the TUC.

That was a great experience for Vinny and he's very proud to say that he's a member of the Bakers Union and will be until the day he goes. During the last 15 years, he was made a trainer for teaching forklift operators, Health & Safety Co-ordinator and a Safety Organiser and also made to take care, also took care of the learning centre and he would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who helped him. I think Frank gave him some money for this next bit, I don't know how much he paid you, Vinny, to include this bit in here, but he says that Frank helped him and advised him during the last 15 years and I think he probably doubled it at this point, Frank. He says you're not just a good Official, but a very good friend as well, so and obviously he wishes everyone in the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' well and obviously says that the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union is the best Union in the country, so obviously our guest at Conference. We thank you for all the work that you did on our behalf, Vinny, whilst you were in the bakery and alongside Frank and anybody who can tolerate Frank deserves an award and I think when we was actually saying who should we invite to Conference, we said if anybody deserves it after all those years with Frank, it should be you, Vinny

[LAUGHTER].

but no, thank you and it's been a pleasure to have you as a guest at the Executive at this Conference. Well done, Vinny.

[APPLAUSE]

Is the raffle ready to go? We've got the raffle ready to go. Okay.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: So, ticket on blue for the Echo Dot is 311 – 315.

Brother Lukasz Bemka – Branch 568: (speaks in Polish)

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: That was an anti-climax, nobody said anything. 311 – 315? If you haven't, come up and get it when you've done, otherwise we're going to be here at day, aren't we. Yellow, for an Amazon gift card, 311 – 315?

[LAUGHTER]

and pink, for the other Amazon gift card, 321 – 325.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is that you?

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Which one? Yellow?

Brother Lukasz Bemka – Branch 568: Which one, yellow one?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Have you got the pink one? Oh, you haven't got it, okay. Two winners in one day. Is that the right one? Are you sure? Did you just print that one? [LAUGHTER]

Okay, well, we've still got the main one, which is blue 311 to 315.

Okay, so we are back and oh yes, yes, tell them how much we raised.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: £471 for the Strike Fund. Thank you everybody.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Motion 81.

81

Branch 356

This union should be a union for the 21st century union and therefore should promote issues surrounding the LGBT community. This includes giving training around LGBT rights at work and other issues to all our shop stewards and Full Time Officers.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Does anybody remember the 11th February this year? Brianna Ghey, murdered. A young trans girl of 16, murdered. I don't have to have the British Crime Survey in front of me to tell about the discrimination that LGBT+ people are facing. The disgrace, the tax on trans people is disgusting, a shame to this country, constantly, we know that the LGBT community are facing because of discrimination. They are facing increased mental health difficulties, they are facing to deal with this, increased substance misuse. So I am just asking for, because as we have done so many times, this is why I'm proud of this Union and I am proud to be a member alongside you, that fights against discrimination and tries to understand discrimination. This is why I say that we must again take up the standard to fight and learn about the discrimination that LGBT+ people are facing, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Right, okay.

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: Friends, comrades. I'm here to support this motion. I think a lot of work needs to be put in. Presently, I think, if you notice the attacks on the LGBT community, particularly on, I don't know if you notice on your Twitter feed being, shall I say, there's been an avalanche of anti-Pride, anti-Pride month, shall I say rhetoric. You know, this is a very, very difficult thing and people need to realise, everyone in this room, we know someone, we are related to someone, we care for someone and we love someone who is a member of that community, whether they are openly out at the minute or they will be in the future, we need to create an environment where people who have, shall I say, a wee bit of reticence about coming out and expressing who they are. I had a cousin, who was a dear friend of mine, he passed away at 56, never admitted he was gay until his mother was dying when he was 47. Rather unfortunately he died 11 years, so he actually lived 11 years of his entire life that he could actually be himself and you know what, I mean we all have sort of tried to hide who we've been in the past, whether it be your sexual preference, whether it be your politics, whether it be your ideology and it's not a nice place to be, so I would ask Conference, overwhelmingly support this motion. Our LGBT friends, our trans friends, they need our help and they need our love and they need our support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Hello, everybody. I'd ask you to support this motion, but the bit I'm really interested in is the bit that says training about issues surrounding it, because I have to say, as many of you do, I work in quite a diverse cultural workplace and unfortunately some of our colleagues are not very open to issues around this, for religious reasons, cultural reasons or other things and actually we have a situation at the minute where some members are complaining about another member that's actually going through the change and this, that and other and I think it would be quite helpful for Reps and Officers to know a bit more about it, in legal terms. Thank you. So I urge you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Freddie Velez – Branch 547: Is worrying that hate crimes are on the rise in this country on grounds of sexuality, it's very worrying not to feel safe on the streets. I think we all, I'm sure we all will support this motion.

I came to this Conference alone, my colleagues at Region 5 made me feel welcome, safe, but more important, they embraced me, they celebrate my diversity and I really appreciate that. I think we need to work together against the narratives that are weaponising the asylum seekers, the migrants, transgender people, LGBT people. I feel that this Union has changed, is more diverse, is more understand better in society. So I had a conversation with Sarah the other day, so I feel that this Union has made many progress, but we still have work to do, you know, even within my Branch I had come across with that question why we celebrate International Women's Day for example, or they question why we celebrate Pride. In a Union like this, what keep us together is that we are all humans and we are equal and we will defend that and I'm sure all the Branches will agree with me. I will leave this Conference feeling better about my Union. I will leave this Conference feeling empowered. I will leave this Conference feeling hope and above all, I will leave this Conference feeling proud of what we are doing. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the Executive for the last two years has had one of its members focus on LGBTQ+ rights and issues and this will continue with the newly-elected Executive. We have a dedicated section on our website and a number of resources that are in development on different issues our LGBTQ+ members face at work and in their communities. We've signed up to the TUC's Trade Unions for Trans Rights Network and are looking into what other Unions are doing in this area. We're not in a position to develop our own training on this issue, we don't have a huge team or people working behind the scenes on resources like other Unions have, however, should the motion pass and we hope it does, we'll approach the organisations we affiliate to, such as the TUC and the GFTU that provide training, to see what they have available and talk to other Unions about where they source their training. I know the TUC has already got some great resources on their website, including Out at Work, which is an education booklet and a workbook that can be downloaded and utilised in every Branch right here, you can do that today. As I've said on other motions and historically in other areas, such as anti-racism work, raising these issues and campaigns should come from those in our membership that identify in that community, to ensure that we are campaigning on the issues that do matter, that are important to them and that are relevant to them, not ones that are straight, white, female can only presume, because that would be wrong. This comes back to engagement. Regardless of the motion, we'll set up an LGBTQ+ network, like the others that we've got going on, that we run on a bi-monthly basis and we'll start that conversation, Freddie and we'll learn and we'll develop and we'll progress. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. That's us, motion 82.

This Conference believes that the UK state pension must be sufficient to meet the needs of a retired population who can no longer rely on secure work and occupational pensions to supplement what is one of the lowest state pensions in the world's developed economies.

The trade union movement, which represents tomorrow's pensioners, should be at the forefront of a campaign to provide a better state pension. While we continue the fight to defend and improve workplace pensions, we must unite with other union organisations and the National Pensioners Convention to fight a vigorous campaign for a Living State Pension.

The basic state pension should be set at 70% of the living wage (outside London rate) and above the official poverty level. This is currently £242.55 a week in 2022. This should be paid to all men and women, regardless of their National Insurance contributions.

Every year the state pension should rise in line with the best of earnings, the Consumer Price Index, the Retail Price Index, or 2.5%.

Solidarity with the National Pensioners' Convention!

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, as part of the Executive, ensuring all aspects of our membership has a voice and our Union's support, we've engaged more over the last few months of the National Pensioners Convention. We've affiliated for a number of years, but we've kind of engaged more with it now and the work that they are doing. The motion is highlighting just how poor our basic State Pension is. I'm sure we all know people in our workplaces that have stayed on at work long past retirement age, not because they need a routine, but because they literally can't afford to retire.

They have to survive on the measly State Pension, which is the lowest in the world's developed economies and that's impacted by National Insurance contributions, which typically hits women more than men. Conference, we ask you to support us working with organisations such as the National Pensioners Convention and others, to help campaign for a living State Pension, just as we campaigned for a £15 per hour minimum wage to help workers live and not survive. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It's formally seconded. Speakers?

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Yes, I oppose this motion. Over a period, National Insurance, you will contribute probably around £30,000 into your National Insurance contributions over a lifetime. You will probably, I mean we've got an ageing population now, which probably lives far longer than years and years ago, so it's being able to afford this. You will probably, if you live 30 years through your pension age, you'll probably have to take back around about, or you will take back around £300,000+. Where does this money come from? It comes from contributions. There aren't enough contributions in place to actually pay for this. What I think we should be doing instead is subsidising. So, as I say, free public transport, TV licence, council tax should be subsidised, everything. So instead of giving more money, let's allow the pensioner to live without paying more money, so they pay less money. I don't think we can afford, I don't think the government or we as taxpayers, can afford to do this. I mean, even in France, apparently they went on strike because they wanted to put the pensionable age up to 64 from 62, or whatever it was and I can understand that the government would be having issues with that, because people are living longer and it's being able to afford that as well, so I can understand why the French wanted to do that.

We know how militant the French are basically, they do strike on numerous, far more than we do and very good from what they get back, but I do think it's unaffordable, I think we should be looking at other ways and subsidising pensioners. I feel if you've worked all your life and contributed into the system all your life, it's not about and I think you should, I think you should be encouraged to save as well, a little bit away each week, I know you may say well, I can't afford to do that, but it doesn't take much to just put the odd pound away each week into a separate pension scheme. I've had a pension, I was forced into, well, forced into a pension, 18 years old, I started working, well, I started working at 16 actually, left school, starting working, my parents said right, you go out and get a pension, so I just walked into the first bank, Trustees Savings Bank, I said, do you do pensions?, yes, we do, will you need pension advice? and I said no, just do me a pension. I've had a pension now, I'm nearly 60, had a pension for all those years and it's surprising, I put so little, just the tiny amount of money in that pension from 18 years old and it has grown dramatically, so I have that on top of my State Pension and added that together, hopefully I will have a reasonable retirement, I don't know when that will be, hopefully very soon, but that's why I oppose this motion. Thank you.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Sister Karen Plasom – Branch 356: Don't get me started. In two weeks, I will be officially old, I will be a pensioner. My pension, I will get £800 a month and personal pensions, I'll get £300 a month. My rent is £600 a month. My rates are £200 a month. I can't get any help, because I've got a bit of a pension. Don't get me started. I can't have a TV licence until I'm 85. I can't have any help whatsoever. No, you're totally wrong. The previous speaker is totally wrong. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Um, as that lady says, the previous speaker, no. We can afford jumbo jets for other countries, we can afford politicians' perks, whatever else, but we can't afford to pay pensioners a decent amount of money to live. It's simple as that. Do they owe us a living? Course they fucking do.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: I don't know how I could put it even more eloquently than my comrades. Karen said it. I think that was fantastic and pulled at my heart strings, you know. I am annoyed when I hear, when I hear oh, we'd like to do this, we'd like to do, you know, look after our pensioners, we'd like to give our pensioners a decent pension. Oh, we can't afford it. We can afford like to bail out the banks when they crashed, billions, it's probably coming up to the trillions. If it was a banker wanting his bonus, I'm sure they'd be like oh, we must give the banker his bonus, but a pensioner and if I say this, please, you want to know how bad it is for our pensioners? Read some of the reports from Help the Aged, the Joseph Rowntree Federation, the Trussell Trust and you're living, when pensioners are afraid to turn on the heating, they go to the library, they go to the library to keep warm during the day. This is the 5th richest country in the world

[APPLAUSE]

nd what are we doing? We're saying yes, thank you for all the work you've put in, but now you're old, go away please, we can't, we don't expect you, we'll toss you away, we'll toss you away on the scrap heap. We can afford to bail out the banks, we can afford to give our pensioners a decent standard of living, after all they have given us. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: I'm here to support this motion and as Douggie actually said, we're supposed to, allegedly the 5th richest country in the world, is that right? I'm quite unsure about that, because if we were, then all our pensioners would be like Spain, Germany, France and quite a few more countries around the Europe, yes, which are all on over £400 a week pensions. So I'll just say, please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Freddie Velez – Branch 547: Chair and comrades. I wasn't going to speak on this, it mentions pensioners. I'm a pensioner, my wife is a pensioner, right and my wife she has had heart attack several times and we had to put central heating every, all night, right and to keep her warm. My last bill was £1300, right. I am using £15, £14, so it went up to £1300 and then I started paying £50, then I had a warning letter. Unless I pay the rest, we are going to put meter in your house and I settled with them that I will pay £100 every week out of my pension and now they gone quiet, now the weather gone, but that is coming down. Now talking about the library, my previous speaker, I got a library just behind my, it's a nice area, a few years back I got some photographs, I'll tell you after, so I, the people approached me, I go to the library every day, I read books, sit there and there was old people there, right. Library was going to be closed, right, it was the Labour Council and they said we have to close the library because we have got no funds, so I, because I go to the library, I've seen people, older age, walking hardly and it was a meeting place for them and they approached me, Mahinder, do something. I said, alright, okay, so I organised a petition of 1500 people of that area, right, so they closed several bakeries and then as a petitioner, I was called to the meeting, right and before I went to the meeting, because I was invited to speak on behalf of them and I took the petition with me and I said look, Labour Council, right, it's not just the library, it's a meeting place for those old people. If you close the bakery, library, you'll be killing those elderly people, right and one of my other colleagues, English man, he said to the head of the library, he was actually a nice Christian, Indian and he said something stupid and they asked me.

I was told by the council leader, Mahinder control them, I said I can't, it's your fault. So then the mayor at that time, first Asian Christian, a gentleman, a friend of mine, very polite person, right, he took me out, he said, Mahinder, I can't say now, but I will make sure your library will remain open, right, the library open, but there was a Labour councillor of the area, right and I went to his home before I start the petition, he was very thick person. I said, can you help us, what can I do, I said, please lead us, I got the petition and he said, I can't do anything. I said, I will do something for you and he didn't know what was that. I said, I have organised this petition, I will win it, right, I am determined to win, I will do something for you, right and that next election I will go house to house and make sure you lose your seat, right and election came, people followed me, we voted him out and brought a Tory council in, right and I didn't know where he lived, if somebody lives in Wolverhampton, my friend lives there, Venta Park? I saw him gardening. I said oh, I recognise you, I did a great service to you, now you've got plenty of work, plenty of time to do your gardening, right and he's doing gardening, right. I used to be Labour, I'm a Marxist, Trotsky, Karl Marx, everything, right, Abraham Lincoln and all that, right and I now don't, I never became a paying member of the Labour Party, but everybody know I was sticking with Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn. I was invited by Jim Callaghan in Wolverhampton, right, I was invited to lunch, right and I was advised on ethnic and racial issues for three years and I was also

[APPLAUSE]

I was also, let me, I was also EC member of Wolverhampton Council for three years, Executive Member and then something, nice story. There was a

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Mahinder, can we stick to the motion.

Brother Freddie Velez – Branch 547: racial equality.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We've got to let all of the other speakers get on.

Brother Freddie Velez – Branch 547: Oh, sorry.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I'm running out of time. Don't forget, we finish at 11 o'clock.

Brother Freddie Velez – Branch 547: Anyway, I've done enough, right, I've done enough. Thank you very much, thank you very much.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Look around the room, not everybody here’s young, not everybody is quite that old yet, we might have one or two, but we’re the ones that made this nation great, apparently and we’re going to keep this nation great, but excuse my language, I don’t care if it costs me, fuck ‘em.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, no, no.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: We are not going to accept the fact that we, when we get to that age, are going to be not given what we deserve. We should be getting this money. Like the opposition in the room said, subsidise them as well. Yes, we should get the subsidisations, we should get the free bus passes, the TV licences and everything else, but at the end of the day, we need the money too. So, support this motion please.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can you go to Standing Orders.

[APPLAUSE]

No need to swear, honestly, we don’t want to go down that road, please. Any other speakers? Okay. We’re not doing the right to reply. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Motion 83, Sean.

83

Branch 558

That this Conference agrees that the success of last year’s format of class room education is to carrying on for future conferences.

Educating delegates and equipping them with the knowledge and know-how of how to go about their business in the correct manner.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Got my Agenda. That this Conference agrees that the success of last year’s format of classrooms for education is carried forward. The sun’s that bright here, I can’t see. Right. I do apologise. That this Conference agrees that the success of last year’s format of classrooms for education is carried on for future Conferences. Educating Delegates and supplying them with the knowledge and know-how of how to go about their business in the correct manner. Basically, I mean, I get it’s very warm down there and I get it on the last day, people want to make their point, but I believe that sometimes at Conference, people tend to nod off and in classrooms you get to learn more about what you’re about in the first place.

I mean, I’ll give an example of fire and rehire. I did that with Thompsons last year and I went with my comrade, Dave Suddards and we thought that was absolutely fantastic, you know, the education we got from that was amazing. So, therefore, going back to your workplace, it equipped me to deal with the site restructure, what they were trying on and when I pointed out we were in a classroom, talking to the young Solicitors, it made them think again. So, I’d like you to support this motion on the basis of education is king. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): I’m obviously here to second this motion. At last year’s Conference, I again, along with Sean, I was very sceptical about the classroom idea, but I learnt a lot, I thought it was great and like Sean says, it gave us some ammo to go back and hammer them with back at work. I’m sure other people did too. This year, unfortunately, I’m not allowed to be at Conference, so I’m doing it via Zoom, so I haven’t attended any other courses, so I’ll leave it to you, who have attended the courses, to say whether you found it valuable or not and hopefully vote for it and keep it on. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: I’m going to support this motion because, as we already see, the changes done for the Conference is significant. We spoke about this last year and just before the Conference, on the Regional Council, a lot of folks was very, very sceptical about the format. I’m quite used to this format, because the majority of the Conference organised in Scotland on very similar formats, so you have time for the debate or time for the speakers and during those times, you also have the workshops and I think it’s quite important for us, as a Union, that all the Delegates can use their time on a Conference to learn something and also to go back to their Branches and share the knowledge or the information that they’ve got, so please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): I’m here to support this motion. I, like the previous speaker, was sceptical, but thought it was fantastic. I’d like to take it a bit further and say can we all, if it’s going to be a factor that we have virtual colleagues every year, we extend it to those as well. The classrooms were fantastic. Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Brother Jonathan Kaye – Branch 575: Just following on from the last speaker, I completely agree with trying to do it online next time for all those that are on, joining the Conference online.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? General Sec.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, I was personally chuffed to see this motion put in the list this year and want to thank Sean and Branch 558 for putting it forwards. I know, as has been alluded to prior to Conference last year, when we made the changes to run it this way, it's fair to say there was some apprehension about such significant changes to our Conference would be run. It's important, whenever we're together, we utilise the opportunity to upskill, inform and train Delegates in the areas of our Trade Union, from preparing meetings with management that we ran last year, to keeping up-to-date with employment law and understanding the different benefits for members such as pensions and financial support from Lighthouse to the Credit Union, which organisations that we support and why, like Palestine Solidarity and Stand Up To Racism. Understanding Solidarity and the various ways of actively showing it and thinking outside of the box, thanks to Bianca at the Ron Todd Foundation, or just different ways of organising. The opportunities for fringe meetings are endless and it gives us the opportunity to try new things, like the leadership sessions that we ran last year or the diversity ones that we've done this year. So the Executive would ask Conference to support this motion. Let's continue to utilise Conference, continue our education and encourage Delegates to take their new or refreshed knowledge back to your Branches, so we get as much out of it as possible.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 84.

84

Branch 390

This Conference believes that learning is a vital tool in improving our members' lives. As such we will instruct our Parliamentary Group to lobby for the reintroduction of the Union Learning Fund which was closed by the conservative government in 2021

Sister Amanda Bailey – Branch 390 (President, Manor, Stoke): Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. Motion 84. Basically it carries on from the last one. That this Conference believes that learning is a vital tool in improving our members' lives. As such, we will instruct our Parliamentary Group to lobby for the reintroduction of the Union Learning Fund, which was closed by the Tory government in 2021. As you all know, learning has been mentioned a few times this week. It's a huge part of being in any Union. How can you help someone if you haven't got the right tools, the right information? As has also been mentioned during this Conference, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland do still have the Union Learning Services, so the Tory government needs to stop being racist and reintroduce this most important Learning Fund. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded.

Brother Duggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I urge you to support this motion. Do you know what, I love learning, I love learning stuff and I look at the great, great work that Unionlearn did and it was fantastic, you know. It's one of the things, not only I got to meet my great comrade, Karen Plasom, in my Branch and the hard work that she did was amazing, absolutely amazing and deserves a round of applause.

[APPLAUSE]

I couldn't believe it that they took this away, something that has given so much to so many people. Whether it comes from the ESOL classes that my migrant comrades were able to take because of Unionlearn, or it comes to giving health and safety, it comes to giving people maths lessons, it comes to giving everything, it's what is best and they had to take it away because it gave us something, it gave us something special and they had to take it away, because it empowered us, it made us better. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Here to support this motion. If it wasn't for the Unionlearn, how many members would have not learned their English or their maths, yes? There's thousands, thousands, but this Tory government doesn't want us to learn. They say we don't need any education, yes, but we do, yes, everybody needs education.

They just want to keep us down, keep us under the thumb, yes, but knowledge is power and if we get that, we want learning back, yes and as soon as we do, the sooner we can get learning again. Please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): The Unionlearn’s done a lot to me, things like going to Barnsley College, when we had it. For me, I’m dyslexic. When I left school, I left school with no exams, no nothing and once, before I met the Union, I never had the confidence to do things like this now and all that and when I went to Barnsley College when we did have it, I got the confidence to go up there and they helped me, because being dyslexic I was hiding myself in a little box all the time and now by going to these courses, that’s helped me out a lot, because there’s a lot of people like me that’s dyslexic and they do hide away and I still struggle, but it’s people like you guys that helped me, help me pull myself forward, so please support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohammed Islam (? spelling) – Branch 390 (Stoke): Please support this motion because myself, I did English Level 1. Our Branch Secretary, Michael Blundred, set up classes for us and he did everything with the hard work, his commitment and I was going to do the maths and the IT course but the Tory Party pulled the funds, so all I’m asking, because they pulled out, we’re going to pass this motion hopefully, but the thing is, through parliament is possible because I did ask the President, Labour Party, but what is the alternative to that? It’s okay passing motions here, but if we cannot, the power, parliament, what’s the point? So, please support this motion please. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Brother John Owens – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool - EC Member): Before I start, firstly I would like to apologise to anyone who has been hurt, offended or upset by my adding song titles to motions and also replies from the EC. It was not meant to offend anyone or mimic anyone’s motions, even mine, just a bit of Scouse humour and while I realise that all motions are serious, I would never put them into the motions that we’ve had today, the likes of mental health, domestic abuse, so please forgive me.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay. Speaking on behalf of the EC, who ask you to support this. We feel the axing of the Unionlearn Fund is yet another attack by this government to attack the Union movement and its members, to stifle us. The ULF was there to support workers to develop at work and reskill for new opportunities to improve their literary and English skills, to give them confidence. The ULF has a fantastic record in supporting some of the most disadvantaged groups back in the classroom and giving them new skills. John Fox, who covered our Region, was always there for us. He would say call me anytime for help and advice and he was always in our canteen at Liverpool. John and his colleagues worked tirelessly to help and support people and I’d like to take this opportunity to thank them all. The government’s decision to axe this funding was sheer madness. As this is my last motion and I won’t be speaking again today and I haven’t had an opportunity to say this, but I’d just like to say, justice for the 97 and don’t buy The Sun.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. And I nearly confused myself, but I remembered just in time, it’s motion 85. No, no, that’s what I said, I nearly confused myself. I remembered just in time. It was a printing mistake in the booklet, so if you look at the Standing Orders Report, it said 85 stands and 86 is withdrawn.

85

Branch 500

That this Conference offers bespoke support to branch reps, FTOs and learning organisers who find themselves dealing with members who confide in them with examples of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, attempted suicide and other such examples of members dealing with desperate circumstances. It is not enough to signpost members to the Police to deal with, given that they have recently been in the news for employing people who have been the perpetrators of such acts.

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: Moving the motion 85. Mr President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates. That this Conference offers bespoke support for, to the Branch Reps, FTOs, Learning Organisers who find themselves dealing with the members who confide in them with the example of the domestic abuse, sexual abuse, attempted suicide and others such as example of the members dealing with desperate circumstances. It is not enough to signpost members to the police to deal with, given they have recently been in the news for them employing people who have been the perpetrators of such act.

The reason why I put this motion that very often as people who deal with the people, our members, if it's going to be Reps, going to be FTOs, people like me who are employed by the Union, very often have to deal with the situation that very often some of our people never want to be where you have a 'phone call during the night, that someone tried to commit suicide. I had a conversation with a young lassie approached to me, aged 21 and she said that she'd been sexually abused by her dad, she lived with her uncle who was abusing her sexually, so this is the moment when actually when need also support, because when we go on any meetings with employers and there is any mental health issues involved, we always push the company to give them a special helpline or any method of support, but I expect the same for us from the Union, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Alright, okay.

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: It is an honour for me to second this here with Rafa. As you know, I've spoken about it quite often, over the last week, I've spoken to people individually, I've spoken in this room here. I went through a tough time myself last year and you know what, a lot of it stemmed from the fact that I was dealing with other people's problems when I wasn't really dealing with my own. Now, in that intermittent time between my full-time Official, Laura, who has given me great support, who let me step back for about nine months, for me to find my feet, to go through my counselling, it was of a great help to me. I'm here to speak on behalf of like Rafa and like Laura and the FTOs, Learning Reps, you know, we go to you, we ask you for advice, we pass on information to you, but what you guys need, you need that support mechanism that we need and I call on this Union here that these guys here, we all put in a good shift, but these guys put in a wee bit extra, I think personally.

They've helped me, they're the guys you go to, the guys who take your 'phone call during the night, they're the guys who sit in a quiet room you can have a cry with, tell them what it is and no matter what you tell these guys here, they take it to the grave and for someone like me and for basically the life that I've sort of had and come to my 60th year to deal with it, to have people around you like Laura, to have people around you like Rafa and all these FTOs and all these learning guys, all these go-to people, right, I think the Union should set in place something to help these guys, because they're dealing with the trauma the same way that we're dealing with our own trauma and we're dealing with our members' trauma. People come and tell you stuff and the hardest thing about it is, they tell you stuff that you've experienced yourself, but you can offset that by dealing with their problem, but there comes a stage, there comes a stage when you become, it just becomes overbearing and you can't deal with it and the point is, if you can't deal with it in yourself, you can't function properly, you can't do your job properly, you doubt yourself, you second-guess yourself, you have a load of problems, so I call on our Union, because the FTOs help us, I call on our Union to help all the FTOs and all the ULRs and give them support and give them the backup they need. Support this motion, Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Yes. I'd like to obviously support this motion. Just from a personal point of view, just before Christmas a good friend and comrade, Andy Whiting, one of my despatch guys, killed himself in dreadful circumstances and it had a big effect across the factory, a lot of people were stressed, they had days off, this, that and the other, arranging funeral cover. I ended up doing disciplinary, because three months afterwards, trying to deal with people that were in bits and were being disciplined by the company for having a day off or not being able to fulfil their job because they were distraught and I'll tell you what, after three months at that, I was ready for topping myself, I was absolutely mentally destroyed. I'm not blaming anybody but yes, I'd love to see a better support for that, so please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, this is a significant motion. We've looked at, over the last few years, avenues for Reps to be able to offload to a professional after dealing with issues like this. We've always said our Reps aren't counsellors, but it's hard not to take on the pain and the trauma of a member who's gone through domestic violence or sexual abuse or attempted suicide. Unfortunately we've not found a service that, you know, can give us any guarantees that they will be able to help with that. Should this motion pass though and we really hope that it does, we'll reach out to one of our sister Unions who affiliate to the GFTU, the Psychotherapists and Counsellors Union, to see what they suggest and talk to other Unions about what they provide to their Reps and Branches and where they source it. One of the benefits of our new Sex Worker members in Branch 600 is the contacts and the organisational knowledge that they've already developed, which will support with some areas that I've just mentioned. I've got to stress though the importance of having regular Reps' meetings at Branches.

Just an hour a month, just to check in with each other, make sure you're okay. Have a Reps' only WhatsApp Group, so you can reach out to each other if cases are particularly tough and know, like Jake's just said, you always have your FTOs at the end of the 'phone who, we do have, we will work with and talk to, but have got an avenue called Canada Life, where they can reach out for support, because it's not a 9 to 5 job being an Official, it's a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week a lot of the time. Conference, too many of our members will go through domestic abuse, sexual abuse, attempt suicide because they are rife in our communities and whilst there are organisations out there like Andy's Man Club that we spoke about this week, Women Against Rape who we've worked with over the last few years, we should be signposting members to them for professional support, but we know members are more likely to come to you on-site as their Reps, because they'll trust you more than they'll trust management, so we know as an EC we've got to have measures in place to support you in supporting our members, so we ask that you support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 87.

87

Branch 558

That this Conference agrees that all trade unions take up the fight against corrupt, sleazy politicians and hold them accountable in courts of law if found guilty of any charge. Sending out a message that they are to be punished for abusing their position whilst stealing goodwill from the democratic system that put them there

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): That this Conference agrees that all Trade Unions take up the fight against corrupt sleazy politicians and hold them accountable in courts of law if found guilty of any charge. Sending out a message that they will have to be punished for abusing their position whilst stealing goodwill from the democratic system that first put them there. What I mean by that, basically I mean, we're not just talking about what's going on in the Houses of Parliament and the nation being in lockdown and people having parties and basically just making a mockery of what it was all about. If you go back to 2010, the expenses exposed by the media. Now there were politicians raping it left, right and centre, pardon my language, I won't say rape, exploiting it left, right and centre. They're abusing their positions, abusing their constituents by actually freelancing around, taking money for doing nothing and then not showing any shame in it. There was a Labour MP, funnily enough, called Harry Cohen. My sister worked for him and she was on to him very early about his expenses, because she said he was stealing from his constituents and she was a member of the Labour Party and she reported it further up the chain of command. So I think, as a Trade Union, we should be challenging this and sending out a message that we will not tolerate the level of abuse that these people have been up to. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Yes. Here obviously to second this motion. I don't know if you all watched the news last night, with Mr (unclear) at court down in Miami. Whether you like him or not and I don't, but what a great sight to see, a politician in court. If you nick it, if you misbehave, you're in court, you're in papers, you get disgraced, you get your life ruined. Well I'll tell you what, these people, politicians of all shades, they've been ruining people's lives, nicking money and misbehaving for years and I want to see them in court, I want to see them get locked up basically. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Speakers? No?

Conference, the Executive would ask you to oppose the motion. If the wording had gone that this Conference agrees that all Trade Unions take up the fight against corrupt sleazy politicians and ended there, we would have supported the motion. But the fact that it's suggesting that we go to a court of law, would mean incurring significant costs to fight that case and knowing politicians, they would change the law to make it impossible for us to do it anyway. We know how these governments and currently oppositions work. They act in their own interests and not that of the people. So we could waste an awful lot of money, members' money, on trying to go through a court system to enable us to be able to prosecute corrupt and sleazy politicians and by the way, there's far too many of them, but we would ask you to oppose, because if you pass it, we won't be able to do anything with it, because I can't imagine you'd want us to start taking a court case out against Boris Johnson for example or a court case out because there's an allegation in Scotland against Nicola Sturgeon, you know, or a court case out against, you know, well not Trump because obviously he's an American, but you know, the other number of politicians that have recently been done for corruption, so it's a shame you went any further, if you'd have stayed with that first sentence we would have been able to support you, but unfortunately we'd have to ask Conference to oppose. You do have the right of reply, Sean.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Yes, I think I will reply to that. Yes, I get what you're saying, Ian, yes, I completely get what you're saying, but I think it's a statement isn't it. I mean, we've seen recently what this motion's about and I get, I've got a common sense approach, I get what you're saying because you'd be there all day firing in court cases against loads of them, but I think it's exposing what they're about here and I think if you look at it, the motion itself, it's saying yes, you know, it's basically saying I don't like what I see and I get, yes, I get what you're saying yes, it should be opposed for the fact that there's going to be a massive cost to this and you'd be there all day chasing them around the place, but hopefully it's opening up people's opinions on these politicians that are doing this, it's never backing the Houses of Parliament again, it's absolutely ridiculous what's going on. If we did it in our workplaces, we'd be under suspension, we'd be dragged in standing tall in front of the man and how they're getting away with this is absolutely diabolical. So I do understand what you're saying, yes

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You can remit it, Sean, if you want.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): No, I won't, because there's a cost to it. It's more a statement. I think, you know, there's a massive cost to this

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): and also you'd be tied down, chasing these people about all day. There's that many of them.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, I'll go to the vote then.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): There's that many of them.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Oppose it then.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes. Those in favour? Those against? That's lost. What time is it? 10 past 2. There's 12 motions left. Okay. 90. Oh no wonder, it's you, isn't it, that's why you're shouting 90 at me. You'd made all your way here, hadn't you, yes?

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Mr President, Chair, EC, Conference. That this Conference agrees to campaign for and work with all interested parties to prevent or outlaw any party in government from changing their leader for their own convenience, without calling for a general election. Over the last 13 years, we've had the Tory government and we've had four Tory prime ministers. All they've done, they've not gone to election, they've not been elected, they've just changed them for their own convenience, because something was going wrong, so they changed the prime minister. They've taken the fall for it and they think they've swept it under the carpet. This is no good for us, yes, it should be, if you want to change your leader, get them elected, not like appointed. There's other things that get appointed, but and everything should be democratically elected. So, please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Yes, I oppose this motion. I just wondered if this motion would have been put in if the Labour Party had been in? I know it's Conservative and things have happened there, but let's say five years ago Jeremy got in, Jeremy Corbyn and then there was the anti-semitism issue, which he may have been suspended on, then we had to put the Vice in, or whatever or we put another, but it would be Labour and their policies, which we agreed with as a Union at the time, so I'm just wondering that's the only reason, if it was, if Labour were in now and the same thing was happening, but we agreed with the policies of Labour, would we be saying the same thing? So, I oppose this motion. I think, yes, I think that there are occasions we do actually vote for the Party, yes, we vote for the person but we vote for the Party and its policies and occasionally things can happen with that prime minister and they may have to change. Unusual it's happened this time on so many occasions, but I think that's the reason. So, please oppose this motion. Thank you.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh Mark, Mark, can I give you, can I give you a clarification?

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: I did see, I did see that little bit at the bottom there.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: The word says any.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Yes, yes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any Party.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568: Yes, any Party, yes, but that’s what I’m saying, I just wondered if it would have been in here and could, this is the last time I’m going to get up. I just want to say, hopefully you’ll understand a different point of view basically and thank you for being kind [LAUGHTER].

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580 (Greggs, Leeds): I support this motion. The current prime minister, nobody voted for, no-one. The general public didn’t vote and the Conservatives didn’t vote for him, he was appointed, which is disgusting. So I support this motion and I think it should go further, where the general public should have more say on who leads their Party. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford): Yes, I’m here to support the motion but also to make people aware, we don’t or we should not be voting for a leader, we vote for the manifesto, that is how these politicians are allowed to change, because they will turn round and say their manifesto has not changed. We don’t actually vote for their leader. I know it appears that we do, but when anybody’s voting, they should look at the manifesto first. That’s all I want to say. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? No? Okay.

Brother Tony Shukla – Branch 139: Afternoon, Delegates. General Secretary, National President and EC. First-time speaker.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaking on behalf of the EC, we would ask you to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply? Yes.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: With the right to reply. Yes, on this, I can’t remember who was the, who actually won the Tory Party first, it’s that long ago, but they’ve had three, three MPs after it, none of them have been elected. There’s only one of them that was elected, was that Cameron? I think it was. 2019, yes, but that was just on a slogan, but you’ve had Truss, you’ve got Sunak now, was there one more?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, there’s probably going to be another one, but we don’t know when.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Yes, but we don’t know when. May, Theresa May, no she was before Boris.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Let’s not debate how many prime ministers, we’ll never get it right.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Yes, but we shouldn’t have to keep doing this and they keep going over the same thing and it’s not working, yes, what they’re actually doing, so please support this motion. It’s, if it’s Labour, yes and we all know what Starmer’s like, you know, he’s gone back on, I’d do it with him as well, yes. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Composite 5. I think this is you, Doug.

Composite 5

The BFAWU is committed to giving support for the working class and indigenous peoples of Latin America and their unions, furthermore, the BFAWU should join in campaigning for the defence of peace, human rights and social justice in Columbia

Original motions: 91 and 93 [Both Branch 356]

Brother Duggie Johnson – District Branch 356: The BFAWU is committed to support for the working class and indigenous peoples of Latin America and their Unions, furthermore the BFAWU should join in campaigning for the defence of peace, human rights and social justice in Columbia. Does anybody here know what the Monroe Doctrine is? Just a point of view. Anybody put up their hands? No. Kevin, thank you, shake your hand. The Monroe Doctrine was issued by the US President, James Monroe, in I think about 1826, somewhere around there, I haven’t got the correct date, but in it, it said within the western hemisphere, the United States had control of everything, they were the power. Since that day, when it was declared, constantly the United States has overthrown governments, had instituted dictatorships such as General Pinochet, has had nuns murdered in El Salvador, Archbishop Óscar Romero murdered in El Salvador while performing mass, has instituted, been convicted.

The only government convicted in the International Court of Justice for basically international terrorism was the United States and the United States was convicted for international terrorism against the country of Nicaragua in the 1980's. I could go on and on and on about this motion, bearing in mind if you are a Trade Unionist in Columbia you, despite the new Columbian government who are a left-wing government and we salute their bravery, if you are a Trade Unionist in Columbia, you are more than likely going to get a bullet in your head from a right-wing paramilitary. This is, this motion shows our international colours, our international colours of Solidarity and say we will have a better world for all its peoples. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Seconder? Seconder? Oh, formally seconded, right, okay, cheers. Oh right, you're going to second it now. Okay.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Sorry for coming again.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just remember

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Now we are coming on international affairs. Was it yesterday or the day before, a lady came from, yes, right, I spoke to her, right, we have exchanged addresses and I will be attending their marches. They are brave people, fighting for their rights and this lady was a bit emotional. I said, I told her about my history, I am fighting single handed for the people of India, because those untouchables have, has not got any capable person to speak, I'm not capable but because I am suffering, my people are suffering, millions of people, millions of people. So I have exchanged addresses, she will ring me and I will, she said we will have a protest march, we will invite you and we will pay your expenses. No, I will come with my own money, right. Wherever people are fighting against Imperialism, we must stand with them. If we are human being, if we are a Trade Union and my Union, I thank them, because sometimes I am out of order, I say things very rude, I can't help myself, because I am one of the sufferers, but it's Britain who gave me this until the last day and even if I go, when I go other side, upstairs, where so-called God is sitting, I will have a go at him. All your children are being treated and you're sitting there, no way. So please support real people, Ukrainians, they are fighters, fighting for their rights and good luck, I'm going to keep and I am standing with you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton): Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council. Executive Council asks you to support this motion, that's the first part. The second part is like my predecessor comrade said that we should giving support for working class and the indigenous people of Latin America, we already do that. We got Nicaragua Solidarity campaign, Cuba Solidarity campaign, Venezuela, Cuba, Solidarity campaign. Also, we have the Columbia Solidarity campaign as well, so we work intense, we're working intense on these campaigns. Also, if you saw, there was, we had a workshop of the Nicaraguan, Nicaragua Solidarity campaign this week and we have the Nicaraguan Ambassador having a speech here, so all I'm asking you, just support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Okay, it's 25 past, so let's have you back at 5, 10, 15, quarter to, quarter to. Yes, 2.45.

[BREAK]

Okay, let's get back to the Agenda then and I believe we're on 92, which is 558. Can we make sure we've settled down, we've started Conference again. Thank you very much.

That this Conference agrees to challenge the organised gangs that are responsible for so many deaths of innocent people, whilst racketeering the English Channel

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): That this Conference agrees to challenge the organised gangs that are responsible for many deaths of innocent people whilst racketeering the English Channel. So what do I mean by that? It does exactly as it says on the tin, it's supply and demand. If you target the gangs, you don't get deaths in the Channel. You stop that market, you don't get deaths in the Channel. You go after the gangs, you don't get deaths. If they were going after drug gangs, there'd be publicised seizures all over the news. I've not seen one of the criminal gangs being targeted by this government, which is a concern. So therefore, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is Mark seconding it? Okay. Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? Any speakers? No? VP.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: Afternoon, Conference. We're asking you to oppose the motion, only on the concept of Sean didn't say who will have to challenge these people. We totally agree on the concept here, but how do we charge them? Do we give them all a beating? That's a good idea, but who are they? And we're all not getting any younger for that beating stuff, I mean [LAUGHTER], so he doesn't say who, he does mention the government when he is speaking, but it's not in the motion and that's why we'd oppose it. So, please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, as Kevin sits down, he's going to bring you back in for your right of reply, Sean.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Yes, I get it, I get it, yes. The wording ain't right. I mean, I'm not asking for (unclear) looking at all these people in balaclavas, so the wording ain't right, but yes

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I'm pleased.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): the wording ain't right, so I can see why it's being opposed and I'll withdraw it, okay?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, cheers, so he's withdrawn it, okay. 94, I believe. Yes, can you quieten down please, we can hear a lot of noise going on. That means please stop talking whilst we've got somebody up ready to move a motion. Thank you very much.

94

Branch 356

That this Conference says that those who are fleeing war or persecution should be welcomed and granted asylum in the United Kingdom.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya. That this Conference says that those who are fleeing war or persecution should be welcomed and granted asylum in the United Kingdom. What I am saying and I give you evidence, there are multiple conflicts around the world, there are multiple dictatorships. Since 2001, when the war on terror was declared, Britain along with its ally or its boss, the United States, has spent trillions, trillions and I'm talking over \$12 trillion has been spent in destroying the Middle East, smashing Iraq to bits, helping Saudi Arabia make Yemen a desert, destroyed Afghanistan, gone around Africa smashing different countries down there under the, under no scrutineers because it didn't happen and yet when multiple people and I have never been to a war and I don't want to go to a war, try and flee these places, what do we do? Sorry, you're not allowed here, we don't want you, we don't want you, we don't need you. Go away, here, we'll give Erdogan (unclear) a few billion Euros. Imagine if you're a Kurdish refugee, are you going to hand yourself in to the tender embraces of Erdogan? Let's face it, people guaranteed refugees rights because of what happened in World War 2. In World War 2, far beyond, far before the public heard about the concentration camps and the death camps and the Einsatzgruppen, the British government knew, the reports were coming out, they knew and do you know what?, they said and it's down on file, it's down on the public record and we can read it. Do you know what they said? They said oh no, we can't let them in, we'll be swarmed by the Jews and that's what they said. Disgusting. Let's not be like them, because we're decent human beings and we can say we will, we are my Brother and Sisters keeper, we will help the oppressed of the world. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Oh, are you seconding it? Okay.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: Formally seconding that motion. Yes, having been, served abroad in the war zones etc, it's our right to say to the government these people that we are helping become homeless in their nations and tearing up their countries and taking what we want out of there, well, if we take what we want, we should take what comes with it and what comes with it is families torn apart, families that no longer have dads, families that no longer have mums, kids with neither, kids with no-one. Every person that comes to these shores from a war-torn country should have the right to stay here and we should push the government at every opportunity to make sure that our culture becomes even more diverse. It makes no difference what country in the world you're from. If we've been there or if we've not been there, people are evil inherently and are making these children, families just break apart, so we should help wherever we can and if it means letting in a million or one, let them in, help them out, make them feel like they've got somewhere where they're safe. Safety first for all the families around the world that come to our shores and stop everyone else from doing this to these families wherever we can and on a quick note,

I apologise for my outburst earlier to everybody, including the Chair and EC and all members. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Again, sorry for coming again and again. It's clearing my heart because I wasn't well, my family tried to stop me but my educated girls said let, mummy, let him go, otherwise he'll be more sick. Anyway, people of Afghanistan, my friend talked about them. I'm British citizen, right, I am proud I'm here and I'm proud I have been given this mouth, right. These Afghan people, I'm sorry Britain used them, right, those who help the interpreters and other people and then they pulled out, they dropped them like tissues, used them and dropped them, right, shame on Britain, right. Used them and then what happened, you people must have seen the people were running behind aeroplanes, they said get lost. I think that's Imperialism, right. Still there are people. We must stand with them. If there is a collection, I will lead it. Thanks. Salute to those people, those fighters. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers? No. Microphone. No other speakers? Oh, no, I know, it's me.

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton): Here to support the motion and I just want to add something to my previous speaker, Dougie Johnson. When he said that the public records was read, we can read that we don't want the Jews and so on and so on. What they done? They formed the state of Israel where, in Palestine and what they happened then in World War 2, they are applying today in Palestine. So, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers? Okay. The Executive would ask you to support the motion. I think Dougie outlined exactly the reasons why we should be welcoming people who are fleeing war and persecution. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. It's you again, Doug. 96. 95, sorry. 95, sorry. It's because the next two are Dougie, so obviously I'm just getting mixed up on 356.

95

Branch 356

This Conference says that Britain should cancel all weapons sales to Israel and that the BFAWU reaffirms its support for Palestinian people in their fight for self-determination.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Thank you. Do you know what? I come from Leicester. In Leicester, we have a factory

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Dougie, I've given you the wrong steer, you're back on 95.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Oh.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, that was my fault because I told you 96 and it's 95. Cancel weapon sales to Israel.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Yes, this is it. Yes, I was doing

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, I thought you were doing sweatshops. That's the next one.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: No, no, no. Oh no, something totally different. It's something totally different. Also involves Leicester

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh right, okay.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: you know. I don't know, I was going to say, do you know what I mean, yes [LAUGHTER], but I think it was, has anybody heard of Elbit Systems? Elbit Systems. I think it was Wakefield where they bravely shook them down, they did, they forced them out. Elbit Systems make drones, that is used to oppress the Palestinian people. Let me talk about one of the victims of Elbit Systems. We saw, a few years ago, the Great March of Return, where the Palestinian people in desperation marched up to the fence at Gaza, marched up to the fence in a peaceful protest, to declare their human rights as they were being kept in the world's largest prison camp. Over 1500 metres away from the fence, as the Israelis started shooting with sniper fire, killing the Palestinians. First aiders went up and they were shot dead by the Israelis. You can see footage of Israeli snipers who put it on You Tube, cheering as they shot dead Palestinian people. Over 1500 metres away from the fence was a tent was a mother with a baby, eight months old, Laila Al-Ghandoor, Laila Al-Ghandoor. A drone went over, spraying it with tear gas. The mother could cope with it, the little baby's lungs could not. She died, she died, from a factory, things made in a factory in Britain. It should be over and the sniper rifles' parts are made in Britain and when I say we must reaffirm their fight for self-determination and it's not just me who calls Israel an apartheid regime. Desmond Tutu, a man who knew about apartheid, called it an apartheid regime, worse than what they received in South Africa.

It is, how long can we stand by and watch this happen? It's time that the world says no more to Israel. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded, thank you very much. Speakers?

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: I support this motion, but I think it needs to go a bit further. I do think, yes, the UK should stop selling weapons totally, yes, because and don't get and this is not wrong, but it is a quote from a song, yes, War, what is it good for?, yes, absolutely nothing, yes. This is what it is, yes. All it is is oppression of one people against another and it's not needed. So, please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Is it 96?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: 95.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Oh, sorry.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That's okay.

Brother Mohammed Islam (? spelling) – Branch 390 (Stoke): The thing is, the Israelis are living in Palestine, they are after the land and they want to finish off the Palestinians there and extend the Israel country and the reason apartheid and this must stop and it's not right to sell weapons to them and the oppressors and we should stand with the oppressed. Please vote for the motion, please.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? No?

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton): Now it's much easier, isn't it, can speak faster now. So I'm not going to keep you too much. All I can say that basically Mr Douglas Johnson said everything in there. What I want to say is that a few years' ago, I been assigned by the EC to present an international report, international report which include hot spots on our global map, including Palestine and if you look at the spring/summer Foodworker magazine, you will find the international report there exactly on the motion 95 and I don't want to speak about it because it's going to take us like half an hour to read it, so you can read it there. All I can say, support the motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Thank you very much. 96. No, I've done 95 now. I nearly didn't.

96

Branch 356

This Union should support ending sweatshops both here and abroad and the companies who profit from them.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: The Union should support ending sweatshops, both here and abroad and the companies who profit from them. Now again, I'm from Leicester and in Leicester the scandal that has been happening in the clothing industry has been sweatshops. We've been working alongside other Unions, GMB and Unite to try and do something about these sweatshops. They pay under minimum wage. We've talked a lot about the abuse of migrants. It is rampant in these sweatshops, it is endemic within these sweatshops. We've been working alongside the MP, Claudia Webbe, who is having the people who are being threatened, if you say anything, we won't give you your money. They're never given contracts, they're never given wage slips, they're paid below the minimum wage, they're frightened, they're scared and to be honest, our government, our government, instead of looking at sweatshops, have more people looking into benefit fraud than sweatshops.

They've got more people doing that and we, in Leicester, are sick to death of seeing our Brothers and Sisters treated in what you could only call modern slavery. Health and safety doesn't exist there, they don't care and if anybody tries to tackle them or anything, what they do, they've got a lovely little trick, is that they shut it down and they reopen it a few months later under a different name and it's companies like Boohoo and the others who use these sweatshops, who use this modern slavery to make their multi-million pound profits and it's time it ends, it's time it says no. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Sorry for coming again. My friend is a learned person, he has said things, I go a bit further, right. I, from that City, it's Labour Party's member is Keith Vaz, right, it's Keith Vaz, Labour Party, that's why I never became Labour, we can choose, right. He's MP from there and there may be some factories, but most of the work was done in homes. Ladies were doing sewing, they were working at home, they were not being paid, never mind about paying their wage, they were paid in cash, right and I don't know about the taxes, but if they were paying in cash, they were not employing them properly, then they were evading the tax system as well. Now, in addition to that, his sister, Valerie Vaz, was MP from Walsall, right and these sweatshops were everywhere, in Wolverhampton, Birmingham and London and my wife, when my kids were little and she used to leave them at school then go to a place of Indian, I won't name him, he was a so-called Socialist, so she was doing work to earn, my wife, I was working in a bakery to look after little school kids, my wife used to go to work there and she used to bring a small wage and then on her pay packet it used to be £3.20, £5.20 tax and I knew, my wife told me to keep quiet, I know how to settle with these people. So then I kept quiet for some time, I can't remember the figure, so I did it, right. Then, from a telephone box, I 'phoned him. I said, he was so-called Labour or whatever. I said, you deducting tax from my wife, he said yes, Mahinder, I said, right, how much it is, how much you deduct? I can't remember, right, I will go to the tax office and take the figure from there, right, but before I go, I'm telling you, you are going to be in trouble, right and at first he was trying to, he was an educated person. I said, I'm not educated, right, either give the money, right or face the music, right and he came to my home. He said, I'm sorry, right. So it was, there were sweatshops in the homes, right, where the Labour MP, Keith Vaz, so that's why I'm ashamed of calling myself Labour, but I'm proud of meeting Tony Benn. I was given, I was invited to a lunch with Jim Callaghan, I met Tony Benn and they were decent people and you all know Bevan, I think he was Health Minister, right. He wasn't very educated person, but he helped the people. So that's the Labour Party we want, not these boys

[APPLAUSE]

I must add, because I might not get another chance, Tony Blair, right, you know about him, right, he had a friend, the Chairman of the (unclear) or something, Gurbachi Singh, right, his friend from Malaysia, he was Commissioner for

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That might be true, Mahinder, but can you stick to the motion, because we have to go to other speakers.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Right, I'm saying what he was and when that person was drunk, dead drunk and she said to the policeman on Tony Blair's friend, get in the car and he had to resign the next day. So that is the Labour Party.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No-one online? No. No other speakers? Okay.

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton): Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council. The Executive Council is asking you to support this motion and why is doing that? Is because the Union is already massively involved in this and which, tell you something. What I want to say is that the government should be involved in this, obviously it's not and what is more funny is that if you know, there is a poster in our factories, it says stay stronger, stay together. Is that campaign of the government regarding the modern slavery, which I'm sure everybody saw that in your factories. I wonder, is there any poster in that sweatshops? Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. General Secretary. Sorry, am I in your way?

This Conference notes the ongoing revolutionary uprising in Iran, spearheaded by women and young people. Sparked by protests against the death of Mahsa Amini, the uprising foregrounds issues of women's rights and opposition to gender apartheid, but also raises issues of social freedom and equality, with people demanding the right to democratically determine their future through their own councils and direct representatives.

This Conference also notes the workers' protests and strikes, involving teachers; nurses; oil, gas and petrochemical workers; steel workers; Haft Tapeh sugar cane workers, and many others. Despite decades of repression, war, and bearing the brunt of economic sanctions, workers in Iran have continued their tradition of militant action and struggled for recognition of the right to form their own independent organisations and to strike.

This Conference further notes the recent establishment of Solidarity with the Iranian Workers' Movement, chaired by John McDonnell MP.

This Conference believes international solidarity with all working-class and democratic struggles for freedom is a core labour movement principle, and supports the struggles of Iran's workers, women, and youth against the Islamic Republic.

This Conference in support of the workers' movement in Iran therefore resolves:

- *To support work of the Committee for Solidarity with the Iranian Workers' Movement, circulate its materials to members, and invite a speaker from the committee to a future meeting*
- *To promote local mobilisations in support of the uprising in Iran to members, and organise a distinct, visible trade union presence on such mobilisations*
- *To mobilise support at national level*
- *To specifically support workers' struggles in our sector in Iran, and aim to make direct links with the workers involved if possible*
- *To request that the national union audits whether we organise workers at companies or in supply chains that have economic interests in Iran or ties to the Islamic Republic, to establish whether action by our members could directly aid workers' struggles in Iran*
- *To condemn the arrest of protestors, and the executions of Mohsen Shekari and Majidreza Rahnavard.*

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, international Solidarity is a vital part of our movement and this motion sets out ways that we can actively give our support to the workers' movement in Iran. I'm not going to go through all the points, it's down there on your Agenda, you can read it yourself, but the Executive hopes that you will support engaging this proposed act of Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It's formally seconded. Speakers? Speakers? Okay. Nobody on there? Okay. All those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 99.

99

Branch 558

That this Conference agrees that Scotland is delayed in being allowed to have another referendum, the Scottish Parliament is recognised but they still remain part of the United Kingdom.

This will unite all workers within the fight against the Tories long term in terms of forging a good alliance to beat an oppressive unscrupulous government. There is a job in hand!

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): No, Mark, it's Mark. Thank you. That this Conference agrees that Scotland is delayed in being allowed to have another referendum. The Scottish parliament is recognised, but they still remain part of the United Kingdom. This will unite all workers within the fight against the Tories, long-term (unclear) a good alliance to beat an oppressive, unscrupulous government. There is a job in hand. Well, it's pretty self-explanatory and coming from a family where I feel more British than English, because I've family from both sides of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Canada, all over and the fight is for the British people and for working class people, people that have come to Britain for a better life against this oppressive government and a lot of our Scottish friends and comrades, they're ultimately against this Tory oppression and we need them to stay with us and to help us fight until we've won this battle against them and then (unclear). We'd ask for your support and hope you support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Yes, I'll second this. By the way Mark, I thought you delivered that really well. Yes, I'm here to support this motion properly, because we have a government that we need to get rid of. These lot are no good and it's quite topical what's happening with Nicola Sturgeon at this present time. I think the Scottish people need to look at somebody else, somebody else to oust this lot that are in, in charge, because they're an absolute shower. You know, in 2019, that landslide they got, I think there's many people I've talked to regret, regret them being in where they are. So, I completely support this and I hope Conference supports it as well.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: And away we go

[LAUGHTER].

Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill, Scotland): Afternoon, Conference. I bet you can guess what I'm going to say, yes? I'm here to oppose this motion, as you've probably guessed. Firstly, I'd like to say I can't understand why this is even a motion at Conference. It's not something that's up for discussion, especially not here. It's a democratic right of the Scottish people if they have a referendum. If this motion is passed today, I strongly feel it could be detrimental to the Union membership drive in Scotland. We've just seen the video this morning, the work that Rafal and Mark have put in and just looking around the room at the membership we've got. Scotland's still very much divided in this subject and I feel it could look like the Union are taking sides and it could alienate some of our new, younger members in Scotland. We only have to look at what happened to the Labour Party in Scotland when it took sides during the last referendum. Can this Union afford to take the chance of the same thing happening to us? We need to remember that the young members and the new members are the future of this Union, that we build the foundations on for the future. Our independence is up for discussion here today and quite honestly, I find it disrespectful. We talk a lot about beating the Tories and I agree, I agree totally, we need to beat the Tories. In Scotland, we've done that on numerous occasions, numerous occasions. When was the last time Scotland sent down Tories to Westminster? We don't do it.

What the Union should be concentrating on, as far as I'm concerned, is finding out why the working class people in England are voting for Conservative MPs. Areas like Blackpool south, (unclear) and north-west Durham, to name but three. We've spoken about already the membership numbers are dwindling, so can we really take sides on this matter? At the last referendum, the Union held a neutral stance and I think we should do it again. If this motion is passed, what's next? Do we decide on what happens to a united Ireland? Do we decide on the future of Wales? Where do we stop? I get the idea behind the motion, but if Scotland does have another referendum, sorry, when we do get it and we have that referendum, nobody's going to say it's going to be successful. I for one hope it is, but that decision's got nothing to do with this Union. We also talk a lot at these Conferences about discrimination and all-inclusive. This is discriminatory against the Scottish people. I feel as if we're being targeted here. You look at the wording of the motion as well. It says Scotland is delayed in being allowed, do we need actual permission? No. Does that mean when the time comes, we need to come to Conference and ask your permission to have this referendum again? Not for me.

It also mentions in the motion the Scottish parliament is recognised within the UK and that's right (unclear) just like in Northern Ireland, but ultimately (unclear) with Westminster, which is the sole purpose that we want to break away from this toxic union with the UK. I know some people here might think that Scotland gets everything, I've heard that a couple of times, Scotland gets something else again and you're right, we do get lots of things. We were privileged to be the first experiment of the poll tax in 1989, we pulled out of Europe even though we voted 62% to remain, we were dragged out of Europe by the Tory government and let me tell you, that was a government I'd have never have voted for as well. A shout-out to my wife by the way, because she wrote all of this for me, or I'd never have done it.

[LAUGHTER]

There's lots more we could discuss about this, Scottish independence and where we stand on it and where I think people stand on it, but no, it's not for discussion on this, this Conference. I'm here today, there's three Scottish people here, three Scottish people, in England, discussing Scottish independence with you – my wife, Kevin Flood and myself. There's five Scottish Delegates, again myself, my wife, Rafal, Polish, calls Scotland home, Kasha, Polish, calls Scotland home and Glen, who's English, calls Scotland home. There's a Welsh Delegation and a Northern Irish Delegation, most of you here are English and live in England and call England home. Why should you have a say, with the utmost respect, why should you have a say about what my country decides? So to finish it off, I just want to say, if Scotland did become independent tomorrow, it doesn't mean everything, Scotland's going to turn their back on the union, or turn our backs on a fight against the Tories, it's probably the opposite. Please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 701: I'm not going to follow that there. I'm here to oppose this motion. I believe the people of Scotland should not be told whether they can vote on a referendum. As I would not let the government come into Northern Ireland and say you're having a referendum on Ireland. Oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: I'm here to strongly oppose this motion. As someone who lives in a divided society, who, our decision to change our destiny has been handed to us, it's for us alone and the people of Northern Ireland to dictate whether we remain a part of the United Kingdom or whether we join a united Ireland. I think the same should be applicable to my Scottish comrades and brethren and I hope and I pray that with my support someday that Scotland shall be free.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Rafal Obrebski – Branch 500: As Chris says, my new home is in Scotland, so I read this motion, I think that's one of the most disgraceful motion been put on this Conference since I coming over on a Conference for the last few years. I believe that Scottish people have a full right to decide of their future and nobody should be telling them they can or they can't do it. So, please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Chair, once again

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can we quieten down please.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Once again, I don't think I have to give the name every time, it will be wasting time, because Britain is my country now, I'm British National, my kids have been educated here, so I have got the right, as a citizen of Britain, to speak on these things. Now these people, it's good that it's delayed, trying to keep Scottish people in, right and I was, I've been to Glasgow a couple of times, attended Asian meetings and once it was GFT's(?) course, I've forgotten the town name, it was near Glasgow, right and those people, my country, England people, they tried everything, you know, to (unclear) this side, Ireland, Wales, they neglected, so I've been there and I forgot the town, but when I came, I was two nights there, then a friend of mine from Glasgow picked me up and brought me to Glasgow and it was late at night and I said I need a drink, right, a drink, beer, allergic to hard drink because it goes to my head, so I got, they said wait until 6 o'clock, the shops will be open and 6 o'clock, I said do they open shops, drink shops early, at 6 o'clock, right and while in England it was half past 9, it was illegal anybody opening before that, so what was the cause, what was the idea behind this British government to keep the Scottish people, to give them drink so much so they don't talk about their future and it's a good job, I think the country, we should respect that part and observe them as proper partners, right, so otherwise if they are being treated like that, I'll be hurt, you'll be hurt, they are part of

[APPLAUSE]

but it is Britain's own fault keeping them ignorant. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hi. I'm here to oppose this motion. I'm here, now I'm saying, I'm not a Scot, right, like Kev or sorry, I forgot your name but, pardon?, Chris, I'm not a Scot, you know. I do come from a Scottish family, we came down to England in '67, you know. I have a great love of Scotland, you know, whether it's the poetry of Burns, I like economics, I like reading, I've read Adam Smith, The Scottish Enlightenment, I'm a nerd at heart, so I do stuff like that, I like being a nerd, you know, but I agree with what Chris says. The way we're going to somehow dictate when self-determination people decide when they, if they want to remain in the union or not, it's not my job. I've never lived in Scotland, I mean, I used to love going up there, you know, my Grandma Johnson, when she first took me to the Highlands, you know, going there and seeing my cousins and we'd go down, we'd go swimming and like, you know, I'd love it, you know. I love the Scottish people, I have, you know, even though I'm English really, my heart kind of is in Scotland. I think there's no more beautiful country, countryside in the world, but we can't go around saying like you, I think you said it beautifully, like Big Daddy who'll say you will have your vote now. It's not my choice, it's not for the English or even the Americans, they normally boss everybody around, to decide who should have their rights to self-determination, it up for the Scottish people. It's their right, not mine, not yours, it's their right to talk about it. Oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508: I wasn't coming up again, but I feel like I've got to. I have a Scottish daughter, 32 years old, lives in Dumfries and I am her dad, I don't tell her what to do, I'm English, I don't tell her what to do, she makes her own choices, so what makes England think that we should just take away a whole nation's right to choose whatever they want to do? It's not right at all. My Scolish friend put it perfectly and I call him Scolish because he's Scottish-Polish. You know, it shouldn't have even got to this point here, with us. This is not right and please oppose this.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? VP.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: So, Chris, well done, mate. I've give you fun facts, as my daughter would say. In 1955 was the last time the Scottish people voted the Conservatives in. The Welsh Delegation have never voted them in, ever. Who votes them in, the Conservatives? Not Scotland, not Wales. There's been no Labour people stood in Northern Ireland since the troubles.

The current major Party in Northern Ireland don't take their seats in parliament, so the only people that vote them in, to help with the fight, is England. So we've been fighting them, it's time you stepped up and started fighting them, not us.

[APPLAUSE]

So, since 1955, there's been seven Conservative governments, nothing to do with us, look to yourselves. So, I've been coming for about 25 years or so, I live in Northern Ireland and I represent Northern Ireland on the EC, but I started in Scotland as the first Executive Council member from Scotland, which I was quite proud of, but in the years I've been here, I've heard us talking about a lot of different isms, like Unionism, Socialism, collectivism, racism, fascism, but this Imperialism is dreadful and as Chris Magill said, it should have never got this far. So, Scotland (unclear), the union, since 1705, not because we were conquered, not because we needed you, but because you needed us, you needed a king and you asked us, we provided a king. Since then, we've been doing stuff for you all of the time and as (unclear) said oh, that's Scotland getting something else again, we provide for England just as much as you provide for us, but what we don't provide is Tory governments. Oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Well done, Brother, well done, well done. Okay Mark, you've got a right of reply.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Hello. I feel as popular as someone else at this Conference now.

[LAUGHTER]

Someone that I'm not naming. I would like to apologise if any of you were offended at all, that was never the intention of this. It wasn't my motion, I just got selected to do it and on listening to all of your passionate arguments and if you saw me, I was cheering every one of you, you're absolutely right and we'd like to withdraw this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Scotland!

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Does Conference agree it's withdrawn or do we want to send a clear message that we believe that the Scottish people make the decision about the future of Scotland? Do we want to send a very, very clear message that we stand with the people of Scotland for their right to democracy and their right to have their own future decided by the people that live in Scotland? So do we accept that the motion is withdrawn or do we want to send that clear message? Want to send the message? All those that are in favour of the motion, please show. All those that oppose the motion, please show. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Motion 100. It's 558.

100

Branch 558

That this Conference agrees that any form of media found to be attacking Politicians of any party, national officers of any trade union, seen to be opposing the current climate.

If showing bias, non-factual hearsay and gossip are dismissed from brandishing their nonsense.

The TUC should then put in place a protection plan, flex its power and lobby government to make sleaze and slur that is fed to the masses a criminal offence

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): I've had to come in, it's very warm up here. I'm going to withdraw motion 100, because I think it's the same rhetoric as I said before, about politicians etc, the media. I'm going to withdraw it. I'm withdrawing it on the spirit of the fact that it's very warm down there and I got myself thinking

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you moving, are you moving 101, Sean?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): No, I'm withdrawing it.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: What, 101 as well?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Not 101, 100.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, well I've got that

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Withdrawing it.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: but obviously 101, that's you as well.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Yes, I know, I'm not withdrawing 101.

It's the last one, yes? Do you want me to go straight to 101?

That this Conference agrees to make a stand against a globalist agenda, stands up to dictatorship and control and protects people from any further lockdowns or socially driven social change or control.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Right. That this Conference agrees to make a stand against the globalist agenda, stands up to dictatorship and control and protects people from any further lockdowns or social-driven social change or control. Very simple. Lockdowns don't help people, lockdowns don't help the economy, lockdowns don't help people's mental health, lockdowns don't help anything. I'm quite concerned that we're not over the final hurdle with this. I believe there's something in the pipeline for it to start again. You've seen politicians being hung out to dry over this, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconded? Formally seconded. Is Mark not coming in then? No, okay.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'm quite shocked at this motion. I'm quite shocked. Globalist agenda. Does anybody know where that language comes from? It comes from the far right. When they say globalist agenda, it comes straight out the fascists. I am against dictatorships. Had it said it was against the Capitalist Globalisation Project, I would have approved, but globalist agenda and your proving of the language of the far right, I cannot but oppose this. I oppose the far right wherever they go. I cannot but oppose this motion, with a globalist agenda. No, I will not use the far right and I ask you to oppose this motion based on that.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? Anyone online? I believe it's you, VP.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: Doug, you stole my thunder. Globalist agenda, we can't have it, it's right wing. Oppose the motion, please.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sean, you have the right of reply.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Yes, I'm certainly no right winger and I'm certainly not a fascist. If I'd haven't looked at the words properly in that motion, it's because I'm busy, because I work, I haven't got time to look at everything but, you know, as far as I'm concerned, you can oppose it, but I'm going to let it stand, that motion, to be opposed, because I'm quite insulted that I've been called a Nazi.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, it was the terminology, but I understand your point, Sean. To the vote. Those in favour?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): It certainly didn't feel like that, Ian. It certainly didn't.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Give me a minute, give me a minute. Those in favour? Okay. Those against?

That's lost. Clearly, obviously it's right to point out where we disagree with words. Obviously we do have to make sure that when we couch our terms of engagement, we have to think about how the individual may feel when we make those comments and I understand the passion and I understand the language, but I don't think anybody who comes to our Conference would support the aims of a fascist or the Nazi Party but, you know, language that is used and we can see it all the way through, is normally common language and some people won't understand that common language, some people are more in-depth, you know and look into things more deeply, but one of the things that we absolutely should not do is misunderstand that when we get up there, we have a duty to be careful about the person who wrote something in a language that may be seen. We correct people when it comes to language. We can make that point strongly enough, I think, without making them feel uncomfortable or that we're suggesting that. I don't believe that that was the intention. Obviously we know the person who made those comments, because they're well read and they understand the fight and they certainly didn't mean to make you feel that way, but I understand your feelings, Sean. I do, I do apologise and I know obviously Douggie would be very, very concerned that he's made you feel that way, that wasn't his intention. So I hope you can accept that.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield): Thank you, Ian, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Motion 102.

Since the arrest of Andrew Tate we as union should call upon all unions to campaign against the propagandising of gross misogyny online.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: And I'm sorry if, I didn't mean to make Sean feel uncomfortable or upset, you know, I know he's not one of those.

Since the arrest of Andrew Tate we, as a Union, should call upon all Unions to campaign against propagandising of gross misogyny online. I didn't know who Andrew Tate was until his arrest, never heard of Andrew Tate. Andrew Tate is a vile, disgusting human being. Andrew Tate, his views on women, I, they wouldn't even be in place if it was the 1950's. Andrew Tate is a disgusting and vile human being who uses women in these sex chat rooms, where he pays them virtually nothing and you must praise our Romanian comrades who eventually has put an end, who's going to put an end to Andrew Tate's misogyny. Teachers throughout the UK have complained that a lot of their boys, young boys are picking up on this vile misogyny. I'm not going to publicise these views because I don't think they should be.

They are disgusting and nasty and he's getting into our young children, our young boys and saying this kind of view is right and women, female school teachers are coming up and finding this, they're being assaulted by it, day-in, day-out. Now, I'm not calling for any kind of censorship at all, I'm saying that the whole Trade Union movement believes, because we believe in women's rights, we believe in the rights of women, we campaign against it. Maybe you do a Facebook page, I don't know, it doesn't matter, but we make a stand and say no, misogyny is something that belongs in the past. Misogyny is gone, we want to push it away, like it's a footnote in a history book, that's what I'm saying, because we should make a stand, saying that the kind of views that is spreading by the likes of Andrew Tate is wrong. So I'd ask you to support the motion, please.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded. Speakers?

Brother Mark Allen – Branch 580 (Greggs, Leeds): I'm going to abstain on this vote, because I think it could have been a better motion put forward than to criticise a person in another country. It also mentions campaigning. I think there's better stuff to campaign against and just out of curiosity, how many people know who Andrew Tate is? How many people have watched his shows? So, we're going to vote on someone in another country, who we don't know about and we think that's a good thing and a worthwhile thing for our members. I'm not going to disagree with the motion, but I can't vote against it because as the gentleman said, I have seen some two minute clips, 30 second clips on social media and some of the stuff he says, it's just disgusting. He's just a sexist pig as far as I'm concerned. I don't know him that well, I don't watch his shows, but anyone can put a 30 second clip on YouTube and go, look what kind of person this is, but I will say this, he was arrested and detained for a month, with no charges or evidence. Since then, he's been under house arrest for four months, with no charges and no arrest and that is an injustice and even if I don't agree with someone and the stuff they say, I will fight injustice wherever I see it. Andrew Tate has been critical of the USA government and I do not believe America's narrative when it comes to individuals. I've give you an example. Julian Assange, who is a criminal, he was sent to court, tried, convicted and has been in prison in England for a very long time and soon he will be extradited to America where they'll probably kill him and the only crime he did was expose America's war crimes in the Middle East. So when a narrative gets put online or social media about an individual and it's coming from America, I don't believe it. I think America are the biggest terrorists in the world.

[APPLAUSE]

My comrade spoke about Columbia and some of the crimes they've committed in Columbia and then Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, the list goes on and on and on. So, I'm going to abstain on this because I don't know enough to vote either way, to be honest. I just think there's better stuff to do than motions like this. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Turner – Branch 3554: I agree with you, 100%. I have a very close family member what's obsessed with him and I'm really, really worried. It's what they're saying about women, it's scary and I think it should be brought up and I'm getting where a lot of red flags are coming now and I'm thinking I need to be taking this further. He's obsessed with watching this and he's all for him, the lot, it's scary, really scary. I 100% agree with you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dimitri Manole – Branch 357 (Greencore, Northampton): Here to support the motion and just to answer to our first comrade who speak on this motion and abstain. Obviously you don't know the legislation of Romania, so as long as you're under investigation, you can keep, you can be kept in jail, that's why. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Peter Pine – Branch 110 (Enfield): Good afternoon, Conference. That guy, if you don't know about him, he's an influencer. He manipulates young people, they believe because they've got no-one to look at or support, they look at him. The stuff he comes out with, it ain't a two minute clip I've seen, I've seen documentaries about the guy, I've seen him being interviewed throughout. The geezer is a bad influencer on people. Support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Nobody online? General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, misogyny is a dislike of, contempt for or ingrained prejudice against women. Examples of this include believing women are too emotional or not tough enough to be good leaders and all too often it happens in the Trade Union movement and shamefully in our own Union, we hear sexist remarks about women and girls which are then passed off as casual jokes, when they're anything but. If, as a society, a movement, a Trade Union, we allow and accept sexist language, we are sending a message that it is okay to demean women. Then it isn't too big of a leap, is it, to see how harassment and verbal abuse might feel okay to some and how then people like Andrew Tate get to the levels of misogyny he has been pumping out online. So next time someone says that their sexist language is just a joke, know that it isn't acceptable at all and won't be tolerated in our Trade Union. People like Andrew Tate are stepping into spaces and empowering young men to believe and behave as if a woman's place is in her kitchen alone and that somehow we, as women, should be grateful just to be engaged with. Andrew Tate is stepping into the space that Trade Unions aren't in and we need to change that, but first we must have our own house in order.

We need to be proactively calling out sexism directly and to be clear, that's not just for the Sisters in the room. Don't validate a sexist comment with a laugh. By laughing at it, you're saying you're okay with it. Don't just let it pass. I know it's not easy to say something, but we need to ensure in this Union, it's absolutely safe to challenge it. Ask questions. What did they mean by that comment, why did they think it was funny? Remind them of their better self. Would they have said that in a different setting? Would they have said it to their mum, their daughter, their sister, their employer? You could express outright disapproval and know your boundaries. Don't be afraid to shut down a conversation if you feel uncomfortable without feeling guilty and finally, if you hear somebody else calling it out, support them to do so. Without being better ourselves, having our own house in order, how do we call out Andrew Tate? Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You've got the right of reply.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: By the way, comrade, as far as I know, Andrew Tate has been charged. As far as I know, he has actually been charged and he should have been charged a lot longer. If you ever hear and I understand, if you ever hear the women that were interviewed on the Vice News programme and the stuff he did to them, that guy should be imprisoned for the rest of his life. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That was unanimous in the end, that's fine.

Okay, guess what, you've finished the Agenda.

[APPLAUSE]

Well done.

So Okay, so, close of Conference. Some people will know what happens at close of Conference, some people won't, but you're going to find out. One of the first things we're going to do, obviously thank the current Executive Council again who've got us to this point in the cycle and I know there's a number of Executive Members that are going to be leaving us, obviously one in particular we're going to be giving a presentation to, as the General Secretary shuffles behind me, because obviously I caught her unaware, is someone, obviously if you worked at Warburtons would know him as Snapper, someone who's, you know, always got a comment, always got a comment, yes, when he's in the country, Kevin, when he's in the country, but he always found his way back just in time for the Executive, which we were always very grateful for. He's been a stalwart on our Executive for many years and he's made some great contributions and he's contributed obviously in his life to this Trade Union and we thank him and appreciate the work that he's done serving as a Shop Steward, as a Branch Secretary, as an Executive Council Member and as a Representative of this Union at various conferences.

Obviously he was always the one that you wanted to get on your music quiz team in the evening. So Joe, if you'd like to come up, we've got a bit of a presentation for you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: We've got you a pewter baker. I know you've been wanting one, we've had it stored away ready for you, so we didn't run out and some biscuits. Thank you ever so much, Joe, for everything that you've done. Please don't get too upset

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560: I'd like to thank all Region 5 firstly for being my support for the last 17 years. It's been an honour and a privilege to serve as your Executive Council Member. When I first came on, Joe Marino was General Secretary, Ronnie Draper was National President, then went to Ronnie Draper and Ian and now we've got Sarah and Ian. I'd like to say congratulations to John Martin, Dave Lawrence, Sharon Osbourne from Region 5 on being elected to sit on the EC. I hope you all enjoy your time as much as I have. Conference, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Clearly, if Pauline McCarthy hadn't had to go into hospital for an eye operation, we'd be giving Pauline a presentation too. Pauline has been on the Executive for many years, obviously Branch Secretary at Carlton, also served on the Labour Party NEC, our first ever and obviously only NEC Member of the Labour Party. She did a fantastic job representing this Union at various conferences as well as obviously working in her Branch too. Obviously we wish her a speedy recovery and obviously we will make sure she gets her presentation, but we'll miss her, as we'll miss Joe and, you know, obviously thank both of them for their service. So, thank you very much to Pauline.

[APPLAUSE]

We had a young man called Pat as well, who got elected on a couple of occasions but obviously unfortunately Pat hasn't come to Conference, but on many an occasion, unfortunately for various medical reasons, he wasn't able to turn up to the EC, so we had a really great stand-in, which is Tony and obviously Tony's made sure that No. 1's been represented. He's a great guy and I know he's a little bit, he was a little bit shy about getting up and speaking, but he finally did it but, you know, the contribution he's made to us has been absolutely fantastic in the short time that he's spent with us and we thank you and appreciate all of the work you do on the Executive and back at your Branch. So, thank you, Tony.

[APPLAUSE]

Now, this next guy, obviously the Welsh Representative, the Welsh Representative, you know, always responded, always responded, always contributed, always made sure that he was prepared, always made sure that he was able to answer people if they ever asked him a question, always prepared to go out of his way and has seen his way through this Conference, as last year's Conference, has always made sure he's played his role on this Executive and representing this Union. Obviously he works in Greggs shops. I think he's been a phenomenal, you know, example of what an Executive Council Member does in a short period and I'm sure, you know, we'll see you involved in the Union as we go forward in many, many different guises. Thank you for everything you've done, Nick, it's really been appreciated and, you know, obviously I'll look forward to continuously seeing you anyway, but thank you for everything that you've done, Nick.

[APPLAUSE]

Obviously Lee Burns isn't here, obviously Lee's our Young Member. I mentioned him at the beginning, but I think it's only right to recognise that obviously Lee, when he first stood by the way, he said he couldn't stand because he wasn't old enough and then he had a telephone call with his mum and he found out he was a year younger than what he thought, so he was able to stand. True story, true story. Obviously he's not here to get embarrassed about it, but it was a true story and he did a really good job for us in his work. Obviously he's doing a fantastic job up in the North East for the Greggs workers as a Branch Secretary there and obviously I know Lee will be heavily involved certainly in the North East, certainly in Greggs and obviously look forward to him, now he's a couple of years older than what he was, or thought he was, you know in the future being more involved with us. So thank you, Lee, for all you did as well.

And obviously there was Nicolai. Stories about Nicolai, I could give you hundreds of them, but one of the things about Nicolai was this. Him and Alex used to be like a tag team and I went to meet them at the Shop Stewards' course and obviously it was like getting a battering in stereo.

Nicolai is, you know, stood down in November, we gave him, I believe we gave him a good send off, we explained what an important role he played, especially as a migrant on our Executive, the contributions that he made, especially as a young bloke as well, the knowledge that he brought and the experience, believe it or not, as someone of such tender age too and obviously we appreciated everything that Nicolai did and I have a memory like a sieve, so I'm just going to double-check I haven't missed anybody. I haven't missed anybody.

Of course, I have missed somebody, I have missed somebody, which is a shame, I don't believe I did that, so yes, I knew there was somebody but I couldn't remember, yes, I was just saving it. Obviously, you know, we had a Vice President, obviously we've got a Vice President, but we had a Vice President that served on this Executive for many a year and people know who he is, people obviously, you will have seen him here and he was a great, great Executive Council Member, was Sean. Obviously Sean is in a difficult place and I'm sure all of this Conference wishes him well. I mean it is difficult, because obviously he was an exceptional guy and I thought the world of him and I know his mates did too and they want to see him back to where Sean should be so, you know, I think on behalf of the Executive, I'd like to thank Sean very much for everything that he did on behalf of this Union, everything he did in his Branch, everything he did at a national level for our Union. So, thank you very much, Sean.

[APPLAUSE]

Oh, by the way, you know, for those that didn't know, there was a young man that kept getting up a few times and kept apologising, but kept getting up and talking for a while. A shout-out to Mahinder, who did 50 years membership this year. So, thank you very much, Mahinder.

[APPLAUSE]

Obviously I'd like to thank Standing Orders, the Chair and the Committee. I thought the Chair would have been here by now, is he over there?, he can get set up here. Thank you for the way that you've conducted Conference and we really appreciate the smoothness of it, so well done and obviously I'd like to pay tribute to Mick, who unfortunately couldn't make it to the Conference for medical reasons, but obviously most people know who Mick is and he's, you know, obviously run this Conference for us for a few years and, you know, we wish him a speedy recovery. We thank him for everything he did, you know, on behalf of our Union and we look forward to seeing him, hopefully next year, because you knew when Mick was about, so thank you very, very much, Mick. So I'd like to

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: One second, I'll be a second. I just want to let my friends know ...

[recording is very faint, as Delegate is speaking off-mike]

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Conference people, got the Conference people. Obviously she would be a Conference person too, everybody knows who Pauline Nasir is, the Naz. Pauline Nazir has retired, unfortunately she didn't want to come to Conference, which is a shame, because I'm sure there's many people that's known Pauline over the years that would have liked to have said goodbye and good luck and all of that. You know, she retired, obviously her health wasn't well, wasn't good at the end, but Pauline, you know, she'd tell you the Bakers Union runs through her veins and, you know, she was always very passionate about our Union. She's still involved with the Credit Union and to my knowledge, she's going to continue to be involved with the Credit Union. Hopefully her health starts to make an improvement, with all of the stress and pressure that the need to come back to work won't be put on her and I wish her a long and happy retirement and I think, you know, we wish her well.

[APPLAUSE]

In Region 5, obviously there was, I mean obviously people that have been coming for a few years will know May Benton, I think she started off as a young girl in the offices in, I think it was Pudsey, I'm not sure, I mean obviously I wasn't around at the time, I don't know if I was born when they started, no, I shouldn't go down that path, should I, but obviously May's recently retired too and obviously the contribution that she made in supporting the people in Region 5 and over the years here at this Conference too, we wish May a long and happy retirement and wish her nothing but the best for the future.

That's it, that's it. Those are my best wishes to everybody. So thank you, thank you to May.

[APPLAUSE]

Obviously thanks to John Fox who obviously from the Standing Orders has chaired and the Committee that he's been working with. Obviously thank you to my Vice President, who's kept me in check, made sure you got breaks, reminded me that obviously we've got a Cool It! Campaign and insisted that we put some additional breaks in for you, I hope you enjoyed them.

Obviously the Scrutineers and obviously we had to be used, I think that's the first time in my term of office that people disbelieved that I could count but, you know, I accept the challenge because I knew I was right, but thank you to the Scrutineers.

Thank you to the FTOs, I mean and obviously on the FTOs, I mean the FTOs work throughout the year, sometimes they can be noisy, sometimes they can be quiet, but one thing they're always, very supportive, they're always at the end of a 'phone, always there ready to support you, always there ready to give you the advice and if they haven't got it, they'll find you the advice. So, thank you to all of our full-time Officials for the work that they do in supporting you and your membership in your Branches, not just for keeping the door but for making sure that you get the support that you deserve in your workplace. So, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Obviously normally in the Office we would have Jan, unfortunately Jan did her knee in, so we haven't had Jan, so she would normally be ably assisted by Vicky and it's a probably a good job that Vicky's been working alongside her over the years because obviously we slung her right in the deep end and made her do it on her own, you know, but obviously thank you very much, Vicky, for making sure that everything was on the tables and distributed and, you know, you made sure that we were able to get this Conference going and running and papered.

Obviously all of our Office staff across the Regions. You can't thank the full-time Officials without recognising the important work that they do in making sure that you're resourced with the information that's necessary.

For all those that set up the lights in this Conference Hall, for the lighting and the sound crew who've also been the online crew, to the stallholders, you know, for the fringe facilitators, so Thompsons, Slater & Gordon, Watkins & Gunn, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Unionlearn, Credit Union, Lighthouse, National Shop Stewards Network, Stand Up To Racism, Palestine, no, they didn't come, but we still had a motion in support of them. Nicaragua Solidarity that sent us an Ambassador. The Ron Todd Foundation. Obviously Matt Trinder, who's over there at the back from the Morning Star. Have we got they didn't come, okay, so a special thanks to all of our speakers, I don't know if Gaz is still here but, you know, obviously we send a message with the RMT that we stand in Solidarity with them, when they take their strike action and Conference, thank you for your tolerance, both in person and online. I think one of the things, alright there were a couple of bleeps that we need to improve on, but I think, you know, the way that you've handled yourself and conducted yourself has been very respectful and obviously I appreciate that as someone who's been running Conference, because it makes it so much easier if we don't have to deal with issues.

And so at this point, I invite the Chair of Standing Orders to give his final address to Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

John Fox's (Chair of Standing Orders) Final Address to Conference

Thank you, Delegates. I'm making no apologies for this, yes, because it has gone on all week, yes, what we've noticed, yes, within Standing Orders, so I make no apologies for it, because I think I might be on the last word of it, yes. So, Mr President, Platform, Delegates. This is the final countdown and on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, I would also like to offer the usual vote of thanks. Superstition has it that we would like to thank Ian for the professional way he has conducted Conference. It couldn't have been an easy time to allocate time for speakers and to ensure that Conference ran its full course. Our thanks to our General Secretary and all that had part in organising the Conference and entertainment throughout the week. So, congratulations to Sarah for making another successful Conference. Thanks to Vicky, who has worked tirelessly behind the scenes, even when the thunder knocked the Wi-Fi out. We only had two people in Standing Orders and one of them was John Fitzpatrick, he was hanging on to his telephone and when we said that we wouldn't fine him, he went out like he was walking on the moon.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

My grateful thanks to my comrades in Standing Orders, without whose help things would not have run smoothly. Three little birds have told us and we've heard it through the grapevine that everyone has enjoyed Conference and without you, we wouldn't have had the great debates that we've had this week. We congratulate the first-time Delegates, who have come up to the rostrum to make their first Conference address. I hope that you've all learned something from Conference, something to take back to your Branches, to give you the motivation to recruit new members. You will also have learnt something of the power of a Union, Conference, how new rules are made, how old rules are changed, but more than this, how the power and the main driving force of this Union is you, as you are the Union.

[APPLAUSE]

Use your power well, use it wisely and help our Union go from strength to strength. So, you might not know these next to you, yes, but they're from a country singer, yes, his name's Kip Moore, yes. So, we have all had this week a little beer money and through that, if you've done anything that you shouldn't, Plead the Fifth. Whether you're on the road to hell or on the road to nowhere, we wish you a safe journey home. Thank you, comrades.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, if you can take your seats again, it's, listen, obviously things change and obviously over the many years that I've been involved in organising Conference, I have to say, I've never seen anybody as efficient or as organised and, you know, the work that goes in to putting Conference on is not easy and I'd like to thank our General Secretary who's made this Conference what it is, but obviously in doing that, I'd also like to invite our General Secretary to give her final address to Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

General Secretary Sarah Woolley's Final Address to Conference

Hello from the other side. I didn't do it in my speeches and I was getting looks from the EC, so I thought I'd get one in. What a week. We've got through an awful lot of motions, we've had some great debates, some open, honest, emotional at times contributions and that's why I love Conference and we've developed policies for our Union and given the new Executive plenty of work to get stuck into over the next 12 months. It's been hot in here, that's another one, yet you have engaged with the debate and the fringe meetings. Many of you have taken on Bianca's challenge of designing your patches and we've seen artwork, especially on this front table here, that ought to be framed and I'll collect any of them in that you've still got, because she had to leave, did Bianca, earlier today and it's been really good and I know not everybody will have seen the sign in the ladies toilets, but it's been really good to see the Solidarity signs around the venue that were created in those sessions, as a reminder of Solidarity is more than just words, it's actions and when we think outside the box, we can make just a little change to a person's life, can't we? And the feedback from Guisell's diversity session yesterday, everybody that came out said how positive it was and how we need to do more around Euro diversity and, you know, we thought we'd trial it at Conference to see if there was a need and a want and there definitely is, so we'll look at how we increase that and develop that going further. And there's all sorts of stuff on your tables and there's stuff that you've done through the fringe meetings that you can take back into your Branches now and utilise to organise, develop new members, develop new activists, get people talking about joining the BFAWU and the positive work that we do at Conference and all year round.

There's two documents in particular that we've touched on around the peripherals this week, but I wanted just to focus on. We've got the latest report, we've done them both with Unity Consulting that aren't here this week but those that were here last year will have remembered them, they did a presentation. So the first one is the Foodworkers on the Breadline Report, read it, digest it, talk to your members about it and make sure they're looking at it. Utilise it in your wage negotiations for your companies. No food worker, nobody in our Union should be in a position where they can't afford to eat, or they can't afford to feed their kids, where they're turning, living in blankets and buying food and not eating enough just in order to survive, so use this. Go back to your employers and shame them of the stats that our members have given us. The second one, I hope you never have to use, but after Dawnfresh and Orchard House, we felt there was a need to have a guide, in case another rogue employer, that's a millionaire, decides to go into administration overnight. There's a guide there, if that happens, what you can do straight away, so you're not stuck and you're not worrying, you're taking action straight away. Use them.

We had conversations about the need for resources. There is all sorts of stuff on your tables. Take them away and use them in your Branches. The whole point, as I mentioned earlier in the week, of changing your Annual Report, was so you can use it as an organising tool, showing people what their Union is doing, showing non-members what they can be part of if they join the BFAWU. Utilise it and we've got plenty more, so if you need some more, take them home because they'll be going in my boot otherwise.

Conference, we've got some brilliant people in our Union, doing remarkable things to encourage new members to join and I want to touch on some of the highlights of this week and some of the people in the room. Robbie, the work that you're doing in Cornwall is inspirational, you really are.

[APPLAUSE]

Freddie, your contribution about your experience as a refugee, joining our Union in the first week of working, I think touched everybody. Thank you for getting up and feeling comfortable to talk about that.

[APPLAUSE]

Jake in particular, but everybody that's got up and spoken about their mental health again this year. Being able to do so and feel safe enough to do so is, that's why our Union is so special. There is nobody that thinks bad of you, it's all about support, Solidarity and building each other up, so thank you for doing that.

[APPLAUSE]

Douggie, your contributions are always well researched, they're always comprehensive and they're always passionate. Keep doing them.

[APPLAUSE]

Mark, first-time Delegate, you've been up and down all week. I haven't necessarily always agreed with your contributions, but do you know what, you've got up and you spoke and absolutely fair play to you.

[APPLAUSE]

I mentioned this to you the other day, Julie. Thanks for asking about the accounts. I sit for hours before Conference, going through, thinking about questions that could be asked and making notes, ready to answer them. That's what we're here for, isn't it, that's what we're here for at Conference. Ask questions on the accounts, challenge us, it's your Union, as John's just said and don't let me just do all that work for nothing. So keep doing that, Julie, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Mark, I don't know where Mr Boombastic came from last night

[LAUGHTER]

that was a side of you I never thought I would see, but it was great. Thanks for that.

[APPLAUSE]

Mahinder, 50 years of membership, wow. That is a feat in itself.

[APPLAUSE]

The difference in Michael from last year when you came, you're a world away from where you were and it's so good to see that you're in a better place than you were then.

[APPLAUSE]

And everybody that I haven't mentioned, 'cause we'll be here well past 5 o'clock. Keep being amazing, keep doing what you're doing in your Branches, keep doing what you're doing for our Union, for your Union, because that's what draws people in. People join the Union because they see you doing what you're doing in your workplaces. They don't join the Union because of me and Ian as National Officers, they join the Union because of you and the work that you're doing, so keep doing it.

[APPLAUSE]

At the beginning of the week I said our Union is special and I think I've outlined just some of the ways that it is and we've got to do everything that we can to ensure it's here for another 100 years and beyond and it does mean working together, it does mean trying new things, it does mean supporting each other even if it's just sharing a post on social media and shouting out about our wins and building. Take those membership forms away and get them filled in. Go back into your workplaces and pick an issue to organise around. You know, Burtons are doing it at the minute around monthly pay. Mike told us yesterday, the day before, in a meeting that he's made six members, just by the membership and the non-members seeing that we're doing something. So pick a campaign idea and go away and organise. Engage with the campaigns that we've got in place, the ones that will no doubt come out of Conference, because there was enough motions around it and let's build our Union up together.

I just want to do a few thank you's, I've nearly done, first of all to Bianca. You'll have noticed some of the foodbank stuff went yesterday, she took some of it to a local parent and toddler group and a pensioner group and we'll make sure the other stuff goes to Stone Foodbank.

To the Exec members stepping down, I know Ian's just done a thank you. Joe and Pauline, thank you for the company in the car for the last few years and especially Pauline for all the cake that she brings. Tony for stepping in at last minute and teaching us magic tricks. Nick, thank you for challenging us and for teaching me new things, like there being a spinney-thing on the bottom of a pelican crossing. I know I'll explain that later in the bar.

To the new Executive Council members, I'm really looking forward to begin working with you and I'm excited about what that's going to look like. There's a lot of you, a lot of new members this year and I think that gives us an opportunity to build and grow and try different things. Yes, I'm excited for that.

Thank you to the Officials and the Clerks for everything they do all year.

To the President, to the Finance Officer for all their support, because I couldn't do what I do without them doing what they do.

To Ruth and Ange, my Sisters. Just a minute Ruth's leaving.

Conference, John Fox stole my line so I had to change it fast. The end is near.

[APPLAUSE]

It would be easy just to go back to work, after Conference, it's done for another year, we'll see you next year, but we need more than that. Leave here, go back to your Branches, engage with everyone, look out for Laura's engagement packs, members, non-members, ex-members, management about our Union. Talk to those who you wouldn't normally talk about, the power of the collective and what we can do when we come together. There are 4.1 million potential members in our industry, we're just scratching the surface. No-one else is going to ensure food workers interpret us or sex workers are safe at work, paid a decent wage and not exploited, we have to do that ourselves.

Safe journey home, Conference. Thank you for a great week. Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE and WHISTLES]

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: Please sit down, we haven't finished yet.

The National President, sorry, I do apologise.

The National President Ian Hodson's Final Address to Conference

Conference, what a fantastic week, it's been an absolute pleasure being in a Conference Hall and chairing this week. I was worried I might be on a Highway to Hell, but it turned out you are Pennies from Heaven.

I had to get someone in somewhere, do you know what I mean? Yes, but obviously I probably didn't even know, I could have gone to Penny Fair or something, but obviously only you would have known that.

It's been an absolute pleasure and obviously the debates that have taken place, you know, I think the General Secretary's just outlined exactly, you know, the contributions that you have made, so I'm not going to repeat that. I mean, my contributions are normally very political, you may have picked that up, I don't know.

I mean there was quite a few interesting debates that we've had this week. I mean obviously we were talking about pensioners earlier on and it is important that we stand up for pensioners, I mean and just to remind people, the reason why they sold off all our energy and all our water is so we could retire early, but now they're on about moving your retirement age up to 70. That was the government that did that, by the way. Or the policies of politicians who sold you the pup when they told you, when we sell off our gas, we sell off our electric, we sell off our gold, we sell off our water, we sell off our industry, that you will inherit the world, privatisation was going to save us. We'd all be walking down, on the seafront, because we'd got our yachts, because we were going to retire early and go to our yachts, that what they told you about the pensions.

Never buy into the lies of politicians. I mean, I do agree with Sean, they are liars and they are corrupt. They don't serve in our interest and I've got to say this too, because I do think it's important, this weekend, in Sheffield, there'll be another anniversary about Orgreave, the miners that were attacked for standing up for their right to work, to preserve their way of life, were attacked by the state, by the police, because they wanted to stand up and defend their jobs, 39 years of waiting for justice, when we all know and saw what the police did to working class people, because that's what they do to us. They wait until we die, then they give us decency and justice posthumously, because they don't value our lives or our contributions. That's why it's important to stand up and say that we will no longer accept what they want to do to us, it's important and there's been questions by the way and I heard the questions too, about the questions about political representation and the fact that we're not in the Labour Party.

We founded the Labour Party. It was set up, it was set up to represent the labouring classes. Starmer's Labour fails to represent striking workers at their time of need and that should be the duty of every leader and the Labour Party to be on those picket lines, supporting every single worker in struggle and nobody should be getting sacked from the front bench for failing to go, going to a picket line. We stand in Solidarity with every single striking worker, whether it's on the railways, whether it's on our Health Services, whether it's on the buses, whether it's on our picket lines at Allied and it's quite right, it's quite right for working people to stand up and say we've had enough, we're not going to be exploited any more. It's really critical and that's why

[APPLAUSE]

That's why we condemn Starmer's Labour Party, we condemn Starmer's Labour Party for failing to defend the right to strike, because they abstained. We did condemn the Labour Party, who last night told us they weren't going to oppose the Right to Protest Legislation being rushed through the House of Lords and the Houses of Parliament, because apparently being elected the opposition doesn't mean you oppose. If you don't oppose, what are you there for, just to collect the money? That's not the job of an opposition. An opposition is supposed to oppose the government and offer an alternative and that alternative is what you've been talking about, but that's the area and the space that the government wants to shut down and so does the Labour Party, because I think it's really, really important that when we have friends that stand up for us, we stand by their side too. That's why we should never shy away from supporting Jeremy Corbyn and I know someone suggested he was an anti-Semite

[APPLAUSE]

or any of that nonsense. Jeremy Corbyn is an anti-racist, he's got a history of it and he's always stood up for people wherever they come from. He's never been a racist and he is not an anti-Semite and we send to Jeremy Corbyn

[APPLAUSE]

a happy anniversary and a Solidarity message and I'll tell you as well. We've seen now the culture war's spreading into music, spreading into music. In 1980, obviously The Wall was released, it's an anti-fascist album, it tracks the role of what happens and what leads to all sorts of negativity and what leads to power grabs and how it can impact on society. In fact, in fact, it was such a cultural issue that when the Berlin Wall came down, they invited Rogers Waters to perform it. It wasn't an anti-Semitic when it was released and it's not anti-Semitic today. Roger Waters' only crime is that he believes in the Palestinians have a right to life, that's what he believes in and that's what he's being condemned for and let's look at what's happening in the North East too. Jamie Driscoll, Jamie Driscoll shared a platform with a film maker who you probably watched his films of, who's watched Daniel Blake, who's watched Kez, all of those films, probably the best British film maker we have ever produced. Ken Loach is not an anti-Semite, he's our cultural hero and he should be celebrated, not condemned. We stand with Ken Loach too.

[APPLAUSE]

And we stand, we stand for change in our society. We stand for the right to have council houses being built, we stand for a renationalised National Health Service, we stand for the renationalisation of the energy, the water and all of the utilities, the Post Office and all of the things that belong to us, that we built and that profit should come into your household and not into the shareholders that live in tax havens and we should be demanding it, but that's the debate they want to shut down. They don't want us to talk about the idea of Socialism, they don't believe that we should have any rights whatsoever, they want to take them all away and they want to stop noisy protests. Well, guess what, I ain't shutting up any time soon and neither are you and neither are we, because I'll tell you what

[APPLAUSE]

when we stand up, when we stand up, we can make huge changes. You've probably heard some of these comments before. You know, look at working class history, look at what we've achieved when we realise our power and our strength, when we realise it's through standing together in Solidarity. First off and obviously in Peterloo, 200 a few years ago, they did a march for democracy and got mowed down, but it didn't stop us and we won the right to vote. The Suffragettes, it didn't stop them when they were getting knocked over by king's and queen's horses, they still continued to protest until women got the right to vote. They promised us after the First World War a country fit for kings, they delivered us austerity, they delivered us poverty and then in the Second World War, when we came back, we demanded change, we got our NHS, we got our Welfare State, we got full employment, we got the end of poverty, we got free schooling, we got an education system from the cradle to the grave.

Those were forced on governments, not given to us, but forced on them, because working people came together and understood that Solidarity wins and it's something that we need to understand, as a working class, that is our duty. We have to fight for the next generation that comes along, that is our duty, that is why we're here, because we were shown 10 years ago, 10 years ago, when those remarkable people at Hovis, who we're celebrating the 10th anniversary of, stood up and defeated zero hours contracts, they stood together on the picket line and we should celebrate that because they are the fabric of this Trade Union and it'll ever be remembered, quite rightly so. You know, it was an incredible time, that picket line. I've never seen people come together, I've never seen the Union support that we received, obviously Fox's café, I thought it was very, very, thank you

I can go on a bit longer now and I know you're all wanting to go, but what an incredible, what an incredible opportunity it was for us to demonstrate what we can do. As bakers, you know, as workers, as members of a Trade Union, what an incredible achievement, because you know we got told we couldn't stop zero hours contracts.

We got told that, we got told they'd shut the factory down if we went on strike too, but do you know what? They said look, in five years' time if you allow these zero hours contracts to come in, everybody that works here will be on a zero hours contract anyway, so we're not going to take any notice of your nonsense. They paid hundreds of pounds to people to cross the picket line, they offered these workers hundreds of pounds when they were losing thousands of pounds because of striking and the response from those workers was, you know, I'm a little bit skint at the moment, but I'll tell you what, if I cross the picket line, I'll be a scab forever, so I'd rather be a little bit hard-up for a couple of weeks than ever cross a picket line because we never do it

[APPLAUSE]

we never cross a picket line. But Conference, quite clearly, we know the work we have to do. This Union is a proud Union and we're shrinking, our membership is shrinking and we have to do something about it, because if we don't do something about it, nobody will. We have to fight for every single member and we fight for every single member by making them understand what we stand for. We fight for every member by encouraging them to join the Trade Union by explaining how we can represent them and we tell them how stronger they will be if they join the Union, because they will make us strong and then we can achieve £15 an hour in our workplace instead of like Allied who are finding that their core rate of pay is £8 or £8.65 when they work for a £17 billion company. What an appalling position for those workers to find themselves in and what a disgusting place for Allied Bakeries to be, to condemn workers to a life of poverty, where they have to rely on the State to bail them out. It's incredible that that company, that makes £17 billion, suggests it's not in a position to pay those workers a decent living wage. Well, we've got news for Allied, we've got news for Allied, whatever it takes for those workers to win, this Union will back them and this Organisation's Representatives

[APPLAUSE]

will back them. We will support them and make sure none of them are forced into poverty while they're on that picket line. We'll go out and collect, we'll make sure that you are supporting them, we'll make sure that others are supporting them, we'll make sure that we as a Union are supporting them. We will fight to make sure the people at Allied get the just deserts that they are deserving of. I mean Conference, Conference, it's really, really important when you go from here that everything you've learnt, you take with you, everything you've stood for, because when you came, many of you didn't know each other, but the thing about it is, when you go away from here, you do. You know, you may come as strangers, but you're going to be leaving as friends and comrades and that's the important part, because what makes a difference to our Union is when you understand your power and your strength, because you're the reason why this Union exists, you're the reason why we organise. Without you, this Union is nothing. Without your ability to do what you do in your workplace and ensure and ensure people's terms and conditions get better, then people's terms and conditions would be even worse than they are today and you need to shout that from the rooftops. It's our duty to work together, it's our duty to make sure we fight for our class, it's our duty to make sure we stand up for the things that we value, it's our job to make sure that as we leave this Conference, we don't forget the things that we've said this week. So, thank you very much. Solidarity. Have a great, have a great evening.

[APPLAUSE]

You thought it was over, didn't you? You thought it was over. It'll be over in a minute. Have you all stood standing? Okay, we've got, we've got our man who's able to choose his own destiny, up here to sing a song of destiny. So I'm going to hand over to Chris Magill to lead the singing.

Brother Chris McGill – Branch 503: Cheers, you'll have to help me here. I'm a bit rough after that last speech.

[*THE RED FLAG SUNG*]

[APPLAUSE and WHISTLES]

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716 (Executive Council): One more song. A wee Scottish song.

[*AULD LANG SYNE SUNG*]

[APPLAUSE and WHISTLES]

[MUSIC PLAYING, *MR BOOMBASTIC*]

[CONFERENCE ENDS]

