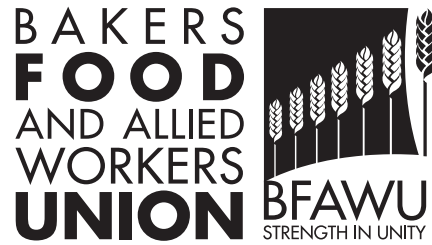




**The
One Hundred and Sixth
Annual Conference
Yarnfield 2025**

Verbatim 2024

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**Official Report
of the
105th ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

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

**from
Saturday 8 June 2024
to
Thursday 13 June 2024**

Contents

Sunday 9th June 2024

Rule Changes and New Rules

	Brother John Dunn Opens Conference	8
	Brother Ian Hodson, National President, gives his Opening Address	14
1	Rules 14.2, 14.7, 14.8g, 14.8L and 15.3 Branch 253	19
3	Rule 15.2	19
4	Rule 14.8	20
7	Rule 11	20
8	Rule 15.2	23
9	Rule 15.6	23
10	New Rule 14.5 (a)	24
	Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, opening address to Conference	26
12	Union Policies	29
14	Union Policies	29
15	Union Policies	31
16	Union Policies	32
	Composite 1	33
18	Union Policies	35
19	Union Policies	36
20	Union Policies	37
21	Union Policies	38
22	Union Policies	41

Monday 10th June 2024

	Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group, addresses Conference	46
24	Union Policies	52
25	Union Policies	52
	Composite 2)	54
27	Safety, Health and Environment. Region 3	57
28	Safety, Health and Environment. Region 5	57
29	Safety, Health and Environment. Region 3	60
30	Safety, Health and Environment. Region 4	61
31	Safety, Health and Environment. Region 3	63
32	Safety, Health and Environment. Region 4	66
33	Safety, Health and Environment. Region 3	69
34	Safety, Health and Environment. Executive Council	71
36	Safety, Health and Environment. Executive Council	74
37	Safety, Health and Environment. Executive Council	76
40	Workplace. Region 5	77

Tuesday 11th June 2024 79

	Gary Cook (STAMMA) addresses Conference	79
41	Workplace. Region 4	80
42	Workplace. Executive Council	80
43	Household. Region 5	81
44	Household. Branch 582	81
45	Household. Branch 580	82
	Composite 3.	84
48	Community. Branch 390	84
49	Community. Branch 459	85
	Sister Shelly Asquith, TUC, addresses Conference	87
50	Community. Branch 582	93
51	Community. Branch 459	94
52	Community. Branch 582	96
53	Community. Branch 580	97
54	Community. Branch 459	98
55	Community. Branch 580	100
56	Community. Region 3	101
57	Community. Region 5	103
58	Community. Region 5	103
59	Community. Region 4	105
60	Education Region 5	106
61	Education Region 3	107
62	Education Branch 405	109
63	Equalities Branch 390	110
64	Equalities Branch 390	111
65	Equalities Branch 390	112
66	Equalities Region 3	113
67	Equalities Executive Council	114
68	International Branch 390	115

Wednesday 12th June 2024

69	International Region 3	118
71	International Region 3	119
74	International Region 3	121
75	International Executive Council	122
76	Miscellaneous. Executive Council	123
	Composite 4.	124
	Composite 5	125
	Emergency Motion 1 Branches 356/331	126
	Emergency Motion 2 Branch 558	128
	Señora Montilla Diaz addresses Conference	130
	Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, gives her Closing Address to Conference.	134
	Brother Ian Hodson, National President, gives his Closing Address to Conference	135

Sunday

9th June 2024

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: [Okay, that's 9.30, can we shut the doors, please. Okay, General Secretary to call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Morning, everyone. Can you hear me? Yes, is that better? That's better, you can hear me now, can't you? Yes. Okay, Region 1, thank you. Region 2, Region 3, say that again, sorry. Region 4, Region 5, Region 7 and how many have we got online, John? Thank you very much.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Delegates. Can I remind everybody, no mobile 'phones should be switched on during Conference. If they do go off, then the Standing Orders are likely to fine you, for your mobile 'phone going off. If you do need to be contacted, in case, if you've got an emergency that you might be aware of, then you need to inform Standing Orders. Standing Orders are situated, where exactly are Standing Orders, are you, Room 9, Standing Orders is situated in Room 9. Anybody that needs to leave Conference or requires to do something during the Conference sessions, which includes the fringe meetings, then you must inform Standing Orders.

Anybody who doesn't do that could find themselves being investigated for leaving Conference without permission and could face possible banning from the following Conference. It's very, very important that during the time that you're in the Conference sessions, you keep Standing Orders informed of any family emergency or personal emergency you may have that you may need to leave Conference for and if you do need to leave Conference, you must inform Standing Orders in the appropriate manner, because we don't want to see anybody banned, we want to see everybody enjoy Conference and we want to see everybody taking and playing their role this week at Conference.

The toilets are just through that door. The first aid is clearly marked and I know downstairs they've got a first aid box. I'm not sure if there is one in here, but I know it's downstairs at reception. Like I say, Standing Orders is in Room 9 and it's out of bounds unless there's a need for you to go there and if you do need to go there, talk to one of the full-time Officials who you'll find on the door.

There is no smoking allowed, obviously. The legislation came in for that years and years and years ago, but sometimes we do have to remind people you can't smoke in your rooms either. There are fines in place and anybody who smokes in their room will face a fine and they will have to pay that fine themselves, the Union will not pay that fine. So if you get caught smoking in your room, you will get fined for smoking in your room, because you're breaking a law, but also they may ask us to ask you to leave Conference as well. So there's plenty of space outside to go and smoke, there's no need to smoke in your room. I know sometimes it can be a bit of a pain getting dressed to go outside but, you know, these aren't our rooms, these aren't our homes, these are, you know, places we use while we're here at Conference, so we just ask you to be respectful and act with the dignity that is entrusted in you as a Delegate to Conference not to smoke in your room.

Donations to food banks are going to go under that table, which says, yes, under there, under that table.

Obviously I've mentioned some of the etiquette that's expected, but in your packs that you all received there is something that says Etiquette, but because I'm full of etiquette, I haven't got one, but in your packs there is a document called Etiquette. Please have a look at it, please remember that, you know, the most important thing about us as a Trade Union is that we treat each other with dignity and respect and we recognise that the best way to enjoy Conference is that we are inclusive and not exclusive, we're a Trade Union and we work collectively in the interests of all people. So, obviously those are the basics and I'll go into some more stuff once we've officially opened Conference.

Now, normally the Conference is opened by a political figure, some Mayoral position that's given, but this year we thought that we, I mean he might describe himself as a nightmare actually, but we thought we'd invite someone to open our Conference who's one of us, he's somebody from our class, somebody from our movement, somebody who's stood up and understood the need to fight for the right to work and the fight to protect your community, somebody that was a hero of our movement and somebody who was on strike for 12 months, because this is the 40th anniversary of the establishment attack on the working class communities up and down this country. So it's my pleasure to invite John Dunn to open our Conference officially.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Dunn Opens Conference

Comrades, I don't know if I can live up to that introduction, but obviously I'm not a civic dignitary, Ian says you usually have a Mayor. I don't have a chain of office, but I do have a few badges of honour. One is a scar on the back of my head that I carry to this day and two, I don't know if you've ever had a convicted criminal officially open your Conference. To this day, for 40 years, I've carried two criminal convictions, watching and besetting and threatening behaviour, given to me during our year-long strike, simply for wanting a job.

For wanting that job, I ended up with severe concussion and a criminal conviction that still haunts me to this day and I've been trying to get, for 40 years I've tried to get that criminal conviction lifted. I've sent Freedom of Information requests off, I've done all sorts and the reply I get back, we have no record of you ever being arrested. Tell me how you end up with two criminal convictions, having appeared in court, also suing three people, the copper who did me and two chief constables, how come there's no record of that? And I'll tell you why, because secret files about what the government did to my Trade Union, 40 years ago, have been locked away until 2066. I'll be 114 then, I think, so I'm on a healthy eating plan to get there, because I want to see, I want to finally clear my name. But enough of that. Thank you for the honour of this invite. I last spoke at your Conference in Southport in 2016, remember that year? We had a bit of hope. I think John McDonnell was your keynote speaker that year. I thanked you then for the invite. I also thanked you for proving that fighting Trade Unions still exist and I'd like to thank you again for that.

[APPLAUSE]

In these dark times, in everything we've witnessed for 40 years since our strike went down, you have been holding this movement together. You're the heroes, you're the people who've fought against rapacious employers, who've fought to earn decent living standards for your members and do you know what?, you're winning. So, once again, thank you for that.

[APPLAUSE]

And I've also got something more recent to thank you for. Thank you for disaffiliating to the shit show, known as the Party, formerly known as Labour. Well done.

[APPLAUSE]

And on that matter, in 2016, that year I addressed your Conference, I don't know if it's a coincidence, but that Party suspended me, suspended me, along with your General Secretary at the time, Ronnie Draper. I think he got back in a lot quicker than me, it took me three years and then they eventually expelled me after 51 years' membership and they're so, this is the Party of government, they're so up-to-date, they expelled me a year after I'd left, that's how good they are and on that matter, I bring apologies from Sir Keir Starmer, QC, Knight of the Realm. He can't be here, because he's busy not feeding hungry kids and supporting a genocide in Gaza.

[APPLAUSE]

I also have to admit, I feel a little bit guilty, a little bit apologetic, because the troubles I've talked about that you face, in fighting back against rampant employers, can be traced back to when our strike was defeated, 40 years of setbacks, of anti-Trade Union attacks, of this thing, this attack upon our class that they dress up in that fancy way, Austerity. Only for a few, only for the likes of us, not for the rich. Your tax money, my tax money, even my mineworkers' pension that the government nicks 50% of every year and has stolen £8 billion from us, that we could be spending in the outlets where your members work, keeping people in work, but no, they choose to make us suffer in class war reparations. That money, together with your hard-earned taxes, has flown uphill. This idea of trickle down economics, where you make the wealthy even wealthier and a few crumbs drop off their table to us, it's a fallacy. Instead, they take our money, they bank it in the Cayman Isles, they don't pay tax on it, but you know, worse of all, your money, my money, is supplying weapons to Nazis in Ukraine and bombing innocent women, children and citizens in Gaza.

[APPLAUSE]

That's the world we inherit, that's the world we've got, that's the world we've got to fight to change, because our political elites of every description, Republican and Democrat in the U.S., Tories red and blue in this country, are taking us to the edge of nuclear oblivion, something I'd never thought I'd say in my lifetime, but for some reason they believe in war, war, war, war against us, war against these so-called enemies. Well, I'll tell you something. No Russian, no Chinese, none of those people have ever done anything to me. The only people that have ever attacked me have been our ruling class, the people we've got to fight.

[APPLAUSE]

So comrades, I don't think we should be too downhearted. Okay, the strike, our strike was defeated, the NUM has been destroyed, our mining communities are now wastelands, but do I get disillusioned about that? Sometimes, but then I realise that I'm still here, we're still here, we're still fighting and Thatcher's dead.

[APPLAUSE]

And not only that, we've got to clear out her bastard offspring from office as soon as we can. So that's our mutual fight. Comrades, we stood tall, we stood proud for a whole year. One Union betrayed and betrayed by the TUC, by the so-called leader of the opposition, Neil Kinnock. Spit when you say that name. Sold us out, left us to fight alone, but with marvellous Solidarity from rank and file Trade Unions, from the women especially of our communities, we sustained that strike. Our Union funds were sequestered, we didn't have money to pay our people, instead the movement stepped up. In Derbyshire, where I was a miner, the Women's Action Group, after Derbyshire NUM had its funds seized, went fundraising, fed us, kept us warm and at Christmas, we had the best Christmas possible.

Those days that I still remember, that are etched into my soul, give me hope because comrades, if we, one Union, can get so close and we came close to victory four times, that strike was settled in terms favourable to my Union, sabotaged by Thatcher and her cabinet and now the secret papers, all except those locked away, are proving how she micromanaged that and why won't they give us an inquiry into Orgreave? Because they don't want us opening the door and shining a light on the savagery, the police brutality, the rigged courts, the press, everything that was stacked against us, they don't want you to know, they don't want the proof coming out that they organised that. That's the lengths they'll go to, comrades. We only have to look now, anti-Union laws. If you're marching in the street, you can be arrested and the most tragic thing of all, if you march through a city street, wanting peace, not to see women and children blown to bits, if you're marching for peace, you're called a hate marcher. You can even get arrested if you make a bit of a noise on a demo.

Well, I don't know what they'd say about me, I can't keep my gob shut anyway, but I don't worry about that, I don't worry at all, because they don't do those things because they're strong, they do it because they're weak and the political elite are afraid of us, they're afraid of the organised working class. They've seen us, after all these long years, after so many decades, getting up off our knees and fighting back. So just imagine, comrades, if we rose up as one, if collectively we fought, not just for better working conditions, not just for better wages, but for a better society that's not based on profit, but is based on people, where everybody is of equal merit. Just think what we could imagine. We have the power. None of these lights would be on if somebody didn't go to work and fuel power stations and throw switches. We wouldn't eat if your members didn't provide food for our tables. We have the power. They might have the money, but they've got nothing else.

So comrades, if I'd say nothing to you today, let's fight the common enemy, let's fight to bring about the just society that we all believe in. Fighting together, we can achieve that. We can also have the greatest revenge possible. I don't mean a bloody revenge, although I'm open to suggestions, what we can have is the ultimate revenge where they get rid of this rotten system that forces people to go hungry, that makes you afraid to switch your heating on, that wants refugees fleeing from countries that we've bombed to drown in the Mediterranean or the Channel, that criminalises people fleeing war and Imperialist-imposed poverty. We can change all that. We can get our revenge for everything we've done and I want revenge for what they've done to my communities, for breaking my head, for convicting me. I want revenge for two of our murdered pickets, who we must never forget and remember, our forefathers didn't just face anti-Trade Union laws, they were put up against walls and shot. People like Churchill ordered troops to fire on striking miners. Peterloo, people who just wanted the right to vote, were mown down with sabres. They're not doing that to us yet, comrades, so let's fight back before they do and comrades, tomorrow can be ours. Let's make sure. Polish your picketing boots, get ready for the fight and make sure that next time, we win. Solidarity.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That's how you open Conference, isn't it.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, I think you'll agree, that's how you open Conference. John, when somebody comes along and does such a fantastic speech as that, we always give them a little gift to say thank you, so there's a pewter baker in there and some of the fantastic products that our members make. Thank you very much.

Brother John Dunn: That's the healthy eating plan gone.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much, it's an honour.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Am I switched on, am I switched on? Hello? Yes, you can hear me now, okay.

Obviously the next thing to do, right, so as we go through, I know there's some new Delegates in the room, but as we go through, I'll explain what happens. Obviously Conference is run by Standing Orders, so Standing Orders will come, they will make, on this occasion he's bringing his opening address to Conference, but will then also talk about motions that are going to stand. Each time that the Standing Orders comes on at the stage and gives, you know, what motions are going to be standing, I will ask you then to accept the Standing Orders Report, obviously you have to show your hands. If there is an objection to what the Standing Orders Report says, I mean, I don't know, they could come up and make a mistake, saying that motion 22 stands and it's been withdrawn and then you could challenge that, but in general you're just voting to say that you accept the report, but obviously if there is something that you need to challenge, then obviously you're entitled to do so. If you are challenging anything, then you have to come down to the rostrum.

Every time you come to the rostrum, you need to give your name and your Branch Number and then give your contribution, yes? It's the same as when you're giving a speech, so anybody that's new that's not given a speech before, every time you come to the rostrum, you have to give your name and your Branch Number and make your contribution and the reason for doing that is because next year you will get a book, which is a verbatim, which tells you what went on at Conference, but if you don't give your name, we can't put your name to it and yes and then Sarah has to sit through it all and painstakingly go over and hope she recognises you and can relate the name to you and obviously we don't want to put Sarah under that pressure, do we? Don't know, don't know, so please make sure you give your name as well. So, obviously there is no Chair of the Standing Orders, so we'd like to thank obviously the guy who's not making a court appearance today, but fortunately he's brought his suit in case he does have to make one later in the week, but the Acting Chair of Standing Orders, which is Glyn, so obviously come and give your opening address, Glyn.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): Thank you, Mr President. Good morning. On behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, I welcome you all to the Annual Conference. It is the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee that procedures at this year's Conference are as follows. Conference will be called to order each morning at 9.30 a.m. prompt, until 12.30 each afternoon or 12 o'clock depending on dinnertimes. Each afternoon, 1.30 until 3, which are followed by mandatory fringe meetings, today, tomorrow and Tuesday, from 3.30 until 5. Tea breaks, guest speakers and all presentations will be at the President's discretion. Each session will begin with the 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 absent Delegates, with Scrutineers, sorry, absent Delegates, yes. Will scrutineers please collect all nomination papers for TUC Delegates as early as possible and bring them to Standing Orders Room 9 by 11 o'clock this morning. The office door will be closed at 11 o'clock. Tomorrow morning, Scrutineers are asked to collect the ballot papers and again have them at the Standing Orders by 11 o'clock.

The door again will close at 11, but members of the Committee will be on duty outside the doors to answer any questions. Any Delegates coming to Standing Orders on Conference business must have the support of their delegation. Please carry a credentials card with you at all times. If you leave it on the table at lunchtime, then you will not be allowed back in the room. The Officials will stop you and you will be sent to Standing Orders and possibly fined, of up to £5. A little reminder, like the President told us, please switch off all of your electronic devices. If you must have them on, leave them on silent please. Also it's good, in a personal thing, to hear and see so many friendly faces out there that I know and see Andy from Branch 405 back at Conference in person and Mark and Josh and our new young member from 558, Ben, back at Conference now in person.

So will you please now turn to your Agenda. The first part of the Agenda dealing with rules. So, motion 1

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just before you do, Glyn.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): Sorry.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: So obviously, just for any new Delegates, it's got on the front The 105th Annual Conference, Yarnfield, 2024 and then it's got Saturday the 8th June to Thursday June the 24th and it's called The Final Agenda 2024, just in case there are any new Delegates and you're not sure which document you're looking for and they're on the tables, because there is another document which looks exactly the same, but that's the Annual Report and the Treasurer's Report and we'll go through the Annual Report after the Standing Orders, just so you're clear.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: They're over there, apologies.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): So hopefully you should all be on the pages that say Motions. Does everybody still now have the Final Agenda? Anybody not got one? Everybody on the right page? Motions? Thank you, I'll continue. So, Motion 1 stands, Motion 2 is out-of-order, Motion 3 stands, Motion 4 stands, Motion 5 is out-of-order, Motion 6 is out-of-order, Motion 7 stands, Motion 8 stands, Motion 9 stands, Motion 10 stands. That's the end of this report.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. So Conference, everybody accept that report? That's pretty unanimous. Thank you very much. Thanks, Glyn. Good luck.

Hokey cokey, reet. Official welcomes, official welcomes. We see some people around the room actually, obviously we've got Watkins and Gunn over there, so you can see them and PayPlan over there. We've got TLC over there and we've got Thompsons over there and we've got a big poster up there as well, that says Changing Lives for the Better, Standing up for You and I don't know if you noticed, they did, I thought that was pretty cool, thought that was pretty cool, does what it says on the poster. It's not like getting on a bus, is it, where it says OXO and you can't find any. Can I just say that obviously we haven't got Ron Todd here, the Ron Todd Foundation decided to fly off to Thailand. I don't know whether it was something that we said, but they've flown off to Thailand, probably got bored of us, they've been here for a few years, probably didn't like the sewing you made last year or something, I don't know. We've got, I'm not sure we've got them here yet, we've got Stand Up To Racism, I haven't seen them. We've got obviously Matt from The Morning Star, who's there, so obviously he will be reporting, so obviously a lot of the stuff that you will say will probably get picked up and reported in the media. We've got Healthwatch here, Healthwatch? Not yet, they're coming. STAMMA, they're coming this afternoon. Unity Trust, they're coming here at some point. Credit Union's tomorrow. Rosa Lux Foundation, tomorrow. Irwins are over there, they're our filming and technical guys, they're going to make us look very professional and apparently make me look like Brad Pitt, is that right? No. I got told you were really good. Obviously on the stage, one of the things you'll notice is obviously, I don't know whether you can put the people online up there while I'm just speaking, so I can introduce at least a couple of them? Yes, we've got one, I might as well introduce Rachel then, there's Rachel Hart, who's recently got married and I'm sure we all send our congratulations to her and her new husband and obviously she's been a long-standing member of our Executive, so congratulations on getting married. Obviously got to get used to calling you Rachel Hart, not Rachel Mullen, but I'm sure we'll get used to it and that's normally the person that sits next to me here, but I think he was worried about coming over as well and sitting next to me, so that's our normal Vice President, which is Kevin Flood. So you'll notice next to me I've got, I mean obviously you'll have seen him, you can't miss him really, he's normally got his shorts on but today he's having to wear big boy pants and everything, aren't you, but he's going to be acting as the Vice President this week. I believe he is very good, I believe he is very good, so obviously is there any We've got another one, well we've only got his cushions at the moment, so we're going to have to wait for Sean to come back and grace us with his presence and then when he comes back, we'll put him on the screen in case anybody's forgotten, there we go, there's Sean, making his contribution, hold on, hold on, is he coming? Yes, are you in Standing Orders Sean, or what? Okay. While we're waiting for Sean to grace us with his presence, I'll introduce the rest of the gang, so we've got Dave here, then we've got Michael and then I think it's Tony, oh no it's not, it's not, it's Curtis, obviously hiding in between, Tony Curtis yes, we've got Tony and Curtis and we've got Roger Moore at the end. We've got Peter, I was persuaded and for people who don't watch UK Gold, you probably have no idea what I'm talking about. So, are you back now, Sean? That's good of you. Can you put him up? It's just in case anybody's forgotten what he looks like. That's Sean and he'll be joining us tomorrow, but he might be a little grumpy because he's getting up really early in the morning to get here, so we're just hoping, we're just hoping that's he's not too grumpy. So that's our Executive, that's everybody on the Executive, isn't it, that's everybody, yes, got everybody.

We've got some new Branches here as well, which is Kettle Foods, which is Branch 112, over here, welcome.

[APPLAUSE]

And that's Chris Read, so welcome Chris. We've got Daisy Medcalfe from Greggs, Enfield as a first-time Delegate. Chris Bolt from Warburtons, Enfield, who's a first-time Delegate. Zolton, Zoltan [Csete] from Region 2 of Memory Lane Cake. We've got Thomas [Iwaniak], I'm not pronouncing your surname, I'm really not, I'm so bad, as you will pick up through the week, I'm not very good with my pronunciations, it's the locality I think I was born in. We've got Leigh Wallace, who's online somewhere, LeighWallace? We've got James Cushley from Branch 500. We've got Joshua Baines, we've got Ben Harley, Arslan [Ayub], Jonathan Marshall, Patricia Evans has very kindly spelt out for me. Patrycja [Grabowska] from Manor, Carlton.

We've got Margie Henderson from Greggs, Bailey Hill and we've got Ian Cook, also from Greggs, Balliol and that's it. So welcome, I hope you enjoy Conference. If there are, obviously you'll be sat next to some really seasoned Delegates who will know how Conference works inside-out and they'll be able to give you guidance all the way through the week. If not, talk to John.

You'll notice when you came in that the full-time Officials are looking very smartly presented and well turned out, were making sure you were guided to the appropriate places where you needed to be sat and they will be doing that role all week. So thank you very much to the full-time Officials.

The Scrutineers are Region 1, Baktour Singh, Region 2, we haven't got one for Region 2, Scrutineer for Region 2, John? Otherwise you'll find yourself doing two jobs, is that multi-tasking? Who's doing it? Nick, okay, Nick's doing the Scrutineer. Okay, I've got Duggie Johnson in Region 3, John Fitzpatrick in Region 4, Joanne Anderson in Region 5 and Noel Mullen in Region 7. I think their first call of duty, not the game obviously, their first call of duty will be tomorrow when we do the ballots, if I remember rightly. Oh aye, yes, don't forget to collect them in today, yes, yes, so obviously Scrutineers, you need to make sure that you collect the nominations before 11 o'clock and they are in the packs, so I think it's just for the TUC? It's just the nominations for the TUC, so if there's one of your delegation that's interested in going to the TUC, somebody's interested in going to the TUC, then you just nominate them. If you're not aware of anybody, then clearly you don't have to nominate if you don't know anybody, or you may be asked by somebody if you will nominate them and then that's up to you what you do.

Oh aye, yes. On the issue of noise, right, one of the things that's really, really important, a lot of people put a lot of time and effort into preparing for making a contribution at Conference, so it's very courteous, very courteous if we can make sure that when they come to the rostrum, we listen and give them the respect that they deserve, because if you haven't been up here and spoke before, it can be nerve-wracking, but once you've done it once, it becomes a lot easier, but obviously you're always going to be nervous, because when you're passionate about something, which has made you want to get up and speak in the first place, then quite clearly you are going to be nervous about it because you know you want to get it right, so it's really, really important that we give the people the courtesy, when they arrive at the rostrum, that we don't speak during, while they're giving their presentation and not only that, we can hear you and obviously we don't want to hear you, unless you're giving a contribution and we want to hear you in a break, but not during the Conference sessions and that goes for the likes of Frank too, who I can always hear all over the Conference floor.

Okay. If you witness or experience any behaviour not in line with our policies or the Conference etiquette, then obviously you do not have to tolerate it, it's not acceptable and go to Standing Orders and report it, yes. You don't have to accept anything that is unwelcome, that is unnecessary and unwarranted and unwanted. So, go to Standing Orders and report it.

I think, for introductions, that's probably it, isn't it? I think we got through them alright, didn't we? Not a bad morning, give myself a tick.

Okay, so you'll find, are they on the tables or in the pack? They're on the table, they're on the table. It looks like the one that you marked off to say that we're standing, but it doesn't say Final Agenda, it says Annual Report and Treasurer's Report. Then I've got to go back to my notes to remember what I'm asking you to do and it doesn't tell me. We start at Page 43? Okay. So has everybody got the book? Hey, do you know what? I mean, if I'd have opened this book up first, right, it tells me who everybody is. I don't have to test my memory. So you'll see a lovely set of pictures on one side, which is on Page 42, so if you open that Annual Report on Page 42, you'll see some lovely pictures, which obviously is and then we're going to start on Page 43, yes? So what I will do is, I will read out the pages and I'm sure somebody will get up and you get up and you come down to the rostrum if you've got a question on that particular page and try and do it when we're on that page, not like they normally do at the Executive and they go no, I want to go back five pages, so show them how it's done. I call out the page, raise your hand, tell me you want to raise a question, come down to the rostrum, ask your question, go back to your seat, we'll be all very courteous and give you an answer, if we can. Okay. So, Page 43 and it says Executive Briefs and it's got the date of 1st – 4th August, 2023, held at Quorn Grange Hotel. This is when you might have to look out, in case I miss somebody's hand, okay? Because when I look down, you see, I might miss you. Okay. 44. 45. 46. Okay, on Page 47, it starts at the top, 7th – 9th February, held at Stanborough House. So, obviously that's indicating these are a different set of minutes, obviously from the February Executive, so Page 47. Page 48. 49. Okay. On Page 50, you'll see at the top, it says 7th – 10th May, held at Quorn Grange Hotel, obviously this is from the May Executive, so Page 50. I love a Sunday. Page 51. Okay, right, okay.

Before we go on to the Treasurer's Report, I believe we're now ready with the screen, for the obituaries. I think what we'll do is, we'll stand up, this is to recognise the people who have died during the year, who were members of the Union.

Thank you.

We'll go on to the Treasurer's Report. So, you'll see the Treasurer's Report starts on, where it starts with Treasurer's Report, which has got no page number at the bottom, that's just to throw me out, so obviously the page that I need to start at is Page 1. So again, like I did with the Executive Minutes, I'm going to read out a page. Again, if you want to ask a question about that particular page, raise your hand and come down and ask your question at the rostrum, so I'm going to ask the pages again and go through it page-by-page. So, Page 1. Page 2. This is how it's done, for the new Delegates.

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Changing Plan Assets, Administration Expenses, £49,000 last year, £86,000 in 2023, so I'm wondering why there's such a huge, because last year, if you remember, it had jumped significantly, because you said there'd been quite a lot of work done on it, but we've almost doubled, so I'm just wondering why?

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: There was a little thing in November, of the crash that we all had, which meant that we had to go back and look again at the investments, we had to deal with the impact of the economic disaster caused by the Tories and unfortunately when the actuaries have to re-work and draw money down and get permission off us to change things and react to situations that we can't foresee, there's bills to be paid for that unfortunately, Julie and it was quite significant because the whole world changed overnight, didn't it?

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): It did, but it's definitely a massive cost.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: It is, it is and, you know, we're still looking at how we reduce costs with the actuaries, how we change things, how we do meetings more efficiently to reduce those costs, but unfortunately because of what happened and what we had to do to change the Pension Scheme and look at the strategy and move things about because of that, it took a lot of work.

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): And further down, the same section, Other, it was £6,000 in 2022, it's now £98,000 in 2023.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: I've not got an answer for that

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Right

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: but I will get an answer for you and I'll come back.

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Okay, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers. Anybody else on Page 2? Cool.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Julie, sorry, I have got an answer, because my notes are at the top. ■■■■■ and ■■■■■, an ex-Official wanted to draw down some of his pension, that is their lump sum payments together, £98,000, but it's up at the top as well. Apologies, my notes were there.

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 701: Page 2, under Amounts Recognised and Provident? Loss Accounts. Total pension costs recognised in the Pension Fund, it was £3m, 204, now there's a deficit of £115,000. What's that, please?

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: I don't know why that's like that, Noel, but I will check and I would just like to apologise, in my haste to try and answer Julie's question, I mentioned two names and I shouldn't have done, so we will sort that out through the appropriate channels of data breaches. Apologies, Conference. I'll get an answer for you on that, Noel.

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

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Looking at the, under the Less Expenditure, Contributions to Labour Party and Election Funds etc., last year it was £325, this year it's £1,875, so I'm wondering why such a huge difference?

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: I believe that's from the local elections that were run last year. We had some members and some applications for funds, but I will not read names out again, I'll get some more information and send it digitally after Conference, on who and where.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Anybody else on Page 3? No? Page 4. Page 5. Page 6. Okay, so if you turn to Page 10. Page 10. Page 11. Page 12. Page 13. Page 14. Page 15.

Okay, to the Conference then, so for the new Delegates in the room and people who may have forgot, what we do now is we put this document in front of the Conference to ask if you accept the report as we've just gone through it, obviously with the responses that's been given to the questions that's been asked, so obviously we ask you if you accept that report, so obviously you need to show your hands, when I ask, but very good, very good, I do like people that are all ready to go, it shows enthusiasm. So, all those in favour of the document and the report? Anybody against? That's unanimous, thank you very much.

Okay, so yes, so as people will be aware, there has recently been a political ballot that we've held as a Trade Union, which we have to do every 10 years, which obviously is just about making the Union use its funds to comply with political legislation, that basically costs us a significant amount of money, so we can continue to campaign on issues that are political, whether it's to support the NHS, whether it's enough to fight for £15 an hour, to call for them not to change the legislation and the right for us to be able to withdraw our labour or the right to protest, as John quite rightly talked about, or to support the campaigns such as organised, you know, for Truth and Justice, for the Orgreave situation. As a Union, we are prohibited from that if we haven't got a political ballot, that's enabled us to be able to political campaign, so obviously in recent weeks we've done that and, you know, I'm pleased to say that, you know, a whopping 97.2% of people voted for us to keep the political ballot, so well done for everybody that voted

[APPLAUSE]

there was just 50 people, or 2.8% of people that rejected the need for us to politically campaign. So thank you very much, thank you for that continued support. It is really, really important, because part of the reasons why we were founded in the first place, you know, was because we needed a political voice and as a Trade Union, we've used our voice very effectively over the years. So, thank you to you and thank you to those members that have taken part and I believe this will go on the website, will it? So, you'll be able to find the full details of it, because I don't think you want me to read it all out, well, you might do, I don't know, but obviously I'm not going to. So, obviously thank you very much for that and thank you to members who are back at the Branch.

Oh yes, it is, isn't it, what time is it? Shall we have a brew first?

[Several Delegates agreeing to a brew first]

Okay, then. We're going to go for a brew, so can you be back in here for 10 to, 10 to 11. 10 to 11, don't confuse me.

[BREAK]

Okay. Okay, can we shut the doors, make sure everybody's in, thank you very much. Everybody take their seats. Everybody settle down. Okay. Can you all, so I've been asked to make a couple of announcements. Obviously the, Yarnfield has asked me to remind people that there is designated smoking areas and, you know, obviously we need to go and use the designated smoking areas, which are obviously just round the side and not in front of the door, this is because unfortunately the smoke blows into the reception area and obviously they like to keep a separate smoking and non-smoking people apart, but obviously come together when neither side are smoking, so obviously just making that announcement. We've also got, I don't know if, does everybody know, everybody must know Robbie? Yes, I'm sure everybody must know Robbie, I mean you can't miss Robbie. I mean, Robbie's the one that's decked out in Bakers Union, you know, looking very fashionable, absolutely, absolutely, give us a twirl.

[APPLAUSE]

But he's brought a load of badges and some people may have missed it, I'm one of those that did miss it, we were doing another food bank collection and so what Robbie's doing is, he's asking people to get a badge from him, make a donation and everything that he raises from those badge sales will then be used to go to the food bank, so thank you very much, Robbie, because I know you do them at your own expense as well. So, thank you, Robbie.

[APPLAUSE]

I think, am I ready, hold on a minute, let me get some water, because my nerves are going, my nerves are going, I'm not sure what I'm doing.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool): I would now like to invite the National President to give his opening address to Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President, gives his Opening Address

I'll tell you what, it's a lot further than what it was before, isn't it? Whose idea was it to put it all the way over here? It's a long walk that, get a couple of steps in, maybe.

I'll tell you what was really interesting yesterday. I mean, you learn a lot of things, because I made a conscious decision not to drink any more, so I stopped drinking, so I'm learning a lot more now. I mean, obviously, can I just say that being under the influence of alcohol isn't always necessarily a good thing. You don't always necessarily make the right comments, but I'll tell you what, you do learn a lot, you do learn a lot, like obviously we all know that Sean's recently been on the road to Damascus and he's a changed person, but what you may not have realised is his Branch at 558 are going to put him forward to be the next Pope

[LAUGHTER]

So, you know, Pope Sean, Pope Sean, which I thought was absolutely fantastic and, you know, it's great to see that obviously moving on from the Trade Union, he will be going into actually preaching, but you can imagine the scenes, I think, in Rome when he calls his first Mass, which obviously will be He's a Good Fella, or something along those lines, but there'll be a lot of chanting, I'm sure, that will be going on and a lot of raving, so I look forward to seeing obviously Mark putting Sean forward to be the next Pope. But also you come across so many people, you know, over the years, I've come across many, many people that have made magnificent contributions to our Trade Union and the roles that they've played, you know, have changed the way we look at things, changed the way I look at things as a human being, changed the way that this Union acts and changes, you know, things in the workplace and negotiates and improves terms and conditions, you know and they're just like, you know, it's just us, just normal people who go to work, but they have a contribution to make. One of those such people, obviously, we saw him up last was Sean Welsby, our former Vice President, who unfortunately, you know, he passed away earlier this year.

He was a phenomenal guy, you know, he believed in, you know, fighting against injustice, standing up for the members in his workplace, standing up in the community and fighting against the inequalities and the hardship that people suffered. He was an extraordinary guy and, you know, he had a great sense of humour. He was a City fan, I mean obviously, you know, he had a downside as well, but he was an extraordinary fella that was very passionate, very passionate about the things that he did, believed, you know, that we all had a right to a decent life and we all had a right to respect and I think, you know, obviously I'm going to miss him very much. I'm going to miss the contributions that he made to us at the Warburtons Groups, contributions he made outside, you know, the work that we were going to do together in Wigan, it's going to be obviously a shame he's not going to be there, because he would have been absolutely brilliant at it. So, obviously remembering Sean, I think, is really important, remembering, you know, the contributions he made to this Union and in particular to the people at Warburtons and I was really pleased at the last Executive that the Executive have proposed and obviously I put it to the Warburtons people and the Branch Secretary's going to talk about it, that going forward we'll never forget Sean because every year there will be a presentation given to a Warburtons representative who's done something that the members of Warburtons feel is significant and there will be an award every year at Conference that will be presented to somebody from Warburtons and I'm really pleased and proud that the Executive have taken that step and obviously I look forward to the first presentation, which our General Secretary will give next year.

Also, you know, I'm not just going to talk about people who unfortunately have passed away, but obviously Derm, Derm Best has been an absolute stalwart, especially in health and safety. Derm Best has played a significant role. I mean, some of the things that Derm did, you know, impacted you in your workplaces, because he identified some of the issues that caused major health problems in flour and he launched a campaign which changed some of the enzymes in flour, but obviously besides that he played an absolute critical role in shaping our health and safety for many, many years and obviously I'm going to miss him very much on our Health & Safety Committee. Unfortunately he had to step down because of his health, but I'm sure we all wish him well and maybe one day we'll announce that a Health & Safety Award will be named after Derm Best. I don't know if somebody wants to put that motion forward but, you know, it would be a very fitting tribute for somebody who's contributed so much on health and safety.

And of course recently we've had to wave goodbye, I mean obviously you will have noticed that she's not here, she used to buzz round, she was always buzzing even when she was drinking in the bar late at night. People who have been obviously here for many years will remember Jan, but she's now decided, at the tender age of 71, 71, I mean obviously if you met her you will still think she was in her 50's, I don't mean that disrespectfully but obviously, you know, she's 71, but she's still darting about, but she's about to fly off and become Jan Chalmers, flying around the world and doing all of these different activities. I believe she's going zip-wiring and mountain climbing and BMX racing and she's got all of these sorts of activities that's going on, but obviously, you know, she's made and played a massive role for this Trade Union over many, many years, so obviously we wish her well and obviously the full-time Officials, I mean obviously, Pauline 'phoned me up and said that she was retiring, obviously she's not in the room so it doesn't really work when she's not in the room, but obviously, you know, I worked with Pauline, did I work with Pauline?

We were in the same Region together, but we did a lot of stuff together and obviously, you know, the stuff that she did around the Credit Union and obviously she's a full-time Official that obviously played a massive role over the years and obviously she's retired now as well, but I think she's coming back, she's coming back for a day, I think it's a day, knowing Pauline, she always used to overstay her welcome, so she might be two days, but if you didn't know Pauline, she'll be doing the Credit Union and it's really good that she's staying involved with the Credit Union and we thank her for all of the work as a full-time Official and obviously for the work that she's continuing to do with the Credit Union going forward.

So yes, so obviously that's happened in, you know, in the last few months. It's been an interesting and obviously, you know, we're all getting older I suppose.

So welcome to everybody who's a new Delegate. Welcome to all you seasoned Delegates. Welcome to you, I hope you enjoy Conference. I know obviously we sometimes have some gripes about the Conference facilities, but I really enjoyed the conversation I was having in relation to the facilities, because I have to keep reminding people, you know, I have to keep reminding people that this is what you vote for when you say you can't use the Britannia Hotels. We can't go and book into a seaside resort because you moved a motion to stop us from being able to do that and I think the facilities here at Yarnfield are excellent. I think they provide everything, the resources that we need. I think the rooms that are provided are ideal, they give you your own space if you want to be able to go and take your own time, you're not having to share with anybody. I think you get a choice of food, which is fantastic, you know, because obviously people never used to get a choice of food, they just used to go in and they got a plate and they could put stuff on or not put stuff on, that was the choice, but here you actually get a different choice of menu, so I think, you know, this is what we were told that members, you know, who were attending Conference wanted, they wanted a facility that provided good food, that the rooms were decent and I think, you know, the Executive and obviously our General Secretary, you know, have done a phenomenal job of making sure that this Conference runs and I think they've done a phenomenal job of making sure that you are accommodated in a way that actually meets what your demands have been, so I thank obviously Yarnfield for putting up with us again.

Whether we're here next year, I don't know, but obviously there will be a discussion. Apparently they're re-building Durham, all of it now, which is why obviously we've been delayed in getting to Durham, but I think it's really important that we understand that when we do come to Conference, the aim of Conference is to talk about the issues that we face in our workplace, to obviously have a good time, absolutely communicate and socialise with one another, but the most important reasons we're here is to make the policies to take this Union forward, to build a Solidarity in our workplaces that creates the opportunity to improve the terms and conditions of our members, because that's why we're at Conference, because it's about our membership and it's about the importance of representing their interests and their needs and their desires and that's the reason why, you know, we come here and I think what's really also important too is to remember the backdrop and I think a lot of our motions this week – I'm getting old, so my mouth gets dry a bit quicker than it used to – I think, you know, we're meeting at a time really of monsters aren't we, it's a really dangerous period in our history. I think John obviously mentioned in his contribution, you know, somebody, you know, I take a lot of notice of, somebody I listen to very intently, someone who's made a massive contribution to our movement and our class, someone who's stood up and, you know, not just worn a t-shirt but actually took part in putting forward the issues that we face as people and the hardships that we face and the struggles that we have to endure and I think John, you know, very clearly, you know, outlined the situation for him, for his family and the reasons why he took part in that miners strike and obviously I do appreciate you coming along, John, because I know you're not getting any younger, just thought I'd mention that, you know, but, you know, I think the contribution and the history of our class and the history that we have needs to be spoken about and it needs to be heard, because a lot of the times they want us to believe that there isn't anything we can do, they want us to believe that we're beaten, they want us to believe that we're isolated, that we're on our own, but we're not isolated and we're not on our own.

People stand up and when they do, they make a difference and people like John have made a difference. People like John and all of his colleagues in the NUM that stood up and fought for their jobs. They kept their mine open, no, they didn't, when they went back to work in '85 and some people say it's a defeat, I don't think it was a defeat, I just think they chose to go in a different direction because obviously it was getting really, really hard, because when you're denied your money, you're denied the opportunity to bring money in so you can feed families, people have to make a decision, you know and the decision that they made was they had to return to work to make sure they didn't starve their children, but I had the good fortune as well of going over to Stoke and meeting a lot of the miners' wives and obviously got to talk about, you know, obviously Arthur was there, I mean Arthur's a hero of mine, I've never actually hid that but, you know, I got to tell him how much I adored the fact that, you know, no matter what they threw at him, he still stood up for our class.

No matter what they said about him, he still stood up for our class. No matter how many times they beat him, he still stood for our class, I mean, because that to me is what a real working class hero is, you know and Arthur Scargill stood by those miners, but those wives, those wives, those incredible wives and Scargill always said, I mean I don't know if you can remember when he came to our Conference, he said, you know, a lot of people were going round with these myths, this idea that the women were putting the miners under pressure to return to work, he said, let me tell you, if it were down to the miners' wives, they'd still be on strike today, that's the miners' wives. They were stood by their sides and organising and campaigning, because they recognised as much as anybody what that fight was about. It was about us and the right to decency, the right to a job, to a decent community, a life of hope and opportunity and aspiration, because that's what that fight was about.

That fight was a war declared on working class communities by a political and government establishment that had no other justification for doing that what they did to those miners other than to smash the miners, believing they could kill the Trade Union movement and roll over us and force us into jobs like zero-hours contracts and insecure work and low pay and make sure that our lives were in hardship for the rest of them, for the rest of our lives in hardship and in struggle, but you know despite all of those billions that they paid to change the laws, to smash the Unions, we're still here and John was quite right. Thatcher's dead, but the problem is her policies are still in power and when this government changes, the policies that she followed will still be in power and it's the policies that she followed that we need to smash. We need to smash Thatcherism once and for all and we need to understand why we need to smash Thatcherism, because Thatcherism is what we're seeing played out on the world stage, it's about how for people's lives for some matter, how for others they don't and we're seeing that played out in Gaza and in Palestine.

This is a time of monsters. We are seeing people described, described in many cases like John said, who want to go out and march to say call for a ceasefire, stop killing people, where they're called haters, but people who want to see other people die, well apparently that's okay, that's normal. It's not normal, is it? To me, what hate is, what hate is, when you kill a journalist to stop them from reporting the truth, because that's why you kill a journalist, you kill a journalist because you don't want them to report on what's happening. You kill a doctor and you kill a nurse because you don't want them to be in a position to repair the damage that the bombs and the bullets have done, that's why you kill a doctor and a nurse. You kill the children, babies, mothers, fathers, because you destroy the fabric of society and the families in that society. It's a deliberate act and then politicians in a so-called civilised world make statements on television, like it's justifiable to withhold water and food, justifiable, politicians, not on the side of working people like us, because I'll tell you what, for those people with a long memory, I remember when we used to have at this Conference representatives from both Israel and Palestine, bakers, that would come to our Conference and tell us how they believed in Solidarity with one another.

Where are those Jewish bakers now?, because all of the Palestinian bakers that continue to bake, to produce those goods, to feed their people, they've been killed, they've been killed. Why are the Jewish bakers not making products and sending it in to Palestine, to feed those Palestinian people? And why are Israelis using aid trucks to go into Palestine to kill people? Why are they stopping aid from getting into that country, if they believe in a two-state solution? Why are they saying, at the United Nations, at the United Nations something that was put together because of what happened to Jewish people in the Second World War, to say never again, why are they saying no to a two-nation solution? Why are they saying no to a ceasefire? Why are they saying no to humanitarian corridors that enable food to get to those desperate human beings? Why? It's because they don't believe that the Palestinian lives matter. That's the reason why.

There can be no other justification for the daily bombardment of children, of babies, of nurses, of doctors and I realise that some people may twist my words and some people may accuse me of anti-Semitism. I don't believe it's anti-Semitic to save people's lives and people have the right to life. I believe it's called humanity. All I want to see is people not being killed on a daily basis, not under the threat of death, not facing, you know, will my child or will my mother or will my brother or will my sister die today, but to wake up and say I'm going to build a future, because surely we're all entitled to a future, yes? Are we not all entitled to a right to a decent life and respect? Do we not all have the right to life? Is that not something that we believe in? I don't care if you're Jewish, I don't care if you're Christian, I don't care if you're Muslim, I don't care if you have no faith or whatever faith, the right to life is what I believe we're all entitled to and I believe the Palestinians and the Israelis are entitled to life like anybody else.

All people are entitled to a life of decency and it's our job as a Trade Union to echo that voice and that's why it's really important, that's why it's really important we go out onto the streets, that we support the right of each other to live. It's important. It's important that when we hear about, you know, issues that people are facing, that we stand up and we say we are a voice for those people who are often unheard,.

Politicians for whatever reason can find £75 billion to pay for more weapons for a war that they want to create, but they can't end the two child benefit cap, they can't provide free school meals and they can't invest in our NHS, but £75 billion, like that, to invest in more bombs and more bullets and by the way, when they find this war to have, whoever they pick on, our kids they expect to go and fight it and our grandchildren in many cases will be expected to go and fight that war, sacrificing more in a country that doesn't believe that people have a right to food, that people don't have that right to be able to go to a supermarket and need to go to a food bank or a food pantry to be able to put food on the table, even when they're in work and we know that's happening and it's not people on benefits, this is working people, but people on benefits should never have to go through that either, none of it is acceptable. Fifth richest economy in the world and food pantries and food banks and charity donations. See, I'll be happy, I'll be really happy when instead of charity paying for people's foods, we have jumble sales for a nuclear bomb and let's see how many people want to contribute then at the jumble sale shop, for a nuclear bomb.

Let's invest in our health service. Let's fight for a country that's fair, let's fight for a country that's equal. You know, I mean they're putting Farage on a platform now. Well, let me tell you something about hate. Hate is easy, hate is easy, it's lazy. Hating somebody because you've been told to. I know we often get told that we don't pay any attention to the media and it's spouted in every corner of our workplace and every part of our community and when we listen to Farage who tells us oh, the problem was it was all these Europeans coming over here, taking your jobs, then we come out of Europe and we never had a problem with people coming over in small boats before, but because there'll be no more Europeans coming over here, a lot of them have gone back, which is why obviously people are struggling to get stuff now because obviously we haven't got enough workers, we had to find another group of people to blame, so it was the people on the small boats, 10,000 people, who haven't actually got here yet, are now to blame for you not being able to have a decent home.

It was the Tories that stopped building council houses, it was the Labour Party that carried that policy on and it was both Tories, Labours and Liberals that didn't enact legislation to help us build council homes so we all have somewhere decent to live. Those are the people responsible, not a refugee, not a migrant, not an asylum seeker, it was political decisions that made our homes so difficult to come by, just as it's political decisions that's making people hungry. The justification that politicians use not to put money into food banks but to find money for bombs. Where is our arguments? Why do we believe that having a nuclear bomb will somehow protect us, because I'll tell you what, the first time they use it, it's failed, the first time they use a nuclear bomb, it's failed, because they told us, didn't they, I mean now they're on about conscription by the way, conscription, why do we need conscription? I thought nuclear weapons kept us safe. It's because it's a lie, because there's money to be made out of the military. It's about investment and it's about money for the rich, it's about taking it off us and making us poor and giving it to the rich and the already powerful and wealthy and making them even richer.

How much do they want? How poor do they want us to be? That's why it's important when we come to Conference to understand what we're fighting for. That's why it's important as well to call out people like Farage. Farage is not leading a people's army. Farage is a racist who comes from the National Front, with a Fascist past and we should recognise what he is and all he's trying to do is continue that argument that puts the power and the wealth in the hands of the few at the expense of us, the poor and we are poor, we are poor. We're poor when it comes to having the right to have our families have a life and expectancy of a life that was better than ours, so we've become poorer, because we know they won't. We know our kids, when they go to school, will be taught in classrooms with leaky roofs. That's not right, is it? It's not right, I mean and I told you this story last year, but it's not right when a child, because his parents on Universal Credit, has to take his dinner home to share it and where are we being offered the offer of change?

We're going to have fiscal responsibility, fiscal responsibility, will continue to allow them not to pay tax at the top of the food chain, but we'll tax the people at the bottom as much as we can and we'll make you suffer even more by taking away your rights, the right to protest, the right to strike, your rights to decent pay, your right to a voice, your right to political change, because no longer will you be offered a choice between two different positions, but one position where even the commentator who did the debate between Starmer says, people don't think there's a difference between either of you. Raise your hand if you have a different position on one, two, three, four and guess what, no different position and that is apparently democracy at work, a democracy where we can't change anything. The only way that things will change in this country and the only way our lives will be made better is by the people in this room and the people who are part of our movement, that recognises by standing together in Solidarity, that recognises by coming together, because there is only one way. We must not fall for the lies of Farage and his racist army, we must not accept the argument that it's a migrant or a refugee or an asylum seeker that's caused our hardship, we must not accept that inequality is our only solution.

We should not accept in any way, means or form at this election that change is impossible, because it is, but we have to organise and demand it. We have to fight for it, with every fibre in our body and in every bone. If we want change and we want decency for our children, for our grandchildren, our grandchildren's children, then it starts with us, just as it did in our historic past, when the working class recognised the only way we make change, the only way we make change is when we understand our strength and that's of Solidarity, because we are the change and we make things happen when we recognise our power, but believe in it, no longer accept low pay, no longer accept insecure work, fight back, stand up, refuse to accept inequality and injustice, refuse it, it doesn't have to be this way, but it's up to us to change it. We refute those people who blame or demonise individuals because they've got disabilities, we refuse to say this is a battle between young and old, we say this is a battle for all of us and it's one we must win as a people. That's why there's a class, that's why there's a Trade Union, that's why there's a movement.

We always have to stand together and fight for one another and as long as we do that, our history shows us, we always win. Solidarity. Enjoy Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, so if we turn to our Agendas, so what you'll see is the first part of the Agenda is Rule Changes, well they're not Rule changes it says, what does it say, it says General Motions, but the first ones are Rule changes, what that means is for a Rule change to pass, there has to be two-thirds of the Delegates to vote in favour. If it doesn't meet that two-thirds point, then obviously the motion falls, so it may look like more people have voted and it looks like more than 50%, but if there's not two-thirds, then it falls.

So, the mover of motion 1, which is Branch 253.

1 Rules 14.2, 14.7, 14.8g, 14.8L and 15.3

Branch 253

This conference agrees to amend rules 14.2, 14.7, 14.8g, 14.8L, 15.3 by changing the number of years in office to 5, so that the rules will read elected for a period of 5 years or hold office for 5 years as appropriate for that rule.

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: President, EC, Delegates. This is to change Rule 14.2, 14.7, 14.8g, 14.8L and 15.3. This Conference agrees to amend said Rules by changing the number of years in office to five, so that Rules will read, "elected for a period of five years or hold office for five years", as appropriate for that Rule. Conference, like a friend of mine in this room?, I hate the Tories, I really hate the Tories. For those who were at the Disability TUC will understand that. A lovely Tory government brought in a little team that likes to penalise Unions, so they made us change how we elect people, so it all took place last year for the TUC. This is just to bring this Rule in line and make it the same for those positions. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? We have a speaker, I believe. I believe it's over to you, Kevin. There's no other speakers in the room, no? So if anybody's not been before, if you want to speak, you have to come down, obviously give your Branch, Name. When we call the Executive Member, who responds, they respond as the last speaker. If obviously there's been opposition to it, then the mover is entitled to come back, but if not we normally finish with the Executive speaker and then that's the end of that discussion and debate and then we'll go to the vote. Okay, no other speakers then. Kevin.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716, Region 7 – Executive Council Member/Vice President: Conference, the EC would like to actually support the motion. As Nick said, it's a tidying-up exercise that was forced on us by the Tory government, so please support. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That was quick. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Okay, that's carried. Motion 3, 253.

3 Rule 15.2

Branch 253

This Conference agrees to amend rule 15.2 by inserting:

If the delegates are elected as the representatives to the national safety committee, the branch may elect a further delegate after 'For the purpose of RCs' delegates, the factory and shops membership must be counted separately.'

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: President, EC, Delegates. Rule 15.2. This Conference agrees to amend Rule 15.2 by inserting, "if the Delegates are elected as Representatives to the National Safety Committee, the Branch may elect a further Delegate after for the purpose of Regional Council Delegates, the factory and shops membership must be counted separately". I think it was last year we had the motion, no, two years' ago we had the motion where we actually put two people on the Health & Safety Committee, one being a female.

This is just to make sure that both of them can attend our Regional Councils, because we need to hear from both of them. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? No speakers? Sean.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: The EC, the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers’ Union, the Lords? of the North of the Bakers, Food and Workers’ Union – that’s you. We’re here to support that. Obviously we need to get more people involved. It’s a tool for getting people involved in workplace practices and organising, so the EC would ask you to fully support this motion, in terms of organising and being more involved in the workplaces.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? It’s unanimous. Thank you very much. Branch 582, motion 4. For those that haven’t been before, a point of order is when obviously you can ask a question, because obviously there’s something not quite right, I’m not sure what it is, but I’m sure I’m about to find out.

4 Rule 14.8

Branch 582

Rule 14.8 (g) All Stewards shall hold office for two years and shall be eligible for re-election. That this Conference agrees to increase the number of years that Stewards can hold office from 2 to 5 years before standing for re-election.

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: Mr President, EC, Delegates. I don’t believe this Rule can actually be, this motion can be read out, because we’ve just passed a motion for that same Rule.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I would agree with you, but obviously I can only go on what Standing Orders have done and I can’t see anybody from Standing Orders. I could do with somebody from Standing Orders. Oh, that’s very nice of you, that’s really helpful, 582 withdraws the motion. Who said that they would withdraw the motion? Thank you very much. I’m sure Standing Orders, oh, he’s here look. It’s too late, they’ve withdrawn the motion.

[LAUGHTER]

[MOTION WITHDRAWN]

So I’ve got motion 7, anybody got, so has everybody worked out what a point of order is, yes? That’s how a point of order works, so if you’ve got an issue with when we’re going through the Agenda, you just come down and obviously I’m sure you said your name as well, Nick, I’m sure you did. Oh, it’s Executive Council, it’s us.

7 Rule 11

Executive Council

Remove the whole of Rule 11 and replace with:

The Union, through the Executive Council, shall establish procedures for consideration of complaints by members. These procedures will explain how a complaint is dealt with dependent on the nature of the complaint and/or who it is directed against.

Any member wishing to make a complaint should do so by forwarding it to report@bfawu.org.

Within Ten working days of submitting their complaint, the member will be contacted by the individual tasked with investigating their complaint.

The procedure which the Executive Council shall make, amend, or revoke from time to time shall be made available to any member and will be visible on the Union’s website.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, our current Complaints Procedure isn’t working. Members do not understand it, their issues are not dealt with and the result, we have members contacting Head Office or myself, even more disgruntled with the Union than they were when the issue arose, raising an issue around it not being dealt with because nobody knows about it, it’s not reached the Branch Secretary, the Branch Secretary doesn’t know where to start dealing with it, it’s so complicated or may involve them, or worse, just not bothering to tell us, you know, members not bothering to tell us that something’s wrong because it’s too difficult to do so, because they don’t understand where to start with it and then they go away and tell their mates just how rubbish the Union is because, you know, they can’t get their issue sorted. When they do email me and I’ve had more than I can count on two hands just this year, in fact I’ve had one come in this week before we came to Conference, I’m having to then direct them back to their Branch to adhere to the current Rule, which aggravates the situation even further and I get some lovely emails as a result in response, because they feel then that they are and I quote, “going round in circles and not getting anywhere and not getting anything dealt with”. Our members deserve better than this.

If they have an issue with their Union, we need to be listening to them, we need to be looking into it and improving things if there is something indeed to improve. The current Rule around complaints doesn't cover what happens if the complaint is about a Branch Secretary. It doesn't cover if an issue happens here at Conference or at Regional Council Meeting. Who deals with the complaints in those situations? It has to, according to the current work Rule going, write in to the Branch Secretary to deal with it initially by calling a Committee.

The Rule, the whole Rule covers the conduct of full-time Officials and disciplinary action towards them, but we've got an agreement with our full-time Officials, just like we do with our clerical staff, processes to follow internally that are laid out. It doesn't cover if an Officer has got a complaint regarding a member or a Branch Rep that's behaved inappropriately towards them, other than contacting said Branch Secretary in writing as a member and doesn't cover National Officers' conduct either. We spent time looking at what other Unions do with regards to complaints. There's been a lot of changes over the last few years in many Unions, mainly thanks to sexual harassment and racism in the movement. There are also lots of different methods of dealing with complaints depending on the size and the sector the Union operates in, however one thing is common across the Unions is that complaints come in to a central point so that they can be looked at, investigations initiated if there are indeed grounds for that complaint.

Now just because the complaints would be coming in to report at, for the General Secretary to look at as per Rule 20.8, it doesn't mean the General Secretary will be investigating every complaint – a bit like watching the verbatim, it would take up quite a bit of time, but what it does mean is that members know clearly where to write to, they know that their issue will have a resolution in a reasonable time frame and what to do if they aren't happy with that situation. What, which is what all anybody can ask for from their Trade Union, if they have an issue. It will also allow the Executive to look at trends. Are we getting complaints about a certain issue in particular, do we then need to look at training as a result? A communications strategy to explain a situation better or just bust some myths, that can at times gain traction and cause frictions? We currently can't do this, because we don't know realistically how many complaints are actually being raised and what they are about. We want to be open and transparent with our membership. I mentioned some of the issues in the wider Trade Union movement that have been in the public domain over the last few years. We should be able to say openly to our members, via the Annual Report that you've all got, that we've had X number of complaints in the last 12 months, these are the general themes.

I hope it wouldn't be sexual harassment or racism in our movement, in our Union, but if it is, being open and honest about that and then outlining what we have done as a Union in response to that to change things and clearly explain how your Union has improved as a result of them raising those issues, because we are a member-led organisation. If we are not hearing when our members aren't happy, how can we truly say that we're member-led? We ask you to support the motion, give our members the voice and the avenues that they deserve when things aren't right and help change our Union going forwards for the better, having heard them. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, it's formally seconded. Any speakers? Not really. See you're not supposed to speak, because you're not a Delegate.

Brother John James – Region 2 (Full-Time Official): I know, but I'm a Full-Time Official, so Comrades. We're allowed, as full-time Officers, to speak on up to five motions, according to the Rule Book. We've been stopped from talking on this and they're hiding behind the fact that because we've had to join another Union, we're still in the Bakers Union, but we had to join another Union and we were told we were not allowed to speak because it doesn't follow the Rule Book. Now Ian spoke about, our President spoke about stifling people's voices and yet that's exactly what's happening to full-time Officers today, we're not allowed to speak at Conference

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: John, that isn't a point of order, that was a speech, mate.

Brother John James – Region 2 (Full-Time Official): sorry, sorry, well, you know.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, I gave

Brother John James – Region 2 (Full-Time Official): What I'm asking is, why have you stopped us?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, I'll give you an answer to that and it's very simple. So you weren't forced to join another Union. The full-time Officials said that they wanted us to recognise your Trade Union, which we've done. There's an agreement that now exists, in the same way an agreement exists between us, there's an agreement that exists between yourselves, in the same way that there is one that works between ourselves and the clerical staff. The clerical staff come to Conference just like you do, as employees, they're not entitled to speak here. The agreements that we have that you're covered by in our Rule Book ended when you stopped, you know, being recognised as Bakers Union full-time Official organised Unions and you're not a Delegate and our Rule Book says you have to be

a Delegate. It was the Executive that agreed that full-time Officials could speak, because at that time you were, you in particular as well, John, used to say that, you know, as members of the Union and obviously organising within the Union and being recognised within the Union, as Bakers Union full-time Officials, that you believed that you should be able to make a contribution at Conference and the Executive agreed to do that, but the moment we were asked to sign a recognition agreement, that changed that relationship, because quite clearly we're not going to suddenly say, you know, we want the GMB people coming to our Conference and making a contribution because it's not a GMB Conference, it's not a UWW Conference. This is a Bakers Union Conference and out of courtesy I've given you a response. I did speak to Geoff about it initially, because it was Geoff that had indicated, but out of courtesy I've given you a response. My word is final, it also says that in the Rule Book too, so as far as, you know, we're concerned, we've followed what we're expected to do. This is a Delegates Conference and you're not a Delegate, you're an employee of the Union in the same way a clerical member of staff

No, well you're in a different Union as well. But John, I've, please, please, I've given you a response, I've given you a response.

Okay, speakers?

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 701: Comrades, I believe we should oppose this motion, firstly on the basis that the new Rule itself does not give any information on what the new procedure would be. While the current Rule might need bringing up-to-date, to remove it in its entirety, as the motion is suggesting, would be totally wrong. The motion is giving the EC a blank page to write whatever procedures they want, without the agreement of Conference. If we do this motion, what does [unclear]. This is like your employers saying they'll change one of our procedures or policies within the company handbook and not telling you what the details are going to be with the change. The motion does not provide any detail whatsoever and as a Union, if our members' employers were trying to make changes in this manner, we would certainly be opposed to it and rightly so. Until the EC can come back with a motion with clear information of what the new complaints procedure would be, then we have no option but to oppose. Please oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Also here to oppose this motion. More concerned, Noel stole a lot of the thunder, the last paragraph, "the procedure which the Executive Council shall make, amend or evoke from time to time shall be made available to any member". It gives them a free rein to alter it and change it whenever they feel like it and not come back to this forum. So, I oppose. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill): I'm up here to oppose the motion as well. The motion's asking to replace four sections of the Rule, which covers different areas of the complaints procedure, with no details. As Noel said, if that was our employer and they changed the procedure, we'd come out in arms about it. So, please oppose the motion. Cheers.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speaker? So, because it was opposed, the speaker gets the right of reply, which obviously is the General Secretary. So, General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thank you for the feedback. What I would say is, when we put the motion together we did include a policy document at the back, to help inform Delegates what the procedure would look like. It's new, you know, we don't want to be in a position where we're stuck with something for three years that we can't change, hence why we took the actual policy out of the Rule Book itself. It would be reviewed annually. If it's not working, then we'll need to change it again. If it isn't working and we change it now and put everything in the Rule Book, we're stuck with it for three years. It might be three more years where members aren't happy with how their complaints are being dealt with. That was the only reason why it was taken out. We would hope that you would trust the Executive that you elect to be doing the right thing. We're not an employer, like some of the people that we deal with and it's there, laid out, the process and the procedure which isn't out of scope with what you would expect if you were raising an issue, but it's all there, we made sure it was in the pack with the motion and the Rule change so you can have a look at it all.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Did everybody see the page that the General Secretary is referring to? So if you turn to Page 14 of the Final Agenda, you'll see on Page 15 what the BFAWU Complaints Procedure is. I understand that obviously people may have missed that, okay, everybody's seen that it's there? Yes, okay. So, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That falls.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay. Rule 8, motion 8, which is us again. Michael.

8 Rule 15.2

Executive Council

Rule 15.2 Branch Delegates

This Conference agrees that after the end of the first paragraph of 15.2 add – “whether attending virtual or in-person”.

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): This Conference agrees that after the end of the first paragraph of Rule 15.2, will add, “whether attending virtual or in person”. That means that the Rule will now read, “Branch Delegates, the Council shall consist of Delegates from Branches on the basis of one Delegate per 100 Branch members, or part thereof, with a maximum of four Delegates from any one Branch, whether attending virtual or in person”. Basically this Rule change, it just explains for those meetings that have an online contingent. It just says how many Delegates can be present. It’s a very simple addition, just to make it explicit on the number of Delegates who can attend Regional Council Meetings. We would ask that you support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded? Speakers? No, okay. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. I’ve got, have I still got Glyn in here? He did say he had a Standing Orders Report. Okay, motion No. 9 then. It’s you, Pete. A long way, isn’t it? It’s a long way. Think of the steps.

9 Rule 15.6

Executive Council

Rule 15.6 Regional Council Meetings

That this conference agrees to include after the first line of rule 15.6 that - “The Delegates of each RC may elect a date to hold an annual Health and Safety or Shop Stewards meeting, with the date to be agreed by the delegates of each regional council.

Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110: Morning, Conference. Rule 516, the Rule Regional Council Meetings. That this Conference agrees to include that after the first line of Rule 15.6 that Delegates of each Regional Council may elect a date to hold an annual Health & Safety or Shop Stewards Meeting with the date to be agreed by the Delegates of each Regional Council. So basically, it’s health and safety. The more meetings you can have and obviously networking, it’s got to be a better thing and if everyone’s talking and communicating, especially all of the Health & Safety Reps of that Region, then it’s got to be better. Support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 701: I ask you to oppose this motion, on the basis that it’s hard enough to get people released to attend all these Regional Councils [unclear]. Please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You’ve got the right of reply.

[LAUGHTER]

No, no, he’s up there.

Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110: That said, having meetings and having an annual meeting of health and safety, it can only be a better thing that you’re all talking together, networking and understanding issues you’re going to face in the workplace and it would be a thing that I’d still recommend. Support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Standing Orders Report.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): Quick apology for tardiness, which is a little bit technical problems at the moment. Please turn to your Agendas for the next motions. Motion 11 stands, that has been composited with motion 38, is now composite 5, which is in your books. Motion 12 stands, motion 13 is out-of-order, motion 14 stands, motion 15 stands, motion 16 stands, motion 17 stands, but that is composite 1, which has been put with motion 23, so that’s composite 1 in your books as well. Motion 18 stands, sorry? May I continue, Alan? Thank you. Motion 18 stands, motion 19 stands, motion 20 stands, motion 21 stands, 22 stands, 23 stands, but it’s the composite as I said before, with 17 on composite 1. 24 stands and 25 stands. That’s the end of the report at the moment

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the Conference, do we accept the report? They're learning, I love it, love it, love it. Thank you very much, thank you very much.

Okay, so we're going to move to motion 10, which is us.

10 New Rule 14.5 (a)

Executive Council

The secretary shall subscribe to Hazards magazine on behalf of the branch.

The cost of subscription and postage will be deducted from quarterly expenses to ensure each branch receives the Hazards Magazine to support with health and safety.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool): Moving the motion on behalf of the Executive Council, who ask you to support this motion.

New Rule 14.5a. The Secretary shall subscribe to the Hazards Magazine on behalf of the Branch. The cost of the subscription and postage will be deducted from the quarterly expenses, to ensure each Branch receives the Hazard magazine to support with health and safety. For those who don't know what Hazards do or what the Hazard magazine contains, here's a little insight into who they are. Our Union has had a long-standing association with Hazards, starting off with Hilda Palmer and now with Janet Newsome. Hazards have continuously exposed the real extent of work-related ill health and injury in our workplaces in the UK, which places an intolerable burden on victims, communities and the public purse. Hazards support individuals and groups fighting for justice over work-related injuries and diseases. This includes challenging the victimisation and blacklisting of safety activists and supporting bereaved relatives. The time and care that they show those relatives is heart-warming.

The Hazards magazine is the only independent Union-friendly magazine to win major international awards. Workplace Unions are your best hope for better and safer work and Hazards provides the information and resources to make the Union job easier. Hazards looks behind the company safety hype and gives Union answers to workplace problems, using a global network of Union safety correspondents. It was Hazards that brought Workers' Memorial Day to the UK, the 28th April, which is now the biggest annual occupational health and safety activity in the world, which is Unions, campaigners and safety activists undertake protests, workplace activities and safety organising drives on the theme, "remember the dead, fight like hell for the living". Hazards make sure that you have the best information available anywhere. The magazine contains valuable health and information to assist us in everyday health and safety issues. The Hazards magazine has no grants, benefactors or other financial support, so Hazards are there for us, so we need to be there for them to survive. It relies entirely on your subscription and donations. So if passed, this is how it will work. Four magazines a year, posted out to the Branch Secretary, the cost will be £11.90 per year, per Branch and the magazine will be delivered to the Branch Secretary's home address, so that needs to be made sure that it's kept up-to-date. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded. Speakers? No, no, no, no, it was Executive, we were formally seconding it. You can do it in any order.

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: I was just checking whether he was for or against, because that could make a difference. I'm going to oppose this motion. I agree with the principle, I think it's a great idea, but if my Branch Secretary was to get a copy, how is she going to share it, from Cardiff? I'm in a shop, our Branch currently covers from Andover across to Cornwall and into Wales. It's never going to reach half of the shops for it to be looked at. Please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): I'm here also to oppose this motion. I'd like to say, I totally agree, John, we love Hazards, we love having them when they come to Regional Council and I love reading it, but yes, how do you share that copy with my 300 members, a lot of whom don't read or write English very well, do you know what I mean? Literally, don't get me wrong, we take the info back and translate it for them and whatnot and use it in the terms of work but yes, I think it's quite important, but the main reason is it says each Branch shall subscribe. Well no, the Branch needs to decide whether they subscribe and that is the principle of Trade Unionism. You can't force somebody to do something, so I'd like to oppose it for that reason. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Here to support the motion, Delegates. I think it's a good idea, but I will qualify it with a question to the EC – is it possible to scan relevant document parts of it but not infringing copyright, or anything like that? So, Branch Secretaries could scan the relevant bits in and email it out, which would get round the problem of access to the single copy of the physical magazine. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Also here to oppose this motion. I don't think anything should be enforced on us and not only that, you know, we're going on about climate change and everything, you know, one copy is not going to do a lot. I know that we currently get posters, we get flyers from the Union, we get the Food Worker and most of them are either left in the slot in the canteen or on the ledge for the salaried staff, nobody bothers to even pick them up, so it's all money that we're spending and really it's being wasted. You know, you talk about putting things online, a lot of people don't have access to computers, they don't have access to printers, so we're spending money willy-nilly and it's unnecessary. If people are that interested and we don't always get time either when we're in the workplace, don't forget most of us are working Branch Secretaries, you know and I know we're allowed time off, you know, but to sit down and read a magazine and I know when I get home from work, I've got a million and one other jobs that need to be done before I can put my head down and get up and start the day again, so I ask you to oppose. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sean. You need to un-mute, Sean.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Sorry. I'm here to support this, I'll tell you why. I disagree with Mark. The Hazards magazine and the language of health and safety is universal. Now, if people can get this into the workplace and it comes out of the Branch Secretary's expenses, so be it, because we need to, you've got Ian giving a speech at this Conference Hall this morning about all being in this together. Now, if we stick this into our workplace and educate the people that are in our Branches about the importance of health and safety and how we operate, we've all got [unclear] time, we all protect our agreements, there shouldn't be an issue whatsoever in getting this out to your Branches. I would not struggle at all, as Mark said, getting this across to 300 people, because the language of health and safety is universal. As Ian said earlier, there is an attack all the time on health and safety legislation and law from the Tories. So I'm here to fully support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs): I'm here to oppose this motion. We've got 2,500 shops across the UK. To get that out to every single shop is going to be one heck of an expense to a Branch Secretary and to even just to print it off, to photocopy some of it, to get it out to our Branches, I can't see the business accepting that and we're trying to be less paper, we're getting more stuff online, things like that, I think it's a complete waste of money and I'm here to oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? Okay. Right of reply.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool): Okay, this is not about forcing the magazine onto people, that's why it's been brought here as a motion obviously for you to decide. Digital copies, that's something we could look at, to get the digital copies out, but this is a resource for Health & Safety Reps. As a Health & Safety Rep, isn't it your obligation that if you receive information regarding health and safety, that you share it with your members? Why keep it to yourself? If you haven't got time to sort of look at these things, then why are you doing the role in the first place?, because that's what you should be doing, is when you get information regarding health and safety, which the Hazards magazine does, you share it with your members, for the safeguarding of your members. So, you know, I ask you to support this. You know, Hazards do an absolutely excellent job and role. You know, I spoke before about, you know, we shouldn't go to work to be injured or to be killed, unfortunately some people do and Hazards are like the gentle giant to these people, to the relatives, looking after them and being there for them and supporting them and they do that by using our help.

As I said before, they don't get no money off the government or they don't get money off grants and this, that and the other, they get the money from us, from subscriptions. So by subscribing to this magazine, it's for the Health & Safety Reps to share that information with its members. So if every Branch Secretary gets one, you can pass it on to the Health & Safety Rep and it can be shared like we should be sharing health and safety information with our members. As I say, we can look at digital copies, to get them sent out, but as a Health & Safety Rep, we should be reading this magazine. It's there to help us, it's there to guide us. You know, they cover a lot of things, you know, like dust and repetitive strain injuries and this, that and the other like. So, you know, please support it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's lost. Just to clarify, it has to be two-thirds for it to go through, so I think it was about 50/50.

Do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to say it's dinnertime and we'll be back in here for 5 past 1. So that's 5 past 1, 5 past 1.

[BREAK]

Okay. Can everybody take their seats, because we're about to call the roll. So have we got the doors shut? General Secretary to call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, I'll go back to Region 3, thanks Geoff.

[LAUGHTER]

Region 5, Region 7, online? Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. I know I left a bit of a pause there for you all to fill in and I don't blame you, if there's a gap, fill it, you know, that's what they say. One of the things that obviously I did get wrong this morning is I thought I'd welcomed all of the first-time Delegates, all of the new people that are here for the first time, but I apparently hadn't, I missed one out and now I can't see her. Oh, she's over there. Not you, Mohinder, not you mate, you've been here before. No, no, you're alright, you just take a seat mate, just take a seat. But we've got Tatiana and those who obviously don't know Tatiana, not only is it her first time at Conference, but she's also, she got elected to serve on the National Health & Safety Committee and actually became the first woman, the first woman to do more than two National Health & Safety Meetings, which was a record, because we've only ever had a woman that's attended one National Health & Safety Meeting before, so Tatiana, who I do apologise for missing off the list this morning, to welcome her as a first-time Delegate to Conference also, you know, a globe-setter by appearing twice on the National Health, I don't know when they used to come, they never came back, that was it, they just left and that was it, but obviously you've stuck it out and I'm really, really pleased about that. But now obviously we have equal value and equal men to equal women, because you passed that motion and we were really proud of that too.

Are you ready? Okay. So, Conference, it's now my pleasure to invite our General Secretary to give her first opening address to the 2024 Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Hold on a minute, she's just filling her glass.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thanks for that, Robbie. It's hard enough following the National President when I'm doing my opening speech, but this year I have to follow him and John Dunn, so please bear with me.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, opening address to Conference

Conference, I can't quite believe that we're here again. It doesn't feel like 12 months ago, does it, since we were here and what a 12 months we've had. We finished last year with 300 more members than we started. A big chunk of that was in Region 1, so well done to Frank, Haroon and all the Branch Secretaries and Reps out there, that have worked hard to build their Branches, but also Branch 600. You've got a little booklet in your Conference packs giving you some more information around their membership has continued to grow in that Branch since they came to us in early 2023. The Reps are active, they're running campaigns, they put us together such a big piece for the Annual Report on the work that they're doing, but like I say, they've got their own little booklet and some of the issues that they face and I think it's fair to say are complex, but together we're challenging bad practice in an industry that is full of exploitation, bogus self-employment, properly dodgy employers and people running clubs and platforms, who have a lot of money, who aren't used to Trade Unions challenging them and a lot of vulnerable people who probably need to be organised and Unionised more than anyone, yet for years, the Trade Union movement has turned their back on them, because it's easier to demean women and people who find themselves in the very broad church of the sex industry for many, many reasons, than to fight to ensure that they've got access to basic health and safety, are recognised as workers rather than be forced into bogus self-employment contracts, which leaves them at the will of the people with more power and influence to exploit them and just generally treated as a dirty secret.

The sex industry is the oldest industry in the world and workers within it deserve dignity and respect and the right to have and be safe at work, just as anyone in this room does and our Union, our wider movement and I'm proud that they decided that they'd come and join us and are helping to build our membership, going forwards. Unfortunately we couldn't get a Delegate here this year, we'll work on that for next year, because I'm sure having conversations with them and learning about the issues that they face would surely help enrich us going forwards and Conference, we've had a first few firsts in the last 12 months for our Union, I shouldn't have had that Brownie at lunchtime, put in my teeth.

We put in for the TUC Cons? Awards in three categories, we didn't win any, I mean we were up against Unions with departments bigger than our total staffing numbers, just to concentrate on cons?, but we got some great feedback that has helped us shape things as we move forward. We're now recognised as a real living wage employer, because how do we hold employers accountable where you all work and hold them to that standard if we're not there ourselves. We've got to practise what we preach as a Trade Union and there's still a lot of work to do internally around policies and other things, but we're working on that in the background constantly.

We've signed up to Can't Buy My Silence, their business pledge, because they've not got a Trade Union one yet. This commits us to not using non-disclosure agreements or clauses to stop anyone in our organisation raising complaints or discussing incidents of sexual harassment, abuse or misconduct, discrimination, retaliation, bullying or other harassment, either at the point of hiring, termination or any other stage. Speaking of our National President, absolutely wiped the floor with the McDonald's CEO at the Select Committee last November, over the shamefully toxic culture within McDonald's and the lack of action to change it or to support the hundreds of predominantly young women who came forward to the BBC. Nikki Pound from the TUC was fantastic and we thank her for her support with that and, you know, we've got Gareth Lane to thank for linking us together initially too with the BBC, he was the one that elevated our members' voices and got us in a digital room with them for that all to take place.

We held a Parliamentary Group, we've held a few of them, we held a Parliamentary Event showcasing the food and work network, which we had the idea about as a Trade Union and has come to life over the last 18 months and has continued to develop and come together with the help of Michael Calderbank, who will be here this week, Tommy Kane and Alex Colas. We reached out to our retired and free card members, asking them if they still want to be involved in our Union, you know, there's a wealth of experience out there that's just not being utilised in many cases. There were over 400 that we wrote to and I'll be honest, I was expecting a handful back and no more. We had 177 replies from our retired and free card members, which is absolutely fantastic and absolutely cemented the position that building a retired members' network is absolutely the right thing to do and keeping those members involved and engaged in our Union is important. We've reached out to as many District Branch members that we have accurate email addresses for and I've not put this in my notes, but I would say please get us your email addresses because we can communicate with you so much easily, more easily, if we've got them. We invited them into WhatsApp groups and set up specific Branch ones and asked them if they want to organise their workplace and what support they need, signposting some to organise now and others to information to set them off building membership, because there is so much potential in those Branches for workplace Branches of the future and we've got to set them off in the right way, haven't we, starting from scratch, building structures, being active and creating members as they grow.

We had discussions with Rosa Luxembourg Foundation London Office and Joe and Debra, who are now BFAWU members, will be coming tomorrow as well, which led to a pilot political, economy and organising course being run in November and a further two courses last month, 45 of our activists have attended. They've heard far more about my background than I thought that I would be sharing and have seen me cry far too many times after watching [unclear] and again after the appreciation circle, but how great have they been, those that are in the room that have attended. Learning about the different economic policies implemented imposed, the impact of change in the power dynamic in creating crises. How we should and I sound like a broken record Conference, I say this all the time, whether it's in Regional Council Meetings and it'll be in the past two years of Verbatims, how we should be shouting about our wins and using those wins as an opportunity to organise, because people don't join the Union because me and the National President stand here and tell them to. They join the Union because of the difference you make in your workplaces on a daily basis and we need to be shouting about that more, because you all do a fantastic job and at last count, those 45 people have recruited 150 people already and that's only the ones where we've been able to track them and really say that they are from those courses. Like I say, Debra and Joe have even joined the BFAWU themselves on the back of meeting and spending time with our fantastic Reps, which is two more to add to the count and I want to give a huge thanks to both of them, Lou, Eva and especially Rafael coming over from America to support us growing our Union and I'm excited to see how many more members we will make on the back of these courses. There's another funded one yet to run later this year, so watch this space.

What else have we done? So, on your tables you've got a manifesto document. We put that together, 13, Baker's Dozen, we thought it sounded about right, based on your input. We put a survey out at the beginning of the year and the 13 points in there are based on the results that we got from that. Things to improve our lives and thanks to Unity and Solidarity Consulting for the help in that. You've all got a copy, there's spares, take them back into your workplaces.

We've got a general election coming up soon, use those to make decisions about who you vote for, because they are the things that will change our lives going forwards if implemented and whilst you're here this week, we've got some little cards, we'd like to take some selfies with the pledgers and some videos of you about how it will change your lives, so we could get it out there on social media and encourage our members to do it too.

We've engaged our members at Greggs, the biggest single employer opportunity for us in our Union. If we reached 50% density in Greggs, we would double our membership in the BFAWU, that's pretty significant. We have got some work to do to get there, but the plan is to utilise the spiderweb technique that Nigel Flanagan talks about, empowering our Reps to be, you know, the ones that their members go to and two-way conversations and feeding it in to what we do nationally as a result.

We've focused on our drivers more, you know, they felt a little neglected and we've had some issues, I would say, alongside that but, you know, we don't ignore our driver members, we've got a driver member as an EC Representative, we've got drivers at national levels in our Committees and we do listen and we are learning and we are putting things in place to support them as well as every other role, not only in Greggs but for you all in your workplaces.

And, you know, we've changed check-off, so we can now join online via check-off as well as direct debit. We're trialling it in Greggs at the minute, the opportunity for everybody to do that is there, we're just working through employers to get them to agree, so that somebody can just go on the 'phone, if they've got it, because I take onboard what's been said this morning about digital access and join up without needing to find a Rep to get a form, to fill it in, to find out where to put it back, so we think we'll see going forwards a new way of membership there too.

We've been involved in campaigns around challenging minimum service levels, more recently around making equality real and making austerity illegal, look out in the post-Conference Food Worker for more information on that and we've been organising MOWI up in Scotland, gaining recognition at WARP Foods, pushing for members at Finnebrogues in Northern Ireland, doubling membership in Valeo Foods in Norwich and the creation of and I always have to be careful how I say this, because my accent, it both sounds the same, 'Pour not poor', in Wales. You've been active in your Branches and we can see that. It's there in the Final Agenda, there's photos and all sorts of you doing stuff and between all that, we're still negotiating wage deals on our members, we're still balloting people for industrial action when the wages aren't right, challenging poor employers and supporting our members with legal cases. We've been doing a lot.

I've talked for far too long. There's been a lot going on, but I want to finish on this. I was talking to another Trade Union's Executive a few months ago, about my journey from Greggs to being a General Secretary, I'm not going to bore you with all that, most of you will already know it, but in the question and answer somebody asked me and I'm paraphrasing here, they asked how to describe what a Union Rep is to someone who hasn't really got the background of activism some of us have or are new to it and I thought I'd share my answer with you, just for a bit of food for thought. We've all worked with somebody going through a rough patch, haven't we? They've come to work covered in bruises, they're not bringing a pack-up any more, they've stopped coming on works nights out, they've been quieter than normal or they're just looking a little rough around the edges and I'm picturing in my mind three or four people when I was working at Greggs and I can just remember them and I'm sure everybody in this room will have somebody that they can think of. Being a Trade Union Rep to me means making the situation better for those people and everyone else, without them having to ask, changing the world for one person at a time is a bare minimum, pushing for free tea and coffee in the workplace or even toast, so if you've not got enough money to bring a pack-up, you know that you can get something to eat whilst you're at work. Free sanitary products for women, because they're so bleeding expensive that if and as women we put ourselves last, if things are tight, you go without in your makeshift ones and you can end up being ill from that, so negotiating for free sanitary products without being asked, because that's what we do as Trade Unionists, we improve people's lives. Taking the time to check in with members, how are the kids, is your partner out of hospital, are you eating okay? and just generally pushing for better. Recognising that just because you might be alright, it doesn't mean everybody is and not just focussing on achieving what you want, but what will improve the lives of those around you, even including those that you can't see, who might be feeling, facing different issues that might be 300,000 miles away. That for me is what a Union Rep is, or a Union Official, not coming to Conference, it's great being here, but this is just one little minute part of the role that we play. It's about fighting to improve people's lives, like I say, one person at a time, making a real difference for other people like us, that haven't got the voice or the platform that we've got.

Conference, we've still got a lot of work to do to turn membership around, you know, last year was a great start, but there's millions of people working in our industry that should be in our Union, because we are the best Union in the UK. We've got to improve our finances and rebuild our Union, so its here long after any of us have retired, including

the young members that are in the room, because I'm not one of them any more, but together we absolutely can do that. We cut our cloth accordingly right now, we try and change, we try out new things, but most importantly, working together, listening to each other and developing ideas as a collective.

Enjoy Conference, respect each other's different opinions, because that's what we're here for, to have a debate, debate well and learn lots in the fringe meetings.

Thank you ever so much, Conference. Solidarity.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, thanks Conference. I've got the nominations for, that have been made this morning. I'm going to read the names out, if it's your name and you haven't agreed to standing and you don't want to stand, shout "withdraw", just so that when we do go out and people will vote, they'll be able to vote for people that actually want to go. So I've got Region 1, it was Ian Banton, okay, Region 2, Nicholas Mead, not used to seeing you as Nicholas, Region 3 Duggie Johnson, Region 4 Peter Levey, Lever, Lever? Sorry, sorry, I was making you posh and Alan Scott, okay? No. 5, Lizzie Dinning. Okay. So just for Standing Orders obviously, 'cause Vicky's in there, all of them are standing. Just so she can put them on the ballot paper, you see.

I got these messages from you, Mohinder, but we've already got some organised, so if you leave it to us, we've got it sorted, mate, is that okay? Cool, okay.

Okay, so we're back to the motions and I believe, I believe it's 12, isn't it? 12? Yes, 11's composited. I think I'm probably going to do that at 38, because it's No. 5. Over to you.

12

Branch 258

That this Conference agrees to condemn the decision to award a knighthood to Wetherspoons boss Tim Martin for "services to hospitality", or as I like to call it "services to throwing his employees under the bus at the onset of a global pandemic". It was only down to the actions of the BFAWU and its well publicised campaign that forced a U-turn on the company's decision to not furlough it's workforce during the Covid lockdown, and we as a union should push even harder to organise companies like Wetherspoons to build up our membership there, to guarantee decent contracts with decent terms and conditions for our members.

Brother Tony Mansell – Branch 258 (Memory Lane Cakes, Cardiff and the EC as well): Right, so Conference, Delegates. This Conference agrees to condemn the decision to award a knighthood to Wetherspoons boss Tim Martin for services to hospitality, or as I get to call it, services for throwing his employees under the bus at the onset of a global pandemic. It was only down to the actions of the BFAWU and its well-publicised campaign that forced a u-turn on the company's decision to not furlough its workforce during the Covid lockdown and we, as a Union, should be pushing even harder to organise companies like Wetherspoons to build up our membership there, to guarantee decent contracts with decent terms and conditions for all our members. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? No? Because Tony's obviously on the EC, he moved it for his own Branch and on behalf of the EC as well, because obviously we're asking you to support the motion. So, to the vote. All those in favour? All those against? That was unanimous. Motion 14.

14

Branch 405

That this conference agrees to embrace the words of Tony Benn's Quote "If we can find the money to kill people, we can find the money to help people".

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Chair, EC, Delegates and comrades. Our motion is that the Conference agrees to embrace the words of Tony Benn's famous quote: "if we can find money to kill people, we can find money to help people". In relation to world events at the moment, we'll start with Ukraine, Jeremy Corbyn summed it up perfectly. He said, "all wars, all conflicts end with negotiation". Why can't we negotiate now, when it all started. Zelenskyy said at the start that he would never negotiate with Putin, now he's pleading for negotiations. Why didn't it start with negotiations, why weren't things started before the bullets started flying, before all the death and destruction? This has a direct economic impact on us. We have given a shedload of equipment, a shedload of arms to the Ukraine, we've got to replace that, so our taxes are going to have to fund replacing the equipment we've given to the Ukraine. Nobody voted for that. This is supposed to be a democracy and then we get to what's going on in Gaza, which is ridiculous. Just to give you an idea of what's going on in Gaza. We say we need to stop arming Israel, it's only symbolic, it won't make a difference, will it?

Well, it will. In World War II, in six years, we dropped so many thousand tons of bombs, I can't remember what the exact number is now, on Berlin and we killed 40,000 people. In the eight months of the Gaza campaign, Israel has dropped more bombs on Gaza, which is a third the size of Berlin and killed the same number of people. Cutting the supply of weapons to Israel will impact Israel's ridiculously excessive reaction to the terrorist attack in October. So I ask this Conference to support this motion and when you go back to support your local groups that are campaigning against the war in Gaza, because it is ridiculously excessive what's going on. I thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Seconder? Formally seconded, thank you very much. Speakers?

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Enough money, money, pounds, billions, trillions spent on destroying people's lives. \$2 trillion spent on the war in Afghanistan, \$2 trillion. We don't know how many people were killed and what's it ended up with, the Taliban's still in control. In fact, the Taliban are in more control of the country than they were in 2001. By the way, a point about Ukraine and about negotiations. At the start, just after the Russian invasion, there was a deal on the table, the Ukrainians agreed with it, the Russians agreed with it, Turkey, who was actually acting as the intermediary said this deal was ready to go and then Boris Johnson flew out to Ukraine, you can't do that and the slaughter continued again and again and if people say about where, about money, let me just tell you something about the amount of money that was going on. Furlough, the British government gave out, in furlough, the equivalent of £14,000 for every man and woman in this country, £14,000, except they never actually worked out where the money was going to end up.

It went to the super rich, it went to them and if you're struggling to find a house, the super rich went around and they bought property and it sent the property prices spiking. They didn't invest in the economy, but they're keen on propping up governments who believe in war. \$5 trillion spent in destroying Iraq. I mean it does take some genius, I was talking to some Kurds recently, several of these Kurds turned round to me and said, it was better off under Saddam Hussein than it is now in Iraq. That takes some special kind of genius to turn a country into a worse state than that. Libya, we spent six months bombing Libya, open-air slave markets, another place that's worse than when Gaddafi was in charge. Yet we can find money for those bombs, yet we can't find money. Just go to the homeless and sit on the streets, go and speak to a few of them, find out how many are veterans and you'll find out how many are veterans, many of them broken having lived on the streets. I've spoken to enough veterans who are so broken and yet they can find more money for more bombs and carry on. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Mr Chairman, President and Members of the Platform. My friends, all of you, I don't have to say much because my friend have already said enough. What's happening in the Middle East, in Gaza, what you have seen I watch, hundreds of people, thousands of people have been burnt, families have been wiped out, right and there is, the world is, America is funding them, your country and your bloody Prime Minister, Sunak, I call him Sunak, right, you're funding them to bomb them, we are all, we all are guilty, right. It's your money going there to kill that people, right. I lost my son five years ago and just one person, my son, the family cannot come to terms up to now. My wife had a couple of heart attacks and we are sitting here, my taxes are going there to bomb them. It's a shame, shame for the United Nations, because I was there, I had a scholarship in the year 2003 to go to UN, I was very proud, right, I went to all the offices and the Director General, he had lunch with me?, right. I thought it's a great institution and that institution was set up by [unclear] of Burma, he was a Buddhist, a real human being, I don't believe in God or anybody, right. If there is a God, he should come down, see what's happening. I'm living in Wolverhampton, it's a nice [unclear] and there's English people, quiet street, it's a cul-de-sac, about 32 houses, most of them are 99% are English people, well behaved, right and nobody victimise me, right, so I came to this country in 1963, I was only 16½ and what's happening in my country, had I been there I would have been [unclear], but now I can stand in front of you. The BFAWU have sent me on at least 40 courses and they have trained me and I am, I was 78 last 4th of June and I am proud to be British, I'm British citizen, right. So it's all of us, we have a duty that to bring down this government and

[APPLAUSE]

we hope, because I've been to two black people conferences, addressed them with the same thing, what's happening in the world. I was encouraged, I had standing ovations, but still it's no good to me, standing ovation, unless we stand up and fight and where I live there's people living in that area and in this winter, in this weather and they walk like this, I was walking like this because I have some problem but I have improved.

So it's a shame on us, we are not human being. I'm not saying all of you, but most of people do think, but why are we planning to bomb them, because they're Muslims, right and whose fault is that? When the Jews were thrown out of German, Hitler pushed them out, they were put in land, that land belonged to our people, Muslims, so if I'm living in your back garden and you're giving me help to sit there and you helping me, feeding me and then why should I bomb you, because your Prime Minister, so-called well, Indian-born and he is a billionaire, his parents and you made him the Prime Minister and he is spending your money and he belongs to the same race as Jews and they invaded India about three/four centuries ago and I come from the so-called untouchable people and they made us slaves and now this man is here to make you slaves and he will spend your money and he's promising he will be out soon, I hope. That day, the doctor has [unclear] not to have a drink, because I used to have wine with my friends, when he is thrown out, I will be happy

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can you wind up now, Mohinder?

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: to have two pints. Thank you, thank you. All the best, all the best, thank you, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else? No-one else? Kevin?

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716, Region 7 – Executive Council Member/Vice President: Cheers.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Kevin, you've got a bit of a buzz at the moment, hold on a second. Try again.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716, Region 7 – Executive Council Member/Vice President: We're asking you to support the motion. What a man, aye, the best [unclear], following Douggie Johnson, who stole some of my stuff, as he does. The International Peace Institute estimated in 2022, 2.24 trillion was spent on arms. In 2020 in this country, we spent 11.3 billion on charity. Where there's war, there's money, it's Capitalism on steroids. I'll give you another couple of quotes here. There's a company in Belgium called FN International, Fabrique Nationale, they make guns and weapons. During the Second World War, they made the weapons and the bullets for the French army. In the Second World War, they made the weapons and the bullets for the German army. Basically, in the Second World War, they made a killing. [unclear], greatest achievement, they made the tanks and the jeeps that we all saw last week, it was the day of the commemorations. They also made [unclear] drops [unclear] every German soldier, in every country where the Germans invaded. The reason being that Tony Blair, Tony Benn, sorry, God forgive me for that, says it's because there's money in killing, that's why. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. Motion 15.

15 Branch 258

That this Conference agrees to call on the Government to abolish 'No Fault evictions' as promised in its 2019 manifesto. It's now 2024 and so far, nothing has happened.

'No Fault' or Section 21 Eviction notices are a major contributory factor to rising homelessness as they allow landlords to evict tenants with only two months' notice, and with no reason needed to be provided. It beggars belief that the Government is now prepared to use cynical delaying tactics to go back on their promise from four years ago to ban No Fault evictions, while record numbers of renters are being forcibly removed from their homes without cause.

Brother Tony Mansell – Branch 258 (Memory Lane Cakes, Cardiff): This Conference agrees to call on the government to abolish no fault evictions as promised in its 2019 manifesto. It's now 2024 and so far nothing's happened. No Fault Section 21 Eviction Notices are a major contributory factor to rising homelessness, as they allow landlords to evict tenants with only two months' notice and with no reason need be provided. It beggars belief that the government is now prepared to use cynical delaying tactics to go back on their promise from so many years ago, to ban no fault evictions while record numbers of renters are being forcibly removed from their homes without cause and I know we've got a general election upcoming, shall we see if Labour get in, to see if they do the same probably, but there we go. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconded? Formally seconded? Speakers? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 16. Oh, is it you doing it, Mark? Okay. (singing: "silence is golden, but not for long").

That this conference agrees to challenge companies that target trade union representatives on trumped up nonsense and oppose a bullying upwards campaign. It is a basic human right to challenge wrongdoing and the role of the trade union movement to do so collectively

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): That this Conference agrees to challenge companies that target Trade Union Representatives on trumped-up charges and opposes, ah, yes bullying-upwards campaign. It is a basic human right to challenge wrongdoing and the role of the Trade Union movement to do so effectively. Right, as you may well be aware and some of you have experienced it, you get targeted if you're a Trade Union Rep and basically if you fall out with management, but the, me and Sean, as you may know, have constantly suffered with this because we can be a bit rough and ready with them, so the latest tactic is they've now introduced a campaign against us called bullying-up and it may be coming to your place soon or it may not. Basically if you get a bit aggressive with them or a bit out-of-order with them or anything, well basically if you argue with them, they now accuse you of bullying and obviously we all take bullying very seriously, we've had motions and we disagree with bullying. Is it bullying to challenge someone when they're doing wrong? In my opinion, it's not. Obviously you probably need to be careful how you go about it, but quite famously, it's not a recent thing, quite famously Sarah, when she was, were you actually General Secretary then and they complained that I was being too aggressive with the HR and making them cry?

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: I was still a full-time Official.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): They actually came, they complained to Sarah, she was a FTO at the time and to my own Branch Secretary and said, can you tell Mark to stop making the managers and the HR staff cry. These were people that were like power-mad little tyrants, do you know what I mean?, that are trying to hammer people, that are trying to sack people, trying to discipline people, trying to get rid of people, so I challenged them back, quite aggressively, at the way they were behaving towards our members and do you know what?, all of a sudden I was accused of bullying. I don't think you can bully-up, only if you slightly get out-of-order which, as I say, occasionally happened once or twice, because we all get passionate, don't we? But, you know, I'm sure Ian does sometimes and bangs desks and stuff. But, yes, I'd just like to encourage you all to be aware of it and to say that when they start coming up with these absolutely mad statements, they're basically only designed to stop Reps doing their jobs, be it a Health & Safety Rep challenging something, or be it a Trade Union Rep challenging someone's behaviour, basically they're more or less admitting they've lost by default and they don't have a case, if the best they can do is say that you're bullying, but in the event they do complain, we'd just like to think that the Union shows some Solidarity, shows some backbone and gives them a bit back and that's it. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Seconder? Are you seconding it, Sean? Are you speaking?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Do you want me to speak on it?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, yes, go on Sean, yes.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Yes, this is a new tactic that companies are using. We lost a good bloke, he's coming tomorrow, Hovis Bradford, recently, since last November on a bullying-up campaign. A bullying-up campaign is a new tactic for companies who don't want to deal with Trade Unions, don't want to be questioned or challenged with a change to health and safety or stuff like that and they bring in a tactic called bullying-up. Now the dossier that a good friend of mine was given was utter nonsense, I think the Trade Union, to echo Mark's words, [unclear] to be fair, but it's a concern that what they're doing is using these trumped-up charges of bullying-up to then go [unclear] and get rid of the proverbial pains in the backsides, so it's a tactic that seems to be starting, it looks like around the Hovis group and I'm sure, having worked for Hovis many years myself, that it'll spread throughout the industry.

Bullying-up, what is bullying-up? Challenging, defending your right to challenge, organise the Branches, experienced people. The person in question I've known a long, long time and the last thing he is is a bully, he's got a very good temperament, yes, they found this charge of bullying-up and made a business decision to get rid of him. So I'd ask you to support the motion, because it's a tactic that we may come across in future, so we need to organise around it and go about it collectively and to touch on what Mark Hilton said about making the HR woman cry. Mark, you're making me cry today and I'm sad in Pudsey. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Speakers? No, okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. I'm now going to take composite 1, which is obviously at the back and its Branch is Branch, so it's 253 and Region 3. While, who's moving it and Okay, as the mover's coming up, I was just going to give a statement out on behalf of the Executive, because the Executive position is, is that we are not giving a position either way, we're leaving the position open. We think the debate is important and obviously from our perspective, we will not be implementing any changes even if Conference passes this motion, because it's not a Rule change, but we will take on board comments that are made during this debate and we wanted to make that situation clear, so if it does get passed, don't expect us to suddenly be putting an online Conference on next year. If it does get passed, then the Executive will discuss it and it's likely that we would put a motion to the Conference, but it would have to be under a Rule change and we just wanted to make that clear, so while you're taking part in this debate, it will not happen because it's passed, it will happen once a Rule change makes it happen, okay? So we're clear on that, so everybody knows they're taking part in a debate about how the future of this Union runs its Conferences without the situation being that it will change all of a sudden next year and the Executive has no intention without a Rule change of making any changes to the current format of Conference. Okay, speaker, mover. It's not for debate, that's just our position. I mean you can ask a point of order, Mohinder, if you do, you need to get up there, but if not, Vicky's, did you want to move a point of order? No, okay, cool. Sorry, Vicky, pretty nerve-wracking.

Composite 1

With a declining membership we should move to biannual Conference, to save costs to the Union have Conference online every other year. This could keep our subs at a level where we do not have to have to put them up by 18p and money be spent increasing members.

Original motions: 17 (Branch 253) and 23 (Region 3)

Sister Vicky Bassett – Branch 253: I'll be the most hated person in the room. Right, with declining membership, we should move to biannual Conference to save costs to our Union and have Conference online every other year. This could keep our subs at a level where we do not have to put our fees up by 18p and money to be spent elsewhere. Sorry, I didn't read that tidier. I thought Region 3 would be here as well. I don't want to be the most hated person in the room and I know there is going to be an argument. We're all here for a reason and that reason's our members. I want this Union to be around for my children, my grandchildren. That money that is spent for you all being here, could be spent elsewhere, on training, organising. Yes, it's great to be here, I enjoy coming, I love seeing people, I've made friends, I have a family, but that money can be spent better. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Who's the seconder from Region 3? Alan. Region 3, who's speaking from Region 3, or is it formally seconded? So formally seconded? You're seconding it, yes? Okay. Right, okay. Speakers?

Brother Alan Scott – Branch 415 (Park Cakes, Bolton): Right, thank you. I don't need that microphone, do I. I'm here to oppose the motion. We had this two years' ago, yes? It's our history, look at it, 105 years. Do you want to give that up for a little bit of money?, a little bit of money. We've seen today how one person online there, speaking, we couldn't even hear him, none of him, we couldn't hear him at the back, there was beeping all over. You want to do this every other year online? I think why not stick with our history and look at other ways of saving money. Get more membership in, that'll get more money without changing this, what we've been doing for 105 years. No, I was going to speak on it, because it's in the Rule Book that we have an annual Conference, but you said it's not a Rule, it's not a Rule change, so that's put me in a bit of a kinder because it's in the Rule Book, annual Conference is in the Rule Book, we have it annually, not online, not biannually, we have an annual Conference, picked by the EC where we go, yes, so I oppose the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill): I'm up here to oppose the motion, but not for the reasons Alan's got. I think that obviously the Rule says an annual Conference but I think we can save money elsewhere. Every Region has four Regional Council Meetings a year, where we travel and you pay your expenses, pay expenses for Reps to go to these meetings. Why don't we look at changing that, do maybe three online and one physical before Conference to get the motions and stuff together, the same with Health & Safety Meetings. We've got Reps travelling a distance. I'm lucky that my full-time Official attends these meetings and I travel with him so we don't claim any expenses. If I've got to travel to these meetings, I'll have travel expenses from Scotland down to Durham, which is an expense that could be saved if we're doing it online.

During Covid we did all this online, it proves it can be done. It's not great and it's not ideal, but if they save money and allow the Conference to go ahead every year, here, we'll have the physical contact and the physical presence here, we can argue a point out. There's going to be arguments online where people just sit back and say I'm not getting involved in that, but if they're here, they might see somebody else talking and say do you know what?, I'm going to talk on that. That's what we need to look at. I think that's the way we should be looking at it and I understand where Vicky's coming from, that this Union needs to keep on. We might not be here in five years [unclear], we want to be strong, we want to be one of the top Unions. If we're going to save money, I think we should be looking at other places and saving money and that's your Regional Meetings for Regional Council and Regional Health & Safety. Three online, one physical, makes a lot of sense to me. Oppose the motion. Thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Mr President, I'm not here to oppose it but I want to say something, because online I can understand it is, everything is going that way in the next future, the next generations, the young generation doing that, but not many people know about online. People of my age, I don't know how many can do that online. Not many people know what's online mean, is it a [unclear] line or is it a railway line or what. Until people understand, I admit that to cut the cost we have to do that, eventually it will be done, but these people are here, they come once a year, right. They work in the bakeries and they are working hard and I will be very happy if there are more than a few people here who knows what's online or [unclear] line or railway line or road line, so I say I admit we must save the money to save the Union, but then to make more money there are people like [unclear], they have made about 60 members I think this year and if all people make new members, then the cost will be less than what it is, but we come once a year and you only see them, other people, you meet them after a year and now if you want to stop that, that's good luck to you. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Also here to oppose this motion. Yes, we did online Conference during, we had Covid and, you know, we fought long and hard for our terms and conditions and for paid release to do Union courses and to attend Conference. Myself and my Delegates at Branch 452, you know, don't have those things at home, you know, we don't have, we've got laptops but they're that old that it takes a couple of hours to switch on. We approached the Union and the Learning Services and said, can you provide us with something that we can partake in Conference and the answer was very sorry, but we can't do it for everybody, so we're not going to start, we're not going to set a precedent. We actually spoke to the company and there is a computer in the Union office, but obviously you couldn't see us because there's no camera on it, so myself and Harry had to sit in the Union office and we were watching people on screen, because we could see them, that were sat out in their gardens enjoying themselves in the sunshine, we were sat in an office at work. Sam was sat in a manager's office in his bakery and obviously anything went wrong with the oven, Sam was grabbed from that meeting and taken off to sort the oven out. You know, I do think it has to be done physically. There was also a vote for the Labour Party for disaffiliating and there was 30-odd Delegates who was online at Conference. I was the only one who spoke against it, because I believed it wasn't a true reflection and it was quoted in The Morning Star, you know, that every Union member of the Bakers Union voted to disaffiliate from the Labour Party. I'm sorry, you know, that was misleading, there was 38 people and I was the one that was Spartacus and said I didn't agree it was right. I know Conference make these decisions and what-have-you, but I did feel there wasn't enough people there to make a fair judgement and I just think if you're doing it online, like we've seen this morning, people are breaking-up online, you can't hear what's being said and you don't learn the same, so I do ask you to oppose this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: I'm here to oppose this motion as well because biannual would mean we'd have one every two years anyway when it's annual, that's strange to me, but you'd lose the personal connection every second year. We come here, we get together, we trade 'phone numbers, we trade ideas, we take them back to our workplaces, we use them in our workplaces and we save our members. So, that's it for me. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Sean.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Yes. I'm here to support this motion funnily enough and I've got some very good reasons. I was asked to go on the EC by default and since being on there since November, I've seen the finances of this Trade Union. Bearing in mind this Trade Union has to operate company vehicles and has to keep people on the road and has to negotiate pay rises for people, i.e. its employees, so there's a lot of money spent at Conference.

We're talking about facilities for online, you know, you can't hear people, blah, blah, blah. We've all got mobile 'phones, half of my EC stuff's done on my mobile 'phone. I struggle to find out why you couldn't do this on a 'phone. Secondly, we've all got organised and strong Branches, have we not?, we're all at Conference. Well, the facility side still stays the same, you'll still keep your facilities side. Last year, you may have noticed I wasn't in that room, I was in Filey at a caravan site, you could hear me alright, couldn't you? Right, so what I would suggest is, it's not a Rule change, but my opinion is this, right, to keep the organisation going and this EC has a duty of care to keep this organisation going, that we have to look at being a bit more realistic. It doesn't have to be, if there is a Rule change further down the line, it doesn't have to be overnight, there could be escape routes for it if the finances and the health of the Union increases.

At this present time, we've got to be realistic. We've got to cut our cloth accordingly. Now, after doing an online Conference last year, the best thing about Conference is that you didn't have to put up with me for a week when I've had a few beers, so I'm sure a lot of people would have appreciated that. Secondly, I felt healthier doing it away from that environment and being removed from that. I know a lot of people need Conference, but there's no need not to do what you do every other year. You could go away to a caravan site, you could go away as a group from your workplace, protect your facilities and agreements. Myself and Kevin Flood do a lot of this stuff on the EC online and people will notice that, so there's no reason why we can't do Regional Council two or three times a year online as well. I'm all up for a debate about saving money, right. I believe to keep this organisation going, we have to be realistic. So please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You've got the right of reply.

Sister Vicky Bassett – Branch 253: I knew it was going to be a difficult one. Please keep the cost in mind, it's not a little cost, it is a big cost to our Union and our members.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Okay, that's lost. Motion 18. 405?

18

Branch 405

That this conference agrees that we support, the work of Law Centres across the country. GM Law have been supporting our union in campaigning and working with members on benefit claims and housing. This essential work means we are able to access justice that would be denied if it wasn't for these fantastic facilities. Law centres give access to justice for communities and means working people are able to seek redress. We ask the EC to look at broader links and supports these essential organisations through affiliation and promotion of their work.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Chair, EC, Delegates and comrades. That this Conference agrees to support the work of the Law Centres across the country. GM Law has been supporting our Union and campaigning and working with members on benefits claims and housing. This essential work means we are able to access justice that will be denied if it wasn't for these fantastic facilities. Law Centres give access to justice for communities and the means for working people to be able to seek redress. We ask the EC to look at broader links and support for these essential organisations through affiliation and promotion of their work. As an example of what we mean, last year, in Wigan, we did some pop-up advice centres, helping people with, it was in the middle of the energy crisis, so giving proper legal advice, not something you find on the internet, we had legal people there, how to deal with arrears in rent, arrears in energy, all that sort of thing, how to deal with the issue of evictions etc. It was heartbreaking, some of the stories that were coming to us. We didn't know what to do, but we had the proper legal people with us. Look around, these people offer help and we can use it. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Seconder? Formally seconded? Just for a moment there I was about to hit it with a hammer, said you've got it. Speakers? Sean, are you speaking?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: No, no, sorry, my mistake, I don't

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

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): Many common problems that people face involve the law and when seeking advice and the financial cost to pay for this help, it can be a scary scenario for many. This is where Law Centre can help, by involving a team of lawyers and professionals who are experts in this field and they also offer free legal advice and representation if required.

Law Centres work for the community, with local people as trustees on their management committees. They are independent, not controlled by local councils, they believe that everyone should be able to live in dignity, regardless of background or their financial situation. They focus on the disadvantaged by using the law to protect people's rights and are a key right of the local safety net right across the UK, working with other groups on issues like housing, migrants and human rights, so the EC would therefore ask you to fully support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. 19, it's you, isn't it?

19

Branch 432

That this Conference agrees that our Union fully supports the Royal Mail Postmasters who were wrongfully accused of stealing money from the post office for their names to be cleared all monies returned to them and compensation paid to them as well. And those responsible for causing this miscarriage, there should be no hiding place and no protection from the establishment.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool): Moving the motion and speaking on behalf of the EC, who ask you to support this motion. That this Conference agrees that our Union fully supports the Royal Mail Postmasters, who were wrongly accused of stealing money from the Post Office, for their names to be cleared, all monies returned to them and compensation paid to them as well and those responsible for causing this miscarriage, there should be no hiding places and no protection from the establishment. I don't need to stand here and give you the facts and figures and timelines over this miscarriage of justice on normal working people just wanting to do their job, serving their communities they worked in, but it's been all over the press and we've all seen the television series Mr Bates versus the Post Office, but yet again in this country, they have been failed. People having to fight against the establishment for justice, having to fight to clear their names, having to fight to save their livelihoods, having to fight to save their homes and having to fight to stay out of prison. The lies, the deceit and the cowardliness and out-and-out disrespect for those involved and that's why we should support them.

In this case, Postmasters went to jail, Postmasters have died and Postmasters have lost their homes and Postmasters took their own lives, while the Post Office and IT companies knew what was going on but did nothing, but their famous words, "you're the only one". While people were suffering, wondering what was going on, Post Office CEO Paula Vennells was receiving her £3 million in bonuses and receiving a CBE in the honours system, which she had to give back in the end but she kept her £3 million and it's the likes of us, the likes of this great Union and its members to fight and support in whichever way we can to support these Postmasters and other people who fight to clear their names, against big businesses and organisations and the establishment, who are being accused. I know what it's like to fight to clear your name, to fight what you know is right and to fight against the lies and to fight against the corruption of the establishment and the basic right of justice as a member of the Hillsborough Justice Campaign, which took nearly 30 years to clear our names, but not justice.

Well, this fight has been going on for 25 years and we have to fight to get justice for them. Orgreave, Piper Alpha, Hillsborough, Postmasters, Blood Scandal, Shrewsbury 24, Grenfell, Windrush, just to name a few, they've all had to fight for years and years to get the truth and justice they so richly deserve. The imbalance of power and protection of the establishment. Two years' ago at Conference, I moved the motion of the Hillsborough Law, which you supported, which would combat the imbalance and would not protect the establishment. Unfortunately this Tory government, even though it was heard in Parliament, the Tories won't implement it, so it's up to us, the great members of this Union, to fight these injustices. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs): I support this motion 100%. My mum worked for the Post Office when all of this was going on. Luckily, Horizon didn't affect the branch that she worked at, but she knows a lot of people where it did, it was horrendous. They were accused of theft, people thought their money had been taken, people had their windows put out, the community turned on them because they were thieves, people lost their livelihood, they lost their families, they were put in jail, it was absolutely horrendous. Like I say, she was one of the lucky ones. I could have lost my mum over a computer glitch, over something that wasn't their fault and they knew, they knew there was something wrong. I suppose everyone here has seen the documentary, if you haven't, please watch it, it is absolutely brilliant and very eye-opening. They destroyed lives and they lied about it. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Please support the motion. You know, please support the motion. I didn't realise until I saw the Mr Bates versus the Post Office. In the series, the one who's the Post Office Rep, who went to the actual computing firm and looked at them as they changed things in real time, it was the Postmaster from Ibstock, the place where I grew up. It destroyed his life, it destroyed his family's, nearly destroyed his marriage, but it's not like a case of a mistake, saying this, they should be punished. They knew from the start, they were warned, Harriet Harman warned Tony Blair that the fault, that the software was faulty, they knew all along. How many Postmaster General were warned, again and again, but it comes down to another thing, privatisation, because they thought everything's better when you privatise and they were more bothered about paying out shareholders' dividends than they were of like destroying people's lives. It's not the case even of the ones that went to prison, what about the suicides? How much compensation is going to pay for the loved ones who've now, seen their loved ones kill themselves? How much? Yet they knew, they knew all along and they did nothing. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Obviously supporting this motion. The bosses, we didn't understand, we didn't know, I didn't read the email. If we did that sort of level of incompetence, we'd have been sacked on the spot. They're trying to use incompetence as a defence, it was no incompetence. I don't think its in the TV programme, the most revealing thing in the actual inquiry to me was they brought an independent IT expert in. He was so worried about the responses he was getting from the bosses at Royal Mail, he started recording his 'phone calls with them. That is the level of deceit when they're saying we didn't understand, because he is telling them and he has it recorded that he is telling them six years into this problem and it went on for years after. People were going to jail for years after he told them that it was wrong, they had a fault and he was so worried, he was recording it and it's only coming out now and they're trying to say incompetence. Please support this motion and please make sure if we can in any way, shape or form, support the Post Office workers and get these bad bosses in jail. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No other speakers? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Motion 20.

20

Region 558

That Conference agrees to challenge ruthless changes in companies' proposed changes to their pension scheme.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): That this Conference agrees to challenge ruthless changes in companies, proposed changes to their pension scheme. Really it's everything it says on the tin. I know Rathbones is part of Morrisons, they're just going through it for about the third time in the last 10 years, where obviously if you know Morrisons have been bought out, they came to us the other year, last year and decided yet again they're changing the terms of the pension. Obviously they can't do it without consultation, but the consultation between the three different Unions, with the three different Unions that are in different parts of Morrisons, with the Bakers being in ours, they want consultation they told us, that's what's happening and these companies are still making millions, since Covid, before Covid, after Covid, they're still making multi-millions. I understand, because myself and Sean were in one of the consultations, I understand that the law is potentially changing, there's going to be changes to auto-enrolment, there's also going to be changes proposed on the amount that, of your wage that a pension is paid on. So I understand that companies are looking at saying we're going to be putting more money in, but such as ourselves, at the minute, I put 5% in and they put 5% in, it seems quite reasonable to me.

It's now moved to 4 and 4, for a temporary period. They were wanting to move it, we'll put the 5 in, they'll put 3% in, do you know what I mean? It's like hang on and when you look at their pension fund and how the pension funds, that of course aren't handled by Morrisons, they're handled by finance companies, they're making millions, there's millions there. It's just pure absolute greed and unfortunately they're just forcing it through and with, especially since Covid and probably with job security now and with the last hopefully of the Tories and the way they've been just sacking people, getting rid of people and generally trying to, you know, get rid of Union activity and any opposition to what they believe, that basically that pension money's yours, you've put it in, you deserve it, it's for you, it's for your family, it's for your future and these big firms they're just really taking the Michael, see, I've changed and, you know, they're just nicking your money basically and taking the piss, aren't they, you know.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: There you go, there's some money to the kitty, mate.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): First fine of the day, isn't it, do you know what I mean? But yes, anyway, that's crux of it. I'd ask you to support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You know your way to Room 9, I take it. Sean, I assume you're seconding this?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Do you want me to speak on it?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Yes, yes. Mark's absolutely right. I mean, everybody in this room is entitled to a retirement, it's part of what, you've worked all your life for it. The company were very slippery how they went about this, they were making out they were trying to get in front of legislation changes, which have not been forthcoming. They used the fact that Keir Starmer, if he was elected, he would still be proceeding on this route of flogging people with pensions and making you pay, they pay less you pay more. Myself, Mark, Jake, were sat in a meeting with them, basically it's only come about since the national living wage has been increased to £11.44. This is what's driving this, nothing else, no legislation changes, nothing to do with that, you're just trying to save money. Quite clearly, we are self-funding our own futures without their, without company support. The General Secretary said and Ian also, then the General Secretary also [unclear] with alliances with Unite and with USDAW? laid off. Now USDAW, uncharacteristically, made a lot of noise about this, but Unite took it to another level and last week went on strike. The backtracker? made us pay 4 and 4 as a compromise but Unite, their members had had enough. Bearing in mind that the company had stripped every benefit you had as a worker working for, away from you. You'd lost your long service, you lost your, death in service was reduced, things like that, everything was stripped back and then the pension onslaught. Now, they, we believed it was to save absolutely loads of money on the fact that the national living wage had gone up, but basically we feel that this is something that is going to go out for other companies and basically ask you to support the motion, because it's absolutely disgraceful what's going on.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Speakers? No? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. 21.

21

Region 3

That being a union that represents many migrant workers we should make sure that Leaflets are in different languages

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: You know, there is something, hello?, there is something I've got to say, something that isn't said enough, to do with this motion. By the way, Ian, I met Tatiana last night, she was forced to hear my very imperfect Russian, you know, so I think Tatiana deserves a round of applause just for that anyway.

[APPLAUSE]

But there is something and I think the President alluded to it in his speech this morning. It's not said enough. It's not said enough and I have facts to back it up. After the Brexit vote, the London School of Economics did a study on migrants, migrants' worth to the British economy. It found out facts we all know, that if it wasn't for migrants our NHS would collapse. If it wasn't for migrants, who pay into the system, our public services would collapse. The fact that migrants pay out and they actually make, create more wealth for our economy. It isn't migrants that decided to stop building a quarter of a million council houses a year, it was Margaret Thatcher. It was Margaret Thatcher, then continued under Tony Blair and John Major decided to sell them, all the social housing stocks off. But I don't think I need to tell you this, because we know that migrants are our Brothers and our Sisters because we work alongside them, they are our friends, they are our comrades and it is a pleasure to stand beside our migrant Brothers and Sisters, because they fight just alongside us and they talk about and I want to send out a message, yes, to Nigel Farage and Suella Braverman and the rest of them who complain about immigration. No, Mr Farage, the dealers in hate are you, the dealers in hate are Suella Braverman, because migrants are our Brothers and Sisters and we stand as comrades together.

[APPLAUSE]

But it's just asking, we've had this motion before and I know we already do it, I think we can do a little bit better and there's nothing wrong with improving on it and just getting more and more done. So, please vote for the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I support this motion, because on our site we've got over 41 different languages on our site. To me as a Branch Secretary, it can be quite hard to try and explain what the Union is. Some, their English is not 100%, it might be about 40%. If I had some sort of leaflet, even if it was online where I could change the language, a drop box, into their language, to explain what the Union is, they might go, oh, that's good, I didn't know that, so when you've got 41 languages, their common language is not English and to try and explain to them what a Trade Union is, you know, you can show them in English, some of the words they might, oh, I understand that, but they might not understand and you're trying to explain it to them and they might go, I don't understand you, but if you had like a leaflet, the idea is if you had like a tablet and you can drop the language to say Portuguese or Hungarian or we got going so we could drop it down to their language and they can read it in their language and think oh yes, I do understand what you mean now. I know we're trying to save paper, so I know that's a big issue we've got with wanting to save the planet, but sometimes when we've got all these migrants coming in, we want to support them as well and that's why really I support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: I'm not going to vote on this motion. I was involved in discussions that we had two years' ago where there was an order form sent out to every Delegate, where if there was something you needed ordering in a particular language, you had the opportunity to ask for it. I think Michael's got the right idea, let's have it on a tablet, where we can change the language. We've just had discussions about Conference moving biannually to try and save money. If we were to produce every single leaflet in every single language, we would probably bankrupt ourselves. Just look at the paper that's on your table today, how many languages should we produce that in?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: I don't want to take much time, but it's a very sensible issue, because there are a lot of people, I'm from India, I can speak Punjabi and Hindi, but my wife cannot understand anything, right. I teach her, then if she have to go to the hospital, they call interpreter, they charge the health service so much money, right, so this will be a good idea to produce leaflets in their own language, so they can understand, right. Most of the, my generation, or the new generation, the new generation can understand English, they can speak English, but the older generation, like me, right, they don't understand, right. I can understand because I was trained by, at the courses, I can speak English, I can understand everything, but it's a very good sensible idea to produce leaflets in Punjabi, Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali and Urdu. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sean. Sean? You're muted. Take yourself off mute.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Yes, sorry, yes. I wasn't going to speak on this, but I find myself agreeing with what Nick Mead just said there. I feel that the cost of this would be a lot. I feel that, you know, managing it and all would be more problematic, going forward. I think the word of an organised workplace should be enough. Bearing in mind that we've just knocked back a motion where the Hazards book to a Branch Secretary has been rejected, the universal language of health and safety and keeping people safe in the workplace, I believe, is the role of a Trade Union and I believe that role itself should be educational alone. People should get it and the [unclear] in the community can also spread that message out, but from the position where we are, I agree with Nick Mead, the cost would be, absolutely sends my alarm bells ringing. So, I'm going to oppose it on that basis.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay.

Sister Katarzyna Damek – Branch 515 (East Kilbride, Scotland): So, as Branch Secretary and [unclear] myself, I would say that I support this motion. It's not asking us for printing leaflets, it's asking us for having them, so they are somewhere online, available for us to use whenever we need them. So, instead of spending money on printing leaflets, we would rather see that this money is spent on training and ESOL classes for our members, but to get good members we need resources and the leaflets in different languages are a great resource for us to get good members.

So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Supporting this motion. If we're going to get new members, we need to open the door for them and a lot of the food industry etc we're getting migrant workers in whose first language is not English. If we shut the door on them by only keeping things in English, we're not going to pick up new members. We've got to look at it on the practical side as well, as well as that is what our mission is, to help people. So, I support this motion. It doesn't actually say that it has to be printed, we can do online, convert it and then they can, the sites themselves can print them off. So please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): It does actually say to make sure that leaflets are in different languages.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I'm not sure what a point of order that is. No, no, yes, but you can download leaflets.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): The word leaflets

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, but

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): so, I totally agree with what Kasha said, it's the resources, but then perhaps the motion said, should the resources be made available rather than the leaflets. I think that's why some people

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: very pedantic, very pedantic.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): but, as a point of order, utterly correct, but there you go.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You download a leaflet, as well as print a leaflet, as well as hand out a leaflet, you can do a lot with leaflets and when you run out, say again? So what they're basically saying is they want resources available, obviously leaflets, so they can hand out. What they've not stipulated is they want them printed, so we can, you know, we can envisage that as they are not printed, it's not for me really to, I mean, so that's where we are. It doesn't say printed, so we can, I assume, interpret it how we wish to interpret it. Well, I am aware and I should have made you come up, but I'll, but obviously I think, you know, Dougie will have the right to reply because there was a couple of people that obviously did oppose, but before Dougie gets the right of reply, is there any more speakers, because if not, I'm going to call the General, Okay. It's not another conversation with me, is it?

Brother Stephen Hayes – Branch 238: I just wanted to clarify if we're voting on leaflets being printed and supplied or we're voting on having the facilities to download the leaflets and print them out as and when necessary. It would be a lot more economically viable to do that. Sorry for the confusion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I think when the General Secretary responds, I think maybe we will clarify how we see it when you pass it. I think on the response that you get from the mover of the motion, who will come back with a right to reply and I'm sure has picked up on those issues, I'm sure he'll give a reply on what the interpretation of what they meant when they were moving it, which may not necessarily not be the same as what we've interpreted it as. General Secretary, yes, sorry.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: It's alright, just ensuring nobody else wants to come up. Conference, it's been mentioned but this has been in the Agenda as a motion for at least the last two years, if not longer. We have multi-lingual leaflets, in digital format and in hard copy format. We put out in the Delegates packs last year the tri-fold one that is in the organising pack, that has English, Portuguese, Romanian and a couple of other languages I can't remember off the top of my head, but they're there and we've got that in PDF format as well and we've also done this for years, so when I was in Head Office this week, getting stuff printed and packing stuff up ready for Conference, I found a box of the really, really old, only the ones that have been in the Union for a long time will remember these, the really, really old leaflets that were little booklets that had the membership form attached in that you could separate off and fill in and they had them in different languages still at Head Office, because they'd not been used and I think there were some in Polish and Lithuanian, just for argument's sake. So we've been doing it for a while.

When we updated our website and, you know, please do let us know, not by shouting out right now but pull us if it's not working but we believed when we put our website together that if your computer is set up in a different language, you should have the option to change the language of the text on the website, not the PDFs because they're obviously developed and they're separate, but the actual content of our website, to ensure that people could go on in their own language and read that content. We've also got examples in the Annual Report and there are pictures in there of different languages being used on leaflets across the Regions, where people have designed them, many of them have been done by our full-time Officials, some of them are done by Rafal from the Scottish Region, from the Learning Services, they're all over social media.

It's a myth that we don't have these leaflets, which is probably why we keep getting motions and coming back, but they are there, they're in circulation, they are in our offices, they're on social media, they are up in workplaces, you know, they're there. They can be downloaded, they can be printed, we've got physical copies of some. I mean, to be totally honest though, it would be really helpful if you let us know, as Nick mentioned, what languages you need them to be in, because at the minute, we're only building things on what we're being told, so 41 languages, we definitely haven't got 41 languages translated, because we didn't know you needed 41 languages. So, you know, feeding that in and letting us know if you need them in other things, but what I would add to that is, when we are translating things, we will also need volunteers just to check through it and make sure that we're saying what we think that we're saying, because the last thing we want to do is use, you know, some AI tool or whatever and get it wrong, because we could end up in a load of trouble. So we need your help to help us to be better, as Douggie said, but there is stuff out there that can be printed, that can just be shared on social media, it's already there and we're already doing it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Yes, I agree really that what Sarah says, we are doing it, but like I say we can always do better, I know we can do better and yes and by the way, Tatiana, now we know you're there, you might be getting a call to like translate leaflets into Russian. You alright with that? Yes? See, that's one great thing about our Union, it's one thing I love about us, it's our inclusivity, you know, it is our inclusivity and how we work together, it's something that I'm so proud of and it's something when I speak to other Unions, they always talk about how the Bakers Union work together, they always talk about that, how we bring people, different nationalities. Now I'm not saying, Sean said like about having leaflets in all languages, we can't do that, we haven't got the money. It'd be nice, but we haven't got it. It's just looking at what we do and trying to do better, if we make a mistake, then we'll do better, you know, we can do this. Britain, proudly, is a multi-cultural country, you know what I mean? I'm proud and do you know one of the things I'm proud of is where I come from, Leicester, yes? Leicester is the most diverse city in the country, it is, that's according to the LSE, London School of Economics, look it up, research it and I was even more proud when Leicester ran Britain's First out of there. Please vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Okay. Those against? That's carried. I don't think you all voted by the way. Motion 22. Oh sorry, yes, sorry, hold on, Standing Orders, Report, go for it. I'm forgetting myself.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): You are. Please turn to your Agendas. The next motion is 26 and it stands, but it's been composited with motion 35 as composite 2, it's in the back of your book. 27 stands, 28 stands, 29 stands, 30 stands, 31 stands, 32 stands, 33 stands, 34 stands, as I said before 35's been composited as composite 2, 36 stands, 37 stands, 38 was the joint composite from earlier with No. 11, composite 5 at the back of your book, 39 stands and 40 stands. That's the end of the report for now.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay to Conference, do we accept? Cool, thank you very much. Motion 22.

22

Region 4

To vote to re-affiliate our union to the Labour Party

Brother Alan Scott – Branch 415 (Park Cakes, Bolton): Hello, comrades. I'm here to call for Conference, if you'd vote to re-join the Labour Party. We never got told the reason why we were kicked out, we were told Ian had had a bit of a spat with Starmer on Instagram. Well, we, you, when you called Conference, 36 people voted on that, out of 16,000. Two voted no, maybe one. Do you think that's a reflection of you lot?, to have stayed in the Labour Party, which was spawned out of the Bakers Union. We still sing The Red Flag, which is not just our song, it's their song, we're all dressed in red, Labour colours. Because Ian can't get on with Keir Starmer, because he's a Jeremy Corbyn mate, yes, he's kicked us all out. I asked Sarah end of November when I went to Eastbourne with you lot, she said they kicked us out of the Labour Party, well, I don't believe that. I asked a lady who was running the course, Debra she's called, from Germany, yes and she's a Labourite and I asked her one question, while Sarah was there. Would we be stronger as a Union if we were back in the Labour Party? and she said, yes. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Speakers?

Brother Robbie Woodland – newly-formed Branch 282, the wonderful district of Kernow Branch: I'm old enough, my handsones, to remember the Labour Party as being working class.

No longer, no longer do they stand and speak for me, these, you or our comrades out in the communities. They've lost the respect of the working class, they've ditched us, the working class, decades ago. We had a short spell with Jeremy Corbyn, where there was hope, there was hope for us, a hope to improve our lives, but under this idiot Keir Starmer, there is no hope. There is no hope for us, the vulnerable, the working class, left. They won't change nothing. All their Union Jacks, we'll change this, change that, means nothing, nothing will be changed. When a political party climbs into bed with big businesses, it makes us homeless. There is no room for us to sleep with them, we have to find somewhere else to go and it ain't reaffiliating with the Labour Party and I will say this, from us down in Cornwall, we will not stand, we will not share a platform with a political party who are nothing but scabs. They've not stood with Trade Unions, on picket lines, they are against us, protesting for peace in Gaza, they don't do it. What have we got in common with the Labour Party now? Nothing. So please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Wasili Ali – Branch 561: I'm here to oppose the motion. I did attend this affiliation online, the numbers were very low, but it was explained. I was one of the people who asked the question why we were disaffiliating. All Delegates were invited, all Delegates in that year were invited back to the Conference, which is by the Rules, the Rule Book says so, so people decided not to attend. So regardless of the numbers who attended, it was a Conference decision to say we are disaffiliating from the Labour. Without taking anything from the previous speaker, I agree with him fully. Labour is not for us. Why should we reaffiliate with them, or go back into them? The mover hasn't given us reasons. Obviously Ian, our National President and Labour, there was something that happened, but Labour, the way they handled it, we had the right to make a decision as a Union and I believe we made the right decision to disaffiliate. Labour has not given us any reason to join them. So, in short, please oppose the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Right. Where do I start opposing this motion. I'm not going to even mention Corbyn. If you want to know how wrong the Labour Party are now, they have refused a wealth tax. The Green Party are going to do a wealth tax, won't affect any of us, it's only on wealth and income over £10 million. 1%, 1% tax on assets over £10 million and that will generate £50 billion a year and the Labour Party have rejected that. Oh and this isn't making the rich poor, because that sort of wealth generates between 2 and 4% interest per year. All this is doing, that 1% tax, is reducing how wealthy they become every single year. If you want to know how bad the Labour Party is, why we shouldn't be in the Labour Party any more, until it changes, fundamentally changes, they're arguing that they can't renationalise the railways. MPs are stood saying we can't renationalise, it's going to cost too much. How much will it cost to renationalise the railways? Zero. It is a franchise system. When those franchises come up for renewal, thank you, we'll just take it back and I'll leave the last word on the Labour Party on why we shouldn't reaffiliate and why we should oppose this motion to Carla Denyer of the Green Party and I don't support her, by the way, but she summed it up completely the other day in the Party debate. She said Keir Starmer has changed the Labour Party, he's changed it into the Tory Party. Thank you. Oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 252: I'm here to oppose this motion and the problem is, after having those three speakers before me, there's not much I can say, but it is true, Keir Starmer, he may be the Leader of the Labour Party, but all he is is a Tory wearing a blue tie. Please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fitzpatrick – Branch 430: I'm very old and remember a lot of things that happened. The last time the Labour Party got in, they had a huge majority, something like 380 members, seats they had and what Thatcher did is destroy the Labour movement. The amount of laws she brought in to change our rights, working rights and everything, give it to the management, people have forgot all that. When Labour got in with the huge majority, they never changed one anti-Labour law, not one and we had that huge majority, they could have wiped the whole lot off and they didn't. When we came out of Europe, all the rich people, Europe was changing the legislation to attack the rich and what they all did is pulled their money out of Europe and put it in different accounts throughout the world. They all done it, the Labour done it, Conservatives done it and that's why they done it. So I oppose this motion. They're not Labour any more, they don't support Labour. Anyone who speaks up against them or says something out of order, you're barred out. I am a Labour member, always have been, always will be, but actually to affiliate to them, I totally disagree with it and we shouldn't, we should spend our money on our own members. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Sorry, once again, I'm just doing exercise because I was unwell. I was always Labour, but last elections I changed to Tory, just one, the person was nice, very helpful, going house to house and prior to that, the Labour people were okay in Whitehall, I'm talking about my town, but nationally, in the past, Labour played a good part. I'm talking about my town, we had problems a couple of years back. The library where I live is [unclear], there's old people there and Labour wanted to close it, right, so I organised a petition of 1500, right, it wasn't just the library, it was the meeting place of old people walking like this with sticks, so I organised a petition, 1500 people went door to door with a beer can in my hand and then as the petitioner, I was called to speak, you know, on that. So I went there, there was I think my friend, a solicitor, there, he knows how many total councillors and I looked at them, I said, you lot, right, you're closing the library, it's a meeting place for the elderly people and you are killers of that, right and what you, most of them were Labour, the Mayor was Labour, friend of mine, untouchable, because now we think he's somebody else. So, he didn't open his mouth and I said, you lot and they objected to it. I said, you lot come here and sit here for about half an hour, one hour and then you go home, sign off, get some attendance allowance and I said when Jim Callaghan came here, you lot, there was drinks on the table and I seen some of that Labour Consulate putting wine in their pockets, right. I said you can spend that there and you're going to close it and then they lost it and then my [unclear] open. I come back to Labour now because my local MP was Rob Marris, a well-known lawyer, he's died now, he's local man, he walks in the community, he don't walk like this, right and we had two Asian, that's where I'm a bit reluctant, two Asian, both untouchable, one worked with me in the factory and he became Mayor, both of them became Mayor and when they walk, you know, like this, they're somebody from other planet so that and also I 'phoned some Labour people, right. I say, what they do in the community where there's Hindu, Muslim, Indian, they will put up an idiot Indian, right, because, right, so I welcome back to Labour because now we got, I think, in the safer hands of Starmer, right and his team and they're good people, so we should work with them.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can we have some quiet? Thank you.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Sorry, I feel like Zsa-Zsa's fifth husband. I know what I've got to say, but I know, I don't know how to do it to make it interesting. I'll start off by saying reaffiliating to Labour? What are you going to get out of it, just what are you going to get out of it? We already have influence with our Parliamentary Group, with good MPs in Parliament. Do you think Keir Starmer will say oh, Bakers Union's reaffiliated to Labour, oh, I best start listening to them, I'll be on the 'phone to Sarah and Ian now, right away. Do you think that's going to happen? It's not going to happen. That's what we think they're going to say, right, £15 an hour minimum wage. Alan, I was on the same course, yes and one thing we did learn is the economy doesn't work like a credit card, but do you know who thinks it does? Rachel Reeves. Rachel Reeves made a great speech at the May's Bankers, in front of all these bankers, saying that the economy works like a credit card and the credit card's maxed out. George Osborne must be jumping for joy because that's what he said in 2010 and the thing is, it's not as if Rachel Reeves didn't do politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford and then go and do a Masters in Economics at the London School of Economics and then went on to work at the Bank of England for several years, so she should know how an economy works, but she seems to be ignorant to it, she seems to be echoing George Osborne. It's not as if I haven't seen the Labour files that revealed a criminal conspiracy against its own membership, revealing that if you are Jewish, you are five times more likely to be expelled from Labour now for anti-Semitism, five times more likely.

The Forde Report, commissioned by Starmer himself, to look at racism in the Labour Party, which they have chosen to ignore and The Forde Report revealed a heirarchy of racism, a heirarchy of racism, but they don't [unclear] happen and one of the most disgusting things I have ever heard in my life. If anybody went online and it went viral, in Liverpool, God bless the Scousers, you know, a woman called Audrey White, a pensioner, went up to Keir Starmer and gave him a piece of her mind, condemning him for doing a column and an interview for The Sun newspaper, he does remember, he's the Leader of the Labour Party, yes and then she gave him a [unclear] about his witch hunts and everything and all his lies, those [unclear] gone, we ain't seen them, they went flying off and it took them two days to expel her, but the saddest thing is, who Audrey White is.

The President knows Audrey? Audrey White, in the 1980's led a strike at her shop that was dramatised in a film called Business As Usual with Glenda Jackson playing Audrey and because of that strike, Audrey White had the law on sexual harassment changed in the workplace. That is somebody you should be proud of in a Party, to have a woman like that, who stands against sexual harassment, but Keir Starmer couldn't even abide her being in there for two days after she'd gave him some home truths. This is how the new Labour Party is, you speak up, you're out. You go against what we say, you're out. Democracy gone and you want to give your money to Keir Starmer and those lot who are not going to do anything for us, they're not going to do anything for us.

We've still got our Parliamentary Group, we can have influence in Parliament, but not through these. Why tie yourself to somebody who agrees with you on nothing and wants to do nothing for the working class? Please support the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Do you mean oppose?

(Delegate says: "You mean oppose, don't you?")

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Any other speakers? Any other speakers? No, okay.

Conference, I thought this was a motion about reaffiliation to the Labour Party. I didn't realise you just wanted to ask me some questions, Alan, because I'd have been quite open to answering any questions that you wanted to pose to me. I got expelled from the Labour Party after the Union disaffiliated, not before, but after. I was expelled from the Labour Party for standing up for this Trade Union and standing up for the General Secretary at the time, who was suspended. That's the reason I got expelled. I got expelled because he was suspended and there was a campaign launched to get him reinstated. Reinstated on the basis that he hadn't had any due process, he hadn't been notified about what his suspension was for and they wouldn't give him a fair hearing either and it was only because of the pressure we put on as the Union and the campaign that I launched to support him, that made the Labour Party change its position, change its position over Ronnie, change its position over quite a number of our members who were also suspended at the same time and the campaign was called Labour Against the Witch hunt and it was about members who were being suspended for any reason and any justification they could find to stop them supporting Jeremy Corbyn in the re-election in 2016 and if you wanted to know that, I'd have told you, you could have just asked me.

The reason why you disaffiliated and by the way, just to put another myth to bed, we had a roll call, there was 99 people, there's 105 in this room, so when you talk about 38 people making the decision, there was 99 people and Julie, you were the one and you abstained, you didn't vote against, you abstained, because you believed that it should be done in person, that's what was said and that's recorded as well. So let's be clear, the reason why this Union disaffiliated by the way, is because you, the members of this Union, in 2020, when we carried out a survey, our membership that was asked do you believe that the Labour Party represents you, they said, no, 48 in favour, 52 against. We asked the Labour Party for a meeting, they promised us a meeting, for the first time ever this Union had a woman General Secretary, but not just only a woman, the youngest woman General Secretary that's ever been elected. They made agreements to meet us, they failed to meet us on every single time they made appointments with us.

I asked Keir Starmer to when he goes into Westminster, that he must represent the interests of our members and I told Jenny Chapman, who was his PA, that we cannot accept, because this is during Covid don't forget, that we cannot accept a move that's going to put our members at risk. We can't accept you moving from two metres to one metre plus because we don't know what that means, but we know what two metres means, it means our members are not dying in the workplace where in other workplaces they are and the response I got from Jenny Chapman, when Keir Starmer went in and said I agree with Boris, he had to say something, he couldn't be stood there at the despatch box saying nothing, I said he could have turned round and said, before we make any decision, we want a health and safety risk assessment and we're going to engage with the Labour movement to make sure that their members and those workers who are on the front line are not going to have their lives put at risk, but so he could be seen to be a statesman throwing sand in our eyes, making him look like some sort of person who represented our interest, he agreed with Boris, he agreed with the Tories and do you know what, after those changes was made, that was the first time we lost lives in our industry.

So am I angry about the way that the Labour Party treated this Union? You're damn right I'm angry. Am I angry that we had people lose their lives because of decisions that the Labour Party made, because he didn't want to go to a despatch box and not be seen to be agreeing and looking like a statesman with the Tories because we were in a crisis? You're damn right I'm angry. I'm angry for every single member of ours that lost their lives because these politicians failed to stand up for us and I say this, I say this, because some people say is it personal? Personal? You're damn right it's personal, because our people are entitled to political representation, our class has a right to be represented in every section of society and that's why we created the Labour Party. We didn't create it for the bosses, we created it for us and it no longer represents us. So I ask you to do this one thing, say no to this motion, no to reaffiliation, stand by our class, stand by your pride, don't be taken in, don't reaffiliate, avoid any, any, any ways of getting back into a Labour Party that can't even stand on a picket line with striking workers in struggle. Oppose this motion. You have the right to a response, right to reply.

[CHEERS, WHISTLES and APPLAUSE]

Brother Alan Scott – Branch 415 (Park Cakes, Bolton): Hi, comrades. I didn't know I'd get you so upset, Ian, do you know what I mean, but you never told us this. You never told us this, we've heard it today. I sat over there, you looked directly at me, yes, all the time, you never told us any of this, you never told us any of it. You never said there were 99 and there's 105 here, we were told there were 36, Ian, so if Starmer lied, you lied to us as well, yes. Are you lying to us, Ian?, because we never heard, we heard 36 people voted on this, not 99. I might not be stood up here now if you'd have told me the truth at first

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You never asked me, Alan, you never asked me, to be fair.

Brother Alan Scott – Branch 415 (Park Cakes, Bolton): When they see, Ian, here, last year you banned me, you banned me for speaking to my wife on the 'phone and made an excuse up for something else, that's it, I'm finished. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Thank you very much.

I believe

[LAUGHTER]

Okay, I believe, Alan, Alan, Alan, quiet please. We're going to go into, does everybody know where the rooms are? Right, so I've just been advised Stand Up To Racism isn't coming, so I believe that's going to fill the Albion Suite up or whatever it's called, the Albion fringe meeting, which is going to be, are we changing rooms is what I want to know. Say again, Albion's going in the Willow Room downstairs. We're going to be back here in the morning at half past 9. Make sure you go along to the things that are due to start at half past 3, probably 25 to 4, because we've gone a little few minutes over.

See you in the morning.

Monday 10th June 2024

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, can you take your seats. We're ready to start. Please sit down. That includes the EC. Thank you very much. Take your seats. General Secretary to call the roll. Thank you.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Turned it on, I wasn't sure whether I'd pressed the button. Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5 and one visitor, Region 7, online? How many? Thanks, Conference.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, obviously there's a number of fringe meetings that'll be taking part this afternoon. Obviously we're pleased to welcome Gary in the room from STAMMA, who will leading one of the sessions this afternoon for us. We've also got another session where we've got the West Country's World Champion, Glenn Gateley, which is sponsored by, Catley, sorry, Catley, sorry, I haven't got my glasses, I'm going to put my glasses on now. This is, I should have remembered there. Yes, you're right, it is Catley, Glenn Catley, sponsored by Watkins and Gunn and that's in the Willow and I believe there's going to be a raffle too, so you'll be able to win his gloves. So, the board's there, the raffle's free? Oh, it's a free raffle, a free raffle, you don't even have to contribute. Sometimes you have to be in it to win it and it'll cost you a bit of money, but today you don't have to pay a penny, but obviously there's boards up there which has the fringe meetings on, because there's also a Credit Union on as well.

So yes, I believe, I believe we've got a speaker that's coming on, obviously for seasoned Delegates they'll know and they'll recognise Ian Mearns. Ian Mearns has been the Chair of our Parliamentary Group for a few years and he's also not going to be our Parliamentary Chair going forward because unfortunately, unfortunately Ian's decided to stand down, which means we'll be losing somebody who knows us as a Trade Union, but understands our class and our people, that's represented the working class community he's from, but obviously more importantly the working class communities across this country, who's been a phenomenal MP and a phenomenal person in putting the issues of our class and our movement forward in Westminster and bringing Unions together as well to try and further the aims and objectives of the Labour movement. So I'm sorry that this will probably be the last time that you speak, but we are very grateful for all of the work that you did on behalf of this Union, Ian and obviously wish you luck in your retirement. I mean, you don't even look old enough to retire, Ian, do you know what I mean?, but obviously I hope that you enjoy life now that you're outside Parliament, because it's probably going to be a lot more, or a lot less stressful than in the Party that you were previously in, sorry, did I say that? Ian Mearns, everybody.

[APPLAUSE]

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group addresses Conference

Thank you very much, Ian. It's a real pleasure to be with you, I'm sorry I couldn't be there in person, but I've got an awful lot going on with the family recently and taking a couple of days out it would take me for the travelling to get to where you are and getting back was just going to be too much of a tour, given what's happening.

You say unfortunately, Ian. I think, you know, one of the things that we do in Parliament is we have the Trade Union group of MPs as well and, you know, the smaller Unions get together with the Trade Union group and one of your colleagues from the Prison Officers' Association, Steve Gillan, is probably to blame for the fact that I'm retiring, because he gave me a t-shirt about five or six years ago, which had on it, on the front, emblazoned the words "68 is too late" which was about a campaign the Prison Officers' Association were running about the Ministry of Justice's plans to increase prison officers' retirement age to 68. Now, the thing is, I'm 67, but I've worn that t-shirt mostly in bed over the years and when I get up in the morning, look at myself in the mirror and I see these words "68 is too late", I think that's probably right, because I am officially retired in terms of the State Pension, I've got my bus pass, so it very kind of you to say that I don't look too old, Ian, I am officially old, so from that perspective. So this is my last report to your Conference as Chair of the Parliamentary Group and I think I've been taking on the role, Ian, I think since 2015. If you remember back in 2015, you know, people like Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell and others used to help the Union out in Parliament and then what happened in 2015, they got other roles to take on, so it was up to the likes of me to take on Chair of your Parliamentary Group and it's been an honour, a privilege and a pleasure to do that since then.

Now, the Parliamentary Report covers obviously the times since your last Conference and, you know, it really covers the time from the return from the summer recess in September through to the announcement of the general election and we know that the general election will take place on 4th July. It's, I think it's been a, yet again, another interesting period.

When has there not been an interesting period in the 14 years since I've been in Parliament? I mean, we've had five Prime Ministers, umpteen Chancellors, you know, countless Secretaries of State for different government departments, some have lasted a matter of hours due to the different crises that were going on and, you know, the one thing I would say about my time in Parliament is this, what I've seen is a government who have systematically worked over that 14 years to dismantle everything I'd worked in previous political life for in local government. I was a Councillor in Gateshead for 27 years and, you know, we had built up a very good reputation as a local authority in terms of delivering good public services, improving our education services, improving our adult social care services, keeping the streets clean, etc, etc and all of that has become not just increasingly difficult but almost impossible as the government have systematically de-funded public services over that 14 year period. So it has been interesting from that perspective, interesting, frustrating. I think one of the other aspects though of that 14 years is what we've actually seen from the government is dishonesty, self-serving attitudes, corruption and a situation where standards in public life have diminished year-on-year-on-year and that's sad because it reflects quite often in the press and in the media on all members of Parliament, but I can tell you categorically it is basically the Tories who have been unilaterally to blame for that.

Now during this period, we launched the Baker's Dozen manifesto in Parliament, based on the priorities of members as indicated in surveys and previous Conference decisions. I was sadly away with the Education Select Committee at the time of that launch, but we did have Beccy Long-Bailey, John Hendy and Chris Stevens speak at the launch. John Hendy is a noted King's Councillor and Labour Lord, put there by Jeremy Corbyn. Chris Stevens from the SNP was speaking at the launch too and lots of other MPs were in attendance and I think it's important that we understand that in Parliament, you know, the Bakers Union Group has had cross-party support from the parties of the left, certainly of the left of the Tories and one of the main demands in the manifesto of tackling excessive supermarket profits. We submitted written evidence to the Select Committee Inquiry into fairness in the food supply chain about high food prices, at the same time the suppliers are being squeezed, but supermarket shareholders are getting millions in dividends. On the basis of the written evidence, your General Secretary, Sarah, who's been a pleasure to work with, was invited to give oral evidence before MPs and we could look at a windfall tax in the short term but more broadly, we need an effective regulator with the power to intervene on supermarket prices.

We've also kept up the focus on how low pay and poor working conditions are leading to food insecurity. We showcased the work of the Food and Work network in Parliament in January with my colleague from Liverpool, Ian Byrne, academics and food bank practitioners and discussed the importance of keeping the issue of hunger on the agenda at the election, emphasising the need for a right to food and universal free school meals for children in our schools. That was also in the Baker's Dozen manifesto.

And, you know, let's, I think one of the things that I do reflect on about that is, you know, we're talking about food banks just being something which is talked about sort of almost on a day-to-day basis, it's kind of like become an integral part of our welfare state. I mean, I certainly support the food bank in Gateshead but, you know how it is, I wish with all my heart that food banks didn't have to exist. They existed under the last Labour government, before 2010. There were a few of them, now there are hundreds and hundreds of food banks supporting families around the country and I wish with all of my heart that food banks didn't need to exist, but they do sadly in modern day Britain and therefore because they do need to exist, we should support them but at the same time, working with all our hearts to get to a situation where they're no longer required in a modern day society.

And we've also highlighted how the culture of zero-hours contracts and insecure work, together with hostility to Trade Union representation produces a toxic mix which is, a toxic mix of working culture with managers able to abuse their positions and quite often if workers are not supported by Unions, having nowhere to turn. Nowhere is this more apparent than at McDonald's, where there is a result of organising due to the BFAWU's McStrike Campaign, the BBC exposed the widespread extent of sexual harassment and abuse of staff at the Company's stores and your President, Ian, gave oral evidence to the Business and Trade Select Committee, alongside the TUC, where the CEO was confronted directly about that particular problem.

In May we also brought MPs together with campaigners and legal experts with the Zero Hours Justice Campaign to discuss how best to provide workers with guaranteed minimum hours and stop bad bosses exploiting the loopholes.

I think that's the main points that I want to highlight from your report, you know, the report's there and it's there to read for you all. It is a comprehensive guide to what's been done by your Parliamentary Group and I think it is important that we do pass on, certainly I pass on, you know, the need for the Parliamentary Groups of Unions like yourselves to continue into the future and Beccy Long-Bailey, who's the MP for Salford, has agreed to become the Group's Chair and Convener into the future and I think, you know, I couldn't be passing it on to a safer pair of hands from my perspective.

After 14 years though, working in opposition, you know, let's not forget what we've had to deal with. Why did, I think one of the things I do reflect on is why did Sunak decide to call the election when he did? I mean, they had a very low point in the opinion polls, some opinion polls have got them between 25 and 27 points behind Labour, sometimes I wonder why, but they are and I actually think that Sunak's decision to call a general election, standing outside of 10 Downing Street, getting soaking wet, with Things Can Only Get Better blaring in the background, was probably nothing to do with the inflation figures which were advertised the day before, but actually to do with the fact that Sunak's own personal ratings amongst his own MPs were going down and increasing numbers of letters of no confidence were being received by the Tory Party's Back Bench 1922 Committee and I understand if you do the parliamentary arithmetic, something like 53 letters have to be received before the Tory Party go into a vote of no confidence. Well I don't know this definitively, but I've got a funny feeling that Sunak's decision was probably because of the number of letters which had been received by the '22 Committee was probably in the low to mid-40's at that stage and I think the urgency with which he brought a Parliament to an end, because what he did was, he called the election on the Wednesday and then he did what's called proroguing Parliament on the Friday and with the dissolution not due until the next week. I mean, as soon as we heard the decision that he'd called the election for 4th July, we thought well, you know, the next couple of days, the Thursday, the Friday and the following week would be used for what's called Parliamentary wash-up, but I understand it, a lot of Tory Ministers and an awful lot of Tory back benchers (a) were shell shocked by his decision, but (b) were very, very angry that an awful lot of stuff that they'd been working on like, you know, bills which hadn't been passed yet, would be lost because the Parliamentary wash-up was only going to last that Thursday and Friday.

So, you know, the Tories have run down the curtain on the current government, you know, they could have gone on until, actually they could have gone on until January as long as they'd called the election before 19th December, but what we've seen is the end of, hopefully, 14 years of lies, deceit, self-serving politics, corruption and, I think, mainly the one thing, one of the things really, I think, highlights this government is despite the fact they've been corrupt and self-serving, they've been grossly incompetent, you know and it's been a frustration as well during this period. It seems to me the media just don't seem to want to join the dots on the record of this government. There's hardly a government department which hasn't had a crisis or an ongoing crisis or a whole string of crises over that 14 years of government and, you know, when a crisis in a department is highlighted by the press or the media, they've always got a plan to put stuff right. Well if they had a plan to put stuff right, why didn't they put it right in the first place and usually, by the way, when you probe them in Parliament on what that plan was, the plan actually wasn't a plan at all, it was a vague aspiration which was then forgotten because of the next crisis which loomed in a different government department and you can, you know, name virtually any government department and there's been a crisis of management to deal with, whether it be the public finances where they've, you know, quadrupled the national debt in their time in office, the de-funding and the poor performance of local government because of that, you know and a local authority like mine and I see Rachel's here from Gateshead and, you know, a local authority like mine and Gateshead, when I left Gateshead Council as its Deputy Leader back in 2010, we had an annual revenue budget of £310 million. This year, 14 years later, with a whole range of new additional needs, demands coming in and with inflation to deal with, the local authority has a budget of less than £250 million, so in real terms, the council is trying to deliver the services that it should on about 50 – 60% of what it had in real terms back in 2010 and that is typical of many local authorities around the country, but we've also seen crises in our schools, in our health service, in public transport, in our prisons, in our benefits system, you know, we've had five Prime Ministers, we've had, you know, a cost of living crisis which has almost been unprecedented and while this government might want to blame that on Covid or they might want to blame it on Putin's invasion of Ukraine, it's funny how so many of our neighbouring countries in Europe don't have similar crises to deal with. They do have cost of living constraints and cost of living worries, but I'm afraid to say that, you know, it's true to say that they don't have problems to match those which exist and which face ordinary people in this country.

I think what's also exemplified this time, from my perspective, has been what I can only regard as the disgraceful treatment of many members of Parliament and members of the Party on the left. We've seen what's happened to Ian, your own President and many others. The internal Party machinations, I think, have left a really, really sour taste in the mouth and we've seen recently the treatment of Diane Abbott, thankfully she's come through that and I think the tactics of the right within the Party were all to blame for that. We've seen Lloyd Russell-Moyle being forced not to stand because of some whipped-up accusation against him at the eleventh hour. We've seen Mick Whitley, a very good friend and comrade, de-selected using a real twisting of the Party rules in his trigger ballot. We've seen Beth Winter suffer a similar fate in Wales and an attempt on Ian Byrne orchestrated by Party officials, which gladly failed but it was very close and Ian Byrne just survived that. The disgraceful treatment of Apsana Begum, our colleague in the east of London, which I'm delighted to say she's come through and is now standing as the candidate.

So we go into the election and we've got an awful lot to fight for. The Labour manifesto isn't published yet, but I'm afraid to say that it'll probably contain an awful lot of words, but I think from our perspective not be saying too much, but there are things within, which must be within that, which we've really got to fight to retain and to strengthen. For instance, the new deal for workers and we've got to fight any attempts to roll back on those commitments and in doing that, we've got to fight not only for a better deal on workers' rights and conditions of service, but for better pay and therefore living standards for all workers across the board.

The one thing I do know, which has been reinforced in my mind during this period, is this. The class that we, I joined the Labour Party to oppose, they know how to look after their class interests, there's no doubt about that and we now have to match their manipulation of the system to look after the interests of the people who are members of our Unions and whose interests our class really should be working very, very hard to protect. We've not only got to protect the rights and standards of living of working class people, but we've really got to work very, very hard to improve them dramatically. Things have got worse very, very badly for an awful lot of people and we can't go on with that and allow it to be the situation where working people are forced to visit a food bank in order to make ends meet.

I'll end with that, comrades. I'll just say though, it has been an honour, a privilege and a pleasure to represent your Union in Parliament and anything that I can do in the future in a personal capacity to help you, I will certainly try and do so. Thank you very much, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, General Secretary, because I assume you're going to talk to him about the...

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Yes, this. Thank you ever so much for that, Ian and, you know, I appreciate why you can't be here today, but it is such a shame that you're not here because you would have had a bag full of goodies, we'll make sure you get some of them from our members next time I'm up in Newcastle, we'll come and visit. As you're not here

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: I'll be down in London occasionally, you know, so you could give stuff to Michael for me and I'll collect it off him if you wish, but I'll be really honoured to receive anything, that's very kind of you, thank you.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Okay, well just on that note, I know the last couple of years we have donated to charity for you, so if you could give us the details of where you'd like us to send a cheque or a BACS transfer as it's normally done these days, we will make a donation to the charity of your choice in the absence of presenting you with a pewter baker.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Very simply, that'll be the Gateshead Foodbank, Sarah, thank you very much indeed.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: We've got those details. Thank you ever so much, Ian and we will be in touch about coming and meeting you and maybe taking you out for dinner. We will do better than a Greggs sausage roll, we might make it, you know, Wetherspoons instead.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: [LAUGHTER] Yes, yes, you canna whack a Greggs sausage roll, mind you.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Oh, I know, I know.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Are you alright with doing some questions, Ian? Have you got some time?

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: I'd be delighted, aye, no problem at all, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Has anybody got any questions for Ian? Wow, anybody? They're being very quiet this year, Ian.

[LAUGHTER]

Dougie, are you coming? We've got one online as well, while Dougie's coming down, we've got one online. Jonathan.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): Good morning, Ian. You may remember me from last year, it was my first time at Conference and you were the first person that I spoke to. I asked about the general election for this year. Firstly, thank you very much for your work with the Union and happy retirement. Second point, you've actually stolen my thunder because it was going to be who will be the right person to replace you as our representative on the Parliamentary Group, but my third point was, would the Union benefit from affiliating with any government Party, or just keep on the pressure of the Parliamentary Group to push through our agendas and manifesto?

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: I mean, I think, you know, the Union has taken the decision to disaffiliate and, you know, along with other Unions like the RMT, the RMT had a very closed vote, I think, last year about whether or not to reaffiliate to the Labour Party. I really do think that that's a decision for the Union and its members, you know, from a tactical perspective where you think you're best placed to influence things. I mean, I personally think that in the recent past, the way in which things have developed within the Labour Party and I will be critical of one particular Union, I think it seems to me that in terms of engaging with the political fight within the Party, Unite, which is my own Union, seems to kind of left the field and I think that's very, very sad and I think with them kind of leaving the field and wanting to concentrate from the General Secretary's perspective on the membership and on their interests from an industrial perspective, that's left a lot of ground and that has been made up and seized upon by people in the right of the Party who are totally and utterly, many of them, anti-Trade Union in their attitudes. So, it's a decision really for the membership of the Union. I've stuck with it and I will be, I will continue to be a member of the Labour Party. I've got a funny feeling I'm not going to be in the House of Lords

[LAUGHTER]

... I can't imagine why that might be when, you know, you see some of the other people who've been, become members of the House of Lords following the general election, but you know how it is, there are ways in which we can carry on the fight and certainly I intend to do that via my own Constituency Party and working in conjunction with Parliamentary colleagues who are my friends and comrades, I will carry on doing that, but I think the one thing I would say is, if Unions aren't involved in the Party, it does leave those remaining left-wing MPs a bit more exposed than they would be otherwise.

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

Brother Duggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hi, Ian. Do you know what? I'm really sorry that you're not standing again, I really am, you know, because I know where your heart leads, standing up for Trade Unionism and our class and it does worry me, because I'm looking at the future and I'm sorry about what's happening in the Party, I really am, you know and I, you know, if the direction then would have been led by, you know, Rebecca Long-Bailey, Zarah Sultana or Nadia Whitcomb or Diane Abbott, I'd be jumping for joy, I'd be like running down the streets, but it's not and I'm coming from Leicester and one of our Leicester MPs, I've got to say made a speech at the [unclear]. She wants to be Shadow, Liz Kendall made a speech about benefits claimants. I'm a lay member, I'm a benefits claimant and I'm frightened, I really am frightened what is coming, I really am frightened by it. She said how the Tories hadn't been hard enough on benefits claimants. I notice, I spoke recently at the TUC Disabled Workers' Conference and I heard this and I just, I had to say, Sarah didn't know about this, I learned about another suicide of a friend, they didn't find his body for over a month. Do you know what the state of a body is after you find it, it's been lying there for a month?, you can only guess.

I'm frightened, I really am frightened. I suffer with my mental health, I can't get a counsellor, I don't know how to get one, I don't know how to access, it's been slashed and then all we're hearing is, Wes Streeting, who wants to be Health Secretary, saying how we've got to modernise, which means privatisation. I'm frightened, I wish you were staying, I wish you were staying, Ian, because you're one of our voices there, you're one of the people that care, I wish you were. I'm frightened for the future and we've got like, we've got the likes of Farage coming back, worse than ever, you know, I wish you, I mean if you can make a question out of that you can like, you know, just I just wanted somebody in Labour to listen and I know you will listen. Thank you.

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

[APPLAUSE]

Did you want to ask your question before I bring Ian in, Sean? Just got Sean to ask a question.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Hi, Ian. Ian, I'll be sad to see you go, firstly because you kept me awake on many occasions at Southport with your talks, you know, you engaged me when I was in a bit of a, well my mind and body were elsewhere, so you kept me engaged, thank you for that. I've got a couple of questions to ask you. Firstly, you've obviously been there for 14 years and you've seen 14 years of Tory rule, yes?, so I wanted to ask you, what did you actually think when you saw the falling letters behind Theresa May, the falling letters behind Theresa May at that Conference and the second part of the question is, sleaze. Now, you talk about sleaze with the Conservatives, but we had a big debate in here yesterday about affiliation to the Labour Party and they've shown some sleaze themselves. The real question is, how do you sit and tolerate all this, knowing what you know, because you've been a good ambassador for the Trade Union movement.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Over to you, Ian.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Well, I mean the thing is, you know, you've got to make a decision on how you feel about things, but I've been a member of the Labour Party, I'm afraid to say, for almost 50 years and, you know, I've been through thin and thinner and then, you know, some good times and then it's got thinner again and the point is, I don't think you win battles by evening the field of play, so you have to make a tactical withdrawal, but you don't leave the field of play completely and that's my own personal view. You know, politics ebbs and flows but, you know, let's not forget by the way that we've also got to put up with, outside of the Party, a really, really antagonistic press and media who will do anything that they can to undermine people on the left who really buy that philosophy and buy that politics and let economic outlook threaten everything that they stand for so, you know, we have to appreciate that.

I personally have decided, over the years, to stick with it and, you know, if people hadn't stuck with it we would never have seen Jeremy Corbyn becoming Leader of the Labour Party. You know, that had taken an awful long time and it had taken an election defeat in 2010 and an election defeat in 2015, but it did come about and then what we saw was people within our Party who actually undermined Ed Milliband's campaign in 2015, going to town and undermining Jeremy and despite the fact that they were undermining Jeremy in 2017, we nearly pulled off a phenomenal result but they really did go to town in 2019 and ably assisted by the press and media, they really went to town on Jeremy and on the leadership of the Party for the 2019 election along with, of course, the frustration which existed in the country over the stalemate that we had in Parliament about Brexit so, you know, getting Brexit done was one of the things that really did cut through in 2019 that led us to the mess that we've got now but, you know, the Labour Party obviously is a political party, it's always in a state of flux, membership comes and goes, the membership is greatly reduced on what it was under its height when Jeremy was Leader but, you know, I still think that we need some people on the left to remain in the Party to act as its conscience and to hold the feet of the leadership to the fire on a whole range of issues which interest, which are in the interests of ordinary working class people.

I think with regard to, was it Doug? Look, Doug, I really do appreciate your comments, I really do appreciate your comments, but as I was saying at the start, I am 68 and I'm afraid to say from a personal perspective, you know, I'm thinking about, if I committed to another five years in Parliament, I'd have to be there being 70, 71 and 72 in a few years' time. Now, some of my colleagues and comrades are willing to do that, but given what's happened within my family in the last six months, I've had, my son's partner had a baby on 11th March, then on the Thursday after giving birth on the Monday, she had a massively serious heart complaint, had to be rushed from the RBI down to the St Bartholomew's Hospital in London and I was left then with my partner, Marie, looking after four kids on and off for four weeks and then completely for 2½ weeks so, you know, with all of that going on, I kind of honestly feel, for me personally, that as every day's passed, I feel I've made the right decision. You know, family has to come first and I think that anybody would understand that I haven't taken the decision to stand down lightly, I haven't done it for political reasons, it's mainly because of family but also I think that time looking after the kids made me very quickly understand, with the levels of exhaustion that we both were putting in, both myself and Marie, that I'm 67, I'm not 37 or 27, which is the age you should be when you're looking after four kids so, you know, that's where we've been, okay?

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

[APPLAUSE]

Listen, Ian, thank you. I was going to finish the questions there, so I do apologise, Jonathan. I was just going to say, Ian, thank you very much for all the work, we really do appreciate the service you've given to our Union. Thank you for taking the time out this morning to answer the questions and of course, from all of us here in the Conference, we wish your family good health and obviously a speedy recovery and obviously look forward to seeing you at some point in the future, but obviously please take from us here at the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union, you know, our appreciation for the efforts that you always did in your time at Westminster. So once again, let's give a round of applause and show our appreciation for your time

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Ian, before you do, before you do that, can I just say it's been an absolute pleasure and a privilege to work with the Union, to work with you personally, with Sarah and with Ronnie, you know, the meetings that we've had, it's always, I think, always been (a) informative, exhilarating and entertaining on many occasions, but I think it's been an honour, a privilege and a pleasure for me personally. Thank you very much indeed, thanks.

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

[APPLAUSE]

Cheers, comrades. Okay, Conference, we're going to go back to the Agenda. You're more than welcome to stay if you're still online, Ian, but I understand if you've got business on and you need to get on, but obviously we're now going to go back to our Agendas and we're going to go to motion 20, put my glasses on, motion 24.

24

Region 3

The BFAWU should provide promotional materials for Roadshows e.g. pens, badges etc for roadshows that are suitable for that site.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I just think, we've spoken a little bit about building up our membership. I just think that one of the ways which improves on it and I've looked how other Trade Unions such as Unite does and I know we haven't got the money of Unite or GMB, but the way that they promote their Union is by the use of promotional materials. It's how every company, you know, promotes their brand and I think we can make use of this tactic so that we can promote our Union, I think it will be useful, I think it can build us membership. That's all I've got to say. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Seconder? Formally seconded, thank you very much. Speakers?

Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 282 and the great pasty nation District Branch of Kernow:

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

My handsones, I'm a travelling shop when I come anywhere. I've got patches, keyrings, t-shirts, with everything on. What Douggie's just said, it works, it does work. Come down to Cornwall and see, the amount of people wearing our Union. They love it, they love us. I know money's tight, but there's ways round it. Come and see me, I'll get you sorted out with your Branch. Trust me. By hook or by crook, you'll get what you want, but we need to do it. Support this motion. Let's promote us, because we are the best Trade Union and we always will be. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, whilst we completely understand the sentiment of this motion, we would ask the mover to remit it, so that the EC can do some work around it, otherwise we would have to ask Conference to oppose. We've had a look at the financial situation of the Union this week, we've had discussions around saving money and how we do save money, so that we can do stuff like this. The motion is realistically asking for an open-ended cheque book for promotional materials to give away, not only that, but ones suitable for that site. When we had a discussion at the Executive, we weren't quite sure whether that meant, you know, branded for a particular Branch, whether it was particular products for a particular Branch or site and, as a result, the EC can't ask you to support a motion that (a) we don't fully understand what is being asked for and (b) could potentially add unlimited costs to the Union that will need paying for. So we would ask you to remit. What I would say though is, we've got a relationship now with TC Branding, they're at the back, please go and have a conversation with them, there's merchandise there that can be purchased through Branch funds and the more that we utilise them, the more that we can get and that we can develop going forwards, so it is there to be purchased, but as a Union, how do we fund unlimited promotional materials? So we would ask the mover to remit, so that we can go and do some work on it and work with TC Branding to see what else we can make available, otherwise we would have to ask that you oppose the motion. Thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'll remit it.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, mate.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I've already spoken with

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers.

[APPLAUSE]

Could I take composite 2, which is, say again

Have I missed out 25? Oh, I have indeed, thank you very much. Good point. Motion 25, yes, absolutely. Sorry about that. To err is human. I am human.

5

Branch 432

That our union look at restarting the Union Towns/ People's Powered projects in Wigan again

Brother Les Bramhall – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool): Morning, Conference. Moving motion 25, which is that our Union look at re-starting the Union Towns People’s Power Projects in Wigan again. This Union initiative was introduced in January of 2023, however it was stopped later that year, in June of the same year. It took place in Wigan weekly, with John Fox, our own Ian Hodson, the President of the Union, Roy Streeter, National Officer as volunteers. It benefited the community and our Branch believes benefited the Union itself in terms of recruitment of membership. Volunteers spoke to people in the town centre, found out about local issues in the area, signposted people to get advice regarding housing and benefit issues and advised people regarding issues in the workplace. They used the Manchester Law Society, the Ron Todd Foundation, Peace & Justice Campaign. Other Unions were involved, including Unite, the GMB, UNISON and in fact Liverpool nurses also attended. Costs were limited, as tea, coffee and biscuits and milk were donated free and they also helped the homeless find accommodation with help from Gary Croft, who was a UNISON member.

I recognise that the Union isn’t a charity, of course it’s not, however we do support each other through our Union membership, so surely it follows that we support our communities and likely extend our membership opportunities, while getting the Union’s face seen in the community as a result. Our Branch urges you to support this motion, to the benefit of all. I can’t speak too much of the reasons it was stopped, I surmise it was the cost, it was cost-related, but as I said before, tea, coffee, biscuits and milk were all donated. I urge you, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Chair, EC, Delegates and comrades. I was one of the volunteers who helped during this project and it was great, it was very, very useful, but it was also very stressful dealing with a lot of people’s personal problems, but I fully support this. Please adopt this resolution. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Speakers? No? Kevin.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716, Region 7 – Executive Council Member/Vice President: Yes, can you hear me?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We can indeed.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716, Region 7 – Executive Council Member/Vice President: Good stuff. The Executive Council would ask you to oppose this motion. It was a noble [unclear] to be fair, we did try it and I understand the people’s thoughts on it so far, but we are a Trade Union, we’re not a Citizen’s Advice, we’re not local government, so on and so forth and as Andy said, it was price [unclear] and it was obviously time consuming for the people involved and as I say, we are a Trade Union and we didn’t get very much, we were speaking to the local community, hearing their problems and trying to help with [unclear] and stuff. The thing that we need to get is membership. We didn’t get any members from it. Maybe we could look at a hotline?, but we’ve got to go and try things to gain membership and then maybe we could look at these things, but until we gain more membership, I don’t see how, so please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, you have the right to reply.

Brother Les Bramhall – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool): I understand what the last speaker spoke about and as I said in my address, the Union isn’t a charity, I obviously understand that, but taking on board the costs involved were all donated, I’d like to know, can anyone tell me what cost to the Union this is, if anything. It was only given a six month’s trial from January to June of the same year. The opportunities to expand that, this in other areas is, you know, in my opinion, far great outweighs the reasons to not reintroduce it, because if it works in Wigan in, you know, a run-down area of the country, with a lot of homelessness and a lot of other problems in that area, I dare say there’s lots of other areas across this country where you all come from that this same opportunity of that initiative could be, you know, rolled out in those areas and I do believe that only giving it six months, that wasn’t no time at all to see if it worked. There’s definitely opportunity there to expand our membership and if we brand ourself or we’re known as a pioneering and a campaigning Union and a force for the good and we’re always looking at ways of extending our membership, surely this is a perfect opportunity to do that. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Okay, I’m going to ask you to it again, sorry, because obviously I can’t make a decision on that. Those in favour? Those against? I think that’s carried, but I’m open to being challenged on that. I think that’s carried, yes? It’s carried, yes.

[APPLAUSE]

You know what I'm going to do now? I'm going to call a break, because it's 25 past and then we've got a big one, we've got a big one on, so I'm going to bring you back in at quarter to, no, not quarter to two, very quick, very clever, but no, quarter to.

[BREAK]

Hello? Can everybody take their seats. Can we call everybody in from outside. It's 10.45. Okay. As was quite rightly pointed out, we are now on the right motion, in the right order, so it's composite 2, which is ourselves and 558 and we'll move it.

Comp 2 (Motions 26 and 35)

That Conference agrees the Conservative government has demonstrated through its actions of issuing new licenses for gas and oil, which it admits now will have no impact on reducing energy bills, will risk further damage to our climate. Furthermore, the decision by the Labour Party to dump the much-needed £28 billion investment package to protect all of our futures shows neither party is serious about protecting us from the risks associated which the climate crisis.

If politicians don't protect us, we must organise to defend ourselves.

Scientists predict that temperatures in the UK will rise to 40 degrees every other year. Neither party likely to form the next government has a plan.

We call on all employers in our industry to act and introduce a plan that includes meeting the reasonable demands of our established 'Cool It' campaign to ensure their employees don't face any financial burden due to politicians' failure to perform their duties and protect their citizens.

Failure of the employer to act means we, as a union, will have to act to protect our members.

This is why we support the call by Rapid Response to take action when the weather exceeds 36 degrees and agree with the Heat Strike call when the Met Office issues a severe weather warning concerning hot weather.

We further call on the trade union movement to provide resources and organise a collective response to stop employers from passing on the burden caused by the failure of politicians to act by campaigning for a furlough scheme to be introduced for all workers at such times.

Conference also agrees to lobby for a legal limit on workplace heat and a commitment from government via constitutional law that this is carried out.

Original motions: 26 (Branch 558) and 35 (Executive Council)

Conference, we know that the climate that we're living in, it's not very stable any more, it's causing, you know, problems here and around the world and the media would ask you to believe that it's not a working class issue, even though it's working class people around the world that are suffering the consequences, in fact thousands of people die directly due to the climate crisis on an annual basis. I believe the figure was somewhere in the regions of about 18½ thousand in 2023, according to the United Nations. Now clearly, you know, that is an issue that impacts us as workers, but because it's so far away, we often don't realise the connectivity between the climate, the impact on working people in other countries until we see the need for this mass migration from places and then they arrive here in the UK because they've had to travel, because of the crisis of the climate and the ability to sustain life in where they were born, because it's not always through wars that people have to leave their country. Sometimes it's because of the corporate greed and the damage that's done by (voice in background – laughter), by political, who's speaking over me?, because of the decisions by politicians. So as a Union, we have been campaigning on the issue of heat since 2008. In 2008 we launched what was called the Cool It! Campaign and we relaunched it again in recent years and we've been calling for a temperature in our workplace that says that if you're doing manual labour, you need to introduce measures to protect people in the workplace when it gets to 27 degrees, or if you're in a stationary position, then it should be at 30 degrees.

But we also know that a couple of years ago, that the temperature's got so excessive that in many places people couldn't go to work and when they couldn't go to work, we also are aware that, you know, that our employers were saying to people well, there is no work because we can't run the units because it's too hot and it's going to be too hot over the next couple of days, so we want you to take your holidays and if you haven't got any holidays, we want you to take unpaid time off. Well, the reason why the climate's in the state it's in is not because of working people, it's because of the decisions of politicians and corporations. It's politicians that have allowed legislation that enables people to continue to drill for oil and gas, it's corporations that make the profit out of those gas and oil fields and despite the issuing of new licences, which the Conservatives claimed would actually reduce our bills, the reality is that all that gas and oil will go back to the same place we already get it from and it will still be governed by the same mechanisms that we currently have today, so will make not one blind bit of difference to the amount that we will pay for our energy, but it will have an impact on our lives.

The only way, by the way, if we want to see a reduction in our bills, is to have a debate about nationalisation and nationalising our energy system, because that's the only way we will reduce our bills, when energy is in the hands of the people and the people profit and not those people who currently own it, called shareholders. So it's a false argument, just as when the Labour Party abandoned its £28 billion Green commitment and what that does is, it makes you believe that it's okay and the media makes you believe it's not your issue, it's just these middle class kids, you know, these [unclear] who are just going out there, you know, making people's lives a misery, but it's you that will have to pay for it. In your workplaces, it's our members, when they're told to use their holidays because it's too hot in the workplace to work and that's why as part of the Campaign that we've joined together with the climate organisation that's called An Organising Heat Strike. We are demanding the introduction and on everybody's pay talks, the introduction of a furlough scheme, because everybody knows what a furlough scheme is, so when it's too hot for people to work, you don't use your holidays, your employer must pay you and why do we say the employer must pay you?, because it's the employers that have used their lobbyists and their financial muscle to ensure that they have the legislation that's allowed this crisis in our climate to happen, so they must pay for this crisis and not us and that's why as part of our demands as well and working with this Heat Strike Campaign and people can join online tomorrow and our very own Robbie will be speaking at it, about the issue of Heat Strike and what we're calling for, because we're also saying when the heat gets to those levels where people can't work, we need to down tools, we need to make a stand and say we are not prepared to suffer in our workplaces, to suffer any more by being exploited by our employers and if they don't like it, then they should use all that financial muscle and lobbying that they currently have to put pressure on the government to put laws and legislation in place that protect working people and don't make us pay for their greed, or the corporate greed. So we're saying that when those temperatures get too high, we take action. It can be in forms of walk-out, it can be in forms of taking part in making a stand, it can be in forms of joining a demonstration that's going to be launched across the country, but also, on every pay claim, alongside the demand to end zero-hours contracts, alongside to end the use of agency workers, to introduce £15 an hour, we now demand that workers are protected when it's too hot to work, we don't have to use our holidays and we're not expected to take unpaid leave, the employer must pay and that's what we call on all of you to do now and if you pass this motion, make sure it's on your next pay demand, because it's not just for today, it's to take us all forwards and protect every one of us in our workplaces. Support the motion.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Secunder?

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): We're the other part of this composite. Obviously as we're a lot more brief, because basically we were just on about heat in the workplace. Bakeries are warm anyway, that's the big thing. It doesn't always matter what temperature it is outside, it can be however many degrees inside and we actually got that bad when they built the new [unclear] plant that my comrade there, Sean, got his friend from the HSE, Geoff Fletcher, to come and old Geoff actually came in and they walked him round, they didn't know what to do, so Sean walked him round. The boss was there, this guy and he went well, it's not too bad is it, it's a bit warm. That Geoff Fletcher ripped his top off, didn't he. He'd got a shirt and tie on, it was soaked and it was like, this is not reasonable and you expect people in PPE to work in this? So it's not just the outside bit, it's the inside bit and as you're all well aware, there is no legal limit and that's all we were questioning, there is no legal limit and I understand why you might say well, people work in bakeries, they work in foundries, but we're human beings and at the end of the day, there's got to be a limit established and it's as simple as that and that's why the motion we put in and wanted to force the government to start looking at a legal limit and bringing it in, but the other part of the composite that I am obviously spotting is, I don't need to say much, Ian's said every bit of it. It's not our fault. The furlough scheme happened for Covid, you can do it then and still make millions and millions in profit, you can afford to do it when people are fainting through heat. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: I think, when we put this motion in, we didn't realise we were walking into a political flag-waving Campaign for the good. Basically, the company came to us, wanting to take our break off us as part of our last pay talks, so we were getting six or seven breaks a shift, we said we'd drop that to four-ish. Basically, if you get a warning from the Met Office and we agreed a certain level inside the factory, that extra break will be put back on, extra water will be put back on, an extra fountain would be provided and you'd be ransacking drums for extra water, as when Geoff Fletcher appeared and he made them do it, but we discussed it at EC level that this should be put on everybody's pay negotiations and here's why. Last September we had freakish weather, it went up to 40 degrees in our workplace.

We took that break, so I marched round into the production office and everywhere else on site and said right, you're putting that break back on now, it's gone over 40 degrees, it's a Met Office warning and our agreement, 40 degrees, extra breaks come back in place, extra water has to be supplied. Now, the picture is yes, people can be getting furloughed for being off work, the reality is they probably won't do that. The bread and butter politics of this Trade Union policy is, make sure people and your members who are in that workplace, when the temperature goes above the level of 40, get extra water supplies, extra breaks, extra comfort breaks and everybody's looked after. They don't want to do it, it's your role, it's the Trade Union's role, in the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union, in the industry where it's warm, to make sure you seize the opportunity to protect your membership and support this Campaign. So, I'm supporting the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Sorry about that. In support of this motion. There's actually a couple of facts you got wrong, Ian, actually you got a couple of facts wrong. It's 20,000 just in this country that died through climate change. Worldwide it's over 310,000 and the clock is ticking. If anybody looks at the International Panel on Climate Change's Reports, every couple of years it's saying we've got 10 years or more to do something and by the way, you mentioned conflict, you start looking at conflict and you must praise the great work done by the academic Christian Panratty?, who goes around the world looking at conflicts. A lot of these conflicts, the majority underneath the catalyst is climate change. Whether it's the Syrian civil war, one of the things that nobody discusses, one of the causes was climate change, where in Syria there had been a mass drought caused by climate change, a mass drought had been caused, forcing all the people in the countryside into the city, that overwhelmed the social infrastructure of that country and led towards civil war. There were other causes. Even Afghanistan, climate change is there. The Mexican drug war, climate change is there. You look at the Horn of Africa, there are many wars breaking out caused by climate change. It's coming.

There are 100 million refugees around about in this world and when climate change really hits, you're not going to be talking 100 million, you're going to be talking in the billions. You're going to be talking mass conflicts over access to clean water, because when all those glaciers go and the oceans turn into acid, the oceans are slightly alkaline, they will become acidic. What will happen when the moisture goes into the atmosphere, it then goes over the land and then rains acid rain. How are you going to grow crops, how are you going to feed the population? Population is rising and rising. Imagine a world of nine billion with a global food shortage, a global food famine, imagine that. Imagine the misery you're going to be talking about, the wars, dog eat dog, people killing each other just for a little bit of bread and yet all our employers care about is keep on pushing it more, we've got to make more money, more money, more money, we don't give a damn about our employees but we'll just carry on. Oh, sod the heat, they can cope. A vote for this motion is a vote for the future, a vote to say we all live on this planet and the future should be about a human future where we look after one another and where employers are responsible for their workers. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I agree with this motion. When we get the hot weather in the summer, our ovens is, the heat in there is unbelievable. You've got the guys, they come up to me asking, I had a guy come up to me last year and he goes, do you know if it'll be alright if I can come in wearing shorts under my baker's trousers. I said, you should be able to. He goes, it gets so hot in there, you know, wearing a pair of trousers you're sweating. I said, when we asked they went yes, we'll allow that, because as long as you've got baker's trousers on, you can have your shorts underneath, but you can't have it like, if you've got a white coat, you can't have shorts. We won that one, but I said when we get into like our plastic tray wash, you've got the heat off the machine coming out, the guys are taking the hot trays off where it's gone through the hot degree trays, all that hot steam's coming out and they're stood there saying it's 30 – 40 degrees, they're sweating and like our despatch room, then it gets people like me, I'm on the forklifts. Our cabs, we've got a shut cab door, we've got a little window like that we can slide forward. Saying it's 30 – 40 degrees out there, in that cab it's about 50 degrees, it's like being sat in the middle of your greenhouse and if we've got a whole lorry to unload, it could take you up to an hour to unload that one lorry and then reload it like of thing as well, so you're in there, you've got a poxy little fan that's blowing a bit of really, I'd suppose you'd call it warm air and you're like, you're sweating your head off like anything.

When you stop for a second, you open your door to just see if you can let a bit of air in. You've got the little window behind you, it only opens like that little much, but that's nothing and the worse bit is through Covid they were saying oh, you've got to wear a face mask and we were like, our Operations Manager said you've got to have it over your mouth. I said, you come and sit in a forklift with a face mask over your mouth, we're in our own little space and I go, it's so hot in there I go, you do an hour, sit on that forklift, mate and then see what you say when you're breathing your hot air in your face, with a face mask on, for an hour. I said, it's so hot in there and I go, at the end of the day we're in our own little bubble there. So please support this motion, please.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 252: I'm here to support the motion. I remember years ago, baking, 25 – 28 degrees outside, inside the bakery it was 40 – 40+ degrees. I was lifting 250 – 300 kilos of greens every 15 minutes non-stop and the heat, it was just exhausting. Fans blowing round, circulating hot air and I was surprised someone didn't pass out and die from it, so that's why I'm here to support this motion. Also, 11 years ago, back in my birth town of Wales, Brecon Beacons, two soldiers out on a hike died, hiking in 30 degree temperatures, but they'd made the hike for nine hours and they've still not got justice and they are members of our armed services, members of the British government and their families have still not got justice for that today, so please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Katarzyna Damek – Branch 515 (East Kilbride, Scotland): So, as you probably know, the heat exposure can be also a silent killer and looking at the retirement age, the government is expecting us to work longer and longer, but working in the high temperature conditions is very challenging for your cardiovascular system, so you are more likely to have heart problems and actually there is a bigger chance that you will not get to your retirement age because of that, so please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else? To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. 27, I believe, 27? I'm checking now.

27

Region 3

That the union lobby to have food workers have sick pay paid at 100 percent from day one. Food workers are essential workers who kept everyone feed during COVID risking their lives to do so, and should be regarded as such.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Sick pay. Norway, Iceland, Luxembourg, Denmark, all get 100% sick pay, all show, all better places to live. You look at the Human Development Index. Throughout Europe, even many countries don't do 100% sick pay. They all, at least, give a larger percentage of pay in sick to their workers and I can imagine what the arguments will be. It will affect productivity, apart from I'm one of those boring nerds who kind of likes reading economics, I just am. Do you know one of the crises in our economy, the British economy? It's productivity and one of the reasons is, is because people are scared when ill to take time off, they're scared, because they will not be able to afford to live, which again becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy that becomes people only take time off when they're really ill and then when they can't afford to live, they become even more ill when they worry about their bills. It's about investing in people, it's about being a humane society, it's about not being a country that ends up when they do us an examination of over 70 countries, Britain comes second to bottom in unhappiness levels. The only country other than Britain that was lower was Uzbekistan. Ukraine is in the middle of a war and is a happier place to live than Britain. Support this motion, because it's about being a decent human being, it's about supporting all of us. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): We would urge Delegates to please vote for this motion. At the minute, the UK Statutory Sick Pay rate is £116 a week. If you're on the National Living Wage, you'll take home £457 for working [unclear] hours, so you're literally getting a third of what the Tory government thinks is enough to keep a family going. It's ridiculous. The system isn't broken, the system is fixed to keep us in work when we're sick. It's wrong, it's just totally wrong. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Unanimous, thank you very much. 28.

28

Region 5

This Conference agrees that the Union should encourage our government to change the zero-emission agreement, regarding petrol and diesel vehicles in 2035, to be postponed.

Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Good morning. Mr President, Platform, Delegates. That this Conference agrees the Union should encourage our government to change the zero emission agreement regarding petrol and diesel vehicles in 2035 to be postponed. The reasons for this is, in 2035 there will be no more new internal combustion engines sold in the UK, but without petrol and diesel cars, consumers will be forced to have an electric vehicle when buying new.

Promises are continued to be made with these vehicles soon becoming affordable, however, the average price of most EVs are still rising and only the very basic models are becoming affordable to a few. Banning will inflate the demand for cobalt and lithium batteries of the EVs, increasing the profits of big car manufacturers even more. The misery of workers in this industry, a UK government subsidy was introduced back in 2011 for EVs ended in 2022, the government and resulted in a slowdown on the new EVs being bought but not affordable to those of us on low or middle income households. More of us will be forced to rely on older and older diesel and petrol vehicles after 2035, forced onto the second-market with older cars that already have increased emissions and become more unsafe to drive. These problems need resolving before a ban is brought in. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

[LAUGHTER]

Do you know, if I was a comedian

[LAUGHTER]

hold on a minute, while I just go and take this microphone in there. What are you doing, mate? Okay. It's Vicky, it's Vicky behind you, mate. Oh sorry, Dave, we have got a speaker online. Jonathan, yes. Oh, we've got Andy that's come down now. Do you know if he'd have finished, you wouldn't have been able to come on. Okay, online, Jonathan.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): Yes, just a quick point of order as well, more for the verbatim. Can we change whichever, hang on, change our government on whatever motion's we've got to, to whichever government, because it might not necessarily be the Tory Party, hopefully not anyway. Anyway, we need to change the policy until it's easier and more accessible to recharge vehicles, because currently cities are fine, but if you live out in the middle of the country, there needs to be a network of charging stations, because obviously we haven't got as many

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Andy, let's bring you in while we're trying, see if we can get him back.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: I'm sympathetic to the motion, but I would like you to vote to reject it because how are we going to meet the zero emissions targets for the nation without some sort of work. Electric cars are the long-term answer, but short-term we've put all of our eggs in one basket. They aren't efficient enough at this moment in time, we haven't got the infrastructure for them. So I'm sympathetic with the delay in banning of internal combustion engines, but we need to do something to deal with it. We should have gone to hydrogen like the Japanese are doing, as an interim, but that's another issue. Thank you. Please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Jonathan.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Just, that last bit, the motion, when you got off, you said please oppose this motion because it needs to be postponed, but the motion is asking for it to be postponed. So I get where you're going, but I'm just not sure whether you got it the right way around. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is Jonathan coming back on? Are you coming back on, Jonathan? There is a little bit of a technical hitch with the internet, we are just trying to resolve the technical and in the meantime we'll play some relaxing music.

[LAUGHTER]

[Ian singing]

Anybody know any tunes?

Okay, while I'm doing that, while I'm doing that, I've, here's a newflash. We've got the results of the TUC and the TUC ballot. Ian Banton 25, Nicholas Mead 62, Douglas Johnson 57, Peter Lever 23, Alan Scott 35, Lizzie Dinning 75. So it's four people, if I remember rightly, sorry, yes, that's right, yes, three and the General Secretary, so that will be Lizzie Dinning, Nicholas Mead, I still can't get used to calling you Nicholas, yes and Douglas Johnson, so well done.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Okay, Greggs Reps, to do with retail, 1.30 p.m. in Room 8, which does mean, because I believe that's not going to finish until 2, just before 2, so because of that meeting that's going to go on from 1.30 until 2, it means everybody else is going to finish at 12.30 'til 2.

[CHEERS]

How's that? Thank you colleagues from Greggs retail. Greggs retail are the people.

Have I got any other announcements to fill in while we're, has everybody put their name down for all of the fringes?

No. I can recommend that we have some great fringes and the STAMMA is one that I can definitely recommend. I've been told on good sources that it's an absolutely fantastic fringe to go to, so if you are looking for a fringe, there is a recommendation.

[Ian singing]

[CHEERS]

Are we on, are we on, are we on?

Come on, Jonathan, give us a try.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): You've lost the last five minutes for the online Delegates, on audio.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You should be able to speak now, Jonathan. We've had a bit of a technical issue with the internet. Obviously they didn't pay the bill, but I think they've just sorted that out now.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): Yes, we lost the last five minutes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It's okay, all you missed was me filling in, mate. I mean obviously I was telling some gags, I did a bit of singing, so you didn't really miss anything. Apparently I didn't pass the X Factor test. Go on, Jonathan. You're still here to us, I don't know what's going on with that screen. Can we just hear him?

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): You can hear me now, yes. I've just

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, just carry on, Jonathan.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): right, are we still carrying on with 28 then, yes?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I've forgotten, yes, yes, yes.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): Right, my point was basically we need to make the recharging more accessible. The cities are fine, it's just in the middle of the country and out in the sticks. There needs to be more of a network for recharging stations. The hybrid and electric cars also need to come down in price. As the original speaker said, workers, normal workers can't afford them and they're going to rely constantly on petrol and diesel cars. The new batteries can sometimes cost as much as the new cars and they're not as environmentally friendly as people think, as in what's charging the cars, power stations, what's charging, what's powering the power stations, coal stations, so we're going to need electric, gas and oil for powering them, recharging, so I would urge the room to pass this motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you. I'm assuming you've finished.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, any other speakers? In which case, been waiting a while.

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): This was one of the Tory government's key policies back in 2020, the year before the UK posted the COP26 International Climate Summit. Boris announced it as part of his green industrial revolution, that new cars and vans powered by diesel and petrol would no longer be sold in the UK from 2030. Several of the world's largest car manufacturers, as it appears, managed to successfully bully or bribe their wishes in persuading the UK government to delay the enforcement of the Zero Emissions Vehicle Mandate, pushing it back to 2035 for now. Before this, back in 2010, the [unclear] Biodiversity Targets were established, with approximately 200 countries drawing up a 10 year plan of action, but by 2020 it appears that the world has failed to meet these targets and the UK. Here is a report from the House of Commons Committee from June, 2021. In the UK, one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, 15% of species are threatened with extinction. Of the G7 countries, the UK has the lowest level of biodiversity remaining. At a minimum, the UK has failed to meet 14 of the 19 IG targets it set itself back in 2010. This is a Committee report, so the government is actually slugging itself. We have seen enough. The rich and powerful multi-national companies continue to employ their teams of lawyers to seriously undermine something so important and government subsidies continue to empower them even further. We cannot afford to let this happen. On behalf of the EC, we ask you to oppose this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply? Technically it should be the same speaker that moved it.

Brother Kristian Mauksz – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Mr President, Platform, Delegates. Only to add, Parliament which was [unclear] agreement are thinking about moving it down to 2055, like, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Substitutes now. Well done, well done, well done. Thank you. But next time, no substitutes allowed. To the vote. Those in favour? Okay. Those against? That's lost. 29.

Repetitive Strain injuries is something that the BFAWU should lobby the government to improve legislation in. We need to improve our health and safety legislation surrounding Repetitive Strain Injuries in the workplace and hopefully this will become a thing of the past.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'm sorry, you're probably sick of my face, but Repetitive strain injury. It's not an act of God that repetitive strain injury happens. The law doesn't say right, I will inflict Mr Baddhan with repetitive strain injury, doesn't happen like that. It's quite preventable, it's quite preventable. I mean, 2008, 2008, the TUC carried out a study. They found over half a million sufferers and by the way, 56% of those sufferers are women. This is a women's issue, this is a feminist issue which we must support. One third were under the age of 45, 5.4 million days lost through repetitive strain injury. Six people each day were forced into giving up work permanently, disabled, unable to work, but it's not an act of God. It can be changed and I don't mean change as in like David Cameron and George Osborne showing off how they ripped up all the health and safety legislation, because they don't give a damn about working class people, to be honest. It can be prevented, it's quite easy to be prevented. Rotation of work, it's quite easy to, you know, have everybody trained up on the job, different jobs and keep on rotating them. Indeed, it's good for the bosses, because you won't have people being forced to take time off because of repetitive strain injury. It's good for everybody to have a healthy, happy workforce. It's preventable. We can do something first off by supporting this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): For me, being in an industry before coming into the baking trade, I was in poultry. For 10 hours a day, we had to stand on the line and pick up birds like this all day and I've got problems with my fingers now. Now, I've been out of the industry 15 years, but now I'm struggling with, my fingers are starting to get problems in my fingers, that's because when I was in the poultry factory, you're working at one degree to zero degrees and for 10 hours, then days, we had no rotation, so I'm stood there, doing 90,000 birds per day in 10 hours and we're all stood on that line going like that and we had to pack say 80 birds a minute onto a conveyor and because of that, over 10 years, now my fingers are starting to get problems and that's, the damage has been done and there's nothing I can do but, you know, things can change now and we need to support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Reed – Branch 112: Hello, everybody. First-time speaker and the first Delegate to speak.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

First Delegate to speak here on behalf of members at Branch 112, Kettle Foods and I fully support this motion. We all know that if our employers were left to their own devices and not held to a standard, we'd be crawling in on our hands and knees, earning the right to buy bread, promptly disciplined for clocking in late, until we're discarded the same way a child discards a broken toy. We need legislations to hold employees to a standard, or employers, sorry. I live with sciatica and tennis elbow recently and numerous members from my Branch also suffer from RSI-related conditions. Preventions identified and risk assessments can be little more than £200 - £300 in new tools and equipment. I'm sure we've all heard that the budget couldn't possibly stretch that far, it's ridiculous. It saddens me that this behaviour is encouraged, as we shouldn't have to fight for basic rights. We need legislation updated to reflect the real world scenarios, working class citizens face in this country. Every baker, packer, operator, driver, anyone on the shop floor to keep the lights on and the nation fed, deserve the right to go home to their families safe and the right to get home and pick up their child. Also, if I may on behalf of members at Kettle, I'd also like to take a couple of minutes just to thank Frank and Haroon for their absolutely incredible support, because they've been completely and utterly invaluable and thank you to everyone at the Bakers for making me feel so welcome. Please support this motion. Thank you.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs): I'm here to support this motion. I do have an injury, I have carpal tunnel in my wrist and the pain gets so painful at night-time, I could literally cut my arm off from here with a blunt, rusty knife. I wake up during the night constantly with pain, I have to wear a wrist brace and that's through like 25, 26 years coming up, working for Greggs, making sandwiches. I don't know if you guys know but, probably like yourselves, all our jobs are time-managed, we've got to do 55 sandwiches an hour, which is an awful lot and when you're making over 3 – 400 sandwiches a day, depending which shop you're in, there's only one of you on sandwiches, sometimes you're lucky enough to have two.

If you've got sickness or anything like that, it's just one there and it's very, very painful and I fully support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool): Speaking on behalf of the EC, who ask you to support this motion. Trade Unions play an important role in achieving better standards of health and safety and welfare at work, with RSI being one of them. A lot of RSI injuries can be avoided with advice, the use of appropriate equipment and safe working practices, but the motion is right, there needs to be better legislation. Currently the legislation, under the Health & Safety At Work Act, which states, “employers are legally required to redress the risks with repetitive strain injury”. Failure to do this could result in pain and suffering of employees and their families through ill health. Personally, after 25 years’ service at my current job, like many others, I suffer from neck, shoulder, back, leg and hand pain and discomfort, but I can see with the ageing workforce population, this is only going to get worse and our current government want to extend the retirement age.

Where is the support from the companies, when after years of repetitive movements, members are off sick and denied sick pay or have to leave work through ill health? So we do need better legislation, but we need to use what legislation we have. We also need to identify the jobs with RSI risks in our workplaces and conduct a risk assessment, insist on better training, job rotation, the use of assistive devices and the use of the right tools and equipment that’s designed to reduce the strain on the body. We do need to use what’s available. One concern that I do have is to remove repetitive strain injuries, companies could go down the line of automation and that’s not good. It might get rid of RSI’s, but the cost of our livelihoods. So we need to make sure we keep on top of RSI’s through stronger legislation and the role of our Health & Safety Reps in our workplaces and we need to use this Brown Book. It’s here for us to use in our workplaces and we need to use it more

[APPLAUSE]

in our workplaces. What we’ll do is, at our next National Health & Safety Meeting, we will discuss the motion and hopefully involve our Parliamentary Group. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s unanimous. Thank you very much. Motion 30.

30

Region 4

That the Government should ban the ‘emergency’ use of bee-harming pesticides in the UK.

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417 (Wigan): The t-shirt says it all. Good morning, everybody. Chair, EC, Delegates. Proposing a motion that the government should ban the emergency use of bee-harming pesticides in the United Kingdom. Bees are an absolute essential for our survival. They pollinate much of what we eat and play an absolute critical role in sustaining eco-systems around the world. There has, however, been a catastrophic decline, in the last decade, of insect populations in the UK, having shrank by a third. Colleagues, you’ll all probably remember when you used to drive down a motorway or an A road, your windscreen was splattered, you’d have the windscreen wipers on, not now, not now. The warning signs are there, everywhere. They’re just screaming out and no-one’s taking notice. There are currently around 270 species of bee in the United Kingdom, which may surprise you, with just under 250 of them being solitary bees. One in 10 wild bee species are at risk of extinction, as reported in the latest European red list of bees. Scientists have found that bees are dying from a variety of factors, pesticides, drought, habitat destruction, nutrition deficit, air pollution and climate change. Figures published last year show that bee keepers in the United States of America lost an estimated 48% of their honeybee colonies. Disastrous.

In the UK, one of our native bees, which is the short-haired bumblebee, was last recorded in 1989 and is now believed to be extinct in Britain, which is a tragedy in itself. Growing global temperatures, if not checked, will mean that the bee will become extinct as soon as 2050. Bees are absolutely critical to just about everything worldwide. Wild and domestic bees perform 80% of all pollination. Some plants like grains, wheat, barley, for example, are primarily wind-pollinated, however critical food sources such as vegetables, fruits, nuts are all pollinated by bees. Greenpeace reports that 70 out of 100 of the world’s top food crops are pollinated by bees. These crops make up 90% of the global population’s nutrition. This means that if you take the pollinators out of the equation, the human population is effectively critically handicapped when it comes to global food production and yet, despite all this, we have a government, which hopefully will change soon, that is approving bee-killing neonicotinoids which have been banned across Europe since 2018.

One of them, Thiamethoxam, which is used as a pesticide, is absolutely lethal to bees. Half a teaspoon is enough to kill one and a half million bees, half a teaspoon. These chemicals are an essential threat to our endemic bee populations in the United Kingdom. This is against the advice of its own expert committee on pesticides, as well as that of the Health & Safety Executive. It's also lethal to human beings as well. Beyond all this and pollinators, neonicotinoids are well known for their environmental mobility and cause harm to other animals such as invertebrates within the soil structure and also aquatic life in nearby water courses, both of which are more likely to be more at risk than bees in this case. It is likely that Thiamethoxam levels in some field boundaries will exceed permitted levels under the Water Frame Directive, but of course pollution of our water tables in the sea is another topic which I could talk about all day.

Conference, Delegates, this lunacy has to stop for the sake of us all here today. What planet are our children and grandchildren going to inherit from governments and world leaders of today? It's crazy. I'll leave you with this statement, which is often attributed to Albert Einstein, but it actually came from a Canadian Bee Keepers' Journal in the 1940's. "If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then mankind will only have four years' life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man". Think about it. For God's sake, I hope we never come to see this pass. So when these politicians come round your door, canvassing, tell them to put it at the top of their agendas. Get on the websites, Greenpeace, Wildlife Trust, sign the petitions, tell them that we can't carry on with this, it's disastrous. Conference, I strongly ask you to support this plan and inform the future government to support the ending of using these lethal cocktails of pesticides, to be totally banned in the United Kingdom. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: Although I am not a great fan of bees, hence the Epi-pens, they've tried to kill me twice in my life, they failed. Anyway, besides the pesticides, we have oriental and Asian hornets that we should be looking at some way of killing these because these are also massively affecting our bees in this country. Like the comrade said, we're going to be killing ourselves if we don't help them. So I'm here to fully support getting rid of these pesticides and killing them and finding another way to help the bees survive this invasion of hornets that are killing them. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Buncey - Branch 547 (Suma): Hello, everyone. First-time Delegate, first-time speaking.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

If you can't tell I'm in support of this motion, in my work I deal a lot with the Soil Association and I have to see what this Brexit government is doing to try and enforce more use of chemicals such as this in our wildlife, trying to decimate our environment and I do fear that if we don't stand up against this now, it'll lead to worse chemicals being used in the future and it's something that will affect us all as workers, as people. It doesn't just affect bees. If it affects bees, as we've heard, it's going to affect us down the line and these are chemicals that will affect bees directly, but you've got to ask how else will these chemicals affect us and our environment. So, I'm in full support of this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Supporting the motion and using it as a point to illustrate several issues that we have. First, these insecticides are coming back because we have left the EU. The other illustration on it is why are they being used? They're being reintroduced because various corporations are complaining that their profits are being reduced because of insect infestations reducing the crops, because they have monoculture, it's just a single crop that they're doing rather than mixing things about, so they're getting pests damaging the crop. They're not wiping the crop out, they're just reducing the profit that they're going to make, so they want to bring these insecticides back to increase their profits. They're going to wipe out the bees, but that's a minor issue, you know, we're going to have more profits for the next few years until that four years that you mentioned circles round and we're all dead. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more speakers? If not, it's Roger Moore. Peter. Watch his eyebrows, honestly.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Peter Pine – Branch 110, Region 1: Good afternoon, everyone. Well, good morning still. Speaking for the Executive. I mean, you've heard it all today. Luckily they said everything I was reading last night, for the last five hours, so support the motion please. Thank you.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: And he stayed up all night to read it as well, didn't he? I know, it's terrible and they stole your thunder, mate. Oh, I'll tell ya. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. Motion 31.

31

Region 3

There should be materials in dealing with mental illness in the workplace.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Sorry, it's me again.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Don't apologise, there's nothing to apologise for.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Moving this motion. I mentioned earlier on, in a recent poll by Sapien Labs, in 71 countries, over 400,000 people questioned, a scale ranging from 100 – 20 with Britain coming 35% of the population with distress at the end of the scale. Suicide is the largest cause of death for men aged 20 – 49. I've spoken before at Conferences. I'm somebody who suffers with his mental health. A few years ago, it's only for your confidence and conviction in me that I'm able to stand here in front of you and give a speech. I said before, earlier on, I had another friend's suicide. I've lost count of how many friends I've had who've committed suicide. I've lost count of how many friends who know, from previous Conferences, I've had my troubles with substances, self-medicating my mental health, but there's something we can do. On top of this motion, let me ask you, because it's an epidemic we suffer in this country, a kind word and just listening to somebody who's suffering depression means the world to us. We must expose mental health because it is an epidemic, just to listen to somebody and their worries means a lot. A lot of times our society, we're told to like keep the stiff upper lip, so that people with mental health often blame themselves. We're frightened, so if you think somebody suffers from mental health, please you can do something. Go along, listen to them, talk to them. From somebody that suffers from this, it means the world to know that there is somebody out there who cares. We, as a society, must tackle this epidemic. I say this again, we must tackle it. We either show that we are a humane, civilised society or we carry on to sweep it underneath the carpet. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: I've been up here before on the mental health issue with Douggie, with Michael, etc and I gave you my heart a couple of years' ago. Now, I'm here to tell a little story, to some of the younger end of that range that Douggie gave, 20 – 40, 49, sorry, 20 – 49. So, I'm looking at the 20 – 30 range. That range, people think well, kids don't have that many problems, they should be okay. I have a 28 year old son, who keeps himself to himself, who doesn't share things with his dad because his dad brought him up to be a proud man and hold things in, be a man. My son watched what happened to me on this stage two years' ago online, thanks to the BFAWU. He's now a member as well, of the BFAWU, in Lidl, in Liverpool, why Liverpool I don't know, but anyway, he suffered with a breakdown and toyed with the idea of taking his own life. He watched me on this stand and it gave him the strength to come to talk to me and it's given him the strength now to move on to a doctor, to move on to a psychiatrist, to get the help he needed and I think if we don't keep pointing this out to that generation, we're condemning that generation to suffer more.

So we can, as a Union, make this more vocal in the workplace, more vocal with our children, more vocal around the world. Men do suffer with mental health, men need help too, but men please remember, you have to ask, you have to open up, you have to be a man, but not the man of the 70's and the 80's, oh, stiff upper lip, pass it on, we're men, we get on with it. This is a different age and a different generation. If you think for a minute, a second, of harming yourself in any way, you need help, reach out and get it. We are making that more visible and we want to make it more visible. I support this motion that Douggie's put in with my heart 100% and without that and without this two years' ago, I might have lost my son. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Vicky Bassett – Branch 253: Anxiety and depression are the most common forms of mental illness in the workplace. Employers have a duty of care. This means they must do all they reasonably can to support their employees' health, safety and well-being. We need more, I'll rephrase that, we should be demanding more help and support from our workplaces. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I've been suffering with mental health over the last couple of years. Two years ago, I lost my mum and I went, two years ago I had a breakdown here where I did the speech. For 18 months, I thought I was alright, until I got to about December last year, I actually suddenly collapsed at work, I was doing first aid, we thought it was a heart attack, I froze and then I had a major breakdown.

I went from right up here, down there and I was blaming myself, because I'm dyslexic, I was going, I'm thick, I'm stupid. I was like, I was crying out and then everybody was like why, what's going on? They called on the management and then they sent me to occupational health, because occupational health said to me you know, everybody's worried about you and what they found out was like, you know, I was stuck, even 18 months, I was in my little bubble and the bubble was starting to crack and I didn't know how to get out of that depression and what they done, they sent me, January this year, I had two months of counselling that helped me and what I realised I was doing, I was cutting myself off. My girlfriend would go to work and my friends would go, are you coming out for a drink tonight? I said no, I want to stay in my flat and I was comfy and I put a lot of weight on in the last 12 months. It's not healthy for me, I realise, my cholesterol's gone up. I've just been told I've got high blood pressure as well, all because I've been holding myself back, I've been comfort eating. I used to, at night-time, instead of me going and having, cooking myself a meal, I was, I got so lazy, I'd just order myself a takeaway, because I just couldn't be bothered to do myself and I was like, I was just knocking, everybody was going you coming, no, no, no, that'll be alright, I'll stay indoors and with my counsellor, he's learnt me now how to deal with that depression. He's learnt me if I'm starting to go out of control, he goes, go for a walk and, you know, learning me how to control my pressure figures.

What was happening, I was biting at my girlfriend, I didn't know I was doing it, I was just like, we'd have a little spurt and I just, something stupid, she stuck with me but the kind of thing is, it was in my head, I didn't realise I was doing it, but now having, it was through work, part of what they call Grocery Aid, they went and did the support and sent me to this bloke privately. They said we'll do it through your work, so you don't lose any work hours, you'll go off, nobody will know in the factory what's going on, it's me to you and you go off to this counsellor bloke for one hour and it was just me and him in front of a thing, he goes whatever is in this thing is a throw carpet? and what I found out, he goes even though I lost my mum, he goes, before that, I lost my house because my house was falling down, so he goes that's part of grievance as well, so he goes two years before you lost your mum, you were grieving over losing your house, you had to move, you had to get rid of your pond, you had to put your dog to a friend's to look after, you had to live in a hotel and he goes then you moved into a, temporary accommodation for three months, then we got the bungalow what I moved in with my mum and then six months later she passed away and for a bloke it's a lot to take in and I thought I was okay, but it got to the stage where blokes hold it in and I was just trying to be the bigger man and hide it and as the months got on and on, you know, as you're holding it in, nothing was coming out, so that's what happened. I was having all this pressure in, money was coming into the situation because it was coming towards Christmas. I wanted to do the best Christmas for my girlfriend, her family, everything else, but the kind of thing is, that's when the pressures started again, it was all coming out and that's why I broke and now I'm on the road to recovery.

I'm like, I've started with a chiropractor for my back to help me get my back better and the next stage is, is go, start the gym. I'm going out there doing more exercising, trying to go for a walk, making myself do it, but if I never had that, you know, that counsellor, what would have happened like now? I wouldn't have known what was happening because I didn't realise I was going out of control. I didn't see it, it was my work colleagues what were seeing it and we need more support out there, people to, you know, are you okay?, you know, mental health first aiders didn't even notice it because I didn't even notice it myself. In my eyes, I thought I was okay but, you know, it was only until I had that major breakdown and shaking I thought, I handed my first aid in, I went I need a break from this so I can get my head space back and now I'm starting to get that. I said in the next six months I should come back a first aider, but I just want to get my head space right and then I'll be okay, but thank you. Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Les Bramhall – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool): I'm only confident to get up here and speak about this because it's two quick stories for you. The first one's about myself. All my life I've been in good health, thankfully, thank God, but about 2019 I think it was, before the pandemic hit, I came down with a lot of depression and anxiety and I know we stand up here and slag the companies off that we work for, but I can only praise Allied Bakeries in Liverpool, because at the time I went to the doctors and he told me that there was a waiting list of about six months to go for counselling. Anyway I approached, through work I approached the lady in, what's it called, John? No, not Occupational Health, the HR sorry, yes, HR Department and she pointed me in the right direction. Anyway, the company paid for me to go and have six counselling sessions, which the first one I felt really awkward talking to a lady I'd never met before, but after that breaking the ice session, you know, I opened up and told her what my worries and concerns were and she pointed me in the right direction and helped me a great deal. So I can only thank Allied Bakeries for all the help and support they gave me at the time and I was off work six weeks. I went back to work and I was on reduced hours, I started off I think it was six hours, then eight and then back to 12, but like I say, this can, mental health can hit anyone.

Like I say, all my life I never had any issues whatsoever with my health, but right out the blue, this was like a dark cloud came over me and it's nice to be able to, you know, share this with you, but there's another side to that story as well that, you know, it was May last year, we were watching the coronation and the Coronation Concert and everything. I know there might be many royalists in this room, but it was a nice happy day, sharing it with my family, watching the concert and then late at night I got a message from my son, that a good friend of his had died and it came out that he, you know, he killed himself and he was a great fella, he was a journalist for the Liverpool Echo. He wrote many stories about Liverpool Football Club, Everton Football Club and Tranmere. Although he was a Liverpool supporter he supported, you know, the whole City in many ways. He even wrote a book on Hillsborough with one of the survivors. His name was Dan Kay. I only ever had the pleasure of meeting him about three or four times, I get that upset thinking about it, but it ended up, we found out that he ended up killing himself by throwing himself in front of a train and I think he was 44 years old, one year younger than my eldest son.

So all I can say is, if you know anyone in the workplace who's struggling with mental health or a family member or a friend and you see signs in them that, you know, they don't appear to be themselves or they need pointing in the right direction to get help with mental health or pushing companies to try and get mental health first aiders, as me and John Owens did in our workplace a few years' ago. At first they didn't want to know, they slammed the door in our face, but thankfully now we have got mental health first aiders, you know, on-site. Basically I think I've rambled on enough, but I'd just like to say, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Now before I give my thoughts on this, I think it's testament to this Trade Union that these members here have had the courage to come up here and explain their experiences.

[APPLAUSE]

I think it's just testament to everyone in this room, that. However, I'm here to oppose the motion. I get the sentiment, but I'm here to oppose it. I'm going to give you my reason why. This should be materials supplied in dealing with mental health in the workplace. Now, this Trade Union was one of the first to get over the line with the mental health stuff in 2017/2018. We had mental health first aiders in our workplace, with an ex-marine called Paul Fairclough, he's still with us and he's still with the Union. He was in the Falklands when the Argentines came in, he was face down in a gutter with a gun pulled to his head. He identified that he had health issues, PTSD, we put him on a course as a first aider. The company were very receptive to that at that period of time, but his role became then as a mental health first aider and therefore he was walking round the plants counselling people and not doing what he was supposed to be doing. The company had me upstairs. They said we're concerned about Mr Fairclough because he's not doing what he should be doing, even though he's there to support these people. He's going out and identifying people or feeling he can identify people with mental health issues and then the next concern was his next step, would he be supplying prescribed drugs, would he be taking the law into his own hands? So therefore we have to be very careful. As much as I support this motion and sentiment, the word "material" gets my alarm bells ringing so unfortunately, as much as I agree with it and I appreciate your bravery coming up and speaking about it, I'm here to oppose it.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, online? Jonathan and then Rachel, I don't know who's coming first, oh, Jonathan.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): Hopefully I won't crash the internet this time. So, at Aunt Bessie's we are big on mental health. I'm here to agree with the motion and simply the room, to look to the next person and say these four simple words – are you okay today? Four simple words that may help someone that's suffering. So, I'm here to agree with the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Rachel.

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529 (Women's EC Representative): Many of you who have been to Conference before will know and remember that I have spoken about mental ill health many, many times. It's something, well, that I feel strongly about having suffered over the years myself, but coming from the women's point of view, obviously this is fairly important and I get why Sean's opposed to it, obviously the wording's a bit loose, but I think that could be used to an advantage as well but it's not specifying what, so we could interpret that as any way we want so obviously that could help when it comes to getting materials and support in the workplaces, but from the women's point of view, one in five women compared to one in eight men suffer at some point in their lives with mental ill health.

Half of women with mental health issues have experienced abuse, three quarter of women who have, three quarters of women who have had extensive physical and sexual abuse, both as adults and children, have experienced life-threatening trauma and 16% of these are post-traumatic stress disorder, over [unclear] of them have faced this extensive abuse have attempted suicide and a fifth have self-harmed, so I think they're quite alarming statistics and obviously anything we can do in our workplaces to help and support and push our employers to realise that you know, people need support with this and obviously it's only getting worse, I think, since Covid, it's just really put a [unclear] on things like that, so please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, first of all can we thank all of the Delegates for their powerful contributions that they've given this afternoon.

[APPLAUSE]

The Executive completely understands the sentiment behind the motion. We agree there should be absolutely information around mental health in the workplaces. We need to remove the stigma and the stereotypes around mental health, but we would ask that the mover remit the motion so we can go and do some work on it. The motion doesn't make clear what those materials should be, whether those materials should be provided by the employer, the Union, whether they should be materials around well-being or signposting to organisations like Mind and there's some documents over there on the resource table, or Andy's Man Club, which we've invited to Regional Councils. We've done a webinar around that which is on the website and I would urge you to have a look at it. We just needed, as the Executive, some more information because otherwise if it's passed, how do we action it? and that was the problem. So we would ask you to remit it. We will continue absolutely to do work on mental health and look at how we bring back something next year to talk about maybe how we get it on the agendas in workplaces, on pay claims, you know, further webinars and other things, but we would ask you, Douggie, if you would remit it please.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'll remit the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: 23, 32, sorry, 32, nearly, nearly. Okay, please, thank you.

32

Region 4

To give statutory rights to green representatives in the workplace for paid time off for training and carrying out their duties and functions in this role

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417 (Wigan): Motion 32. To give statutory rights to Green Representatives in the workplace for paid time off for training and carrying out their duties and functions in this role. Thanks for giving me the privilege of speaking on this motion before you all today. This motion needs your support right here and right now. It's vital that we all collectively get on board with this motion before it's too late. We need to harness all of our labour power to transform the world, which is in such a perilous state. Nobody else is going to do that for us, not now, not never. This is why we need to ramp up the importance of Green Representatives in the workplace and give them parity with Health & Safety Representatives and Union Learning Representatives and the statutory legal rights they have in connection with their respective roles. Currently Green Representatives do not have any legal rights in the United Kingdom, as I've already mentioned, which are afforded to Health & Safety Representatives and Union Learning Representatives. Green Reps should also have their specific role included in the ACAS Code of Practice, which will enable them to have paid time off for training and other duties within this role.

Collectively, this Union must elevate the role further by whatever means possible, including tabling the motion in the House of Commons, to change the statutes to make this law, so that the Green Reps have full legal rights, if indeed that's the right course of action to take. Conference, we need to address these points as a Trade Union. We need to place climate bargaining at the centre of everything we do, not tomorrow, now. We have to include greater resources into reaching, researching our climate change, impacts on sectors and its members anti-climate change. We need to send this to the top of every agenda in every workplace and every workforce in the UK. This must be our aim and priority. These problems are not just related to the UK, as you're all well aware. We need to look at global supply chains, as these are obviously impacting on climate change as well. Our collective workers must be agents of change, who are able to promote and develop new ways of working to fundamentally safeguard the environment.

This can be achieved by training and empowering Green Representatives to take up this vital important role in the workplace, so that they can challenge poor or non-existent environmental policies in the workplace. The transition from high to low carbon industries depends on workers and their communities. This is nothing new, the Transport & General Workers Union have been active in combating all forms of pollution and contamination for a long, long time, but we need to keep this at the forefront, especially now with the current predicament we're in with the climate crisis and it's there, as I said before, it's happening, it's now. The government and management need challenging on all the issues I've mentioned. We need to put the policies of climate change and the specific role of the Green Rep on an industrial footing. No more greenwashing, we've had enough of that and give Green Reps the rights to train, have paid time off, the power to liaise, help and improve environmental policies in the workplace and all sectors of employment in the United Kingdom. Through properly mandated Green Reps, this can be achieved. We need these Representatives to engage with employers and make a transition from a high carbon economy before climate change becomes irreversible. Conference, I strongly ask you all to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Are you seconding it? Oh, that's okay then.

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: Here to support this motion. Michael and I had the

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Did you say second that motion?

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: Here to support this motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, right, well I need a seconder first.

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: I'm seconding it too.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Well, you've got to say seconding it.

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: I said that

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You said that to me. You didn't say it into the microphone.

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: I'm seconding it

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I have to say formally seconded, if it's formally seconded

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: I'm formally seconding the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: and you have to say, I'm here to second the motion.

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: I'm here to second the motion.

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

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: He's so argumentative today. I had the privilege of being on the first trial of the TUC course for Environmental Reps, with Michael. We were joined by a member from Unison, from, no, the Actors Union, Equity and there was someone else popping in and out, from GMB I think it was and one of the things they talked about as part of one of the case studies we studied was this Union and the work that Sarah's being doing with Greggs and I was sitting there and we were talking about this piece and I'm looking at the photo and there I am, I was in the photo, it was taken at Head Office. We need more of us trained. We passed a motion here to allow Green Reps, we have that in our Rule Book already, we now need to get it into law and get us out there doing stuff in the workplaces. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Speakers? You don't have to say seconded, you just say anything you want now. Anybody online? Okay then, General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the Executive would ask you to support this motion. As Nick said, only a couple of years ago, we recognised Green Reps in our own Rule Book and structures. What we're finding is employers are reluctant to recognise them as stand-alone positions, instead heading them to other positions, typically Health & Safety Reps and we understand this to a point, you know, they're not forced to recognise it as a stand-alone position, but the role of a Safety Rep is absolutely huge already, so it's going to dilute something than being merged together and not everybody in the room would want to be a Safety Rep, I don't know why they wouldn't but they wouldn't necessarily, so being a Green Rep and doing that role as a stand-alone gives us an opportunity to bring more activists in that are interested in the environment, interested in greening their own workplaces and making a difference. Having statutory rights like ULRs, like Health & Safety Reps, would mean the role has to be taken seriously by employers, there has to be then those structures in place and they have to recognise that role and it will allow, I've not had any chocolate brownies yet, it will allow Reps undertaking the role the time to actually fulfil it and potentially, like I say, draw in new activists. So we would ask that you support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much.

I'm debating with my head, right. I'm thinking, will this be a long motion, because you'll all want to talk about how wonderful the Health Service is, or will it be a quick motion, but I'm going to give the benefit of the doubt and say you'll all want to praise the NHS, so I'm going to call lunch early and

[LAUGHTER]

call you back at 2 o'clock, how's that?

[CHEERS]

But that does mean you've got to come and praise our NHS after lunch.

[BREAK]

Am I turned off? Listen, in a minute, right, I'm going to ask you as a favour, right, I'm going to tell you about some workers out on strike in Barnet and, you know, they've been on strike now for 56 days. They're fighting a council, right, a Labour council by the way, they're fighting a Labour council that's brought in strike-breakers to do their jobs. I mean and these are people, we were talking about the issue of mental health before, these are mental health support workers, you know and instead of, you know, settling the dispute, they forced these workers to go out on strike, so I'm going to say that pretty much again and you're going to send a message of Solidarity to them, but I'm going to record it, so I can send it to them, just so we can send it as a message of support and Solidarity from the Bakers. Is that alright?

[Delegates in agreement]

So we're going to do the roll call and then we'll do it, yes? Cool, cool.

General Secretary, roll call.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5, Region 7, online? Thanks, Conference.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Conference, I wanted to bring a message to you about some workers that are out on strike in Barnet. These are mental health workers. We were talking this morning about the issue of mental health and the need to support it from our communities. These workers have now been on strike for 56 days and the Labour council, instead of settling the dispute that these workers have been trying to resolve for nearly, well months, the council instead has hired strike-breakers, so I think which is absolutely appalling. When the Labour Party is standing at a general election and claiming it's offering a new deal for workers, for its council to be sending in strike-breakers, you know, doesn't send a good message to the Labour movement or to workers who are in dispute. So I think we need to send a message of Solidarity and support to those courageous and wonderful mental health workers, from all of us here at the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much.

We've got a winner from Watkins & Gunn, it's somebody whose name I always forget and I'm looking to where the Scottish Delegations are and it's you, it's you. I mean obviously I can't remember who you are, but I've your name on this bit of paper and it tells me it's you. So I believe, I don't know what you've won, but obviously you've won something from

[LAUGHTER]

I think you've won me announcing your name

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

and the amazing thing was, Kasha, I could actually understand what it said.

Okay, I don't think I've got any other announcements, have I? No, in that case, oh, quiz and karaoke, yes, 8 o'clock. I believe Andy at the back is coming as Elvis, he's got his suit and everything

[LAUGHTER]

the bar's open until midnight and I believe Zane's buying the rounds, that's what you said yesterday, wasn't it, when you were offering people drinks for supporting certain motions, which I think is a very generous gesture of you. So, evening sorted. Thanks, Andy and Zane. Can't wait to see you in that wig, I really can't.

[LAUGHTER]

Okay, so we're on motion, what motion are we on? I was just seeing if you knew, 33, we are indeed. Motion 33.

33

Region 3

The BFAWU thinks that our healthcare workers are a national treasure and should not gradually lose pay in real terms every year. This means that the government is pushing healthcare workers to leave the country for better wages and conditions elsewhere.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Moving this motion. Thank you, thank you very much, thank you. Thank you very much there, Mark. Thank you, thank you. You've just heard, another way by our health professionals are getting assaulted, another reason. A Labour council, a Labour council bringing in strike-breakers? The Labour Party has come in the wrong direction for a long time, but that's not just about that. You know, our health care workers have had enough. The TUC found out, look at facts, TUC found out last year that from 2010 until 2023, maternity and care assistants suffered accumulative real pay lost of £30,000, equivalent to 14 months of salary. Nurses and physiotherapists suffer accumulative real terms pay loss of £37,000, cumulative 13 months worth of salary. NHS vacancies, record highs, quarterly figures show 132,139 roles vacant, more than 36,000 nurses, vacant posts for nurses and let's face it, who would be a nurse now, who would train to be a nurse? You walk out of university, over £50,000 in debt and if you get a job of around £20,000, the tax rate, including your student loan payments, is higher than the richest people in this country. You are paying more out and that's without even counting your rent and food. GPs, on average, are paid around £160 per patient.

Is anyone here struggling to get a GP's appointment? Yes, yes, do you want to know why? The GPs have had enough, they're leaving, they're going. They've fought hard enough, our nurses, our doctors, our consultants are fuming. I see interviews with nurses who have turned round and said, I come out to home at the end of each shift and cry. Is that the way we treat the people who, let's face it, all of us are in this room alive because of the work that is done by the NHS and yet we treat them like nothing. We give tax cuts to billionaires, we have to encourage the wealth providers. No, the wealth creators are in this room, they're not in the country clubs and the private clubs, it's the workers and they have the hypocrisy, during Covid, to come out every Thursday and clap our NHS workers. It's disgusting and do you know what?, I don't blame the NHS workers for leaving, I don't blame them. Australia wants some and they'll treat them decently, Canada will want them and they'll treat them with respect, but the place that is the birthplace of the NHS doesn't give a damn and I'll tell you this, do not think this is not part of a wider picture and it's been planned out, it's been planned out and one of those plans was laid out in 1968.

You've all seen the place called the Institute for Economic Affairs?, it should be called the Institute for Economic Fables. A guy called Arthur Seldon wrote a pamphlet for them, which has been the plan and it's called After the NHS. He became an adviser, health adviser to Margaret Thatcher and it was a step-by-step plan of turning the NHS into a free-at-the-point-of-use publicly, public system into a private health insurance system and thanks to the last Tory government, their 2013 Health & Social Care Act, we are now coming to the end of that plan, but there's something we can do. Voting for this motion is just one step, but we can do others. Get involved, let's save the NHS. Let's stand up for the NHS. Let's respect our nurses and doctors and vote for the motion.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: I want to say something on this, what you have said earlier, about what the police doing.

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

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Pardon?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: About this motion?

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: I'm neither backing, nor rejecting.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: But I need a seconder first, Mohinder.

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Alright, sorry.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Seconded. Now you can speak, Mohinder.

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Pardon?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Now you can speak, I've had it seconded. I wasn't sure if you were seconding it. No, no, you can speak now. You alright? If you're talking on the motion, you can speak. Okay.

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Okay. I'm Labour, I've been always Labour, but hardcore, I'm used to working with Arthur Scargill and all the Labour people, right. What has these people, Tories done, it's bad, really bad, still I'm not their supporter, right. Last election, general election, we had Tory candidate and Labour candidate and there were four people from the Green Party, one from another one, one Tory and one Labour and there was audience of about three, four of them, so I asked the question to all of them and I said, there is discrimination in this country, there is class system in this country and you are in here, the Prime Minister of this country, Sunak, right, he's a strict Hindu and he is backing that, so I asked all the candidates what are your views on discrimination and Labour man said Mohinder, if I win the election, I am against discrimination and against all sorts of class system and whether people vote for me or not, right, it was Tory person who said that, he said if people don't vote me, I don't mind, but on that issue I'm with you and I asked the Labour person who said, I can't do anything, right, Labour, working class people and the other two parties and they were quiet, because they were going to lose votes and the Tory Party MP won, right. He was a decent person, I'm not talking about his Party and whenever there was a problem, he used to help us and he won the seat, then somebody attacked his office, broke in his office and he left, now he's MP for somewhere else. I voted only, not on the grounds that he was Tory, he was a decent person. Anybody who's fighting for human rights, whether it's Tory or Labour, I will not change the Party, I'm hardcore, I used to be Marxist, right, I still have the same views, but I don't lump people whether they're Tories, Labour, those who cannot stand against the discrimination, right.

[APPLAUSE]

If a Labour Party do that, they can do it.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

They call me, the Tory people, even Labour people, in Wolverhampton councillors

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Let's get on with Conference now, Mohinder.

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: okay, Labour is racist, in Wolverhampton town, they elect black people from the black area

[APPLAUSE]

uneducated people, right, uneducated people. We are two layers of Wolverhampton, right, uneducated, right. Why I think, whether Tory or Labour, intelligent person and fighting for the people. I'm not getting involved with the parties, I'm going to, I'm standing by the people who can fight for people and our people.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Mohinder. Back on the health, it's back on motion 33.

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (Retired Branch): Platform, Delegates, EC Members. Conference, I'm here to ask you to support this motion. The reason being, both my daughter and my granddaughter work in the care sector and when we go to see them and they show me the bruises and scratches that they are getting, sustaining whilst at work, it's just unbelievable and they are working for the minimum wage and they come home and they're battered and bruised and scratched and everything and it's, it makes my blood boil that they have to go and do that job for minimum wage. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): All the main parties have pledged billions towards the NHS, investment in the NHS, but what we should all be demanding, who is successful next month, is that the rise in NHS demand is met with effective planning and significant investment, that waiting lists are stopped from sliding further and reduced as soon as possible and that the government ensures that the workforce is given the right tools to effectively plan and deliver the best healthcare possible, with proper funding to achieve targets and ensure that promises are delivered. All of these will only be possible with investment in the most important part of the NHS, that's those that live and work in it every day. Only a couple of months' ago, the Royal College of Nursing said that the real term cuts to nurses' wages since 2010 have been so severe that hundreds of thousands are effectively working five days a month for free and that a quarter has been cut from their pay packets during the last decade. To stem departures from the NHS and to help move forward with recruitment and retention of staff, the Executive Council would recommend that everybody please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. Motion 34.

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 701: Just received a text regarding the mental health debate, from Jake Dunwoody. He says, thanks very much.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Cheers.

[APPLAUSE]

34

Executive Council

That this Conference agrees that we should encourage all branches to ask every Shop Steward to take on the role of Safety Rep to enable them to strengthen health and safety in their workplace.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool): Motion 34. Moving the motion on behalf of the EC, who would ask you to support this motion. That this Conference agrees that we should encourage all Branches to ask every Shop Steward to take on the role of the Safety Rep, to enable them to strengthen health and safety in their workplaces. This is something that we have spoken quite often about at our National Health & Safety Meetings and our Executive Council Meetings and we feel it would strengthen the knowledge of our Reps if our Shop Stewards were also Health & Safety Reps. It would give them all the tools in one box. Apart from going into pay negs, how many times has a Shop Steward, if you go in with a member for a grievance or a disciplinary hearing or an absence review meeting, which in some way or form involves health and safety or well-being, so having the knowledge of the dual role would help immensely. Both of the Shop Stewards on our shite, site, shite?, site

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, aye?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool): can I just rewind that? Both of the Shop Stewards on our site are Health & Safety Reps and I've done that role for over 20 years and I found it a massive help. In our role, knowledge is power and the more knowledge we have, the more power we have, so doing a dual role is a big help. In some of our Branches, we have Shop Stewards and no Health & Safety Reps and vice versa, Health & Safety Reps and no Shop Stewards, so by doing the dual role, it is a win-win situation. I've spoken to a few people here this week who do both roles and they find it very helpful. Sometimes we forget that being a Health & Safety Rep gives you more powers covered by legislation. If this motion is passed, don't think for one minute that the Shop Stewards will be forced to be Health & Safety Reps. We won't be sending Ian round to bang on your doors to make them Health & Safety Reps, we would encourage them to take on that role. So, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It's formally seconded. Speakers? Oh, Jake, I'll take Jake first. Mainly because he was taking so long to walk here, do you know what I mean? Come on, Jake. We're on you, no, we're still on you. Do we know why we can't get any sound? We've got somebody, we've got the 'phone ringing. I know we've got somebody's 'phone ringing. Oh, is that you 'phoning Jake? Maybe that's why his internet's not working. Drop him a message, tell him we can't hear him, he might need to turn off and start again on his computer.

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: Can you hear me?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh yes, we can now, just here to turn you up.

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: That's turned up to the top, lads.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Hold on a minute. Somebody's having a conversation with him.

Brother Jake Dunwoody – Branch 711: Can Conference hear me? Yes, right, okay, right. I'm going to oppose this, right, on about three levels. One, trying to get time off to do your duties as a Shop Steward and taking up your time on your days off is a bit of a heavy hitter. To be honest with you, the double responsibility is a big hitter as well, but the thing I'm sort of working on is that it would affect people mentally and we've discussed mental health here. We've discussed motion 31 here about health and safety and people gave all their stories and stuff. It's tough enough being a Steward, it's tough enough dealing with stuff on the work floor while doing your own job. Your days off are taken up, your evenings are taken up with conversations. I think it's a wee bit too much to put on Stewards, because to be honest with you, I think it would just burn them out. So, I oppose this motion. Take care everyone, I hope you all have a great Conference. Love you all, see you soon.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Jake. Okay. There's nobody else on there, is there? No, okay.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: Shop Stewards 1, Shop Stewards 2, Health & Safety 1, Health & Safety 2, etc. Health and safety in the workplace is one of the most important things, because you want to protect every single member you've got out there. I believe that you could ask your Reps to take on this. I believe some of the Reps will be quite happy to do so, because we as Reps that I know of want to help our members in every way and making them safe should be a number one priority in every workplace. It should be in your heart that you want every member safe. So I believe that it should return a positive response for this, so I, I almost said oppose then, I support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fitzpatrick – Branch 430: I'd like you to support this. Shop Stewards have a job to do, but you're putting your jobs at risk sometimes on the line when you're arguing for your members' rights. With a Safety Rep, you're protected by the law, so you can twist a thing round to be more on health and safety and it protects you. We started this off in Sayers in the 70's and 80's. We found it difficult to get Safety Reps. We had a lot of Shop Stewards and when we went down to one Safety Rep, I spoke to a lot of them and got the Branch Secretary on board and it went through and all the Shop Stewards took the courses. You get time off for your training, same as Shop Stewards, so it's not putting too much pressure on you, but what you've learnt as a Shop Steward, you'll learn a lot more as a Safety Rep and if you put the two together, your workforce will be a lot powerful, especially when a major accident happens.

Like I had in one where they were laying the floor in a fridge and everything was fine and then a lot of members come to me, the fumes in the room was terrible and I actually stopped them all going in. You're not supposed to stop a job, but I stopped it and went straight to the CEO. I told him what had happened and he said leave it, he'll find out straight away and it turned out the fella laying the floor had all the gear on the master lot and he ran out of one bag, so he took another bag, completely different, out of his van and a lot of members would have been affected and in hospital if I never stopped the job at the time. So I would encourage more people to take it on. Once you take it on, your knowledge you gain is well worth the effort you put in and you're guaranteed paid release for the job, you don't have to do it in your own time, you do it in work time. Okay, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother George Hoye – Branch 703 (Hovis Bakery): Mr President, Podium, EC Members and Delegates. Also Region 7, Health & Safety Trainer. Since I've started reading these motions, especially this motion, I've been swayed both for and against, but partially I am against it. As a Health & Safety Rep, yes, it's a hard job so it is, but people have, I do not, I'll admit this myself here, I don't, I do want help from people to help me do the job as best I can, but if you reverse it, people were talking about mental health, Reps, in my Bakery alone, there's two Reps, there's one days, one nights. Trying to get people to take the position, we had one Health & Safety Rep at Stage 1 and she told me at the end of last week she's jacking it in due to mental health issues. Now the pressure will go on for putting more work on to the Shop Stewards. It will possibly make them ill with mental health. Also the Union has a duty of care and we have a duty of care ourselves, so I would like the Delegates to oppose this motion please.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: I'm here to support this. This is something we've been doing as a Branch since 2015. With our Shop Stewards at our site, we have Health & Safety Reps/Shop Stewards. Vicky Sykes will confirm that, she sends over the forms for nominations. We've got Josh Hawley? at the back of the room there, he's not a Shop Steward, he's a Health & Safety Rep/Shop Steward. The reason why we feel this is the way forward is because it gives them more autonomy in the workplace. If people feel it's going to struggle with their mental health, then they can actually speak to the Branch Secretary and say I can do one or the other and obviously, you know, we can stand them down from certain roles, but if people want to take up the role above, it gives them a bit more autonomy, it gives them more scope to work in the workplace. You should see the emails that Josh is sending in to the company I work for, from a night and he's getting away with it because he's a Health & Safety Rep. He's entitled to challenge.

We're talking about bullying-up, we're talking about all sorts going on here. As a Health & Safety Rep, you're entitled to question things, you get taught legislation. As a Shop Steward I could probably have learnt that in an interview room with the police. Now I can stand up for myself, I can stand up for other people, but from a health and safety point of view, you get smartened up, you get switched on with legislation, you get taught about what John Owens mentioned earlier, the Brown Book. I didn't know what that was until I went on a Health & Safety course. You align them both together, it makes you have more impact in your workplace. You get more respect from your fellow peers and also it's a tool to recruit, you can recruit more people because you're a Health & Safety Rep. You can encourage better behaviours, you can challenge the management of ill practice? and you learn to stick together, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): As a Health & Safety Rep and a Branch Secretary, I do both roles, I trained at Barnsley College when Willie was there and we got taught, Willie said to us at Barnsley College, as a Trade Union, we do it better than the employee, as a Health & Safety Rep, we do it better than what the employee does, so we're there to make sure, we can make sure that the health and safety is down on that floor, wherever we are in that factory, it's done right and if it's wrong, we can make sure it's corrected. I go to all the Health & Safety meetings, once a month, to make sure I can put my point, if I'm not happy with a health and safety issue, plus they've given me the access code on my 'phone for access, if I want to put a hazard out, if I'm not happy, I can take a photo and upload it and it's within the offices of the Health & Safety and every time I see the health and safety, I pull it in. Like I said, as a Health & Safety Rep, as a Trade Union, we do it better than them, so support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs): I support this motion. We've had quite a few points of order today on wording of motions and as this motion says that we should encourage all our Branches to ask every Shop Steward to take the role, we're not telling them to do it. Would you like to be a Shop Steward? No, thank you. Okay, job done. Support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Jonathan.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): I'm here to somewhat agree with the motion, I don't oppose the motion, but we need to encourage and push the health and safety in workplaces as both Branch Secretaries and Shop Stewards. More training needs to be put in place. In my workplace, on my shift, we've gone nearly 1,000 days without a LTA, lost time accident, which for working in a factory, I think is somewhat incredible, whereby the people that do the safety walk-rounds that have been introduced, by management and it's more of a change of mentality and a change in ways that's helped us with over, nearly 1,000 days, so I agree that to some extent that Shop Stewards should be asked but not forced to take the role of the Safety Rep.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you speaking? Okay, go on then.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): The aforementioned 558 Branch that we just said we've been doing it for years. I sometimes misbehave, as you're probably all aware, yes?

[LAUGHTER]

But I'm teaching Josh the same way. I'm a Health & Safety Rep. You cannot be dismissed for raising a health and safety issue. I'm like a koala, I'm a protected species. The amount of victimisation, I'm even cute as well, look

[LAUGHTER]

the amount you've seen, we've all been talking about the amount of victimisation that they're doing of Trade Union Reps, Trade Union Officials, you're being targeted, they want rid of you, but guess what? I'm a Health & Safety Rep, I fucking [unclear].

[LAUGHTER]

Please support.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You will

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): And I'm in credit already, already.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I take it you've already paid, have you? Yes.

[LAUGHTER]

Okay. Right of reply.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool): Yes, I think for most people that have got up and spoke, they already do it and they find it, like, really helpful. Me personally, if I was going in for a disciplinary or a grievance with someone and it was regarding health and safety and I wasn't a Health & Safety Rep, how can I represent that person to my best ability? I can't and I think the important thing and the lady said it before like, is we're not forcing you to do it, we will sort of ask you if you want to do it. If you don't want to do it or you feel as though it's too much or you're quite happy just being with a Shop Steward, then fine, not a problem. It was just to encourage people to do the dual role, so you've got all your tools in one box and you can represent your members fully, that's all it is. No-one will be forced to do it, it's just we would sort of ask you to do it, but there'll be nobody forced to do it, so please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Okay, so it's motion 36. That's Rachel, isn't it?

6

Executive Council

This Conference agrees that the recent exposure of McDonalds and its failure to deal with sexual harassment where its CEO admitted to receiving 1 or 2 complaints a week shows the urgency of the need for legislation to protect workers. Conference agrees that the BFAWU should lead a campaign on this, the aim of such a campaign would be to bring into being a new requirement for reporting cases of sexual harassment and violence similar to the need to report accidents in the workplace (RIDDOR) so that employers who are not fulfilling their duty of care towards their employees in this area are held to account.

Conference agrees that the campaign should aim to achieve at least the following:

- *A new reporting line to be set up which takes anonymised details of the incident and forwards the complaint to employer, which generates a reference number.*
- *Once a complaint has been raised the anonymised complaint becomes reportable and remains one of the companies' reporting requirements until both parties agree that the situation has been resolved satisfactory.*
- *That the 3-month less one day rule for such issues be removed to recognise that such cases are often not reported due to fear or some other substantial reason in a particular timeline. We have seen for example in the Jimmy Saville cases, reports have been ignored due to the individual complained about.*
- *That a new, cross-cooperation panel is agreed to overview sexual harassment in the workplace between TUC EHRC and the HSE.*
- *Workers represented by TUs are consulted in such cases and any agreements with employers include representation through the members union or TUC-appointed facilitator.*
- *Workers not represented by TUs can seek support from TUs, with all time funded by employers.*
- *Workers should be trained on a recognised programme agreed via Tripartite EHRC, HSE and TUC to enable them to take part in any discussions.*

Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529 (Women's EC Representative): Yes, that is me, hello.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can't hear you yet.

Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529 (Women's EC Representative): Hello, can you hear us now?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Keep going, keep going.

Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529 (Women's EC Representative): Can you hear us now? Yes? Champion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That's it.

Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529 (Women's EC Representative): I've just thought before when I spoke, I think I used my old name. I'm Rachel Hart from Branch 529, not Rachel Mullen now. Anyways, Rachel Hart, Branch 529, moving this motion on behalf of the Executive Council. I'll not read the whole motion out because you've all got it in your Agendas and you'll see what it's about. The crux of it is obviously, you know, employers are getting away with far too much at the moment with lots of things and what this motion sets out to do is essentially not just our industry, but we know it's rife in McDonald's and places like that, but obviously it happens all over, so it's about protecting the people at work in all industries and I think in this day and age and especially now with the general election campaign underway, politicians should be discussing important issues like this, because otherwise, you know, if we don't do anything about it ourselves as a Trade Union and we don't seek to get any legislation or things like that in place, employers will continue to get away with not dealing with issues like this, it'll just be swept under the carpet.

So please support the motion, it's about supporting not just people in our industry, but across the whole, workers across all industries. It's about holding employers to accountability, to deal with serious issues like this, because like I alluded to when we were talking about mental health issues before, you know, people that suffer with sexual harassment and sexual abuse, can lead to them having mental health issues, so it's about dealing with issues like this and hopefully can prevent further issues, such as mental health issues and things like that in the future, so it's important that we stand up and try and get something in place rather than it just being brushed under the carpet time and time again. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Vicky Bassett – Branch 253: Formally seconding it?

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

Sister Vicky Bassett – Branch 253: I just didn't want you to have a go at me like you did Nick, you know? It's enough pressure as it is. Okay, please bear with me. This is one of the most essential motions at our Conference in terms of workplace safety and well-being. In 2024, it's appalling that people are still going to work facing abuse. It is terrible that those, in our Union, who have been sexually harassed have been severely let down by their employers. We need real change and that's why passing this motion is the first step in securing a future where sexual harassment is something people never have to experience.

The aim of this motion is to put in place a set of measures that will protect people and it will also expose bad employers, who fail to deal with the issues of sexual harassment in the workplace and indeed our movement. By ensuring that there's a tripartite body that overviews sexual harassment, which includes the Health and Safety Executive, Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the TUC, we will be making sure that future generations never have to suffer in a way that far too many people in our workplaces up and down the country have.

I know that there is resistance from HSE and concerns over funding and resources both the EHRC and HSE, but without them on board, there can be no means of enforcement. That's why we must demand that they are involved. I was appalled when I saw on the BBC exposure of what happened to McDonald's workers and the confirmation by the CEO that they receive one or two complaints a week and what made me realise the significant impact of one or two complaints per week was the reality that the TUC survey showed that for every person who comes forward, five do not, meaning it could be as many as 12 per week and that's one employer and we know it's not just McDonald's.

We have many incidents in the workplace across the country and it needs to end. People don't go to work in any industry to be harassed or abused. So, what do we want to see? We want to see a 'phone line that is set up so people who have been sexually abused, harassed or discriminated against in the workplace have a private, confidential helpline to which they can report their incidents. The company they are employed by receives the information and is told they must deal with it.

Individuals must be satisfied that their complaint has been dealt with appropriately, which cannot include the use of a non-disclosure agreement just to silence the individual and the company must record the information on the number of reports and reference number given on the annual company accounts will mean that when people review how that company operates, it will ensure that its record will be there for all to see. It takes the issue of sexual harassment seriously and protects its workforce. It's often very difficult for people's issues to be dealt with appropriately in many cases, because of the power of the individual, the power of the corporation instead of the toxic culture being addressed, the person highlighting the issue is shunned, pushed out of the organisation or silenced with a non-disclosure agreement.

We have seen this in television and in film, the music industry, the food industry and shamefully this Trade Union and the Labour movement. When people raise genuine issues and concerns, they fail to be dealt with, which puts people off from putting forward their complaints. So to make sure the companies and individuals can't make these events historic, which essentially means justice cannot be sought, we are also demanding a change in the law. This is that the three month rule must go and that the legal timeline is not restricted to people seeking justice for such crimes against them.

We must ensure that justice is served for the individual, not matter how historic the event. It's disappointing politicians haven't put these protections in place already, but as a Union we will show leadership and fight for the protection of workers, not just in our industry but in every sector of our economy. Please support the motion.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else getting up to speak? That was superb, well done well done. Any other speakers? Okay, got a speaker on here.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): Hi. Just, I can't follow that really, all I can say is that if we can't do anything as a Union, the Union needs to make sure that the Parliamentary Group push and push and push this to go forward and if that fails then talk to individual MPs. So I completely and utterly support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. No other speakers then? To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. That means I'm on 37, doesn't it? That's you.

Conference affirms that climate change is a class issue and a trade union issue.

Conference notes that the:

- *UN Secretary General has said we are in a new era of global boiling with unprecedented extreme weather impacting every part of the globe with increasing frequency.*
- *International Energy Agency (IEA) states that to stay below the Paris Climate Agreement of 1.5°C, fossil fuel use must reduce by 25% this decade and we cannot develop any new fossil fuel sites.*
- *Working class in the UK and globally are already being impacted by the terrible consequences of climate change, through loss of lives, livelihoods, food, access to water, housing and accommodation, forced migration, unbearable working conditions and an intolerable burden on emergency services.*
- *UK government is doing little to safeguard workers or people from the impacts of climate change and, far from it, is advancing a narrative that seeks to make a virtue of weakening its commitments.*

Conference believes:

- *We need a rapid transition away from oil and gas to prevent catastrophic climate breakdown.*
- *Failing to take urgent measures to transition away from fossil fuels puts jobs at risk from sudden climate events or their economic consequences and foregoes opportunities to build in a timely way the larger skilled workforce needed across the whole economy without which decarbonisation cannot happen.*
- *Inequality and declining standards of living for working class people are explicitly locked into a fossil-fuelled market economy and austerity policies.*
- *The costs of transition to a decarbonised economy and society must not fall on those least able to pay.*
- *Transition policies must be generated by state investment.*
- *We must resist attempts aimed at using climate to divide working people; this only serves elites and distracts us from our common interest in jobs and a secure future.*
- *Political posturing on net zero policies does not help our class and we must fight for policies that address climate change and environmental degradation rooted in economic and social justice.*
- *Trade unions and workers in all sectors are central to transition plans.*
- *Workers in other countries are our allies.*

Conference agrees to fight for:

- *Policies to address climate change and environmental degradation that are in the interests of workers and communities, and a plan for the forms of bargaining and industrial action to achieve them.*
- *Negotiated transition plans that guarantee protection for all workers in all sectors of the economy including across all equality strands, and as a minimum should cover jobs, wages, pensions, training and skills and trade union rights.*
- *Public ownership of key sectors such as energy, water, transport, mail, broadband, education, health and social care.*
- *A fair and progressive taxation system, accessing the wealth of one of the world's richest countries without asking working people to pay for a crisis they did not create.*
- *A National Climate Service to plan, coordinate, fund and ensure education/training for the workforce necessary to undertake the rapid and wide scale transformation to a decarbonised economy.*
- *Workers and their unions being directly and immediately engaged with government in designing and defining what the decarbonised industries and their workforces of the future look like.*
- *Solutions to the climate crisis that are in the interests of workers and communities, not capital.*

Further, Conference agrees to build combines within and across sectors, at the level of branches as well as nationally and globally, to develop common industrial strategies that contribute to a 'whole economy' approach to decarbonisation, including engagement with community and climate justice groups.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, climate change is a Trade Union issue. The motion clearly outlines the asks, so I'm not going to go through it all but to summarise some of the points within it. Working class people in the UK and globally are already being impacted by the terrible consequences of climate change, through loss of lives, livelihoods, food, access to water, housing and accommodation, forced migration, unbearable working conditions and an intolerable burden on emergency services. You may have seen only last week the firefighter who drowned in floods over in Germany. We need a rapid transition away from oil and gas, to prevent catastrophic climate breakdown.

Failing to take urgent measures to transition away from fossil fuels puts jobs at risk from sudden climate events or their economic consequences and for those opportunities to build in a timely way the larger skilled workforce needed across the whole economy, without which decarbonisation just cannot happen. The cost of transition to a decarbonised economy and society must not fall on those least able to pay, which is us. We must resist attempts aimed at using climate to divide working people, this only serves the elite and distracts us from our common interests in jobs and a secure future for everyone. Trade Unions and workers in all sectors, but especially the food sector and allied trades, are essential to transition plans. Workers in other countries are our allies and improving things here cannot and should not make things worse for people predominantly in the global south who we cannot see, but are involved in our supply chains, making sure that our members can make the products they do amongst other things yet bear the brunt of the climate crisis far more than we do.

Public ownership of key sectors such as energy, water, transport, mail, broadband, education, health and social care are vital to moving forward and already BFAWU policy. A fair and progressive taxation system, accessing the wealth of one of the world's richest countries, without asking working people to pay for a crisis they did not create is the least that we should be asking for. A national climate service is needed to plan, to co-ordinate, fund and ensure education and training for the workforce, who is necessary to undertake the rapid and wide scale transformation to a decarbonised economy, needs to be in place and we're already in informal discussions with other Unions around what that would look like. Workers are the experts at the jobs they do, their Unions are there to elevate their voices. They need to have the ability to directly and immediately engage with governments in designing and defining what the decarbonised industries and their workforces of the future look like. We need to have a say in how the food industry operates in a cleaner, greener, more sustainable way in the future. We need solutions to the climate crisis that are in the interests of workers and communities, not capital and this motion highlights how that can be started and the Executive asks you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded. Speakers? No? No speakers? Okay, to the vote. Oh, sorry, go on, Jonathan.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): Sorry. I feel like Mark at this Conference, this year. The amount of times that I've come up to the podium compared to last year. Anyway, right, climate change, it is nothing new. It's only been brought to the forefront in the last 10 – 15 years, however oil and gas were never going to last. Previous governments of both parties have failed to prepare for this for many years. They've had a too blasé attitude. This country is supposed to be the front-runner of protecting the country, moving forward innovation and all that sort of stuff. We've got huge wind farms off the North Sea, one of which pretty much I can see off our seafront in Hornsey. The coast, we are surrounded by the sea, why are we not using more tidal power in our factories, in our, moving forward? We agree with the national ownership of utilities, national ownership of all utilities, it needs to go back to national ownership. The amount of companies that have made the amount of money is scandalous and why is that money not being put back into this country, with the taxpayers and the owners of those companies need to start paying their taxes.

The failure of HS2, I don't need to start going into HS2 and especially the TransPennine corridor between Hull and Liverpool. We used to have a brilliant canal system to transport goods from Liverpool to Hull, with no issues whatsoever. Why are we not doing it with the trains? The water companies, we're consistently let down by water companies, with the amount of sewerage that is now pumped into rivers and seas, it's absolutely disgusting and the National Climate Service, why can't they work with universities more, companies willing to invest and train in the future. I completely support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, he was supporting it, he was very good as well, if you couldn't hear it, Douggie. I'll go with the vote then, then, okay. Those in favour? Those against? Oh, okay, that's carried. Motion 39. Has it, oh, Standing Orders. Okay, 39's withdrawn. I need my Standing Orders chap here, I need him soon. I've only got one motion left, Mr Standing Orders, wherever you are. Motion 40. Motion 40, Region 5?

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Motion 40. That this Conference agrees that when cyber attacks happen on an individual's private data concerning employment issues, that this Trade Union acts swiftly to defend its members. Basically, it's exactly what it says on the tin. It's too common now that companies are having cyber attacks and personal data's leaked. We've had a member recently who, his pension has been cyber attacked and all he got back was a, here's your Equifax, here's this, here's that, go and do your own work on it and he said, his missus is distraught about this, all my personal details, all my finances gone out to God knows where, all I've got to do now is check Equifax. So basically we've got a similar thing with a company I worked for many years ago, but it was like a no-win, no-fee, so I decided, we sat down as a Branch and said I think we should do something about this, so we put it to Thompsons and Thompsons took it on as a personal injury claim and I think we've got to act quicker and faster with stuff like this because it's happening more often. I mean, when you go to work, you've got your details, your personal details, you know, your address, your bank number, all that's been leaked elsewhere and it can get into the hands of anybody and a company's response to that is basically oh, go and check Equifax, do this, do that, they don't care. So basically the more we sort of like raise the bar with this, the less likely it is to (a) happen, but (b) there's a deterrent there to say we're going to do something about it. So please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded. Speakers? No? Before we give a response and before you sit down, Sean, maybe, we would ask to remit, because whilst obviously we recognise the issue around, this particular issue around personal data, we think the wording, is there something we could do as a Union?, but we recognise we need to do something to make sure it's clear about what Branches do, which obviously sitting on the EC, you know, we did have the discussion about, but obviously, you know, we would just ask you if you would remit, because otherwise we've got to oppose it because, you know, the way it's worded, we wouldn't be able to deliver on it.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Yes, yes, I'll remit the motion, but it's something we've got to be very mindful of, okay? I'll remit.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I appreciate that.

[APPLAUSE]

Cheers, Sean. Where's he gone? Report from Standing Orders.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): Please turn to your Agendas for the following motions. Motion 41 stands, motion 42 stands, motion 43 stands, motion 44 stands, motion 45 stands, motions 46 and 47 both stand and have been composited to composite 3 in the back of your books. Motion 48 stands, 49 stands, 50 stands, 51 stands, 52 stands, 53 stands, 54 stands, 55 stands, 56 stands, 57 stands, 58 stands, 59 stands and 60 stands. This is the end of the report this time.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference agrees to that report? Thank you very much. It's going to be a big one that, isn't it? Do you know what I might do then, what I might do is like obviously tell you to close your books, remind you that at 8 o'clock tonight you've got karaoke and you've got a quiz. Apparently you can't bring your 'phones to the quiz, so there's no cheating allowed. Anybody caught cheating will be exposed tomorrow morning. I don't know exposed to what, I haven't decided yet, but it's something we can talk about. Point of information, Joe. Oh, you've won it already haven't you, come on, I know. Oh right, okay.

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (Retired Branch): Ian, does that mean you're paying for all them that have their payments on form, because if you can't take the forms in, they're not going to be able to pay.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, if you remember, Joe, I sorted that out earlier. I told you, we've got Andy dressed as Elvis and Zane buying your beer, already sorted. Oh, it's 7.30 now, oh, it's 7.30, obviously they've brought it, oh right, okay, I was given the wrong information, good job you're still here. So it's 7.30 for the quiz and yes, I'm going to do that as well. So, 7.30, not 8 o'clock like I first told you, quiz and karaoke. Also, any young members in the room? Now, I know a lot of us feel young, but unless you're 27 or under, you don't count as young. That's not being discriminatory, but if you could remain here for five minutes, we'd really appreciate it because we want to introduce obviously the Young EC Member and we want to introduce him to you and you to him, so we'd like to just take that opportunity for those five minutes. We're going to start again in the morning at half past 9, so obviously go to the fringes, whichever one you're at, just a reminder, they're on the board there. Have a great evening. I hope you have a lovely time singing and one of you wins the quiz. See you in the morning.

Tuesday 11th June 2024

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Thank you very much. General Secretary, roll call.

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

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Good morning, Conference. You will notice we've been joined on stage by a legend of our Union. Obviously we're also pleased to see you because you've not had, you've had some difficult medical problems recently, so we're really pleased that you're here today to join us and obviously he's our guest to Conference, so let's give a Bakers Union welcome to Dave Suddards.

[APPLAUSE]

For some people who may not have met Dave before and I realise there'll be a few in the room, because obviously we've got some new Delegates here. Dave was an exceptional Branch Secretary for Hovis for quite a number of years, someone I always look to as a fountain of knowledge in the work that he did and we made some stuff together, we did some stuff together, we did some great stuff together and he was a stalwart of the Hovis Branch and from what I can say about him is, you know, to thank you for all that service during those years and to obviously wish you a long and happy retirement and obviously I know you do like your holidays, in fact I think you probably have more holidays now than you actually have time at home I think. So welcome, Dave.

Okay, Conference. We do have a speaker coming in round about half past 10, which is a young woman called Shelly Asquith and I'll tell you more about her when she arrives, but she'll be talking to us round about half past 10, or after break, whichever we feel like doing, because I'm allowed to. Obviously I hope you're all recovered and you've got your voices ready this morning, because I know there was quite a number of you singing last night, so and obviously I believe the Kernow, the brainboxes of the Union were a massive victory in last night's quiz, so well done.

[APPLAUSE]

Well done and well done for everybody that took part in that as well and obviously thanks to Watkins and Gunn for organising that evening for us.

So we're back to our Agendas, but before we do, before we do and I nearly forgot, I nearly forgot, I'm going to invite Gary down from STAMMA. Now obviously yesterday we did the first fringe and I think, was it the first fringe for a Trade Union as well, on this issue with STAMMA? and obviously we're very grateful that we were the first Union to be able to do that and obviously we thank Gary for coming along and making this groundbreaking opportunity to understand some of the issues that people face in the workplace and I'd like to give Gary an opportunity to address Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Gary Clark (STAMMA) addresses Conference

First of all can I thank this great Union I'm here addressing, as you're at the forefront, you're starting a movement, starting a movement where the Trade Union movement will have roughly 80,000 members, who then can have half a million children who are members of the Union and STAMMA and you are the second Union to affiliate to us and you should take great pride, you may be small but you pull your punches, you pull your weight with the punches and I'd like to say thank you for getting involved. What we have produced as STAMMA for hospitality. I've got one for every Region here, every Region to come and see me at the desk there, put that up. I've also got a contact sheet, because we're producing these, a quarterly newsletter, so these will go directly into the Branches, I'll do that myself to save you doing that and that will take there. I want you now to go back into the workplace and start discussing, we've got an actual workshop on 7th July about dealing with customers of STAMMA. That could be used as a free workshop. I'm now going to built up on our actual one day training school, which we'll do for every Rep in every Union to be trained up on this, this will actually impact upon hundreds of thousands of people of STAMMA, not to Union members but customers and clients of STAMMA who use it day-in and day-out at call centres. You've started a movement which I'm going to dedicate the time I've got left to make sure that this works, because it will be a legacy for the generations who come behind me and whoever else.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much, Gary and thank you for coming to our Conference. I'll put my glasses on, so that I don't make a mistake and I do believe, I do believe it's 41. Motion 41, which is Region 4.

To lobby the government to prevent Greene King from allowing their employees to wage stream their wages and charging them for the privilege. Wage stream is just another name for pay day loans. Please support.

Brother William McKnight – Branch 404 (Beech’s Fine Chocolates): Motion 41. To lobby the government to prevent Greene King from allowing their employees to Wagestream [unclear] their wages and charging them for the privilege. Wagestream is another name for payday loans. My daughter works for Greene King and whoever works for Greene King, if you want to take your money early you can, but they charge you £1.75 per transaction. How can you charge somebody for taking their own money? It’s just not right. When you’ve done it once, you’re getting less wages when you get paid, so you’ll be doing it again and again, so every time you’re just going to keep paying and I don’t know this, but I’m pretty sure that Greene King will probably take a cut, whatever they’re taking, so it’ll be a case of your employees are working for nothing, because they’re getting the money back, doing all the work. So, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? It’s because you sang too much last night, isn’t it?

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): Wagestream apparently is a service that boosts financial well-being and productivity, contributing to employers satisfaction and performance or the rise of promoting debt uptake. Come pay day, the individual is going to be paid less, so how are they going to be able to cover their expenses the next pay day, or will it lead to a further salary advance? Eventually potentially becoming a problem that can spiral out of control and as the gentleman’s just said, a similar situation that many people found themselves in with payday loans. This motion is about Greene King’s salary advance, but we’ve seen this in many other companies recently. Just last month at Premier with Michael speaking about it at our recent EC meeting and it does appear to be on the increase nationally. I was discussing this last week with our General Secretary and she stated that Greggs has been approached recently and told them no, thanks, so well done, Greggs. The BFAWU have a statement opposing the use of Wagestream and we need to begin educating our members against its potential harm, which of course wasn’t mentioned or included in any employer statement, on their website or internal emails. This statement, by the way, everybody should have one in their pack. My Branch Secretary approached our HR Manager very recently to voice his concerns and her response was that people need to be more responsible and accountable for their finances. Spoken like someone who isn’t struggling to pay their bills, when your pay barely covers everyday essentials and you’re not working to live, but living to work. On behalf of the EC, we’d like you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s unanimous. Thank you. It’s 42. That’s me.

This Conference agrees that an employer expects you to work from day 1, why should we not then have employment rights from the same day. No worker should be left behind, we call on the BFAWU to ensure it campaigns to ensure that all workers are protected from day 1 of their employment.

Morning, Conference. Motion 42, we’re saying that we should have employment rights from Day 1, on the first day you start working. I mean, they don’t say to you you’re going to have to wait 12 months or two years before you start work, they don’t say work, or come into this place and we’ll pay you for two years, so why shouldn’t you be entitled to your employment rights on the same day you start work? There’s nothing in my opinion and I’m sure in your opinion of why health and safety shouldn’t apply to you from Day 1. There’s no reason why you shouldn’t be expected to have a contract of employment, which obviously we have a position on to say that we want to abolish zero-hours contracts, because we recognise people have no rights on zero-hours contracts and it’s about exploitation, so why shouldn’t you have the same rights as the people you work alongside, from Day 1 and, you know, we recently did a survey, which obviously is in our Baker’s Dozen, an opportunity to remind people that we surveyed our members and No. 3 of that wish and desire, in this general election, is that we want the government of whichever colour it is to introduce Day 1 work rights and that’s a demand of our members. You’re here to represent all of those members in your Branches and this is their desire. So I wouldn’t expect you not to support the idea of having rights in the workplace from Day 1, because it’s just what we would expect, isn’t it?

We expect everybody to have dignity and respect in the workplace and that should start on the first day you start work. So we ask you to support this motion and we ask you that when you go back into your workplace, to explain to your employer, if they don't give rights from Day 1, if they don't recognise that people are treated unfairly, they have a right to be able to claim unfair dismissal, that we, as a Trade Union, will not just campaign about it, but we will support our members if they are discriminated against in any way and whether that's through a legal route or through using the strength of our members in our Branch to put pressure on an employer that dismisses an individual for unfair reasons that we, as working people, will stand with them and support them, because it's important that not only do we call for something that we're prepared to take action in support of our demands and this is what our members want. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

It's formally seconded. Any speakers?

Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 282, from the great pirate land, District Branch of Kernow: Us down in Cornwall fully, fully support this motion. We have our comrades who work seasonally, they've been working seasonal hours for decades, so that means not one of them ever gets working rights. They're employed from March 'till October. Ten years with no rights at work. It's disgusting. They should be valued, welcomed, treated like the rest of us, you know, they are working class people. We in Kernow will stand with them, these people will stand with them, we need you to stand with them and get this passed into law. We fully support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Motion 43.

43

Region 5

This Conference agrees that we should encourage the Government to provide financial support to families that are separated whilst going through the process of obtaining the relevant paperwork to enter and stay in the UK

Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Good morning, Mr President, Platform, Delegates. That this Conference agrees that we should encourage this government to provide financial support for families that are separated whilst they are going through the process of obtaining relevant paperwork to enter and stay in the UK. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Okay, so in that case it's Dave.

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): There are many hurdles that families, family members have to negotiate when trying to join their loved ones and when poverty hits, these problems can multiply. Not only to struggle sometimes to find a roof over their heads, but also in the food to survive, to get medical treatment and the means to pay for that medical treatment and on top of these, the threat of being preyed upon by those who take advantage of situations like this. This motion accepts that any legal process takes time to tick the boxes and follow the system of border control in the UK, but asks that some financial aid be given to support many people who are in need of help and who are at their most vulnerable. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 44.

44

Branch 582

This Conference agrees that the present 25% discount for single occupancy tenants should be increased to 50% to bring it in line with other groups that are entitled to a reduction in council tax.

Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Good morning again, Mr President, Platform and Delegates. That this Conference agrees that 25% discount for single occupancy should be increased to 50% to bring it in line with other groups that are entitled to a reduction in the council tax. If you live with your partner, you are required to pay the full council tax, but if you're a single person, you only get a 25% deduction. I think that's unfair. Why are we paying just 25%, we've got one income coming in the house? Most households nowadays have two incomes, so please support this.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I'd agree with this. As, living on my own, my income, you know, when it gets to winter, you know, you've got your gas on, you've got your heating on, you've got your wages coming in. By the time you've paid out your council tax, your gas, your rent and everything else, you're left with a little bit. I can remember this winter, my gas bill come to like £179 a month, that's my gas and electric. I've got all this to pay out and my wages coming in and I've got one wage and you're thinking I need to still put food in the house, I need this, I need that and sometimes you're like I need to pay my council tax, I need to pay my TV licence and I say sometimes to my girlfriend, I said, I know you don't live with me, can I borrow 50 quid. She goes, you should be able to do that on yourself. I said yes, but you forget I just got my money coming in what I earn and sometimes I need to do a bit of overtime to cover that, so I'm not going into my overdraft and with our company, we're fighting at the moment, we do this stupid 44 hours, 33 hours, because they say on a Sunday how I work, because we work Friday, Saturday, Sunday and a Monday, our shift overlaps, you know, a new week of HR, so HR from a Sunday to a Saturday, so if we're running a weekend, they pay us 33 hours, so to me that's horrible. So when you're on low wage, for one month at 33 hours, you know, I get, say one month and at 33 I get £350 a week, so out of that £350 that week I've got to pay my rent, council tax, water, my TV licence will come in between that as well and then I've got my car insurance on that, the wear and tear on your car if you need to and you think, if I had that little bit of help, you know, it'd just give me support, because I'm new to all this as well.

I had to go from living with my mum into a one bed flat and it was going into that big old world but, you know, getting 25% is a little help but, you know, if you had a partner there, her wage coming in as well, if she was working, so you've got that extra bit of wage, but when you're on your own, you've only got your wage to cover you, so if you get in the winter time, it can be a nightmare and I've known people at our factory are doing sometimes two days' overtime. We're not allowed to go over 60 hours, because then there's time regulations, but sometimes people do it because they need money to go in that house or their flat, you know, to keep yourself warm, keep food on the plate, keep them going and, you know, it can be horrible. As a single person, you think I want, my washing machine's packed up, I can't afford that because I've got all of my bills coming out, how do you, you know, it's so hard. Please support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs): I'll try to keep this together. Five years ago, I lost my husband in a motorcycle accident. He went on a lads holiday, on a biking holiday to France and didn't come home. As well as going through grief, you have bills to pay and when you're half of two incomes coming into a house and then all of a sudden you've got one and you're going through grief, the last thing you need to worry about is your bills. I went from paying 50% council tax, because we shared the bills, to paying 75%. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Alan Scott – Branch 415 (Park Cakes, Bolton): Hi, comrades. I'm here to support, but I'm only here to say we should campaign to scrap it altogether, right. It's an unfair tax on us all. Just scrap it, scrap it, scrap it.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Speaking on behalf of the EC. We'd ask you to support the motion, for all the reasons that you've heard in this room today. I mean, the young lady's pointed out her plight, the gentleman before has pointed out his plight. I mean, obviously I volunteered to speak on this, I thought yes, you know, I'll have some of that, you know, I'm a single man, I live between two properties, but obviously, you know, there's a serious side to this, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Unanimous, thank you very much. 45.

45

Branch 580

That this Conference agrees absent parents have some kind of legal support so they can see their child/children. No parent should be stopped from seeing their child because they cannot afford to get a solicitor

Sister Ruth Stevenson – Branch 580 (Greggs): Morning. That this Conference agrees absent parents have some kind of legal support so they can see their child. No parent should be stopped from seeing children just because they cannot afford a solicitor. When a relationship breaks down, the consequences of this can become heartbreaking when children are involved.

The birth mother will nearly always have parental rights for their child. It's not fair and in some cases one parent refuses visiting rights for the other, it further damages the health and well-being of an already emotional child and can devastate the parent who can no longer see them. To fight this, parents have to go through the courts, which can have financial implications and keep loved ones apart for even longer. So we ask for your support that some sort of legal aid is provided to help them. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: I spoke a bit about my son yesterday and his problems. One of his problems is his ex-partner with his twins, won't let him see the kids. He can't afford the fees that a solicitor charges, to get to see those children. Funnily enough and suddenly, she wants to take the kids to Spain. Oh, you can see the kids, John, you just need to sign this bit of paper that says I can take them out of the country on holiday. Well, that's okay then, I'll sign it, because I want to see my kids. Four weeks later, back, wants to see the kids, no, no, I've changed my mind, but thanks for letting me go on holiday with them. So, you can understand the state of mental health of my son obviously and it's like this power that one parent can have over the other parent to stop them seeing their children, because they can't get the help they need. It's damn right, just support this motion please.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I support this motion. As a child growing up, I was 10 years old when my mum and dad separated and as a child, as a growing adult, you know, I needed my father, but because of all this thing, my dad was far away, my dad lived up in Derbyshire so I never had that support. He couldn't come to see us, so from say 10 years old until I was about 17 – 18, I got in contact with my dad and all that, but I was 18, now I go and see him every, he's on the end of the 'phone when I need him, everything else, but as a teenager growing up, I've lost all that from my father and my dad's lost that, he never had support, you know, when you're growing up, oh dad, I've got this problem, my mum had to do it and I had a friend down the road who was like my father figure, but my dad lost that and growing up, now I say to my dad, I go you're there but like he says son, I've lost, you know, when you're from 10 years old to 18, that's the time my kid's growing up, I've lost and we had my sister and my younger brother, he was even like, at the time, he was six years old, so he's even lost more, but as a kid growing up, it affected me as a kid, heartbreaking.

You know, when your parents are separating and you're growing up, you go mum, what's going on? Oh, I can't explain to you, you won't understand, you know, it's heartbreaking, you know, you're crying and saying I want my dad and she goes oh, it's nothing to do with you, it's between me and your dad and it's like, now as I've got older, my dad's explained, because being in the Royal Navy, you know, he was going back and forwards abroad and all that and he goes our marriage, he goes, your mum knew what we were marrying into, but now they did get better friends before my mum passed away, but like my dad said, you know, at the end of the day for my kid's thing, he's lost that, you know. He said as a parent, that's your kids and he goes, you lose from like 10 years old to 18 and like my brother from six to 18, he goes, that's heartbreaking in a father, when you can't see your kids, if they fell over and hurt their leg and he goes your mum sorted that, he goes, I only know if you fell over and you're in hospital or something like that, broken arm or something like that. He goes, it's heartbreaking when you get that 'phone call. So, please support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): I totally support this motion. I went through it. It's heartbreaking and today I still feel I can't see my kids. Not only do you have to have the finance to do it, you also pay child maintenance on top, yes? Nine years, I still suffer. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council. We'd like to ask Conference to support this motion. Basically the first point is when these wranglings happen, the child's welfare suffers. I think the gentleman pointed out there that obviously they're caught in the middle of all of this. Now, we can all look in this room and say right, we'll get up and stand here and say oh, it's the father, it's that bloke who's climbing up Big Ben, trying to get access to his son because he can't afford his legal bills. There's two sides to this, because my partner's daughter had the same problem and he took the child from the mother. Sixty grand into this and she's got it back on track, £60,000 in an 18 month period. So I'm going to ask you to support this motion, because it's extortion. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. We're going to do composite 3. Just to remind everybody, the composites are at the back of the book, on page, this one's on Page 14 and this is Branch 558 and 405, okay. I know, but I've still got to read it out as it is. I have to do it, because it's been passed by Standing Orders and you accepted the report at the time.

Composite 3

That this Conference agrees That the Bakers Union Offers support to Kim Johnson's MP, Joint Enterprise Significant Contribution Bill and give continued support to JENGBA's substantial injustice private members bill.

Original motions: 46 (Branch 558) and 47 (Branch 405)

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Chair, EC, Delegates and comrades. Moving this motion, on behalf of Jan Cunningham, who can't be here for a very good reason, she's standing against our local Labour MP, Lisa Nandy, so good luck to Jan. That this Conference agrees that the Bakers Union offer support to Kim Johnson, MP and the Joint Enterprise Significant Contribution Bill and give continued support to JENGBA Substantial Injustice Private Members' Bill. This is to support, Private Members Bill, supporting the JENGBA Organisation, that stands for Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by Association. It is a massive miscarriage of justice that this country's carrying out. I explain it like this, your kid goes out with a group of friends, they separate, your kid is somewhere else, but she's been part of that, they've been part of this group and a couple from that group end up in a fight, somebody dies and they get done for murder. They all get done for murder, everybody who was in the original group. They know from CCTV that there's only this small section of the original group, but they do them all and they all get done for the maximum sentence, so there are hundreds and hundreds of kids languishing in jail who are innocent of any crime. Please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded, is it? Formally seconded, thank you very much. For those that can't remember what the issue was is that it was, for whatever reason, it's been composited as two different Branches, but it came from the same Branch, but somehow it's managed to get done as two different Branches, but it was put to the Conference and you did accept it, so I have to accept it as it's written. So my rules, it says the way it works. So I just wanted to make that clear, because obviously that's what Mark was going to raise with you.

Conference, just on this particular motion, when this motion was put in, obviously it was going through the processes and through Parliament at the time, earlier in the year, so it's actually happened already. Now you passed a motion last year to support this, you know, to help get it to that stage where Kim Johnson was going to obviously support it in Westminster, so we have already done this and obviously currently now there is nothing going on in Westminster because there is no Parliament, so we would ask Conference to support it, because we've already done it and obviously, you know, it was based on last year's motion and the fact that you passed the support for JENGBA last year, but obviously this would have been an updated one as well when Jan came I think, which would have explained exactly what happened when Kim Johnson raised it in Westminster. So the Executive would ask you to support the motion.

Okay, those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you very much. Motion 48.

48

Branch 390

Around 1.52 million people worked in the adult social care sector in England in 2022/23. This is more than in the NHS. Around a quarter of the workforce were on zero-hours contracts, including 54% of home care workers. The concern is that care workers are not paid enough for their hard work. Using their personal car and phone to work is not considered when they get paid. The mileage given is far less than what petrol costs to drive from house to house. The time given to drive to house to house is also not enough. Each visit to a service user's house is paid for by the minute. If all tasks are complete workers must stay until all the time is up for the call. For example, if a visit is for 30 minutes and the tasks completed takes 15 minutes, workers must wait until the extra 10-15 minutes in order to get paid the full amount. This Conference agrees that this state of affairs is not good enough. Zero hours contracts should be banned, as per previous Conference motions, and the time taken to travel between clients should be paid. There should also be a mileage allowance that covers both fuel and vehicle depreciation at market rates.

Sister Amanda Bailey – Branch 390 (Manor, Stoke): General Secretary, hiding in the corner, Mr President, Delegates. Around 1.52 million people worked in the adult social care sector in England in 2022/23, this is more than in the NHS. Around a quarter of the workforce were on zero-hours contracts, something we don't agree with, including 54% of home care workers. The concern is that care workers are not paid enough for their hard work.

Using their personal car and ‘phone to work is not considered when they get paid. The mileage given is far less than what petrol costs to drive from house to house. The time given to drive to house to house is also not enough. Each visit to a service user’s house is paid for by the minute. If all tasks are complete, workers must stay until the time is up for the end of the call. For example, if a visit is 30 minutes and the tasks completed take 15 minutes, workers must wait until the extra 10 – 15 minutes, in order to get paid the full amount. This Conference agrees that this state of affairs is not good enough. Zero- hours contracts should be banned, as per previous Conference motions and the time taken to travel between clients should be paid. There should also be a mileage allowance that covers both fuel and vehicle depreciation at market rates. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Agree with most of the sentiments of what the previous speaker has just said, but obviously that call for that client, if it’s for 30 minutes, that client is paying for 30 minutes. Now, I went through this with my mother a long time ago and she had carers coming in. They were scheduled to be there for a certain time, they’d nip in, you okay?, make her a quick sandwich and a cup of tea and out they went. She was paying for that service and she was getting swindled left, right and centre because they weren’t staying there. I’d go round after work, that sandwich was still there, the cup of tea was still there, you know, nothing had altered, they’d go in again, similar thing and I just feel for the clients that are being ripped off left, right and centre, because people are rushing to try to get back home to their own families and stuff.

So I agree with the sentiments of what she’s saying about the travelling and stuff, but come on, we can’t go in work and say we’re going to be there for eight hours and walk out after six and say well, actually, my job’s done for the day, I’m going. So, you know, I do believe that some carers are really taking the mickey out of the clients, so we need to be careful with that. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? Michael. It’s a nice shirt that, mate. I did like the ducks.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): We would urge you to vote for this motion, please. I did a little bit of research into this and the care industry in the UK, it’s worth 55.7 billion. Something like 81% of all the workers in it are female. A lot of them are on zero-hours contracts, they’re on the National Living Wage. It’s a shocker, the whole thing is terrible, 75% of them are not even paid the travelling time to go between clients. You’ve got people who are being underpaid, undervalued, overworked and then the companies are stealing money from them, it’s absolutely terrible. One of the things that follows through from the way these people are being treated, the turnover rate is 28% in a year, that’s how many people they’re losing because of the T&Cs that they’re working under. According to an October 2023 report, there were 152,000 vacant posts for care workers. It’s just not good enough, we need to give these people some support. So, please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I’m just, Julie, sorry, I’m just checking, you didn’t oppose that, did you? Yes, but you weren’t opposing, were you? It’s only so I know whether I’m giving a right to reply, that’s all, just checking. Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s unanimous, thank you very much. Motion 49.

49

Branch 459

That this Conference agrees that Dentists should be able to charge a fee for patients who do not turn up for the planned appointments please support

Brother Michael Redshaw – Branch 459: Platform, Delegates. That this Conference agrees that dentists should be able to charge a fee for patients who did not turn up for their planned appointments. How many times do we go to visit the dentist and see how many hours have been lost, due to people not turning up for their appointments, stopping genuine patients from doing so? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Just saying to Sean, me and him between us, it’s not right when the teeth are apart from us falsies and we’re the first ones up for the dentists, go on lads. Right, this isn’t really a [unclear], just a question.

On the wording of it, it says that this Conference agrees that dentists should be able to charge a fee for patients. Well, mine already does, so I'm just questioning what we're trying to achieve here, because if the law already allows them to charge, what are we trying to change here? Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): Also here to oppose this motion. I think it's ridiculous, you know, we get charged enough to see the dentist, you know, without having to pay if we miss an appointment. There's a reason why some people miss appointments. I want to know does it work both ways, so when the dentist sends me a text beforehand and cancels my appointment, are they going to pay me? I don't think so, so I'm sorry I oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Fees, really and it just isn't dentists. Fees to use the NHS. I spoke the other day about there's a plan to destroy the NHS and all the services in it. One of the plans that comes up is to get us used to making, paying fees, paying fees, extra fees if you don't come up. It's already been shown, countless documents have shown that when you pay a fee, fine somebody for not turning up for an appointment, you then have to investigate, you then have to investigate whether they had a genuine reason or not. Countless studies have shown again and again that this puts an extra charge on the NHS that will see it collapse and that's their plan. They want to see the NHS go.

That's why they, you're hearing constant talks, well, shouldn't we pay a fee to go and see the GP and it'll be a minimum fee one day and I guarantee straight down the line it'll become bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger. It's all part of a plan, they want to destroy it, they want to destroy it. They want to destroy it because they've always hated from cradle to grave, they've always hated it, because all they want is things they can take and make money out of us and keep us poor, keep us under the jackboot, that's what they want. Please oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Obviously I'm here to oppose it. You don't see poor dentists, sorry, you don't. Now, Mark's talking about dental treatment in this room. I need some new railings putting in, but the point is, in my naivety I moved to Pudsey four years ago because my son was at Leeds University. I came out of the Rothwell NHS dentist thinking I'd get another NHS dentist, four years down the line I can't get a dentist and my railings need doing, so please oppose this.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Opposing this motion. NHS dentistry, dentistry full stop in this country is in a shambolic state. It's got nothing to do with people not turning up for appointments. It's the prototype of what they're going to do with GPs, what is happening with GPs. Please oppose this motion and we should be focussing on correcting the problems of dentistry and health in this country, not penalising and complaining about people not turning up for appointments, that's not the reason this place is falling apart. Thank you, please oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I'd oppose this motion as well. At the end of the day, when I go to a dentist, say I'm having a filling done, I have the filling done, go out and they say oh, you need another two more fillings, oh okay, go into reception, they said you pay £153, because I'm a private dentist, he goes, £153 plus we need 20% off the next appointment and that, I go, why's that, she goes, you need to do that, we need that payment now, 20% off the next appointment, so if I didn't turn up, if there was a cancellation because you didn't turn up, they've already took my money anyway, took 20% of my money, so if there was a cancellation fee, if that was added to that, so that'd be a bit more money, you know. I'm waiting for an hour, I've got a wisdom tooth what they said last October is dead, it's going to cost me £155 to take out. I've still not had it out because at the end of the day, when I rung them up they said oh, we need 20% of that money before we can have it out and I go at the moment, because of the way the climate is changing, I can't afford to have, pay £155 to have that tooth out at the moment, it's not causing me any problem, but I haven't got the money to pay 20% of that bill now to have it out maybe next week or the week after. At the end of the day, my bills come first. Unless I've been made to pay, then I'll have to do it, but at the moment my bills come first because I need to keep a roof on my head and the kind of thing is, they're already charging you anyway because you've got to pay 20% in advance before your next appointment, so I oppose this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs): Here also to oppose this motion. I had a NHS dentist, my dentist ‘phoned me to say that by the end of the month I wouldn’t have a dentist any more, I wasn’t signed up to them, as the NHS dentist was leaving, so I’ve been trying and trying and trying, there are no NHS dentists in my area, I’m going to have to pay private. So as far as I’m concerned, if somebody doesn’t turn up to a private dentist and he can’t fill his Lamborghini right to the top with his fuel, I’m all for it. Oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110: Morning, Conference. Obviously everyone’s stolen my thunder again, haven’t they? What a result, but honestly, I mean you’ve only got to look like they’ve said about the NHS dentistry, there ain’t none, they’re going, it’s privatisation isn’t it and actually to be charged for not turning up, people want to be treated, so the people who don’t make appointments, there ain’t none, they’re all going to go as far as I’m concerned and to put a tax on it, because that’s what it basically is, it is, privatisation is a scam on the NHS. Please support the motion, oh, oppose the motion, sorry.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: How did you do in the singing last night? Okay, right of reply.

Brother Michael Redshaw – Branch 459: Right to reply. Can I obviously remit the motion? I take on board everything everybody’s said, but like you say, [unclear] get to the dentist.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. As you will notice, Conference, we’ve been joined by our next speaker, so you can close your Agendas for now. We’re really pleased that actually, to actually pass on our thanks and gratitude for the work that Shelly does. Shelly works at the Health & Safety part of the TUC and obviously we’ve talked a bit about Covid this week. One of the things that enabled us to do so much work in our bakeries during Covid was the work that Shelly did, I mean the resources that Shelly provided alongside Hazards, which enabled us to make sure that we protected as many of our members as possible and she did some phenomenal work from the role that she performs in the TUC. Obviously, you know, I want to pay personal tribute and on behalf of our members for that support you gave us during Covid, Shelly, because obviously without those resources, we probably would have lost more members and more members would have fallen sick, so we’re really grateful for that work that you did and we’re really pleased for the stuff that you’ve been doing through the UHSS and all the campaigns that you’ve been involved in and obviously I know you have another role that you perform as well, which has been bringing about, you know, this issue about the Gaza situation, which has been absolutely phenomenal in bringing and organising people to call for an end to the violence, call for an end to the humanity crisis that we’re seeing in Palestine and I’d like to thank you for doing that as well, because I know that you obviously get a lot of attacks personally for some of the work that you do in calling for humanity, but obviously, you know, from a health and safety point of view, you know, I thank you very much because the work that you did was absolutely phenomenal and the work that you do, we really do appreciate. So, Conference, please give a warm welcome to Shelly Asquith from the TUC.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Shelly Asquith, TUC, addresses Conference

Thanks a lot for that, Ian. Thanks to you and Sarah for inviting me here today. How do I change the slides, is there a clicky device or anything like that, or do I just say next slide? Okay, so it’s that lot where the Covid TV things, isn’t it, I’m going to be, Jonathan [unclear] whatever he’s called, next slide please. Okay, anyway, thank you for having me. It’s my first time at the Bakers Union Conference and a pleasure to be here. I’ve heard many times that it’s a really brilliant Union Conference, so I was excited to come up. You won’t know me, but I feel like I know many of you now, having seen the videos of your singing and dancing at the karaoke last night, so I hope you’re all feeling alright this morning. I’ll start by telling you a little bit about myself then.

Next slide, please. So one of the first Union campaigns I was involved with, we were trying to get proper sick pay, we were trying to get the minimum wage raised to a real living wage for some of the colleagues that I worked with at the time and maybe a bit of a giveaway of when it was, because that was what the minimum wage was at the time, but the way that we got colleagues into the Union to begin with wasn’t actually about, through talking about low pay or talking about sick pay, it was about securing a space to get changed into uniforms and PPE, personal protective equipment, before the start of a shift and at the end of it, which was especially important for women colleagues, because it was about having a sense of personal dignity, having a sense of safety when coming in and leaving the

workplace and showing first of all that the Union could win on that, to secure that space for them, it then gave colleagues the confidence to get behind the Union in a collective call for a 15% pay rise, which for some people new to the Union, new to organising, new to the country, that felt like a pretty scary demand to be making to your employer, but winning that welfare provision built their confidence and they did go on to Unionise, to vote to strike and to win a 15% pay rise. So for me, I often look back and reflect on that and think that is usually the way that people get into the Union, it's through health and safety, it's often, I think, the kind of gateway to the wider Union organising agenda, it's the basic welfare health and safety provisions in our workplaces.

Next slide please and because when we say Unions make work safe, it isn't just a slogan, it's something we can back up with evidence. Now just one example, we know in particular there's a Health & Safety Union Rep premium, so where Unions are organising, they've got recognised Health & Safety Representatives, we have statistically lower rates of illness and injury compared to workplaces that don't have those Reps and I notice you've got motion 34 here, calling for more Reps to train as Health & Safety Reps, which I wholeheartedly welcome. In 2020, the TUC undertook a study, during the Covid pandemic, on safety procedures in workplaces in your sector, in the food and drinks sector and we were comparing workplaces that had Safety Reps and those that didn't and we found that in the workplaces with Union Safety Reps, they were 20% more likely to have the right PPE, they were 23% more likely to have a workplace risk assessment and they were 40% more likely to have had that risk assessment shared with the wider workforce, so that everybody knew what steps the management was supposed to be taking. It sounds pretty basic, but we have to recognise that when there isn't a Union in the room, a lot of these things are falling by the wayside.

Next slide, please. What we've also seen in the last year in Britain is that health and safety matters enough for members to walk off the job over it. I think often what we see in the headlines is people taking strike action over pay, but actually a lot of the time people are taking strike action over health and safety as well and where management fails to recognise safety concerns raised by Unions, we've had workers walking out over asbestos exposure, over long hours causing fatigue, over access to sick pay after somebody was injured in the workplace and in all of these cases, the workers have won.

Next slide, please. Now every two years we undertake a big survey of Union Health & Safety Reps, we survey thousands of Safety Reps from all different Unions, all across the country and we ask a lot of questions, but one of the most important ones we ask is, what are the major health and safety risks in your workplace, what are the kind of concerns that members are coming to you and complaining about and asking you to take action over? This is what came back in the most recent survey. Reps say that stress is the most common health and safety concern for their members and just below stress come some of the most common causes of stress, things like bullying, harassment, working long hours, overwork, big workloads that are unmanageable, but unlike physical risks like machinery, slippery floors, toxic chemicals, how many employers have got stress in their risk assessments, now many are putting in place control measures to prevent work-related stress and how many are doing that with the risks like violence, like sexual harassment, other psycho-social hazards? The answer is not many, hardly any at all and we can't just sit round and wait for them to do it of course, as with any issue we've got to force them to take action.

Next slide, please. So going forward, that has to be something that we are collectively pushing for as a bare minimum preventative step. We know that this is overwhelmingly the most common health and safety hazard and on here, on the left is the HSE, Health & Safety Executive's official statistics. You can see that within the last few years alone, the numbers of reported occupational stress cases are spiralling. So we could get a bit of a crisis in workplaces, a stress pandemic if you will and because people aren't being physically injured, because employers aren't receiving, read all reports, they're simply not doing anything about it. They can often palm it off as stress because of what's going on at home. No, they're stressed because of what's happening at work. So on the right here is a campaign that we'll be launching in the next few months called Assess for Stress. We're going to be piling pressure on as many employers as possible to introduce stress risk assessments and take meaningful action to protect their workforce rather than offer them things that help after they've already reached that point of mental health crisis. We're also going to be trying to mobilise as many Health & Safety Reps as possible to carry out stress inspections, so like you'd normally do a walk around looking for physical hazards, how can you inspect the workload, the hours that people are working, the kind of interactions they're having with customers perhaps that are causing them stress and then what can we do about it.

Next slide, please and if we don't get action from employers, we take our own and this is just to emphasise again that this is a cause that we can and do take industrial action over. Plenty of Unions have called industrial action over stress and its causes, be it the long hours, the high workloads, the culture of harassment at work and so while we campaign and negotiate and influence safety procedures with the management, we also don't shy away from the most effective weapon that we've got.

I want to touch on a few more health and safety issues while I'm here. Next slide, please. The first which Ian mentioned just now of course is Covid, which hasn't gone away and it's really the long-term effects that are still very much with thousands of working people. So just a few things to bring to your attention. First of all, the Trade Union Congress is a core participant in the Covid Public Inquiry. We continue to feed in workers' experiences of the pandemic and especially how our so-called key workers were left exposed to the virus without the proper protections and advising on what needs to happen in future pandemics. Secondly, we're still calling for the government to take the advice of its own Industrial Injuries Advisory Council to categorise long Covid as an occupational disease for those who are exposed to it in their line of work. This would mean that thousands of workers who are now off on long term sick will be able to be, able to claim for and be entitled to disabled benefit, which would massively improve their quality of life but so far the government has failed and refused to do that and finally if this is an issue that you're dealing with as a Rep, if you've got members who are affected by long Covid in some way, you can check out the guidance that we've published on our website. It's accessible, it's very thorough, it's got lots of case studies and it's based on a survey we did of thousands of workers' experiences of long Covid.

Next slide, please. The next thing to touch on is the risks that we face inside the buildings that we work in, so we've got a cocktail of hazards there. We've got hundreds of thousands of public buildings still containing asbestos, hundreds of thousands of our homes still contain asbestos, including local authority owned homes, which is the biggest reason why Britain has the highest rates of asbestos cancer of any country in the world, you know, one of the most developed economies and we still have the highest rates of asbestos cancer. Thousands more buildings contain RAAC, I always have to look at this, reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete, no matter how many times I say it it's a mouthful, but as you'll all have heard about it of course in September this year, it led to the closure of hundreds of buildings including many schools, we've still got high rise offices and hospitals fitted with flammable cladding, Grenfell-style cladding, it's still on those buildings, still putting hundreds if not thousands of people at risk everyday. So many buildings have got poor ventilation, the list goes on. So we've got on our hands a building safety crisis as well, causing thousands of unnecessary cases of illness every year and at any moment a school, a hospital, made of that unstable concrete could collapse and kill hundreds of people and yet again, we've got a government that is refusing to remove or improve our buildings, refusing to take action. So we've launched a campaign on this and of course this is going to need to live on under the next government as well, you can get involved in that and write to your MPs and candidates, but we've also got some really easy to access learning resources on this topic aimed at Reps. We've also launched a brand new two-day course on all things building safety, which is aimed at Safety Reps, completely free to do, so if any of you are interested in skilling-up and learning a bit more about the risks in buildings and the action that you can take, then do feel free to sign up for that.

Next slide, please. There's so many other issues that I could talk about, sexual harassment, working in the heat are two really important issues for the Union and I'm really pleased to be working with your Union on those issues, but I don't have lots of time, but I'm very happy to provide any information on any other health and safety issue that we are taking action over, but on the subject of Health & Safety Reps, we need more of them, we need many, many more of them, because we know that in the next 10 – 15 years, tens of thousands of Health & Safety Reps across the country, across all different Unions, are going to be retiring, they're going to be leaving the workforce and leaving workplaces unprotected. We actually currently have twice as many Health & Safety Reps over the age of 60 than under the age of 35 and they've all got this wealth of experience, fantastic, you know, skills that they've built up over the years. We need that to be passed down, we need people taking new members, younger members under their wings and getting them trained up and ready for that role as well. So we've got a bit of an existential crisis until that happens.

I want to just finish by encouraging you to encourage other people to become a Health & Safety Rep, even if you've already got a different Rep role, take the health and safety training as well. You get more powers, it's a much more exciting role. I think people think you walk around with a clipboard and it's all very boring and jobsworthy, but it is the most powerful role. You can shut down the workplace and you get to work on some really exciting issues.

We're running training courses designed specifically for young Union members, we're doing some for women and for black members as well, because we know that those demographics are under-represented amongst Health & Safety Reps, but we are targeting any Union member that's interested in becoming a Health & Safety Rep. We're doing that in order to try and recruit and train as many Health & Safety Reps as possible, but essentially to protect the future generation of workers because as I say, we know that lots of people are going to be retiring in the coming years and we have to replenish.

Next slide, please. As I say, there's a lot more that I could talk about, but I just want to leave it there, with an invitation to join our TUC Health & Safety WhatsApp Group, it's an alerts group so it's only me posting, it's not lots and lots of chat all day long, if you want to keep in touch with things that we've got in terms of campaigns on health and safety, events that we're running, free training, conferences for Reps, new reports that we publish, anything like that, you can scan a QR code and it will take you straight to the WhatsApp Group. Please do subscribe to the quarterly Hazards magazine, it is absolutely the bible for any Union activist with an interest in health and safety. Sign up to our TUC education webinars and courses, they are all free and they're all listed on our website. We've got a whole range of things from the menopause to mental health, to building safety and things that aren't health and safety as well and lastly just to say a massive thank you to all of you guys for all of the work that you do year-round protecting workers. Thanks to your Union for inviting me today. I'm very happy, I don't know if we've got time for questions or anything like that and to stick around for a while today, so thanks a lot for having me. Solidarity.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I'm really pleased you mentioned that about questions, because I was going to ask you that when you sat down. I'm just going to take a few questions, if you've got any questions? So you've got an opportunity to ask Shelly some questions. Obviously just come down to the front.

Brother Paul Ormby – Branch 357 (Hovis, Nottingham): I want to know how long, how do you know if you've got long Covid?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, that's a question and a half, isn't it? Is there any other questions, any other questions? You know what it is, Shelly, unfortunately we're getting towards the tea break and I think they're all

Sister Shelly Asquith, TUC: No, it's good to be off the hook, to be honest. If that's the only question, it's quite a simple one. Look, when it comes to diagnoses of any kind, whether it's long Covid, any other occupational health issue, we're not the doctors, we're not the medical professionals. We need people to be referred to Occupational Health or to their GP to make those diagnoses and they then need to come to the workplace with that diagnosis. I think often we confuse ourselves a little bit when people come to us with like stress, mental health problems and we try and diagnose things. We've got to remember that we're here to prevent them becoming sick and injured, we're not there to diagnose it after the event. We also need to make sure that our employers are referring people to proper medical professionals, not the Occupational Health Practitioners that are there just to sign them off and try to get them out the workplace as quick as possible. So I would say you don't know if they've got long Covid or not, but somebody else should know and they should be getting that proper diagnosis and it's from that point onwards that you can then try and get them the support that they need.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: Good morning. I'd like to just ask you a little bit about the TUC courses, the online ones etc., because in England obviously we've had our funding pulled by a Fascist government that's stopped us training our members, fortunately it's got a little bit more leeway with the government up there and we can run courses, but a lot of people here still want to know where they can train and get extra and obviously the TUC are running these courses, we'd just like to know sort of what we can get out of it, you know, to help our members please.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Shelly Asquith, TUC: Yes, a great question. I think you're referring to the government's cuts to Unionlearn there, which is an absolute travesty and we obviously will be campaigning to try and bring that funding back, but we do still offer a whole range of services. We've got TUC tutors in colleges across the country, running courses in classrooms. We also offer a lot of courses online. If you want to see the full offer, just Google TUC Education Courses and you'll be able to find them. There's a lot of the courses that are starting in the Autumn Term that we've not uploaded yet to the website, but we will be running those as well and you can also find other kind-of non-educational events on our events listing page, so things like conferences, where you don't get a formal qualification or diploma, but they still kind of give you that bite-size sense of different issues, so yes, there's loads there. We also run kind-of every fortnight a webinar often on health and safety issues, like Employment Law update, all sorts of different things. All of that is free, you know, so please do make use of it.

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

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Executive Guest: Yes, just a question relevant to this industry. I've recently had some health issues and I was surprised because I'd been a runner, I've kept myself fit all my life and I've been diagnosed with a form of emphysema

So what I'd like to say is, the only thing I can put it down to is dust, not so much flour dust as well as we have despatch workers, you go into the back, it was something I campaigned of all the time at work, they'd come in, they'd do a couple of weeks, clean the floors and then within a couple of weeks, you'd put a pallet down and the dust would come up and the only thing I can think what's caused this is the dust that I've breathed over the years, so just a question.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Do you want to ask your next question, Andy and then I'm going to finish with Andy anyway.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Just to welcome our guest. A specific question on the baking and food manufacturing side, about temperature, because there's no high temperature maximum given. Any advice for members etc when the temperature gets excessive, what they can do? Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Shelly Asquith, TUC: I didn't catch your name, but thank you for sharing, Dave, thank you for sharing about that. I have to say I don't know much about emphysema and I don't know if there's a recognised link between dust and emphysema, but if there is, then there are certain things that you can pursue and claim for, but it might be worth looking into that and I'd be happy to have a conversation and see what we can do there, but I know there's obviously all sorts of health issues related to the conditions that you guys are working in, particularly if you're exposed to dust commonly. There's a lot more that we can do to push for good compensation and recognition for a lot of those illnesses that are not yet recognised as being linked and Andy, great question about maximum working temperatures. You're right, we've got, currently employers have got guidance on what the minimum working temperature should be, but not the maximum and as we know with things hotting up every year, it's only getting worse, more and more workers are being exposed to working in very hot temperatures, both inside and outside. We're campaigning for the introduction of a maximum working temperature.

Our current position is that when it gets to 24 degrees, employers should start to take steps to reduce the indoor temperature and at 30 degrees people should not be in the workplace, unless they're in a workplace that is already one where employers are giving them suitable protective equipment, it's already a workplace that is known for being hot, you know, they're a firefighter or they're working in a furnace for example, but otherwise that should be a trigger to stop the job. Really pleased that we're working with the Heatstrike Campaign. I've been told that there's some leaflets over there that you can take away, really fantastic campaign raising awareness of this and calling for people to take action at a certain point in the summer when it gets to a very, very hot temperature. We need to be pushing for legislation on this, but we know that it's not ultimately legislation which protects us, it's Unions taking action, so the more that we can get agreements with employers for action to be taken when work gets hot, but also be willing to just using powers like Section 44 for example, to walk out of the workplace when it's too hot, because it is a health hazard, it's a concentration hazard, it's all sorts of things that it can be linked to, especially if you're working in hot weather repeatedly, so yes, excellent, excellent point, really good campaign and proud to be working with it and I hope that we'll see some inspiring action that causes employers to think again this summer.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. Shelly, are you staying for a bit?

Sister Shelly Asquith, TUC: Yes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You are, right, so you'll be coming back after the tea break, which is great, that's great, if you are. So, in the meantime then, we have got a bit of a presentation. General Secretary.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Shelly, thank you ever so much for coming. I'm not going to say much more, the National President introduced you and covered everything that I would say, but all speakers that come to our Conference get a little bag of goodies, so in here there's a pewter baker for you and some of the products that our fantastic members have made. So thank you ever so much.

Sister Shelly Asquith, TUC: That's very exciting.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: I hope it's not too heavy, but yes.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, back in here for quarter past. How's that, how generous am I? I'll tell you.

[BREAK]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, is everybody back in the room? Can you take your seats, please. Thank you very much.

Conference, yesterday you'll remember we sent a message of Solidarity to Barnet, yes, please, quiet, we sent a message to the member health workers in Barnet Council who have been on strike and they sent us one back saying, let me just find it, that they really appreciate the message of Solidarity and they sent us this on behalf of the strikers: "your heartfelt Solidarity and response from your Delegates brought tears to our eyes. Many thanks on behalf of the Barnet strikers". So, thank you very much, Conference.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

And before we go back to the Agendas, we've got at least one presentation that I know we're going to make, well, we've got a few presentations that we are going to make, so I'm going to invite the General Secretary to talk and present.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: For Delegates that haven't been before, one of the nicest parts of Conference is being able to award some of our activists with Awards for the work that they've done over the last 12 months. We put our notifications to Branches and ask people to nominate, you know, outstanding, everybody's outstanding, but extra outstanding people for our national Awards. We have the Dermey Best National Health & Safety Award, the Olive Molloy Young Member Award, the Pat Rowley Organising Award, the Unionlearner Rep and last year we did a membership competition, so we will be doing the Award for the winner of that as well. Then what happens is we get these nominations in and the EC have to sit and deliberate who to pick out of the fantastic nominations that we get and it's not always easy and we sometimes have tied, we've done a couple of ties, haven't we, in the last couple of years, but it's really nice to be able to recognise the outstanding work of Reps. So, could somebody on hand with a camera please, thanks Nick, I'll just volunteer you there because you're at the front. I will move to present the first Award and I'm going to ask Shelly if she'll give us a hand with this, being the health and safety person from the TUC. So the Dermey Best National Health & Safety Award goes to John Owens

[APPLAUSE]

and we did fib at him at the EC. John was put forward for the Health & Safety Award for his tireless work, not only in his Branch but also in the Region where he chairs the Regional Conference and he's obviously on the National Committee and he puts a lot of time and energy in supporting our members and has done for many years. So it's our absolute pleasure to award John with the Dermey Best, the first Dermey Best National Health & Safety Award.

[APPLAUSE]

John didn't know that he was getting it, because he left the room and we had the discussions and we told him somebody else was getting it.

[LAUGHTER]

The next Award is the Olive Molloy Young Members' Award and for those that, I mean, I don't need to speak about Dermey, because the National President did that in his address, but for those that don't know, Olive Molloy used to be the Chair of Standing Orders for Region 5, a formidable woman, who could hold the room with every word that she spoke and we decided a few years ago, as the National Executive, to call the Young Member Award after Olive and this year's recipient is Shannon Osborne/Osborn (? spelling) from Greggs, Branch 529. Shannon stepped up at her site when there was a couple of issues there and a few of the Reps resigned. She's helped to make sure that all new membership forms are processed and has helped with members, not only at site but in the shops and at QNI, which is Greggs Head Office for those that don't know. She's just completed a Stage 1 course and I know she was definitely thrown in at the deep end a couple of weeks ago when some of the other Reps were on holiday and she got like 270,000 disciplinaries to deal with, so Shannon, please come and receive your Award and Thompsons will

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Do you want to do it down there and then

[APPLAUSE]

That was a good idea by Thompsons to do a photo there, so we'll do yours John, we'll do it again afterwards, alright?

The next Award, for those that are really new, they may not remember Pat Rowley. Pat Rowley, fantastic activist from Region 2, you never didn't see him on a picket line or a march or dancing at Conference, he was always the last person standing on a night-time and the Pat Rowley Organising Award this year goes collectively to Branch 529. The 529 Gosforth Greggs Reps Team, as a collective, made 84 members in 2023 and they made, at the point of the nomination coming in, at the end of April, 33 members so far in 2024.

They've also had ongoing issues with another Trade Union trying to edge in at the National Distribution Centre that the Branch Secretary's been supporting as well as his site to move them back out again, so collectively the Branch Reps from 529, do you want to come and get your Award. Again, from Thompsons, but I think Reuben could, you could get into the photo this time, because it's not a Young Members' Award this one.

[APPLAUSE]

Unfortunately we didn't receive any nominations for Unionlearner Rep this year, which is a real shame, but I think it's clear that we've got some work to do to re-ignite that role after the English funds, as was mentioned earlier, were pulled and the new National Committee, we re-elected two people per Region, much the same as the National Health & Safety Committee last year, are really working hard to get resources together and, you know, signposting people to courses so that we can re-ignite that role and hopefully going forwards we'll have, you know, too many to be able to choose from when we come to Awards.

Our next Award is, you may remember last year at Conference we set you a task, the first one to get 10 members would get an Award and the person that made the most members from Conference to the end of the year would win a prize as well. The first Delegate to make 10 new members after Conference and the person who made the most members in the second half of the year was Bobby Bazra from Allied, West Brom. He absolutely smashed it out of the park. He'd made 27 members by the end of July and 47 members by the end of the year, which is absolutely fantastic.

[APPLAUSE]

So Bobby's receiving a laptop as a prize.

[APPLAUSE]

The, 305 members were made in total across the sites on the back of that, that we could track. Some of you forgot to put your names on the membership forms. So we've agreed as an Executive that we're going to do it again this year. The first person to get to 10 after Conference and the person that makes the most members towards the end of the year will win a prize at next year's Conference. There's some new Delegates, there's some new membership forms around the Conference Hall, remember to put your name on so that we can track them, because that's how Bobby won, he put his name on every single one. So, congratulations Bobby and I look forward to presenting somebody else the prize next year, because he doesn't need two laptops, does he?

Just before we finish, we had a miscellaneous, we had a miscellaneous contact this year when we were doing the Awards. We were approached by a member of Branch 529, Brian Swann, who said the following: "Branch 529 would like to recognise our Branch Secretary, John Martin, for all his commitment he has put in for dealing with issues at our BNDC site. Not only this, but he has been very supportive in reassuring the members at the Gosforth site that we are in a strong position being part of the BFAWU. I would also like to mention John's fantastic charitable work in raising funds for the Greggs Foundation. I would greatly appreciate this if the above point could be mentioned at this year's Conference" and what we've done on the back of that is we've put a certificate together for John, to thank him for his work because, you know, it was a difficult period in time dealing with another Union coming in and poaching our members and he spent a significant amount of time in that site and I know John, who is here, has helped him and supported him, as have the other Reps as well. So we've put a certificate together for John, but he's not here, so when I'm next at site, I'll present the certificate to John and we'll make a bit of a fuss, I might take him some biscuits but yes, thank you to John for everything he's done.

[APPLAUSE]

And thank you to Nick, for stepping in as photographer. That's all the Awards this year.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Well, we'll say thank you if they turn out alright, do you know what I mean? That's alright, you don't have to worry about that. Well, if it makes me look like Brad Pitt, absolutely. He'll get the job next year of being on the film crew. Aye, it's a wonderful thing.

Okay Conference, back to your Agendas please and we are on, where's my helper when I need him? 50? 50, we go on 50 then.

That this Conference agrees that a national tariff should be set for all taxi fares to provide a fair and transparent standard price per mile.

Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Good morning, Mr President, Platform, Delegates. That this Conference agrees that a national tariff should be set for all taxi fares to provide a fair and transparent standard price per mile.

It's a simple idea. Every time you hail for a taxi, you ask the price and where you want to go and they punch in the details into their Sat Nav, which gives a distance, destination and a tariff for that thing, that journey. So potentially the difference for the journey, throughout the city centres and countrysides, so a tariff is also nationally set to amend? for this rule. It's straightforward, it takes you anywhere, takes away any confusion and potential abuse for exploitation. This happened to our party the other day. We went from this village here, from this centre into Stone, we were charged a certain price. When we came back the same evening, before midnight, the price was doubled. We just need it nationalising and setting at the right rate. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 701: In Northern Ireland they've already done this, they've set their rates out. There's three rates. Monday to Friday, 6 – 8, the price for the first mile is £4.20, £1.86 for any additional miles. Rate two, Monday to Thursday, 8 o'clock until 6 in the morning it's working out at £5.10 for the first mile, then £2.00 after and then weekend rates is £5.00 for the first mile and £2.00 after and 3½ for Christmas Day and New Year's Day, so if we can do it, the rest can do it. All taxi fares charge the same price. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Supporting this. What a bloody brilliant simple idea, I've never thought of anything like that. Excellent idea. Everybody knows where they are then. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I support this motion. Thinking about some of the taxi drivers, you have got crooks, taxi drivers out there. My brother is just starting his own business as a taxi driver and like he says, the actual, your local council set a rate, but my brother said, he goes, there is other drivers out there don't use that system, because he goes, by the county, when you get your taxi plate, he goes, your local council, when you apply for your taxi, there's a local taxi rate what's set that he goes, my brother says, there's taxi drivers out there who try and have you because if you've had a few drinks, they'll go for a different, say rate one or rate two, they top their rates up without you even noticing and he goes, we need a national rate so it doesn't matter if you're in one county or another county, it's the same rate through the whole of the UK, like thing, because at the moment it's only set by certain, you know, if it's Stoke County Council, wherever you are, it'll be their local council, but then you've got these crooks out there who try and rip you off. So, support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? Curtis, your debut, mate.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Curtis Tierney – Branch 258 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): First-time speaker.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Regarding taxi fares and standardising rates. I, like many others here, have experienced the extortionate rates often found in standard cabs. As an example, when taking a single route, but in reverse, my return journey was pushing three times as much as the first fare. The excuse was noted as [unclear] rates, due to demand. This coming from Uber. From what I've looked up on standardising taxi fares, they are standardised but only regionally. In line with these findings, the EC is in favour of this motion, breaking away from region by region basis. At the same time, we are in favour of protecting drivers by opting for premium rates to be offered during peak times, which also will be standardised, to stop these businesses fleecing people. I ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Well done, pal. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you very much. That means it's 51. 459, yes, here he comes. Couldn't see, behind the post.

That this Conference agrees that parking charges at NHS Hospitals should be abolished across the country. Please support.

Brother Michael Redshaw – Branch 459: Platform, Delegates. That this Conference agrees that parking charges at NHS hospitals should be abolished across the country. Nobody goes to hospital to go for exercise, walk around the corridors or to make use of the over-priced retail shops.

They go to visit their loved ones who are sick or coming to end of life, so why is it that we have to pay to park? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I'd agree with this motion. When my mum was alive, she had a brain tumour and she was three months in hospital, so every time I tried to go to the hospital, you might spend three hours or even four hours with her in the hospital, intensive care or wherever she was. You drive out there, I can park my car, I might be paying like a £15 - £16 charge to park my car. I'm going to see my mum, who's in hospital, but then you're thinking I've just paid the fuel to get down there, now I've got to pay the car parking charges, just to go and see her. In them days, I put the ticket in the car and I was like, worrying, I better go, mum, I better go because if I'm late at my car, I'm going to get a ticket on my car and I kind of figure like, going, my mum, because she's on her own, she's got no friends or family around her, she's just got herself there, she wants her family around her, but I'm saying I won't come tomorrow, mum, because it costs me about, say if I stay for four hours, it's going to cost me nearly 20 quid or £15. She doesn't want to hear that, but you're like if I come for a whole week, seven days a week, that's going to be a lot of money and I'm thinking I've still got my bills to pay and it's worrying.

There's a lot of people out there in exactly the same situation. You're going down to see your loved ones, you might go down and spend half a day with your parents or your loved ones and you've got to pay your, you know, you're paying that parking charge to pay your car up, where you go in a local supermarket, you might pay £1.25 or £1.80 for an hour and all that, why can't they offer like, if you've got patients in there, free parking? So, support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 252: I'm from Wales, it's actually already free in Wales, so it proves it does work, it does for the NHS. It's easy, you have four hours free parking, if you need additional, you just let the hospital know, with an automatic type as they put in and you can stay there for 24 hours, if it's an emergency. If it works in Wales, it can work throughout the country. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Paul Sweeney – Branch 504: First-time speaking.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

I'm here to support the motion because my wife's mam has ill health. She's had it for over 10 years, she's had sepsis about 20 times and obviously it's not just the cost of the car parking, it's also the travelling all the time. My wife is there on a daily basis, all the time, so I'm here to support the motion. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (Retired Branch): Platform, Delegates. I'm here to support this motion. It wouldn't be so bad if all the money went to the hospitals and to the NHS, but in many cases, as in Wakefield, the money actually goes to a building company called Balfour Beatty, that actually built the hospital and they're still getting all the money from all the parking, so please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Les Bramhall – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool): Just think about it for a minute. People are going to these hospitals across the country, apart from Wales obviously, we've just been told, to visit dying sick relatives. People who are dying and they're looking for money in their pockets or they've got to use a bank card to pay to go and see a sick relative. I think it's an absolute disgrace and not only that, but doctors and nurses have got to pay to park their cars, doctors and nurses who are, you know, looking after people who are dying and really sick. During the pandemic, I think I'm right in saying all the parking charges were suspended during the pandemic. If they can do it during the pandemic, they can damn well do it now and I think it's an absolute disgrace that any one of us in this room visiting a sick relative or dying relative has got to pay for the privilege. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): The Executive want you to support this motion. It's privatisation. They're getting everyone to just pay and pay and pay. We see the NHS as a support system for our health, they see it as real estate. Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you very much. So we must be on 52.

52

Branch 582

That this Conference agrees that inconsiderate, and potentially dangerous, parking around many schools is increasingly causing problems outside the school gates, placing the safety of children and public at great risk. We demand that the Government should legislate that local councils and police authorities should work together to enforce stricter action to provide a far safer environment for everyone concerned.

Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Mr President, Platform, Delegates. That this Conference agrees that the inconsiderate and potentially dangerous parking around many schools is increasingly causing problems outside school gates. We demand that this government or the next government should legislate that local councils and police authorities should work together to enforce a stricter action to provide a far safer environment for everyone concerned. This is surely one problem that we all see in our local areas. It's the inconsiderate and sometimes dangerous actions of parents who insist on dropping their children off as close to the school as possible and some of them even illegally park, creating accidents, hot spots for children, parents, teachers and the general public. Some of them block the roads and exits, creating major concerns for emergency services and all this happens in just a short space of time. We ask that the authorities must work together to solve this problem, to make the roads and entrances to the schools a safer place for everyone concerned. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded, thank you very much. Okay, Rachel.

Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529: Hello? Am I on yet? Oh yes, there I am. Yes, I'm up here to support the motion. From a School Governor point of view, I know it's really frustrating for the school itself, trying to remind parents and whoever uses the school not to park dangerously etc and there's not a lot you can do and I think another point with that is, obviously schools and councils are facing tight budgets, so another thing that ties into it would be lack of funding for lollipop people to obviously help children and parents cross roads safely. I think that, coupled with obviously the dangerous parking, is obviously a recipe for disaster and I know obviously councils can't do much and to be honest, the police can't do much, so it is really frustrating and as a person who takes a child to school now, it is really frustrating trying to push a pushchair past as well, because there's not much room and, I mean, sometimes it's sheer laziness and I am going to say that because where I live, it's two minutes walk to school to take Charlotte. The person in her class, the parent lives literally in the same street, I can see their house from my window and they take the car to school, every single day they take this child to school. Two minutes walk, if that, so I think more needs to be done to encourage people to walk to school as well. Thank you. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: I've just had one kid, I'm here for another one. My daughter works tirelessly at Kirklees College as a tutor. She has my grandson, Robert, he's four and he's in a pre-school, just about to go up to big school as he puts it. Last year, in November, my daughter walked from the college, like she does every day during the week to pick Bobby up and got there and all the white zig-zags were covered in cars, right up to a pedestrian crossing and then after the pedestrian crossing, again you couldn't see the white zig-zags. Now this is a definite no-parking zone, it is not policed and it should be. My daughter picked Bobby up, went to cross across the pedestrian crossing and a speeding car, doing just short of 30, straight into her. In presence of mind, she threw Bobby out of the way, he ended up with a few cuts and bruises, she ended up and she was in a really bad way in hospital with it, but she was lucky, she survived. Many mothers of children and fathers of children crossing them crossings, in these dangerous conditions, don't survive. You see that in national statistics that children die as well and we need to stop this now. You can't have parents and children crossing what should be a safe zone, not a safe zone, because people are just too busy to park a few minutes away rather than parking as close as they can do to get on with their busy lives. So please, wholeheartedly, support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs): I'm here to support this motion. My address is School Avenue, there's a primary school at the end of my road. There is one access in, one access out, it's six streets long. There's parked cars either side on a morning. I have to make sure, if I need to be somewhere and it's about the time for the kids to be dropped off at school, I have to leave early or I just won't get out. It's like Whacky Races and for our younger members who don't know what that is, it's like Super Mario cars, it's getting absolutely ridiculous and we need to do something about it. So, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Obviously I'm here to support it, but we've got to look at why it's happening. I mean, 40 years ago we were walking to schools, weren't we? and this motion for me touches quite a bit, a bit that we've been discussing this week. A greener environment, zero emissions, stuff like that. If you go into Pudsey when schools are, you can't get anywhere, you know, even if you're walking to the shops to buy some fags, past the Union office, whatever, you cannot get anywhere in the streets because it's overrun with cars and pedestrians, it's chaos, but we've got to look at why it's happening. Obviously society's changed, do you know what I mean? When we were kids, we walked to and from the school gates safely, that's why this is happening. Also, as I say, we've got to look at the environment, because it's actually got [unclear] in it. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): Many areas around the UK witness a chaotic transformation on their streets during the school runs. There are many good examples that have been used up and down the country. Permit holders only around the school areas, park and ride facilities, nearby parking areas, drop-off areas, one way systems, unfortunately none of these have been successful in becoming permanent and enforceable. It appears that what is needed, as Peter stated in moving the motion, is we need council and local police authorities to combine, to get together and put procedures in place and enforce them and unfortunately to do this, it must come from the top down, from government. So the EC asks you all to please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Motion 53.

53

Branch 580

That this Conference agrees LED lights on motor vehicles need regulating as they are very dangerous for oncoming traffic.

Sister Ruth Stevenson – Branch 580 (Greggs): Motion 53. This Conference agrees LED lights on motor vehicles need regulating as they are dangerous for oncoming traffic. Many of us must have witnessed the terror of being partially blinded by powerful LED lights when driving at night. It can be a very scary experience. A recent RAC poll of 2,000 of their members found that 85% said it was getting worse, so we are calling for the government to set a safety standard and limit the danger for this hazard. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: Sorry, I'm back. Now I looked at this and as per police standards, they can stop people and ask them to change the bulbs, if they think they're too bright. There is no actual law in place for this, so it's down to the police officers' discretion which, in the society we live in, they shouldn't really have that kind of discretion. There should be a law in place, so I think this motion is absolutely superb, so please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: I'm here to support the motion, but just to correct the previous speaker, there is a law and it states and it's not very great: "they must be white or yellow, they must be bright enough to allow you to see around 100 metres ahead of you without blinding other drivers". Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? Go on, Pete, it'll be you. You've got a bit to fill in as well, mate. You notice we've put you all the way down there, so you'd have to, you've noticed that, yes. It's alright, they wanted me to hum a tune as you came along, I said I'm not going to do that.

Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110: Good afternoon again, oh, good morning. Obviously the Executive want you to support this motion. I'm a HGV driver myself and I've been exposed to these lights for years. Since 2013 they done an assessment that 280 people actually have had accidents and they've been taking notes since then and there's actually six people died, just through these bright lights, which is shocking. It's the outer marker lights that are not regulated because the ones they put on, even the ones they put on new vehicles, they are too bright. I hope you support the motion. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Motion 54, thank you very much.

54

Branch 459

That this Conference agrees that drivers who park on pavements blocking pedestrians and the excess for mobility scooters should be fined please support.

Brother Michael Redshaw – Branch 459: Platform, Delegates. That this Conference agrees that drivers who park on pavements, blocking pedestrians and the access for mobility scooters, should be fined. As we see more and more cars on the roads, we find that drivers just park anywhere in acts of selfishness. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I support this motion. Going back years ago, one of my friends had his leg amputated, so only to go round like a local town or anywhere he wanted to go, he had an electric scooter and he used to say to me, he goes, them cars that go up on the pavement winds me up, he goes, sometimes I've got to try and come off the pavement somewhere halfway up the road, come onto the dangerous road of oncoming traffic, so I can get home. He goes, I've got all the traffic coming, lorries, cars and all that and he goes, I can't go down on my electric scooter down there because the cars are blocking the path, so he goes I'm going towards the oncoming traffic. He goes, or the other option is I've got to go round another way just to get home or go to the shop and he goes, it's not my fault I got my leg amputated and he goes, these people that park on the pavement, they don't care about people on, you know, anybody else, you know, he goes, it used to wind him up like anything and he goes, you know, I'm trying to get in, he goes, I've got to go towards traffic and people are beeping at him, saying what are you doing? and he's going like that to the cars and he's like I can't get and then you've got people like people with pushchairs.

You know, the family's trying to get down there and the cars are that sticking out, they can't even get their pushchairs down there, so they're trying to go onto the main road as well, so they take the pushchairs down onto the path, you know, into the oncoming traffic, putting themselves at risk and while they're trying to do that, if they've got younger kids by the side of them, they're trying to keep an eye on their younger kids while they've got the pushchair as well and while they're doing that, they've got the oncoming traffic coming up there. So I don't have kids, but I've got my nephew and niece and I can remember going back years ago, my nephew's got autism and he's got no sense of things around him, so you had to, my sister-in-law used to go, I've got your niece in the pushchair, could you make sure you've got hold of your nephew, because he's got no awareness and he was six years old and she goes, he's got no awareness so while we're trying to get round, he might just run across the road, so she goes, if we're passing, she goes, could you make sure you're holding him. She goes, because he's got autism, she goes, he don't understand. Please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 282 and the Great Republic of Kernow District Branch: What are you laughing at? And also three days without a pasty, I'm not happy.

[LAUGHTER]

Conference, this issue is rife in our sunshine state, especially now this time of the year until October. We have the wonderful tourists coming down, not spending their money, but taking up our parking spaces, using up every single bit of access road, pavement they can to block the local residents, but we have to look into this deeper, why? and it's all down to private companies charging excessive rates for you, as a visitor, to come and visit us, so they don't pay it. £15 for a couple of hours, it's disgraceful, you know. We need to stop this, we need people-powered communities to enforce our own laws to stop this from happening. We, in Cornwall, totally support this motion. Please do as well. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: These inconsiderate "people" block up our paths. Our mum is a motability scooter user and has been for a number of years. She shattered her hip and she can't walk anywhere really, so she goes to town and suddenly she can't, she has to head onto incoming traffic etc, risking her life because of these inconsiderate "people" and we, we've got to stop it. We've got to think about our older generation, especially like this and our younger generation, like my colleague said there. I've seen a woman with a twin pushchair, there's no way she's getting through that gap, yes, so she has to go onto the main road and she's pushing a twin pushchair towards cars that are coming at her and it's like, do people not see that this is just wrong?

We should be, I don't know, going mad about this, you know. I'm not saying go out and slash the tyres of the cars, because they'll still be parked there because nobody will pay to remove them but, you know, we should be doing something about it. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Here to support this motion, but I think this is more of an enforcement issue, because I'm fairly certain there are plenty of laws already in existence to deal with this. It's a case of chasing up the authorities, the council, the police etc to enforce existing laws to prevent this and remove the cars involved. Fine the owners, that'll sort the problem out when that starts happening on a regular basis. Please support the motion though. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers in the room? No? Rachel, oh, she doesn't want to speak, right, okay.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool): Before I start, can I just take this opportunity to thank everyone for the Award I received before. My colleagues

[APPLAUSE]

my colleagues on the EC who voted for me, I'll give you the dropsy later, my fellow Health & Safety Reps at work, I'm not saying site this time and that's Les, who's here and also Jay back at the ranch and my colleagues past and present on the National Health & Safety Committee, Sarah, Ian and Ronnie for all their help and support and my colleagues in Region 4 who elected me onto the National Health & Safety Committee and offered me help and support all the time. So, I'd just like to thank everyone, cheers.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaking on behalf of the EC, who ask you to support this motion. When we were discussing these motions in our EC meeting and the EC were going to support the motion, I was determined to speak on this, for the EC and also personally, because on a daily basis I see this happening. Drivers parking on pavements and over dropped kerbs. Some may say oh no, not another fine, they're not doing any harm, but they are. They're endangering pedestrians who have poor eyesight or are blind, those who have poor mobility, those in wheelchairs, those in electric wheelchairs and those pushing prams. I get to see this every day on my daily walk or cycle, but I've got to notice in real terms the inconvenience and the dangers more over the last few years. I have a friend who lives in the next road to me and for many years has had mobility issues and she used to get about on crutches, going to the shops, work, etc, but about five years ago she was told she needed to get a wheelchair for her mobility. After using the crutches for years and years, it had knackered her arms and shoulders, so she felt a bit down the thought of having to get around in an electric wheelchair, but I tried to keep her upbeat by saying just think how far you can go in this now and where you can go. After a few weeks I said to her, how's it all going in the chair? and she said it makes her life so much better, but there is one problem, motorists who park on the pavements and across dropped kerbs. So one day on my daily walk, I said to her why don't you come along and, you know, come with me and show me what the problem is.

She did and I was horrified at how many times she faced obstacles, how many times she had to go in the road and how many times she had to go back on herself to get from A to B because of blocked pavements. Sometimes I would try and find the driver and explain the dangers and inconvenience of parking on the pavements. Most were fine and said sorry, some were abusive, not just to me but to my friend in her wheelchair. I have seen her miss buses because motorists park in bus stops on the pavement, so the bus can't get close enough for her to get on it. These people, in the wheelchairs and with disabilities, didn't ask for their disabilities, so why make life more dangerous for them? I would say from my experience there's a small amount of people who just don't think. When you explain the dangers, they understand, but I would say there is a large proportion who just don't care. I wish I could bring my friend here today to explain in person the difficulties and the danger she faces every day, with cars parked on the pavements and dropped kerbs. So, please support the motion and if you are one of those people who do park on the pavements or a dropped kerb, just think about the inconvenience that you're causing people with disabilities who didn't ask for those disabilities. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you. Motion 55. You know we can hear you when you're talking at the back, don't you? Just thought I'd mention it.

That this Conference agree cyclist (electric or pedal) should by law have highly visible clothing when on the roads or the paths as this is dangerous to other users

Sister Ruth Stevenson – Branch 580 (Greggs): Motion 55. That this Conference agree that cyclists should be by law, should by law have high visible clothing on when riding on roads, paths, as it's dangerous to other users. The Highway Code is a mixture of law and advice, but Rule 59 of the Code, which covers clothing for cyclists, is only advice and states that a cyclist should wear light-coloured or florescent clothing to help road users to see you in the daylight and poor light and reflective clothing in the dark. We are asking for this to be changed to mandatory rules, to make our roads and paths a safer place for everyone. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): Morning, Conference. Just here to completely agree with this motion. It's not only cyclist clothing, it's also lights, reflectors, anything that can make cyclists visible. The amount of cyclists that I see going home of a night without even a basic rear reflector, it makes it so dangerous. I believe that a lot of cyclists have not passed their basic fundamentals of how to ride a bike properly either, because this could even be down to how to turn on the roundabout and [unclear] into separate junctions, so I'm just here to completely agree with the motion. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs): I'm here to oppose the motion. I think it's personal choice. I think if a cyclist needs to take a risk assessment before they even get on the bike and if they choose to put their life at risk, I think it's completely down to them. What are we going to ask for next, that we all wear high vis just in case you want to cross the road of a night-time? I oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I'd agree with this motion. As a driver, when I'm driving in like the winter, I'm coming down a dark street, you've got a cyclist, no lights, no, dressed all in black. Before I get up to him, if you're travelling on a 60 road, on a country road and the next minute you come round a corner, there's a guy there on his bike, you know, you've just seen him, because if you had the high vis reflector, at least that would shine, my lights would have shined up on him, so I would know he's there, but you're like quickly, oh, there's a bike there, but it's alright if he had something like brighter clothes, but they're going out, they don't even wear a helmet, they have a black woolly hat on, black coat, black trousers, black shoes, no reflectors on their bike, no lights and the next minute you're on a dark road, you come round a corner and, or even just coming up, you just oh, the bike's there. It's like you say, if your lights, at least with that reflection you would see them on there and there's an accident waiting to happen, you know.

I can remember as younger, me being on a bike, I never wore, but now as I've grown up, learning to be a Safety Rep and all this, you know, I was very lucky as a kid, I could have got knocked off my bike so the car didn't see me and the end of the day, no parents or no family wants to see their kid or husband come home, have a policeman knock on the door and it's like just that little high vis and it's something so people can see them, because you find them out there, a lot of them don't even wear crash, you know helmets. If you're on a motorbike, it's illegal not to wear one. Why can't we have, when you're on our main roads, why can't you have a crash helmet or high vis because you're on our national roads and it's making the roads more safer. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham): I don't think this goes far enough. You're talking about high visibility clothing, what about when you're on the canal paths and you're walking with your grandchildren, you might have your dog with you, they're coming from behind you. It doesn't matter if they've got a high visibility vest on, you're not going to see them. What they should be having is horns, bells, they should be vocal in letting you know they're coming and a lot of them are quite ignorant and they go quite fast, you know and all they want to do is get past you, they don't want to have to stop, so I don't think this goes far enough and I don't think high visibility clothing is always the answer. So I do believe, you know, it doesn't go far enough and they should have a warning system in place where they can shout to you and let you know, you know, it's great if they're coming towards you, but like I said, if they're at the back of you, high visibility clothing doesn't make any difference. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): Many of us have hobbies that are spoilt by inconsiderate and arrogant individuals, who not only disregard rules and regulations but don't consider the threat that their actions may impact on other users. I do myself own a couple of bikes, I always wear high visibility clothing. It greatly improves my own safety as well as others around me, but sadly a large majority of other cyclists, they don't take it seriously. High visibility clothing isn't expensive to get hold of. It doesn't take any enjoyment out of cycling and most importantly, it greatly improves your own safety as well as everybody else that's around you. So on behalf of the EC, we ask you to please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: There is a right of reply.

Sister Ruth Stevenson – Branch 580 (Greggs): Just the one thing. Imagine if you hit and killed a cyclist, just because they weren't wearing high vis or they didn't have a bell or, imagine your thoughts and your feelings if you killed somebody.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 56.

56

Region 3

The BFAWU is against the authoritarian measures the government is due to take against benefits claimants.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Moving the motion. We're soon going to see a change of government and to quote the great Rosa Luxemburg: "Bourgeois society stands at the crossroads". Either transition to Socialism or regression to barbarism. Anybody who's transcended the benefits system will know we ain't talking about Socialism here and it depends on who we're going to get as the next government, because our next Shadow, the Shadow Health Work and Pensions Secretary, Liz Kendall, who is unfortunately a Leicester MP, has made speeches about all the Tory claims on being tough on benefits. Well, I'm not only addressing you today, I'm hoping to send a message out to Liz. I will describe, I will give her a list about tough on benefits. Paul Reekie, 48, [unclear] based poet, suffered from severe depression, committed suicide after DWP stopped his benefits. Leanne Chambers, 30, suffered depression for many years and took a turn for the worse when she was called in for a Work Capability Assessment. Leanne committed suicide soon after. Karen Sherlock, 44, multiple health issues, found fit for work by Atos and denied benefits, fought a long battle to get placed into the Work Support Group of ESA. Karen died the following month with a heart attack. Carl Payne, 42, fear of losing his lifeline benefits due to welfare reform, led this father of two to take his own life. Tim Salter, blind and suffering from agoraphobia. Tim hanged himself after ATOS found him fit for work and stopped his benefits. Edward Jaques, 47, suffering from HIV and Hepatitis C. Edward had a history of severe depression and self-harm, took a fatal overdose after being found fit for work. Crystal, 32 years and five months pregnant, her benefits stopped, Crystal, clutching her baby son, jumped from a third floor balcony.

Reporting by Private Eye and others, have reported about terminal, people in terminal comas being declared fit for work, along with other serious mental and physical health difficulties. Amputees have been asked when they expected their limbs to grow back. People suffering from depression are being asked why they haven't tried to commit suicide yet. What society are we living in? We live in a society that Hogarth would have recognised. We live in a country that Dickens could quite easily have written about. A place that when Friedrich Engels wrote The Condition of the Working Class in England, he could quite easily see in Manchester of the 1840's. I ask you now to send a message about how Socialism lives and how we can change by being a decent humane society and supporting this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Wigan and Wigan's the important thing. I've got personal involvement in this, because Wigan was a pilot area for the new systems when they were bringing them in. We got a pool of experienced Union Reps to go in with people on benefit claims and reassessments, because they were destroying people in these assessments. They ended up banning us because we were too successful, because they were only doing this to try and save money, but their own figures now prove that all these draconian, authoritarian, call them what you like, processes that attack people's benefits actually cost more money than the benefits that they're trying to stop. It's perverse. Please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: I watched a certain Prime Minister this morning say that their Party will help reduce the

welfare state, by what? I'll tell you what he's going to do, he's going to get these doctors to say yes, you can go back to work, yes, we're going to stop your benefits, yes, we're going to keep doing this to you, we'll put you to the sword like they did 200 years ago, 300 years ago. We're the lords and masters, we tell you how it goes, you can get to work. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: I'm here to support it obviously. It's a conversation we had in the pub last night. I think it's very topical. The thing you've got to look at is what's driving all this, the media drives all this, people on benefits, people on benefits. It's media driven. I remember a long, long time ago when the World Cup was on, there was a Scouser bobbing up in every photograph, I don't know if you remember that, Ian, apparently he was doing this on benefits. What, travelling the world on 60 quid a week? I'm sure he wasn't. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Are you just scribbling some notes down, Dave? Peter. I didn't know you were getting up then, mate, because you were scribbling away there, I thought oh. It's you, mate, it's you, mate.

Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110: Obviously you've heard everyone talk, but you don't realise what's coming with this. The ministers are trying to bring in sanctions where they can actually check people's bank accounts. The DWP are actually making these people look like they're all criminals. We've got a welfare state for a reason, it's there to support and help people, working class people, but they're trying to convince us that they're the enemy. The only thing you've got is people come out of Eton and they're the ones you've got to look at.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Okay, I believe I've got Standing Orders.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): Please turn to your Final Agendas and we shall carry on. Motion 61 stands, motion 62 stands, motion 63 stands, 64 stands, 65 stands, 66 stands, 67 stands, 68 stands, 69 stands, 70 stands but is comp 4 at the back of your book, it's comp'd with another one. 71 stands, 72 is out-of-order, 73 stands and is the second part to comp 4 in the back of your book. 74 stands, 75 stands, 76 stands, then obviously like I say, the comps are in the back of your book, the ones we haven't already covered. Also, there are two emergency motions being put forward that have been supplied to you on your tables, so take your time to have a look at them before they're brought up, please. Thank you. This concludes the motions from the Standing Orders Committee and is the end of this report.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just before you go, where do you want, have you got a position you want me to take those emergency motions in, or

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): Whenever you feel, Mr President.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, well, what I'll do then is I'll put them at the end, because I haven't got them yet anyway.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): Yes, yes, yes, sorry, I don't, Steve [unclear], you know

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, whoever's sorting it out. I'll take them as basically 77 and 78 then.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): Right, I was going to say in the book, it does say emergency motions after comps, so I thought that's where they would be going.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, yes, yes, okay, okay, that's cool. Okay, okay. With that slight amendment, obviously taking those as 77 and 78, those emergency motions, does Conference agree? Yes. You're all getting lazy, you're not all putting your hands up, what's wrong with you? Come on. Enthusiasm and if you'd have shown a little more enthusiasm, I might have said it's dinner time.

[CHEERS]

But before we do, before we go to dinner, we've got a little bit of a presentation to make, it's a really important presentation.

While the General Secretary's going over there, there isn't, you know, obviously we don't have Jobs for Lives any more, but what we do have is we have people that join the Union and even when they leave work, still continue to stay with the Union and so it's a real pleasure when we have somebody who does 50 years as members of our Trade Union. We don't get many of them, but when we do we like to celebrate them. So obviously John Fitzpatrick who's done this EC, obviously a long-standing member of Region 4, made some really breakthrough things in relation to organising shops when he was at Sayers, has done 50 years service and obviously we'd like to give him a presentation from the General Secretary.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Okay, oh, are you going to say something? Oh right, okay.

Brother John Fitzpatrick – Branch 430: Thanks for this Award. I've been a Bakers Union member since '73. I've never stopped, I've been an active member and still active now when I'm retired. It's been hard a lot of times and sometimes good and bad times. One point comes to mind is it was a fridge where the floor was getting refurbished in work and people came to me and said there was bad fumes and they were feeling sick and whatever and I went and had a look and this is a point about being a Safety Rep more than a Shop Steward. I stopped the job on the spot, told the manager of the department and that, but I went straight to the director straight away and told him what was going on and he agreed that it was right stopping the job and I should have gone to him first and it turned out that they had all the stuff signed off and he was short, so he went to his van and got a bag of floor thing and it was the wrong mix at all and it was causing fumes and if I never stopped it, someone could have died or even been in hospital with it, so I'm made up with the work I do and I will carry on doing it as long as I can. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. What are we going to do, an hour or an hour and 15? Do an hour or an hour and 15? Do an hour and 15? Okay, come back here at quarter to then. That's pushing it.

[BREAK]

Cool. Everybody start taking their seats, please. Are we, alright, alright Conference, can you sit down, please. The General Secretary's going to call the roll, thank you very much.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, I had to think about that then. Region 3, Region 4, Region 5, Region 7, online? Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: What number am I on? Motion 57.

57

Region 5

This Conference agrees that any family of legal workers who have settled or pre-settled status in the UK shouldn't have any further restrictions on entering the UK and joining their family other than providing passport, marriage, and birth certificates.

Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Good afternoon, Mr President, Platform, Delegates. That this Conference agrees that any family of legal workers who have settled or pre-settled in the UK shouldn't have any further restrictions on entering the UK and joining their families, other than providing passport, marriage and birth certificates. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Any speakers on there? In that case, Dave, Dave.

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): This motion challenges the bureaucracy of the UK government's hostility towards immigrants, where we witness many stories of cruelty, an environment which leaves more, many vulnerable people in a desperate situation and unnecessary long drawn-out procedures where document checks and paperwork is used as a brutal tool to try and deter and even exclude them. So the EC would please ask you to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 58.

58

Region 5

That this union lobby the government to begin to take to task, the job of looking after the people who they represent.

Brother Chris Beckwith – Branch 560 (Retired), Region 5: The abject failure of this government to look after the people they represent. President, Platform, Delegates. I ask you to support this motion, to lobby this government and any future government to begin the task of bringing this country together and looking after the people they represent. Many things have been in decline over the past 60 years, closure of major British industries, pits, steel works, mills, car and shipping industries and many more cuts to the NHS, mental health support and community services. The decline of these services have had a devastating effect on people and communities, so we need to lobby this government and rebuild all British industry, the NHS and all public services, to make a United Kingdom and a Great Britain that is great again. People and communities are the lifeblood and the foundations of which we should rebuild. Without strong foundations, we have nothing, everything collapses. Last week, we commemorated D-Day veterans who gave and paid the ultimate sacrifice. What would they think if they could see what they have paid the ultimate sacrifice for? Today, a fractured and a broken Britain. Previous governments and present governments should hang their heads in shame. They have failed us, they have failed the veterans and the people and communities of today and tomorrow. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: And I believe you're a first-time speaker as well? First-time speaker as well, yes, I believe.

Brother Chris Beckwith – Branch 560 (Retired), Region 5: Long-time Delegate, first-time speaker.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (Retired Branch): Platform, EC, Delegates. Here to second this motion. It does exactly what it says on the tin. There are so many vulnerable people who, for no reason of their own, find themselves facing an increasingly uncertain future. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Speakers? Anyone online?

Conference, the Executive would ask you to support this motion. Politicians, £92,000 a year, all the perks, all those corporate lobbyists that take them out for lunch, they buy their policies, they deliver the changes in the interests of business and then every five years they come along to us and say, we're living in a democracy, here are our promises, they get elected and then they say we didn't realise the state of the economy, so we can't afford to do the things that we promised you we were going to do. British democracy in action. We all know that, because we see it, don't we, on a daily basis. It is right that we hold politicians to account and it is right that we make demands on politicians too and we've been talking about those issues this week, here at Conference. We've talked about the fact that you should get Day 1 work rights, people should be treated fairly when they enter the workplace. We shouldn't need charity to be able to live. People shouldn't need to be subsidised or have to fill in endless forms to be able to claim benefits to top up their wages because their pay is too low and who is responsible for all of those decisions that force us to live the existence we have? They're the politicians we elect, the politicians that make the promises, the politicians that give us the commitments and then renege on them and it's right, it's right to hold them to account, but it's also right that when we come to elections, when we've got so much history and knowledge of their failure to defend and represent us, that we make demands of them, just like those businesses do when they give them all that funding, all of that money to get those policies and to get that legislation that they want. If they won't deliver for us, then we should not deliver our votes to them. That's how we demonstrate, that's how we can make people listen to us.

So if they don't believe that we have a right to a contract of employment, they shouldn't get our vote. If they don't believe that it's wrong to invest in nuclear weapons and not in our NHS, then they shouldn't get our vote. If they introduce a policy that says we're going to demonise refugees coming to a country that they believe is safe and suggest that they're the reason for all of our problems and all of the issues that we face in our lives, then we shouldn't give them our votes, because like I've said before on many, many occasions, it's never been a refugee that's been responsible for the hardship we suffer, it's those politicians which this motion is talking about. We have to hold them to account. It's their decisions that impact our lives. It's no migrant, it's nobody on benefits, it's not a person with disabilities, it's not a person that needs to use the NHS, it's not a person that says my school should be better, those aren't the people responsible for the hardships that we suffer, it's politicians and governments that determine what happens to us and a legislation is normally bought and paid for by boardrooms here and around the world. So we have the right to exercise our vote and we have the right to hold them to account, but for years and years and years we've blindly followed a religion and, you know, voted because that's how we were told we must vote.

We're working class, so we vote for Labour. You're rich, so you vote for the Tories. But the reality is, apart from appearing around 1945, 1951, the policies that any government has followed hasn't delivered for us, but we know politics can make a difference, don't we, because we saw that, in a country with no money, a country after the Second World War that was virtually bankrupt, when politicians decide they want to work in our interest, they build council houses, they introduced policies like full employment, but not full employment that's based on zero-hours contracts, but full employment that gives you rights and respect and dignity that every human being is entitled to, that doesn't mean that you have to rely on food banks and handouts and benefits, but also what they did after the Second World War was introduced a welfare state, that meant people, whether they lost their jobs, when they came to being in hardship, were supported and not demonised, like the benefit system is used today, to keep us divided. So it's right to hold those politicians to account, because again we saw with the introduction of the National Health Service, the difference policies and politicians can make to our lives when they decide they're going to work in our interest. So that's why it's important that this motion is on our Agenda, that's why it's important that we just don't blindly go into a voting booth and vote for a Party because our history tells us that's what we should do.

We have to challenge these politicians, because what we're seeing now and what we're fearing that's coming in Europe is the re-emergence of policies, populace policies that would suggest our best way forward is to move to the right and to fascism. Moving to the right and fascism never, ever delivers for people, it kills people. We need politics and policies that represent us, that give us a right to exist, that give us a life of dignity and that every year and every generation, their lives get better than the last and that's why it's important that we call out politicians that fail to stand up for us and I know we've had a little bit of a debate and a discussion about should we or shouldn't we be giving our money to a political Party, well, we should give it to a political Party that serves us. We should give it to politicians that represent us and if they fail to do it, then we should hold them to account and withdraw our vote and support from them. So I urge you Conference, support this motion.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Thank you very much. I've lost my glasses. What number am I on? 59. Region 4?

59

Region 4

To promote Healthwatch within their branches. Healthwatch is an organisation in every local authority which helps people with any grievances that the public has with any health services.

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417 (Wigan): Motion 59, to promote Healthwatch within their Branches. Healthwatch is an organisation in every local authority which helps people with any grievances that the public has with any health services. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the Executive asks you to support this motion. I know he isn't here this week, but I'd like to place on record our thanks to John Fox for highlighting this valuable service to us, because we've not heard of it before. Healthwatch is everywhere. I was looking when prepping my speeches because, you know, I like to be prepared and they give a reliable and trustworthy information and advice service to you, to help you access the services and support that you need, provide advocacy for formal NHS complaints, they're independent, impartial and respect confidentiality. They have options to volunteer, have a section dedicated to young people, dental services, maternity and neo-natal services, a section for parents and carers, mental health, adult social care and on the Wakefield page because, you know, that's where I'm from so I had a look at that one, they've got a section on dementia, signposting to support services available, a 'Start for Life' booklet around local support for pregnancy and early years, unpaid carers service, surveys and events which I know is something we've discussed in the Women's Network and resources around what happens when you get discharged from hospital and what you should expect. I'd really advise that you go away and you have a look and search your local Healthwatch page, so that you can utilise that resource because it's rich, it's free and it's something that our members can utilise. The Executive would ask you to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you very much. 60.

This Conference agrees that understanding the basis of everyone's right to be safe in society and to be treated with dignity and respect, and the many challenges that people face in modern life which threaten these rights, needs to be included in the school curriculum at the earliest age to educate and empower our children.

Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): My last one today. Mr President, excuse me, Mr President, Platform, Delegates. Motion 60. This Conference agrees that under the basis of everyone's right to a safe, to be safe in society and to be treated with dignity and respect and many challenges that people face in the modern life, it needs to be included into the school curriculum at the earliest age, to educate and empower all children. Dignity is a fundamental human right that every individual is entitled to and the person's age, race, gender or health should not influence this. Preserving dignity has been proven to enhance a person's overall well-being and while having a positive impact on their physical, emotional and physiological health. When we give and receive respect, we create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued, respectful towards each other. It sounds a great way to live, doesn't it? and we ask that this should be part of the school curriculum right from the start. Start teaching it when they're young and continue to teach, educate, empower the right throughout the child's school life. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Anyone online? I think Rachel's just come on, just put her hand up, Dave, sorry. Rachel online.

Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529: Hello. Here to support the motion. I know there is, speaking as a School Governor again, I know my school partakes in a Right to Respect in schools, which is a programme by UNICEF and are doing what this motion asks, so the only problem is that obviously it isn't compulsory and I think it should be, because I think sometimes, you know, I don't think kids are as respecting as they should be or, you know, these days because, you know, you do see the news about, you know, trouble with gangs of youths and, you know, there's knife crime on the rise and I think if you started earlier and made it compulsory for schools to have like a Right to Respect programme in place, I think it would have a positive impact on the rest of society and, you know, even the crime numbers might come down etc. I've totally lost my train of thought now. Yes, support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Let's do the one online first. Jonathan.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): Yes, just here to support the motion and also say that I think it also starts at home as well and I think a lot of education can start with the parents and how it's being dealt with down the line, how people treat each other, so yes, I'm here to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya. Here to support the motion. I like to learn, I like what learning and education has given me. Many years ago, I know people who know me know this, I was nothing more than one of those homeless junkies on the streets. I was a person who got spat on, I was a person who a police officer kicked in the face, kicking two of my teeth out in Derby. I was a person who had pint glasses of urine thrown at me. Education, I was given the chance to come off the streets and learn and I remember this brilliant, this fantastic teacher at college when I got to do an access course. Her name was Sue Cauldwell. She loved history, she would teach me, she would give me books like E P Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm, history of ours and they were so proud of me when I got to university, I couldn't believe it myself, I really couldn't believe it. In fact I was given several awards, you know, I was taken to, in Coventry and I was given an award and the guy who presented me the award said like what does education mean to you? and I said, it means hope, it means that I'm worth something and I say supporting this motion means you are supporting hope for millions of others. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): There are many who feel that the school curriculum is unfit for the 21st century, that the system is too focused on qualifications at the expense of providing children with basic practical skills, skills that they can use throughout their lives, skills that empower them to reach their potential and skills that employers are looking for. This motion specifies dignity and respect. Educate children at the very earliest of their lives and continue to teach and educate them right throughout their 14 years at school. Surely this is the best way to bring about a culture of change, create a classroom environment that any parent would be proud to have their child in.

Invest in our children and develop their equality, their dignity, respect, non-discrimination and compassion that they will hopefully take throughout their lives and in the words of Scouse John, but not that one: “You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one”. On behalf of the EC, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. 61.

61

Region 3

That the Bakers union should lobby the Government for more funding towards providing ESOL classes for our migrant comrades.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Sorry, it’s me again. Speaking, moving the motion. Do you know what?, it’s hard not to take this, that we have to do this motion, it’s hard not to take this personally and one of the proud things about our Union and I always say, is about how multi-cultural we are, how we welcome every member no matter where you are, yet we have politicians and you see them from all sides, get up on the television and I saw it the other night in that debate, where I don’t know who was trying to be the nastiest, whether it was Penny Mordaunt or Nigel Farage or Angela Rayner, who described about how they always say immigration is a problem, I don’t see what the problem is myself and then you get Nigel Farage going on about integration and yet when I travel round, when we used to have Unionlearn which done fantastic work, when we used to have Unionlearn, they would say we’re going to provide some ESOL classes and everybody would jump at it, wouldn’t they? Because people want to be part of a community, people want to give in and I spoke the other day about how migrants increase the wealth of this country, yet I think, I’ve got a niggling in the bottom of my heart that the reason why they cut funding to ESOL is because they don’t want us to communicate, because when we communicate, we join together and when we join together, we create a world that belongs to the 99%, not the 1.

[APPLAUSE]

It’s a shame that we have to even speak about this. I’m proud of our Union, I’m proud that I live in Leicester, that is the most ethnically diverse city in the country. I was proud because when the fascists turned up at Britain’s First, we saw the whole of Leicester, this beautiful, multi-cultural Leicester, run them out of town. But it’s a shame that we even have to talk about this, because if we push for more ESOL classes, we can eventually communicate with everybody, joining together in Solidarity or Solidarność

[LAUGHTER]

and we can make the world that we deserve and not the one they want. Vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Katarzyna Damek– Branch 515 (East Kilbride, Scotland): I would like to ask you to support this motion. We have so many people coming from all over the world, highly educated people and the only reason why they are working through the agency is because the level of their English. They are not able to communicate enough to even get full-time job to support their education, they go on courses and they need our help so they can improve their language skills and they can be part of the community, providing all of the skills they bring with them from their homes. In my factory, I meet people like [unclear] from Poland, who couldn’t work as nurses because they didn’t have the language skills. I met a doctor from Nigeria who couldn’t be a doctor in the UK for the same reason. Please support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Mr President and friends. I have a very good friend, the person speaking from Birmingham and he guides me from time to time, I take his advice all the time. About this, I wasn’t going to issue on this, but the immigrants who are coming here, they’re not asylum seekers, most of them. They are, they’re coming here for work, right. More and more people, if they come legally, fine, if they’re coming through the seas, then be careful because people, if they come from country and my country, ex-country, it is not my country, those people will just [unclear] the country, they will bring the [unclear] from here, right and you are, British people will be in trouble. My friend said about Leicester, there are a lot of Gujarati people there, I’ve been there many times, that’s the greed of India’s Prime Minister, so-called Modi, right. He’s illiterate, he only went to school for four years and people coming here, they’re bringing the disease of caste system here. I’m here, I was low caste but thanks to the British people, thanks to my Union, thanks to GFTU and thanks to this British Nation, because I’m a British subject now, I am proud of it, because

[APPLAUSE]

This country, this country has given me everything. My children are at universities, only less education was me. I was only, I went up to high school and because of poverty, I came here. I worked in the bakery, I worked on the buses and in the Union I think, Bakers Union, I may be the only person with a 53 year membership, right, I'm still alive, but I'm fighting always about the crimes, about the hatred, caste system, colour bar, but the people who are coming here, be careful, be careful, because the disease, you've got MPs here, Labour MPs and Labour councillors and Labour mayors, if they are from a high caste, they still carry the same disease, right and even if they are from lower caste, of which I was born, they've got the same germs to [unclear], I don't, right. I used to believe in God, I don't now, because I believe in nature, right and what's happening in the world, people are being killed, God hasn't come, he should have come down, so be careful. If you're having foreigners, have them, people who can work honest, right, if they're hiding and coming through the borders and then you people are funding them, right, you're giving them food and your taxes are going up, right, so

[APPLAUSE]

it's not [unclear] one, it's not coloured one, it's just, it's stopping your kids from, migrants are British now, right, so my kids are at universities and I'm proud, I was nobody but this Union and GFTU taught me, sent me on about 40 courses and all that and I'm now asked by the University of New Delhi to, when I go to India, to address the School of Sociology, right. Who am I?, right and they want me because I suffered, I know what's happening, how the mankind, people like me have been brought down, I'm not now, right. I hit back, if there's a polite people, I'm polite, if there is rude people, I'm double rude. Thank you, thank you.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: Well, I came up here to talk about ESOL classes and how do you follow a gentleman that's been through it all, that has suffered it all and come out on top as a British citizen, like he says, because he's had the help of all the Unions, giving him the learning courses etc, absolutely fantastic example. Thank you very much, Sir.

[APPLAUSE]

Now back to the point of ESOL classes. How are we going to communicate if we don't get these leaflets to people, in their languages, to let them know that the ESOL classes are available in English? How do we communicate that without these leaflets? So, we need ESOL classes, we need to stop this separation by management, because that's what they're doing, they're keeping us apart by not letting us educate these people that are coming in, that are so highly qualified, it's ridiculous. Some of these people are PhDs etc, that's just not recognised. It's absolutely disgusting. They're being treated badly, we are being treated badly because we're being kept away from their brains, because we're not going to be knowing what they say, we don't understand it, yes? So ESOL classes help break down those barriers. We really, really need them, so I ask you to please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 701: As far as I'm aware, none of the projects, learning projects in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland have any separate fund for ESOL courses. [unclear] allows me to part-fund ESOL courses if the employer arranges to set them up and release the students. ESOL is a very important course for migrant workers, as the project will help students to be able to upskill onto essential skills, have more communications in their workplace, promote them in higher jobs and also in the community. I would say give full funding for ESOL, not funding like the motion says. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the Executive would ask you to support this motion. When the government shamefully removed the English Unionlearn Fund back in 2021, it also stripped back the funding available in England and I take on board the point that Noel's just made about the [unclear] Nations. It stripped back funding available for initiatives like ESOL. As a Union, we proudly have a high percentage of migrant members, who don't speak English as a first language. Stripping back this initiative has had massive implications on those who aren't confident in their ability to speak and understand our complicated language, which is made even harder with the amount of accents and the odd local dialect words that we have. We've got avenues as a Union, around ESOL. Bianca, who's not here this week unfortunately, but has offered courses initially to Branches in Northampton to trial and we've got links with an organisation we spoke about at the EC in May, who is like a health and safety signs version of ESOL, but these come at a cost now, whereas previously they were funded by the government. Much like the ULF Fund which, you know, invested into people that then put a lot more money back into the economy, they've got rid of that, haven't they?

We know the government over the last 14 years have focussed on, instead, dividing us and creating a blame culture around migrant workers and generally just making it as difficult as possible for people like us to upskill ourselves. We are a diverse internationalist Trade Union and we want to be able to open doors up to everybody. So, we ask you to support this motion. As Noel said, we want fully funded ESOL courses, so our members can develop themselves, regardless of their first language. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried, thank you. 62.

62

Branch 405

That this Conference agrees to use the legislation for Union Learning Representatives (ULR) which gives them the same rights as a Health and Safety Representative, giving them paid time off for these union duties.

- *Using the National ULRs to go around the region that they are in to help set up bakery's learning agendas and to set up learning committees within the factories.*
- *Using the ULRs to engage with management on learning, discussing what is required on sites.*

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Chair, EC, Delegates and comrades. Motion 62. That this Conference agrees to use legislation for Unionlearner Representatives, ULRs, ULRs, which gives them the same rights as Health & Safety Representatives, giving them paid time off for their Union duties, using the Unionlearner Reps to go around the Regions that they are in, to help set up bakeries, bakery learning agendas and to set up learning committees within factories, using Learner Reps to engage with management on learning, discussing what is required on the sites.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: I'm here to oppose this.

As much as I agree with it in sentiment, I feel I have to oppose it. Motion 61 says, government for more funding, more funding, there's no funding available for this course at the moment, they pulled the plug on it, the General Secretary's just told you. So, let's look at what the motion's saying. That this Conference agrees to use legislation for Union Representative, ULRs, which gives them the same rights as Health & Safety Representatives, giving them paid time off. As a Branch Secretary, I can deliver the first part of that, we've done it in the past, we'll give you time off, facilities time, agreements, stuff like that. We can deliver that bit. Now, who's going to pay for all of this, because we ain't getting any funding from the government. So using the National ULRs to go round, are they going to do it voluntarily, are they like the Blue Cross? Are they going to take time off work and not get paid for it?, because the companies don't want to pay you. Also, we've been sat at JCC level, but we've pitched to the company about the training again and ESOL classes and they said oh, don't worry about that, we're cooler than you, we'll do it and they went to a learning provider and they came back and said oh, the learning provider won't do it because your members can't and we found out that they couldn't get the funding either, so if companies can't get the funding, Trade Unions certainly are. So I'm actually going to oppose this, even though I agree with it in sentiment. We've got to be realistic and think about the readies. Please oppose it.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: The Executive Council appreciates the sentiment of the motion, but would ask that the mover remit it, so work can be done on it to bring it back to Conference, otherwise we would ask Conference to oppose the motion. Fundamentally this is just down to the wording, because our Branches aren't just bakeries, they're much more diverse. We have shops, distribution centres, fish and poultry processing plants, online Branches, factories where ready meals are produced and salad products are washed, crisps and sweets are made and so much more. If they passed the motion as it is, it would rule out all those Branches other than bakeries and we just couldn't support that as an Executive. So we would ask the mover to remit the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Remit motion 62 then.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you. 63.

This Conference agrees that union literature and forms should be gender neutral, words such as ‘chairman’ should not be used.

Any instances should be notified to head office and then be rectified as soon as possible.

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390: Motion number 63. This Conference agrees that Union literature and forms should be gender neutral. Words such as Chairman should not be used, any instances should be notified to Head Office and then be rectified as soon as possible. As a Union we are pretty good, most of our forms are totally free of casual sexism or racism and things like that, but if there is the odd thing that sneaks through, we should be able to change it and put it into language that’s acceptable to everyone. Language can be welcoming and it can also be a bar to people joining as a Union and that’s what we don’t need. All this motion is trying to do is make us inclusive, so please vote for it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Buncey - Branch 547 (Suma): Hiya. I wholeheartedly support this motion. Personally and on behalf of my Branch members, it’s hard enough as a Shop Steward to get people to sit down with an application form for our Union sometimes and it’s been really bad in the past when I’ve had people come back to me and hold the application up and be like, this is my first experience of the Union and I already don’t feel seen or included, this is really bad taste to begin with because of the language used. Now, we’ve seen a running theme that language is very important for all sectors if we want to be an inclusive Union and represent all workers, therefore I think this is an imperative move forward and if you have any objections to this motion, I’d like to hear why, I’d like to hear how this affects you and why you’d oppose it. Thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Yes, it’s a bit difficult because just one of the things I noticed and it’s not really for or against, it’s something we do in terms of, because we’re talking specifically about literature and stuff and we do still refer to each other as Brother and Sister and I’m just questioning how that stands, would that be affected by passing this motion? It’s just really a query, that’s all. I’m happy to call you all comrade, I’m not bothered, do you know what I mean?, but I’m just wondering, but as far as the inclusive thing, Buncey, second time up, absolutely fabulous, sorted. So I’d just like to ask that question.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is that a point of information you’ve asked?

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): No, I’m asking for people to think, but hopefully if someone down here that’s perhaps more worldly-wise than myself

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I will try and address, but obviously if it’s not a point of information, you do realise

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Alright, alright, alright, without knowing whether this would affect that, I would ask you to remit it and find out whether it would affect things like that. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I might need to ask whether a Delegate can ask for somebody to remit something actually, I’ve never come across that one before.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): I’m a changed man again

[LAUGHTER]

and I’ve still got one swear word in credit.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Do you know, if you’d have said I’ve got this question to ask, right, we can answer, but when you don’t ask a question as a I’ve got a point of information or a point of order, I can’t address it.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): I think I’ve made quite enough points of order at this Conference, but yes, I appreciate your point. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, in that case I can’t answer you.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): And I am absolutely got off, so I'm not speaking again. Could I just ask that question, Ian, would it affect that please, because that might affect my judgement on which way I vote in this.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I might make you go back and sit down and put your hand up and say I've got a point of information I want to ask

[LAUGHTER]

but I won't do that to you, Mark and I'll answer your question now you've put it in a question. So, the question would be this. I would imagine that the issue in question is how we write our information down and making sure that it's gender neutral. We would refer to people and address people as they wish to be addressed, so somebody would explain to you what their name is or how they would like to be addressed – sorry, I'm not speaking into the microphone, am I, I do apologise, it's 'cause I'm looking at him. What I was saying is, it wouldn't affect the way that we would use our literature or our forms, because we would want them to be as gender neutral as we possibly can make them, to make sure they make sense. I mean, obviously there will be some information on there that we need to do to collate to make sure, you know, we're offering equal opportunities, etc, etc, etc, because obviously we need to be able to do those, equality data, yes, that's what I was looking for, thank you very much, Sarah, but the way we address one another is how we address one another. So, you tell me your name's Mark and I like to be called Mark, I will call you Mark. Simple as that and that's all I would anticipate anybody in the Union to do. However anybody wishes to be addressed, is how you should address them and that to me is the appropriate way that we communicate with one another.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): It was just the fact that it said written and in literature and I happen to be reading the verbatim report.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I'm talking about verbal, you did ask me the question about verbal, I've given you an answer. Go and sit down.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): But the motion does say about writing, doesn't it, in writing, in literature.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: But that's what I said, literature, forms. Verbal, you said verbal. No, no more points of order, no, no. I've answered your question. If you look at Standing Orders, once I've answered your question, that's it. You get one go, but I was very generous. See, now you've thrown me off, I've forgotten where I am. Is there any other speakers? Sean, sort him out.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: Speaking on behalf of the EC. We strongly encourage you to support this motion. We, as an EC, had a big debate about this. We feel we do the right thing most of the time, we're a very diverse Trade Union, however we believe there's still room for improvement and we're always on about improving, it's a revolving door. So we're asking you to please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried, thank you very much. 64. 390?

64

Branch 390

This Conference agrees that the state pension should be tax exempt. This will allow those pensioners who have paid into an occupational pension scheme to receive more income before they start to pay tax. We will instruct our parliamentary group to lobby for this.

Sister Jean Haynes – Branch 390: Here to support

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Mark, hold on a minute, Mark, quiet please.

Sister Jean Haynes – Branch 390: here to support motion 64. We having to work longer and longer to get our State Pensions, pensions that we've all worked hard for and paid into for a long time throughout our working lives, so it's about time the government ensured that we all have the comfortable retirement that we all deserve and end pension poverty immediately. Making State Pensions tax exempt would be the first step to addressing this injustice. It has been total mistreatment for many years of all those people, like ourselves, who have made enormous contributions to industry and the economy during many years of hard work and sacrifice. I don't believe for one minute all the spin of pre-election campaigns, so we must act now. Those with private pensions or occupational pensions will still have to pay tax according to the tax thresholds but again, most of us here can only receive the State Pension when we retire, so we need the extra support. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Wasili Ali – Branch 561: No, no, no, no. I'll take it, it's okay. Afternoon, Conference. Here to support the motion. When I was growing up, I believed I'd work up to 50, 50 years retire, enjoy my life. In this country, we are working until we are one foot in the grave. The little that I've saved, why should they tax me? I believe they should leave my money alone, let me enjoy it before I die. Thank you. Support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Sorry, this is a very interesting issue. The pensions have gone up, my private pension has gone up a few pounds and other pension gone up and the tax gone up as well, right, so what's the point of giving us that few pennies and then taking them back? That's fooling people, so it's a joke. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Michael, because there's nobody else, is there?

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): We would urge you to vote with this motion, please. At the moment, the current State Pension is £221.20 a week. The National Living Wage would give somebody on a 40 hour contract £457.60 and as I've said before, the National Living Wage is supposed to be just about enough to keep you afloat with your family. The State Pension is less than half of that. Jean used the word pension poverty and that's bang on. These people, they want to give you some money and then take it back in tax. Where the hell's that coming from? It's absolute nonsense. You work all your life for the State Pension and then they tax it. It's crazy, it should be tax exempt, end of. Please vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Unanimous, thank you very much. 65.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Give her a round of applause.

[APPLAUSE]

65

Branch 390

This Conference agrees that increasing the age at which the state pension is paid has been a disaster for workers in our industry. The stress, strain and general wear and tear on our bodies is a lot worse than in other, less manual, industries.

As such we want the state pension to revert to being paid at 65 and will instruct our parliamentary group to lobby for this change

Sister Jean Haynes – Branch 390: Here to support motion 65. As the years pass by, we're all having to work longer than our predecessors and quite frankly it's a disgrace, an utter disgrace. Over the next few years, I and many others should be planning our retirement as our parents and grandparents did before us but no, we now have at least another seven or eight years and it's rising all the time. We're putting ourselves through pain and injury on our already battered bodies, purely due to our unforgiving industry. Oh, to be a pen pusher! You young members out there, how it's going, you'll still be working when you're 70. I have family and friends who died at 72, so what lives might you have? This government wants us to revert to the early 19th century when our ancestors literally died at work and didn't have any retirement to look forward to. This is an absolute disgrace. We must act now and protect our comrades. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded? Speakers? I've got Jonathan that's coming on, so just make your way down, Les. Jonathan.

Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's): Hi, yes, I'm in complete support of this motion. As Sarah and [unclear] are fully aware of where we work at Aunt Bessie's, it's a very physical job and with the current retirement age of 68, I'm only 44, so that puts me at least 24 years on before I can physically retire. Goodness only knows what age it's going to be when I actually do retire and as for the young members that are in the room, it's going, it could very well possibly be well into the 70s at the current rates. We need and urgently need to reduce this down to 65 at the very least. So, I urge the room to completely support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Les Bramhall – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool): On reading this motion for the first time, I was going to put my hand up and say I support it, but I'd urge you all to read the bottom line, which it says, as such we want the State Pension to revert to being paid at 65 and will instruct our Parliamentary Group to lobby for this change. Aren't we forgetting here, comrades, all those ladies out there in the WASPI campaign, who had thousands and thousands of pounds stopped from them when they should have been paid at the age 60?, my wife's one of them. She should have got her pension when she was 60. She didn't get her pension until six years later, when she was 66 and she's still working now at age 69 and myself included, I get my pension but I'm still working, 12 hour night shifts, 12 hour days, the reason being because I've still got a mortgage with about three years left on my mortgage. I can't afford to retire at the moment. So as much as I agree where it says to lobby to be paid at 65, we should be thinking before we vote about all those women who didn't get their pension at age 60, so I say oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): We've been asked to, we would ask the mover to remit the motion, on the wording, on the fact that it says 65. Are you happy to do that?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: 66.

66

Region 3

The union should lobby the government against the changes to the UK visa system. We declare to raise the threshold to £26,200 is not only racist but vindictive against migrant workers that have given so much to the UK economy and society.

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya, again. Thank you, H, thank you, thank you. We're talking about changes to the UK pension, not, sorry, oh bugger, oh no, not again. That's me fined. That's me fined, thank you very much. No, talking about changes to the UK visa system. I've spoken already at this Conference a few times about the worth of migrants. I can speak again and again and I don't think, I don't want to bore you too much, because, I don't want to bore you too much, because let's face it and again, this is one of the reasons why I'm so proud of this Union. It's one of reasons why I'm so happy to be a member of this Union, why I'm constantly, when I meet people, I'm showing off about our Union, about how we have so many different people from different places. How I can annoy Tatiana with my really bad Russian, I can annoy Kasha with my even worse Polish. You're lucky, by the way, Deborah, you didn't, you haven't heard my German and that's really bad, but it is. What they're trying to do, what they're trying to do is play little Englanders and shut us off, because they know again that when we come together in our beautiful multi-cultural country, we learn from one another, we appreciate one another, we learn about culture, we learn about history and these little Englanders, I'm sorry, I really am annoyed at the people like Farage and who's that idiot, David Starkey, who does the stuff on the Tudors, called himself a history, historian. His history is rubbish, by the way, it really is bad, yes? and they talk about culture.

Well, I'm sorry, but culture is an organic thing that develops over time. We don't have the same culture we had in the 1980's, the '80's weren't the same as the '60's, the '60's weren't the same as the '40's, they weren't the same as the '20's, it wasn't the same before the First World War, the turn of the 20th century and when we have people coming in to the country, we develop new cultures, we develop new art. Our food we eat is different and we have wonderful food, although by the way, I want to make a complaint. How come two members were able to get samosas last night?

[LAUGHTER]

No, but it is. We should be encouraging people to come and live amongst us and this, this £26,000, what a load of nonsense, what a load of nonsense. They just want their friends coming, because it's easy if you're a millionaire to come, because they just want to keep the working class separated. So, please vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 252: I'm going to support this motion, but I do think there's a point that's wrong in the information, it's raised to £38,000, not 26. Only because I know that because someone that actually works with me, has been working alongside me, actually his visa's running out in two months and he's had to apply for a visa which he's actually got in Canada, no questions asked for life, because he can't get a visa in this country to carry on working in the country, even though he's been doing so solid for the last two years, so I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Speakers? Online? Anyone? Anybody? Okay. Over to you then, Kevin.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716, Region 7 – Executive Council Member/Vice President: Afternoon, Conference. I always seem to come after Douggie. Douggie says everything I write down, so I totally agree with everything he said and I'm asking you to please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Short and sweet. Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 67.

67

Executive Council

The BFAWU endorses the social model of disability, which was developed by disabled people to identify and act against oppression and exclusion.

The social model of disability holds that people with impairments are disabled by barriers operating in society that exclude and discriminate against them. For example, barriers can be social and cultural attitudes, organisational and/or physical barriers that prevent equal access. The social model advocates for a "nothing about us without us" approach in which disabled people should have choice and independence, and meaningful input into any decisions being made about us.

Words and phrases that reflect negative, outdated historical and medical or pitying views of disability are stigmatising, offensive and harmful. It's important that our Conference reflect this, so we encourage you to use the language of the social model when drafting motions. For example:

- *Use the term 'disabled people,' 'disabled workers,' in education, 'disabled pupils/students' (not 'people with disabilities,' 'workers with disabilities' or 'pupils/students with disabilities'). [An exception: use 'people with learning disabilities' / 'people with learning difficulties' as chosen by this group of disabled people.*
- *Use 'non-disabled' people (not 'able-bodied' people) to describe people who are not disabled.*
- *Use 'impairment' to describe an individual's physical, sensory, or cognitive differences. 'Disability' is what is caused by the barriers in society.*
- *Avoid 'suffering from'. Use 'person with', 'person who has or 'person living with' an impairment. E.g., a person who has Long Covid.*
- *Use 'invisible impairments' (not 'hidden disabilities').*
- *Use 'wheelchair user' (not 'wheelchair bound').*
- *Avoid describing people as 'vulnerable'. Be more specific. Why are people in this group more at risk? Are they disabled? Are they from disadvantaged backgrounds? Are they more at risk due to poverty or isolation? With regards to Covid, use people 'at higher risk of infection,' for example.*
- *Use 'access needs' or 'access requirements' (not 'special needs').*
- *Use 'inform' to describe someone telling their employer about their impairment (rather than 'disclose').*
- *Use 'mental distress,' 'trauma' or 'mental health conditions' rather than 'mental illness' or other terms that pathologise mental distress.*
- *Use 'neurodivergent person' / 'autistic person' / 'dyslexic person' (not 'person with autism' / 'person with dyslexia').*

Notes: Motions may refer to the Equality Act which doesn't use the social model; however, it may be appropriate to refer to people as being 'considered as disabled under the criteria set out in the Equality Act'.

There is no such legal category as 'registered disabled' (although local social services may hold voluntary registers for e.g., sight-impaired people).

Further reading: Social model of disability: Interactive guide for union reps:

www.tuc.org.uk/resource/social-model-disability

Trade Unions and Disabled Members: Why the social model matters:

www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/socialmodel.pdf

The Social Model of Disability

www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/about-us/disability-in-london/social-model/the-social-model-of-disability-and-the-cultural-model-of-deafness

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the motion outlines the details, outlines in detail, great detail, the asks of the motion. The BFAWU as a member-led Trade Union, which houses part of Rule 1.1, the promotion and equality for all being an objective, as well as opposing actively all forms of harassment, prejudice and unfair discrimination, including on grounds of disability, we feel we should therefore endorse this motion on adopting the social model of disability, which was developed by disabled people to identify and act against oppression and exclusion. The social model of disability holds that people with impairments or disabled by barriers operating in society that exclude and discriminate against them, for example barriers can be social and cultural attitudes, organisational and/or physical barriers that prevent equal access. The social model advocates for a nothing about us without us approach in which disabled people should have choice and independence and meaningful input into any decisions being made which impacts them. Words and phrases that reflect negative, outdated, historical and medical or pitying views of disability are stigmatising, that is offensive and harmful and have no place in the BFAWU or indeed the wider Trade Union movement. It is important that our Branches, Regions, Conference and Union as a whole reflects this. The motion is encouraging you to use the language of the social model when drafting motions, but also when speaking about issues, because to be a truly inclusive Trade Union, that is welcoming for everyone, we need not only actions but we need to be using the right words too. The Executive asks you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes): I support this motion. As someone who suffers with dyslexia, I've been dyslexic all my life. I have, my reading is not 100%, my spelling is completely out the window. As I was growing up, I was getting picked on, everything else and it's took me coming to the Trade Union to get me like now as coming out speaking. If you'd have looked at me five or six years ago, I was very nervous, because my dyslexia puts it in the way. With me, I do dyslexic thinking, I think outside the box, that's what we do as dyslexias and the kind of thing is, it's the kind of thing, I know when I was in my 20's I went back to college to do a literacy and learn a bit more, you know, how to spell and the kind of thing is I can remember when I was a child, being in school, some of the kids were so cruel to me, because they used to punch me, oh, Michael, could you say this certain word and I couldn't pronounce the word and I was only about 13. Come on, Michael, they were like and I can't say that word and I used to go home crying and I can remember my mum writing me a little letter saying oh, Michael doesn't want to come to school, he's got kids picking on him, calling me certain horrible names, it's not my fault I'm dyslexic, kind of thing, you know. It's not disabled, in my words, but the kind of thing when I'm at work they devised, because when we started they said oh, you can't use your mobile 'phone to do hazards and all that, they've looked at where I am and they said oh, Michael, we'll allow you to use your mobile 'phone, because I use my mobile 'phone as a proof reader. I can say, on the App, you know, I can say it's this thing, I can't spell it, but then once I've got it on the 'phone, I can read it back to myself but if I went and spelt, wrote it on a bit of paper, people would go, what does that mean? I might know what it is, but you guys might not, but by using things like iPads and things like that, I have learnt myself in the last 20 years to read and that's because a lot of it, with this Trade Union, has helped me a lot. When I first, before I became a Shop Steward or anything, I was so nervous, because being dyslexic you would go, would I be able to do this job and when I got, Dave Dash put me forward to become a Branch Secretary, I was like, will I be able to do that job, because at first I was thinking my dyslexia would get in the way, but as I went forward, it pushed me and pushed me and then getting the confidence because it's pushed me and now it's helped me a lot. Thank you. Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you. 68.

This Conference calls for an immediate ceasefire, from all sides, in the Palestinian conflict. We condemn Israeli aggression and the forcing of Palestinians to leave their homeland. We demand that the building of Israeli settlements in West Bank stop, and existing ones be given back to the Palestinian people.

The United Nations needs to call a meeting in which a new resolution is passed to ensure Palestinians are given back their land which has been taken by the Israeli government by force. We also demand that all Palestine refugees from neighbouring countries should be able to return to their rightful homeland. Justice should prevail for lasting peace in which both Muslims and Jews live side by side as they were living before for centuries.

Brother Mohamed Akram - Branch 390: President, Platform and Delegates. First-time speaker, yes?

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Thank you.

Brother Mohamed Akram - Branch 390: This Conference calls for an immediate ceasefire from all sides in the Palestine conflict. We condemn Israel's aggression and the forcing of Palestinians to leave their homeland. We demand that the building of Israel's settlement in the West Bank stop and the existing one be given back to the Palestinian people. The United Nations need to call a meeting in which a new resolution is passed to ensure Palestine are given back their land, which has been taken by force. We also demand that the Palestinian refugees from neighbouring countries should be able to return to their rightful homeland. Justice should prevail, for lasting peace in which both Muslims and Jews live side-by-side as they were living before the conflict. I request to the, everybody to support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Douggie. Douggie, are you seconding it? It's from your Region, isn't it. Do you want to speak on it first then, Douggie, as seconder? Formally seconded.

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417 (Wigan): I believe the ceasefire's been accepted, one hour ago.

[AGREEMENT and APPLAUSE]

However, the legacy that it's left is absolutely tragic. It's not a conventional war, it never has been, what it is is a race war, [unclear], as the Germans used to call it. The Jews know it as the Shoah, or the Holocaust. It's murdering people, innocent women and children, men, dying for nothing whatsoever, you know. What if it was your family there in Gaza, how would you feel? It's terrible. Netanyahu and his cabinet must be held to account for what has gone on, tragic. I know what Hamas did is unforgivable, but if you pick up that leaflet, which is in your folders, read it, you'll understand that it goes back a long, long way, a long way, but as I said, the people in power that perpetrated those war crimes on both sides must be held to account by international law. Conference, accept this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: I'm not going to speak too much on this one, because I'm doing the next one as well that is, you know, another ceasefire. Do you know what?, I'm glad there's a ceasefire but this is another round, it's another round to it, because you know they always ask, we want the right of return, we want our land back, we want the end to expansion of settlements, we want the end to Apartheid and Israel will say right, well, we've got the ceasefire and they'll think that is and every year in the United Nations, every year in the General Assembly, there is a vote on a motion to, solutions to the Palestine issue, Palestine/Israeli conflict, every year and every year the entire world votes to accept it apart from Israel, of course, the United States and several of these little islands in the Pacific and every year it's voted on and nothing happens. Every year the Palestinians get more brutalised, every year we're lied to by the media and it's like oh, it's complicated, it's complicated. Have you ever heard that?, it's complicated. What's complicated about Apartheid? What's complicated in saying that genocide is wrong? What's complicated in saying that stealing somebody's land is wrong? What's complicated about that? What's complicated about doing the right thing?

And I'll tell you what, I will support this motion but I'm not saying it's with a hope, because the things, I recently met a young woman, a brave young woman, a young Israeli, who herself had refused, I will not serve in the IDF, I will not serve in the IDF, she had been to prison for this. She had to do the whole meeting with a mask on so that nobody would recognise her. She talked about how the militarism and how the racism had pervaded the entire of Israeli's society. Yes, vote for the motion but I'm sorry, I haven't got a lot of hope, because I know it's going to, in a couple of years' time it's going to be again and again and they're going to, politicians are just going to make the same excuses. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Supporting this motion. The US Secretary of State, Blinken, says that the difference between the US and Israel is that they support international law and Hamas doesn't. Israel has broken international law more than any other country in history, that's a fact. It has more judgements against it than any other country in history. Please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Chair and members. This is a [unclear] situation in the world now and who is paying for that?, us lot. Our taxes going to kill people in Palestine, our taxes going in killing everywhere in the world and who is sending it?, your snake. He is sending the money and in the night, in the evening, when you're eating, if you see the news about it. Muslim kids, not just one, two, I've seen people losing all the family, right and children, little children, some children were in the stomach of their mums. If you're a child, my child, get hurt and you can't sleep all night, the mother can't sleep and how the world is sleeping, how the British people, those supposed to be fair, fighting for human rights, right, so it's, I feel very emotional when I see it, right. I was, my health was bad for two years and sometimes when I go out for, have a glass of wine, to have a pint of lager and when I come, I can't eat, so we should stand together. Humanity is being wiped out, right. The same thing is happening in my country, India. A foolish government, a fanatic government of the same type of Israeli people, because Israeli people, I might be repeating it, they came from few centuries back, about three centuries back, Aryan people, then due to their activities, Hitler sent them to settle in [unclear] and if they are there, the world should and the UN should and Britain should get them together to stop fighting, because if the Israeli people, if they are there, then they should sit there as a neighbour and when other people, Muslim countries, give them support, they won't let the food go, they won't let the medicine go, it's a crime, crime against humanity. I think it's worse than the people who were killed with the bombs, they've gone for it, but this, I've seen sometimes legs, limbs, right, so we should, the elections are coming. Any MP, member for Parliament comes, question that right and if the Tory comes at my door and I will say if you don't open your mouth, don't touch my door. If the Labour come, same, but they are both the same creed. I want to give you good news, but I will give you tomorrow, so all of you go back to your places, right, if the Muslim kids are kids of yours. Muslims, they have one Allah, they worship one Allah. Jesus, Christians have one Jesus, okay, fine. I'm Buddhist, but I don't believe in God, I believe, so please, please, think about it seriously, is the children, babies and if they want to carry on the fight, all the politicians, all the MPs should go on the border and have a fight and get

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): We would urge you to please back this motion. Everyone, every Delegate should have had a copy of the BFAWU statement on Palestine in your Delegates packs and virtually the second word is genocide. It's, what is happening over there is way beyond the norm and it's just totally reprehensible. The last figure I heard was that 37,000 people have been killed in Gaza, that's lives, livelihoods, neighbourhoods obliterated by the tons of ammunition that Israel's rained upon Gaza. It's absolutely horrible, disgusting. Please vote for the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

One announcement I've got to make, on Saturday, 22nd June, 11 a.m. until 4.30, Cornwall, Cornwall?, that's you that Robbie, you're rubbing off on me, mate

[LAUGHTER]

Conway Hall, is the National Shop Stewards Conference. If anybody can get along, I'm sure it'll be a really great event, as it always is and I would encourage you to attend that and obviously learn some fascinating facts, meet some fascinating people and have a fantastic day.

Information for tomorrow, okay? So, we have got a speaker coming, but unfortunately they can't get here until 1, so this is how tomorrow's going to run. Conference will start at 11 o'clock, right and we'll finish the last motions, then we'll have lunch and then we'll go and do all the closing down stuff in the afternoon after the guest speaker's finished speaking. We're also going to have, from 9.30, in here, the Part 2, because we had a bit of a commercial break, of the Albion Project

[APPLAUSE]

so all of those that took part the other day, obviously I know you've campaigned and, you know, demanded it and now you've got it and for all of those that didn't, I would encourage you to come along and take part in it too.

So, is there anything on this evening? So there's an Allied meeting at 5 in here, other than that, you make your own amusement tonight. Thank you very much and tomorrow 11 o'clock, but don't forget, breakfast will still finish at half past 8.

Wednesday 12th June 2024

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. Can you hear me? Hello? Hello? Can you all settle down, please. Thank you very much. We're going to get through all the business today and obviously we've had a really great Conference and obviously we don't want to make Wednesday, you know, a position where we start to struggle and we end up staying here until late into the day and, you know, everybody starts to feel tired or anything like that, but I believe there might be some people who are very tired anyway this morning, because they were out until when was it, until the very, very early hours of the morning, you know, but obviously I'll keep nudging the General Secretary if she does fall asleep. I have offered her my dark glasses as well, just in case, but I thought it was very nice of her to stay awake just in case anybody wanted directing anywhere in the morning.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: It's been a long time since I've stayed up until the sun comes up.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Did the sun come up? We haven't seen it for all week. So that's the time, that's where you see the sun, it's at quarter past 5 in the morning, just outside, in the smoking bit.

[LAUGHTER]

General Secretary, call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, 13 and one absent with permission? It's me that's not supposed to be with it this morning. Region 4, Region 5, Region 7 and online? Thank you very much.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, are you okay? That's good, that's what I like to hear. Well, in that case then, we'll be joined at, obviously when we come back from lunch, just to remind you all Motion 69. Quieten down now.

69

Region 3

The BFAWU is in total agreement and stands in solidarity with the South African government in its case against Israel in the International Court Justice

Brother Duggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya. The motion here speaks about our Solidarity with South Africa at the ICJ, International Court of Justice. South Africa has charged Israel with the crime of genocide. Now don't get me wrong, we have to define what we mean by genocide. What do we mean? I can only quote, that in her fourth report from the occupied territories, Dr Francisca Albonesi, the eminent international lawyer, in her report on the occupied territories in [unclear], genocide is defined in international law as specific sets of acts committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part a national ethnic racial or religious group as such. It is often referred to as the crime of crimes. Due to its complexity because of the challenge of proving the specific intent as a convention requires and yet this complexity is not about creating a higher hierarchy among atrocity crimes, it is rather a reflection of a different nature and scale behind its threshold, for intent namely to destroy as prescribed by Article 2 of the Genocide Convention must be proved directly or inferred from facts which admit no other reasonable inference, but when genocide is so conspicuous, so ostentatious, as it is in Gaza, we cannot avert our eyes. We must confront genocide, we must prevent it and we must punish it.

The catastrophic situation I investigated is known as it is broadcast to the world in real, the real world by its victims in real time. Israeli soldiers have published footage boasting their crimes of killing families, mothers, children, bombing of homes, mosques, churches, schools. Self-incriminating videos show them sadistically mocking and humiliating their Palestinian victims, mass disappearances and arbitrary detentions, widespread torture and inhumane treatment add to the experience of death and loss. Israeli politicians have deliberately incited violence against Palestinians, the Israeli President describing there is no innocent in Gaza, there is no innocence, they do not care and if I mention one name to you, I want you to remember one name, Hind Rajab, remember that name, I will say it again, Hind Rajab, Hind Rajab was six years old. Hind Rajab was getting out of a zone that the Israelis told everyone to evacuate. Hind was with her uncle and aunt and three of her cousins. Hind, they killed her uncle and aunt, they then killed two of her cousins. Hind was the last one left alive, for three hours on the 'phone with the Red Crescent Society, a little girl, six, was crying, I'm scared, she kept on saying, I've wet myself, please help me, please come and get me. The Israelis wouldn't let anyone come and get her. The woman on the other end for the Red Crescent would recite verses from the Holy Quran to keep her momentum up. Then, after the hope of three hours when the Israelis allowed the Red Crescent to go and fetch this little girl of six in with a, they said we're near close, we're near close, we're close to you and then the recording goes off, when the recording goes off, they can't reach them.

They found the ambulance drivers the next week, they were just round the corner, all are dead and I don't know if this is going to pick it up but I'll play this.

[recording plays]

That was the last moments of a 15 year old girl, Hind's cousin, Layan. I want you all to remember this, I want you all to take this into your hearts when you vote on this motion. Say I accuse Israel of genocide, not because I'm bigoted or anti-Semitic, because I am a human. I accuse Israel of murder, not because I have anything specifically against Israelis but because I am a human being. Remember that these atrocities carry on and on and we cannot avert our eyes. Please vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Speakers? Okay, it's, yes, it's been seconded, mate, yes.

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Good morning. Chair and Brothers and Sisters. It's very hard to speak behind, on such a learned intellectual person and he can speak in details, but I can speak only with my sentiments. What's happening there, I think the whole world should support it, stand by them, because can you see little children, I've seen it, you have seen it and it's, they are not mosquitoes, they're not any worth. Whenever anyone is killed, people feel sad and this is what is happening and England and other countries are supporting it and you, we are all guilty, British people, we are supporting them, your Prime Minister is supporting them, selling them bombs, right. It's killing somebody's children. It's hard and as humans we must wake up. It could be your families tomorrow, then you will cry, right. So it's about time we all wake up and stand up in your own towns, when it comes to elections coming, sorry, Parliament elections coming, when those people come there, they ask for vote, after that you don't see them for a long time and you tell them that where you stand here and if they say well, we don't, well, it's nothing to do with us, then you tell them we have got nothing to do with you lot, because children are children, Muslim children, Hindu children, Sikh children. I just want to say something short. Never mind about other people children, my dog died about five years ago, the whole family didn't sleep all night and they didn't eat. Dog, I think, he was more than a human being, but as the Labour movement, if they are supposed to be working for us, those are, we shall fight for them, not these rich people sitting there on their backsides, they're not going.

I've met loads of Lords, I've got badges and given badges and this, that and I have been recently told that in my town, they are organising royal recognition for me, organising campaign and I have told them no way I am going to go down in front of that family, the Royal Family. I know Diana, what happened to her. I was at the Palace two days before that, two days after that [unclear], it was [unclear]. I don't want to say much more and I went to, I took a, hired a taxi, I went to that hotel where Princess Diana chose to meet Dodi's son. This poor girl was killed and she was not just a girl, she was a girl who worked for charity all over the world and she was a rich woman, her parents were rich, millionaires, more richer than your King, the King's property is your property. I don't believe in the royaldom, I don't believe in Lords and this and I went to, I've seen many Lords and I don't bend in front of them, they should bend me because they're living on my bloody money. Anyway, thank you very much, thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716, Region 7 – Executive Council Member/Vice President: Morning, Conference. Speaking on behalf of the EC. The EC would like you to support the motion and as usual I come behind Douggie and Douggie's generally got more information than I've ever got. This is the first time I've ever agreed with the South African government on anything, but Things Are A-Changin', as Bob Dylan once said, but I'll say this about genocide, since October 7th the number of people that were actually attacked by Hamas died, 1,200 people. In Palestine [unclear] 25,000 were killed, 9,000 of them were women, 14,500 were children. In anybody's books, that's bad, the crime of it, the punishment [unclear] the crime, I don't think so and the bottom line of this is, it's not just about genocide, this is a land grab, that's all they really want, they want the land, they want the people off it and the best way to do that is to kill them. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 71.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya. I'm sorry that I played you that last on the motion, but I think that illustrated my point more than anything else would, you know. BFAWU places its support and Solidarity in the boycott divestment and sanctions movement against Israel, because it is an Apartheid regime operating against the Palestinians. One of the things that broke Apartheid in South Africa was the Solidarity that people around the world showed in boycotting South Africa. You operate a racist regime, we will not have anything to do with you, we will not listen, we will not buy your goods, we will not invite you, your academics to teach at universities and we will not do anything, we will cut you off until you end this, but Israel's supporters often come at us, declaring we are not an Apartheid state, we are not it, how can we be an Apartheid state, we're not like South Africa. So it's a natural case to arm us with evidence, I'm a great believer in evidence and these are not the words of Douggie Johnson and the Bakers Conference, I'm not doing it ad-hoc and finding Israel guilty of being an Apartheid state. These come from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Israel's own human rights organisation B'Tselem and there are two people who knew something about Apartheid, who called Israel an Apartheid state. They happen to be Nelson Mandela and Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu. I think they know a little bit about Apartheid.

In fact, Arch Bishop Tutu said that what he saw and what he reported on in the occupied territories was worse than South Africa. What is happening to the Palestinians was far worse, because at least in South Africa, they wanted the indigenous population for cheap labour. In Israel they want them either dead or gone and the latest campaign shows this, but I must say, we must arm ourselves with evidence of why Israel is guilty. The 1998 Rome Statute defines Apartheid, a country has to be guilty of convening three elements. That there is an intent of domination by one group over a second group, that there is systematic oppression by this group over the second, that there has been one or more acts of inhumanity against the second group by the first. You define in Israel whereas Jewish Israeli citizens have no restrictions on where to live, where to travel, who to vote for, Palestinians are restricted by four distinct calcifications. One, Palestinian citizens of Israel have no, have relatively no restriction on travel but must adhere to the ideology of occupation or they may lose their citizenship. They must agree that Israel, the only people for right of [unclear] within Israel is the Jewish people, the Palestinians are pushed aside. They may not marry a Palestinian from a different area, because they may again lose their right to live in Israel. If they do marry a spouse, they may not come to live with them in Israel, but they may move into one of the Bantustan that Israel has set up. Palestinians of [unclear] are a different category. They consist of 350,000 citizens. They have right of residency, but little else. They may have their houses destroyed, they may have it seized by Israeli settlers.

Sheik Jafar was one of the things in the last crisis that happened. In the West Bank, travel is restricted for Palestinians, they are forced into 167 cantons. They often have violence metered on them by Israeli citizens. Children are often killed, they are often, these Israeli citizens are guarded by the Israeli army. I remind you that in the West Bank, in the West Bank alone, before October 7th, 240 Palestinians were murdered by the IDF and settlers and again I mention one name to you, I mention one name to you, Mohammed Al Tamimi, he was two years old, two years old, travelling to see relatives in a car with his father. The IDF then shot him in the head and shot his father as well, the two year old died instantly. This happens constantly. Water is seized, water rights, to get water. Palestinian homes are demolished. This is Apartheid all the time. The Palestinians are suffering this. When Palestinians dare to protest, they are taken by the IDF firing live rounds of ammunition. When Palestinians dare to celebrate Eid, they are blocked from going into the Al-Aqsa, the third holiest shrine in Islam. I'll just finish in a second and by the way, the plans they have for Al-Aqsa is that they wish Israel and there are members of the Israeli government who wish to have Al-Aqsa demolished and they've clearly stated it, demolishing the third holiest shrine in Israel. This is Apartheid and we must say no. Please vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? It's formally seconded, yes.

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: It's about Apartheid, I was [unclear] some views on this, so because my friend and my teacher, I take a lot of encouragement from him. Apartheid, it's not something new. It is, somebody, world famous person was involved in it. That was, I will give you the proof and it was very dangerous for me to say so, my friend knows. India's so-called Mahatma Ghandi, Mahatma means Saint and Churchill called him [unclear], he is a bigot. It seems a prize to hitting somebody who is the so-called father of Indian constitution. He was in South Africa, I think early '40's, 40-something and he was in South African police, he was a sergeant and he was beating black people, beating and then he moved from there, went to India and everybody believed him God, Saint. I used to at school, now I don't, the reason is the very shameful story, I will tell you, I've got the proof and I will tell you, when I tell you that the proof was he was caught, nicked with the health minister in India [unclear] and she slapped him in the bedroom. I've got a book

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Mohinder

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: my friend, he have it and it was banned in India, the person who wrote his story and his house was burnt and he was hiding for a long time. The book, bookshops were burnt and fortunately, before his death, he sent me a book, I think it's the only few remaining books in the world, but [unclear] Mahatma Ghandi

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Mohinder, this motion's about Palestine.

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: It's Palestine, because it's Apartheid, that's what I was saying. Okay, thank you. Thank you very much. It's Apartheid, he was involved in.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? I think it's you, no longer a debut. Seasoned.

Brother Curtis Tierney - Branch 258 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): For those of you who don't know about the BDS movement, it's a non-violent movement started in 2005, it's an anti-racist, human rights movement that opposes all forms of discrimination. The movement relies on putting pressure, political and economic pressure on Israel, for them to be accountable for the atrocities that have been happening and it's not over the months or the years, it's decades. For me and on behalf of the EC, we urge you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 74. I can put the composite in where I want and I just thought that we'd just try something else, yes, okay. I haven't forgotten, but I do appreciate, thank you very much, because I keep looking at you to remind me.

74

Region 3

The BFAWU disagrees with any Free-market trade deals that includes Bilateral investment treaty with an Investor State Dispute Systems and say they are an anathema to democracy. We as a union should lobby any Government to withdraw from such treaties and do not negotiate any new ones that contain such parts to future trade deals.

Brother Douggie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hiya. You might not be familiar with the terms used in this motion, Bilateral investment treaty, Investor-state dispute system. It might seem very long, very complicated and what has it got to do with me? I've got to say this is probably one of the most important issues in the world today, it's one of the most biggest issues that is trying to destroy democracy. I will explain. In all these free trade deals, what you will have is a Bilateral investment treaty. One of the first ones used of these would have been NAFTA. The bosses are very keen on these. What happens, you are supposedly, elect a government, it depends on how you elect a government, yes, you elect a government that puts forward policies you like. Unfortunately and I will give examples, if you are signed up to a Bilateral investment treaty, a foreign corporation that has interest in your country can turn round to you and say the law you have just brought in has meant that we have not got as many profits, we're taking you to a thing called arbitration. Most of the arbitration is carried out in the World Bank and it's carried out in secret, you're not even told it happens. You have three international lawyers who will sit there and they will say, there will be one for the country, one for the company and one supposedly independent. What then basically happens is they fine the country.

I will give an example. Ecuador had an American goldmine company that was polluting the local environment and the Ecuadorians had a vote, voted a left wing, good left wing government and the left wing government has decided this is bad, so we will shut down your goldmine. What did they do? The owners of this, hold on, you're stealing my profits, they took them to arbitration and they fined them more than the GDP of Ecuador, of the Ecuadorian country. Egypt, by the way, dared to raise the minimum wage, a good thing you would have thought, hold on, you are stealing our profits, off to arbitration, fine it, fined again. Germany, you think a big country like Germany can defend itself? Germany, after the Fukushima disaster, dared to say that nuclear power is dangerous and it is, so Germany closed all its nuclear power plants and said we're not going to have it.

Hold on, Swedish company Vattenfall said you're stealing our profits, off to arbitration and they fined Germany and by the way, there is no appeal from these, you cannot appeal from arbitration and if you want to get out of the treaty, it takes 10 years, by which time they'll get another government in. This is an attack on democracy, so that the corporations can have the governments they want. If you talk to the people of Latin America, they know all about it because they've been hit so many times. So please vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Alan Scott – Branch 415 (Park Cakes, Bolton): I'd just like to say to Ian, Mr Chair, we're not in a Douggie Johnson's political forum. When you read these motions at Standing Orders, half of these are all the same, we don't know about Nicaragua or Ecuador, yes. You're supposed to chair this, Ian. You let him go and on and on about things that are nothing to do with this Bakers Union. We're here for a Bakers Union. If it's about Israel, I understand, yes, but you've gone over and over and over and over about Israel, now you're going through South Africa, now you're going to Germany. What has this got to do with our Bakers Union motions? Thank you.

[some APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Hold on, Douggie. Alan, people are entitled to be able to put motions in to Conference that, Alan, sit, please. People are entitled to put in motions to this Conference, as long as they meet the requirement that's expected of people to submit a motion, then they're entitled to submit it, whether it's, we've had motions on fun fair rides, we've had motions on, you know, obviously Gaza, Palestine, Ukraine, we've had motions on many, many different things, because it's what people have a passion about, whether it's the Right to Food, it meets the criteria of what people feel in this Trade Union and obviously we'll find out whether or not people believe in this particular motion, which is about Bilateral investment, which is actually about the economy, it's about the way that business and corporations are actually taking over the world and impacting on your life. I think Douggie actually gave you a bit of an explanation there, so if you didn't know about it, what you've been given is an explanation about what this actually is. It wasn't about Israel, it wasn't about Palestine, it was about how the corporations control your governments, that's what this motion's actually about.

It's not about war, it's not about the impact of Gaza and Palestine at all, you know, it's about how corporations control politicians and governments and the bodies that they've set up to enable them to control the way we live our lives, so the people that you talk about, when you come up to this rostrum, you know, the hardship that people suffer, whether it's about poor housing and all of those other issues, actually gets covered by these Bilateral treaties, whether you like it or not. So, you may get frustrated because you don't like the fact that Douggie keeps getting up or anybody else keeps getting up, but the fact of the matter is, as you are, as everybody in this room is, they're all entitled to get up and speak. Unless you want us to start saying no, you can't speak any more, we don't want people to take a part in this Conference, because that's what we're here for, that's what Conference is, it sets the Agenda for the Union, whether you have a personal interest in it or not and unfortunately, it's also part about being a Trade Unionist and Trade Unionism, about recognising not just what's happening in your workplace, what's happening in the community, what's happening in the country and what's happening internationally too, because we're not just local Reps, Trade Unions are internationalists. So I hope that answers your question.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, obviously, is there any other speakers on the motion? If not, I've got, who have I got? Who's speaking on this? Peter, is it? Yes. Roger, isn't it.

Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): Good morning, everyone. Obviously everyone's spoken about this and a lot of people don't even know what this is. It's basically, in layman's terms, the top 1% taking the wealth, they've took it, it's later than you think. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 75.

The BFAWU pledges to challenge harmful and divisive language by.

- *Calling out the use of words that alienate and demean migrants and refugees.*
- *Standing up and challenging language which encourages division and harms migrants and refugees.*

Conference notes that there has been an increase in hostile language which is fuelling tension and hostility towards migratised and racialised groups in the UK, including migrants and refugees.

At the Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union, we have been leading the way in challenging the narrative around migration for some time.

We understand that language forms the foundation of how people navigate global immigration systems and how they are treated.

Conference agrees that we run a dedicated campaign to exploring the ramifications of certain language and show solidarity to migratised communities by standing up against harmful narratives.

We want to campaign for a society in which the migrant experience is respected and valued.

The recent events and inflammatory language used by the media and politicians shows us the time to defy the status quo is NOW.

Conference agrees that we would also call on politicians, charity sector organisations, the media and individuals to recognise that their words matter.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, we are heading into one of the most divisive general elections many of us will have ever lived through. The rhetoric around small boats, the attacks on those supporting Palestinians, the rising anti-Semitism and Islamophobia is clear for us all to see. It is in the news on a daily basis, it's in our workplaces shamefully and our communities. It has even disappointingly entered the Trade Union movement, with Reps and members using hostile language and sharing some shocking means on social media that isn't what we would expect from Trade Unionists, especially those who have migrant workers as members in their Branches. How do you think it feels for a Union member to see their Rep sharing stuff or speaking in a way that demonises them? It can't fill them with confidence that they're going to be supported by their Union, can it? And it certainly won't fill them with the feeling of Solidarity or unity. The motion is asking that we be brave and call out words that are used to alienate and demean migrants and refugees, taking a stand when they are used and challenging the rhetoric that cuts deep when heard by our migrant members. No-one and I don't care what the likes of Tommy Robinson, GB News, the rag that we don't mention and Nigel Farage says, absolutely no-one wakes up one morning and thinks I know, I'll walk, hitch hike, potentially drown in a rubber inflatable boat, because I fancy a change of scenery or that they'll put their kids through that.

They are forced out due to fearing for their lives, either due to war that wasn't theirs in the first place or like we've heard from Delegates in this room last year and the year before, ostracised for being a Trade Unionist or just for being gay. Families choosing to send their teenage son into the abyss of the unknown, knowing that they are unlikely to ever see them again, because that is better than those young lads being drawn into wars they are not, they have no involvement in, being forced to hold a gun, ripped through villages or be tortured and killed themselves, can you imagine having to live through that? Then they come here and people say, people that are supposed to be helping them, supposed to be supporting them, talking about Solidarity and unity, saying the same phrases as the right wing fascist that we go out on the streets to fight against. We want to campaign for a society in which the migrant experience is respected and valued. We want to run a dedicated campaign exploring the ramifications of certain language and show actual Solidarity to migrant communities, by standing up against the harmful narratives, not using them and we ask that you support the motion so that we can start that work, because we are proud, we are proud of our migrant members, we are proud of the contribution they not only give to the industry that we all work in, but into our Union and we are proud that as a Union, we welcome each and every one of them with open arms.

Please support the motion. Think about the language that you are using and what you are sharing on social media, because how would you feel if the tables were turned and you were on the other end of it?

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded. Speakers? No speakers? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 76. Dave.

76

Executive Council

Conference notes that the Morning Star is a reader-owned cooperative, a unique socialist voice in a world dominated by corporate media. It is the world's only English language socialist daily newspaper reporting our stories and giving us a voice.

Conference understands that there are a number of Morning Star Readers and Supporter groups around the UK in geographical areas.

Conference agrees that it would be great to have a BFAWU Morning Star readers and supporters' group. Which would be a means of connecting BFAWU members committed to increasing readership, raising funds and spreading the reach and influence of the Morning Star with each other and the wider membership.

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton): Mr President, Delegates. This motion is quite self-explanatory, it's quite a good explanation on the motion itself, so I'll be brief. This really is a great idea to increase membership, I meant to bring the paper with me as well, we've all been handed one this morning, to provide a daily social newspaper, Socialist newspaper, that not only educates, but tells the truth, reporting stories that many media outlets either cover up or distort the truth to give their own political agenda. So the EC would like you all to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded. Any speakers? To the vote. Those in favour? Those against?
That's carried. Composite 4.

Composite 4

That this Conference agrees the BFAWU is to lobby the government to end all arms sales to Israel and to ask our parliamentary group to work to stop all sales of weapons made in this country or abroad, to anyone.

Original motions: 70 (Branch 405) and 73 (Region 3)

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Moving Composite 4. Chair, EC, Delegates and comrades. That this Conference agrees that the BFAWU is to lobby the government to end all arms sales to Israel and to ask our Parliamentary Group to work to stop all arms sales, weapons, made in this country or abroad to anyone. Focusing on the Israel situation and the disproportionate response to the terrorist attack on October 7th, I'll repeat what I said in a previous debate that we had. Gaza is smaller than war time Berlin, Gaza in eight months has had more bombs dropped on it than the allies dropped on Berlin in six years of war, that is the scale of the disproportion that is going on and because of that scale, preventing weapons sales to Israel might actually have an impact rather than just being a symbolic event. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Ending arms sales. The other year, two-thirds of countries classified as not free because of their dire human rights records and civil liberties, have received licences to import weapons from the UK, over the past decade. Between 2011 and 2020, the UK licensed £16.8 billion-worth of arms, criticised by Freedom House, a US government funded human rights group. Of the 53 countries castigated for poor rights record on human rights, on the governments, on the group governments list, the UK sold arms and military equipment to 39. Further analysis by the London-based campaign against the arms trade found £11.8 billion-worth of arms had been authorised by the UK government in the same period, to the Foreign Office's own list of human priority, human rights priority countries. Two-thirds of the countries, 21 out of 30 on the UK's government list of oppressive regimes had received UK military equipment.

Again, UK Department of Defence and Security Exports has published a list of countries it invited to one of the largest arms fairs in London, eight are on the UK government lists of human rights priority countries, but an argument may be caused, it allows us to give jobs, but for every £1 billion in investment in the arms industry, leads to only 11,000 jobs. For the same money of £1 billion, we could get, if we invested it in clean energy, we could have 16,000 jobs. If you invested it in education, it would lead to 26,000 jobs, so is it worth the money? Not the fact that we are supporting some of the most rapacious and horrendous regimes in the country, in the world, sorry. Not the fact that what we are doing is supplying arms to some of the worse torturers and murderers on the planet. Do we want our country to be known like that, or do we want our country to be known as a beacon of supporting human rights, dignity and democracy? So please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500: Although in principle I completely agree with this, but actually, honestly? I can't see us being able to do it. The economy is in rife trouble anyway, we all have extra taxes to pay, etc because the government's always scraping money off the little man. If the arms sales money goes, we're going to be in worse condition, they're going to want more from us and as much as I hate to say it, we've trained some of the world's worse leaders in our military camps. We send our soldiers, our best trained soldiers to support their soldiers, to train them in their countries and then we go up against them and fight them sometimes, yes. I know it, I've been there, I've seen it, I've done it. It's a vicious circle, but if we don't sell them these arms, somebody else is, yes and I don't want to be the person that stands up here and opposes this on the fact that I agree with what happens to those arms, but I would ask you to oppose it on the fact of it's going to happen anyway and I don't think it's actionable, sorry.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): I'm going to ask you to oppose this motion again, because one, it's exactly the same thing that I believe I discussed two years' ago and it's the wording on it at the end, to ask our Parliamentary Group to work to stop all sales of weapons made in this country or abroad to anyone and it's as simple as that. I believe I once said before, there are some things you have to fight for. What if we were in the position of actually being able to supply arms to someone that was being massacred, that was facing a dictator, was facing a tyrant, would you have supplied arms to fight in Spain against Franco?

I would, so saying anyone just rules out your motion of actually being able to send weapons or supply weapons to a just cause as well as an unjust one, so I oppose. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: The Executive would ask the mover if he would like to remit the motion on the wording at the end, because obviously the issue around the banning of the arms sales to Israel, I think is, Andy was the mover, because it's Branch 405 that was the first one on the list.

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: We will remit the motion but I will make two points on it. We will never have a peaceful world until we start to make progress towards peace and work towards peace, which is partly what this is directed at and another one, I'm sorry, the Royal Navy spent a hell of a lot of time blocking weapons going to the Republicans in Spain and Britain refused to supply the Republicans with weapons, so bad example. So, remit the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Composite 5.

Composite 5

This Conference agrees that the Tory Government's Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 is an attack on our right to withdraw our labour as a tool to improve our working conditions.

As such we should, at national and branch level, raise awareness of this legislation and the responses to it, including that of the TUC.

Conference also agrees to repel any anti trade union laws and supports the right to strike.

Original motions: 11 (Branch 558) and 38 (Branch 390)

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Composite 5, right. This Conference agrees that the Tory government's Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act of 2023 is an attack on our right to withdraw our labour as a tool to improve our working conditions. As such we should, at National and Branch level, raise awareness of this legislation and the responses to it, including that of the TUC. Conference also agrees to repel any anti-Trade Union laws and supports the right to strike. Well, right, so, it's exactly what it says on the tin. I don't know if you're aware of the government Acts, the Minimum Service Levels. If you're not, it's basically a piece of legislation whereby they can make the decision that certain parts of industry and industries are basically vital and they want to restrict their right to strike. You've seen it with the trains thing, you've seen them try it with the nurses, stuff like that. It's every workers' right, fundamental right and idea of Trade Unionism that the only peaceful way you can show your disapproval and opposition is by withdrawing your labour and fair enough, we can do it at the minute, Bakers blah, blah, blah. What if you're a fireman, if you're an ambulance driver, what if you're a nurse, rail driver, it's lunacy and don't think that this legislation was enacted to actually stop that happening, because they know strikes are going to happen. It's specifically been designed to get the Unions into court, to get decisions and make it financially unreasonable for them to continue, yes?

They're just trying to, it's a bullying act, they're trying to bully you and you might think well, you know, police, fire brigade, well, it's not me, it's not me, but here's one. We were all clapping ourselves a couple of years ago during Covid and we actually were lucky, we got to go to work, didn't necessarily all get furloughed, but what did they class us as?, key workers, right, so how long, if you're having a dispute with Hovis or Warburtons or Morrisons or Rathbones and someone decides oh well, you're a key worker, you're food, you're a food worker, you're a key worker. How long before oh, guess what, you can't go on strike and it's not just us is it, it's not just bakers, it'll be the entire food workers, it'll be the entire people that work in shops, it'll be manufacturers. The attempt is clear, they want to stop your right to withdraw your labour and that is our fundamental right and that's why you have to support this. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You'll need to walk back down now. I was just saying to Amanda, she needs to walk back down now. Yes, you do, because you're seconding it.

Sister Amanda ? - Branch ?: Seconding the motion, formally. I just want to say I agree totally with everything Mark said. It's our God-given right, as Unionists, to remove our labour to strike, simple as that. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Supporting this motion and to just give you an idea of how stupid the Minimum Level of Service is and how one-sided it is. The rail companies have already breached the Minimum Levels of Service that would be imposed on a Union when they strike. Think about that. Their own breakdowns and incompetence have gone below the Minimum Service Levels that the government has set for a Union, on the railways, but nothing's happened. Why aren't they getting fined, why aren't their executives in court?, because that's what would happen to the RMT and ASLEF if they break the Minimum Levels of Service. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: I'm here to support it. If this goes through and we allow it to happen, there's no point even being here this week, is there? If you can't remove your right to strike, because of this legislation being imposed, what's the point in being here? Now, Mark Hilton touched on a very interesting point. Most people in this room didn't get furloughed, they were classed as key workers, I actually knew that, not because of Covid, but because of the oil crisis in 2000 when we were all expected to get to work by hook or by crook, so if they're expecting you there in times of crisis, you know and you can't strike after you don't agree with what's going on, well, what do they really think of you? I mean at the end of the day, you know, you're essential workers and you, as workers, should have the right to strike. If they're saying that you're good enough to go to work during a pandemic, then you're good enough to take action when you don't like what's going on in your workplace. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council): We would urge you to support this motion. The recent trend in anti-Union legislation, as Mark and Dougie and Glyn were saying at the Albion earlier on, it's counter-revolutionary response from the bosses to keep us in our places, because people like the nurses, the junior doctors, ASLEF, the RMT, were standing up for their rights, they were going out on strike and they're using this legislation to beat us and to keep us in our places, which is in work and doing what we're told. We do need to repeal all of this anti-Union legislation and we do need to understand the reasoning behind why it's being brought in and it is, it's a tool to keep us where they want us to be. So, please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you very much. Emergency motion number 1.

EMERGENCY MOTION 1

Branches 356/331

Recently with the rejection of Narendra Modi at the Indian election with the BJP losing to majority it is time this country needs to take stock of its relationship with the worlds largest democracy. With Modi being weakened we have an opportunity to support those who stand for human rights against racism and islamophobia

Brother Dougie Johnson – District Branch 356: Hi. You might say why does India matter? India matters a hell of a lot. India matters and should matter to us not only because of the connections through the Indian diaspora that live in the UK, but India is the largest democracy on the planet, it's the largest democracy in the world and if democracy is stifled in India, it can be stifled anywhere. We talked, the last motion talked about bosses stifling us, the bosses hate democracy, the bosses hate it, because democracy means that my vote counts as much as the Duke of Westminster's. My vote counts as much as any billionaire, but if democracy goes in India, it can go anywhere. It asks, the motion just asks for us to stand in Solidarity, support those who are standing up for human rights in India, those who are saying what is happening in India is wrong. We should care, because if it can happen in India, it can happen here.

We should care a lot. We must support and I've always believed, I support anybody, no matter where they are, no matter who they are, who stands up for democracy and human rights, I support them and it is a Trade Union thing to stand with our Brothers and our Sisters. The history of the Trade Union movement is about standing with workers and for dignity around the world, whether it be the Mat? women who received support from Australia, whether it be the Trade Unionists who stood against Apartheid South Africa, whether it be the Trade Unionists when the countries of the world invaded Russia in 1918, 21 armies and the Trade Unionists said no, we will not brutalise our Russian friends. It matters to stand up for democracy and human rights. Please vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Baddhan - Branch 331: Chair and friends. My friend has said India is the largest democracy. Yes, India has the largest dictatorship, dictatorship, it's, I'm from India, I was only 16½ when I came here. There's no such a thing as democracy, the country is large, billions of people, some 80% are living below the poverty line. To get their, they're being given food every week. The poor people are my people, 70 – 80%, in all states. They sell their boat for food, for food and what right India has got to say that they're the largest democracy, the person who created the democracy was Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the father of Indian constitution. He drafted India's constitution, which gives you liberty, equality and fraternity. That means if people have liberty to do something, anything which is not criminal. People have got the right to vote, people have to go school, but that is no [unclear] thing there, because people who open their mouths, they're locked, without any breaking law. There is two government agencies, CBI, Central Bureau Investigation, other one is ED, Enforcement Directorate. What's they do, they arrest somebody on suspicion that he's corrupt or he's this and that and then they put them in jail for a long time. There are intellectual people, educated people, those who are 20 times more educated than India's Prime Minister. Do you know his qualification? He only went to primary school for four year, but he has produced a certificate of graduation and where he done that graduation, that's university never existed, so it's false to call India democracy.

There are loads of people in this country. If you do a crime or you are blamed to do a crime, they arrest you and investigate you, your family can see them and if they are free, they come out and I'll give you my own example. It was, I was only 16½ and somebody filled my form, I didn't know that, I signed that form and do you know, this man went to jail for, I think, 15 – 16 weeks and then the court found out that person was innocent, he just signed it, some person gave me, told me to fill the form, I filled it, so this was justice, because it wasn't my fault and so it's wrong to say India has democracy. Anybody opens their mouth, India, so many states, some are intellectual, they fight, the fight, they are fighting, but they're going to jail, but now we've got democracy and people, there are people in jail for 2 – 3 years without anything, but because CBI have to investigate, ED have to investigate, but one thing is good in the long run, the Chief at the Supreme Court of India is set up by Dr [unclear] and the constitution and release them, because the government is from there, traitors, they are terrible people, they like to put them in and they beat them up, right. If I am a rebel, I'm against it, if I go to India, I will be arrested at the airport, right, I can't take a risk, but at least if I'm outside, I'm in Britain, Britain giving me everything I suppose, all my friends and all that, so it's wrong, never say India is democracy

[APPLAUSE]

India is oppressive, dictatorship and the whole leadership is now, we had just elections still going on. The party, [unclear] party lost and there were some other MPs and they are, they are there, but one day the people will wake up and blow the system up. Thank you very much for giving me time.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC): After 10 years in power, 10 years of policies that have discriminated and stigmatised religious groups and other minorities, restricted free expression across the country, stamped down on peaceful assembly, targeted civil society and human rights defenders and escalated human rights violations, we have now seen a rage amongst many voters in the recent Indian elections, the largest election in the world and as Duggie pointed out, India does matter, it's the world's largest democracy, with over 900 million registered to vote at the recent elections, but as Mohinder said, it's also the world's largest dictatorship. Unfortunately although not achieving a majority, the BJP's coalition government have seen the opposition grow much stronger than ever before in the last decade and this motion asks that we use this opportunity to send our support to them and to express our anger against any organisation or party which represents racism and abuses human rights. So the EC asks you to please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Quarter past 1, please, can you be back in the room? Cheers.

[BREAK]

Thank you very much. Can everybody take their seats, please. General Secretary to call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5, Region 7, online? Thank you. Just before I pass back to the National President, you'll notice the full-time Officials are coming round with some QR codes on business cards and stickers, it's dead exciting, shush. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Can we, can we give a massive thanks to Robbie, who's obviously brought badges and encouraged people to donate and his final total, to go to the food bank, is £241.42.

[APPLAUSE]

I've also received a message from Dermie Best. He says I am deeply honoured and humbled to learn the Health & Safety Award has been named after me. This recognition is not only a personal milestone but also a testament to the collective effort and commitment we all share towards maintaining the highest standards of health and safety in our workplaces. This, if we could, a bit of hush please, the establishment of the Dermie Best Health & Safety Award is a significant initiative that underscores the importance we all place on the well-being of every member. It is reminder that safety for our people is not just a priority but a value and is inherently woven into the fabric of our daily operations. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who played a role in making this possible. Your support and belief in the principles of health and safety have been the driving force behind our success. This Award will serve as a beacon in inspiring current and future generations to continue championing the cause of health and safety and environment. Thank you once again for the incredible honour. I am truly grateful for this gesture and opportunity to be associated with such a meaningful accolade. Please give my regards to all attending Conference and give my congratulations to John Owens for being the first to win this well-deserved Dermie Best Award. Yours fraternally, Dermie Best.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, last motion. Emergency motion number 2.

[APPLAUSE]

EMERGENCY MOTION 2

Branch 558

That this conference agrees that Kevin Sinfield is awarded a knighthood due to his tireless campaign for raising awareness for MND for his fallen team mate Rob Burrows

This we believe is the biggest act of nobility seen by the working class in recent history and has the trade mark of true chivalry.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558 (Leeds): Oh, it's changed. Good afternoon, comrades. Emergency motion 2. That this Conference agrees that Kevin Sinfield is awarded a knighthood due to his tireless campaign for raising awareness for MND for his fallen teammate Rob Burrow. This we believe is the biggest act of nobility recently seen by the working class in recent history and we believe it's the true trade mark, the trade mark of true chivalry. Does everyone know who Rob Burrow was? Does everyone know who Kevin Sinfield is? Okay. It's pretty self-explanatory and though I'm not a big fan of the honours system particularly myself, it has to be said that this lad has gone over and above because of love and friendship for his friend and also, on a serious note, the frustration that is still shared by governments, successive governments still avoiding their responsibilities of paying for medical things. Why, in this day and age, when as someone said we can afford to ship arms here, there and everywhere, we can afford this and that and the other, and yet former, parts of the health situation are having to be maintained by charity, like how far you can run or how you can climb or whatever.

In this day and age, it's not right. It's an absolute disgrace, but in a motion that we discussed at the beginning of this Conference, we look at some of the despicable people that are awarded knight hoods for all sorts of dodgy practices or basically for what money they're paying the parties, whatever. I'd just like to recognise a proper Northern working class lad that's gone above and beyond and I firmly believe that if he wasn't a Northern working class rugby league player, if he was a pop star or something else, I think he would have already been knighted. The system stinks and whilst I don't agree with honours as I say, I'd just like to turn round and put him up as an absolutely shining example of what you can do if you put your mind to it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sean, you'd be up second, I believe.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558 (Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield) – EC Member: What is this? Not just any tea bag, it's Yorkshire Tea. There's a guy at the back there with a good street price for these, never leave home without it. Right, on with this, right. Emergency motion 2, yes. Now, I want you to look at this motion and Mark pitched that really well, it's a 558 motion. It comes in peace and leaves your conscience in pieces, right. First of all, that this Conference agrees that Kevin Sinfield is awarded a knighthood due to his tireless campaign for raising awareness for MND for his fallen teammate Rob Burrow, right. We believe this is the biggest [unclear] the working class has seen in recent history. Right, what does it mean? We're not championing the knighthood system or the honours system whatsoever.

What we are doing is pointing out, as a Branch, to this Conference, the atrocities against the working class that the establishment do on a regular basis. They ignore Sinfield for tirelessly campaigning to raise awareness for his teammate. At the same time, they award Tim Martin a knighthood and guess who else got a knighthood, I'm going to compare it to, Jimmy Savile. The city I live in were in outrage about this, because Sinfield's done a lot more than them two. They've committed atrocities against the working class and they get rewarded. Now when I attended school, the few times I attended school, I always understood that being a knight was noble, you had an ability, you were meant to be, you know, respected. Now somebody talked about the D-Day landings yesterday in here, I watched that last week and there was a Sergeant Major telling kids, from the East Lancashire Regiment, that they take a good look at them white cliffs, because you may never see them again. Now if you're put in a landing craft, who would you be put in a landing craft with? Kevin Sinfield, Tim Martin or Jimmy Savile? I know who I'd rather be with, right. Now if they're reading the back of The Morning Star this morning, Joey Barton's going to get a knighthood as well, if you check the back pages, the sports pages, read it, right.

Now, they're not rewarding people for good work, they're rewarding people for whatever. Now, I spoke to Mark about this, I said well, how do these honours go in? Well, the King of England is given a list. Well, I'm sure everyone in this room would agree, you'd rather give the King of England a list or care of your kids and your grandkids, right? So, going on to these knighthoods, right. We believe that it's been despicable how this guy's been overlooked, right? He's championed his mate, his mate's fallen and we think it's an establishment-bashing motion, because it's so obvious. Sinfield gets ignored, Tim Martin gets a knighthood. Tim Martin, this Trade Union campaigned to get the people in his business furloughed because he didn't want to pay them, so what are they rewarding? Nastiness. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405: Fully supporting this motion. I'm no fan of the honours system, but if anybody deserves a knighthood, it's Kevin Sinfield, for the care and love of his friend and the work that the illness that his friend has suffered has inspired him to do, to raise awareness and raise money to research motor neurone disease. What he's done has proved he isn't just a knight of the realm, he's a prince among men. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Conference, the Executive doesn't take a position on this motion and I'll give you an explanation and the reasons why. We have got a traditional position that we don't support the honours system and obviously this is calling for us to recognise the honorary process, but obviously, you know, that doesn't stop you from voting on it and what we also said was if there was like a petition or anything like that, a campaign launched and obviously we would take from what you vote in this room as the position in relation to any correspondence we received.

So, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's pretty unanimous, I think.

Okay, so that's all the motions done. I mean I've got another message here and obviously it's just a shame we just got it today instead of like probably Friday, but obviously I want to thank George Hoye from Branch 703, who looks like he's actually completed more than 20 years, but obviously we'll make sure that you get a 20 year badge, but thank you very much for your loyal membership to the Bakers Union.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, Conference, we believe they're in a taxi somewhere, we're hoping in Stone, but in the meantime obviously I'm going to have to switch Dave up and invite the Executive Guest to Conference to give an address to Conference. Please welcome Dave Suddards everybody.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards (Executive Guest): Thank you, Conference. Well, I'm not usually lost for words, I was going to write something but for so many years anything I wrote tended to end up in a grievance, so

[LAUGHTER]

I better not write anything but no, I joined the Bakers Union in 1999, I became a Shop Steward in 2005 and a Branch Secretary in 2006 and I loved every minute of it. It's been fantastic. I mean admiration, of all you out there, what still carry on the cause. I think you all do a fantastic job. If you get down ever on the things what we do get, right, just think of what you do get right because, believe me, if it wasn't for people like us and yourselves, the employers would have us all on minimum wage and with shocking working conditions. I'd like to thank the Executive and I'd like to thank Ian and Sarah. I'd also like to thank yourselves and your members for extending the invitation to me and what I would say is, if you can, to keep the Union strong, let's all go back and make five more members. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

[PRESENTATION TO DAVE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right, okay. Anybody know any songs?

[LAUGHTER]

Dum, de, dum, de, dum, de, dum

I'm a Union man, aye.

So in the meantime then, what I'll do is, I'll thank everybody that, yes, yes

Have you all got these? I'm going to have to find somebody to talk to you about now, aren't I?

Once upon a time

We got these things printed and they'll take you to the joiners page, so they'll be really useful in your workplace and achieving those five members that Dave talked about, so do as Dave says, join five members and we've made it easy.

You could go and get some resources

Do we know how close they are?

Okay, what I'm going to do, what I'm going to do, rather than, because obviously I can't close Conference until they've been

[LAUGHTER]

... so I'm going to give you 15 minutes, alright? I thought that was pretty reasonable of me. Back in here for quarter to. Gary, can you do us a favour, mate? Will you just make sure you chase them in for us?

[BREAK]

Okay, thank you. If we can settle back down. Thank you for your indulgence for that extra break, I'm sure you enjoyed it. You will notice we've been joined by two people, one of which is going to speak and the other one is going to translate. So it's our proud privilege to welcome Lina Montilla Díaz, who's from the Youth Department at CUT, which is the Columbian equivalent of the TUC. So we welcome you to our Conference and when you've finished taking photos obviously [LAUGHTER] and invite you to take the rostrum to address our Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nick MacWilliam, Trade Union Officer of Justice for Columbia: Hi, everyone. I know you'll hear from Lina, but I'm just going to, one minute of your time. So my name's Nick MacWilliam, Trade Union Officer of Justice for Columbia, a long-running Trade Union campaign to support Trade Union rights, human rights and peace in Columbia, founded by the TUC around 20 years ago and all throughout that time, the BFAWU has been a really, really big supporter and, you know, we're really pleased that that support is continuing, so strongly under Sarah and of course we really appreciate the time. I know this is the end of Conference and you're all staying around to hear from us, so really, really appreciate that as well. Just to say, it was founded because Columbia was and remains the world's most dangerous country for Trade Unionists, more than 3,000 murdered since the 1970's and still being murdered regularly, despite the many advances done and the food sector has been impacted as any other sector and some of the biggest food companies, food and drink companies in the world have been implicated in human rights violations in Columbia, including Coca-Cola, Nestlé and you might have just seen the news this week, Chiquita, which is a fruit company, has just been found guilty in the United States of paying paramilitary groups which were murdering Trade Unionists in the early 2000's.

So, you know, it's workers like yourselves and across all other sectors who are on the front line, because those are the ones really who are building change and striving to make conditions better for people in their communities, so that's why JFC exists. I will be leaving some leaflets at the end, just about the organisation. If you can affiliate your Branches, we would really love you to do that, so I'll just leave those here and I'll hand over now to Lina. So, thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Lina will be speaking in Spanish, by the way and I will be translating.

Señora Montilla Diaz addresses Conference

I bring warm greetings from the CUT, Columbian Trade Union Federation, a workers' congress that day after day fights for decent work, democracy and peace with social justice for the Columbian people.

It's great to be here. My name is Lina Montilla Díaz, I'm a teacher and a National Executive Member of the CUT Columbia, as are, as Ian said, the Colombian version of the TUC and I'm Director at the CUT of the Department for Young Members and the Eradication of Child Labour.

I extend a warm hug and gratitude to Sarah Woolley, General Secretary of the BFAWU, a Trade Union organisation that for over 150 years has fought for fair conditions for its members.

This is a historic political moment in Columbia, which has brought international attention to our situation, as for the first time we have elected a progressive government.

So these achievements are thanks to huge protests by social movements and Trade Unions which carried on for a long time, led by the Colombian people. Particularly in November, 2019 we launched the largest protest in decades, with Unions at the forefront and then again after the Covid-19 pandemic in April, 2021. These were the largest protests we had seen in a long time, they were against inequality and violence, as we took to the streets fighting and resisting for almost three months, but it was soon afterwards, in 2022 that this public anger at the long-established system in Columbia was expressed in the election.

We elected a people's mandate in the form of President Gustavo Petro and Vice President Francia Marquez at the head of what we call the Government of Change.

However, our government faces serious obstacles to passing its progressive agenda. There are strong concerns of illegal coup to remove the government from office. This campaign is being led by right wing opposition parties, the business class, the corporate media and others who benefit from the inequality in Columbia.

Therefore, it's important to state that as a Trade Union movement, we continue to defend the Colombian people's right to life, to peace and to democracy.

We support the government's ambitious social reforms that have fundamental demands of Trade Unions, social movements and mass mobilisations, especially in the last 30 years of neoliberalism in Columbia.

These basic demands are for decent health care, universal pensions, decent and dignified work, education as a fundamental right and good quality public services at a low cost.

However, these fair and basic demands that are supported by the majority of people have been blocked by opposition congress members who want to preserve their privileges and will do anything to prevent laws that prioritise the people's interests over their own.

I would also like to mention the campaign for peace in Columbia, where there has been a very long armed conflict because of the inequality.

The government has developed a policy called Total Peace, which aims to reach peace agreements by negotiating with the many different armed groups that are in Columbia, such as gorilla movements, dissident groups and others.

At the same time, the government is making important efforts to advance implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement between the Colombian State and the far left guerilla movement that was so strongly backed by Trade Unions in Britain and elsewhere, including the Bakers Union.

But shockingly, since the signing of this Peace Agreement in 2016, more than 420 former guerillas in the peace process have been murdered, including 10 since the start of 2024, that's 420 out of 13½ thousand who entered the peace process, so it's approaching 4% have been murdered.

Furthermore, killings of social activists including community leaders and Trade Unionists are still being committed regularly. Since 2016, at least 1,366 community leaders and activists have been murdered, with virtually all of these crimes going unpunished. Armed conflict has again escalated between dissident groups, gorilla groups and right wing paramilitary groups.

That's why we support the government's Total Peace policy and keep striving for peace with social justice, because peace is not only the silencing of guns, it is also the guarantee of a dignified life for all.

That's why from this platform and in the name of CUT Columbia, we ask the international community to unite its voice with ours to say no to the soft coup against the Colombian government, Columbia's Congress prioritising the interests of the people over those of big business. Let's make peace with social justice a reality and we demand public and decent education at the service of people and not markets.

And finally, I want to again thank the BFAWU for your Solidarity, for listening to these words and for your interest in my beautiful country. Thanks also to Justice for Columbia for its Solidarity work with the coup, with Columbia and to support Colombian Trade Unionism and peace.

And also I want to thank you and Justice for Columbia for giving this opportunity to speak to you today, about our country of enchantment, coffee and orchids. Sooner, rather than later, we hope it will be the country that we dream of. As a woman, feminist, Trade Unionist and human rights defender, I invite everyone here to be part of this wonderful process of international Solidarity, that today provides a platform for the voices of Columbian Trade Unionism to tell the world what is happening in our country and it is this fundamental principle that as Trade Unionists we share all around the world, the Solidarity of the working class.

(Lina says THANK YOU in English)

Thank you very much.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary (speaking to Lina in English, translated into Spanish by Nick MacWilliam): So it's customary for people, when they speak, that they get some goodies made by our members and a pewter baker. Thank you.

Sister Lina Montilla Díaz: Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Nowt like Yorkshire Tea, aye. Okay. Thank you very much, thank you very much, *muchas gracias*.

[LAUGHTER, CHEERS and WHISTLES]

Brother Nick MacWilliam, Trade Union Officer of Justice for Columbia: So these are Columbian coffee sweets.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh aye, I'll have some of that.

[LAUGHTER]

It's a good job Conference is over, isn't it.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I don't know what I've done with my glasses now. I've lost my glasses. Thank you very much. That's how I got them.

Okay, thank you very much.

So, for those whom this was their first Conference, well done, you've made it to the end. For those who are seasoned, you know what happens in the next few minutes. Can I just put a myth to bed, right, about The Red Flag, right. It was wrote by an Irishman, who was a Trade Unionist and it was to celebrate international Solidarity. It is not a Labour Party song. They sometimes sing it, but now they don't sing it any more because there ain't no Socialists in it, but we still do, because we're a Socialist Trade Union, that's why it's our song and not theirs. So I just wanted to put that myth to bed, so you're quite right to be able to sing The Red Flag when we come to the end, which obviously we'll be inviting Chris Magill up to do, as we, oh, did I forget to mention it, I thought that's why you'd, I thought it was special like, special.

Anyway, so can I first start by saying, obviously, thank you to the Standing Orders and the Acting Chair, who I think have done an absolutely phenomenal job making Conference run smoothly.

[APPLAUSE]

Dropped in at the deep end and certainly swam, so thank you very much to you and the Committee. Thank you obviously to the Vice President, who was also dropped in at the deep end and temporary, Acting, Acting, Acting Vice President for assisting us during Conference, I've really appreciated it. The Scrutineers, the FTOs who have been doing some extra steps to make sure you got back into the room in time for the start of Conference. Obviously Vicky, Vicky somewhere, who's obviously been doing the staff work and obviously we really, really do appreciate. I did mention Jan, who used to do it but obviously has now retired. Obviously all the office staff, the work involved in making Conference before we actually get here, obviously making sure you receive the information that's necessary and obviously keeping the Union ticking over certainly while, you know, we're mainly all here enjoying the opportunity to take part in discussions and debate.

For all those that set everything up in the Hall and the lighting and sound and recording. The Yarnfield Conference Centre and all the staff, the stallholders, those who facilitated our fringe meetings, Thompsons, Slater and Gordon, Watkins and Gunn, Credit Union, PayPlan, National Shop Stewards Network, Stand Up To Racism, although they did unfortunately get Covid so they didn't turn up but, obviously Bianca who flew off to Thailand. Obviously The Morning Star and the coverage in The Morning Star, we really appreciate that. TC Branding, STAMMA, Unity Trust, the Credit Union and the Rosa Lux Foundation and Mark for the Albion.

Special thanks to the speakers John, Ian, Shelly and obviously Lina. The Delegates, obviously, for your tolerance of me, both in person and online and now I'm going to invite, where is the Standing Orders, where is Glyn? Do you know, it's just like waiting about all day, isn't it, do you know what I mean? Anybody seen the Chair of Standing Orders?

Hey [WHISTLES and APPLAUSE]

Now, I don't know if he's going to fine himself for being late, because obviously until he closes it, you know.

[Brother Glyn Tozer out of breath]

You looked very smart before you left, what happened?

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 500 (Acting Chair of Standing Orders): I fell. Anyway, Mr President, Platform, Delegates and visitors. On behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, I would like to offer the usual vote of thanks. We would like to take the time to thank Ian for his professional way he has conducted Conference. It can't have been an easy job to allocate time, speakers and to ensure Conference ran its full course, so thank you. Our thanks to the General Secretary, Sarah. Thank you for your tireless efforts and as General Secretary, for everything you do for all members, Reps, Secretaries, etc, in front of and behind the scenes, here and out there. Your leadership is an inspiration to us all, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

I'd like to thank Vicky, who has worked so efficiently behind the scenes, never having a minute to call her own, yet ready and willing to offer help at all times to anybody. She really has worked her backside off out there, so thank you, Vicky.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

There's a special thanks also though to Vicky's home printer. Bear in mind this is a home printer, not the office printer, so it's, you know, two or three copies and it's on strike. Literally, it's copied 220 at a go, you know, only breaking down 25 times with the demands we made from it. It carried on with not one of you willing to represent it to get a mandatory break either, I'm really disappointed. We thank the Scrutineers for the job well done. To anyone who had occasion to visit Standing Orders, Mark, yes, just you, no you haven't, end of Conference, it's gone, mate, it was for this Conference, there you go.

[LAUGHTER]

We're even, pal. To anyone who had to visit Standing Orders, obviously Mark, thank you for your courtesy, even for the one fine paid up and in advance without any complaints, well, not what I heard anyway. So, my own special thanks to the Standing Orders Committee, who have done a stand-up job and had a lot of patience obviously because I'm new to this and we all practically are new to this, you know, ourselves. I've had really good support from the Committee, so thank you so, so much. We've just tried our best to make it run as smoothly as we can and give you the best Conference you can and stay out of your way. Thanks to all the new members who have participated and got up here, you know, it takes some bottle to come up here for the first time, it takes more bottle to come up the second time and then it's easy, yes? For those that didn't, don't worry about it. Next year, year after. I'll talk to you about that in a minute. When you feel ready and you feel comfortable, you'll want to say something and when you want to say something, we'll all accept you, with our open hearts, like we always do. Fines and miscellaneous food funds obviously for the local donation bank, Robbie, sterling job, thank you so much.

[APPLAUSE]

Also thanks to everybody that's donated, obviously and to Mark for your tenner.

I hope you all enjoyed Conference. We congratulate all the first-time Delegates. Something to take back to your Branches though here is hopefully to give you the motivation to recruit new members, to show them what we're about. You'll also hopefully have learned of the power of confidence, of the power of Conference, sorry, I apologise, I can't read my own typewriting. How new rules are made, how old rules are changed, more than that though, also the power and main driving force of the Union is you and every single member. Use that power well and help the Union go from strength to strength. We wish you a safe journey home and look forward to seeing you again.

P.S. Thanks for the tea bags, Josh, from Branch 558.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Everybody enjoy being tea bagged.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much, Mohinder and obviously I'm sure it was all, it was all wonderfully resolved in Standing Orders.

Conference, it's my great pleasure now to invite the General Secretary to give her closing address to Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, gives her Closing Address to Conference

Conference, here we are, at the end of another Conference and what a few days we've had. I've spoken more about pineapples than I thought possible. I learnt more about the toilet habits of some of our Delegates than was absolutely necessary.

[LAUGHTER]

I've received some strange but useful gifts over the week, you can't beat a cup of Yorkshire brew.

[APPLAUSE]

And I've stayed up talking to you far longer than was probably wise, especially last night. It's a stark reminder I'm not as young or as slim as I used to be.

In all seriousness though, it's been great to see some of you come back again after a few years of not being here, seeing the colourful shirts and dungarees and the other styles, I'm not going to mention the football shirts, other styles that you all bring to Conference. It's been fantastic to meet some of you properly for the first time and have conversations with you and listen to all of your fantastic contributions, whether that be up here, in the fringe meetings or on an evening and at lunchtime.

We've passed motions this week to make our incredibly diverse Union more inclusive, to make our sector greener, our workplaces safer and our members' lives better as a result. I know Glyn's just mentioned this, but Conference, thank you for the donations to the food bank. For those of you that can't see how much is there, I'm not actually sure I'm going to get it all in my car, but the food bank in Stone, I know, will really appreciate that and the financial donation and it's practical Solidarity in action, isn't it? We're here, we're together and we're supporting the community that we landed in for a week and created some, you know, some noise whilst we've been here, I think it's fair to say.

Trade Unionism doesn't and can't possibly stop at the workplace door, because people's problems don't, do they? And we will continue to fight and campaign on all issues that our members are facing, whether that be around the Right to Food, decent menopause policies in the workplace, challenging the likes of Tim Martin getting a knighthood, after telling Wetherspoons workers during Covid to go and get a job in Tesco's so he didn't have to pay them furlough. Calling out sexual harassment and the speech that Vicky gave on that was absolutely phenomenal, she's not here to hear me say that. Exploitative zero-hours contracts and the many other issues that we've spoken about this week and speak about every day in our workplaces. We've a small Union, with limited resources, but we're absolutely not afraid to step up and speak out on behalf of our members and support those that need it, even if we do it alone in the movement, because sometimes that's what we've got to do.

Like I said at the beginning of the week, our role, our duty is to improve people's lives.

Conference, we've done a lot over the last 12 months. There's still a hell of a lot to do. We are the oldest and the best Trade Union in the UK and it's on all of us to keep it that way. If everybody in the room, Dave said five and I was thinking oh, if everyone in the room makes 10 members in the weeks after Conference, that's over 1,000 members we would make in the next few weeks. Everything in your packs this year at Conference has been designed that you can go back into your workplace, you can use it on your noticeboards, you can use it for your members, you can distribute that information out there and there's so many resources here too. Take them, because when you go back into your workplace and somebody says well, what's the Union doing for us, what's it achieved, what's it done, what's the point in joining the BFAWU? You can show them, you can show them what we've achieved. There's all sorts of examples in the Annual Reports that we've changed, so that you can utilise them in your workplace. The reports that we've done after surveying our members, the manifesto asks that we've put together, the resources, use them, that's what we do as a Union, we listen to our members, we develop policy here and we campaign on behalf of them and it's not just what we're achieving nationally either. What have you achieved in your workplace, what can you talk about? Utilise the wins and when they still push back and say well, you know, we've not got this, we've not got that, this is what we're achieving now with less than 15,000 members. Just imagine what we can achieve with 30,000 members, 60,000 members. Just imagine what you can achieve in your workplace if your density of membership is over 50%, is near 100%. We've got so much work to do, Conference, but we can do it, because we are doing it, we can show that. We finished last year with more members than we started and we need to continue that trend.

Conference, you are the Union. Our members are the Union and your wins in the workplace are why people join the Union, so shout about them. Get them to us, we'll put them in the Food Worker, I'm always looking for content for the Food Worker, so get them in, even if you don't think it's a massive win, we need to be talking about them. We'll put them on the website, we'll get them on social media, so others can see our wins too, but also so that we can celebrate them together, because we need to celebrate them, we need to shout about them.

Thank you to all of our Reps, our activists, our Officers, our clerical staff and all the organisations that support us, to support you.

Conference may be over, but the work starts tomorrow, to implement the decisions that we've made this week, to continue to grow our Union and build and go forward.

Keep being amazing, each and every one of you. Reach out if you've got ideas or questions about how you want to develop your Union. Please read and use what we've put time and effort in to put together for you, but most of all, keep fighting, to improve our lives, to improve those people's lives that we can't see. Nobody else is going to do it for us. It doesn't matter what's going to happen on 4th July, it's down to us to do it for ourselves. Solidarity, comrades.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool): I would now like to invite the National President to give his closing address to Conference.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President, gives his Closing Address to Conference

Cheers, comrades. So, we've done it, we've got there, it's finished and it's been quite a good Conference, been quite a good Conference. Obviously we started Conference at the beginning, I was going to say at the beginning of the week, it was Sunday, wasn't it, it's Wednesday today, isn't it? Seems like a week ago. One of the things that we were doing, we were looking at obviously people who've done a lot but unfortunately have passed away and I think he would have been quite pleased with the majority of Conference and the way that it's gone, because I do think it's important that we remember the people who have stood up and done a role in this Trade Union and I really do think it's important that we understand why we do the role and understand why it's about inclusivity, why it's about recognising the importance and it's not about where you come from, but it's how you support one another, understanding that there will always be people wanting to divide us. It's the bosses greatest friend, division, by the way and bosses can divide you in the workplace, they can get all sorts of stuff through, because if you can't stand in Solidarity, you can't win. If you're divided, they rule, do you know that? It's how life currently is, so that's why it's very important to understand, as Trade Unionists, your neighbour, a good neighbour, can be born anywhere in the world. They can have any religion they choose. They can choose any gender they wish. They have a right to humanity and to exist, the same as we all do and that's what being a Trade Unionist is, it's recognising that the only way we lose is when we accept their argument that we have to be divided.

Hate is really easy. Hate is lazy, in my opinion, because you can always be told who to hate. You can always be told who's the problem. You can always be given a scapegoat for your problems. It's easy. What's difficult is to love your neighbour, to love those people with differences, that's difficult, because you've got to work at it, haven't you? You've got to work at it and sometimes that's just too much to expect of people, but not Trade Unionists. Trade Unionists understand that we win when we stand together. It's the reason why obviously Warburtons have been so successful in winning such good awards in its workplace, because its Branch Secretaries understand that it is by being collectively and representing everybody's interest in the workplace that they win and have got some of the best terms and conditions in our sector, in our industry, because they stuck together, they stood together, they work together and they understood they represented every single worker in that factory, regardless of where they come from, regardless of their religion and regardless of the colour of their skin.

Now, I understand that people have different opinions and politics to me and I recognise that not everybody will be as political as I am, but let me tell you this, accepting your neighbour, accepting the person who works alongside you is how you win in your workplace and in your community. It's the difference between hardship and winning, because like I say, hate is easy, love is hard, you've got to work at it. If the struggle was easy, it would be called a doddle, but it's not, it's called a struggle for a reason and we struggle every day with our existence and that's why when we come to Conference and we debate the motions that we debate, when we talk about the things that we talk about, the aim is to go back from here with a better understanding of what's been said, what people understand about one another and recognise that when we go into our workplaces, the way to victory is by making sure we're all included, making sure of it, making sure.

Making sure that when we see on our TV screens babies being killed, mothers and fathers being killed, doctors and nurses being killed, that we have empathy with people and understand that it's not wrong to have sympathy with people who are different from us, in a different country, being killed. It's not wrong to feel sympathy or empathy and it's not powerful to think it's easy to hate them. It's not powerful to start to demonise people who are suffering, because that's not how you win. That's the reason why we're in the mess that we are. That's the reason why we're struggling. That's the reason why we've got so much hardship, because we've allowed them to put us into a position where we blame each other, blame the benefit, blame the migrant, blame the refugee and how's that working for you, how's that working for you? It's not working at all, is it? So what are we going to do about it? What are we going to do about it? I'll tell you what we're going to do about it, we're going to recognise that we stand with each other in Solidarity, that's where we start, we stand with each other in Solidarity, regardless of religion, regardless of where their heritage is from, regardless of gender, regardless of, you know, how they wish to identify. We're going to stand with one another, because that's how we start to win and to fight back and we're going to make the demands, make the demands that we, as workers, are entitled to. No longer accepting low pay, minimum wage, as a normal way of making sure that people get a pay in the workplace. We're not going to accept that some people are getting a pay increase because the government says here's a minimum wage increase that reflects the legal, lowest pay we can give you. We stand up and we say that's not acceptable for our members, no more accepting minimum wage in any of our workplaces, that's the first place we need to start.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

The first place we need to start and when we look at consolidated rates that we've accepted over the years and then we start saying well, hold on a minute, what did I earn before I consolidated my rate? and now I look at it and it's less than what I would get if I was on minimum wage. We have to say, when we go into those wage talks, we're not accepting low pay any more and if you aren't going to stop with this idea, because we've got this consolidated rate, of trying to pretend somehow it now recognises the unsocial hours that we have and the overtime that we do and the holiday payments we used to get, we're going to turn round to those bosses and say this. We demand a minimum wage of no less than £15 an hour and that's the starting rate for bakers in our industry. That's what we're going to demand, as workers, as a Union, because that's been our demand for quite some time, but how many of you have got it, how many? So what are we going to do about it? We're going to fight, absolutely and who are we going to fight and what are we going to fight for? We're going to fight for £15. Why? Because you deserve it. Why aren't you getting it?

It's time for us to get off our knees. It's time for us to stand up. It's time for us to tell our employers we won't be exploited any more, we won't accept low pay and do you know why?, because we'll have the backs of everybody in our factory, because we understand that it's one, all for one and one for all, as Trade Unionism has always and always will be, because when we fight for one another, regardless of where we come from, regardless of what gender we choose, regardless of our sexuality, regardless of how we identify, regardless. We stand with one another, we talk to the workers in our workplaces and say, are you happy with your lot? and they will say probably no. Their kids are suffering, your kids are suffering and we're going to change it by standing together, because it's not just a saying, you know, it's not just a word, it actually means something different when you practise it.

Now, this might sound pretty angry to people and it might, but if we don't get fired up, if we don't start putting those arguments into the factory, if we don't start showing leadership and making demands, we will continue to live in the hardship we've got. So it's up to us and that's what Conference is about. So thank you very much for indulging me. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. Solidarity to you all.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Are we ready?

Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill): I'm ready, if you are.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Ready to go, Chris.

Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill): He's kind of sprung this on me, so

[Delegate asks, in background, "Where's your guitar?"]

In Scotland, I didn't bring it because I didn't think you were coming this year, Sean.

[THE RED FLAG SUNG]

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Auld Lang Syne? A bit of Auld Lang Syne? You're going to have to lead on this one. Are you ready?

[*AULD LANG SYNE* SUNG]

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you all very much. Safe journeys home.

[CONFERENCE ENDS]

