



Offshore Catering Branch / Shop Stewards Meetings 6th, 12th and 27th March 2014

Summary

Meetings were opened by Branch Chair or Secretary, and all were welcomed.

Inspection of Membership Cards

All cards of those present were checked, and found to be in compliance.

Apologies for Absences

Apologies for absence for these branch meetings were received from Neil Hamilton, Neil McLaren, William Forbes, Graeme Henderson, Dean McGinley, Graeme Neish, Davie MacRae, David Fitzpatrick, David Whyte, Derek Brown, David Mitchell, Isabella Troup, Kyle Michie, Mick Murphy, Ray Duffy, David Strawhorn, Andy Nunnen, Robert Black, Gerry Lynch, Brian Milne, John Jenion, Lynne Stormonth, Isabela Troup, Steve Haywood, Stuart Slater, James Sutherland and Angus Liddell.

Even with the importance of the upcoming wage negotiations and an email reminder prior to these meetings, there were still a number of Shop Stewards who did not give notice they could not attend any of the above meetings. The Branch asks that if you are a shop steward who did not attend one of these meetings and whose name is missing from the apologies please in future pay the branch the courtesy of notifying us in advance that you will be unavailable.

Minutes from this series of meetings will be posted to Shop Steward's home and offshore address, as well as e-mailed to members and Shop Stewards for whom we have correct e-mail addresses. They will also be placed on the offshore catering branch website at www.uniteoffshore.com and can also be accessed from the link at the side of the news page. Members requiring hard copies of minutes to be posted to their home addresses (provided it is in the UK) should email Vic Fraser at vcfraser@aol.com or contact the Aberdeen office.

Branch Report

Brother Mundie (Branch Secretary) confirmed that the Branch remains in good order and that the branch was proud to have been able to support the offshore Shop Stewards who attended the recent "Back Home Safe" debate in Hollyrood 27th February 2014. Branch membership continues to increase.

It was highlighted that four RMT members who pay their union dues by check off had mistakenly had that money paid to Unite by their new employer having recently TUPE transferred. Our branch has made the RMT aware of the mistake and has taken steps to have the money transferred to the RMT to protect those individuals union membership.

A number of hardship grants have been authorised since the last round of meetings and these have been well received by members off work long term due to illness.

Members are reminded to ensure if one of their fellow colleagues are off on long term illness they should inform the branch at the earliest opportunity to get advise particularly if the absence is as a result of an accident or industrial illness.

Officers Report – John Taylor RIO

100% Campaign

Brother Taylor confirmed there is continued good work by Shop Stewards trying to achieve 100% Union membership within their work place. He was also encouraged by the continued number of members who are willing to take up the mantle of Shop Steward on their units, most recently Irena MacLoed (GP3).

Should any member be on a unit where we do not have a Shop Steward, we would ask you to address this and try to get one elected on each shift. The importance of having a Shop Steward on each shift, let alone on each unit, is paramount. A shop stewards credential form can be downloaded from the branch news page, completed and returned to the Aberdeen office where it will be processed. Once this is done, suitable training will be available to the new Shop Steward to allow them to fully represent their constituency.

Westminster Transport Select Committee

John Taylor, Unite, addressed the Westminster Transport Select committee on the issue of helicopter safety at the recent evidence session held in Aberdeen, on 27th January 2014. Members of the Transport Committee took evidence on offshore helicopter safety. The inquiry was set up after last year's Super Puma crash off Shetland which killed four people. Since 2009, five serious incidents involving Super Puma helicopters offshore have seen 20 people lose their lives. John Taylor commented 'Part of the problem is that the industry, in some areas regulates itself.' The full session is available online at www.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/house-of-commons-25915258

Super Puma Fatal Accident Inquiry (FAI)

Following the first branch meeting 3/3/14 Unite were informed that the outcome of the FAI into the Super Puma crash on 1st April 2009 will be released 13th March and we await the findings before making any statements on the matter.

COTA Wage Negotiations

Growing salary gap.

It was agreed that a proposal would be put before the Joint Union Shop Stewards (JSS) meetings to address members concerns on the growing salary gap between COTA grades. The proposal would mean that whatever the financial amount a given percentage was worth on grade E this financial amount would be used as the increase on all COTA grades.

Ad-hoc and zero hours contracts

Continuing concerns were raised regarding the treatment of Ad-hoc and zero hour contracted employees. It was agreed that this would also be raised at the JSS

meetings along with a suggestion to have a minimum of one week in four guaranteed work for these members. It was reiterated that Unite are currently campaigning nationally against the abuse by some employer of employees on zero hours contracts and this included offshore where John Taylor has raised this not only with COTA but also Oil and Gas UK.

Hollyrood “Back Home Safe” debate

On 27th February a delegation of Unite the union offshore reps were invited to Hollyrood to listen to the debate raised by Richard Baker, Labour MSP on Unite’s back home safe campaign. After the debate our reps met with a number of MSPs who were all supportive of our aims including Labour’s Lewis MacDonald and the leader of the Scottish Labour Party, Johann Lamont. Disappointingly no MSPs from the Scottish Nationalist Government were able to attend the drop in session after the debate but steps have been taken to open up dialogue on our campaign with local SNP politicians.

CAA Offshore helicopter safety review

A copy of the Helicopter Safety Steering Group (HSSG) response to the CAA review was provided to those in attendance and can be accessed from the news page of the Offshore Catering Branch website at www.uniteoffshore.com

CPPT&G RISC Motion to Unite policy conference

Brother Fraser explained that the following motion had been passed on from the Regional Industrial Sector Committee (RISC) for the Policy Conference and emphasized the importance of keeping up pressure on the authorities to make offshore helicopter travel the safest it can be.

Title of motion: **Helicopter Safety**

This conference calls on the UK government to initiate a fully independent public enquiry in respect of the off-shore helicopter service industry following recent countrywide concerns raised over helicopter safety, and specifically in relation to;

- The regulation and management of helicopter maintenance and servicing
- The independent auditing of helicopter maintenance and servicing
- Scrutiny of the supply chain in respect of parts and materials
- The introduction of regulations to extend regulatory obligations to the helicopter part, servicing and maintenance, supply chain
- Comparisons with UK practice versus European and Norwegian (Scandinavian) regulations/best practice

Conference calls on the union to continue to raise our members concerns on a UK and European level and to engage with sister unions both in Europe and Scandinavia in order to examine best practice.

Shop Steward's Training

Those Shop Stewards present were reminded of the importance of ensuring their training was up to date. Due to employment law changes recently the branch is to write to every Shop Steward informing them that if they had not completed their basic training within the last three years they should reapply. Unite training syllabuses will also be posted and emailed to every catering branch Shop Steward.

AOB

Barry Brooks – Retirement

All present wished one of our longer serving shop stewards Barry Brooks of Trinity all the best for his retirement.

Mark Lyon – Ineos

An interim employment tribunal ruled Friday 7th March in favour of the Grangemouth convenor Mark Lyon. In a blow to the petro-chemical company, the tribunal ruled that it was 'likely' that Mr Lyon will win his case for unfair dismissal when it goes to a full tribunal and ordered Ineos to pay his wages until the full hearing in a number of months. The convenor, with 25 years of service to the company, was tried and dismissed in his absence by Ineos managers for not stopping the union commenting on media reports about fears of job losses at the plant. The Offshore Catering Branch passed on message of solidarity to Mark Lyon and his family at this difficult time.

Protecting your union membership

Even with all the reminders the branch has sent out we are still finding members who have TUPE transferred to another COTA employer but not ensured the new employer has continued to deduct their union dues resulting in their membership lapsing. If you or one of your colleagues has TUPE transferred to another COTA employer please check your payslip to ensure your union dues are being deducted.

Offshore Catering Branch / Shop Stewards Meetings

The dates for the next Offshore Branch meetings have yet to be confirmed but as discussed at previous Branch meetings, should any Shop Steward or member be able to ensure sufficient numbers, the Unite Offshore Catering Branch will consider holding extra Branch meetings in other geographical locations of the UK. Please be aware that numbers must justify the expense of the Branch Officials attending these meetings.

Should any Shop Steward feel they are prevented from attending Branch meeting due to the cost associated they should write the branch explaining their situation so the Branch can consider what assistance can be provided.

In the meantime, for the latest information affecting Offshore Members please keep checking the news page on Offshore Branch website at www.unitetheunion.com

Thanks were given to all members for their continued support in fighting for our employment rights.

Meeting closed