



**The
One Hundred and Fourth
Annual Conference
Yarnfield 2023**

Verbatim 2022





Official Report of the 103rd ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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

**from
Sunday 5 June 2022
to
Thursday 9 June 2022**

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Sunday 5th June 2022

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right, okay, Conference, we are at 9.30 which means the General Secretary to call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5, nearly couldn't count then, that's not good. 27? Region 7.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. Just some logistics, to remind people. Obviously when people come down to the rostrum to speak, please be courteous and keep quiet while they're making their pronouncements to Conference. Obviously mobile 'phones need to be turned off. We know people may use them for research purposes in planning to write their speeches or there may be an emergency call that they need to take, in which circumstances you need to go to Standing Orders which is over in the corner and tell them that you're waiting on an emergency call. Other than that if you could make sure it's at least turned on silent, preferably turned off, it would be much appreciated. Anybody who does obviously let their 'phone go ringing, I do believe it could be a very expensive ring and I do believe it could cost you about a fiver at Standing Orders, so I would recommend that you don't leave your sound on because they check, they check.

Obviously the toilets are just outside the door and on your way round to where you're going to get your brews from at breaktime and lunchtime. The fire exits are clearly marked and if there's a fire, obviously evacuate the building safely and we'll all meet on The Green outside. Obviously if it's still raining, we might go under a bit of a shelter-bit, but obviously leave by the safest way possible. Like I say, the Standing Orders room is over in the corner. If you need to talk to Standing Orders, obviously go and see them in that corner. The rooms that we'll be holding the fringe meetings in are when you go out of this door, you turn to the left and you follow them down to Rooms 8, 9, 11 and 12, but obviously we'll remind you of that again and I think that must be all of the logistics.

I think that's the logistics out of the way, so obviously what that means is, is that we can formally ask Sally Parkin, the Chairperson of Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council to formally open our Conference. Welcome, Sally.

[APPLAUSE]

Sally Parkin (Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council) addresses Conference

Sally Parkin, Chairperson, Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council: Is this, it is on, I can hear. So, a very warm welcome to you all to Yarnfield Park. I'm Sally and as billed, I am the Chair of Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council. If I was standing here three years ago, welcoming you to our little parish, very central in the UK, I guess my message to you would be quite different because our world would be a different place. As it is, the Covid pandemic and the appalling war in the Ukraine have illustrated beyond all doubt the importance of food production and I speak here as a regular citizen, not any kind of expert, but honestly I think I can safely say that we've taken food for granted. We've all become used to really high quality fresh food, an infinite variety of diverse and interesting tastes from around the world, all the year round. We've become used to an ease of transport, international travel and trade. We expect food to be manufactured and on our supermarket shelves all the time, whenever we want it and we want it to be cheap. You know, I think, speaking as a regular citizen we have been expecting a lot, but it's starting to dawn on us. The price of fuel is going to disrupt, is already disrupting the supply chain. Basic commodities have been in short supply over these last few years and a new reality is emerging for us as the regular citizens in little places like Yarnfield and Cold Meece.

There's a shocking truth, a shocking truth, that people round here and people all over the country go hungry. We've seen this ever-increasing need for food banks and it's heartbreaking and I absolutely know that the Stone Foodbank, which covers all of this bit of Staffordshire, will be immensely grateful for your gifts and I thank you on their behalf. We've seen huge public support for children, who normally get free school meals, to be fed in the school holidays, the work of Marcus Rashford and others has really highlighted this and by and large, people have had their eyes opened and are supportive of that. But you know, it's not all bad, because on a positive note, over the past three years we've seen communities like ours here in Yarnfield and Cold Meece pull together, take care of each other, give to the food banks, make sure people have had a hot meal. We've seen a change in the way that communities think about themselves and where people, especially in places like Yarnfield, where, the employment is where you are, this is the base of our employment here in Yarnfield Park, we don't have lots of places for people to work, so people who live here go out to work in Stone or Stafford or Stoke or Birmingham or some of them even in London, but they've been working from home.

So suddenly the community has been here five days a week and that has made a difference because it's made people think about how we care for each other and you know, every gift of money, every gift of food is an act of love and care and I think if I ponder on that, that has been the silver lining. There's never been a better time or a more important time to take care of each other and to value the people who feed us, the growers and the food producers, the bakers, the manufacturers, the warehouses, the shops, the chefs and so I would like to say thank you for what you do. Thank you for choosing to come to Yarnfield. Thank you, Pauline, for the donation of cakes, which we will put to good use and we will convert into money which will be donated to our local hospice. You'll understand that it's a busy weekend in the parish and every parish across the country, so please forgive me for leaving you straight after this introduction, but I really hope that your Conference is a productive and enjoyable one.

Thank you again for inviting me to speak. Thank you again for choosing to come here and I am delighted and honoured to declare your Conference open.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thank you ever so much, Sally. I know we're going to do a bit of a boot swop at lunchtime to make sure you get all of the cakes to take with you, but this is a gift from us, made by BFAWU members, some lovely Fox's biscuits and we'd also like to gift a charity of your choice £100, so if you let me know, either now or afterwards and we'll make that

Sally Parkin, Chairperson, Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council: Thank you very much indeed, that's wonderful, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you. Okay, obviously Mick will come along in a minute. I know he's here, I could hear him. I think they should fine themselves, by the way. So obviously the donation of the cakes, by the way, has been made by Manor, Carlton, Branch 582. Good to see he's on his way, must have heard me. Could you? Did you fine yourself? Have you fined yourself? Well, you need to. So, Conference, Mick McDonald to give his opening address to Conference.

Brother Mick McDonald – Chair of Standing Orders: Right. Morning, Mr President, Mrs General Secretary, EC members, guests and finally to you all, the Delegates to the 103rd Annual Conference. I'm Mick McDonald anyway, as you've heard, Branch 577. Now then. On behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, I welcome you all here to this Conference. The Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union. This year will be a challenge due to the new format. This is something that has never been done before, so obviously we've got to have respect and patience and understanding for everybody, because it'll be needed. This is a new experience, as all of us, that we will need to deal with everything diligently, professionally and with respect and that's the thing, respect and patience. So, there's not much I can say with the, we've got two things to sign haven't we, the, have they got them all, yes, so I don't need to go into that at all. Well, I just need to give you what the running order at the start of the Conference. Are you ready for it?

Right. So, we've got, we're going to go to, from motion 1 to motion 10. So, Rule 1 stands, Rule 2.1 second? stands, motion 3 stands, 4 stands, 5 stands, 6 stands, 7 stands, 8 stands, 9 stands and 10 stands and I think that's, be okay for this morning [LAUGHTER].

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

Brother Mick McDonald – Chair of Standing Orders: Okay.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: For all the new Delegates, what we do now, once the Standing Orders have spoken is, we put to Conference the position which he's just put, which is those motions are standing and obviously everybody always shows their hands in support of the Standing Orders because obviously they're responsible for running Conference, if we don't we've got a bit of a problem, so I ask you now, do you accept that report from Standing Orders? Please show your hands. See, we've got it already. So easy that, wasn't it. Thank you very much, thank you very much.

Brother Mick McDonald – Chair of Standing Orders: Thank you.

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

Brother Mick McDonald – Chair of Standing Orders: See you later.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Obviously, Conference, I think we'd like to welcome our stallholders, who are Thompsons, Slater and Gordon, Watkins and Gunn, obviously with the effervescent Clive Watkins Gunn holding court in the corner there. We've got a Wigan Diggers stall, which obviously is at the back. Oh, I can see you now, Lorraine and we've got the Credit Union, which is, they're coming later in the week so they're not here, but I did welcome them.

Justice For Columbia and they're here tomorrow [LAUGHTER], okay, Class? Class are here tomorrow as well, so obviously don't look for them today, they'll be here tomorrow.

IER, they're coming at some point this week, IER. We've got People Before Profit, we've got the National Shop Stewards Network, we've got Stand Up To Racism, we've got Orgreave Zeros? and the Orgreave Zeros? Justice Campaign, which is, but she's not here until Monday is she, Monday. We've got, listen, the Ron Todd Foundation, which obviously there's a beautiful banner over there but can I just say, on Friday, right, Bianca Todd got married, but so much in love with our Union, she's come to spend her honeymoon with us. So can we give Bianca a real warm round of applause

[APPLAUSE]

and say obviously all the best to you and Steve for your future and obviously happiness and joy and I think you gave a speech about love, which was very nice. So we've got Youth Fight for Jobs, we've got the HMRC, National Minimum Wage Promote Team, the Morning Star and we've got the Skills Network and we've got To Move. Oh, I thought that was telling me I had to move on [LAUGHTER]. Unity Bank, I thought I was going too slow, sorry, how did you know that in advance? Unity Bank, we've got Lighthouse and we've got PayPlan and the camera man is Lukasz, I believe, who's going round. If there is anybody that doesn't want their photograph taken, then you need to let us know, because obviously we will be taking photographs and obviously when people come down to the rostrum, we'll be taking photographs. Have we got a camera? And obviously we've got over in the corner, yes, sorry, I'm only going through my list, it's been a while, it's been a while, I forgot and obviously we've got Fox's Biscuits and we've also been sponsored by Thompsons, Slater Gordon, Watkins and Gunn and Burton's Biscuits and we also have some new Branches and first-time Delegates, which I've been given, so if I haven't got your name here, right, go up to your full-time Official and remind them to give us your name and I'll read them out, but I think it's a warm welcome to Mark Sweeney and Lee Wright from Branch 504, Bailey Hill, Vicky Bassett and Aisha Powell from Branch 253 in Greggs, Ryan Lowe and Stu Keable from Branch 258, Memory Lane Cakes and Steven Hayes from Branch 238, Burtons. So, thank you and welcome and I hope you enjoy your experience at our first return to Conference after Covid and obviously your first Conference with us.

Now I'm going to introduce, normally these people are obviously all at the back of us, but I've got to remember where they sit now. So obviously the Executive Council, so I've got our Young Member which is Lee, which is, he's sat on the corner there, I've got Nicolae Macari who's Region 3, I've got Dimitru Manole who's Region 3, I've got Kevin Flood, trousers in one piece? That's alright, from Region 7. I've got John Owens, obviously who's made the room very decorative, I've got Rachel Mullen who is our Woman's EC Member. Next to Rachel, is that Pauline? Yes, I couldn't see because of the Welsh man, but obviously we've got Pauline who's Region 5, obviously Nick who's Region 2 and is that, I wasn't sure then whether you and Ronnie had swapped places. So obviously I've got Joe Knapper from Region 5 and obviously we've got the Executive guest to Conference just there and I'll come back to him in a minute. Obviously you'll notice to my left, is that the extreme left? Extreme left, to my extreme left we have a new Vice President, which is Sean and he's from Warburtons and he's giving pronouncements at some point today, is that right? I thought so and obviously, Conference, physically in person at her very first Conference, can we give an absolute warm welcome to our General Secretary, who's making her first appearance and has done, I believe, an absolutely phenomenal job on getting this organised, Sarah Woolley, our General Secretary.

[APPLAUSE and CHEERS]

So obviously if we've got a new General Secretary, although he probably can't remember now, 'cause obviously I believe he normally has to have a nap by dinnertime, but it is only early in the morning [LAUGHTER], well, I know I'll get some stick at some point. I mean obviously Covid interrupted our ability to have a real send-off, because whilst Boris might have been saying that it's alright to party when people leave, we chose the decision that it wasn't safe to meet, but obviously we can, as we celebrate 175 years, we thought we'd bring somebody who'd been living through most of them [LAUGHTER] to fill us full of wisdom, so it's an absolute pleasure to, certainly for one last time, to sit on the same platform as someone I worked alongside for so many years, somebody I respect, even though at times obviously he's, I said respect Ronnie, I did say respect, so you know, even though at times obviously when I had to carry you home and you used to leave me in Bolton with no taxi money to get home, but you were alright, obviously it's nice to see you again Ronnie and obviously I know you've been retired and doing art, did I say retired? Did I say retired, I did say retired, yes, I did say retired, but it's a pleasure to have you back for this last Conference, Ronnie and obviously, like I say, you will be getting a history lesson at some point later on today and I'm sure Kevin's looking forward to it.

[LAUGHTER].

So Conference, obviously the door duties are done by the full-time Officials and I believe today it's Frank, Haroon and Gary. I got the Scrutineers, but I do believe I've got one missing from Region 5, so I've got Mushtaq Mohammed from Region 1, Michael Maguire from Region 2, Dougie Johnstone Region 3, David Hoff Region 4, who is Region 5? Dave Suddards is Region 5 and Peter Algie is Region 7 and I've already done the photographs bit, I got ahead of myself. Nomination forms? Nomination forms are on your seats. We need to get them in, they'll be collected at breaktime by the full-time Officials and taken to Standing Orders. It's just for the TUC Congress. Okay? So, just do whatever we want.

Obviously Conference, now we've formally opened Conference, we know that these past few years have been very, very difficult and a lot of people unfortunately lost their lives and some of our members lost their lives too. We're now going to show and stand for a minute's silence and we've got an obituaries presentation, which we're going to put on.

[OBITUARIES PRESENTATION played – MINUTE'S SILENCE OBSERVED]

Thank you, Conference. I think we've got Gary.

Brother Gary Johnston: Good morning, Conference. I just wanted to say, oh, it's working now, is it?

[LAUGHTER]

Good morning, Conference. Just wanted to say a quick word about our comrade, Pat Rowley. Many of you, apart from the new ones, would know Pat was a long-time Delegate and a long time coming to Conference. This was a place that he loved coming and as you all know and I'm sure many of you have done it over the years, the same as Region 2, we all had a little gamble on who was going to come up to the rostrum the most and it was a very silly man that didn't put their money on Pat Rowley, wasn't it, you know, 'cause let's face it, he had an opinion on everything. Pat was a member for over 50 years and in that time Pat was not one of these Delegates that came up to this rostrum and talked a good talk. Pat, when he went back to the Region, especially with myself for two decades, out giving me a hand, but it wasn't just me, he helped Tony Kennedy when Tony was a Regional Organiser and from then Tom Stephens, also another full-time Official who passed away, Mr Broomfield, unfortunately we lost quite a few people during this, the Covid years, but Pat loved going out. Greenfield sites, out with George of No. 3, we'd be up there, helping there, Frank would be coming over with us down Cornwall helping out with Dave Dash and John, all working to try to get members for this Union, because that's what Pat loved. Pat loved two things in his life, his family and the Bakers Union, that was the two things he loved most and I know, sadly, we couldn't get a chance to say goodbye to Pat, Pat didn't want any fuss, so he got his body donated to science, so this is our chance of saying goodbye to our friend and to our comrade and I'll say to you Pat, you may be gone, but you will never be forgotten. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: And obviously I think people who have been for many Conferences will know that this part of the Agenda is normally dedicated to Pat, because out of everybody that came to Conference, nobody challenged more than Pat did, that would be right, wouldn't it, Ronnie? So, I think, are we going to Shall we do the Treasurer's Report first, then? So, you've got the Treasurer's Report in front of you. Obviously the, it's got Treasurer's Report on it [LAUGHTER], it's more for my benefit, so I know which document I'm looking at. Okay, so for new Delegates, what we do is, we go through the pages and if you want to raise any issues, then you come down to the microphone, you give your name and the Branch that you belong to and then you make your question and then obviously you'll get your answer, hopefully. Okay, so we're going to start on Page 1 of 19 and it's the one that's obviously got the 31st December wrote at the top. So Page 1 Dave, not Page 1, alright, okay, Page 1.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: I'd just like to ask a question why the legal income has gone from £7,940 to zero. Is this a reflection on Reps not doing what they should be doing in promoting, well, I won't say promoting accident claims, but helping members to make claims, or I know that at Hovis, Bradford we do, I take an interest, I give them the numbers, I give them their membership numbers so that they've got them when they contact the solicitors and then periodically, I don't ask them what they've got, but I do ask them if the company's admitted liability or whatever, so I show an interest in whether we are succeeding in them claims.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: So Dave, on that, it was the last of the legal income that we got that was stopped with the Jackson Report, so that's just the last of the funds that we got from the solicitors. It's not a reduction in cases or anything like that, in fact last year, our members were awarded over £500,000 from the solicitors in personal injury and employment claims. So that's just, that's why it's gone down to zero.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: Can I thank you, they're really well set out.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers. Page 2. Okay, Page 3. Page 4. Page 5. Page 6. Obviously then we go on to some policies in the document, which then go onto Page 9, sorry Page 8 and Page 9, which then starts to cover the operating and the pension costs and then we get to a bit of a breakdown which is probably where, if there might be any questions to be asked, might come on that page, which is Page 10. Page 11. Okay, then obviously we go onto Page 12.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: It's just, sorry, it's just an observation that we spend only £1,085 on organising, yet we spend £9,297 on cleaning miscellaneous. We have cleaners we go at Bradford [LAUGHTER]. Sorry.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: So, the miscellaneous covers all kinds of other things as well, so in there is things like, we had to have some trees cut down at Head Office because they were causing subsidence, there was a cost to that, that went in there because there was nowhere else for it to go. It's kind of like the dumping ground, if you like, for things that don't fit in any of the other box. On the organising, we drastically reduced what we were doing last year, because we didn't believe that going out and handing leaflets out when we were going through Covid, which is one of the big bulking costs of the Greenfield organising, was the right thing to do, so we did organise it in a different way, utilising digital platforms, so we reduced those costs, but as we come out of that, you'll see those rise again.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Page 13. Page 14. Page 15 and then obviously after Page 15, it's just some more words just explaining a bit about procedures and stuff, so unless anybody wants to talk about wording [LAUGHTER]. Okay, we're going to go onto the Exec Minutes, which I believe we've going to put on the big screen, but you should have all had a copy and for people who think that what we're doing is not giving you the information, right, the reality is we passed a motion, right, that said you wanted us to reduce paperwork, so obviously we've tried our best, which is obviously why we tried to send as much out digitally to you as we possibly can and, but we are going to make sure that obviously it's displayed for anybody who's not got it with them or got access to them. Okay, Page 1.

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580: And

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That's alright. Just on there, mate, just there.

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580: Sorry. I've just seen this Wages Report, yes and salaries and insurance and there's one, the Retirement Scheme. Can you please explain who gets the money from this Retirement Scheme, because it doesn't say, it just says Scheme.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: So, that's the Pension Scheme for the staff of the Union, so it's the employer's contribution into the Pension Scheme for the staff of the Trade Union.

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580: And what is the Scheme? Is it a Final Salary Scheme?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: It's not, no.

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580: Okay, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, go back to, nobody else has got any more questions on the Treasurer's Report, have they? Are you coming back on the Treasurer's Report? Okay. What page?

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417, Hovis Ltd., Wigan: Morning, Conference. Page 10, Equities and Growth Assets, is it 5 million, that? The amount, 5, 5 million, is it?

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Yes.

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417, Hovis Ltd., Wigan: Are we still investing in fossil fuels, in the Equities?

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: So, we, not in our investments, we've moved those towards green initiatives and investments and we're just working through the Pensions Scheme and the investments that we have to do through that, doing exactly the same, moving to greener ones and moving away from fossil fuels.

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417, Hovis Ltd., Wigan: Okay, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody want to come back on the Treasurer's Report now? Anybody else? Okay, well, we'll go back to the Executive Minutes. Okay, so obviously that's Page 1 of the Executive Minutes. I'm assuming we've finished the Treasurer's Report, yes? Okay, so So that's obviously got August on it, 2021. Page 2. No? Page 3, which is obviously the Executive Reports from 3rd – 5th November. You did get them all, you did get them all circulated digitally. I mean, sometimes obviously when we're asked to do something, we do it.

There are consequences [LAUGHTER] and don't shout out again, deaf ear. 3rd – 5th November, Page 3. Page 4. Page 5, are we 2nd – 4th, okay. 6, which is May. Page 7. Is it? That's because I started at Page 1, isn't it [LAUGHTER], okay. Page 11, next time, come down here and Okay, so that's the Executive Council Minutes. Okay, so now what we do is, we put the Executive Council Minutes and the Treasurer's Report to Conference. Obviously you don't, the questions have been raised and the questions have been asked and the questions have been answered, so we ask Conference to agree those Reports. All those in favour? Anybody against? Thank you very much.

Okay. We're going to come back shortly, after you've had a brew, how's that? So, if we come back for half past. All your teas and coffees are just outside. Water and juice.

[BREAK]

Okay, can you take your seats please. Haroon, Haroon, can you make sure everybody's coming back into the room now, mate. Okay, can you sit down, Delegates, please. Okay, doors shutting, yes? And let's rock 'n' roll.

Brother Shaun Welsby, Vice President: Morning, Conference. I'd like to invite our National President to address Conference. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

National President's Opening Address to Conference

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: For new Delegates, you think well, he's already done that, hasn't he? Yes, I speak a bit, I speak a bit. Obviously you'll get tired of it, you won't find my jokes funny, but when Ronnie's on, I can guarantee you'll be in bulk. Obviously I'm a bit worried, because he does know a bit and I'm not sure how much he's going to divulge, but I'm not going to admit that any of it is true though, you know what I mean? But it will be embellished, I'm sure Ronnie, yes? Totally embellished. Oh no, no.

Conference, obviously it's great to be back together in a room and to see all your smiling faces. Obviously mostly sober. Obviously we've come miles away from pubs, to ensure that obviously you can fully enjoy what I've got to say to you this morning in the clearest possible terms. Obviously I'm on a time limit as well, I recognise Rachel, obviously she says she's timing me to make sure I don't spend too much time up here, but listen, Conference, it's real great to see you all again and, you know, we have missed you, despite what you think, we have missed you and we have missed coming together for the last couple of years, you know, but obviously Covid was a real killer, you know and we have a government in power that had a responsibility and a duty towards us which, it failed us, it failed us miserably, even the counts found that they'd failed us miserably by allowing so many people to die in care homes. All those people dying unnecessarily, families, loved ones that were unnecessarily killed by a government because of neglect. What we also know about what the government did, is while we weren't celebrating, you were all going out and working and keeping this nation fed, they were partying, they were partying, right, while you were working and called essential workers but now the Covid crisis is apparently over, now you're not essential workers any more, are you?

They don't see you as essential workers any more, but you are essential, you were essential before the Covid crisis, you're essential after Covid and I'll tell you what, this is why the Bakers Union needs to make sure that we're organised going forward, to win in our workplaces the wages that our members deserve, the pensions that they deserve, the terms and conditions that they deserve, because what Covid has showed us is the government and the politicians won't come to our rescue, it's down to us. While they partied, you were out making sure that people's lives were being saved. That's what you were doing in your workplaces, not partying, saving lives and I want to pay respect to all of you for the work that you did, because it was the role that you performed that made sure that people didn't die in our workplaces.

It was the things that you did by standing up and demanding, demanding changes to working practices like staggered start times. Who would have thought that an employer in the food industry could do staggered start times, but yes they can, can't they? They can make sure, they can fit your working time to make sure that you're safe in your workplace. You know, we made sure as well, because you made sure, you made sure as Trade Unionists, that where we have agreements with employers, they paid you if you went off sick. Not only did they pay you, they recognised that Covid, if you got Covid, it shouldn't go on the sickness against you, so people didn't get penalised for having Covid. Well, if they can do it, if they can do it when we're in a crisis, they can do it when we're out of a crisis too and it's about time employers understood that when workers go to work and they get ill, they have the right to a full 100% sick pay and we should make that as a demand on every wage claim across the country and make employers pay 100% for all of your time, whether you're in work or out of it, because most of the illnesses come down to their neglect of us, neglect by government like I say.

You know, that's a government, you know, that wasn't even held to account by the opposition, too afraid of negative headlines by the Daily Mail. You know, the Daily Mail, the Hitler-supporting Daily Mail, let's not forget where they come from. Too scared of upsetting the anti-democratic Murdoch, which is obviously why we've got to remind people we don't let The Sun into our Conference Centre, we don't buy The Sun, we always ban The Sun

[APPLAUSE]

we never bring The Sun here and we always stand up for the Justice for the 97, because those people went to a football match and died, because of neglect and then they still can't get justice, they still can't get justice, working class justice denied. Orgreave Truth and Justice, this week there's going to be a fringe meeting on Orgreave Truth and Justice, a working class disaster, where people were attacked, attacked by the police, the police who were supposed to protect us, attacking working people for standing up for their communities. They were attacked, working class injustice still going on and obviously we've got Jan who's a first-time Delegate with us, who represents JENGBA, Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by Association, working class kids put in prison, not because they're guilty but because they got charged with a crime that they may not have even committed or even realised was going to be committed, but because they're associated, that's enough to put them in prison for life. That criminal injustice is being carried out on working class people, just as all those people that died in those care homes was a criminal injustice carried out against working people in retirement homes. Those, those are criminal injustices

[APPLAUSE]

carried out by a government on the working class because it doesn't, it doesn't have any feelings, trust or belief in us, so we have to do it for ourselves, we have to do it for ourselves. We have to recognise that our strength is our Solidarity and when we understand, when we work together and we stand together, we will always, we will always have more chance of winning together. You know, our community is devastated, devastated. We were doing this thing in Wigan where we've been running these pop-up gazebo tents offering legal services and food to the people, the homeless people in Wigan and some of the stories, you know, one of the first stories was a, was a young lad from Skelmersdale who was walking from Skel and he was going to the hospital, he went to the hospital in Skel, the mental health hospital and he wanted help and he got told he couldn't have any support because they don't do it there and the closest place he could go was Wigan. He had no money. He walked from Skelmersdale to Wigan, no food. I mean, this guy needed serious help, but our healthcare system has been devastated by a government that's not concerned about us and an opposition that waves changes through that's going to lead to the privatisation of our Health Service.

We've got a lot to talk about this week, we've got a lot of things to debate, but one thing that's going to come out of this Conference is our understanding of the need for working class people to organise, to organise, to organise and to organise in our workplaces, organising our demands, organising about improving our lives, organising, because we're the only people that's going to change our lives, we're the only people that's going to make sure that when any pandemic hits, we will protect each other. We're the only people that's going to make sure that we can afford to put food on our tables. We're the only people that's going to make sure that we have a safe working environment. We're the only people, the only people that's going to look after the interests of our kids to make sure their lives are better than the ones that we've had, because we should be aspirational about our politics, we should be aspirational about our rights, we should be aspirational about our entitlement to justice.

We've gone through a crisis, a crisis of neglect brought about by a government and a political establishment that failed to defend us and to defend our loved ones. The people who've died died needlessly, just like in Grenfell, the people that have been abused, just like at Orgreave, just like the criminal injustice that is being carried out on working class kids, just like every criminal injustice from (unclear) is because we dare to ask. Well, we no longer dare to ask, we demand and you are entitled, you are entitled to see your wages grow, to see your terms and conditions improved and it's by standing together with the Bakers Union at your side and we together, we together to make sure that our terms and conditions are the best, the best we can get, because you deserve it, because if it wasn't for you, so many more people would have died, so many more people now would be suffering, so many more people would be in hardship because, because of the demands that you've made over the years, you've brought change about.

You are courageous people. This Union was built by courage and you are the people that's going to take us forward for the next 175 years and like I say, I know Ronnie's going to talk over quite a number of those years, but we look forward to the rest of this week, we look forward to hearing your debates and Conference, please enjoy your Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay Conference, open your Agendas. Okay, Scrutineers, you know who you are, can you please go into Standing Orders, the Scrutineers? Okay, Rule 1, Branch 582.

1 Rule 5.4 Retired and Unwaged Members

Branch 582

This Conference agrees that Retired Members Contributions Reductions should be granted when members retire from full time employment regardless of whether they have reached state retirement.

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582, Manor, Carlton: Good morning, Conference. Mr President, Platform, are we still calling it a platform, or, it's not much of a platform is it, Council of Elders. Delegates.

[LAUGHTER]

Motion 1, Rule change 5.4, Retired and Unwaged Members. Delegates, we've seen rises in the State Pension entitlement for everyone over the last decade or so and for those born after April, 1978 like myself, Ian and Sarah, we're unable to claim State Pension until our 68th birthday. The Rule allows a reduced contributions rate for members reaching State Retirement, if no longer working full-time, but we ask your support, Delegates, to change the Rule to allow all members who retire from employment, regardless of whether they've reached State Retirement age, to be granted the full rate of reduced rate of contribution. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, while the Executive appreciates, oh gosh, that was a bit louder than I expected, whilst the Executive appreciates the sentiment of the motion, we would ask the mover to remit it, otherwise we will be forced to oppose the proposed Rule change. This is due to the fact that as it is written in its current format, the Rule would override the whole of the current Rule 5.4, including the section which allows qualifying retiring members to make a one-off payment of £25, entitling them to retired membership for life and the reduced rate of quarterly contributions if that option's not taken up. I want to reiterate the Executive are sympathetic towards the idea of the Rule change, but if the mover doesn't want to remit the motion, we would ask you to oppose it, as we wouldn't want to remove other aspects of the current Rule.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, thank you very much. Rule 2. Point of order?

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Point of order. Now last year and years gone by, there's been motions that have been remitted to the Executive Council. Does the Executive Council not bring them back to Conference, because there's none in the motions this year and what do they do with them?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. So obviously when they get remitted to the Executive Council, we discuss them, if we believe that there's something we can do then we will turn it into a motion on behalf of the Executive. If there's a motion that's actually written down, then obviously we'll change our position in supporting it going forward if it's been re-worded. I mean, obviously one of the things that we will do is obviously when the General Secretary responded just then, she advised the reasons why we were making that position clear. Now obviously the mover now is entitled to bring that motion back next year and obviously take, bear in mind what it is that we've just suggested to them, so therefore, you know, what we try and do is, we try and give guidance to the movers of the motion so they might want to bring it back. We will debate it on the Executive as we debate all of the Conference motions at the August EC. We will take some to the Trade Union Council, obviously we no longer take anything to the Labour Party, but we do take stuff to the Trade Union Congress and obviously we put an update on the website about all of the things that we've done and made decisions on. That's your point of order, I've answered it, never mind, never mind, come on [LAUGHTER]. What's all that about? [LAUGHTER]. Sorry, Rule 2.

2 Rule 21.0 Election of Executive Council

Executive Council

The Unions Executive Council will be held in accordance with the prevailing legislation and any guidance issued by the union from time to time. All candidates will be required to comply with such guidance. Such elections shall take place every five years. Members who are not in compliance with Rule 10.1 are not eligible to vote of the Union's membership in accordance with Standing Orders.

The EC will be elected on the basis of one member per 3000 members in each region, or part thereof, based on the previous September Quarters membership returns.

In addition, one female Member will be elected to represent the female membership and one Member to represent the young Members.

Nomination

Nominations shall be invited by Branches at their December Quarter meeting preceding the election. Each Branch shall be entitled to nominate one candidate from within their Region, along with one candidate each for the positions of Female and Young Members Representatives.

Nominations must reach the General Secretary by the last Friday in January in the year of the election. Nominees must be Members of not less than 3 years membership apart from the Young Members EC representative. The Young Members EC representative must have a minimum of 1 years membership, and be aged 27 years or under on the 1st of June in the year in which the election takes place. All candidates must be clear of arrears of contributions, or the nominations will be void.

Substitute EC Members

If an elected EC member is unable to attend an Executive Council Meeting and/or resigns from their position, an elected Substitute will stand in their place.

Permanent EC Vacancy

Where the Executive Council has determined that (a) a permanent vacancy has arisen within its number and (b) that the next scheduled election for that position is at least 24 months away from the date of that determination, then elections for a replacement shall be held in accordance with this rule book and as per a timetable as laid down by the Executive Council. Should the operation of any relevant rule impede the timely conclusion of the said elections, the Executive Council shall be empowered to depart from it to any extent which is both reasonable and proportionate.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union, our Union, has had a very proud tradition of not following the legislative rules when it comes to electing our Executive Council. This has served us well for many years. However recently the Tory government has made the decision to enact the remaining anti-Trade Union legislation they began to introduce in 2016 – I really need to put my teeth back in this morning – namely by giving the Certification Officer extended powers. These include, but aren't limited to, investigating Trade Unions without a complaint being made in certain aspects of the legislation including elections, which covers Executive Council ones as well as National Officer ones and she can enact financial penalties onto Trade Unions of up to £20,000 in these situations. We know she has already approached and I say she because the Certification Officer is currently a woman, we know she has already approached several sister Trade Unions, some of a similar size to our own, asking for proof they are in fact an independent Trade Union, as well as other questions, so it would seem she is intent on making her mark.

The Executive believes that as much as we would like to continue to do things our own way, the risk to the Union of repeated fines of £20,000 is just too severe. The money we would ultimately be giving the Certification Officer, we would hope that you would agree, is better spent on our members and yes we know that there will be an outlay to run a full postal ballot every five years, we can budget for that, what we can't budget for is how many times the Certification Officer would and could fine us for breaching legislation and what further action she may take and impose down the line. We've included in the Final Agenda all of the motions that would be impacted by the change to Rule 21.0 under Appendix 1, so you are clear on what would be changed and impacted and added in Appendix 2 the guidance for the elections which would sit alongside the Rule Book. Whilst this is a huge change to how we have elected our Executive Council historically and it isn't one we would have necessarily chosen to do had it not been for the changes to the Certification Officer and the risk that poses, we actually think that by opening up the election process nationally, we would be in fact acting more democratically and opening up the opportunity to sit on the Executive Council to far more many members. The Executive would ask that you support this motion. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, formally seconded? Any speakers? No speakers? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Thank you very much, that's really appreciated. Okay, so what I should have said and I forgot, it's been a while. Point of order.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: It's just that buzzing noise that's going on, like a feedback thing. It's like if I was a dog, my hearing's like that. It's proper disrupting. Cheers.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, what I should have said obviously, by the way, is that when it's a Rule change it's 2/3rds Conference, when it's a general motion it's 50% of Conference. So obviously we're going on to general motions now, which means it's just a majority of show of hands. Okay, so the mover of motion 3, which is 253.

That this conference agrees that with the passing of Bro Pat Rowley we name our organising award after him. Pat has done so much for our union and his many years of helping get members and people involved in our union he has shown what we stand for. A true gent missed but never forgotten.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of Branch 253 and the Executive Council: President, Secretary, EC, Delegates.

Motion 3. That this Conference agrees that with the passing of Brother Pat Rowley, we name our Organising Award after him. Pat has done so much for our Union and in his many years of helping get members and people involved in the Union, he has shown what we stand for. A true gent, never forgotten. We've already heard today about Pat. From my first encounter at Regional Council, Pat made a point of taking new Reps under his wing, welcoming them, guiding them. Many of us in this room have a story to tell and to be honest, we could probably fill Conference week. If there was a march, he was there, a meeting, he made it if he could, a question needed asking, he asked it. Pat was well known for questioning how your money was spent and I'd like to read an extract from verbatim 2018, our 100th Conference.

Brother Pat Rowley, Region No. 2: Yes, it is needed now, but with a membership of 18,000 or so, it is a massive big budget. If we can't get members, will we be able to continue to pay expenses other than double the Union dues, or something like that, to do it, because otherwise we won't be able to be a feasible Union and that's up to all of us now in this Union to see we inherit a great Union. 50 years ago there was 40,000 members and now it's 18. It's up to us to improve on it. It's not the fault of any of the people here what has happened, it's the management and these robots which are taking your jobs and taking your bakeries and cleaning us out. So if we can't get members, we won't be able to do, we couldn't be able to continue, I couldn't see us continuing and it's up to all of us, not the full-time Officials, not to organise, because you people are inside the factories and if you don't get the members, we can't get to them.

Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Are you, yes

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: Morning, Conference. Chair, Platform, Delegates. What can I say about Brother Pat? He was a true gent, a great ambassador for our Union. The amazing essence and spirit of Pat, his generosity to people who had nothing, his belief in all that's good and fair, his unwavering commitment to the Union. Words, even the very best words, could not pay tribute to this and truly capture the unique and special role that he played in our Union. He was a very special man, always helpful and supportive in the way that warms your heart. The Union made us comrades, but Pat made us friends. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Hiya. What can I say? What can I say? Some of the beautiful tributes today to Pat. I can only speak from my heart. There was nobody like Pat Rowley, there was nobody really like him. We'll all miss and I'll miss, we'll all miss Pat's rousing passionate speeches. We'll all miss the advice he would give you, from the heart. We'll all miss his rock 'n' roll dancing, we will. We'll all miss the stories he told. I always remember he told me about working on Bobby Kennedy's Senatorial Campaign in the 60's, about knowing Bobby Kennedy, the wealth of experience that Pat Rowley, was amazing. Pat Rowley was one of a kind. Pat Rowley's somebody whose passing diminishes this Union slightly and that don't mean to say anything bad about our Union, but his going does. This is a way to respect somebody who gave his all, somebody who cared about working class people, somebody who cared about this Union. Somebody who cared about all of you. Somebody I will really miss. Please vote for this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202, Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes: Hello, comrades. Pat, when I first went to Regional Council in Wales, round about my first Regional Council, Pat took me under his wing like he does with all these kind of new members and he was so lovely, so passionate about the Union and he took me and even when I went to my first Conference, Pat was there to talk to everybody, all of us and you know, he was so passionate about the Union itself, even when we were at Regional, he'd go through the Accounts and all that and he rips into it and the kind of thing, at our last Regional Council Meeting it was never the same, because we all sat there and think Pat's not here telling, going through our Regional books and going what about this account, because he was there and we knew Pat was going to rip into the Accounts and even through the whole Regional Council Meeting, the same at the Conference as well and you know, it's never going to be the same in our Regional Council thing, even in Conference and even through the whole Union.

I support this motion and hopefully his legacy carries on, so other people and other generations can actually, even the young generations, can see what he was like, because we've got to recognise somebody like Pat so it carries on in the new generation, generation, generation and so on, so support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558, Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield: Now this venue's new and it feels alien to a lot of us, it's a lot more alien because Pat Rowley isn't here. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Tony Mansell – Branch 258: Conference, Delegates. I can just say three words about Pat and that is gentleman, enigma and a legend. God bless you, Pat. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. So, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried unanimously. Thank you very much. Motion 4.

4

Branch 356

That as a union that deals with many migrant workers, that in order to enable and help recruitment we should make sure that leaflets in different languages are available.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: You know, I think this motion is a non-brainer. In bringing this motion and what I'm going to say here, it's not an attack on anyone. I know that our FTO's work hard, I know they work hard, I know our National Officers work very hard, I know our EC works hard for this Union, I know, but I don't know if it's something's that's been overlooked, but several times when I've gone out trying to bring members into the Union, several times I've gone out, like the other week we did a roadshow at Coldfresh? Now, I was there with my Regional Officer, George Atwall and we didn't have the right leaflets. George had to do a disciplinary and there was, the majority of workers there were either Hindi speakers or Polish speakers and I don't speak either of the languages, I don't speak either of those languages. My own ignorant fault, I know that, but we've got to do something about this, because we live

I'm proud of this Union, I must admit I'm proud of this Union, how multi-cultural we are. I'm glad how we welcome people, I'm glad that we, the first Union that has the first Moldavian on it's EC, the first Romanian on it's EC, but if we want to build on that, we need leaflets in different languages. We need to do something about this. Now, I think it might have been overlooked, I don't know and I know everybody works so hard, because we want to make this Union better, but it's got to be pushed through, we've got to have the tools, because this is a great Union, this is a fantastic Union, with fantastic people in it, but we've got to get out there. We've got to, we've been trailblazers in the past, let's get these leaflets done, let's build this Union and let's see another 175 years go ahead. Thank you, support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Is anybody seconding it? Right, okay. Okay, cheers, Dave.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: I'm here to support this motion. I'll just say it contradicts another motion what we've already put through successfully on reducing paper, which doing it in a number of languages. I find the best recruitment tool we've got within our Trade Union is ourselves. If we get out, it's what we do for the members and that goes from word of mouth from member to member and to non-members and then we recruit. I agree that yes, having paper, pieces of paper in different languages will help, but I think us, as Branch Secretaries, Stewards and all Union members have a duty to go out and increase our membership through what we do for the Union. I support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Hello, everybody. Okay, a bit oddly, I'm opposing this motion.

[CHEERS, APPLAUSE and WHISTLES]

It's, I understand, I understand the importance it is to have foreign workers to come in, but shouldn't we be putting the money into educating, integrating these people into our society. I'd prefer to put this money into education, making people understand, you know, we're here. They want to make a life here in Britain basically and I know initially when they come here it is difficult, they have a different language basically, but I would prefer to put that money, as opposed to thousands and thousands of leaflets in foreign languages basically, educate these people, let's initially make them understand the leaflets in English, make them understand the way we work.

Yes, when it comes to health and safety absolutely, health and safety is a legal requirement, it's black and white and maybe we should have leaflets for that, but when it comes to, I don't know, going in when we're actually going into disciplinaries etc, let's work with these people, let's educate these people and let's help them, as I say, repeat again, integrate into society by putting this money into other aspects as opposed to thousands of pounds on leaflets, let's educate. Thank you.

[some APPLAUSE]

Sister Kastarzyna Damek – Branch 515: I would like to oppose this motion and agree with Mark. We can spend thousands of pounds by printing leaflets in all available languages. That doesn't seem right because at the same time we can spend that money on supporting ESOL classes for everyone, so we can invest in improving people's language skills instead of just printing labels, printing leaflets in multiple languages. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Karen Plasom – Branch 356: Morning, Conference. Sorry, I'm a bit nervous. While I support the motion, let's be clear, it does not cost thousands of pounds to clear, to print leaflets. On Learning Services I worked with Parry (? unclear) and I got one lady, one lady that's all it took, to translate my leaflets into her language, into Polish and I took the same questionnaire in English and in Polish and then in Bulgarian, because the people were helping me and I printed the amount of leaflets that I wanted. It's not difficult, it doesn't cost thousands. I ask you to support, but remember, we can help each other by getting somebody to translate for you and then making them leaflets up.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: As Karen goes back to her seat, I just want to remind Delegates that obviously during Covid, the government cut all of the learning funding and obviously, Conference, we've never really had an opportunity to thank all of that staff that works for our Learning Services that brought, you know, learning opportunities to so many and it's a real pleasure to see you here, Karen and I know we've got John Fox in Standing Orders and obviously I do want to say on behalf of the Executive and I'm sure on behalf of Conference, you know, we would like to send our best wishes to you and to all of those people that we unfortunately had to lose due to the government decision to stop learning in England for working class people. So thank you, Karen.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508, Lightbody's: I want to support this motion because when migrants come to this country, their English is what they learn in the schools in their countries. It's not fantastic, it's basic, so when they come here, if we have the leaflets that they need to learn from their own language, which we can then help them later on to learn the English, it gives that bridging gap that we need to get them into our workforce and into the Union, so they can understand that they're protected in the workplace in the UK as well. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nicolae Macari – Branch 357, Grencore, Northampton: First-time speaker on behalf of the EC.

[APPLAUSE]

Dear comrades, our membership is the heart and soul of our Trade Union. Communicating with our membership base is a key element to our Union. To build our membership number is crucial to building our Union. It is a fundamental element of communication that gives us the legitimacy and builds our recognition and strengthens our resolve. Today we work more and more in a multi-cultural workplace. As a Trade Union, we celebrate the diversity in our workplace. We celebrate bringing workers together in comradeship, but we need to communicate with our comrades whose English is limited. By doing so, we extend our Union vision, we spread our ideas of Solidarity and comradeship, but first we need to communicate with all our comrades. By communicating, we can tell everyone who we are and what we do. We can communicate the benefits of being in our Union. We can communicate the support, the support we give to all members of our Union.

In order to go, we must spread the information about our Union and that means provide the leaflets in multiple languages. We must be the standard bearer in opening ourselves to all our workers across the UK. We must build our strength by being more accessible to all workers and again, I say that the way forward in building the strength of our Union lies in communication. Communicating will make us stronger and will see our Union continue on for another 175 years, for us Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels of old. Workers of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains. Please support the motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Douggie, you have the right of reply, because it was opposed. For new Delegates, when somebody opposes a motion, the mover has the right of reply, just so you know why he's coming back. If it hadn't have been opposed, then obviously we wouldn't be inviting him back up to speak.

Brother Douggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Kind of, you stole my thunder here like, because you said something I was going to say, you know, but, sorry? Right, alright, alright, you know, but we have put money in education, you know and it was the government who cut the funding for ESOL classes. It was the government that cut the funding for Unionlearn and the great work that Karen Plasom and John Fox did and we're still trying to work to provide ESOL classes. We have Bianca Todd who's trying to get hold of and provide, working with us to get ESOL classes. We have Regions that are talking to colleges to get ESOL classes. We do help with languages, because we are a multi-cultural Union that I am proud of, I am proud to be a member of and I am glad to call you all comrades. Please vote for this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, okay. Okay Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 5.

5

Branch 405

That this conference agrees.....That this union is to work with all relevant, authorities, parties and bodies to help end the exploitation of the black economy, by changes to the law. Meaning that those that knowingly are involved in the recruitment, employment, supervision and most importantly – the paying of 'black economy' workers, are charged with tax fraud.

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: Right, hello. I've no idea what I'm doing, so I'm just going to read this piece of paper, so it's motion 5. Here we go. That this Conference agrees that this Union is to work with all relevant authorities, parties and bodies to help end the exploitation of the black economy by changes to the law, meaning that those that knowingly are involved in the recruitment, employment, supervision and most importantly, the paying of black economy workers are charged with tax fraud. I'm not sure if you know what the black economy is, but I'm not going to go into a big speech about it, but basically it's the part of the economy where it's unrecorded, untaxable, it's sort of back-handed, secret payments, that kind of thing, construction workers usually find themselves in that position, so yes, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Also first-time speaker as well and first-time Delegate.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, seconder? Formally seconded. Okay, yes, cheers. Any speakers? Obviously the Executive Council would ask Conference to support the motion. To the vote. Those in favour? Okay. Those against? That's carried, thank you very much. Motion 6, which is 420. Branch 420? You've withdrawn it? So it was withdrawn? Alright, okay. In that case then, yes, we'll do motion 7. Nice introduction then, wasn't it?

7

Branch 432

That this conference agrees that we as a union should fully support the call for the introduction of "Hillsborough Law" . This is not a football issue or about Liverpool FC it's about every single person in this country, about Fairness and about what's right.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, AB, Liverpool (EC Member): Moving the motion and also speaking on behalf of the EC, who ask you to support this motion. That this Conference agrees that we, as a Union, should support the call for the introduction of the Hillsborough Law. This is not a football issue or about Liverpool F.C., it's about every single person in this country, about fairness and about what's right. So, what is the Hillsborough Law? It's a move to re-balance the scales of justice, based on four key pillars. One, a Charter for families bereaved through public tragedy, legally binding on all public bodies. Two, a statutory duty of candour on public servants during all forms of public inquiry and criminal investigations. Three, proper participation of bereaved families at inquests through publicly-funded representation and an end to near limitless legal spending by public bodies and four, a public advocate to act for families of the deceased after major incidents. The Hillsborough Law would make it illegal for those in public services to give misleading information. A Bill also contains penalties and fines for those who are wilfully non-compliant. The Law will protect other families from going through what the Hillsborough families went through and still go through.

Unfortunately the establishment have failed to learn lessons from the cover-up of Hillsborough and Hillsborough is not the only tragedy over the years to receive shoddy treatment and unfairness. The Birmingham pub bombings, Orgreave and, more recently, Grenfell and there are many, many more. The need for the Hillsborough Law is a clear and fundamental re-balancing of the legal, colonial and judicial systems, creating a level playing field for bereaved families with agencies of the state, will prevent future generations experiencing injustices we have seen in our lifetime. The Hillsborough families have had to fight decade after decade after decade against the injustices of the cover-up by the establishment. In 2016, a new inquest, which I might add the families had to fight tooth and nail for, found the 96, now 97, after Andrew Devine passed away last July, were unlawfully killed due to gross negligence and despite that verdict, no-one has been held accountable for causing the 97 unlawful killings or the discredited police case. I will repeat that again. Nobody has been held accountable for causing the 97 unlawful killings or the discredited police case.

I was at Hillsborough on 15th April, 1989 and I was in the Leppings Lane end, but I was lucky, I got out and I've seen things that day that scar you for life, they haunt you, but we knew the truth and we tried to tell what happened and we tried to tell people the truth, but they wouldn't listen. They would rather listen to the lies from the rag of a paper. The police lied, the FA lied and the government lied, but we knew the truth and now you all know the truth, unfortunately some people won't or can't accept the findings of the inquest in 2016. Where I sit at Anfield, I'm not far from the supporters who, every other week, instead of singing to support their team, sing about Hillsborough and how a certain paper was right. We need to educate ourselves on Hillsborough and join the fight for the introduction of the Hillsborough Law, because one day, you never know when you might need it and on that day of 15th April, it could have been any team. The disaster was waiting to happen. Justice for the families, well, the families have never got justice. They deserve it and they fought for it. The victims, they never got justice and because of the worst cover-up in British criminal history and lies and lies and more lies.

Over the years I've seen many members of the families who have lost loved ones that pass away. John and Teresa Glover, whose son, Ian, died at Hillsborough, who were pivotal in the launch of the Hillsborough Justice Campaign and what can you say about Anne Williams, a truly wonderful, wonderful courageous lady who lost her son, Kevin. She is the real Iron Lady. I thank them for their tireless campaigning in the fight for justice, but why oh why should you have to fight for over 30 years for justice, which they still haven't got. It's disgraceful and it's shameful. The Hillsborough Law would be a valuable legacy for the 97. Every day I wear my Justice for the 97 badge. I wear it with pride and I wear it with respect and I always think about 97 angels who went to a football match and never came home. So please get to know about the Hillsborough Law and when you go home from Conference, speak to your MPs and ask them if they are supporting it or not and if they're not, ask them why and put your case forward. So I hope you support this motion and remember, don't buy The Sun and Justice for the 97.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother John Fitzpatrick – Branch 430, No. 4 Region: I'm here to second this motion. It affected everyone in Liverpool. My first cousin, she lost her partner and her children lost their father. It was dead distressing. I wasn't at the game, but I seen it on the television and what you seen was horrendous. All the ambulances were kept over the road, just like in Manchester, they were all kept away from the area, not needed. It's heartbreaking for the families, it's heartbreaking for people not having justice. As John says, it's not about football, it's about justice and the law and when you think about it, that's where you go back to your Branches and your MPs. I'd like you all to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417, Hovis, Golborne, Wigan: Morning again, Conference. President, General Secretary, Chairman, Executive Members and Branch Delegates. How do you follow that? Somebody who was there in the stand that witnessed such catastrophic events, absolutely terrible. Said with such eloquence as well. The Houses of Parliament acknowledges that it's taken 28 years for the two inquest verdicts of unlawful killing of the Hillsborough 97 to be recorded. The House also acknowledges that 33 years after the Hillsborough disaster, criminal trials shamefully collapsed on 26th May, 2021 at Salford, on a technicality. Furthermore, the House or the Houses of Parliament acknowledges the fact that it took 24 years, 24 years of campaigning for the truth about the disaster to be finally acknowledged at the Hillsborough Independent Panel and for the mendacious lies and smears and victims and survivors to be corrected. The MP for West Derby in Liverpool, Ian Byrne, supported by the fantastic work of Maria Eagle, MP for Garston and Halewood, alongside Joanne Anderson, who is the current Mayor of Liverpool and Steve Rotherham, the Liverpool Regional Metro Mayor are now solidly behind the Real Truth Legacy Project. This is a campaign to educate all generations about the real truth, the real truth and injustice of Hillsborough. Following on from this, the Project hopefully will become part of the National Curriculum, taught in all of our schools.

In fact, the whole of the Liverpool City region signed up to this Project and gives it their full co-operation and endorsement. However, despite this and the tremendous ground swell and support, other disasters, as John has already eluded to, have occurred. Obviously, in recent events, the Manchester bombings come to the mind, to the fore. John's already spoken about the points, about the Campaign calls, so I won't go over them again, but basically the Charter for families, statutory duty of candour, etc. Those points should be a catalyst to speed up this process, to act upon and build so that in the not too distant future, it becomes statute law and is established in law of the land of the United Kingdom. It's a legacy that must prevail. More than anything else, it's to honour those deceased, their families and relatives in their utmost hour of need. Conference, I strongly ask you to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No more speakers? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Okay, those against? That's carried unanimously. Thank you very much.

Okay Conference, I'm going to invite you to put your Agendas away, because obviously we are going to, I think you will remember him, right. I know he's been gone a little while, but I think you will remember him. Obviously, I've, you know, I've worked with him for, well I mean, obviously I attended the same place where he attended for a number of years, we, yes, yes, but we had some good times and obviously we, you know, we fell out a lot, but we made up plenty and we had some enjoyable times and I think about the McDonald's Campaign and the £10 an hour Campaign and the things that we did together politically, you know, over the years. I mean, which nearly does span over 175 years, Ronnie. Obviously over all of those years, you know, you've played a major role, you know, we talk about the Credit Union, we talk about, actually you know, you can go back a long way with you, can't you? Yes, I mean obviously Scotts had a bakery and you went to work there, didn't you, then they closed it because you stroke that often that they never re-opened it again after that, is that right? You closed it down, yes, yes. I mean and obviously there was a lot of things that you've done, but you've done so much for our Trade Union and obviously it's a real pleasure to invite our now-retired General Secretary to give his final address to our Conference, in our 175th year.

[APPLAUSE]

Ex-General Secretary Ronnie Draper addresses Conference

Brother Ronnie Draper: Comrades, members of the Platform, President, new General Secretary, who I think is doing a great job. It's the longest preparation for a retirement speech ever, I mean two years, one month, four days, that's how long ago I retired. You know, lockdown, I know it was terrible for you, because you were forced to go into work, but, you know, for me, as a pensioner, lockdown, living in a rural setting, all I could do was walk and eat. At one time I thought I was turning into a dog

[LAUGHTER]

and I can't do with, never have been able to do, those Zoom meetings. I know you had to put up with them, lots of them and, you know, I did the odd ones.

[APPLAUSE]

I always thought, I always thought it was like a political version of the Ranganation. I couldn't get my head around pushing buttons to find who's speaking and looking to see whose hands are going up, so, anyway, I'm glad at the beginning the President said that he's crap at jokes, because I remember the first Conference when I took over as General Secretary, Ian as President and we were doing a preparation for Conference and he says, I think I'll tell a few gags. I said, Ian, don't. He said, no, no, I've got to I said, don't, don't, don't, don't tell any gags, Ian. Why not? I said, you're crap at it, man and so he said I've got to do it. Anyway, he got up at Conference and he told a gag and the only one who knew it was a gag was me, because nobody laughed

[LAUGHTER]

everyone and when he finished, he thought, he said that was disappointing, he said, nobody's laughing at my jokes. I said, I told you, Ian, you're no good at it. Anyway, he's given me parameters that I'm not allowed to speak, so I'm not allowed to mention Man United, he did tell me that, so I'm keeping away from that. He's told me to keep the speech short, so I've said about three hours is good. He said I'm not to mention about his, the thing he has for wearing onesies, I don't know whether you've ever seen them. He has a Tigger onesie

[LAUGHTER]

right, which he loves to wear and the only reason he wears a Tigger onesie is because the Andy Pandy one wore out.....

[LAUGHTER]

right, so I'm not going to mention that and I'm not going to mention about the time when he parked his car, we went to a meeting in Pudsey and he parked his car on a, well, we parked our car on a car park and he parked it in somebody's kitchen

[LAUGHTER]

because he'd left the handbrake off and it went through a house. I'm not going to mention that and the other thing, I'm not going to mention when he was giving, we were out on the £10 an hour Campaign, we were in London, we were outside McDonald's and you know Ian is one for waving his arms and I know that, you'll find it, if you're speaking from there, by the time you go home on Thursday, you'll be like this for about three days, but he gave a speech and he had a cup of coffee in his hand, just a cardboard cup of coffee and he's like talking and he's waving around like that and somebody walked past him and threw 50p in it.

[LAUGHTER]

So I'm not going to mention those sort of things. So all your secrets are really safe with me.

So just a little bit of history about myself. I've been a member for 49 years, 50 years next year. Pat, I think, was at every Conference I went to and probably, no, I think his first Conference was Margate, the same as me and the same as a number of people who were on the Executive at the time and so, 49 years a member, 33 as a full-time Official, of which 21 was as a National Officer. So I've had a career that's been quite long. I've had lots and lots of highs, many laughs and quite a few lows and, you know, made lots of friends along the way. So I just want to maybe go through some of those stories with you that we had, to show how maybe the Union's changed and sometimes how it hasn't changed.

I remember my first Conference, going as a Merseyside Delegate, 1979, down to Margate, never been to Margate in my life, didn't know how to get there, we went on a train, we booked a carriage on the train, we all got down there. The first morning of Conference, we're sat at the front, Merseyside sat at the front, never ever been known, John, we were sat at the front. Day two, we were at the back, they shifted us back, right to the very back of the hall and I remember Terry O'Neill, who was the President then, making an announcement. He said, I've made some strange announcements, he said, from this platform, he said, but has anybody lost false teeth, he said, we found some on the lectern yesterday. Now any sensible person would leave it until a breaktime and say, you know, Terry, they're my teeth. Not Tommy Booth, Tommy Booth, back of the hall, head like that, here you are mate, they're mine

[LAUGHTER]

took them out of Terry's hand, straight in his mouth

[LAUGHTER]

never washed them, back to the back of the hall. So that was my, the first thing that I got at that Conference.

My second Conference was at Skegness, another place I'd never been before. You know, we didn't have salubrious places like this to stay in, we stayed in, well, they were just up from a dosshouse, we stayed in a hotel called the Hildred's? Hotel, it was a big hotel and you didn't have a room on your own, in fact the room I had, there was four of us in it. There was a guy called Joe Flynn, who was one of my Stewards, there was Lenny Williams, who was a Branch Secretary and some young guy from Cousins, which was another Bakery in Liverpool. So we got in, there's two single beds, there's two double beds, so this young kid's gone in first, gone down the end of the room, a little single bed for himself, Bob's your uncle. I went in second, double bed, claimed it. Lenny Williams, who was our Branch Secretary, goes in, straight to the second double bed and he puts his case on it, so Joe Flynn's looking at him, Joe Flynn walks in, puts his case on the single bed, opens the window, takes Lenny Williams' case off the and threw it out the window.

[LAUGHTER]

Second floor, we could have killed somebody in Skegness

[LAUGHTER]

and Lenny says, what did you do that for? He says, because you left your case on my bed.

[LAUGHTER]

One of the other ones I can remember is speaking at my first Conference about and I know what my first speech was about, when somebody moves, after the National Strike, that we should re-admit people who dropped out the Union so they could go into work and work during the strike and then they got thrown out the Union and then they wanted re-admitting and I said well, look, you don't do that, you never ever admit a scab back into a Union.

[APPLAUSE]

I will say, once a scab, always a scab. Some people got called scabs when they weren't actually scabs and it was from my kids, because my kids came on the picket line with me during the strike and anyone who tried to get in was called a scab. My kids were shouting it but, you know, it was unfortunate, like a year later, any bread wagon that went past, scab, scab, the kids were shouting after the wagon, so it was a legacy that stuck.

One of the stories I've told before but many people won't know it, is when I'd just took over as President and Joe Marino was the General Secretary, Joe had an unfortunate illness where he couldn't turn up to Conference and it was one of those Conferences where you have 100 motions, lots of Delegates and Jackie Barnwell, who was the Vice President then, I said well look, Jackie, I'll do the General Secretary's job and some of the President's job as well, but you sort of do the stuff that I need you to do. So she said okay, so halfway through the change of Rule, which is always the driest part of Conference, you know everyone's sort of nodding off and I'm no different to that, I was listening but you know, sort of relaxing, speech going on, I hear somebody shout point of order, Mr Chairman and I looked at, yes and this guy walked down, took no notice who it was, come down, I said make your point of order, asked the speaker to get off. Well, what he said was a point of order, it was a speech, against what the guy there was saying. So I said, excuse me, that's not a point of order, you'll have to leave the rostrum. So this guy carries on, point of order, Mr Chairman. Same guy comes down. I said, look, is it a point of order? He says, yes. Goes back on, starts making the same speech in opposition to what the guy on the rostrum was saying. I said, look, mate, that's not a point of order, now get off, off the stage and we carried on and that night I was taking Jan Hawke, who was just walking across the back there, it was her first ever Conference and I was taking Jan round the function we had that night and we were walking and introducing her and this guy comes over to me. I now know him as being Duncan Dale from No. 5 Region and he come up to me and he went oh, he said, Ronnie, he said, three little words, he said, those words this morning and I said, point of order? He said, yes, he said, it really damaged me, he said, it's left a lasting legacy on me that scarred me for life and I said, well, I didn't mean to be nasty with you but, you know, point of order, I've got to run Conference right and you weren't in it, so that's why I asked you to move. He said, no, he said, it's not that, he said, three words, he said, have never damaged me so much, he said, since my first girlfriend said is that it?

[LAUGHTER]

The other thing at Conference, it just struck me, the other thing that Conference reminds me of is Watkins and Gunn Solicitors all coming, dressed as cowboys and indians and John James, who's the Official for No. 2 Region coming up to me and saying Ronnie, can you come and meet our lawyers, so I said, yes, I'll come over, all dressed, you know, it's surreal isn't it, going over and shaking hands with cowboys and indians but Jonathan, who's Clive's partner in the business, I went to shake his hand and he fell over, he fell over and so as he's trying to, drunk, trying to get up and as he's doing it, his phone fell out of his pocket, so he went to pick his phone up, he did a somersault, he just couldn't stand up, so in the end I walked away and said hello to and then we were going to another bar, I think, the Manchester bar later on that night, walking along the road and one of the young women from Watkins and Gunn, dressed as a squaw, is carrying Jonathan on her back

[LAUGHTER]

she's carrying him up the road. I mean, you would have thought it would have been the other way, but he was that drunk, he couldn't walk, so she carried him piggyback all the way up, so it was absolutely fantastic.

You know, we've got some great speakers at these Conferences and I can remember many over the years, you know, you'll remember Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn, you know, some fantastic people, Ronald Wolfe from the IUF. One that I really remember is Hang Dongfang, you'll all go Hang Dongfang, who's he? Well, Hang Dongfang was the guy, do you remember Tiananmen Square, he's the guy who stood in front of the tank?, that was him and we got him, we were lucky, we got him to speak at our Conference and he was amazing. We had a Conference where we brought an Israeli and a Palestinian, after we'd been over it, in Israel, got them together, in peace, to come to our Conference and talk about, you know, peace in the Middle East and I thought that was another great tribute to our Union. But the ones I really remember is when we had the Ugandans over, so we had these Ugandan visitors and I took them up to Conference on the Friday in Bridlington, like today, drizzly day and we sat in the café opposite the Conference Centre and I got them whatever they were having, tea, coffee and a woman walked past, rainhood on, with a Chihuahua on a lead and she's walking and Joseph Embabazi, who was their President said to me, he goes, why's that lady got that dog on a string?, and I said well, it's her dinner and she doesn't want it to escape and honestly, even after they went home from Conference, they were convinced that, you know, people, every time they saw somebody walking with a dog, it was for their dinner. They must have a big family if they've got a big dog, you know

[LAUGHTER]

so that's Sometimes, you know, the jokes you tell and whatever can rebound on you and, you know, I can remember a guy called Richard Morfa, I don't know whether people from Northern Foods would probably know him and this Richard Morfa, there's one thing that stands out when I was doing negotiations in Manchester and we'd signed an agreement, or we were signing an agreement, with Cara? Foods and they brought their Operations Director down, a guy called Rob Bryan, Richard Morfa, who was the Factory Manager, Tony Scott, who was our Branch Secretary and myself, so the four of us were all signatories, so Rob Bryan, as the parent company's Human Resources Director, he signs, I sign the agreement, Tony Scott signed it and Richard Morfa says no, no, stop, he said, I'm not signing that, I can't sign this agreement. So I said, you know, they've spent a fortune, they've had the binders and all that all done on nice paper, he said, I can't sign that, so I said, why can't you sign it? He said, because, he said, he's signed it A Scott, he pointed to Tony Scott, he said, he's signed it A Scott and his name's Tony. I said, no, no, no, no, you've got it wrong. Tony, as in Anthony, Richard as in Dick

[LAUGHTER]

and I think he got the sack a few weeks' later on.

[LAUGHTER]

But there's times when laughs rebound on me as well and I don't mind people taking the Mick out of me, it's happened, you know. Like I went, you know, Southport has some really bad memories for me, not the Conference as such, but normally when I went to, I knew I'd be doing it, you go a month before and you check what's going on and John Vickers had come with me, because they were doing, the Learning Services were going to have an operations room in the Conference Centre, so we went over to sort all the details out and we did it and then we went out for a few beers and then we went for a curry and then we went for a few more beers and then we were staying at the hotel that put us up, both up, overnight, separate rooms. Three o'clock in the morning, you know if I've been drinking beer, you know what happens? I want to go for a pee. I gets up, opens the door, no glasses on, click and I'm on the landing.

[LAUGHTER]

No clothes on, nothing at all

[LAUGHTER]

and the first thing I thought about was, there was a pensioners, you know, all pensioners tour going on, there was like loads of them and I was thinking, what if anyone comes down and thinks I've been thrown out of one of these old women's rooms?

[LAUGHTER]

What's people going to think? and I had to walk to the stairs, trying to cover myself as best I could, you know it's difficult

[LAUGHTER]

shouting down to the Night Manager, hey mate, mate and he looked up and I've never seen anyone so mortified in their lives

[LAUGHTER]

and the other thing that happened in that hotel where the laugh ended up on me was, another time I'd gone up direct to the hall, ready to get Conference stuff ready and summer month, black trousers, white shirt, opening neck, you know, I was boiling, went in, I was staying the night and I was at reception and these two old ladies came over to me and they went, are you the turn, love?

[LAUGHTER]

and I went, I said, yes, yes, I'm the turn and she goes, can you do any Neil Diamond? I said, oh yes, I do Neil Diamond, yes, Cracklin' Rose, what do you want, America? She said, oh anything, she said, but will you play it for, say Enid and Ethel? I said, I'll do that for you. I felt sure, I mean I wasn't even going to be in the hotel at night, I was going out with the POA. So I've gone in, I've had my meal, I've got a glass of wine, not ready to go out yet, so I'm sat at the bar and these two old ladies came and sat next to me and I thought, oh God, how am I going to get out of this? And then my phone, for some reason, lit up and on my front page is a picture of me and my partner, Shirley and this old lady went, oh, is that your daughter, love?

[LAUGHTER]

When you are a National Officer, you know and you go abroad, you have to be an ambassador as well, you have to be an ambassador. The one thing I never thought I'd ever be was a translator and I went to Egypt because, you know, they always wanted the President or the General Secretary to be there and that we take EC members. So I took two EC members with me, who were they? Marilyn and Vi. Now, I don't speak Arabic, I don't speak Arabic at all, but they didn't understand the two Delegates we had from Newcastle, so I was a translator for the whole 10 days or whatever we were there, everything they said, I had to translate into English, for the translator to tell the Egyptians what they were saying. It was quite traumatic, wasn't it, I was worn out by the end of the week and we have some members of course who, we take EC members along for a number of reasons. It's good for culture, it's good for them to understand how other Unions work, sometimes it's good for them to mess everything up on the tour, like somebody I know, who's not sat too far away. Now, I don't normally mention names, but Kevin

[LAUGHTER]

Kevin, we were on a bus with, we'd been, we were in Israel and we'd been, all of the delegation, some went to a political rally and we went to, round a food factory, but the guy who we actually brought to the Conference and we were sat on this old rickety bus. We'd done the meeting, we were going back for a beer at the hotel and, if you can imagine, down this bus it was double seats on one side and just a single seat on the other side of the bus, right down to the driver, so me, I'm sat on the double-sided one with my legs up, Kevin's sat on a single seat with his back to the window facing me and we're having a chat and Pauline, I think Marilyn was there as well, so the four of us were on this bus, all having a chat and a good laugh and Kevin's phone rang, you know, who's phoning in Israel and it was Laura, his partner. Laura's phoned him and he's got, you know, well, everything's tight but he had tight jeans on and he leaned back to get his phone out the pocket and the window fell out the bus and he went with it

[LAUGHTER]

except I stopped him, I stopped his legs. I said, don't forget I saved your life, so never say anything bad about me. So he, he's like panic, I could have died then, I was terrible, he's a bit of a (unclear) that way. We get into Tel Aviv and he's still got his back to this window, well, where the window used to be and this woman, we stopped at a zebra crossing and a woman walked across who was absolutely blattered and she walked across the front of the bus and came down the side and must have seen his broad shoulders leaning out the bus, he actually had that under his armpits. I'll tell you what, jump up, he nearly hit the luggage rack.

[LAUGHTER]

Seriously though, you know, I mean I'm not going to tell you more, maybe tonight if you're nice. You know, I owe a lot to, obviously in my lifetime, to the Union. I remember the first time when I worked in Scotts, you got the Union card, it was a closed shop. If you didn't sign it, you were out, you didn't work and a guy called Andy Ennis, I don't suppose there'd be many people in here who'd know him, his actual name was Ambrose Ennis and he was the Branch President in Scotts and he made, within 10 minutes of me being in work, I had a Union card, so I've gone right through from that day, you know, it's been my life. I've, you know, took part in many elections and I've been fortunate enough to win them and to get into the positions that we have. From, I think, I was thinking the other night about some of the Campaigns that we've done. I mean, in Scotts, you know, you're right, Scotts did have lots of strikes, you know, for fairness and all that, for justice, but there was other things that happened in the Union that I can remember still to this day, although it was today. When we marched in Manchester to try and protect the workers at Manor Kipling, it's stuck with me, I thought it was a fantastic, you know, move by the Trade Union movement to fight for people's jobs but, you know, the one that really stands out, I mean, it's not one that I was a part of in Scotts, the one that stands out for me, that made the Union's reputation, is what happened in Wigan.

True, the Wigan strike put the Union, I thought that was you grabbing it, it was a microphone, the strike in Wigan, I think it was great for comradeship, it was great for the Trade Union movement in general. I mean, I've never seen spontaneously, you know, 400 people turn up on a picket and the police not know what to do and it was always good humoured, it was always about fighting for justice and it wasn't about, you know, we're going for extra wages or we want more money for overtime or bonuses, they were fighting for the rights of casual workers, people who could be turned on and off like a tap, very much like it is today. When I was a kid, we were brought up like that, we had the casual role on the docks. My partner's dad was a docker and they would stand in a pen and if your face fitted, you got a job and that's how it worked in Liverpool on the docks and I'm sure would have been in all other docks. The stand that Wigan took, I thought, was absolutely fantastic and

[APPLAUSE]

I was lucky, you know, I'd go around, speaking at meetings, go on the rallies and whatever and promoting and, as I say, I think it did a great job for our, it didn't do so much good for the Directors, because I remember being at the meeting, Geoff Atkinson's not here, John Fox is, we sat at a meeting, the first one about 10 o'clock at night and the Director says, we'll give in when hell freezes over and that was the statement they gave, we'll give in when hell freezes over and Ian and I were over in Ireland, I was speaking at a rally in Dublin and we got a phone call in the airport. Brian Carlton, he says, look, he says, we're going to give in, he says, will you call the strike off today? I said no, no, I can't, mate, I'm not calling the strike off, I never put the strike on. Our members took the decision to go on strike and it'll be our members who call it off.

This guy was like weak, he was like putty, he said, okay, we'll go back and we'll ask the Branches, no, you won't, I'll ask the Branches, I'll go and talk to the Branch, I'll tell them what you've got to offer and bear in mind, Brian Carlton, who was the HR Director, about two or three weeks before, I remember driving down the M3 going home and he phoned me and he said, you call the strike off now and I said, I'm not calling no, I've told you, I'm not calling the strike off. He said, we'll come after the Union, we'll seek to sequester your funds. I said, do you know what'll happen?, the Union will continue because people, you know, volunteer. You know, our Reps aren't paid, they're volunteers and they believe in collectivism and so you can do what you want, you come and sequester the Union, you come and take our buildings and we'll carry on. He said, yes, but we'll come after your house. I said, look, pal, get in the queue, my ex-wife's after that one, so you've got to wait.

[LAUGHTER]

So, you know, he was a really hard nose employer. As I say, a couple of weeks' later, the strike was over and those, I think they won an epic battle. You know, the Fast Food Rights thing, I think has put us on the map, I think it's been brilliant. I think the Campaigns on zero hours contracts, on £10 an hour, now £15 an hour, God, inflation's gone quick there, hasn't it?, have really made people look at our Union as a campaigning Union and I think it's absolutely fantastic and, you know, we're going to need to have more strikes like what we had in McDonald's, but we need them in Wetherspoons, because he's one of the most corrupt employers in this country and we still all go to Wetherspoons to help him pay. This is a guy, remember, when Covid came in and I hope it was a baptism of fire for Sarah, because she'd just been elected, I was still General Secretary, Sarah was General Secretary Elect and we ran a campaign because he said to all his workers, go, not furloughed, go, go and work for Tesco's if you need to, because they're taking people on and if you want a job when we re-open, we'll give you your job back. That was the sort of guy that we were dealing with and on that day, I think I got 10,000 hits on my Twitter feed, because the work that we were doing and what did he do that night?, he capitulated, he turns around and decides he's going to furlough his workers.

So, I want to finish, comrades, by thanking everyone for, you know, what they've done to help shape my career. A lot of people were pivotal in it and some, most of the people that I'll talk about are dead. It has nothing to do with the fact that they were pivotal in my career that they died, I mean, it was probably old age, some of them, but the likes of Wally Ormisher, who was one of the funniest guys you'll ever meet, always pushed me forward as an EC member, pushed me to become an Official and then supported me later on, right throughout my career, but by no means least, I want to thank my family. My, sorry, my partner Shirley, who can't be here for reasons that well, she can't be, she's not here and my kids, one of them's at the back there filming me and if he blackmails me with that bloody video, he's had it.

[LAUGHTER]

I'd like to wish Sarah and Ian all the best for the future, I know you'll do a great job, but to finish off, just to quote Joe Marino, you know, Joe Marino used to say and people used to get sick of it, if everyone goes away and makes one member for this Union, you double the size of it. I mean, he was a whizz at maths, that was absolutely thinking that, but that's a challenge I think we should all do, even if we start off with Delegates, if everyone here goes and makes one member tomorrow, we increase by what, 130 members. It isn't difficult to make a member. I can remember making a member every week or every month, I've done it all my life being an Organiser and that's a challenge I think that everyone should take up. If we want to keep this Union independent and to stay a great independent Union, then you've got to organise. Organising is what it's all about. Education is what it's all about and the only way we're going to change education is by changing government. We need to get a change of government, we need to unify as a working class people and win the next election.

Comrades, thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: So because you retired like 10 years ago now, it feels like, we've already given you retirement gifts, but what we would like to do is gift £100 to a charity of your choice.

Brother Ronnie Draper: Okay, Christ Church Foodbank.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thank you, Ronnie.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thanks, Ronnie. Ronnie, obviously tonight, did you say the first round was on you?

[CHEERS]

Oh, he's only got cash. The first time he's gone to a place where his money's not welcome. Listen, obviously Ronnie, we wish you a bon voyage, mate. We know you're enjoying your retirement, we see it often on Facebook and you can buy his artwork, it's up there for sale now and it'll be worth a fortune in years to come or it'll be in some museum and the onesie stuff just isn't true, by the way, I haven't got a onesie, I've got a twosie.

[LAUGHTER]

Yes, only because we used to share, but obviously, Ronnie, we wish you very good health and obviously to you and your family all the best, Brother. So, thank you very much.

So Conference, obviously you may have noticed some little pink cards which I did have, like that and they've got Samworth on and they've got a QR code on the back. Please could you pick them up, go to the QR code and sign the petition. We need as many people to sign that petition as possible. Lukasz has got them, Lukasz has got them, you can't get past Lukasz. So please pick up a card and go to the QR site. This afternoon, obviously we're starting back at 2 o'clock. If you can't remember which fringe meeting you're in, look on those boards over there and if you haven't picked one, come and find either me or Sarah or anybody else, me or Sarah and we'll pick one for you. So obviously Room 8 is Ron Todd, Room 9 is Skills Network, Room 11 is the Organising for a Meeting, No. 12 the Watkins and Gunn Industrial Disease. Downstairs is where you're getting fed. So we'll see you tomorrow morning at half past 9 in this Hall. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Monday 6th June 2022

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, can you shut the doors, please. Morning, Conference. Before I call the General Secretary to call the roll, I just want to remind Delegates. I know we probably reminded most of you yesterday, but just in case there was anybody that missed it. The accommodation people have advised us that someone was smoking in their room. Clearly, that is not allowed. I can't think of anywhere where it's allowed nowadays anyway in hotels, but they do have their details, because when you signed in on Saturday, you gave your details and you signed for your room key. What they have suggested to us is, they will report you and you might get a fixed penalty fine if they do find people have been in breach of that requirement not to smoke in your room. So, I'm not saying any of you here have done it, but apparently somebody did, but obviously if you have, please refrain from doing it. If you are thinking about it, please don't do it. Okay. General Secretary to call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5

[LAUGHTER at Delegate's comment – *one's smoking in his room*]

thanks, Mark. Region 7. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference. I'd also like to welcome a first-time Delegate from Hovis, Mitcham, Branch 130, which is Ragulan Ratha. I'm pronouncing better, only because people are spelling it out for me now, look.

[LAUGHTER]

I'm not going to do it twice, but welcome and I hope you're enjoying your first Conference.

We've got the nominations come through for the TUC Congress. I'm going to read your name out, if you're going to be standing or if you want to withdraw, you need to let me know now otherwise your nomination will go forward. If you don't, if you've just been put down by mistake, just shout withdraw, but obviously if you want to be going forward for the ballot, then just keep quiet. Okay and I've forgotten my glasses as well, so you're all in for it this morning [LAUGHTER]. I'm going to try and struggle through. I'm getting heckled from the side now, what's all that about? So, Anna from Greggs obviously, Nick Mead, Tony Mansell, Tony Mansell withdraws, Mohinder Badhan, Adrianna Kara, Douggie Johnstone, John Owens, John Owens withdraws, Lee Burns, Dave Suddards, Dave Suddards withdraws, Debelia Haile, Desbelia, sorry, Desbelia Haie, couldn't see the 's'. Okay, Sean Molloy, Lizzie Dinning. Okay. The ballot papers will be out as soon as possible.

Also Conference, I'm sure we will want to send our Solidarity to the RMT, who are on strike, the CWU and the Unite Yorkshire Arriva bus drivers, who are on strike today and obviously we wish them well in their fight for their rights. So, moving back to Resolution 8 and by the way, have you noticed the Solidarity Rings while you, have you noticed them? The Solidarity Rings. Well, yesterday Standing Orders told me these were standing. Right, okay, yes, yes. Motion No. 9 and just to make you aware, the reason why there is no Delegate from Branch 520, so that's the reason why there's nobody to move the motions on their behalf. Yes, let me get No. 9 out of the way first, because I've just called it, yes. You haven't come up here eating sweets, have you?

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582, Manor, Carlton: Would I do that? Yes, you've caught me unprepared.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Do you want somewhere to put your sweet?

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582, Manor, Carlton: No, it's alright now.

9

Branch 582

This Conference agrees that Companies should move to working 4 Day week to reduce stress and fatigue and create a Healthier Workforce

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582, Manor, Carlton: Good morning, good morning. Mr President, Platform, Delegates. Motion 9, four day working week. We all love a Bank Holiday that extends our weekend, but what if every weekend could be a three day weekend? There's already a lot of information out there from different models across many industries and countries from around the world and this morning, only this morning, 70 companies around the UK started a six month trial in what is believed to be the world's largest experiment for a shorter working week, with no loss of earnings. Many results from trials around the world have already shown that costs can be cut by closing the factory or office for an extra day, less expense travelling to work for staff, who can also save money on food and drink working a day less, more free time at weekends to live life and a reduction in childcare costs for parents.

Potentially increasing our mental health, being able to spend more time with family and friends, whether good or bad, employers finding it easier to recruit and retain staff on a four day week, productivity levels increasing with the workforce more happier and absence levels reduced. The benefits do appear to outweigh the disadvantages. A change in employers' attitudes to trial and embrace the challenges is what's required. It may not suit every industry, but if more employers make the change and see how it could benefit everyone's life, then efficiency and work/life balance could really go hand-in-hand. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, you can't second it. Secunder? Formally seconded, right, okay.

Brother Noel Mullen – Branch 703: I'm here to oppose this motion. I agree exactly what it says, you know, but people work 36 hours a week, which is three days, on 12 hour shifts, how are they going to benefit? I say, oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It's been seconded, yes. You can't go yet, you're answering for us, go and sit down.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Yes, I oppose this motion. I feel that companies will take advantage of this. Okay, yes, four days a week basically, on full pay. I can't imagine companies being able to sustain this of any length of period. I know it seems that they're testing it out in, I think what you said was 60 other companies. It works in finance and I've seen it work in finance both in Britain and in America, but finance is a different aspect to a business manufacturing. Eventually companies will just look at this and say well okay, four days a week, you're working eight hours, alright, we're going to increase that now to 12 hours a day, so you're doing 12 hours. So, in the end, I feel people may work four days a week, but they'll increase your hours and eventually they'll say well, we can't afford to do this, but it's already contracted, it's already in your substantive and what you'd then find basically is you'll be on less pay. So it worries me that eventually it may work in the short term but in the long term, I think it will be a disadvantage to us all. So please oppose this.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: Well, I'm on the shelf with this one, as I work four-on, four-off. We used to work a five-on, three-off on a 10 hour shift and like the gentleman before me, if knowing swapping from a 10 hour shift to a 12 hour shift would have had so much detriment, I would never have agreed to it. The four offer's fantastic, but it's no good if it's taking you two days to recover from the four-on. So I'm afraid I'd oppose it on that. If the motion said four 10's, I would support that motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: This morning, on the television, it was reported that 17 companies throughout the UK were doing trials on this, four days, four days a week. There is a lot of for and against this, but it's our lives, it's our members' lives, yes. The stress that they go through doing five shifts a week, six shifts a week, 12 hours a day, let's get it down, yes, let's get it down for our members, yes. It's our members what we've got to think about, yes. Let's get it down, four days a week, eight hours a day. I support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452, Park Cakes, Oldham: Agree with the sentiments, it would be great, but I don't think our management would buy into it. Like the previous gent has said, you know, they'll start extending your hours and they'll be expecting more, five days' work out of you in four days. It's already a rat race and it's great having three days' off, but don't always believe it's going to be Friday/Saturday/Sunday you're going to be off, it's not. You're going to be off when your kids are still at school, your partner's still at work, it's pointless. It might be, you know, a bit of peace and quiet for you and what have you, but it's not going to increase any family time whatsoever. So really, you know, the idea's great, but practical-wise, I don't think it's going to work. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580, Greggs, Leeds: Morning, Conference. We've just had a gentleman, a bloke up here, proposing the four day week. All I've heard from everybody is oh boo hoo, hoo hoo, it might not work. Well, I ask you all, who is it that'll make it work? It's you.

[APPLAUSE]

You need to go for the four day week, you need to put it on trial, because I have worked six days a week for years and it makes you ill, yes? It ruins your home life, it ruins your family. That is the best suggestion I have ever heard and all I've heard is oh boo hoo, poo hoo, it might not work. Give it a go, it's not written in stone. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Karen Plasom – Branch 356: Twenty years ago, we were on a four day week, working 10 hours a day. I loved it. I could go out on a Thursday night and get and I won't swear, 'cause you're not having my fiver.

[LAUGHTER]

Darts night was Thursday night. I absolutely adored it. It worked for me, it can work for you and it worked for our factory because, although when the management said four day week and we thought fantastic, we're down to 32 hours, no we weren't, they put them up to 10 hours, but it worked. So it's up to you guys, it's either make it work or not. It's in your hands.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Good luck, pal.

Brother Lee Turner – Branch ?, Fletchers: This is my first time here.

[APPLAUSE]

I've got a lot of illnesses, I suffer with fibromyalgia, chronic pain syndrome. I've done six 12 hours a week and I was in a right tangle and I do four 12 hours a week and I feel 10 times better. I think it's a good idea and I'm all for it, because I used to work 72 hours a week and I was in a right tangle, it made me ill. So, I'm for it 100%.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Everybody done out there, yes? Okay, Kevin.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716 and No. 7 Darts Team [LAUGHTER]: Morning, Conference. I'm here to support this motion on behalf of the Executive Council. All the stuff that's been said there about how it would work and hours and all that kind of stuff, that's all but all the motion's saying is, would you consider a four day working week? It's been less than 100 years since we went from six days down to five and I'll tell you, the arguments we're putting forward now for this one were the same arguments we put forward for that one. We've got a two-day week, a weekend, that's how it started, the exact same thing and we'll not do the six days a week, we'll have two days off where we can rest and recuperate, go drinking, play darts, play football, whatever you've got to do, that's what you could do. Nobody's saying how are Warburtons going to work it, how Greggs are going to work it, the point is, the motion says would you support a four day working week? You have got to be supporting a four day working week, because every single one of you at any given time will say phew, I'm shattered and I only do a three day working week and I'm still shattered and I'm still quite young compared to some of you

[LAUGHTER]

So necessarily, you've got to believe in the motion, not how the motion will work. The motion is, would you support a four day working week? I say, support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, you don't want the right of reply. Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Okay, motion 10. Oh no, I'm going to bring Standing Orders in, sorry. Where is he, where is he?

Brother Mick McDonald – Chair of Standing Orders: Good morning, Conference. I've come now with your second address. So we've got No. 11 stands, 12 it's withdrawn due to no Delegate, 13 stands, 14 stands, 15 stands, 16 stands, 17 stands, 18 stands, 19 stands and 20 stands and that's your second address. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you. To Conference, all those in favour? See, you've remembered [LAUGHTER]. Anyone against? That's good, thank you. Okay, motion No. 10. Take your time, Doug.

10

Branch 356

That the BFAWU should campaign against companies who are putting their workers lives at risk by ignoring COVID regulations. It is obvious that these companies are putting profits before there workers health, and we as a union should name and shame them.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Oh, sorry.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just saying.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Oooh, handbags at dawn [LAUGHTER].

Hiya. The reasons I would ask you to support this motion is one of the reasons we exist, is to protect workers' lives. The reasons we exist, as a Union, is to see a better working environment for everyone, because if it was up to our bosses, we'd still have children down coal mines, running up chimneys, because they don't care about our safety.

They don't give a damn. While you were keeping people fed during the pandemic, they were counting their coins, not bothering about your safety, not caring one inch about your safety. I say, vote for this, because this is what we do. We've always led as a Trade Union movement. Baker's lung was described as an industrial injury, because of the work done by this Trade Union and

[APPLAUSE]

let's make sure these employers don't put your lives at risk, don't put you to ground. Let's vote for this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Secunder? Oh right, okay, sorry, I was looking, I was looking over there, two sides of the room, it's 'cause I've not got my glasses, yes. Any speakers? No? Okay, so Conference, the Executive would ask you to support the motion and in saying that, we are saying this to you as well, is obviously, you know, the work you did absolutely was amazing during this pandemic, you know, you did save people's lives, you know and you can compare that with non-Unionised workplaces and you can see the difference in lives lost in unorganised workplaces compared to ones which are organised by Trade Unions that have Health & Safety Committees and I think the mover is absolutely right, when it comes to saying, you know, we should campaign against these companies that fail to protect workers and fail to ensure that they've got, you know, Covid rules and procedures in place, I think what the government's just done is absolutely shameful, absolutely shameful, but I do think this as well. If people feel that they are unsafe in the workplace, due to an outbreak of this illness, then they have the right to move themselves to safety and if our members decide to take that action, then this Union will support them in any action they want to take after that. We will stand by our members if they want to take action against employers who fail to protect them in the workplace

[APPLAUSE]

be it on Covid or any other issue. So, we would ask Conference to support the motion. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried, thank you. Motion 11.

11

Branch 405

That this conference agrees.... That this union is to work with the government and all relevant authorities to give HMRC its teeth back. To return its level of staffing and its power and authority to deal with the corporate financial world, on over 10 million pounds of revenue. No more 'sweetheart' deals!

Amendment to Remove the words 'the government and'

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: No glasses on. That this Conference agrees that this Union is to work with the government and all relevant authorities to give HMRC its teeth back, to return its levels of staffing and its powers and authority to deal with the corporate financial world on over £10 million. No more sweetheart-deals, yes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, there's an amendment, who's moving the amendment?

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: I don't know. There's an amendment to remove the words "the government", so yes.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Are you coming out to do the amendment? Right, okay, okay, come on then. It's only Monday.

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: It's only Monday, yes, you're correct. Morning, Conference. I'm here to push the amendment through, because our Union won't work with this government, yes. So, that's why the amendment's there. We're just cancelling "the government" and that's why we put that amendment in, yes. Please support the amendment.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I'll take it that was formally seconded as well, was it? Yes, okay. Okay, cool. We are going to vote, yes, sorry, yes, we do have to vote on the amendment, what are you talking on? On the amendment? So you're not talking on the amendment, you're going to talk on the motion? Obviously, yes, I know, but I just wanted to double-check which one he was talking on. So, on the amendment, do we accept the removal of the words for the amendment? All those in favour? So, obviously we just take that out, yes, okay. Next, go on. Motion, the motion now reads without that bit of government in.

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: Morning, Conference. I'm here to oppose the original motion and the amendment. I don't think giving the Tax Office any more bite than they've already got is a good idea, because they won't come after Amazon and they won't come after Apple, they'll come after all you, every single one of you, they won't be doing that, give them no more bite. Oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: I'm here to support the motion, you know. At the minute, you know, if you read the scandal of the Amazons and the Starbucks and how they get away with tax and what does the HMRC do? There are more people investigating Child Working Tax Credits in the HMRC than there are tax-avoidance and if you're talking about money laundering, the centre of money laundering is, in the world, the City of London and nothing is done. It launders drug cartels, it launders terrorist groups, anybody. The City of London, you have a few million dollars or billion, they will open your arms and it will let you in and say, we love you, but what does HMRC do? Nothing. They investigate nothing. I say, please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Yes, I have to oppose this motion. I agree with my previous, previous, previous colleague. Why would we possibly give more power to a government branch that, their job is to actually find tax. I mean, we are in a Covid situation which cost us millions over the last two years, I mean billions and they're going to have to get that money back somehow so, giving them more power, giving them more staffing, giving them more money basically to find this money, I agree that they won't take it from, yes, they'll take it from Amazon, they'll take it from the bigger companies, but they will go after us. I know I'm reiterating what my previous colleague said, but I just do not want to give more power to an organisation where the job for that organisation is to find money and to fund, basically, the government. So, please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, nobody else? General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, we would ask that you support the motion. The HMRC are here this week, delivering sessions on what constitutes a National Minimum Wage breach and how individuals can report them and keep their employers, take their employers to account, which is fantastic, but they need the ability to run the investigations and take the action needed on employers who choose to abuse the system and we know, like every other department and service, they've been stripped back and hampered over the last 12 years, under the guise of austerity, thanks to the Tory government. So, we ask you to support this motion, so that we can put them, we can hold them to account to make sure our employers do the right thing. We ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You have the right of reply. Right of reply? No? Okay, to the vote then. Those in favour? Those against? Put your hands down. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Thank you. Motion 12 is dropped.

Right, we've got Ian Mearns coming on at half past 10, so he's doing our Parliamentary Report, so I know you've only just come in, but we're going to send you for a brew, alright? So, what I am going to do though is, because obviously you're going to have slightly longer for your brew than we would normally do, I'm going to take it off you just before dinner, because you can't get your dinnertime until half past 12 anyway, so you'll just have to stay back a little bit, like detention, most of you have served it before [LAUGHTER]. So, go and get a brew and make sure you're back in here for 25 past 10.

[BREAK]

Please take your seats now, please. Okay, have we made sure everybody's back in? Okay, obviously I'm being drip-fed by Frank, who's made me aware now that there is also another first-time Delegate, from Branch 139, Hovis in Erith, who's Navagh Kalir? and I do apologise if I haven't pronounced it right. Kaliwah, Kaliri, Kaliri?.

Oh, yes, you've got nomination papers, sorry, voting papers. Can you make sure they're filled in and can the full-time Officials make sure they're collected and obviously give them to the Scrutineers to take into Standing Orders. It's, for first-time Delegates, you can vote for three, up to three people, up to three. Well, everybody else should know. So, vote up to three Delegates. Have we Obviously the Vice President's just realised he's the Vice President and he's got a new member himself, which is Waqas Iqbal from Branch 419. Obviously, on behalf of the Vice President, he sincerely apologises for forgetting that you're new. That's what I meant, a new Delegate to Conference. New, no, I said new, I said new. We are, is he on? And as if by magic, all the way from Geordie-land, we've got, we've got, any second now, the wonder of science and technology, he's on their laptop over there, waay, how you doing, Ian?

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Morning, Ian, how are you doing?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We're alright, mate, we're alright. Obviously, the wonders of technology. It's just like you're in the room with us now, Ian, just like you're in the room [LAUGHTER].

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: It's funny, it's exactly the same for me.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You didn't think we could all fit in the living room, did you? [LAUGHTER]

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Well, this is my kitchen.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, you're in the kitchen. Put the kettle on, mate, put the kettle on. Actually we've just had a brew, we've just had a brew, mate, but obviously Obviously, Conference, as people know, we have a Parliamentary Group and we have a Parliamentary Chair. Ian Mearns has been the Parliamentary Chair, oh, for, since the land that time forgot, wasn't it? He's currently the MP for Gateshead, which is obviously for those people that have never been past obviously Durham, it's around that area. You know, I mean obviously everybody goes to Durham Miners Gala every year, but obviously Ian's here to give us our update. Can we have quiet, yes? To give us our update on our Parliamentary Group. So, Conference, give Ian Mearns a warm welcome and a round of applause, obviously. [APPLAUSE]

Ian Mearns, Chair of our Parliamentary Group, addresses Conference

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Well, thank you very much, Ian and it's a pleasure to be with you, even if it is virtually and I'm sorry I couldn't be there in person, but given that I'm also Chair of the RMT Parliamentary Group, I think it would have been perverse for me to try and circumvent their strike action on the TransPennine Express yesterday to be with you, because I did look at various options. It was going to take me something like seven hours to come via, a circuitous route to be with you if I'd tried to travel yesterday with there being very few train places available.

The report that I'm about to give covers the period from the return from the summer recess in September, 2021 through to now here we are in June, 2022 and only in the last couple of months have all of the physical restrictions on access to parliament been removed, so for a large part of the year, we've been working remotely but despite that, throughout this period, the Group has continued to remain active on the Union's behalf, contributing to debates, tabling early day motions and submitting written and oral parliamentary questions as required and also liaising with our front bench and ministers where it's been appropriate to do so and Bakers Union briefings and media releases on a wide range of issues have been circulated by the Group Secretariat who of course, as you know, are Solidarity Consulting. To inform MPs and the Group's most recent online meeting has taken place just as recently as 24th May.

Now, at the Labour Party Conference in autumn last year, so the BFAWU, which has been affiliated to the Party since 1902, made the historic step of disaffiliating in protest at the present leadership behaviour under Sir Keir Starmer and the final straws came after the Party's refusal to endorse the call for a raise in the National Minimum Wage to £15 an hour and the resignation of Andy McDonald, the Shadow Employment Minister, over the issue and of course I'm sure that the treatment of your President, Ian, was a contributory factor in your decision. Critics pointed out that Sir Keir Starmer was happy to be photographed with the BFAWU banner supporting the fight for £15 and then refusing to take the necessary policy action on the scourge of no pay and Keir Starmer also used Conference to pick a fight with the Unions and the left over the mechanism for electing his successor, indicating that he appeared to believe that shutting the door on the Chancellors of the future, so it was either being elected was more important than carrying the fight to the Tories over the deteriorating living standards of working people. With Jeremy Corbyn deprived of the Party Whip and the Shadow Cabinet increasingly dominated by the figures of the Party right, BFAWU members sadly felt that the Labour Party no longer represented their interests. You know, I'm sticking with it, I've been a member for 45 years, but I utterly respect the membership of the BFAWU and the decision that they've taken. I'm afraid to say that many members in the Party voted for Keir Starmer on the back of his 10 commitments, many of them furnishing him with their vote in good faith, but since his election, we've seen the systematic erosion of those commitments, only to see a set of policies emerge which would not have got him elected amongst the Party membership at the time. However, the BFAWU continues to work closely with supportive Labour MPs, particularly those like myself, who are members of the (unclear) Campaign Group, as well as politicians from other parties who support the Union's demands.

The Parliamentary Group continues to work and to meet and carry forward work on behalf of the Union and is not restricted to solely Labour MPs, but of course during this period, it seemed the premiership of Boris Johnson came under increasing pressure following a succession of scandals, including the resignation of Owen Paterson following a lobbying scandal, leading to the loss of the North Shropshire by-election, corruption waste over the issues of Covid contracts, the Sue Grey and Metropolitan Police investigations into the Partygate breaches of Covid rules and the revelations over the non (unclear) status of Chancellor Rishi Sunak's wife and other Tory MPs are thought to be under investigation for alleged rape, indecent assault and sexual harassment.

It's clear that the standards in public life seem to have sunk to an all-time low, but sadly from my perspective, because of repeated references in the media to a non-existent political class, in the eyes of many, all MPs are regarded as bad as each other.

By-elections have also been triggered in Wakefield, where the Tory MP has been convicted for sexual abuse of a minor and in Tiverton and Honiton, where the Tory MP resigned after admitting to watching pornography in the House of Commons Chamber, when claiming to be looking for tractors believe it or not. Outrageously Home Secretary, Priti Patel, has also attracted attention by announcing a scheme to deport asylum seekers and migrants arriving in the UK, without clearing the complex bureaucratic hurdles to be processed in Rwanda of all places, where human rights have been widely criticised for alleged abuses. The Home Secretary, Patel, in this case leaving out the details of the plan, which prevents those deported to Rwanda from ever setting foot in the United Kingdom. Instead, their applications for asylum will be decided on by the Rwandan government and any successful applicants will be allowed to settle there, not in the United Kingdom. However, Patel was also eventually forced to withdraw her pushback proposals to actively intercept and prevent asylum seekers attempting to reach UK shores via boats across the English Channel and we've discovered only this morning that Johnson will now face a vote of no confidence by his own Tory MPs tonight and it is unclear whether he has the support amongst his back benchers to remain in power. However given his track record, we would view, even by the narrowest of margins, as a ringing endorsement of his premiership and I suspect one of the real challenges he now faces is that he now has zero creditability with swathes of the public, with which to make promises to his own MPs in return for their support and given that his entire career has been built on continuing to lie and repeatedly breach the ministerial code, it doesn't look great for him at the moment. The problem is, of course, with the ministerial code being, that the ultimate arbiter of the ministerial code is non other than the Prime Minister himself.

Meanwhile, as the cost of living crisis has progressed and the cost of living crisis has intensified with retail price index inflation soon expected to exceed 10%, colossal rises in domestic energy bills and rapidly escalating fuel, food and fuel prices, much of this pressure proceeded the outbreak of war following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but the conflict is undoubtedly compounding the scale of the problem, giving Europe's reliance on Ukrainian exports, such as wheat and sunflower oil and of course gas and oil as energy. The rise of gas prices is also rising the cost of manufacturing fertiliser, which is also leading to increasing food prices, as is the increased cost of transportation arising from the shortage of HGV drivers, which we were warning around about as early as May last year and of course huge increases in the cost for energy intensive industries and the cost of energy for households has also been soaring. This cost of living crisis really, really hit home to many millions of people. However, at the same time as bills have been rising, workers' pay was also hit by the government's heightened National Insurance contributions and Chancellor Rishi Sunak having been widely criticised for only conceding a limited Council Tax rebate towards the cost of domestic bills, sort of deflects the attention from the Partygate, which I call the lying-through-the-back-gate, back teeth to parliament gate accusations by announcing a further package including support for low earners and a windfall tax on the profits of oil and gas companies. Something that they've strenuously tried to avoid for months and in the process, trying to call it anything but a windfall tax.

The £650 additional one-off payment to people on Universal Credit, Pension Credit and other legacy benefits is of course welcome, but when set against the scale of the projected increase in prices, it's still unlikely to keep additional households from falling into poverty and scarcely makes up for the £20 weekly Covid uplift payment on Universal Credit being confiscated from recipients earlier this year. As yet, there's no commitment to raising the level of benefits overall in response to double-digit inflation until April next year. So this appears to be about an unpopular government buying itself some temporary breathing space, rather than addressing the fundamental inequalities in our society. It should also be remembered that many households will receive just £400 towards energy bills, that by October are set to have an increase in the cap at a colossal £2,800 and of course that £400 will probably go directly to the energy companies themselves.

Comrades, in many ways the period following the last general election in 2019 has been incredibly tumultuous, historically unpredictable and unstable. We should not forget that many households in our cities, towns and communities have been struggling for decades, certainly since the 2007 credit crunch and their plight has continued to worsen since the election of this dreadful Tory government in 2010 in particular.

Council funding in the areas with the greatest need has been slashed and continues to decline, while need, poverty and demand for services grow. Households with very little are being forced to pay more across the board, energy, food bills and Council Tax, with much less coming in in real terms. For many people in my constituency of Gateshead, the latest cost of living crisis has been something they've been living through for more than a decade, it has become their way of life. This does not have to be like this and cannot be the way we must live in 2022, or for the rest of our lives in the 21st century, in one of the richest countries on the planet.

It's clear now that the Labour Party leadership must come up with a proper solution to improve the lives of ordinary people in ordinary households across the country and in places like my constituency in Gateshead. We must now strive to work towards a policy platform which has the answers to not just the cost of living challenges, but for our whole communities, in education, health, housing, our services for the elderly, services for the young, for those with disabilities, in the workplace, in transport and on our streets and our welfare system and across our de-funded public services, all with the challenge of climate change and protecting the environment, not forgetting of course the mismanagement broken promises and empty rhetoric that has surrounded the exit from the European Union and the chaos of the Northern Ireland protocol. There is not a single government department that is immune from the maladministration of this corrupt, incompetent, self-serving, useless Tory government and yet we struggle to hold a lead in the opinion polls after being repeatedly told a few years' ago that with any other leader than Jeremy Corbyn, we would be 20 points ahead. Now is not the time for us to be going to the country with a manifesto that basically says vote for us, because we are not as bad as them, as we did in 2010. That is no offer at all and hardly stirred the enthusiasm of the British public, who are increasingly alienated from politics and from politicians. The scale of the challenges we face are so great, the needs of the people who rely on us so massive, that we need to convince people that we can manage things so much better. Manage and change the system to truly benefit the many, not the few and really mean it. Thank you, comrades.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Ian, that's much appreciated and I think it gives a clear understanding of where the political situation certainly is in the country at the moment and obviously I think most of our members can see, you know, the difficulties that's happening in our communities, which you exposed quite clearly. I know we'd normally give a Q and A session, but I think it might be a bit difficult on Zoom, Ian, so I'm just going to invite the General Secretary to speak to you briefly.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thanks, Ian and thanks for joining us. The power of Zoom allowed you to be here, even though you couldn't get here physically. As Ian said, we normally do a little bit of a presentation, but we can't do that over Zoom properly either, but we would like to gift £100 to a charity of your choice, so if you could let us know, either now or get in touch with us after and we'll sort that out for you, Ian. Unfortunately you're not going to be able to have the biscuits that we've got a bag for you because you're not here, but we'll put them in the donation to the food bank that we're collecting for. Thank you ever so much and just let us know the charity, Ian, thanks.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Well, Sarah, I can tell you that straight away, if you can make a cheque payable to the Gateshead Foodbank, I'd be very, very appreciative and if you want to send it via me, I can transfer it, but I mean the Gateshead Foodbank, I think their need has never been so great, the demand never so high and of course at a time when donations from the population who are really struggling are trailing off as well, it's, things are desperate.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thanks, Ian.

Ian Mearns, Chair of Parliamentary Group: Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much, Ian and thank you very much for joining us and hopefully we'll see you in person soon. Has he gone? Oh right, okay. Oh right, cheers Ian, thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay Conference, before we go back to our Agendas, obviously you'll notice we've got another guest on the stage today, obviously, I think, no, I think you had the beard before you did retire didn't you, Dave, so people will recognise you with the beard. Obviously when we went into Covid, unfortunately we didn't get the opportunity to bring you to Conference, because we didn't have it, to say goodbye but we've obviously invited you back here to this Conference Dave, because obviously for people who are new Delegates and people in different regions, Dave was a full-time Official in Region 2, he was the Regional Officer, where he did a fantastic job for us and he obviously did a lot of work in promoting young people in particular was a massive passion, obviously he had a, you know, he had a long service with the Union obviously from a bakery which I'm sure he's going to cover, but obviously Dave, we want to thank you for the work that you did for the many, many, many years you were with us and invite you as our retired full-time Officer now to make an address to Conference. Cheers.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Dash: Thank you very much Chair, Executive and Delegates and comrades. Thanks very much for inviting me here as a guest for your first face-to-face Conference. Ian's just pinched a lot of my speech that I wrote last night. Yes, I am Dave Dash, I'm the ex-Regional Officer for Region 2.

It was an absolutely honour and a privilege to represent members. You've got to understand, as obviously I went through the ranks as a Shop Steward like you all are, doing this, doing what I was doing as a voluntary position and then I'm getting paid for it, so it was a dream, a dream. I joined the Union, Bakers Union 48 years ago. I worked for British Bakeries, now known as Hovis. When I started at British Bakeries, within the year we were on strike for two weeks, the right to have a Bank Holiday off with pay and then when I was elected after two years, because that was the rules in those days, two years period as a Shop Steward, again we went out on strike for five weeks. None of those strikes were my fault personally, but anyway. We did win those strikes, all the strikes and in the 20 years I was at British Bakeries, we had 16 disputes and all of them were successful, very proud to say, we fought them and won. In my time as a FTO, one of the highlights was for me, was helping in the Fast Food Campaign, organising strikes, to actually see young people have the courage and commitment to get up and stand up for their rights. I mean to say in small little, you know, fast food establishments, to see, it's easier in a big branch and you've got 300 people behind you but just to walk out, five people in a little store, was absolutely amazing, absolutely amazing. Obviously I retired in 2020 and I'm loving every minute of it, I've got to say. I've got two allotments, which keeps me very busy. I am, at the moment, a Labour town councillor and have been a member of the Labour Party for 36 years, but I must say, being a Labour councillor and a member at the moment is embarrassing, to say the least. The Labour Party is being run by a dictator, who I call Wooden Top Starmer.

We have now got the most corrupt government in my lifetime and the weakest opposition. When the British people are fed up with the Tory Party, which will come, the red Tories are in waiting and obviously the establishment is in control of the Labour Party, in my view they've got an establishment puppet and it doesn't make me feel very good. I congratulate you all for voting **(unclear)** from the Labour Party, that was the right move in my view.

Anyway, thank you very much again for inviting me. Hope you have a very successful Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: What we'd normally do now is give Dave a collection from his colleagues, but we've already done that digitally, so instead Dave, there's a lovely bag of biscuits there for you, from Fox's, that our Trade Union members have made. Thank you ever so much and enjoy your retirement.

Brother Dave Dash: Thank you very much, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, obviously back to your Agendas and it's motion 13. Try now.

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582, Manor, Carlton: Okay?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Hey, techno, techno.

13

Branch 582

That this Conference Agrees that The UK Deserves More Bank Holidays. The E.U. Average is 12.8 Days a year, So the Government need to Address this.

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582, Manor, Carlton: Shall I turn it off again now? Mr President, Platform, Delegates. Motion 13, Bank Holiday entitlement across the UK. Northern Ireland has 10, Scotland nine, England and Wales however have only eight days a year, which is the lowest number of holidays in Europe and the second worst in the whole world behind Mexico. Trade Unions and the TUC have been calling for extra holidays for many years. The average across the EU is 12.8, so adding a minimum of four would be a great start and it does make commercial sense, as many of us generally spend too much money when on holiday, which surely is a winner for governments to boost our struggling economy at the expense of employers. It would also be a great way to thank all those workers for their hard work and commitment during the pandemic. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Seconder? Formally seconded? Okay. Any speakers? No? Jump on.

Sister Pauline McCarthy – Branch 582, Manor, Carlton: General Secretary, National President. I'm up here to formally support this motion, on behalf of the Executive. It's really important that countries across the world are able to support their workers and the workers that fight and fought through this pandemic's been really hard for us, we've seen it, we've seen it, we've lived it and to see other countries and other communities being able to have 13 holidays and we have eight, come on and we're all divided, Wales is different, Northern Ireland is different, so we need to support this motion. Thank you all.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 14.

14

Branch 356

Because of the shortage of workers if companies in the food industry are paying agency staff bonuses of sometimes a £1,000 for working six weeks, then we say that they should pay the same to their permanent staff as well.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Hiya. You know, I'm going to keep this short, Bobby, so you'll be alright. It's a no-brainer, this motion, yes, it's a no-brainer. We've already got motions, we've already got policies that deal with like how they're using agency staff to undermine all of you and your contracts, already got motions on that, but now they want, because they treat workers in the food industry like rubbish, now and they can't get the staff, they're trying to like say, come and work for us on your agency temporary work and we'll give you £1,000, despite the fact that all their profits have been going up and up over Covid, their wealth has gone up and up and they've forgotten that it was you who made their profits, you who kept the shelves stacked with food, fed everybody during Covid. Where's your £1,000 bonus? Why shouldn't they be paying the people who made their money, the £1,000 bonus? It's about time they showed you the real people who do the work and that's you. Please vote the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Cool. Speakers? Have I got a speaker? Cool.

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Yes, we'd want to oppose a bonus scheme. I oppose, what I think we should be doing is paying people a little bit better. Why should we run on bonuses, shouldn't we be relying on a better hourly rate? So, I oppose bonus schemes and propose basically better hourly rates, but I know we're on that anyway, we're trying to get £15, which I think is unattainable anyway, but bonus schemes I oppose. I don't know which companies are paying this, my company doesn't pay, I don't know, I work for Ferrero now, Fox's and I don't know any of the Ferrero Group that are paying these bonuses, I'm not sure where these have come from, the only thing I do know is they do pay a slightly higher hourly rate, but they're on short-term contracts, they're only two/three month contracts, but they don't actually have any of the other substances, they don't actually have any of the other benefits to actually working, so they don't get a permanent contract. So, I suppose I support, you know, people who get a short-term contract and if they do get a little bit extra I'm actually, weirdly enough, I'm fine with that because after two/three months they won't have a job, so if they get a little bit extra, I'm okay, so for six months of the year, seven months of the year, they'll have nothing, so if they get that extra bonus. So that's why I suppose it's a weird thing to oppose somebody, you know, opposing us getting more money, but I don't think I oppose, you know, somebody on a short-term contract who would not have the benefits of us all on full-term contracts, getting a little bit extra, so that's why I oppose this.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? Nicolae. Oh right, okay.

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580, Greggs, Leeds: Right, Conference. Morning again. It's a sad situation this, agency workers. I myself deal with them, I've got five agency. After three months, they go onto Greggs T's & C's and they're very happy for it, but as the previous colleague said, when we need them no longer, they're out of a job. But on the other side, our department can't get workers. We do interviews, I've had interviews for three weeks, four interviews a day, one person turns up out of the four, so really we need a solution. Where are the workers? Why have we got agency? Agency are there because they've seen a hole where they can work. It isn't nice being an agency worker. I don't know of an agency worker that has got £1,000 bonus, I don't know where it's coming from. What we need to do is get people back to work and out of all these Branches here, there must be people the same, short-staffed. Greggs are short-staffed all over, your Branches must be the same. That's the problem. Don't hammer the agency. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dimitru Manole – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: So what I'm trying to say is, those people on agency, they're not losing any money, so they are migrating, you know. For six months on Greencore, they're taking the bonus, then they go to another place, staying another six months, taking the bonus and then on to another place, so they're not losing, they're not losing any money. They're gaining more than the people on the company basically. So, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417, Hovis, Golborne, Wigan: Morning, Conference, Top Table, Delegates. I went on strike, I went on strike with John Fox. Nobody should have agency workers in the country, they should have the fundamental right to proper employment.

[APPLAUSE]

That's all I've got to say.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else?

Brother Nicolae Macari – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: I speak on behalf of the EC. First of all I want to start, you have my word, you have the workers on agency who get £1,000 and you have workers who get more than £1,000 nowadays. I will not bring any names on the line, but you can do your little search, more than sure Google will tell you this information. For any advance economy to grow, it needs a consistent input of the skilled workers. In fact, it is no secret that the UK skill shortage is one of the major crises within some of the country's highest growing sector. According to a recent report commissioned by Open University, it was estimate to be costing the UK economy more than two billions a year. In the last 12 months, they found that 91% of the companies are struggling to find skilled workers. Companies recruitment costs are skyrocketing as they attempt to fill vacancies and temporary staff are mainly being used as a stopgap.

Also, the latest British Chambers of Commerce quarterly economic survey indicates the skill shortage are reaching critical level. They have reported that 75% of the business in the manufacturing sector and 71% in the service sector of having had recruitment difficulties. In manufacturing, new job still outweigh the number of skilled workers to fill the gap. Again, agency staff are being used as a stopgap to fill up a skill shortage. But it is loyalty to our employers seems to have forgotten, the loyalty of their permanent staff who have stuck through the thick and thin. Working through the pandemic that has seen them increasing their profits and the shareholders as well. Where are the bonuses for continuing loyalty that their permanent staff has shown them? Yes, we admit that the skills crisis is something what needs to be addressed, but if the government had not spent the last few years putting through cuts in education, then there would not be a shortage in skilled labour. But loyalty counts too and that means permanent workers deserve to be paid bonuses as well, bonuses for their loyalty, bonuses for their hard work, but it seems that many employers have forgotten the meaning of loyalty. Therefore, I believe we need to make sure that our employers are treating us fairly. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply? Did you just want to give your right of reply? Go on, then.

Brother Douggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Do you know what? This isn't really about agency workers, you know and I agree with the comrade who says there shouldn't be agency workers, because we know why there is agency workers. It's a reason for the bosses to try and break all the rights that the people who come before us and we carry on in that tradition that we fought for. That's why the agency exists, you know. If an agency staff gets a, over a £1,000 bonus, great for them, but I still don't think they should (**unclear**). If they get a little bit more money, good for them, but let's face it, it's you, the permanent staff, that this motion is about. You're the ones who come in day-in, day-out, through all the highs and the lows, who make the profits. Shouldn't they show you some loyalty? Don't you deserve the £1,000 bonuses and yet I agree, they should be paying £15 an hour and we had a motion the other year, we cried out £15 an hour for everyone. You're the ones who make the profits for these fat bourgeois people [LAUGHTER]. You're the ones. So don't you deserve extra? It's for you. Please vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Just before you go, right, the motion is about agency. It's in the wording. Unless you're saying you're removing the wording, in which case then you want to remit the motion So, it does include the word agency and it is about agency? Okay, thank you. Okay, obviously

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: It's working. Ian, it's actually not about agency. If you read it properly, the first line tells you that some agency people are getting paid a grand.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, so it's agency.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: No, no, no, no, no. The first line says that there is a happening in the world. The motion is actually saying non-agency should get paid a similar sort of bonus, so just to not confuse people, it's not about agency, it's about our own workers and that's what Douggie's trying to get across. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That might be what he's trying to get across, but the actual wording is because of a shortage of workers, companies in the food industry are paying agency worker staff and so it was about the payment to agency worker staff compared to other workers.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: No, it's about

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It's about, he says it's not, he said in his right of reply, but you can sit down now, Mark, because you've had your point of order. He said in his right of reply this is not about the agency workers, but it is because it references the agency payment and that's what he was referencing in moving the motion and that's why I sought clarification, because if he was now saying it wasn't agency workers he was referring to, then he needed to clarify that. So please sit down, Mark, thank you very much.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: Thank you very much, Ian, for listening to my polite comments.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. Chair's always right, it says so in the Rule Book [LAUGHTER]. Okay, those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Okay, motion No. 15, isn't it? Oh, we've got the amendment, who's moving the amendment? Are you moving the amendment? Don't confuse me this time.

15

Branch 405

That this conference agrees.....That this union is to work with the government and all relevant authorities and interested parties to close tax loop holes and end the abuse of tax allowances for the very highly paid.

Amendment to Remove the words 'the government and'

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: I'm here to propose the amendment to this motion, which is exactly the same as the last motion that I got up for. Okay? Please support it. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, so to Conference, is it seconded? Formally seconded, right, cool. Okay, does anybody want to speak on it? Good, right. So, do we accept the amendment to the Rule, to remove basically the word "government" from the motion? All those in favour? Anyone against? Okay, now you can move the motion, yes.

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: This Conference agrees that this Union is to work with

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes, you can remove that now, yes, just leave it out.

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: Sorry, I'll start again. This Conference agrees that this Union is to work with all relevant authorities and interested parties to close the tax loopholes and end the abuse of tax allowances for the very highly paid. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Sorry, I keep forgetting. I'm Mark from Fox's Biscuits, 568. Yes, I oppose the motion. Why would you oppose a motion that, you know, helps with the big businesses through a tax loop? Will it also help small businesses? I had a small business for many, many years, travel business and there were certain, I struggled on occasions through many years basically with payments, whether they be wages, whether they be my utilities etc, my insurances and there were certain tax loops that I could use to help me out. There are many more smaller businesses as well as large businesses that use these and over the last couple of years, with Covid, these businesses, a lot of these businesses disappeared. These tax loops helped, maybe helped businesses survive over these last couple of years, so that's why I oppose this motion. It can also be used for the smaller business as well as the large business. So, oppose this motion.

[SOME APPLAUSE])

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: You know, 130 billion, but just imagine what 130 billion can buy. How many hospitals can it pay for? How many teachers' salaries can it be paid for? How many nurses' salaries? How many homes that can be built for the guys who are living on the streets? 130 billion. That's how much we lose each year through these tax loopholes. Just think how much £130 billion a year is. Let's do something about it. Vote for this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: I'm here to agree with Mark. I had a small business myself and a lot of small businesses need loopholes just to survive. The, if we work with relevant authorities, the first people they will attack is the smaller businesses. They'll never go for the big boys.

If it read go for the big boys first, then fair enough, but no, I don't know a small business or a taxi driver or anybody who doesn't use a tax loophole to make an honest day's living. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anybody else? No? Okay, General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the Executive asks that you support the motion. The days where the rich and the famous can legally avoid paying taxes, when workers in the food industry are running out of food, needs to stop. We only ever hear in the press about benefits cheats, but we know who the real cheats are; those who earn millions and even billions and utilise tax loopholes only they can access to avoid paying their way. Meanwhile, if you or I attempted to do that, we would be punished. The motion talks about very highly paid, not businesses, so we ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: Yes. Just to highlight, the motion does actually say the very highly paid, not small businesses.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Good, we're against tax dodgers.

Can I also welcome a new Delegate as well, first-time Delegate, which is Kelly Westgate from Greggs in Region 2.

Mover of motion No. 16, please.

[APPLAUSE]

16

Branch 582

This Conference agrees that that paying more than half in Tax for A litre of Petrol and Diesel is Unacceptable. Reduce Tax to Help all motorists

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582, Manor, Carlton: Governments levy taxes on fuel mainly to raise revenues. For petrol and diesel, fuel duty accounts for around 50% of the price at the pump, it's including VAT which is levied on the duty. In the spring statement of this year, the government have cut fuel duty for petrol and diesel by 5p per litre across all of the UK for 12 months, but the figures are still too high. Across the EU, we pay in the UK the highest tax on diesel anywhere in Europe and the 7th highest on petrol. Combine this with the 22% of VAT and we are No. 1 on both fuels. Fuel duty is facing dramatic change with more hybrid and electric vehicles on our roads every year, but most of these are out of reach for the working class. So, it's about time that the fuel escalator is removed from a cash-cow system for governments to help those most in need at the pumps. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Must be you, then.

Sister Pauline McCarthy – Branch 582, Manor Bakeries/Premier Foods, Carlton: Must be me, then. Executive members, General Secretary, National President. I'd like, I'm up here to support this motion. I think Dave did a really good job presenting it and it's time, it's our time now to get what we deserve. So, support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 17. Move the amendment.

17

Branch 405

That this conference agrees.....That this union is to work with the government and all relevant authorities and interested parties. To end tax relief for extremely large donations into personal pensions as a way to avoid paying tax on extreme wages and bonuses.

Amendment to Remove the words 'the government and'

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Same again, okay? Please support.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Is that, you want the words "same again"?

[LAUGHTER]

Okay. Is there a seconder? Formally seconded. To the Conference. Do we accept the removal of the word “the government”? Okay. Anybody against? Cool, let’s move the motion then. Who’s moving the motion? Are you getting your steps in?

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: Honestly, I’m worn out. That this Conference agrees that the Union is to work with government and all relevant authorities and interested parties, have I read this one already?

Right, start again, sorry, I’m new to this. This Conference agrees that this Union is to work with all relevant parties, all relevant authorities and parties and to end tax relief for the extremely large donations to personal pensions as a way to avoid paying tax on extreme wages and bonuses. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox’s Biscuits: It’s, actually it’s not really an opposition, sort of an opposition because it seems a little bit irrelevant this, because the tax may be not be taken at base but once that pension is drawn, it’s taxed, so there’s no money lost or gained on this motion, because whether you get the tax relief initially paying in, that tax is then taken back when you actually draw that pension. So, that’s how a pension works, so sorry about this, this motion’s a little bit incorrect, because that’s how pensions work. So, just a comment on that. Thank you. Mark.

[SOME APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you, Mark? [LAUGHTER] Okay. Any other speakers? No? General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, we would ask that you support the motion. Much like the last one that I spoke on, the rich and the wealthy being able to avoid paying their way is far out of reach for any of us to be able to do. The wages and bonuses for some of the CEOs that they are paid, even in our industry never mind others, are obscene and are just magnifying the divide in our society between the rich and poor and let’s face it, without you and other workers in our industry and on the shop floor, the CEOs wouldn’t be making the wages that they are. We ask that you support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply? Do you want the right of reply? No, okay. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That’s carried. Just checking there’s no amendment, that was all. 18.

18

Branch 582

This Conference Agrees that the Government must remove VAT on domestic energy to help many households already suffering with fuel poverty.

Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582, Manor, Carlton: Motion 18, remove VAT on domestic energy. Boris Johnson and Michael Gove were promising to scrap this damaging tax when the debate for leaving the EU was taking place, just half a dozen years’ ago from then onwards. They were even claiming it was their top priority. Yet, Brexit has gone and still we have tax on our bills. It’s no surprise that it was Thatcher’s government who privatised gas and electric, some 35 years ago, promising privatisation would encourage shared ownership, but the reality was that fat cats bought up most of the shares, prices and government incentives only ever seemed to help maintain their long-term profit goals that privatised energy firms seek and the reality is that numbers of vulnerable people, who are dragged down into fuel poverty, continues to increase and further ensures those that are already suffering from cold and malnutrition face a very bleak future. Reading in the Socialist Worker this morning, there is a report that claims energy prices are rising 23 times faster than wages and 38 times faster than benefits. How can anyone survive these soaring costs? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Okay, speakers? No? Yes? You on your way? Good.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of Branch 253: I support the motion, but I think it should go further. It shouldn’t just be on domestic, it should be on commercial. Every penny that we can keep within our companies, we can fight to get for us, that’s a penny in our pocket. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I like your T-shirt.

Sister Karen Plasom – Branch 356: I think we should go further. Let's re-nationalise.

[APPLAUSE and WHISTLES]

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417, Hovis, Golborne, Wigan: I think the loss to the revenue by abolishing VAT at a reduced rate of 5% is something like £1.5 billion. I think what we should be looking at is imposing the windfall tax, which would raise an estimated five billion. On reflection, I would ask you all to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Anyone else? Must be you.

Sister Pauline McCarthy – Branch 582, Manor Bakeries/Premier Foods, Carlton: I'm up here to support the motion. I think Dave has again done a great bit of work on what we want to move with this motion, so I ask you to support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, there wasn't anybody opposing, so straight to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Amendment and if Mick can come and get ready, that'd be great.

19

Branch 405

That this conference agrees.....That this union is to work with the government and all relevant authorities and interested parties. To ensure that the BBC licence fee is retained. And that the BBC is returned to following its central journalistic principles. Abandonment of these principles being the main drive to those who wish to abandon the BBC's unique financing model – the licence fee.

Amendment to Remove the words 'the government and'

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Proposing that we remove the words "the government and", yes? So, please support.

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

[APPLAUSE]

Seconder? Formally seconded. Anyone speaking? All those in favour? Anyone against? Mover of the motion. That's carried. That's you, Jan. Yes.

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: That this Conference agrees that the Union is to work with all relevant authorities and interested parties to ensure that the BBC licence fee is retained and that the BBC is returned to following its central journalistic principles, abandonment of these principles being the main drive to those who wish to abandon the BBC's unique financing model, the licence fee. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Where's your guitar, man? Aye, aye.

Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503, Warburtons, Bellshill, Scotland: I'm up here to oppose the motion. The motion talks about journalistic integrity and stuff like that. Where was the BBC's integrity on Hillsborough, Orgreave, during the Palestinian campaign when the Israelis were dropping bombs on children's hospitals? The BBC reported that the Palestinians were a people that weren't causing this problem. John Scott lied to the Scottish people, they told us we would be better together. Scotland's been hammered. Where's the integrity? The BBC licence fee should be scrapped. We, as a Trade Union, years ago fought to get rid of it, in previous Conferences we asked to get rid of it. Why do you want it back? They do nothing for Trade Unions, they're an anti-Trade Union station. They have Tory rhetoric and a back? Tory government through the crisis and Partygate and stuff like that. I ask you to oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580, Greggs, Leeds: Hi, Conference. I'm here not to oppose, I'm just here to say to you people you've all got a switch, switch the garbage off. The BBC is jobs for the boys, it's all the old school, Tony Blackburn on every Saturday, he's getting a big fat pension off them, they're still paying him. There's nobody young in the BBC, they're biased, they're just totally terrible. Switch the thing off. I don't pay a licence fee, my wife does. When the BBC comes on, I walk out of the house. It's all lies. Jobs for the boys, it's garbage. Please don't support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Yes, I oppose this motion. An elitist organisation, which should be self-funded. If you want to watch the BBC, why don't they go down the Sky route, just have a, assign yourself to it basically, pay a monthly fee as you do with Sky and all the other digital television that's out there. It's, they have, I mean they talk about that it's a station that has no adverts. It does have adverts, it owns about six or seven other stations and they pay massive wages to these people basically that work on it. It's, I'm proud of the BBC, absolutely proud. I think it's a worldwide organisation that is known everywhere, from the deepest darkest Africa to Australia, it's everywhere. Yes, I'm really proud of it, but it should be self-funded now, we shouldn't pay for it. I know it's a small amount of money, I think it's about £160/£170 a year, but the company's making millions from its advertised channels, it's making millions from making programmes which they sell worldwide, why should we contribute anything more to that and people are struggling and that small amount of money will help people who are on the, you know, the low wage bracket. So, please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Now I'm going to support the motion, you know and I've heard what the people, my comrades, have said. The BBC's disgusting behaviour and its journalism, I agree, the disgusting behaviour in its coverage of Hillsborough, I agree. I agree with all of those points about it. You know, the trouble is, the BBC can be saved, it can be saved, because it belongs to us, it actually belongs to us, you know. I think it can be saved and it said about the BBC exports programmes around the world, it does a hell of a lot of education and training. The Open University works along with the BBC, allowing people in remote locations to receive a university education. I think it can be saved, but it'll take a lot of hard work, a lot of hard work. You know, the reason why we have a film industry in this country, world class film industry, is because of the BBC and its training and education. So, please vote for this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: Here to move the motion for the Executive Council. We're asking you to oppose the motion. Dougie, I agree, some of the things that you said are correct, but some of the other stuff everybody else has said, that's far more correct. One of the things that Chris Magill didn't mention, where was the integrity when they wouldn't speak about (unclear), where was the integrity that day? Oh, we'll not talk about it, hide it, we'll tell a lie about it. No, it's not worth saving. Some things are worth saving, the BBC is not. I've been coming here for about 25 years and nearly every year the motion is amended in some way about free TV licences. Now we've got a chance to have a free TV licence, don't pay it. (unclear) over there, she's not paid it for years and years and years, won't be paying it any more. Support the motion, no, oppose the motion I mean.

[LAUGHTER, CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

I haven't even had a drink, I'm sober, so please oppose, support.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, you're opposing. Make your mind up!

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: Dougie, you've got me excited. We're asking you to oppose the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You're opposing, you're opposing, yes, yes. That's what you said, that's what you said.

[APPLAUSE]

You have the right to reply. I've tried your glasses on, I'm not surprised you haven't got them on.

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: The motion actually says to return it back to its values, which is inform, educate and entertain, so we're not asking for the motion to keep it as it is because we don't like the BBC as it is, to not pay a licence fee. We're saying keep a hold of it as the BBC, but we want it back to what it is, original as it was, which is to inform, educate and then entertain and I think that's really important, because it is ours, we can criticise it. We might end up without a licence fee but, you know, we all pay Sky subscriptions which are £60 a month, you know, for what? That's just as bad.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's lost. Okay, have I got Standing Orders? Did you say you're going to get them?

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Mick McDonald – Chair of Standing Orders: Good afternoon, Conference. 20, this is your order of running, 20 stands, 21 stands, 22 stands, 23 stands, 24 stands, 25 stands, 26 stands, 27 stands, 28 falls, no Delegate, 29 stands, 30 stands, 31 stands, 32 stands, 33 stands, 34 falls, no Delegate, 35 stands, 36 stands and 37 stands. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Anyone against? Good, that's carried. Thank you, Mick.

Motion 20, General Secretary.

20

Executive Council

This conference agrees that over the next 4 years we will trial alternate physical and digital conferences, so that we can continue to hold an Annual Conference but reduce the overall costs to the union whilst membership turns around. This would mean that:

2023 and 2025 would be digital.

2024 and 2026 would be physical.

We would run conference in the same way regardless of format in line with the current rule book and review the trial at the 2026 conference.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the pandemic threw us into a position where we had to find new ways to work, new ways to continue to be democratic, meet each other when we couldn't physically be together and support each other through a situation none of us have experienced before. After not holding a Conference in 2020, we put together an online Conference last year and I know there were reservations about it beforehand, it was something new, how would it work, would people be able to talk, why were we asking for speakers in advance, would it even be democratic, but I think we proved that it can be done. Yes, there were a couple of hiccups, just like there has been this year, but it was the first attempt. What we found though was it opened up the opportunity for new Delegates to attend our Conference, Delegates whose caring responsibilities, for example, prohibit them from attending a physical Conference such as this, because they can't be away from home for a week. It gave new Delegates and some more experienced Delegates that confidence to contribute to debates for the first time, that work stifled even when we had far more speakers than we thought we were going to have.

Having a trial in place, which alternates between physical and digital Conferences for the next four years, gives us an opportunity to engage with the next generation of activists and Reps who, let's face it, live online. I'm sure that my son does and I'm sure many of your kids do too. It allows those who can't attend a physical Conference like this to engage in the democratic decision-making of our Union, which we believe will help encourage more Branches to become active in the process and yes, reduce expenditure over the next four years as we turn membership around and build it back up. We would still be holding an Annual Conference, this wouldn't change, it would just be the format which we now know works both ways. We will produce a report to Conference in 2026, which would cover things like the numbers of motions, as well as numbers of Delegates and first-time speakers, Delegate withdrawals, we would look at whether there is an increase in engagement from the many Branches, because there are many Branches that don't come and aren't represented at physical Conferences, so we would look at if it increases engagement with them, so we can properly review the trial in 2026. The Executive would ask that you come on this journey with us, improve engagement and democracy within our Union and support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It's formally seconded. Speakers? No, no, we've seconded it, you're alright, calling for speakers now.

Brother Mohiner Badhan – Branch 331: Mr Chairman, comrades. I'm not against it, but I'm **(unclear)** it, because going on the system, not having the physical Conference, how many people there, those who can operate computer? I'm 76, I was 76, I'm going to college to learn it, online and all that, online and inline, right and it's difficult to get in my brain, right, but I've been speaking not only here at Conferences and National, international Conference, right, I've got a different field, but this, that means you're barring the old people from, those who have all their life worked hard in the bakeries and now junk? boys will be coming and they will be doing this business. So I think, I am against it and all this little, let me know if there, any, I think there may be, I may be wrong, maybe only a few people who can operate the computer properly, going on the system, having the confidence every two years. I know, I can understand the economic situation, but there should be other ways. If you can't carry on, I think there's no need for a Union, right, because I think I take it differently, I think it's age discrimination, right.

So, I may be wrong, right, but I feel that strongly, right. I have worked in the Union, I think, I don't know if there is anyone who has done 52 years, in the Union, right. I've attended loads of Conferences, loads of, my friend, Ian, knows, right. I went even to ILO, right, I was speaking with this, right, so if I'm barred from this, I won't be coming back again, right. So please oppose it, oppose it, oppose it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Alan Scott – Branch 415: Hello, everyone. Not first-time to Conference, but first-time ever speaking on here.

[APPLAUSE and CHEERS]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Well done, Alan.

Brother Alan Scott – Branch 415: Now, thank you. I'd like to say, we've been having a Conference for 103 years, 103 years, yes and it's been like this, where we sit. Last year, Sarah was led to believe that Zoom was a major success, it was a shambles. Can you just put your hands up who was on it, please. Out of you lot, who was on Zoom? I rest my case, yes, I rest my case. You're on Zoom, it was rubbish, pressing your button that votes. Standing Orders were non-existent. We had one person, Standing Orders, yes, Mick, Mick McDonald. How many's in there today, five? How can that be a true vote on what we voted for, last year on Zoom? None of you could even, my two colleagues over there weren't allowed to come, the company would only allow one, so that's a third of the votes gone. 30% voted on this last year, 30%. Internet were going in, internet were going down, today you saw it. In a room with you lot, we saw a fella speaking to us. None of you could speak to him, right, 'cause you weren't allowed to, they wouldn't let you, they wouldn't let you speak to him or ask him any questions did they? No, because they want it their way, they want save, save, save.

We go to work, yes, for a full year, putting targets on our back to get members to pay their wages, yes? I don't get paid, I don't get a new car every three years, they do, they do. You want to take the one thing that is regarded as a perk. We represent year-in, year-out, targets on our backs, management hating us all for this Union and our workers, yes and you want to take the one thing we look forward to. I know how we get our food and we come away and I get to speak to people I've not spoke to for a year, I get to go for a pint with people I've not had a pint with for a year. You speak about the things in your workplace and all because of saving money, yes, they want to take our history away from us. We're the biggest independent Union in this country and for one week a year they want to take that away. Please, please, please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: I'm here to support the motion. While I agree with some of the sentiment of my fellow speakers, I would rather have a Conference than no Conference every year and if it's down to cost and we have to save money, but we still have a voice, I also think our employers would love it if we had to go to a two-yearly Conference due to cost, they would be rubbing their hands that they didn't have to pay us release time to come and have our voice and interact. If it's the only way we can interact until things turn round, then for me, I support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508, Lightbody's: Sort of on the fence because, as a Union going forward, we want to use technology as much as we can to advance, to bring in the younger members, to bring in the people that want to, you know, interact more but may be a little bit shy, however coming to Conference, as I've done myself and as yourselves have done, you pick up networking, you get the experience of wealth of knowledge from the people that have been around these situations for years and years. You learn about what other members are having problems with in other workplaces, you can relate to that, you can talk about it. Like Alan said, over a fag, over a beer, you can catch up, you can network, yes, although on a computer you can network too, but there's that little bit less of human experience there for you when you do so. I'm actually going to oppose the motion, but I'm really on the fence because it's a way forward sort-of. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503, Warburtons, Bellshill, Scotland: I am up here to oppose the motion. I understand there's got to be cost-cutting somewhere and I understand as a Union moving forward, technology is a way, but I think that this Conference, as previous speakers have said, is once a year and it's a once a year chance that we get to meet with people and network, as Glyn said. My wife's here this year, it's her very first Conference. We were sat in a fringe meeting yesterday and we did a questionnaire, girl sitting beside us, came around, where do you work? What are your thoughts on Greggs? They worked for Greggs, the three girls were sitting with my wife, talking, she'd never get a chance to speak to them at a meeting.

She doesn't get away for some meetings, when I get away for some meetings and the thing with being online as well, it's quite easy to turn your mike off and your camera off and go and do what you want. At least when you're physically here, we get to take part, we get to listen and we get to see everybody. Me and Kevin Flood worked together years ago at Warburtons, best of mates. I don't get to see Kevin until we come to Conference because of the distance between us and that's good, on a personal level, for me to say that. Silly (**unclear**) sometimes, but it's things like that and I'm here this year and I've bumped into people I met years and years ago when I used to come to Conference and you don't get the chance to see people like Dave and Ronnie, when they retire, you don't get a chance to say goodbye to them on a computer screen, the way we should be doing. So, I'm up to oppose it and I ask you to oppose this motion. Thanks very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580, Greggs, Leeds: Good afternoon. I'm here to speak again, to oppose this motion. I've been coming to Conference, I've never spoke before at Conference, but things like this, that I have spoke on today, really grieve me. I've worked for the Union, been a Shop Steward, never had a penny off them. I've recruited, I've done wage negotiations, so here we go then, to save money. Branch Secretaries, I had a Branch Secretary for years, it was my 60th birthday at one Conference, he didn't even buy me a drink. So, we're actually on about saving money, the Branch Secs could sub for the younger people to come. This Conference we're having, it's fantastic, the food, there's too much. I think there's too much, you're full, it's just eat, eat, eat, breakfast, dinner, tea, you know what I mean? There's ways to save money. We could all dip in, we could all pay one day's accommodation, for the sake of saving Conference, for the sake of meeting, like people say. I was a young man once and I got brought to Conference, bring your young people forward. I'm a dinosaur, I finish soon, but this digital shit, Christ, I can't even see a computer screen

[APPLAUSE]

let alone press a Zoom button. It's wrong, you need to speak, you need to communicate. There's no pubs any more, they don't want you in pubs, they don't want you to talk, they don't want you to organise, they want prodding. All people have got today, the youth of today, prod, prod, prod, prod, prod, prod. Sod prod, prod, prod, talk, talk, talk. Thank you. Please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I would imagine Standing Orders might want a word with you though.

Brother Lee Turner – Branch ?, Fletchers: Hiya. First-time at Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

I oppose. I've really enjoyed this and got to meet a lot of people and that and this has been brilliant for me. I've learnt a lot and I'm no good with computers. I'm a dinosaur, I agree with that guy here, I really would struggle with a computer and that and I'd lose concentration. Here I've been concentrating, I've been really taking everything in. This is something I'm sure a lot of you agree with, I prefer this 100%. So, it's entirely up to you but I'm against.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452, Park Cakes, Oldham: I'm also here to oppose this. Yes, I understand, you know, the Union is saying they need to be saving money, but you do learn so much more face-to-face. At Park Cakes, we ask for release and we were struggling because we don't have the facilities, we don't have, we don't all have laptops, we don't all have 'phones or we don't want to be sitting looking at a 'phone screen for a full eight hours a day. Our company said, you know, well, we approached the Union first and foremost and said, we haven't got the facilities, Covid was on, we were having to follow the restrictions, we haven't got laptops, we haven't got tablets. The Learning Services had those things in our areas and we were asking was there any chance we could loan or borrow those equipment and the email we got back was logistically it's not possible, because we don't know how to get it to you, it's going to be hard to collect it back and if it's available, so our own Union shut the door on our face in Park Cakes, Oldham. You know, we asked the management and we had to do it on-site, so while we were looking at other people sitting in the gazebos and the gardens at home, having a great time and being released, we were sat in an office, two of us were in the Union office with a laptop that didn't have a camera, so you couldn't, we could see you, but you couldn't see us, it was just a blank screen with our names on. We had Sam, who was sat in a managers office inside the bakery on a works-loaned laptop and then he's got management knocking on the door or mithering him, just come out and have a look at this oven, I'm at Conference, no, we really need you to come and have a look at this. It's not right, it's really not right.

Decisions were made at Conference and things were passed, there was 38 people voted on the motion to disaffiliate from the Labour Party, 38 people. The thing appeared in the Morning Star and it was on the news, it made national news, you know, all the Bakers Union, that led everyone to believe that over 15,000 members voted on that. I'm sorry, they didn't, it was 38 and I was one that opposed it, because I thought it should go to a bigger forum. So, I do ask you to oppose this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202, Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes: Hi, comrades. Going back a couple of years' ago, I had my first Conference when I become Branch Secretary. I had nobody below me, because on our site we had no Branch Secretaries, they left, so I had to take over the whole role, I got in there to take Branch Secretary. The only experience I had was like going to Barnsley College, what's been now cut and I can't get that experience of having comrades and all that and going to Conference is getting that experience off you guys to learn me how to be a Branch Secretary, how to be a Unionist. Without that, if I'm on my own at my Branch, I haven't got, I've got the members, but they haven't got the experience, but you guys have got the experience, can teach me the way to go forward. I know we've got to come into new generation, but it's you guys coming here, at the end of the night we can talk, you know, communicate, how we work, you know, how you run your Branches, how I can run my Branch. Without that experience, you know, I can't go forward. If I had, like somebody comes in and who's a Delegate, how, if they've not got the experience, it's hard for them to learn how to speak, because I can remember when I first come to Southport, I never spoke in my life, trying to come up to you guys and by doing this, it gives me the experience to actually talk to you, so I disagree with this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Carol Ingham – Branch 452: Hi, guys. I work at Park Cakes Bakeries with Julie and what-have-you. I'm Branch Secretary and I'd just like to say that I'd like to oppose this motion, because on the basis that at Park Cakes we have not got the facilities. So, I'd just like to oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: I'd like to oppose it as well. This is my first one and

[APPLAUSE]

it's more than just meeting members, it's making friendships and you can't make a friendship on a Zoom.

[APPLAUSE and CHEERS]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No-one else? No-one else, okay. Right. General Secretary.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, oh, where to start [LAUGHTER]. I want to make a couple of points. Mohinder, you were on the Conference last year, you did a fantastic speech that allowed us to send a message of Solidarity to the Indian farmers. You were there, you were involved. In terms of technologies, we're not in the same restrictions with Covid as we were when we held Conference last year. We can utilise our offices, we can utilise the equipment that's in our offices. Branches and Regions can come together and hold their own mini versions of it. We have got a situation, a serious situation, with the finances of the Union, membership is still declining. Conference costs the best part of £100,000 a year. In the next four years, that's a hell of a lot of money that we've got to find to hold a Conference that shouldn't be seen as a perk.

Conference is the democratic body of our Union, it's not a perk, it the way that we function, to give us policies and directions to work on, to support you and other workers in the food industry and if we have to do the next four years, we might not be here. You have got to go away and build this Union. We've got to make sure we've got members, so that we can afford to run Conference, because if we don't, we're going to die, aren't we? We're going to die out and nobody will have a Conference, because we won't be here to have one, but having said that, we listen, have taken on board everything that you've said, we will remit the motion rather than put it to a vote, but every Regional Council, every Branch, every Rep is going to have to play their part to turn this Union around, because I want us to be here for another 175 years. I don't want to be not here in four years because we've come to Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, I want to move motion 21. Has it Oh right, okay. I've just got told it's been remitted. 21, you're 21? Get him on with 21, 21, go, go, go, go.

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of Branch 253 and the Executive Council: Chair, Platform, Delegates. The motion reads, that this Conference agrees that where it is possible and appropriate, we should be going paperless. Why do we need to print so much? One ton of printing paper requires up to 24 trees to be cut down. In the UK, we use about 12.5 million tons of paper each year. The trees needed to produce this amount would cover about 21,000 square kilometres, roughly the size of Wales. In 2021, I put a motion, insisting we should be going paperless on agendas and minutes and rightly so, it was opposed by a few Branches and I think it was 561 said, if I had included “where possible”, then they would have supported it. I remitted the motion and clearly the EC have started work on it, by not printing so much this year. This isn’t about stopping people having paper, this is about saving our planet. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Are you seconding it in person? Okay.

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580, Greggs, Leeds: Hello Conference, me again. Paperless, yes. I’ll go back to my original point what I said before. Prod, prod, prod. All we do is sit at home and order off Amazon. There’s shops shutting down, shops that are jobs for people, for staff. They come, Amazon, big massive box, what’s in it? A fountain pen. That’s where all your paper’s going, it isn’t on us printing, although I agree with it, but think about it. Everybody sits at home, everybody prodding, no community, nobody talking. That’s the point. Paper is all on packaging, Amazon, the likes, takeaway food, shops closing down, jobs for people like us. Thank you. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers? No? Okay then, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Waay.

Okay Conference, you can put your Agendas away. Obviously if you’re ready, I’m going to invite, obviously last year on digital we had our maiden address from our General Secretary, but this year you get to see it in person and, you know, are you ready? Okay, that’s cool, that’s cool and obviously, you know, we made history when we elected a female General Secretary, because she’s the first one in 175 years of our existence and I think, you know, we should be proud of the fact that this Union elected a female General Secretary. So it’s an absolute honour and a privilege to welcome our General Secretary to give her first physical address to our Conference. Please welcome our General Secretary.

[APPLAUSE]

General Secretary Sarah Woolley addresses Conference

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thank you. We’re finally here together and what an absolute privilege and honour it is to be able to address you for the first time at an in-person Conference as your General Secretary and as Ian said, the first woman in our Union to take up the post.

This year’s Conference is very different. We’re in a new place, the format has changed and I know this has caused some frustrations, wondering why we need to change things that have been a certain way for very many years. Well, I’ve stood on a platform of change and I’m not going to apologise for that. The Union has been around for 175 years and in that time, we’ve experienced many changes. It’s had to, in order to remain relevant and we will continue to have change in the future and we’ll have to adapt in order to still be in here, still be here, sorry, in 100, another 175 years – I shouldn’t have had that blue pop last night.

[LAUGHTER]

We’ve seen a steady decline in membership for the last 15 years or so and we’ve got to look at doing new things, because continuing to do what we’ve always done has long since stopped working. This may mean stepping outside of our comfort zones and I know Roy, I saw him yesterday making art and crafts, definitely stepped out of his

[background comment, *thank you for reminding me*]

[LAUGHTER]

We’ve got to try different ways of organising, different approaches to talk about our Union and being better at celebrating the fantastic work that goes on in our Branches, our Regions and nationally. It means embracing the technology we now have access to, utilising the digital platforms as part of our overall work, to remove some of the barriers to participation we have experienced in the past, because like I’ve just said with the motion, not everyone can attend a Conference like this and we don’t want to become an echo chamber.

Looking towards being more inclusive and grassroots led, building networks for different equality strands, as well as Branch positions, so that we know as a Trade Union we are campaigning on the issues that matter to you, because you're telling us them first-hand. We will continue to ask for your feedback and make changes in accordance with it, because we can put in place a starting point such as the fringe meetings this week, but we need your input. You will all receive a link after Conference to feedback on this year's Conference, because our Union is and always will be run by our members.

I'm going to talk a little bit about some of the networks we've been running since the Conference that we held last June. The Women's Network has been attended by a small group of Sisters and led by Rachel and the discussions have covered sexual harassment, menopause, domestic violence, as well as other topics around period poverty and maternity rights. The sexual harassment survey we ran earlier this year came out of that group and the work the TUC's doing. Unfortunately the report isn't quite finished, mainly because we'd got a Conference to organise, but the work in response has already started. Where employers were identified in the survey as not doing enough to prevent sexual harassment and assault, they've been approached and work has begun on developing policies. The Reps Code of Conduct in your packs, put together in part due to the increased powers of the Certification Officer, was also put together due to the results of the survey, because whilst the results weren't damning internally as a Union, no-one reported any incidents of sexual assault or prolonged harassment within the realms of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union, there was still a clear picture of inappropriate language and behaviour being used inside the Union in Branches, which we simply cannot have. The Trade Union movement and our Union especially should be a safe space for members, especially women, to turn to, not one they shy away from because they get propositioned or unwanted attention.

We've had a couple of (unclear) Network meetings, again small in number, but we've spoken about the attitudes and the behaviours that our (unclear) Brothers and Sisters are experiencing on a daily basis and I want to be clear here, anyone who thinks it's okay to treat somebody differently, poorly, because of the colour of their skin or the fact that they weren't born in the UK, doesn't belong in our Union.

[APPLAUSE]

We should be and are striving to be an anti-racist organisation and we're working with the TUC, Stand Up To Racism, Class?, on training and support to ensure our Reps and members are empowered and able to call-out racism when it happens. Educated, so they don't fall into the trap of sounding or even acting racist and be better at supporting those that are at the receiving end of racism and dealing with, through the Rule Book, those who are simply racist.

The Young Member's Network, we've had one meeting so far. At that meeting we had three brand new young members, who were brilliant. They attended, they gave us some valuable feedback on the website and the resources that are available and from that, we're developing a frequently asked questions document about Trade Unions for young members to be able to understand and potentially young people. We're looking at a briefing around the rights of work that can be accessed by them too. One of the three has signed up for the Organising For Power course, which is on week 5 out of 6 this week and that's been fantastic and the three of them have signed up to the GFTU Young Members Development Weekend later on this year. None of them could believe, incidentally, that they were sat talking to the General Secretary of a Trade Union when they came on the Zoom meeting, but they all said that that was a massive plus of being part of our Union, that they got direct access to the National Officers.

Finally, our Branch Secretary Network has met a few times and we've got a couple of regular attendees. I'd like to thank John and Tony for sticking with it, sometimes it's just the three of us. The Group though is an opportunity for you to support each other. No-one knows what it's like to be a Branch Secretary other than Branch Secretaries and sometimes you just need to let off steam and have a chat and say, I don't know how I'm dealing with this, can we have some support and once you've got your fantastic full-time Officials and the clerical staff in the Regions, sometimes it's just beneficial to talk to somebody that's also going through what you're going through right now.

The Branch Secretary Survey came out of this Network and some of the key points from the Foodworker that you've been given this week and just as the new process of inducting Reps came out of the Branch Secretary Network, we know that we need new Reps to come through and we want them to hit the ground running. By using the new induction workbooks that will come out in a couple of weeks', they will do just that and they can start being a Rep from Day 1, rather than waiting until they've been on a course, building up their confidence, learning the skills.

We're in the process of developing the other Reps' booklets, but the Shop Stewards one, as I said, will be out in a couple of weeks.

These Network meetings have helped us, help you. We will continue to run them. The QR codes that Laura's kindly put together are in the Foodworker for the next meetings and we're going to start a migrant workers' one this week, but if there's any other Networks that you want to get started, let us know and we'll put them together, because as I say, this is your Union and we need to support you.

One of the big campaigns we launched last year was the Right to Food Campaign and I was asked why we've not put a fringe meeting on for that, but we thought it was more important to talk you all about the Campaign, rather than just a small group.

We've got Unity Consulting attending Conference this year, who will cover some of the work that they've done behind the scenes on the Campaign and Solidarity Consulting, who have supported our Parliamentary Group and have been involved too and I want to publicly thank them both for all the work that they have done on the Campaign, because they've really helped us drive it forward and to those that have been supporting Ian in Wigan, John and Lorraine Fox especially and I know Roy's been down a few times, thank you as well, because the work that you have done in Wigan around the People Power Campaign, but for the Right to Food Campaign, has been outstanding.

As you know, we ran a survey last year. We've put it in your packs because we work together and although we've circulated it digitally, sometimes it's just nice to read it in a booklet form.

Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union members, key workers, running out of food, eating less than they should be doing, because they can't afford to buy enough, relying on friends, family and food banks in order to eat, is absolutely disgraceful. Yet, that's the reality for many people in the food sector, in 2022, in the fifth richest economy in the world. We're now looking at what we can do to change that. We're working with a number of academics, as well as Ian Byrne, MP, that addressed Conference last year and others to develop quantitative and qualitative data around access to food and let me tell you, having met some of the academics a couple of weeks' ago when we held a summit down in Birkbeck, I'm really excited about what's going to come out of that. There's just so many fantastic people that are going to be supporting this Campaign and helping us to make change.

We're looking at developing alternatives, so we're going to be working with union co-ops:uk and Cooperation Town, raising early day motions on the subject and looking at what legislative changes are needed, so that workers in the food industry aren't living in poverty and barely surviving, because it's not good enough as a Trade Union just to know how crap things are, we've got to be able to have a plan to make things better and we've got that, we're starting with that with this Campaign. We're building towards a comprehensive tool kit that will be built around the food industry, but one that can be utilised by other sectors, because we know, you know, our Brothers and Sisters that work in the university and college sector for example, are too struggling to put food on the table and make ends meet. We've developing some interim reports, so we can take it to all the political Conferences this year and we did have a bit of a "do we really want to go?" shout at the Tories, but I think it's important that we go and we call them out, because these people, who are supposed to represent us in parliament, have forgotten who they represent. They're not struggling to put food on the table, on £80,000+ a year and we need to shame the ones that are talking the talk but don't walk the walk, especially those currently residing in government.

As part of the Campaign though, through the week as we're at Conference, get some selfies with the Right to Food sign and we're going to do something creative with that as well as we work through. Did you bring that? Okay, okay. Conference, I'm not going to talk for too long, because I know it's nearly lunchtime, but I couldn't stand here today without mentioning our members at Dawnfresh Seafoods in Scotland. For those of you who don't know, the company was owned by one of the richest men in Scotland and for years he's cooked the books to make it look like the company's just breaking even, giving directors huge bonuses just so they can say they've not made any profit and just prior to Christmas, they embarked in, in Mark McHugh's words, the longest redundancy consultation known to man. These continued and Mark and the Reps at site negotiated a package and a resettlement package for their other site, which was a few hours away. However on 1st March, the administrators came in, sending all the workers home, that were working overtime in some cases, that morning. They told them that they weren't going to get paid, so they were left low paid, weekly-paid workers were left with nothing. This happened on a Tuesday, they received no wages on the Friday. They were plunged into poverty overnight, not knowing when they were going to see the money they were owed, let alone the now statutory redundancy package that they would have to apply for, but this wasn't before Alastair Salvesen got his chauffeur to go in and remove the expensive artwork that he had there, so it wasn't frozen as assets and shameful is the only word that I can use without getting sent to Standing Orders, (sigh) yes, but thanks to Raff and Mark for all the work that they did for those members through that time.

[APPLAUSE]

Conference, the billionaires of this world have got away with too much for far too long. Raff and Mark have sorted out our members up there, the majority of them are now in employment and we were able to grant each of our members with some financial support from their Regions' Benevolent Fund, the Executive donated some money and the GFTU and Community Union also did, to help see them through, because we met with them on the Friday after it had happened and some of them were already looking at food banks, because they'd just got nothing to survive with. Our members in Dawnfresh are the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union P & O workers and they've been let down by a government that allows loop holes like this, is not interested in penalising their rich mates and is more interested in selling the site to someone else than the workers that were left with absolutely nothing and we're actually in the process of challenging Salvesen's right to be a charity director. I mean, how ironic, the guy is a charity director and can do that to 200 workers, because we don't believe that he's fit and proper to be involved in any sort of charity.

I'm going to close on this. I want to thank the Officials and the clerical staff for everything they have and continue to do to support you in the Branches. Thank you for the work that you do, every day, whether that's feeding the nation or supporting the members in the issues and problems that they face. We've got some exciting ideas, campaigns and projects coming up, not least of which is the recruitment video that we're developing this week with your help, we'll be pulling you in to answer some questions. It's truly a privilege to be your General Secretary, but this isn't my Union, it's yours and the members' and we want your ideas about how we move forward together. We've got a duty together to build our membership up, continue with the fantastic work we are known for and in many cases envied because of and make sure that we're here for another 175 years.

You'll notice some boxes over there. You'll remember I sent you an email asking for donations for the food bank in Stone. If you could put your donations over there, I've put mine in, we'll deliver that on Thursday, because we're here, we need to help the people that are in the locality whilst we are here and I just want to finish on a quote. We were made aware a few weeks' ago, you might have seen it on social media, of a certificate that had been found, a 50 year membership certificate that had been found, from 1940 and the quote that was on it is as true today as it was back then. "In your day and generation, you have done something to leave the world better than you found it" and I think everybody in this room has done exactly that. Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. The elections, yes, yes, the elections. I nearly sent you out and forgot to tell you and then somebody would have given me a point of order tomorrow [LAUGHTER].

Okay. So, on the elections, the votes went as follows: Desbelia Haile three votes, Mohinder Baddhan 19 votes, Sean Molloy 23 votes, Lee Burns 32 votes, Adrianna 39 votes, Anna 48 votes, Nick Mead 54 votes, Douggie Johnstone 56, Lizzie Dinning 65. So elected are Nick Mead, Douggie Johnstone and Lizzie Dinning.

Okay, so thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Because obviously breakfast finishes at 9 o'clock, we're going to start at quarter past 9 in the morning, save you hanging about.

Tuesday 7th June 2022

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can everybody quieten down. And then there was silence [LAUGHTER]. Okay, General Secretary to call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, that's 'cause he had a very late night last night, Gary, Region 3, Region 4, we're not doing well today, Region 5, Region 7. Thank you very much. It's a, somebody's lost a car key, a key.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Somebody, we've had somebody's room key handed in. So if you've lost your room key, it might be yours, but if you have lost your room key and you don't come and pick it up off us, make sure you go to reception, otherwise you won't get into your room.

Listen, also we've been asked to remind Delegates that there's no smoking allowed just in front of the doors as you leave here. Can you use the smoking facilities around the corner. There is a big sign up that says "Do not smoke here", but obviously we understand that sometimes signs are only there for leaning against and that's probably why nobody noticed them.

I've had a message through and I know obviously Conference will remember Marilyn and Geoff, they used to obviously be regular participants here at the rostrum and they've sent their best wishes to everyone at Conference. They're sorry they can't be with us, but they send us a message of Solidarity. Obviously we had one too from John Wade, who for many, many years attended Conference from, was Hampsons, now Sayers in Bolton. He wished everybody well. Yvonne France from Park Cakes has sent a message, wishing everybody well and we've had some messages from John McDonnell, who wished Conference well and said sorry, he couldn't be with us on Sunday, that was his intention to come along. We've had messages as well, support from Dave Ward and some other General Secretaries of the Trade Unions, wishing our Conference well, but I just can't remember where I've put those messages. Apologies to them and obviously don't record that bit [LAUGHTER] and I've brought my glasses, so I can see you and you're all looking fine, by the way, you're all looking fine, considering.

Obviously, just to remind you that all the stalls are at the back and on the side. Today, I believe we're doing the recruitment video. Oh right, okay. Well, in the meantime, can I wish Peter Pine a very happy 21st birthday, it is 21st, isn't it, Peter? [LAUGHTER]

[APPLAUSE]

And I have, I've got, also and I should have remembered this Carol when you came down and was a first-time speaker as well. Carol Ingham, who's also a first-time Delegate, but obviously she's already introduced herself by making a contribution yesterday. She's 453, from Park Cakes, Oldham and we've also got Zahid Hussain from Branch 312, from Fine Ladies Bakery. Welcome and I hope you're enjoying your first Conference.

We've got Christian from Manor Bakeries as well, but we can't remember what his surname is [LAUGHTER]. Can't pronounce his surname, can't pronounce his surname. Welcome Christian, anyway.

We're going to start off Conference slightly differently, rather than going through the Agendas, we're actually going to make some presentations. Now, obviously just to remind Delegates too, that every year we write out and ask Branches to nominate people that they feel have done something at their Branch that should take, you know, special recognition, be it on health & safety, on organising and, or a young member and we write out, but unfortunately on many occasions, people don't write in and yet you're all special people and you all have special people in your Branches, even if you wanted to nominate yourselves, make sure, make sure you're nominating the people that are doing all that special work because you all deserve rewards, you all deserve recognition for the work that you do and so it's very, very important that you send us, you send us the information in so we can make sure that all of the good work that you do is recognised at Conference. So now asking the General Secretary to make the awards.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: We'll start with the Health & Safety Awards, Sudip, are you ready? 2020, the award winner was Nicolae Macari from Greencore. We know that they had massive issues.

[APPLAUSE]

We know they had massive issues through Covid, they had massive issues in Greencore through the pandemic and the work that the Health & Safety Reps did on site was just outstanding so yes, Nicolae, very pleased to present you with this Award.

[APPLAUSE]

We've got another one. 2021, if you remember, when we had our digital Conference, we couldn't pick out a Health & Safety, a specific Health & Safety award winner, so we've not got an award for that year, because it was just for everybody, but 2022 the award winner is **Alex Reporter** (? spelling) from Greencore. Now, Alex couldn't be with us this year as he was at work, so Dimitri's going to accept the award on his behalf and then we'll come and make a presentation at Regional Council for him, so he gets it himself.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dimitru Manole: Thank you. I'd just like to speak a few words on behalf of Alex. So, unfortunately Alex couldn't be able to come to this Conference this year, but is wishing you a good Conference and all of you enjoy the Conference. Thank you. And he wants to thank everybody for the prize, yes. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Next up, we're going to do the Learner Representative Award. We've only got one for this year and the recipient's fully deserving, I can't say anything, he's still in Standing Orders, he was one of the project workers in the English project that unfortunately the funding was stopped, but that's not stopped him continuing with learning and supporting members in the Wigan area and the passion that he's got for education is second to none. So the winner of the Learner Representative Award for 2022 is John Fox and he doesn't know about it, because he's still in there.

[APPLAUSE]

Are you saying a few words?

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Yes. Quite a few really, yes. Thank you very much the EC or whoever's nominated me for this. I'm quite honoured, because I actually won the first one when Alex Ropota was in charge, yes, a long time ago. This is great, totally unexpected. Just thank you very much, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Next up, we're going to do Organising Awards and obviously we'll be inundated with them next year as we start building up our Union again. Our first one is for 2020 John Martin, Branch 529, doing a fantastic job of trying to organise in Greggs up in the North-East. John can't be with us today, but I know somebody from the Branch is going to come down and accept the Award on his behalf. He's sunning himself up on holiday, that's where he is.

[APPLAUSE]

Do you want to say anything?

Brother Brian Dinning – Branch 529: Yes. Yes, I'm getting this on behalf of John Martin, he's a brilliant Branch Secretary, he's done really well, he's filled some great boots, from my wife, he took over her job. He'll be over the moon with that, so thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Then we've got 2021 was Greencore, Northampton and they did some fantastic work trying to organise in the pandemic and everything else. Don't sit back down Nicolae, because you'll be up again for 2022 as well [LAUGHTER].

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nicolae Macari – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: I'm very honoured to have this Award and I appreciate that our work, everything we were trying to do in the best interests of our members and just for everyone to know how great is this Union. Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: 2022's award we couldn't split, we couldn't choose between the two Branches that were nominated, so we decided that we'd just give them both as a thanks for the hard work that they've done. So, I'm not sure who's going to come up on behalf of Bailey Hill or Greggs, which Reps are coming up, but we've got the Reps from Branch 504, Greggs, Bailey Hill and Greencore, Northampton.

[APPLAUSE]

Do you want to say some words?

Brother Lee Burns – Branch 504, Greggs, Bailiol: I will, aye. I'd just like to say about the Reps we've got at Bailey Hill, it is a very tough place to work and the fact that we've got through the pandemic with the management that we've got is an absolute, I can't even say a word for it, but I'd just like them to know that I'm very, very proud of my Reps, they're spot on, brilliant.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nicolae Macari – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: Thank you. We are allowed to get this nomination this year. I would like to thank to all my Shop Stewards in the Branch, to my full-time Officials in Region 3 and to all of them for the good organising and good support from everybody. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: We're now going to do the Olive Molloy Youth Award and this has got a bit of meaning for me, because I remember a few years ago getting up and accepting this Award myself. It feels a lot of years ago now after Covid. I'm very proud to be able to ask Curtis Smith to come up from Greggs, Branch 334, because he was the Award winner in 2020.

[APPLAUSE]

Do you want to say a few words?

[APPLAUSE]

And for 2021's Award winner, it was Amardeep Singh Dhillon from Branch 104 for the work that he did recruiting bartenders in the London area. Now, unfortunately, Amardeep can't be with us today, but somebody from the Region's going to come and accept the Award on his behalf.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Frank Loveday – Organising Regional Secretary Region 1: On behalf of Amardeep, I'd like to say thank you. I'll make sure that he receives his Award. Amardeep has done an awful lot of work in the Region, as have the rest of the Stewards and I know that many of these should be put forward for this and next year I'm sure we're going to have to fight who's going to get the Award. Thank you very much on behalf of Amardeep.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. Alright, okay. In that case then, we'll get back on with the Agenda. Motion 22. Have we got motion 22? Just checking, it's not us. Branch 560? Yes, do both. Just while Joe's getting his act together, any thoughts now, we ready to rock?

22

Branch 560

That this conference agrees for the government to change the social care plan and reduce the amount to be paid before you receive funding from £86,000 to £50,000.

The average life expectancy for residents in a care home is 18 months.

18 months = 78 weeks

Care at £1000 per week

78 weeks at £1000 = £78,000

Therefore the average resident would pass away before receiving state funding for their care.

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560: Morning, Conference. I used to be 566, or I wasn't aware that I was going to be moving this motion, 'cause it's come from 560 and I didn't attend the last Branch meeting at 560, because I was asked to go up to Region 5, but Conference, Delegates. That this Conference agrees that the government has to change the Social Care Plan and reduce the amount to be paid before you receive funding, from £86,000 to £50,000. The average life expectancy for residents in a care home is 18 months, 18 months equals 78 weeks. Care at £1,000 per week, 78 weeks at £1,000 equals £78,000. Therefore, the average resident will pass away before receiving state funding for their care. Conference, Delegates, here on behalf of the Executive Council, does anybody want to speak?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, no, you're alright, Joe.

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560: I'm here on behalf of the Executive Council. This is a disgrace that has gone on for far too long. My daughter and my granddaughter both work in a care home and they confirm to me that these figures are right. The average amount of time a resident stays is around 18 months. So I ask you, Conference, please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Do we have a formally Secunder? Formally seconded, thank you very much. Any speakers? Okay, well Joe obviously spoke on behalf of the Executive as well. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 23, Branch 253.

That this conference agrees that workplaces need to do more to help women who are going through the menopause so we ask our EC to campaign on our behalf to get legislation in place to improve training and other ways of helping.

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: Morning, Conference. Moving motion 23. Chair, Platform, Delegates. This Conference agrees that the workplace needs to do more to help women who are going through the menopause, so we ask the EC to campaign on our behalf to get legalisation in place to improve training and other ways of helping. It's about time that the symptoms were taken more seriously. The debilitating effects it has on women, just a few of the symptoms are anxiety, depression, low mood, flushes, brain fog. We need to educate the masses. Workplaces need to do more to help women going through the menopause. Men may not know much about it, but also younger girls and boys. We need to educate all sexes, because it does affect younger people directly or indirectly in some shape or form. 44% of women leave work early, or even end their working life, because of the menopause symptoms. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Are you seconding it? Oh right, okay, yes. Okay, I just wanted to double-check. Okay, no worries, go on. Oh, you're seconding it? Oh well, go on then. You have to go up there now [LAUGHTER]. I know, we've forgotten a lot, haven't we? We've forgotten a lot, we've been away a bit [LAUGHTER].

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: Seconding the motion.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Waay.

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: I'm here to support this motion. In my workplace, 80% of the staff are female and whilst I won't suffer directly from the menopause, I can be indirectly affected. My family, my colleagues, our Sisters in this room can all be affected. At this moment in time, all I know is I should be given the opportunity for my staff to have an additional rest break. Training is required for all, but not just training, it's education. Training is about ticking boxes, education is about understanding. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Duggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Hiya. I recently, I must admit, I did not know a hell of a lot about the menopause and recently we were able to go to a short day Conference given by Thompsons, thank you Thompsons, for educating us on the menopause and what we can do about the menopause and to be honest, since we're celebrating, we've been celebrating special people, I want to thank our General Secretary, who's done some brilliant work on that. Thank you very much, Sarah, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

It's a no-brainer, you know what I mean? This affects over half the population. It's time we understand, we did something to understand and cope with the menopause, because like the previous speaker said, it affects everybody, yes. Let's vote for this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Penny Grimstitch – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits, Batley: First-time Delegate, first-time speaker.

[APPLAUSE]

I ask you to support this motion. As a woman of an age, where I have gone through menopause and I have managers that have said, "go over there, get on with it", it's not acceptable. No other medical condition that affects 50% of the workforce, 50% of the nation and one in four people who suffer severely will be told to go away. We would offer them help, we would offer them support and I am here to support this motion and I hope you all do too. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Well done. Morning, Sean.

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558, Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield: I'm here to support it. I was in a previous relationship where she suffered badly with the menopause. It's a workplace issue really. I think it affects people, it affected me, I couldn't sleep, I had to have a technique, I was overheating, underheating, sleeping (**unclear**) and stuff like that, but it is, it is a workplace issue. I think it needs to be looked at, because you need your teams fit in the workplace these days, in this day and age and I think if women aren't fit and they're coming to work and they're tired and like asleep, it's a health and safety concern as well, so I really do believe it is a workplace issue and therefore I'm fully supporting it. Okay.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529, speaking on behalf of the EC: I can't really say much more than what's already been said. I mean, obviously we've had this type of motion at Conference for a few years now and we are, you know, we're not blind to what or deaf to what you are saying about it and obviously myself and Sarah have been working with the Women's Network to, you know, get ideas about how we can tackle this issue and what we can do to make our employers take this issue seriously because, you know, like's already been said, it affects 50% of the workforce. You can be damn sure if it was a man's problem, it'd have already been sorted by now. So support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's overwhelming, thank you very much. 24. Overwhelming, yes, overwhelming the support. Unanimous, unanimous. I know, I'm checking my vocabulary.

24

No 5 Regional Council

That this conference agree that young adults mental health needs more support networks in place to reduce the levels of suicide in young adults especially in young men.

Sister Angela Robinson – Branch 580, Greggs, Yorkshire: That this Conference agrees that young adults' mental health needs more support network in place to reduce levels of suicide in young adults, especially in young men. Suicide is a national and social issue. In the UK, in 2019, there was 5,691 registered deaths by suicide in England and Wales, averaging 18 suicides a day. Males continue to account for three-quarters of registered suicide in 2020. As a nation, we need to be proactive, lobby this government for changes and support networks to be improved and stripped back no more and funding returned. In this room alone, I will guarantee at least one person, more than one person, has been affected by somebody who has committed suicide. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Secunder? Formally seconded. Oh, we've got a seunder. Are you seconding it? Go on, then. Can I, when people are moving it, if you're a seunder, could you also come down at the same time. Cheers.

Brother Darren Lock – Branch 571, Jackson's, Hull: I've been coming here for quite a lot of years and it's the first time I've stood up here.

[APPLAUSE]

I'm here to support this motion. It's, like Angela did say, everybody in here has, will have been affected by it. I've got like my cousin, he went through it and he did it. I've done something stupid before and it will affect everybody and I was young, he was very young. I'd just ask you all to support, please. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Duggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: I'm one of those people that suffers from mental illness. I'm one of those people that suffers from depression and anxiety. It's hard dealing with it. When I was young, the only things I used to help me was heroin and crack cocaine. I've recently celebrated my five year clean birthday.

[APPLAUSE and CHEERS]

In that world, I've seen so much heartache and break, suicides, I can't even count them. My best friend is a paranoid schizophrenic, who was sexually abused by a school teacher when he was a child. Nobody believed him. He uses crack to make himself feel better. He turns up at my house saying voices are telling him to kill somebody, voices are telling him that aliens are chasing him. I'm not a trained social worker, I'm not a trained psychiatrist. Voting for this motion means voting to help him and others. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529: Obviously supporting the motion and I think sometimes it's, well, more than that, it's getting worse, because I drive and, I go to work, I drive over from Gateshead over to Newcastle over the Tyne Bridge and last Wednesday, the traffic was quite bad going and I thought, this is a bit strange, it was just after 11 o'clock, just after the rush hour and I thought well, I know what it'll be and I knew what it was going to be before I got there and it was a young lass sitting on the side of the bridge. Obviously the coppers and that were there and I just, it's just so sad. There never used to be an occurrence like that. At one point they did used to close the bridge when there was somebody, you know, threatening to jump off it, but now it's happening once, probably once a week and they just don't bother any more.

They just close one lane and it's just so sad that people are in that position. I mean, I have thought about it before. Luckily, luckily I'm (unclear), it breaks my heart when I see somebody like that. I was just driving, a crowd and I thought, I had to calm myself down, I mean, obviously being pregnant doesn't help, getting upset, but even if I wasn't, I probably would have felt the same and it's just so sad and I just hate the government so much because it just doesn't seem to care about people any more and I'm a council worker and I was Vice-Chair of the Care, Health & Well-being Committee and, you know, it's just so sad, because you have from, you know, the people that are giving the care like nurses and, you know and they just haven't got the funding to help everybody and it's awful because, you know, people come to them for help and they have to be turned away because they can't physically deal with them and it's just awful and something needs to be done. So yes, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Saturdays we do the People-Powered Communities in Wigan. We've been doing it since 8th January and we've been in Wigan every Saturday since then. We work with a lot of people with mental health problems, a lot, yes. They come to us, they talk to us, we give them support with solicitors, with the (unclear) Foundation and quite a few companies who we have supporting us, yes. It's right, we need to get everybody, well not everybody, but get plenty of people trained up to be a mental health first aider. So, go back to your companies and ask them, I know a lot of companies are doing this now, but all companies need to be mental health first aiders. I was lucky, yes, with being on the Learning Services. We had to do, we got told we had to do the mental health first aid and we got it. It's an eye-opener to what you get taught, yes, but you're able to see the conditions before they actually set-out. There's not much you can actually do, apart from get them help, serious help straight away, yes. The only thing that you can do to them is keep them talking and keep them calm while the help is arriving from the team from the hospital, yes. So, it's ringing 999 and get help there for them straight away. Please support this motion, because this is definitely, it's a life and death, yes, motion. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202, Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes: I was going on this route, about two months ago, because I lost my mother and I got a 'phone call at home, or work and it said your mum has passed away. I broke down at work and when I got home, I was blaming myself. I was, because I lived with her all my life, 43 years and I was there going, it's my fault because, I go, what happened, did I, in the night-time if she called me and I didn't hear her, so I was blaming my own self for about two/three weeks. I got to about, my Mrs stayed with me and I got to about the last two weeks, my Mrs went to me, I need to stay home. I said no, I don't want to stay home, I've got my dog at home. I went to my car and I said, I can't do this no more, I went, I want to go to my car, I felt like just getting a bottle of whisky or a bottle of vodka and just doing myself in, because I just couldn't cope any more and luckily my friends, my family and my brother all turned round to me, he goes, if you don't pack yourself out of it, he goes, you're going down the road and he goes, I don't want to see you in a wooden box like your mother, but the kind of thing is, I was just blaming myself and when I went back to work, Occupational Health had a word with me and she goes, it's not your fault. I said yes, I know it's not my fault, but I was blaming myself, because the kind of thing, because I lived with her and all my family live far away and I did everything for my mother and the kind of thing is it's like my own fault, because in the night, she could have liked called me in the night and said, Michael, I need an ambulance and I didn't get that call and I thought I should have been there for her and that's why I really support this motion, because the kind of thing is luckily this is the support I had off friends and family and Occupational Health and everybody else.

It's a long way down the road at the moment, because I'm on my own now and I've got to do all that thing, but it's just, over time it will get better, making sure I've got all the support of my friends and my family and everything else to make me carry on with my life, because when people said you're coming to this Conference, I said I need to come to this Conference, because the kind of thing is, I've got to get back to reality. I know what's happened, I can never change what's happened, but I've got to get back to reality or else, the way I was going about three/four weeks' ago, it could have been a different story, but the kind of thing is, I had to do it for myself and when they said, do you want to come back to work, I said, I need to come back to work, because the way I'm going, staying at home, is the worst thing I can ever do is stay at home, all I'm doing is seeing the four walls and in that house I didn't want to eat and I was getting made by my fiancée saying, you need to eat. I said, I don't want to eat, I don't want to cook in this house, I don't like going in this house and she goes, you need to knock yourself out of this, because she goes, you're going down that road of mental health, if you don't, it's going to be a long way to get yourself back out, you need to do it now and luckily I'm getting support and that's helping me out. So, support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Best wishes, comrade.

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417, Hovis, Golborne, Wigan: Morning, Conference. Where do you start? You've just heard three, three really powerful, emotional, statements there from your colleagues and how many more of them are out there? I'd just like you to put your hands together for them three people.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. That takes tremendous, tremendous courage to get up and speak about personal problems that affect your daily living, tremendous problems and I can't commend them highly enough. It takes some guts getting up here. By the way, this is my first time at Conference as well.

[APPLAUSE]

I'm a mental first aider at work and thanks to John Fox, we know all about John, he encouraged me to go down the route which, you know, I can wholeheartedly commend for that. I've taken some exams out, outside of that, at Chesterfield College, done through distance learning and it really, really is a tremendous eye-opener, it deals with everything. Post-natal depression, the menopause that we've just spoken about, suicide, post-traumatic stress disorder, everything basically. What I'm asking you to do, colleagues, Delegates, is to get actively involved in this very important area of mental health. It affects us all, in one shape or another, the work/life balance. When someone comes to you, you've got to be prepared to listen, not to talk, although it's an important point, you have to be a good listener and that's all I have to do, let them tell you, get into an environment where it's quiet, you know, you can take them to one side and then get talking.

We aren't professionals and we never will be, unless we choose to go down that route but, you know, it's about actively engaging with people and being interested in what they're saying, getting involved. We have four at Wigan, four mental health first aiders and Hovis, they look up to our site because we're doing the vanguard, we're pushing it, pushing it all the time and colleagues come up to us regular, (unclear) drivers, primary drivers, despatch operatives, can I have a word with you, Mick? Yes and I'll have countless people, we've helped them out. As I said, we're not professionals, all we can do is signpost people and like, in extreme circumstances, we know the emergency services are there, but a lot of the time a problem shared is a problem halved. So, with that, as I say, I'd just encourage you to all get involved with this very, very important area. So Conference, I strongly ask you to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mike Andrews – Region 2: Morning, Conference. I just want to share something with you. A couple of years' ago, three/four years ago now, a member of staff at my works was taken into an office, something happened, he was escorted off site. I found out that day he'd been a naughty boy, it was irrelevant. He went to a shop, got two bottles of gin, drunk them both, slashed his wrists. He was luckily discovered by a passer-by, taken to the hospital and he's still alive today. Thank God and we were all oblivious to this when I was working and I was in the office, the 'phone rang, I answered it, it was his young wife who said, what happened to him, what happened? I said why, what's happened? She was in hysterics on the 'phone and she said that he slit his wrists, he's in hospital and she said, what happened in work, what happened, why did he do this? I found out afterwards what it was all about and it was something stupid and it wasn't worth it and the two people that sent him home, there was no HR involved, no other counsel, no other representation in that room and he'd already been previously coached for mental health which the company was aware of this and they ignored it and the fact is that that man chose an attempt to take his life over something silly and left a young wife, with a young baby, behind, because he wasn't supported.

Now after that 'phone call, I found out what hospital he was in. I said, can I go and see him? Yes, I was allowed in the hospital. I sat down and spoke to him and he was shocked I was there. I asked him, how are you doing? He said, well, as you can see, I'm alright, joking around and then there was such shock he was there and I said, how are you feeling? I said, if you don't mind me asking, why did you do it? He said, I just totally blanked, I just, I thought that's it, I'm destroying my family's life, I'll destroy mine and through all that, events and everything, he was dismissed from the business 18 months later, he was on long-term sick etc and he's always stayed in touch with me since then and he's got his new job and got his life back on-line due to the extra little help with me staying in contact with him, which led me to be a mental health champion and a mental health first aider today.

[APPLAUSE]

So that's one thing that, you know, has forced the company to think Oh God, we caused that, regardless of what that person done wrong, we caused it and they changed their ways of working, so that's one good thing to come of it, but it just shows how many people, unknowns, can react in such a different way to the minor or major bit of news they get and that's why I think and I think everyone should support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Lee Wren – Branch 504: Hello, everyone. I'm speaking on behalf of the EC.

There was a lot of powerful stories there and I think you should commend yourself for coming up and saying that, because it's very, very hard.

[APPLAUSE]

I'm not, I'm going to tell you a story about a lad I used to work with. He was called Tom, we used to work for the British Heart Foundation, it was a charity going door-to-door, we used to talk about helping people every single day, every single person. Now this lad was only about 23/24 years' old, looking at him you would never tell, but you can never tell, you never know what's going on in someone's mind. After about a year of working with him, there was a big group, there was about 16 of us all doing about the same sort of job, all took turns in different teams. One day we got a 'phone call saying that Tom had obviously committed suicide. Now, he was a fantastic fella, he'd just had a newborn baby, he had a new lass, he was getting married within a year, quite young to get married but if he's into that, why not. Now, when that happened, the lads obviously I used to work with, we all got together, we said, we set a WhatsApp group up, I'm not going to say the name because it's quite rude, but that group it was set up so the lads could basically moan about every day life and I mean, I'm telling you, they whinge about everything, their wives, their kids, everything, the dog, everything you could possibly think of. We've set a pact for any of the lads that need help to say, to say in the chat, can someone give me a call? So we put that in place to obviously try and stop something like that happening. Now, it has worked, we still stay in touch.

There was a game that me and Tom and the lads used to play, if you've ever watched Balls of Steel, it used to be a programme, you have to make an individual move without touching them. Now, he was the best at it, I'm telling you, it was absolutely hilarious, so we're a bit older now, so when the lads meet up, we haven't done it for a few years because of Covid and stuff like that, we tend to get a bit silly and we tend to do the same things, so we sit in the bar and I'll try and make someone move without touching them, that means you can make noises, you can do whatever you want. Now we do that to honour him. It sounds stupid, but the little things in life are the best things and he enjoyed doing that game and he was absolutely brilliant at it. Also, we've also set a saying up that it's nice to be nice, so every time I walk past someone at work, anyone from the Conference, I'll say, how are you going? Doesn't matter if I don't like you, not here, at work, if I don't like a manager, if I see him or her and I think, I don't really like you but I'm going to carry on, are you alright?, have a good weekend, things like that. It's the little things. You've got to be nice, you've got to explain to people, you've got to listen, I think one of the lads said that, but I would strongly want you to support this motion, please. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Unanimous.

Okay, just on that issue, obviously a lot of people are going to be suffering from debt, which is going to cause a lot of anxiety and depression and really stress people out. Over in the corner, if you haven't already been over to see them, PayPlan do an exceptional great job in supporting people and giving them financial advice and helping people through that really, really difficult time.

You can put your Agendas away, because we're going to have another speaker. This next individual that I'm going to introduce should have been the leader of the Scottish Labour Party. Obviously he's no longer an SMP, was the best SMP in Scotland, always supported Trade Unions, always there when we needed him to support us in Scotland. Now part of Unity Consultants which we formed a relationship with during Covid that produced that fantastic research for us on the Right to Food, obviously doing some great work with our Officers and Representatives in Scotland. So it's my pleasure to introduce to Conference Neil Findlay, a real good friend and comrade.

[APPLAUSE]

Neil Findlay, Unity Consultants, addresses Conference

Neil Findlay – Unity Consulting: Thanks very much, Brothers and Sisters and friends and comrades. It's a great pleasure and a great honour to be here to speak for the first time at your Conference, so and it's been, I have to say, it's been very moving hearing those contributions this morning on hugely important issues, like social care, like mental well-being and the menopause. These are absolute at the core of the issues that working people are going through, the experiences they're going through, particularly with the issue of mental health during the pandemic, but also during those years, ongoing years of austerity and cuts.

As Ian said, my name's Neil Findlay, I'm a Director of Unity Consulting. We're a not-for-profit social enterprise that was established to work with Trade Unions, to work with charities and community groups and a year ago, myself and my colleague, Michael, who's with us and my other colleague, Tommy Kane, who's back in Scotland, back at the ranch, established the organisation. We all come from working class backgrounds. I started my working life as a bricklayer, Tommy worked in a tyre factory and Michael a call centre. We're steeped in the Labour and Trade Union movement. I was a councillor and MSP for 18 years, Michael was a Head of Policy in the Scottish parliament and Tommy was a senior advisor to Jeremy Corbyn at Westminster and during that time we all worked, working in the Scottish and UK parliaments. We saw how the big business community, the financial institutions, the banks, the fund managers, all those people who dominate our economy and dominate political decision-making used their power and their influence and their networks and their connections, sometimes blatantly, often secretly, to line their own pockets. They used their friends to determine the direction of policy and the spending of our taxes, to their advantage. Look at the scandal that we saw of Tory MPs and Peers syphoning-off hundreds of millions of pounds of public money into newly-formed companies to provide PPE during the pandemic. Companies that did not exist prior to Covid. They had zero experience of producing, of sourcing this equipment and yet they set up these companies and ripped us off to the tune of hundreds of millions of pounds. So we set up our organisation because we want to build an alternative, an organisation that shuns the commercial sector and works only for our people and our class and we were delighted that the first Trade Union that we worked with is the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union.

Over a year ago, we carried out a survey of members and that was to hear about people's experience during the pandemic and the results are in this report, please pick one up if you've not read it already. The results are absolutely shocking and you must read it. 40% of respondents said that due to lack of money, they'd eaten less than they thought they should have at some point during the pandemic, 40%. Over 45% who responded had gone without enough food to ensure others in the household could be fed. 19% who took part had said that their household had run out of food because of lack of money. More than a fifth had to rely on the support of their extended family and friends for food and 7% said that at some point they had to rely on a food bank to feed themselves and their family. Now these are not just some dry statistics, behind every one of them is real people, real families, the very people who worked in the factories and the bakeries, the shops and food processing plants, risking their lives all through the pandemic to keep the country fed and I don't know about you, but I'm absolutely ashamed, ashamed to live in a country where the people who make and distribute our food go home to empty cupboards and fridges. That, to me, is an absolute scandal and a disgrace and how are these families rewarded, by the soon-to-be-departed Johnson and Sunak and the rest of them? They were rewarded by a £20 a week cut to their Universal Credit, making the situation even worse. All this at a time when we see inflation at 10%, fuel bills soaring and the price of everyday food items rising at eye-watering rates.

So the call from this Union, one for a National Minimum Wage of £15 an hour and two, for the Right to Food to be enshrined in law, could not be more urgent. It is an absolute pressing priority and these are not policies plucked out of the air, they're rooted in that research that we conducted and they're rooted in the evidence that you, as Reps, will find every day in your workplace, speaking to the people you represent. The report we've produced has not just been written and stuck on a shelf. We've worked extensively with the Union to use it in a number of ways. It was sent to all MPs and MSPs, it was raised in the UK and Scottish parliaments, it provoked parliamentary questions and motions.

We worked with journalists to ensure it was carried in a number of national newspapers, we created social media content to make sure it was out there as widely as possible and working with our sister organisation Solidarity Consulting and Sarah and Ian, we helped put on an excellent seminar a few weeks' ago in London. The campaigners, academics, Trade Unionists came together to see how we can pool our knowledge, our skills, our experience and campaigning to deliver on these and other policy objectives and that work is ongoing and please watch this space for the next developments. In the Scottish and UK parliaments, Rhoda Grant MSP and Ian Byrne MP are leading the campaigns to try to enshrine the Right to Food in law and we're helping ensure that the Union is involved at every stage of that process, putting pressure on decision-makers to support this proposal. We helped draft the Union's submission to the Scottish Good Food Nation Bill and the Right to Food bills that are going through parliament.

We've also been working with Ian to look at opportunities for developing grassroots community engagement, similar to the work that's been done in Wigan and we're looking at possible work in Glasgow and Fife, helped by supportive members of parliament.

Earlier this year, we saw the closure of the Dawnfresh fish processing plant at Uddingston. Without any warning, 200 loyal staff lost their jobs, as one of Scotland's richest men, Alastair Salvesen put the plant into administration and as the plant manager was announcing the closure to workers in the canteen, Salvesen was spotted removing pictures belonging to his private art collection from the boardroom so the administrators couldn't get their hands on them.

An extremely rich man, more concerned about his artwork than the loyal workforce whose hard work, skills and talent made him rich enough to buy the artwork in the first place. We helped expose the scandal in the media and in parliament and we reported this rogue boss to the Charities Regulators. We don't believe he's a fit and proper person to sit on a charity board and we helped the Union raise the closure with the Scottish and UK governments and with the Scottish TUC and in Glasgow, a group of interpreters supported by the Union have established an interpreters branch. These are highly skilled workers providing services in the workplace, the NHS, the courts and other services. They're being systematically ripped off. They're only paid from the time they go into a workplace or into a public service and the payment ends the minute they leave. No travel, no allowances, no bus fares paid, they can be travelling long distances to provide that service and they get nothing for it.

The agencies who employ them are making a fortune from these largely taxpayer-funded contracts, but such is the rip off, the interpreters are barely making the National Minimum Wage and we've been helping raise the profile in the Branch and the issue affecting their members and a big part of what we do is with the media. We've excellent working relationships with journalists and the print and digital media and we're always looking for opportunities to promote the Union and the work it does and have successfully placed stories in many of the national newspapers and online media, but we can only do that work with the support, co-operation and encouragement of members and Officials. So I want to thank Ian and Sarah and the Union Executive for having faith in us. I hope that you can see by the work that we're doing that we are repaying that faith by the quality and quantity of the work we're producing.

From the Bakers Union coming on board and supporting us, we are now working with a number of other Unions and progressive organisations to help in their campaigns too and we point to the work that we're doing with the Bakers Union as one of the leading examples of what we can produce for them and how we can help fight for members. I also want to say a special thanks to the Union Scottish Organiser, Mark McHugh, I don't know if Mark's in the room, oh, he's at a training session, oh well, I'll not embarrass him, he's not here, but Mark for all his work and his total commitment to this Union, he's an excellent Union Official and an all-round good guy and he's ably supported by Rafal, who has kindly taken a day off from his appearances on The Chase, you'll see him every day on The Chase, to be with us this week [LAUGHTER]. I thought he was going to be a non-runner this morning as he was into that Polish moonshine last night, but he's got there in the end, but Rafal is a Learning Rep and also working with a migrant and has done some great work as well.

So thanks for the opportunity to speak to you this morning. If anybody wants to grab myself or Michael for a chat about any of the work we do, then just get hold of us and we'll have a chat and finally can I say as a Socialist, then I'm an optimist, you've got to be, you can't be a Socialist and a pessimist and as a Trade Unionist, I believe that if we work together, if we use our collective skills and knowledge and talent, just as the founding members of this Union did 175 years ago, then we will create a better workplace, we will create a better society and we will create a better world for everyone and I hope that in our small contribution we can make, that we can deliver on that historic mission. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thanks ever so much for that, Neil and for the work that you, Michael and Tommy are all doing for us, it's second to none and, you know, it's absolutely brilliant and you're helping us go into areas that we wouldn't have been able to get into previously. We'd like to give you a small gift, some lovely Fox's biscuits, made by our members and a pewter baker as well.

Neil Findlay – Unity Consulting: Oh, thanks very much, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, colleagues. We've got John Hendy, he's supposed to be coming on at half past 10, obviously the motion before obviously went on, on those very important issues and we weren't going to cut those emotional stories off, so we have run over a little bit, so I do apologise. I'm going to ask you to come back for 20 to, instead of quarter to, so we can get John Hendy on. Okay? So can you come back for 20 to.

[BREAK]

If you could start taking your seats, I'd appreciate it. Can we close the doors, please. Make sure everybody's in. Okay, we're going to go Zoom in a minute, we're going to go Zoom. Oh, he's here. How are you doing, John, you alright mate? Welcome to the Conference. So obviously a lot of people will be aware of the Institute of Employment Rights, it's easy when you put your teeth in. Obviously John Hendy has been heading that up and obviously making sure that the Trade Union voice is also heard in the House of Lords. He's done some sterling work with the Institute of Employment Rights and making sure that people hear about the issues and why collective bargaining is a really important issue and made it front and centre of what they've been doing to put back Trade Unions' voices, not just in the workplace but also into politics too.

But I'll let John tell you about his role and the work that the Institute of Employment Rights do, 'cause he's far better at it than I'll ever be. So please Conference, give John Hendy a warm round of applause and welcome him to the Bakers Union Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Lord John Hendy, Chair of the Institute of Employment Rights addresses Conference

Lord John Hendy, Chair of the Institute of Employment Rights: Well thank you very much, Ian and thank you the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union for inviting me to speak to the Annual Conference. I'll just say a word about my own role. Ian's right, I'm the Chair of the Institute of Employment Rights which is the capacity in which I attend today. The Institute is a think tank for the Labour movement, it's (unclear) basically by Trade Unions and it's composed of academics and lawyers and Trade Unionists and Sarah sits on our Executive Committee and we're very grateful that you have at the back of the Hall there a stall, Institute of Employment Rights stall, which is staffed by my colleagues Ben and James and they'd be very happy to chat to you during the course of the Conference about the work of the Institute, particularly the publications that we put out, which are intended for the education of Trade Unionists. So I won't say any more, I'll leave it to them to sell the Institute to you, but I've got two other roles as well. I am a practising barrister and have been for the last 43 years and I specialise in work for Trade Unions, in fact I'm on the verge of retiring from that so I'm really doing the last few of my cases now but it does give me a position to sort of reflect on the role of Labour Law, that's to say the law of the workplace at the current stage and I'll say something about that in a moment, but my third role is in the House of Lords.

I was appointed by Jeremy Corbyn in 2019 when we still, when we had hopes of winning that election and if we had won that election, my role was to put forward a comprehensive package of legislation to transform workplace law. Unfortunately, of course, we lost the election, so that opportunity is no longer there, but I still feel duty-bound to pitch up at the House of Lords and say what I can on behalf of workers and Trade Unions when the opportunity arises, which is not to say that I don't totally support your motion 44, mind you, I support practically every other motion that you've got before Annual Conference, in particular motion 44 to end the undemocratic anomaly of the House of Lords. There's no getting away from it, it's a totally undemocratic institution and what we need clearly is a Representative and Democratic Senate to be the second house of parliament.

I just wanted to add one word about my role in the House of Lords, because it's one in which you guys could assist me with. We're in a position where we've had one session of parliament under Boris Johnson with endless bills that have now become Acts of Parliament which have done all sorts of damage, as you well know, but in particular have restricted the right to demonstrate and to picket, giving more powers to the Certification Officer to fine Trade Unions and so on and now we're facing, in the next session of parliament, which began with the Queen's speech a month ago, 38 separate bills and they're going to come again to attack the right to protest and to picket and I think we've all got to get together to fight those things and there are other proposals which affect Trade Unions as well, which shouldn't be overlooked. I don't know whether it's been raised in Conference already, but there is a proposal to end the firefighters' right to strike and a proposal to end their right to National Collective Bargaining, which I think is extremely ominous, because if they get away with that for such a well-organised sector, they will come and attack other parts of the Trade Union movement and of course we know too that there's a threat that if RMT carries out its threat to conduct a national strike over pay and staffing on the railways, that the government will introduce legislation to restrict the right of strike, having a minimum service requirement.

So the Tories, we can be absolutely sure, have got constantly on their mind the possibility of limiting the power of working people collectively to defend their terms and conditions and their working lives generally. So any help that you can give on that, any points that you think I ought to know about in the forthcoming debates, just let me know, perhaps through Sarah and we can discuss what can be done by way of putting forward amendments. Of course, we've got to recognise that the government's got a 75 seat majority in the House of Commons, but nevertheless the fact is, we've got to put up a fight because if Trade Unions are not prepared to fight now with the current cost of living crisis, then you have to ask the question when is the Trade Union movement going to fight? I know I don't have to say that to this Union, but let me deal next with, to say a few words about Labour Law, the law of the workplace, the law on Trade Unions and the law of workers and employment rights, all that sort of thing and one of the things that the Covid pandemic has demonstrated I think to all of us, but particularly to Labour Law, academics and Labour Law practitioners, is the absolute failure of Labour Law to protect working people, well, not just working people, pensioners as well, but we've seen it, Labour Law didn't protect anybody from being sacked during Covid and because of Covid. It didn't protect the health and safety of workers and it didn't protect the hours that people worked nor their incomes either.

My colleague, Keith Ewing, who is the President of the Institute and myself have written a long piece in the Industrial Law Journal, which is our sort of trade magazine for Labour lawyers about the failure of Labour Law to protect workers during Covid and this seems to me to have been particularly brought home with the P & O Ferries saga which started on St Patrick's Day, the 17th of March this year, when 786 seafarers were sacked overnight, thrown off the vessels, some of them sleeping in their cabins, turfed out, given 15 minutes to gather their possessions together and marched off the ships in front of coachloads of workers who'd been recruited far away in India and Brazil and Honduras and places like that, in order to take their places on a fraction of their wages, working entirely different hours and shifts and so on than those that had been negotiated by the Unions in collective agreements which date back at least 100 years and what that demonstrated to everybody was the failure of our Labour Law to protect jobs, terms, conditions and in particular to protect the right to bargain collectively, because all those collective agreements were simply torn up and thrown overboard.

It's true that those workers were entitled and were paid a few thousand pounds of redundancy and for failure to consult, but that's not what they wanted, they wanted their jobs, they wanted their terms and conditions and Labour Law didn't give them that, didn't protect them and we've seen it elsewhere in our wider economy, the rampant use of fire and rehire, which I know has been used against members of your Union up and down the country, a technique that is entirely legal for employers to bring contracts to an end by giving proper notice under the contracts and then offering to rehire the workers on worse terms and conditions and the only way that that can be resisted is by strong collective action by the workers saying no, we're not going back on worse terms and conditions, if you want us back, you pay us the existing terms and conditions and of course I recognise that it's not everywhere that workers are well enough organised or in a position to take that stand, but sometimes they are and it is in fact the only way of resisting, although it really offers you nothing, which is not saying we're not going to try because my colleague in the House of Lords, Tony Woodley, former General Secretary of Unite, is introducing a bill which Keith Ewing and I drafted for the House of Commons, which we're going to reintroduce in the House of Lords and Tony Woodley is later on this year. Of course it will fail, we know it will fail, but we've got to do something, haven't we?

So that's what I wanted to say about Labour Law and the consequence of the failure, which is not to say that there aren't cases worth fighting, of course there are and I know this Union fights them, but the real consequence, the message to take home is really only workers collective organisation, their collective strength, their collective activity which is the defence against the employers attempts always to reduce staffing, to reduce wages, to lengthen hours and to reduce security of employment.

Finally, Chair, I just wanted to say something about the current cost of living crisis, because we are now facing the worst inflation for 40 years, with a decline in the value of average real wages and this is going to be a catastrophe, it already is a catastrophe for a lot of workers in this country. Even before Covid, there were nine million people living in poverty who were living in families where somebody was in work. This is not simply a problem of people who are unemployed or are pensioners, it's a problem of working people, this decline in income. So this is a major catastrophe and let's just look at the two sides of it. First of all, why has the cost of living gone up? Well, there's no ifs or buts about that, this is what Capitalism does, this is the naked, rampant greed of Capital wanting more profit, which means re-distributing income from wages to profits, from workers to investors, from the poor to the rich and from Labour to Capital. It all started of course with OPEC deciding that they weren't getting enough profit from their oil and driving up the price of oil and gas. This is before the war in Ukraine. What it is is basically a cartel of the big producers banding together and deciding that they were going to put up the price and to hell with the workers who were going to suffer across the world in consequence of it and they put up the price, not because the cost of drilling or exploration or transport or storage or refining those products had gone up, they put it up because they simply wanted more profit and the effects as we all recognise of being catastrophic.

So it's Capitalism that's screwing us, it's Capitalism that's put up the prices and the only way out of it is not windfall taxes, which are all very well, but what we want is a cap on the price that these Capitalists can charge. Actually what we really want is public ownership of the energy supply, but let's start with a cap on the prices that can be charged. That's what they've done in France and France is nowhere near a Socialist country. So that's the price increase, let's just look at the other side of the coin, which is wages. The government of the Bank of England said a couple of months ago that we were in danger of having a wage price spiral, which I think is an absolute insult to working people. The suggestion that workers' wages could drive up inflation is just absolute economic nonsense. Wages are only a part of the cost of goods and services and for most things, in particular energy, wage costs are a trivial part of the equation, but there's another side to this as well. When they say that wages and you see it in the newspapers now, wages are going up, Labour's never been in a stronger position, all the jobs have been filled, so workers can demand more.

Well, you guys in this Union, know the reality. It's not so, it's not the case. Workers are not in a position to push up wages and the reason for that is very simple, there's two of them. One is because of the legal restrictions imposed by Labour Law over the last 45 years on Trade Unions, so that Trade Unions are unable to mobilise their workers and call strikes and take industrial action as they would wish to do in order to protect terms and conditions or to increase wages and the other is, that government policy over those 45 years, I mean since Thatcher came to power, has been to destroy collective bargaining. Now this is not such a well-known statistic, even among Trade Unions, but let me tell you, from the end of the Second World War in 1945 through to the coming of Thatcher in 1979, on average 85% of British workers have their terms and conditions negotiated by Unions on their behalf. It might have worked in workplaces where there was no Union, but there was national collective bargaining for most of the sectors of the British economy and so all workers got the benefit of nationally, nearly all workers got the benefit of collectively negotiated terms and conditions.

When Thatcher came to power, she decided both to destroy the power of the Unions and in particular to destroy collective bargaining and by placing restrictions on Trade Unions, by getting rid of various things like the Fair Wages Resolution at the House of Commons, by contracting-out public services and so on, various other devices which we don't need to go into. The coverage of collective bargaining has been driven down from that high point of 85% to something less than 25% today, so your members are in a very privileged position, you're amongst the quarter of workers, most of your members anyway are in that proportion, the quarter of workers whose terms and conditions are negotiated by Trade Unions, but three-quarters of our workforce are at the complete mercy of the labour market and the generosity, if you can call it that, of employers.

When they go for a job, they don't sit down and say well now, let's talk about how much I'm going to be receiving, I'd like £15 an hour, please. There's no discussion, no negotiation, you either take it or leave it at the terms that the employer offers and that is the reason, that collapse of collective bargaining, because of the restraints that have been, in particular, placed on Trade Unions by law is the real reason why workers are not in the position to force up wages and why they are having to now tolerate, as they have for the last 13 years, falling real wages and of course if workers can't put up their wages, there's no way that pensioners can as well. That's why it was so easy for the government to destroy the triple lock, which I see is the subject of another motion you guys are going to be debating.

So what is the response to this? Well, I can only offer you blood, sweat and tears because you're going to get nothing from the lawyers I'm afraid. It's got to be collective organisation, collective action and the Unions have got to really seize this moment to stand up for the working class. Of course we're going to make a show on 18th June and I'm sure many, many hundreds, if not thousands, of members of your Union will be present in London on the march organised by the TUC on 18th June, but this is just chicken feed isn't it, we've really got to get organised now to defend the working class, because if the Trade Union movement led by the TUC won't do it, I ask who will and there is nobody else. So it means that all of us, all of us have got a role to play in this, both our workplaces, supporting Shop Stewards and Representatives and recruiting into the Unions. We've got to increase membership, we've got to bring home the message to young people, which I know this Union has certainly done with a raft of new members taking industrial action over the last few years and so on. We've got to bring home to young people the importance of joining Trade Unions and of collective Solidarity amongst working people and into the wider community, embracing pensioners and those who are conducting other fights, like the renters and the environmentalists and so on. All these fights are our fight and we've got to stand together.

So although I'd like to say listen, I'm a lawyer and the law is the answer, I can't say that to you, in all honesty I cannot say that to you. So, I would like to express my Solidarity to the Union. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to have a little bit of a rant this morning about the things that I think are absolutely fundamentally important and I'd love to hear some questions and comments.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, we're going to take a couple of questions, if people have got any questions they want to ask? Have they got any questions they want to ask? John, you might get away with no questions, oh, have we got, are you coming down, Dougie? Okay, at the back, I can see somebody at the back. Yes. So ask your question and then go and sit down, please. Yes, I saw you run up there, no strolling today, Dougie. See, I've got my glasses on.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: The mike's not working, hello? Thank you. One thing that is really concerning me is the attack on our democratic rights, the right to vote, it's the most important thing and the concerns about how the Tories are trying to change, you're going to have to bring in ID to have a vote and it really, really worries me because I've seen what it's like in the United States.

I've seen how those people, poor working class people have been basically, generally they're African-American or Hispanic, have been pushed out because they haven't got the right ID to vote, you know. I wonder if you could say a few words on that.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, cool. We'll take a couple. They're all shy this morning, John.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508, Lighbody's: Mine's not a question, more like a statement. I, like a lot of Brothers and Sisters, feel let down by the Labour Party, especially over the last two years and you brought a point, one good point for me in your whole speech, I'm sorry to be, you know, what's the word, disparaging towards you, but the public sector does need to earn more so that we can, you know, get the prices down, so that we can get the taxes down, so that people can start to live again, so that people can start to not have to lean on resources given by other people, resources that are draining faster and faster every day, without a lot of governmental support or hardly any governmental support and the more that we can do to push the government, Tory, Labour, whatever's in at the time now and from onwards, to get these into the public sector and own these companies that are screwing us over. We'd just like more and more help with that going forward, if possible. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers. Sean.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558, Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield: John, you haven't instilled with a lot of encouragement when you're talking about Labour Law. I've not sat there and been really inspired, I've come out of it thinking a bit, I'm getting a bit worried about where we're all going as a nation. I've got a question for you though, 'cause you mentioned the P & O Ferries. Now, I remember the, you know, at the time what actually happened there, but it seemed to have died a death. Didn't the government impound one of their vessels, was it a Saudi-owned company that tried to remove them off the ships? What is the state of play with that now?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: He's not going to answer you yet, Sean, he's going to answer them all together. Okay, mate [LAUGHTER]. Is there anybody else that wants to ask a question?

[APPLAUSE]

Anyone else? Oh, right, okay, okay. Well, it's no good hiding over there, is it, it's not like you to shy away in a corner, is it?

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: I am a naturally shy person, as you well know, Ian.

[LAUGHTER]

Oh, it's working.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: You've turned it off now.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Press the green button.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: I've turned it on again.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Don't touch.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: I like touching. You mentioned the fact obviously that the Lords does need changing. Do you find it hard, this is just a personal question, do you find it hard justifying yourself being in the Lords, whilst wanting to abolish it? Do you know what I mean? It's just an honest question. Cheers.

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

[APPLAUSE]

The idea of abolishing yourself, John. Whatever you did after that would be absolutely worthwhile for the rest of us anyway, wouldn't it John, so I mean

John, if you can answer those four questions, I'd really appreciate it, mate.

Lord John Hendy, Chair of the Institute of Employment Rights: Yes, of course, yes. Yes, well I'll try anyway. I couldn't, I quite agree with the first speaker, the attack on democracy is very, very dangerous and it's not just requiring ID to be provided, they're going to alter the boundaries in all sorts of ways. Of course they want to stop people voting. I think there's meant to be, is it two million people in this country that don't possess any form of photographic ID, they haven't got driving licences or passports and they won't be in a position to prove that they're able to vote. I mean this is, I'm, it's surprising that more people are not as angry as your first speaker. I mean, it's just outrageous and when this provision was being debated in the House of Lords, I have to say it was opposed on every side of the House, there were even Tory Lords and Baronesses who were objecting to it, as well as former judges and bishops and the cross-benches and the Lib Dems and of course Labour as well.

But I just wanted to make a point in addition to that. This attack on democracy shouldn't be seen in isolation, because when I was talking before about the coverage of collective bargaining, we're entitled to say what about industrial democracy, what about the right of workers to be heard on the determination of their terms and conditions? This seems to be a battle that has almost been forgotten, I'm not suggesting it's forgotten in your Union, but the words "industrial democracy" you don't hear very often now. There was a huge debate about it in the 1970's and a report and all that sort of thing. We ought to bring that back. I mean, surely democracy doesn't stop at the work gates does it? I mean, democracy is a principle that everybody is affected by, the decisions of the elite, who is entitled to have a say about them and that is the fundamental argument, in favour of collective bargaining. It's a democratic right to be heard.

Now the second question, I felt let down by the Labour Party and I can understand the reasons for that, in particular the need for public sector workers to have a pay rise. This is absolutely clearly, the government of course have maintained the pay freeze on and off for the last decade and their letter to the pay review bodies, so called Remit Letter, I don't know how many of your members work in the public sector, not many I would imagine, but they will, those who do will know about this, the Remit Letter sent by the government to the public sector pay bodies recommends a pay rise of no more than 2%, no more than 2%. We've got inflation running at 19? %, so this is a significant wage cut that the government are proposing for public sector workers. Well, I hope that public sector workers are preparing to fight back about this. All the stuff that you hear, I mean I was listening to the Today programme this morning, all the stuff about decreasing the tax increases that the government have imposed, National Insurance, VAT and all the rest of it, all those things are no doubt worthwhile, but what we want is a wage increase, we want increased earnings. It's not so much reductions of tax, reductions of tax mean that the public are in fact subsidising low paying employers. What we want is employers to pay decent and proper wages. So that ought to be where the (unclear) is.

The third question asked about the state of the P & O Ferries. Well, the government announced after that that it would take nine separate measures to address the fiasco of P & O Ferries, some of them it's taken. One of the ones that was mentioned is that it instructed the maritime and coastguard, Maritime, yes and Coastguard Authority to carry out rigorous inspections of the ships and the crews to make sure that they were safe to sail and they did detain two vessels, but since then, as I understand it, those vessels passed and the crews passed their tests and they are now back in service again. The other measures, RMT and Nautilus International are considered to be really peripheral to what was required, as the one thing that the government weren't prepared to propose was that there should be any alteration to Labour Law and that's what I think ought to do, happen, I mean there's a whole number of things, but I'll just give you one example. P & O Ferries accepted, when they were interviewed in the House of Commons, they accepted that they had broken the law which requires consultation prior to a collective redundancy, right, accepted that and they said that they would pay the penalty for it, which is up to 90 days' wages, but that, what is really required is the power, if you want to put it in the hands of lawyers, is the power for a Trade Union to get an injunction to prevent dismissals where consultation was required and has not been carried out. That will really be transformative in the P & O Ferries situation, as it would be in many of the fire and rehire situations as well. Give the Unions the power to get an injunction, after all, Unions are subject to injunctions at the drop of a hat if they decide to go for industrial action. Let's have a bit of the sauce for the goose, what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. So that's one thing amongst many other proposals that the government could have carried out, which they haven't yet, but I will pursue that in the House of Lords in the days to come. I'll let you know, if you want to, when that's going to be.

So the last question asked me how I justify myself. Well, I don't really, but I mean Jeremy put me in the House of Lords to do a job, that job couldn't be done because we lost the election, but what am I meant to do, just leave it or use the position that I've got for, do what I can for what I consider to be my constituency?. Well, I think there's an opportunity there to raise the voice and raise the standard for workers and Trade Unions. It may be completely ineffective, but I do what I can anyway.

[APPLAUSE]

Well, at least while I'm fit to do so. No retirement age in the House of Lords, you just keep going until you drop.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much, John and listen, we appreciate the work that you do in and outside the House of Lords and while the issues of democracy mean that we have an unelected place, then we need as many class fighters for us in there as we possibly can, whether we agree with the House of Lords or not, we have to be represented. So we thank you very much for joining us this morning, John. We really appreciate your time and I'm now going to bring the General Secretary in, who's got a couple of words for you.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thank you ever so much, John, for joining us. If you were here, I'd be presenting you now with a lovely bag of biscuits made by our Trade Union members, but unfortunately I can't pass them through a computer screen. So instead, we'd like to make a donation of £100 to a charity of your choice. You can either let me know now or get in touch with me later and we'll make that happen as thanks for coming on today.

Lord John Hendy, Chair of the Institute of Employment Rights: That's very kind of you, Sarah and of course I choose the Institute of Employment Rights.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thanks, John.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. Cheers, John. Thank you very much for your time, John. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Lord John Hendy, Chair of the Institute of Employment Rights: Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers. Okay Conference, we're, before you go back to your motions, I've got to tell you the Orgreave stall, which I believe is just over here, is going after lunch, so you need to get your Orgreave gear and while, whilst there is a march on 18th June, I'm surprised that the TUC picked the 18th June because obviously it's a day in history, you know, where an injustice happened that should be where all the Trade Unions are, which is in Sheffield, to support the call for the Orgreave Justice, but if you want your gear, if you want any information if you can't make it to London, then see Chris who's on that stall over there. They do a sterling job and, you know, they keep that fight going until those people get what they deserve, because they were treated so appallingly on that day in a police riot.

Okay, so we're going back to the motions, which is motion 25.

25

Branch 253

That conference agrees that smear testing should be done at a younger age than currently is the case and that there should be no change to the 3 year check ups as it is now.

Sister Victoria Bassett – Branch 253: New to Conference, first-time speaking.

[APPLAUSE]

Motion 25. That Conference agrees that smear testing should be done at a younger age than currently is the case and that there should be no change to the three year check-ups as is now. Cervical cancer is the 40th most common cancer. Currently all women and people with a cervix age of 25 – 64 are invited by letter to attend a smear test. Yes, cervical cancer is very rare in under 25's, but it is a quick and simple appointment that could save lives. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Oh right, okay, didn't see you there, hiding behind [LAUGHTER].

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: Chair, Platform, Delegates. Here to support. It's a no-brainer, it saves lives, it's as simple as that. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529, responding on behalf of the Executive Council: Obviously we would ask you to support this motion. I mean obviously you've basically covered pretty much of what I was going to say but, you know, I think one of the things that's brought this issue into the spotlight was, I know she was probably a celebrity, but Jade Goody died young because she wasn't old enough to get a smear test and she left two young children behind, I don't think they were even three at the time. So like all have said, it's a simple process, simple procedure that doesn't take very long and could save lives and will save lives if the age was lowered. I mean, it's just like everything else, it would be a cost thing, even though in the long-term it would probably save money catching, you know, people earlier at a younger age and treating them for less time than having a more aggressive cancer and having to treat it for longer and use more costly treatments. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 26. Motion 26, Region 5 Regional Council? No mover?

Okay, is anybody moving it from Region 5? Okay, cool.

This congress agreed to protect seasonal workers who travel to Uk for short periods of time and are used as cheap labour. And the conditions are accommodated in is far from any standard. We have to stop this modern slavery especially in the food and drink sector.

Sister Kastarzyna Damek – Branch 515: On behalf of No. 5 Regional Council. This Conference agree to protect seasonal workers for short periods of time and are used as cheap labour, as their conditions are accommodated in (unclear). We have to stop this modern slavery, especially in the food and drink sector. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Have we got formally seconded? Formally seconded. Okay, speakers? Must be you, Nicolae.

Brother Nicolae Macari – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: I'm speaking on behalf of the EC. I would like to define what is the seasonal worker. We define seasonal workers part-time or in temporary work employment that fill business demand during the certain period. Seasonal employees will work on a short basis and will not work more than six months of the year. Often the seasonal work arises as when work demand go up or where a job position is only temporary needed. With this matter, it tends to be a particular high-risk industry, as it relies on low skill seasonal workers who sometimes face exploitative wages, unsanitary working and living condition and even physical attack from supervisors, experts says. According to the Walk Free Foundation 2018 Global Slavery Index, there are about 156,000 modern slaves in Britain. This is about 10 times more than the 2013 government estimate, although there is no surprise with this Tory government. Underestimate a problem to deny that is not much of the problem, so they don't have to do anything about it. Britain's anti-slavery body, grandmasters ? and labour abuser authorities should inspect living and working conditions in these firms and there should be ways of seasonal migrant workers to report the abuse, such as 24-hours hotline.

Britain claims to be an international leader in the fight against the slavery. The 2014 – 2015 Modern Slavery Act is certainly a move in the right direction. It says the trafficker could receive life sentence when persecuted. It also says that there should be better protection to vulnerable people. The large business should be completed in addressing any threat of false labour, however there are multiple fears around the extended (unclear) in trafficker problem. The TUC has warned of increases of enforcement, which is risking workers' safety and would allow bad bosses to get their way with flagrant abuse of the workers. The TUC has also said that the UK would need an additional 1,797 labour market inspectors to meet international (unclear) mark. They also said the UK is potentially in breach of UK Euro Trade Agreement because of lack of inspectors. Please support the motion and let's force this government to deal with these issues. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 27.

That conference agrees that men should be encouraged to open up more with their mental health issues and that more support be given to help support them in doing so

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253, speaking on behalf of the Branch and the Executive: Chair, Delegates. That this Conference agrees that men should be encouraged to open up more with their mental health issues and that more support be given to help them in doing so. This is an extract from Mind. "According to the World Health Organisation, one in four people in the world will be affected by mental health problems or neurological disorders at some point in their lives. Meanwhile, men accounted for three-quarters of the UK deaths by suicide in 2018. So why aren't men talking about how they feel? In 2016, a survey for men's health week found that amongst men who experience mental health problems, 46% would be embarrassed or ashamed to tell their employer and 52% would be concerned about taking time off. Poor mental health at work can lead to redundancy, long-term sickness, lack of opportunities, relocation, dismissal and not being well enough to work." I, myself, had an issue during lockdown one, I was furloughed for three months, like many of us. For eight weeks, I had a building work project to carry out, every day had a purpose. I'd get up, I'd have breakfast, crack on with work, end of the day, about 7 o'clock at night, have a beer and start again the next day.

At the start of week nine, I'd finished the job and I felt okay, just bored, but at the end of that week, I felt like I wasn't needed. By the end of week 10, I felt I had no purpose. For the next 10 days, I was spiralling down the rabbit hole, then work called, then a video call, then back to work and all felt good again, but the whole time I felt I was alone. My friend owns a pub and on a catch-up with him, when he was allowed to open, we were just chewing the fat and discussing how he felt and how his business was as it was going down the pan. He had the same issues as I did and we both said to each other and I'll go and pay my fiver later, why the fuck didn't we talk to each other? Was it bravado, was it pride, was it admitting failure that stops us speaking out? The message here is clear, we should all talk. Take a moment today to reach out to a bloke you know, in this room, end of a 'phone, some bloke walking his dog and just say Hi. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I think when you make a comment, I don't think necessarily if it's the truth, then therefore a fine's not necessary, is it?

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: Yes, exactly.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: After you, as seconder, yes.

Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253: Chair, Platform, Delegates. Here to support. I can't really follow that, the only thing I can say is that men, please, please, open up and talk, it's vital, you've got to talk. As women, you don't shut up, but you men must, must talk to one another, help one another. Please, please, support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Burns – Branch 504: Hello again. To be honest, a lot that's just been said was kind of what I was going to say. I think at our time, blokes, it seems to be you're a bit stubborn, don't want to talk about things, but I'm alright, I can get on with it, but it's okay not to be okay. The thing about what Nick said, about having a conversation with someone, it's a small thing, but it's a massive thing, someone else's mental health. So if someone's got a problem, don't feel, you've got your Brothers and Sisters around you, you can talk to anyone in this room, even if you feel better over a text, like I mentioned about the WhatsApp that we've got, a couple of them lads are stubborn, they're not good at, they're big, you know, big lads, they'll not have it, but they'll text us and say Lee, do you fancy a 'phone call, mate and we can talk about anything, about the weather, play that stupid game I mentioned earlier on. All the little things matter. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Duggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Hiya. I know I've spoken a little bit on another issue, another motion about this, you know and if I call out two special women, yes, that are sitting with us today. When I was having a hard time, very hard time, I had to step down from a position I held in the Union, you know, it was you, Sarah, that noticed how unwell I was feeling, it was you, Sarah, that came up to me and gave me comfort and, you know, you don't know how much that meant, you know, thank you, it really did mean something, you know, it really did, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

I'll call out another person, who came and comforted me, it was Pauline McCarthy, you know. Everybody thinks Pauline's big and tough and, you know, there's a heart of gold there, you know, who gave me a big hug and said that and said you've got to look after yourself. Thank you, thank you both for your, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508, Lightbody's: How do you follow that? A man giving his heart out. I, myself, have suffered with problems. Big strong lad, ex-military, all about teamwork, Solidarity, etc, but personal feelings are hard to share. They're hard to say to somebody, I need help. It's hard to open up. It can be your pride, it can be your feeling of worthlessness. A lot of people here know me, they know me, I'm a strong, confident, out-there kind of guy. That's on the outside, that's the persona, that's what you see. On the inside, so many doubts, fears, worries, thoughts go round my head and I'm sure yourselves you get these thoughts and worries yourself, what's happening with my next move, what's happening with my family, what's happening in life, in general? And it's really hard right now for me to be here, standing here and saying this to all of you that do know me, but in here and in here there's not a person in this room who I don't trust, I don't respect for what you do in the workplaces, no as in I don't respect you, I mean I don't, sorry, I respect you in the workplaces, it's just that I don't not respect you, do you know what I mean? Sorry.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: We're with you, we're with you Brother, we're with you, we're with you, we know exactly what you mean, absolutely.

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508, Lightbody's: Each and every one of you are important to me, as part of this Union and since I've been in it, I have felt so needed by the other members when I've been a Rep for them. I have felt so supported by my Branch Secretary sometimes, we do have a few disagreements at my workplace. Sarah, as an FTO, Mark as an FTO, the support's always been there. I'm going to keep naming people, Raff with his support, knowing the ins and outs of everything, people from other Branches in the Leeds area, etc, but I know I'm going on, but I can't thank everybody that's been part of my life from this Union enough and I can't go to each and every one of you every day and say thank you. There are so many people that I would, I'd give my last penny to, you know, just to help them, even if it meant I went without and each and every one of you I know are like that, each and every one of you I know want to help everybody and getting up here to give a mental health state from a man who doesn't like to share, is kind of a good feeling inside for me, it's helping me right this minute to be here and give you a chance to do the same and like Nick put so perfectly, grab hold of somebody, just for a chat, just say to them oh, let's have a quick cig, let's have a quick drink, are you alright, pal? Hope you're feeling, you know, shall we have a chat about whatever you like? Just share and don't be afraid to open up yourself if you've got a little bit of something, please. Thank you very much for your time.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558, Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield: I'm here to support this, of course I am. I wasn't going to speak on this, but when the young man mentioned lockdown. I've got a friend in Bramley, he lives in the Gambles flats, he's a bricklayer so, you know, you can get the pitch of what he's like. He's a single man, he's bought his own gaff, he lives there, he owns it, he didn't go to work for four months on the building sites. I was watching his behaviours, the first Friday night the pubs were shut he went ballistic and there's a friend of ours called Peter Ure ?, who's in the farm and there was something on one of his pages and he had a complete meltdown on there, so I said to my brother I said, we'll go over and we'll go and see him and get him out, get him out for a walk up Pudsey. I said, we need, something's going on here and he basically came out, I said, what's up with you, I said, you're losing the plot. He goes, his hair, he hasn't got a girlfriend, he hasn't got a mother, she's died, his hair, he looked like he'd come out of a cave, his hair was all over the place. I said, you need your hair cutting. He wasn't in a very good place. He's a single man, he's in his late 50's, his life is travelling, his life is music festivals, his life's going out, his life is football, his life is all that sort of thing, that all stopped. So I sat there, we went up to a place called Post Hill and we sat, I put a picture on my Facebook, some of my mates would have seen it, they said you look like two tramps on a park bench. I actually spoke to him, you know, Nick, what's going on? And he said, the fact that he was in the house, in that flat and following these restrictions that people were telling him, it was sending him mental. So I said well, talk to me about it, you know. I said, you need to do this, need to do that and then, you know, that support helped him and then I had a few issues with my workplace not so long ago and he returned the favour for me, you know what I mean? So, you know, I'm really, really here to support this. Blokes can be blokes, but you do need to talk to your mates, you need to tell people what's going on and you will get the right support. So, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael White – Branch 202, Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes: I just want to say is what, me opening up earlier on, it made really a big thing like for me and for you guys and I want to say a big thank you, because it goes a long way in my heart and there's like a lot of guys out there will just stand there and not tell anybody. It's us guys, we've got to stand up, stand by you, how are you, alright? The kind of thing like you guys saying thank you to me, what I'm going through, it's appreciated in my heart and I'd like to say a big thank you and support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417, Hovis, Golborne, Wigan: Again. Well, you all know my thoughts on this, so I'm not going to reiterate all that again but the fact of the matter that, you know, young men are suffering from tremendous pressures. Women are too as well, so I think that should be included. Men traditionally are more reticent in disclosing how they feel, although we've heard today from colleagues that, you know, they have expressed how they feel which, as I say, I commend them for that. As they say, there's a lot of times with men, it's about the kizmo and pride, again that's been highlighted, but that shouldn't get in the way, you know, you've got to speak from the heart and, as we keep saying, talk, but as I said earlier on, listening is vitally important as well, just as important. I think maybe we should take a leaf out of Japan's book, where they place a great value on well-being and they place an emphasis on support and building a society that values people and the planet, not just profit. I, myself, you know, if you look up, if you research mindfulness, Mother Nature's out there, get in there, see the sights, smell the sounds, experience it, that's a great relief, a great leveller. So Conference, I strongly ask you all to support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Oh, come on, get a backbone, you know, a spine, grow some balls, what's wrong with you? I don't get it, that's what I hear people say, so funnily enough I'm here to support, but I just support it.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

So, I do see men struggling with this basically because and that is why I hear these comments made basically, even at work type-of-thing. You know, look at other countries, look at people in Africa, look at people in South America, they're struggling and it's usually men that basically struggle actually approaching people, approaching other people. So, I just thought I'd do something a little bit different and support a motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Mark, you even oppose your own motions when you move them.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Lee Turner – Branch ?, Fletchers: Hiya. After what everybody's said and that, I'll just cut it short. I'm here to support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, any more speakers? Obviously Nick Mead, at the beginning, you may have forgotten, but he moved it on the Executive that was asking you to support. So, all those in favour? Those against? That's carried. So we're going to move on to motion 29. Did you notice how we put you at the back, so you had a long walk?

29

Branch 580

That this conference agree to lobby government to introduce water safety lessons into schools to reduce youngsters drowning

Sister Angela Robinson – Branch 580, Greggs of Yorkshire: I'm not going to swear, I won't give you the satisfaction, you're not having my money. That this Conference agrees to lobby government to introduce water safety lessons into schools to reduce youngsters drowning. Drowning is the third most common cause of accidental death in children. A lot of children learn to swim outside school, a lot of people don't. I never learnt to swim at school, still can't swim now, nearly drowned when I was seven, there was nobody there to help me, apart from a stranger. It's just vitally important that children do learn to swim. We need the provisions in school, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Formally seconded, yes? Okay. Speakers? Have we got one? Cool.

Brother Michael White – Branch 202, Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes: Going back about 13 years ago, I had a friend at my old factory. He went down with his girlfriend and he never learnt to swim, but the water came in, he panicked. So instead of, he went in the water and drowned because he couldn't swim and luckily he did survive, but he's got a brain injury now, because where he was unconscious because he drowned in the water, because he's never learnt how to swim, at the time he was only 19 years old and like they said, if there was more like this, support in schools to learn people to swim and all that, his life would be changed. Now he's like partly disabled, because where he was, where he drowned, he couldn't, they couldn't get him, they tried to get him quick enough to come round, because nobody knew first aid there on the beach at the time and by the time somebody did come along, the actual drownage of that did damage his brain. So, I do support this motion, because if he was taught to swim in school a bit more, his life could have been in a different situation now. So, support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council: Here to support this motion. When I first read the motion, when we first read the motion I have to say, we automatically assumed it involved swimming lessons, we clearly didn't read your motion properly. So I researched swimming lessons, what do primary schools need to provide? All primary schools must provide swimming and water safety lessons in either key stage one or two. Each pupil is required to be able to do the following: perform self-service rescue in different water-based situations, swim completely confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres, but they're all in enclosed situations.

Key stage four, 14 – 16 year-olds, allows for more risks to be undertaken, but it's unclear what situations it allows for. But this isn't just about swimming. It's about what to do when you see someone in trouble. What's different about a lake, a canal, a river, the cold factor, the red and white ring by the side of the water, the orange horseshoe, the yellow thing with the rope hanging out of it? There are various youth organisations that do do training on water safety, the largest part of their existing training programmes. The scouts, for example, cover water safety with their young people, as young as six. Schools should do more to cover it. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

30

Branch 356

We call on the UK government to open up the borders and allow refugees to settle in the UK. We consider this a moral obligation on behalf of this country, as most are coming from countries that the UK has dropped bombs on, or has sold weapons to governments who are doing the same.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Hiya. I'm here to call on the UK government to open up those borders.

[APPLAUSE]

We go around bombing other people's countries. 20 years in Afghanistan, God knows how many people were killed there. We've bombed Syria. People are fleeing, drowning in the Mediterranean. People are drowning like hell and yet what's being done? We're just letting them drown, people are fleeing. I've never been to a war zone, but if I went to a war zone, or saw a war, I'd be like Road Runner in the cartoons and would go like beep, beep, the other direction. But don't do it for me. Remember 2015. Do it for Alan Kurdi, two years old, he was the young Kurdish-Syrian boy who washed up on the shores of the Mediterranean and you saw the tears of his father when he found out his little boy had drowned, you know. I take this, I take this kind of personally because I live in Leicester and I love living in Leicester because it's so multicultural, yes and do you know what, you know what, we had Britain's, sorry, I'll go and pay the fine, Britain's bloody first turn-up one time, yes, spreading their racist nonsense as they did and we all come together, but there were people who come together, we went down, somebody told all the Kurdish people in the Kurdish shops and they come storming up. They were like fascists, come marching up to deal with this. We had Syrian refugees who came up, joined in against the fascists. When we had a Black Lives massive protest and took the, my friend, you know, Jackie, yes, worked with Syrian refugees, yes, came up, we had some of the Syrian refugees came along, showed their Solidarity and took the knee? Surely we should open up our hearts, open up the borders and let's show that we really care. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Now this may be, why would I oppose a motion which helps people, but I'm not opposing helping people, I will always want to help society worldwide, all the people out there basically who are really struggling. What I oppose is putting a policy in place which could possibly be taken advantage of. I know a minority of people, I know he will shout at me and say Mark, a tiny minority of people would take advantage of this situation, but that's the only worry I have basically. Situation, you open up the borders and then you get those people who think, I can get to England now, there'd be no problem here, basically. I still want, maybe a policy should be changed that not open up the borders but change the way we deal with certain societies or certain countries. Basically, we've blown up, we've used our bombs on many countries. Unfortunately we're in a violent society worldwide. I think we're less, the most violent society in the world is the Middle East, not the Far East, it's America. So, I think America should be blamed for

[APPLAUSE]

the most violent instances around the world, but that's the reason I oppose this motion. It's an opposition of a motion that could possibly be taken advantage of. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503, Warburtons, Bellshill, Scotland: I'm up here to support the motion. If somebody wants to cross the English Channel on a dinghy with their family, to make a better life for themselves, the life that they're coming from must be really bad. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508, Lightbody's: You might be getting sick of seeing me by now. I want this motion supported because we're already diverse, we're already accepting all races, colours, creeds, religions etc. What is wrong with getting these people out of the countries where they are persecuted, they are abused by their governments, abused by the military, by the police and everything? Let's give them a chance to be somewhere where they can be abused by our government instead, you know, but

[LAUGHTER]

at least, at least we know they're going to have their human rights, which they don't have in their own countries. These people are going through hell and we're going well, maybe conditions, we could just look at this, maybe we did supply the bombs or drop the bombs and maybe we trained your dictators in our military academies, maybe we put this in place sometimes. Saddam Hussein, one of the worst people, genocide for his own people. He was trained here in England at Sandhurst, literally. We trained him and then put him back in his own country and (unclear) regime, brilliant idea. Osama bin Laden was trained partly in England, partly in America. Again, partly is more than enough to get these people out of these situations that they're in and their homelands and give them a new home. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580, Greggs, Leeds: Morning, Conference. Sadly, I oppose this motion. It is a great motion, but we need to know who is coming in and where they're going. The people that turn up now, nobody knows where they're going, they are not tracked. They're put down into slave, labour, sorry and they're taken in by gangs. If we're going to do this, which I wish we would, we need a system in place so we know where these people are going, what they're doing, etc, etc and that will cost a lot of money, which our government will not pay. Everybody's okay saying yes, let the people in, I agree, but there must be some system to house them, say where they're going and where they're working and one fundamental thing, who they are and what they were. We need to know this. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nicolae Macari – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: I mean, it's easy to put the position, I'm not here to judge, I'm here just to share my personal opinion. It's easy to say that we need to control that and to control that and to put in place that, but nobody was put in control when the UK was attacking plenty of countries, were giving money or giving them ammunition to attack second countries. Nobody was checking that, nobody was interested why the country, why the UK's doing that and what's the reason behind that. I mean, it's very hard for me to understand why the UK is attacking the countries and doing whatever they want for plenty of years and suddenly we're saying we don't have money for that, we don't have ability to help others who are going from their countries, not because they have a wonderful life, because they don't have any life because people are dying because children are dying because (unclear). I mean, you need to understand the difference between a need and a want. I don't want to leave the country, but I need to leave the country because I don't have any life and I need to look after my family and everybody else. I believe that's the understanding of the, I mean, most of the refugees. Thank you very much. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Nobody else? Okay.

Brother Sean Welsby – Branch 419, speaking on behalf of the EC: Asking you to support this motion, for the reason the world was a gift to us, an absolute gift. Only the dictators, the rulers, the establishment of this world dictated where we could or can and cannot go. We should be allowed to step foot on any part of the land in this world, you know and part two of this, if your family, your friends or yourself were at risk of dying due to bombing, you'd move to another country, I'm sure you would, to safeguard your family. So, please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Douggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Oh Mark, you started off so well today.

[LAUGHTER]

Take advantage of, I kind of like evidence. There's no evidence that any refugee is taking advantage of a poor system that locks them out and sees them drown in the Mediterranean or the Channel, no evidence, no evidence whatsoever and there is a system, yes. The refugees don't even know where they get sent to, if they actually get through the application form, if they get through and are able to stay in this country, which takes months and months and sometimes years, but if I speak from the heart, I think, you know, I, we support Stand Up To Racism, you know and in 2017, you know, during the election, a blinding moment of hope, we did a stall with Stand Up to Racism saying,.

And because of that, we went down to a community centre where we met some of the Syrian refugees and beautiful people, wonderful, beautiful people. We had one old man come up to us who would say, I love Leicester, I love the Queen, I love the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was Theresa May, so I think we were not too keen on that, but he loved, the hope in his eyes. We asked him, he must have seen something oh God, yes, he went oh yes. He said, if you hadn't had me here, I would be dead. So, let's vote for that motion and let's let them in.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Okay, you can put your Agendas away and you will notice we've been joined on stage and obviously Delia Mattis is from Black Lives Matter and I'm going to let her explain all about what she does, but it's an absolute pleasure for us to have you at our Conference. I know when we met in Manchester, you said it was important that Trade Unions got to hear the voice of Black Lives Matter. I promised you then that you would be here and here you are, so please welcome and give her a very, very warm welcome from the Bakers Union Conference.

Delia Mattis, Black Lives Matter, addresses Conference

Delia Mattis – Black Lives Matter: Fantastic. Thank you very much, that was a great introduction and I appreciate it. You're right, actually. We were at Manchester, campaigning against the Tories and we spoke at that event and actually I was quite critical of the Unions, not that I'm not a Trade Unionist at heart, I found my voice in the PCS Union as a Branch Secretary and a Regional Campaigns Officer, but I don't believe in standing on a platform and not speaking the truth and I think we need to hear more of it and you're going to hear some more of it. I didn't really have a speech when I came here, but you've given me so much to talk about, thank you. So I'm going to take the opportunity to have a good old rant and I hope I'm in the right place to have this rant. I will be, thank you.

I've only got a few points on my sheet of paper, one is Jan from JENGbA, Hi. Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by Association, an absolutely fantastic campaign. Last year

[APPLAUSE]

one of the most racist laws of our time, provenly racist and last year Jan spoke at an event in London, it was an exhibition and she just, her and her colleagues, had us all in tears, so I just want to go on record and say you're doing fantastic work, you and the whole crew, it's amazing and the awareness that you're raising is really, really important, so keep doing it. Well done, Jan.

[APPLAUSE]

Can I just touch, am I allowed to just mention something that

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Say what you like.

Delia Mattis – Black Lives Matter: Thank you and what's the rules on swearing, do I have to pay? I'll try not to.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You're a guest, you're a guest.

Delia Mattis – Black Lives Matter: So I'm free.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You get away with it.

Delia Mattis – Black Lives Matter: I'm free.

[Delegate comment, "*If you swear, Ian Hudson will put the money in for you*" LAUGHTER].

Delia Mattis – Black Lives Matter: Wonderful, woo, woo [LAUGHTER].

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. I just want to say, just first to mention about motion 27, about mental health. I mean, it's such amazing to hear men speaking about this issue. I was sat there, almost crying, because it was that emotional, but it's really fantastic to come to a Union Conference and hear that kind of debate, so well done to you for raising the issue and I hope you can do a lot with that motion. Sitting here, it felt quite emotional and I think it's the way forward. The more we speak about mental health is the more that we can do about it, so thank you and I'm glad to be here.

I also have to touch on another motion, which is the one that just passed and I'm really happy that it's passed. I listened to the criticism about we need to police refugees that come into the country and I understand your thought process, but I just don't think it's correct. The problem is, when we start policing things like refugees, what happens, we've got a war going on in Ukraine, the Ukrainian refugees aren't being policed and the reason why that is is because they have blond hair and blue eyes. There is now a global

[APPLAUSE]

there is a global call-out for everybody to take in Ukrainian refugees. They don't remember, they forget that when people were trying to board those trains and leave, black people were being kicked off the trains. If we start policing refugees that can come into this country, it's black and brown people that are going to be affected. So thank you very much for passing that motion.

[APPLAUSE]

I also want to talk about issues you've and, you know, I'm very honest, I've got to be honest, issues that you raised about, somebody talked about being let down by the Labour Party and I feel like this. Even on the left, yes, we've got Keir Starmer and I'll get into that in a minute, but I don't think that we can make the improvements that we need to make. I don't think in the future when we finally do get another left-wing, if that's going to happen in the next 20 or 30 years, a new left-wing leader, I think if we don't recognise the mistakes of the past, we're just going to make the same mistakes again. Jeremy Corbyn is for, I love the man, I think he's a darling, he's such a, he's got such a great human nature, he's fantastic, he's always stood on the right side of political history, but we have to be honest about the mistakes that were made when he was the leader of the Party, not him, but the people that were around him. We had a mass movement and somehow people that surrounded Jeremy Corbyn sort of moved him away from the movement that put him in position in the first place. What I say is that if we're going to have a new left-wing leader in the future, we can't have them surrounded with public school toffs that don't have any experience of working class life. You've got to have working class people

[APPLAUSE]

surrounding a leader that's supposed to represent the working class and if we don't do that, then the same thing is just going to happen again, but equally, we're going through a terrible time politically. Our communities are suffering more than ever before, we've got the worst government in history, I'm not really excited about the vote of no confidence, because I think we all have to be aware of what's going to come next. I mean, Jesus, I mean if we get someone like Priti Patel, who's an absolute lunatic, I mean, I don't know what things are going to look like, but the problem that we've got is that we've got the worst government in history and we've got absolutely no opposition whatsoever. I was a member of the Labour Party, have held positions in it, this, I had to leave, I had to leave and honestly we stood Independent candidates in the last local election that we had in London, because we've got no, we don't believe in the system that we've got at the moment. I don't believe that we should blindly follow anything, if it's not working or serving in the interests of our communities.

I don't believe the Labour Party is currently serving in the interests of working, well, if you want to tell me something that they're doing that would benefit working class communities, I'm all ears, but it hasn't happened and I think that when you've got a leader, a feckless, useless leader as the one that they have got, Keir Starmer, I don't think there's any hope. I don't believe that working class communities in the North will vote for a man like that, because he's not offering us anything. The only thing he came out and offered was surrounding himself with the Union Jack, as if that can feed people. Nobody is fooled by that kind of empty rhetoric. So, the worst government in history, no opposition, we're in a mess and what that allows for is what has been happening and it's these bills that are being pushed through by the government.

Last year in March, a group of grassroots activists, including me, got together a group of people and we called for a national day of action against the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill and the response was that over 50 cities, I think it was 52 cities mobilised and took action. This is a bill that's going to curtail our right to protest and can you imagine, hundreds of years of protesting for our rights, hundreds of years of Trade Unions organising, making our demands by doing all kinds of actions and with one slip of the pen, they're going to take that right away and I don't think there's been enough opposition. Yes, we had 10,000 people out in London and thousands across the country, but the Trade Union movement really, well, I'm not talking about this Union, I know that you do support grassroots actions, but the TUC didn't support those actions and we should have had a lot more people out on the streets and we didn't. We've got the Nationality and Borders Bill. I don't know if you've read it, Clause 9 of the Nationality and Borders Bill. It plans to strip people's citizenship away. If you were not born in the country, you have a parent that wasn't born in the country, it can strip citizenships away and deport people to places that they've never even known. If we had, I'm delighted, I'm delighted that the TUC has called a day of action on 18th June and of course we're happy to support, but I think there should be more action from the TUC to support things like the Police Bill and the NAB Bill, because we've got a cost of living crisis, yes and it is terrible and people are being crippled, but they're taking away our rights to protest against it and that is equally as bad and I think we're being really polite, I think we're being really polite in our language.

This is my understanding. If the government is inflicting working class communities with injustice and then bringing about laws that takes away our rights to fight against that injustice, that is fascism

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Yes.

Delia Mattis – Black Lives Matter: That is fascism and I think we should do better at calling out this government for what it is. I'm tired of people on the left using, they use this authoritarianism, it's a bit posh for me, to be honest with you, but that's not the language that we should be using. We should be telling the truth. This is racism and this is fascism and that's what we're fighting against. I think we could do a lot more, a lot more together with the Trade Unions if Unions would back more of this grassroots action. Things have changed, you know. In 2020 we saw a BLM uprising, that was global and we all know that timing was very important, because it was right in the middle of a pandemic and people were stressed and it was quite maddening and people were looking for a cause and then, right then, a murder happened in America and everybody watched it and so Black Lives Matter became the cause, but that was then. Now we're not really in a pandemic any more, but the issues are still the same and I think, I mean why wouldn't the TUC be backing movements like Black Lives Matter and other grassroots campaigning, it should, because we are one movement and if we join together properly, then we are more powerful.

The issues of Black Lives Matter haven't gone away. Police are still brutalising black people every day. I don't know if you've seen the footage. In the last few days there's been some footage circulating of the police tasering a black man on Chelsea Bridge in London, several times over and on looking at the footage, I would suggest that he's probably mentally ill, because of his reactions. Several times over. Now once you've tasered him once and got him down on the floor, there's more than one officer, you can handcuff him, you can handcuff him and take him away. They carried on tasering him, several times, to the point that to escape the taser, he jumped over the Chelsea Bridge, into the Thames, to his death. It is the most harrowing footage you can see.

People tell us all the time that things are getting better, it's not and we know that if we want equality for black and brown communities, this is a fight that we're going to have to keep going for ever. We're always going to have to challenge the establishments and I say this, that as long as there is injustice against our communities, as long as we are inflicted with these systemic injustices to anti-black racism, anti-brown racism, that's as long as we will be protesting and marching on the streets and I think we have to continue to do that, regardless of what bill the government bills about. Some of us are going to have to be prepared to be locked up, that's the reality. Some of us are going to have to be prepared to be locked up, but if that is my future, then that is my future, because I'm not, I'm not prepared to give up my right to have a free voice.

[APPLAUSE]

So onwards we go with this movement and hopefully, I'm so happy to be invited here and it's been a fantastic Conference, but onwards we go, there's a lot more work to be done. A lot more Unions have to be more welcoming and not afraid of, you know, grassroots community action, because joining forces is the way forward. If we don't join forces, then there's a splinter in our movement and that's not helping anybody. Community groups and community people need to be reflected on these types of platforms, on TUC platforms, otherwise we don't feel like we're included and we should be included because we have something to say.

Anyway, thank you for inviting me and Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]

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

[APPLAUSE, CHEERS and WHISTLES]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Delia, thank you ever so much for coming along and speaking to us this morning. Inspirational and we'd just like to give you a bit of a gift, so there's some lovely biscuits in there, made by our members at Fox's and a pewter baker.

Brother Mohinder Badhan: (off microphone) Excuse me, can I make a comment on that, say something?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Sure.

Brother Mohinder Badhan: (off microphone) It's in the same line, I just want to congratulate that lady. I'm not going to make a speech.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: That's good [LAUGHTER], because everybody wants their dinner.

Brother Mohinder Badhan: (at the microphone) Sorry, Chair, friends. I salute you, you are fighting for a cause, right. I'm in the same boat. I'm from India. I'm so-called untouchable, you know, I was and since '69, I am fighting for that same right, I'm in the same boat, but it's a hard, it's very hard way, but the people who in the past who inspired me and you have lost their life. Like Abraham Lincoln and many more, fought for people and then Martin Luther King had to go through the same boat, right and I'm not, I got a little bit of their conscience, right. A man on this earth is not only here to eat and produce other generation, but to produce other slaves and those people who fight, they don't die. Their bodies go, but they remain in the sky like moon, right and it's a dangerous path. When I get a chance, I will later, on my own, I'm fighting for that. I had, I'm under police protection, I got paperwork here, for opening my mouth, right. Carry on, carry on, I salute you. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Cheers, Mohinder and obviously we appreciate everything you've said today and obviously anything the Bakers Union can do to support Black Lives Matter, just ask and we're open for it and we're up for it too.

Okay, obviously it's lunchtime. Obviously you know which rooms, if not, your names are up there to tell you which rooms you're in for your fringe meetings and I'll see you back here in the morning at quarter past nine. Quarter past nine!

What about tonight? Oh, there's a quiz and karaoke.

Wednesday 8th June 2022

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Can you shut the doors, please? Hello? Can you shut the doors, please? Shut doors. Everybody sit down. Okay, can everybody settle down. General Secretary to call the roll.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 1, Region 2, I thought you were counting them then quickly, Gary, Region 3, have we done something to upset Region 3? Region 4.

[LAUGHTER]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: And a full-time Officer with a fine.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Region 5, Region 7, thanks, thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, before we start, we've got Mick, Chairman of the EC to, Chairman of the EC, Chairman of Standing Orders, it's going to be a good morning, Chairman of Standing Orders to give his final address to Conference.

Brother Mick McDonald – Chair of Standing Orders: Good morning, Conference. This is my fourth address to you and it is the order of motions for today. I think we start on 38, don't we. 38 stands, 39 is withdrawn, I've put emergency motion 1 in there, but that has been withdrawn as well, so emergency motion, there's no, nothing on 39, 40 stands, 41 stands, 42 no Delegate, so emergency motion 2 is in there at 42, if you just put a note on, you've all got the paperwork I think, 43 stands, 44 stands, 45 stands, 46 stands, 47 stands, 48 stands, 49 stands, 50 stands, 51 stands, 52 stands, 53 and 54 stands. That's the end of your motions. Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to Conference, do we accept the report? Hands up, hands up. Anybody against? Thank you.

Before we start the motions, I'd like to invite the Female Rep of the Executive to address Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Rachel Mullen, Women's EC Representative, addresses Conference

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529, Women's EC Rep: Is it on? Oh yes, we're on. Morning, Conference. Well, this is a bit strange, being all together again. It seems longer than the three years since we were all together at the last physical Conference and as we all know, a lot can happen within a short space of time. Just look at me, for example. Since we last met, I've got a baby, well, it's not a baby any more, a toddler and one on the way and yes, I have not been eating all the pies and cakes during lockdown, it is a baby.

So well, cracking on. The first major thing I can think of that has happened since then is the pandemic.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: I think they heard you, Pauline.

Sister Rachel Mullen – Branch 529, Women's EC Rep: Thanks, Pauline. The pandemic affected us all in some way or another, but there's probably been a harder impact on women. When you think about it, what was classed as front line workers in the first lockdown are predominantly women. Nurses tend to be predominantly women, carers tend to be predominantly women, supermarket workers, certainly the customer-facing ones on tills, tend to be women. I know there are a lot of other front line workers, like obviously ourselves that work in food factories, but obviously they aren't customer-facing, so less of a risk, but I'm talking about the big groups of workers that had more interaction with the general public and therefore were more at risk of contacting Covid-19. On top of being exposed to Covid-19 at work, you've then got to home-school any children you may have. According to statistics, a significantly greater proportion of women were home-schooling than men. When you take into account single parent families, where the majority of the time it's the mother of the children that takes the main responsibility, it just adds more pressure to parents that may be finding things hard in the first place and another worry to add to the list. It's no wonder that the pandemic had an impact on people's mental well-being.

What else did women have to contend with during the pandemic? A risk in domestic abuse. Extra stress, loss or worry about income, isolation, increased drinking, all seem to make the perfect storm for increasing the risk of domestic violence. The Office of National Statistics reported that in May, 2020 there was a 12% increase in the number of domestic abuse cases referred to victim support and those are just the cases that have been reported. As the saying goes, you never know what goes on behind closed doors. The National Domestic Abuse Helpline also had an increase in calls of 65% through its helpline between April and June, 2020. It saddens me to be reading out statistics like this in this day and age.

The Domestic Abuse Act came into force last April, which sounds great, but organisations such as Refuge and Women's Aid have welcomed the Act but have also stressed that effective implementation and funding would be the key to its success. Only time will tell whether the Act is worth its weight in gold or just another meaningless gesture by this government. I just hope for the women in this country that it is not the latter.

That brings me onto what we are doing as a Union to help prevent and tackle domestic abuse. You may be aware or have even filled out our Domestic Violence Survey. I'm glad that we, as a Union, took the step to do that, as it has highlighted issues that need to be addressed with the organisations we work for. It's disappointing that we have got perpetrators in our workplaces and it is sad that people still have this attitude towards women. It's disgusting and these people should be ashamed of themselves. We will not tolerate this kind of behaviour and will do all in our power to reprimand and stop it happening and support you as Representatives of this Union to tackle it if you come across it in your workplace.

We have also been holding a Women's Forum via Zoom, which obviously Sarah gave you a bit more information about as well already and although it isn't attracting a great number of attendees, it has given us food for thought and provided us with invaluable information and it's about sharing best practices with each other. Just one example of this is in one Branch over the Christmas holidays, the place of work used to (unclear) people in. The Branch Secretary approached the company to ask if they would ask for volunteers first, as they were aware of women that worked there that would face domestic abuse over the Christmas period. The company agreed and they have been doing it since. The Branch Secretary said that he could have literally saved a life just by doing that and that's what it is about, sharing experiences like that in order to use the knowledge to help others.

Further afield, across the pond in America, the Supreme Court is looking to overturn the law that effectively makes abortion legal. It's meant to be a first world country with human rights laws. They are going to be taking away a woman's freedom of choice about what happens to their own body. Of course pro-life groups are happy about this, but I'm not sure they are completely pro-life when it's at the detriment of a woman's life. There are many reasons, I imagine, as to why a woman would want an abortion and I imagine it is a decision not taken lightly, but what about a pregnancy as a result of a rape, an underage pregnancy, babies that could be brought into the middle of a domestic violence situation, or even where the mother can't afford to feed herself, let alone a child and what about medical complications, such as an ectopic pregnancy? This could affect women all over the world, not just America. If America are seen to be taking away human rights from women, that is essentially a green light to other countries to do the same, or not progress the rights of women, especially those lesser developed countries where some basic rights aren't even always given.

A few years' ago at Conference, some of you might remember who have been for a few years, I showed a video which I had seen at the Women's TUC Conference that year about what it was like for women in this country before the Abortion Act came into effect in 1967. It showed and talked to women that had been through the experience of how desperate women were and how they would go to backstreet abortion clinics where one method was a metal coat hanger to get rid of an unwanted pregnancy. It put women's lives at risk. Stories of women being left in 'phone boxes, bleeding after the procedure. What America is doing, is taking away safe abortions for women, not eliminating the need for them. It will only lead to a rise in women's deaths after unsafe abortions. I only hope that this country doesn't see fit to follow America's lead on this, like it does with so many other things.

I could go on about women's issues and rights, the list seems to be never-ending, sadly. It's just sad that in the year 2022, women around the world are still fighting for rights, even basic rights in some countries. It's about time women were stopped being treated as second-class citizens. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, motion 31.

31

Branch 390

This conference agrees that the fees for using commercial electric vehicle charging points should be regulated by OFGEM to prevent profiteering from those people who do not have the facility or the option to charge their vehicle at home. We will instruct our parliamentary group to lobby for this

Brother Tahir Rashid – Branch 390, Premier Foods, Stoke: Good morning, everyone. Mr President, Madam Secretary. This is my first time at a real-life Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Just before I start on the motion, I'd like to thank this Union and the Learning Services for the education which not only helps us develop as Union Reps, but also as people. The skills that we learn will help us throughout our life and for that I am eternally grateful.

T his Conference agrees that the fees for using commercial electric charging points should be regulated by Ofgem to prevent profiteering from those people who do not have the facility or the option to charge their vehicle at home and will instruct our Parliamentary Group to lobby for this. Price fluctuations are wholly grotesque and downright criminal. BP charging price, 35 – 49p per kilowatt hour, but if you're charging at home and you've got the charging point at home, it's 11p. EDF Energy, 35 – 65p, depending which rate you're paying, if you're charging at home, 5p. Shell Energy, 55 – 59p, if you're charging at home it's 7p. This sector, unregulated, will cause another burden upon the working class as the Ultra Low Emission Zones and Ultra Low Emission Zones and Clean Air Zones are starting to bite and will force everyone to buy eco-friendly cars and electric has been put as the way forward. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council: Here to support this motion. We're currently in an economic crisis. Petrol and diesel are running high, greenhouse gases are rising, the logical step is to change our short-distance vehicles to electric, simply because we haven't got the technology to go further yet. Whilst charging points are normally free to use at most supermarkets, as someone's already said the prices, so I don't actually need to repeat all the prices now, you can find them in some public car parks as well, slightly cheaper. It'll give you about a 90 mile charge for £6.50, but Ofcom should regulate now, before companies take further advantage of the UK population. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 32. Mover of, Branch 405? I know, it's Wednesday, I have the same problem.

32

Branch 405

That this conference agrees that we lobby the government to stop the NHS or the Private Health Companies from using premium phone numbers, especially text messaging for surveys.

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: Here we go, right. This Conference agrees that we lobby the government to stop the NHS or the private health companies from using premium 'phone numbers, especially text messaging, for surveys. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: I'm here to second this motion. This has happened to me, I didn't know about it. What happened was, I got a text from my doctors, yes, to ask me on a survey, to fill a survey in about how did I do at my doctors. Nothing on the text message to say it was a premium number or anything like that, but as soon as I got my bill, yes, it was, yes and premium numbers is extortionate, yes. So, please support this motion. I don't think this should happen to anybody and especially in the NHS, yes. The NHS shouldn't take money from us for doing them a favour in filling surveys in. Please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

[Delegate comment, LAUGHTER]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Leave me alone. I oppose this motion because it's a, it's getting more and more difficult to fund the NHS. We had a population of what, 60 million back in the 1980's, we're now 70 million+ basically and it's so thinly spread now. I mean, how else, I just feel, I know taxation and they said we're increasing the National Insurance to pay for the NHS. I think that's, I'll try and use a gentle word, I think that's just rubbish and I think that money is just being used to obviously pay for Covid. Covid cost billions, basically and I knew the government promised that we would not be taxed basically to pay for the Covid situation, but a way of hiding it is to put it in a National Insurance, which is supposed to be funding our pension schemes basically, but saying we're just adding this little bit on to fund the, to fund our National Health, that's not right, to me that isn't right. I mean, I may be wrong, but I think it's just a way of paying back for Covid. I think we have to find some way of funding the NHS in other ways, apart from taxation and if it means just a small amount of money to do a survey or to, I mean it's not every, every number that is a premium paid number. I mean, I can 'phone my doctor, it doesn't cost anything more than just the normal cost of a telephone call.

There is just certain high-end numbers basically that you do ring and if there is just a small amount of money which adds to the NHS, I'm all for that. My brother lives in the States, he's insured, they're all insured over there. He had a baby, I mean it's all paid for, but it still cost him \$20,000. It's an amazing system we have in place and if it means us just paying a little bit more in a premium paid number, unfortunately I'm all for that. So, that's why I oppose this motion. Thank you.

[some APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: I'm here to support this motion. Mark, my question is, who's getting the money from these premium lines? I've seen no evidence that that money's actually going to the NHS.

[APPLAUSE]

It's going to communications companies and similar rip-off bastards, like it always does. Not to the doctors, the nurses and the Health Service, like it should do.

[APPLAUSE]

So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Karen Plasom – Branch 356: I'm also here to support. We pay enough taxes, we don't need to pay any more. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Wren – Branch 504: Hello. Speaking on behalf of the EC. In all honesty, I didn't know that this was happening. I didn't know people were getting texts and getting charged, but I agree with what everyone's just said, kind of everyone. We do pay enough tax, pay enough National Insurance, we shouldn't have to pay for things like this. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: Yes. I mean the motions says it's premium-priced 'phone numbers. The NHS isn't doing this, it's somebody else and if you think about it, would you get the answers back? They never send you the, you know, the results of these surveys. It's got nothing to do with the NHS or making money for the NHS, it's another company screwing us over.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? I think that was unanimous actually. 33.

33

Branch 432

That this conference agrees we should lobby our government that All workers who have paid national insurance for 35 years should be allowed to retire at a reduced state pension. A lot of 55+ years of age are unable to work because of health reasons. It could also free up jobs for young workers.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, AB, Liverpool: Moving the motion, also speaking on behalf of the EC, who ask you to support this motion. I'm speaking on this motion because it was put in at our Branch by a member who was going to come to Conference, but couldn't make it, so instead of withdrawing, I said no, I'd move the motion. That this Conference agrees we should lobby our government that all workers who have paid National Insurance for 35 years should be allowed to retire on a reduced state pension. A lot of 55+ years of age people are unable to work because of health reasons and it could also free-up jobs for young workers. I know in our bakery, we have a lot of 55+ workers, including myself, I know that might surprise a few people, that you're thinking I'm over, [LAUGHTER], what are you laughing at? [LAUGHTER]. A lot of those people are doing manual work and over the years it takes its toll on your body, aches and pains in your feet, your ankles, your knees, your back, your shoulders, your neck, everything. Lifting, twisting, turning, repetitive movements, pulling, pushing. In our despatch area, where I work, it's not big enough to have forklift trucks and we're pushing wheels onto lorries every day and I know a lot of people who are 55+ at our place that can't see themselves working until they're 66 or 67, because of all the ailments I've just said and, you know, they would love to be able to retire on a reduced state pension. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded. Oh, you're coming down to second it, John? Are you seconding it? Okay.

Brother John Fitzpatrick – Branch 430: I want you to support this motion and as they said, people are getting that ill now, it's, you've worked all your life and the people our age, you worked in places where it's manual stress, lifting 120 lb bags of flour. There was no health, when we all started work, no safety masks, they didn't know what they was. You filled flour silos up by hand, covered in flour, breathing dust. When I was young, there were no old bakers, you never met an old baker. I used to sit in the pub with my dad and there was, people did every type of work but you never ever came across an old baker, because that much flour used to go down their lungs and that. So now if you want to retire early through ill health, you should be allowed to do it. I would ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Christine Marsh – Branch 301: Hello. Chair, Platform, Delegates. I'm not going to say I support or not, this motion, I'd just like you to think about what I'm going to say. I'm in the age group if this was passed and the government implemented it, it would apply to me. The thing that would worry me, because of the wording, would be, it would set a precedent for the government to say oh well, everybody's now going to retire at 55 on half your pension and not everybody can afford to do that, I certainly can't. It would be a wonderful thing if it were an optional thing, but it would worry me that if it was brought in, the option would then become compulsory and you'd then create a bunch of people who have half pension for so many years before they could retire, sorry, so many years before they could retire officially. It'd be lovely, but not for me. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Thank you very much. Any other speakers? I don't believe that was opposed, so I'm not giving the right to reply, so I'm going to the vote [LAUGHTER]. So, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 35. Morning.

35

Branch 560

That this conference agrees for the government to reinstate the triple lock immediately and back date the triple lock to October 2021.

To stop the UK pensioners been the poor pensioners of Europe.

The UK pensioners have worked 50 years to pay tax and national insurance to receive a decent state pension.

Boris & Co tell us the younger generation cannot be expected to pay for the older generation.

The UK pensioners have paid 50 years of taxes financially supporting 3 generations of pensioners.

I have paid 50 years of taxes from 16 years old. I did not think at 16 I would become a pensioner but here I am today.

It is a rite of passage to move from one part of society or group to another from a younger generation to an older generation. We all become pensioners one day Boris

Sister Jenny Oates – Branch 560: Morning, campers. That this Conference agrees for the government to reinstate the triple lock pension immediately and backdate the triple lock to October, 2021, to stop the UK pensioners being the poor pensioners of Europe. The UK pensioners have worked 50 years to pay tax and National Insurance, to receive a decent state pension. Boris and Co tell us the younger generation cannot be expected to pay for the older generation. The UK pensioners have paid 50 years of taxes, financially supported three generations of pensioners. I've paid 50 years of taxes from 16 years old. I did not think at 61, I mean, I did not think, what's that one?, I would become a pensioner, but here I am today. It is a right of passage to move from one part of society or group to another, from a young generation to an older generation. We all become pensioners one day, Boris. Now, the triple lock pension is supposed to be coming back in '23 – '24. I won't hold my breath. Thank you. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: I totally support this motion, yes, but I wish in a way it went a bit further, yes, about the WASPI women as well. The WASPI women have actually been cheated of their pensions from the age of 60, yes. I think that that should have been brought into this motion and people should actually, the ladies should actually be paid from 60 and get it backdated from their 60th birthday, yes. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Karen Plasom – Branch 356: 66 next year. This government has already stolen £48,000 off women, given the retirement age.

[APPLAUSE]

I can't work any more, the body isn't that good, sorry. I want to enjoy my retirement. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speakers?

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560: Morning. Here on behalf of the Executive Council and it seems every time there's mention of pensions or care homes, I get the one to, I don't know why but

[LAUGHTER]

they always send me. Anyway

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You replaced Ronnie.

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560: So what I'm going to be saying is, it's absolutely disgusting that this government swop and change the promises made in their manifesto. Boris and his corrupt government just do what they want, as proven with the parties held in Downing Street whilst the rest of us were, the rest of the country was going through the most stringent periods of abstinence ever imposed on our generation. So, please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion, it is indeed, motion 36. Motion 36. Is that not you, Doug? You told me you was not going to stroll anywhere today. Race to the podium I'll do, he says, race to the podium.

36

Branch 356

We condemn the government for the allowing of the drowning of refugees at sea, and that helping someone in those circumstances is the mark of being a decent human being.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: You just can't get the staff, can you, do you know what I mean? Hiya. You know, I have nothing but respect and admiration for these people who have had to flee war and dictatorships, flee them and risk their lives in dinghies across the Channel or across the Mediterranean. I have had nothing but respect and my heart goes out to them, my heart really does, you know. I've had the pleasure of knowing many in my City of Leicester, Kurdish, Palestinian, Iraqis, Yemenis, but they are the unworthy victim, they're not, you know, it's okay for Priti Patel, who I agree with the speaker before yesterday, from Black Lives Matter, is a maniac, she is a maniac. I, she's the daughter of refugees and yet she's perfectly happy to see children die in the Mediterranean. She's perfectly happy to see the Channel turned into a graveyard. Shouldn't we actually open up our arms and say, we're all humans and we are going to help those in most of need. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Richard Hirst – Branch 580, Greggs, Leeds: Right, morning. The motion says people drowning at sea, etc. We get all these heartfelt motions coming across, but nobody gives a solution. What are we meant to do? How will we do it? We don't know. These people don't go to ASDA in France, buy a boat and come across. They pay, they actually pay to come across. So, I'd like the former speaker to say how we will regulate this, what he will do to stop it, to stop people drowning. I agree that people shouldn't drown, life shouldn't be lost, but we need a solution. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Yes, I agree, I don't want anybody to die, but how do you police a situation that's virtually impossible? I mean, it just seems a blame-game here, we want to blame somebody. I don't want to blame the government for people that are coming across and I pray for those people, I mean, coming from horrendous situations, but I don't want to blame the government for unfortunately people losing their life. They are trying to get across the Channel secretly, so they're not coming across the main sort-of routes basically, where they can be seen, they'll come in at all sections of Britain and I don't want to blame the government for somebody losing their life when it's impossible for them to actually do anything about it. I agree with the previous speaker. What is the solution? I mean, the solution is basically having another 500 ships sort of patrolling the shores, but then that's our taxes, so we increase our taxes.

Nobody wants to pay any more taxes, that's been said in many of these motions as we've gone through over the last three days. So, it all comes down to money, but none of us wants to pay any extra money and I do not want to blame anybody, government or any organisation for something that's impossible to actually sort. So, that's why I oppose this motion. Many thanks.

[some APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558, Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield: I looked at this, I looked at it for a while, I spoke to Dave Suddards at the back. I agree with its sentiment, however, you know, we've got to look at what the guy said, we should be condemning the criminal organisations that supply these people with dinghies and stuff like that. It's the organisations we should be condemning and this government needs to go after the criminal organisations that people traffic. Even though I agree, I'm opposing it because of the wording, because we should be targeting the gangs that are creating this catastrophe on our Channel and on the seas.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508, Lightbody's: Sean stole most of my thunder there. I agree, we should be going after the people that are letting this happen and pushing this to happen to get these people across, whichever angle they come from, but we can't literally send our navy, our coastguard out to sea constantly to watch the waves, we can't afford it, unless every single one of us wants to pay a bit extra, which I don't think we do unfortunately. I want these people to be safe as much as the next person, but we can't literally just go out looking for every single one of them. So, I'm afraid I oppose as well. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: I do blame the government, not for letting the people drown, but the barriers that they actually put in place for these people who are trying to get here. They moved the visa place, yes, miles away from where they are and they've got to go there and get back. Where are they going to get the money to go from just say Calais to, it was Brussels I think it was, where one of the visa places was, yes. They've got no money, they're escaping persecution, yes. So please, please support this motion, yes. It's the government what's at fault here, for putting all the barriers in place. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: I'm here to oppose this motion. I believe in the sentiment of the motion, but the motion isn't clear. Which government is to blame? Is it the Spanish, is it the French, is it the Portuguese? A few years ago, I travelled across Europe on a coach and I spoke to a lot of actual refugees and people travelling and they could travel the full length of Europe with nothing more than a driving licence. Now, do we take away freedom of movement? You know, how far does this motion go? How do we stop policing it? Do we stop them at the shores in Africa, or, you know, where do, it's easy to blame a government, but which government? I believe the English government pay the French government to police this on the French shores. They're not doing a very good job. So while I agree with the sentiment, children and adults, nobody should die at sea, but who do we blame? Is it the full European countries, or is it just as always, we blame the British government? You know, it isn't just this government to blame. So I'm sorry, I don't support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Michael Negasy – Branch 3579: First-time speaker.

[APPLAUSE]

I just want to say, when we are saying that who's responsible or it's only the government, it's not about the government giving them the money or accommodation. Just helping them to get democracy in their country as well and just the UK is one of the powerful countries in the world and just instead of helping dictators or bombing the countries, it's easier to help the countries to get democracy as well. So that's one way of helping the people stopping drowning, it's only just welcoming some part of the world like, easier like some media said, blond hair and blue eyes welcoming and darker hair and brown eyes stay there. It's not like that

[APPLAUSE]

just everybody coming here, it's not about getting benefit or slipping there, a lot of people are just escaping a war and just persecution, just it should be like helping the people getting a democracy in their country, can be one of the help. So, I'm supporting this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Imran Hussain – Branch 301, Greggs Shops: I'm here to support the motion. Yesterday we had a speech on mental health and someone who experienced it first time said mental health issues first, then heroin and drugs. He didn't say drugs first and then mental health issues. These people have desperate times and in desperate times you take desperate measures. You talk about regulating, if you're from Ukraine it's easy to regulate. So you can't just keep using oh, the government can't regulate it. When they want to regulate it, they do it, they'll give you £350 as well. So support this motion, because if we're going to allow one country in, we should allow everyone in a controlled manner.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mohinder Badhan: Good morning. These people, who this motion is about, they're not illegal immigrants. They're running from their countries to save their lives and they're paying the price drowning. They hardly reach here and British, Britain is a caring society, right and those people must not be, we shouldn't let them killed in the sea. They should be given refuge here. In the past, British people have helped people, right. I don't say that illegal immigrants should be given the same help, the same sort of protection, but these are poor people, so British people have always helped people, humans in troubles. So I support this motion and please say yes to this. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any more?

Brother Nicolae Macari – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: I'm speaking on behalf of the EC. I was saying a thousand times in the EC and all over the place that I would never speak on the political aspect and here I am. I believe there's some subjects which you just cannot go near you and it's touching your heart or it's touching you as a person. As you, I don't know, maybe pay attention, I was having a speech to every single motion, which I spoke here. I believe this one is not there, I don't know if you understand the whole problem, the whole aspects of the problem. If my country will be in the war, I will sell everything what I have, I will sell everything, everything, I will steal, I will do everything to save myself and my family.

[APPLAUSE]

And when you're saying that you pay to the (unclear) and stuff like that, I will do anything to save my family. It doesn't matter how moral is that or is not, I don't care. I don't know how about yourself, but my family is coming to the first plan in my life and if I cannot protect my family, why am I living? Why, I'm trying to do something. You need to understand and the words of Solidarity, just on the words, don't mean nothing for the people who are currently in the war.

[APPLAUSE]

Solidarity should not be only in the words. I believe Solidarity, you should show your Solidarity, not only put that in the words that you are with that, because that's not showing that too much. People are dying, they are losing their families, they are losing their children, they lose everything what they have. You have people who are running from their country with nothing, they were working years and years. Imagine yourself working, building your life here for 50 years and in one of the moment you lose everything what you have, your family, your money, all your goods and you're nobody in foreign country. You need to understand how tough that is morally and physically for any person, regardless what country he is living for and I believe it's a little bit (unclear). I mean, let's take the history (unclear). How many country that UK bomb, how many country did UK give the guns, the money and everything. Let's take even the last one with Ukraine. How many millions do we give to Ukraine with the guns and everything, enough that we're saying, Europe is saying, UK is saying that we want to stop the war? It not seems that we want to stop the war, we want the war to go on and on because we give them money and ammunition to these people. Please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Right of reply. Mike, you know, Mike spoke really, really beautifully when, just and I asked Mike's permission if I could do this, yes. His family at the moment are trapped in Ethiopia, in a war, they're trapped. His brother was killed a couple of years' ago. He doesn't know if his mother or his family are safe. Are you going to tell me that if his family flees, flees Ethiopia to run away from war, you're not welcome, sorry, we can't police it? I've heard about solutions, solutions. Well let me put it this way, there has been solutions in the past, there has been solutions, you know. Spot Quiz. I wish to know how many people here, put your hands up, have you heard of the Nansen passport? No-one. That's surprising, that's surprising, because after the First World War, the League of Nations decided to ask the Arctic explorer, Fridtjof Nansen, if they could do something about the refugee crisis, the refugee crisis from the Russian Civil War, the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, the breakup of the Austria-

Hungary Empire, the continuing wars that were going on in Europe and Fridtjof Nansen came along with a passport. It said that all refugees come in, give us what ID you've got and we'll have a passport, yes. You have an identity, you are a person, you can go and live in these countries and it worked, it was a great success. So if we can do it after the First World War, why can't we do it today?

[APPLAUSE]

And I don't mean to call the comrades, I understand your sentiments, what you've said. The trouble is, you put yourself in a very dodgy historical precedent that was answered, yes, in World War Two, the same kind of things and I'm not saying, I know you're doing it from the best of heart. The information about what was coming in World War Two in the camps was coming out years before they marched into Belsen and Auschwitz. People knew, at all levels of government, they knew what was happening as the trains were going on and on to Auschwitz. The gas chambers were running on and on and on and on and the answer was, you can even get this from the National Archive, the answer was we can't accept any more refugees because we'll be swamped by Jews. That was said. We won't be able to police them, we won't be able to do anything. Let's not put ourselves in that tradition and I don't mean to insult any of my comrades, because I love all of you, yes, but let's not put ourselves in that tradition. Let's just show you the best of what humanity is and let's pass that motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 37.

37

Branch 405

That this conference agrees that any Parliamentary Member, must declare an interest in any payments given to them by companies or lobbyists and any 2nd or more jobs they have and get paid for. If they are found out then they should be dismissed from their position and they would not be allowed to stand again

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: That this Conference agrees that any parliamentary member must declare an interest in any payments given to them by companies or lobbyists and any second or more jobs they have and get paid for. If they are found out, they should be dismissed from their position and they would not be allowed to re-stand.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded? Cool. Any speakers? The Executive would ask you to support the motion. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 37? 38, sorry. No, no, we passed motion 37.

38

Branch 432

That conference agrees we should lobby our government that with the increase in knife crime that tougher sentences should be given out to those carrying bladed weapons without a reasonable excuse and those using bladed weapons as a weapon also better education is needed in our schools, colleges and in our communities on the danger of knife crime.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, AB, Liverpool (EC Member): Moving the motion and speaking on behalf of the EC, who ask you to support this motion. That this Conference agrees to lobby the government that with the increase in knife crime, that tougher sentences should be given out to those carrying bladed weapons without a reasonable excuse and those using bladed weapons as a weapon. Also better education is needed in our schools, colleges and in our communities on the dangers of knife crime. Knife crime seems to be a common thing in our society today. Sadly, not a week goes by without reading or hearing on the news that someone has been stabbed, either injured or fatally and it must stop. Far too many lives are being lost and the families of the victims being ruined. That's the reality of Britain's knife crime epidemic. As my motion said, stiffer sentences are needed as a deterrent, but not the only answer. Education on the danger of knife crime and why it's wrong to carry or use a knife as a weapon. We need to educate people in our schools, colleges and communities.

We need to divert children and young people away from toxic environments. We need to invest in new services and social care. We need to provide educational support and we need to work with families and communities to support, educate and help young people back on the straight and narrow. Unfortunately, a lot of these support groups and services have cruelly been scrapped or underfunded by this vile Tory government. Often carrying a knife, starts as a way to avoid being a victim and this must be changed. If I may, I'd like to finish on a story, on a heartbreaking story. The people think that knife crime is just down to gang-related vendettas, well, it's not.

People actually go on a night out carrying a knife on their person, or go shopping, or the switching-on of Christmas lights in a city centre. On 25th November last year, the Christmas lights had their switch-on in Liverpool. Thousands turned up, one of those was Ava White and her friends. When it finished, she made her way back up from Liverpool ONE, up through Church Street, where a lot of street entertainers perform. Ava stopped with her friends to listen to some music and started to have a little dance. Upon this, a person came over with a group and started to video her for one of these social media sites. Ava didn't like this and she asked them to stop, a bit of a disagreement took place. Ava was then fatally stabbed in the neck in front of hundreds of shoppers. Ava was 12 years of age, 12 years old. The person who did this can't be named for legal reasons. Why? Because he was 14 years old. That's why education is so important. Why is a 14 year old boy taking a knife to a Christmas lights switch-on? Ava's family will forever miss their little girl and forever wonder what path Ava would take in her life. That's why we must say no to knife crime. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fitzpatrick – Branch 430: I'd like you to accept this motion. It's very upsetting. The kids of today have got no respect, no respect whatsoever. They've started carrying three inch blades, thinking that it doesn't matter, you're only giving someone a stab. Just last week, someone got stabbed in the back and on the news it said that they'd just got probation and told off. It should be, if you carry a knife and use it, you should be charged with attempted murder. That Ava White was stabbed with a three inch knife blade. She was stabbed in the neck and it hit an artery. So kids should be able, if they're educated in school, they learn and then their generation will start taking over the Scallies that we've got today. I want you to support this motion. It's very upsetting just listening about children getting hurt. Your children go out to play, they should come back in and they should go to bed. You don't expect your child to go out and you never see them again. They're dead, that's the most upsetting thing you could ever do for the family. I have relatives that have been suffering bad through this. Liverpool used to be a well-known city for being friendly and everything, it's the young kids that are destroying it, so we need the younger generation coming through now, with education, that they can see what this is doing to the families and everything else. I'd ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother John Fox – Branch 405: Before I say, I'm going to say this, I'm going to say a little story on this, yes. I agree with it wholeheartedly, yes, of what's happening now in the world with knives, but it's on the wording. I was going home from work, it was 2 o'clock in the morning and the police actually stopped me, yes and in my bag I had the big fat knife, very sharp, like a machete, yes. If this was in law, I would have been prosecuted, yes. I don't know how many people here today takes their knives home, but it's all a part of our job, yes. Knives for cutting fat, cutting what's-a-name. I support the motion with what's happening in the world today, but I can't support it on the wording, carrying the knife, yes, because if, I could be in jail now, yes, through carrying a knife round with me, yes. So I'm leaving this open for you to decide, yes, it's up in the air. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558, Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield: I'm here to support this wholeheartedly. I'm a parent, my son's at Leeds University, but my main fear is when he goes out partying, that some Joe's going to stick a knife in his stomach and he's upset him. I think it's a problem up and down the country. We need to look at it. I fully support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508, Lightbody's: I used to carry a knife when I was younger, after being attacked by a guy with a knife and that was at a football match, funnily enough, in the lovely town of Liverpool. This is when, the 80's, this kind of, you know, fist-on-fist was acceptable, stick-on-stick was acceptable, knives were not supposed to be carried. After a good stab in the wrist and a couple of slashes on my legs, I was alright, bled out a little bit but I'm fine. These days, you're aiming this towards kids. Just two weeks' ago, a guy in his mid-30's went nuts with a machete down on the London Underground, started hacking at a guy, started swinging his machete at everybody that got in the way. People were falling over each other, so it's not just kids that need educating, it's the whole bloody country. You know, we need a blanket coverage on this knife, stop it happening, stop people thinking they need to defend themselves constantly because of these young people that have got knives, but it's not just the young ones, it's everybody that's got knives. They're going out there and they're just defending themselves, attacking other people at random. So I support it, but we need to aim it at everybody. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: Yes, again it's the wording, it's the tougher sentencing for those carrying a knife. I've carried a knife and if the police had stopped me and asked me why I'd got that knife, my excuse wouldn't have been a reasonable one, because I've been attacked in the past and I felt the need to have some form of protection if I'm out alone and in fear that a man may attack me. So my only questions on there is, is the wording of a tougher sentence for anyone carrying a knife. We've got to work out why people would carry a knife. I mean, my campaign is about justice and about people who've been convicted of murder, very often in knife crime situations, so when I hear stories of a young person using a knife and killing someone, that is the bane of my life, because I want that to stop so that my campaign doesn't have to carry on, but I think it is education.

I think the one thing that young people don't realise is, just a little nick in the thigh can hit a major artery and someone can bleed to death within two minutes. In the neck, you know, the young girl in Liverpool, I'm sure the kid didn't want her to die, I'm sure he didn't sort of go in there like that. I mean, it's awful what's happened but, you know, not only has this young girl's life been destroyed, he's destroyed his own life, his own family's life, everybody's life concerned, you know, so who sells these kids these knives, you know, where are they getting them from, because I did a Conference in Manchester a few months' ago and some of the mums said that they're aware that their sons have got really big sort of deadly knives, but they don't come from their kitchens and these mums said they don't come from my kitchen, where are they coming from and there are shops in most of the major cities where there are grown men selling huge knives to children illegally and they need to be stopped as well.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Andrew Dalby – Region 3, Branch 3579, Gunstones: Morning. Yes, I'm here to support the motion. I think one of the previous speakers before, when he was saying he was found carrying a knife, I'm sure in the motion that the wording of "without a reasonable excuse", I think that might have been looked at and he'd have been alright with that, if he'd have got a reasonable excuse then he'd have been fine, but the world is just becoming such a terrifying place to live. I've got a daughter now, she's 15, she's getting to that age now where she's starting to think about, in a couple of years now she'll be going out, going out with her friends, on nights out and as her dad, I'm absolutely petrified for when that day comes. So yes, I'm here to support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Turner – Branch ?, Fletchers Bakery: When I was a young lad, about the age of seven, I lived in Park Hill Flats and we'd do stupid things. I used to do running on flats with my friends and that, knock a door and run and this particular guy I didn't know used to live on the streets and then they put him at the side of us to live and he'd got mental health problems which, being that age, I wouldn't know this. So this particular day he saw me, he grabbed me, put a knife to my throat and dangled me over the flats and said, now knock on my f-ing door. Now, fair enough, people will say I shouldn't have been doing it, but I've been found with a knife a few times and I don't carry knives, but I have had knives with me and I think it's something what really needs to look at. Educate people, yes, definitely educate people because stabbing people, like you say, it only takes to hit an artery and it's all over. So and it's just coming now where people, everybody, I've got five children at the end of the day and one of my son's was carrying knives at one stage and I told him, don't do it. You don't even get sentenced really. He was back on the streets the week after, they just get a slap on the hands and that. I mean, like five years for taking somebody's life and obviously emotionally it affected me with what he did. I shouldn't have been knocking on his door, but I was only a young lad, I was only seven years old. So, I support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: I'm here to support this motion. I regularly carry a knife, an axe sometimes, maybe scissors, I work in a shop. The wording of the motion says "without a reasonable excuse". Someone else mentioned, I know this has already been touched on, that they were worried if they got stopped, they might have been done. Reasonable excuse. Why do I carry a knife or an axe or scissors? I'm a scout leader. I frequently have to go straight from work to scouts, so therefore I have to lock a knife in my shop during the day. It's locked in a safe, I then put it in my rucksack and then it carries. That is a reasonable excuse. There's no need to carry a knife for any other reason. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Lee Wright – Branch 504: First-time speaker.

[APPLAUSE]

I support this motion, but I think we need to be looking at where the kids are buying the knives from, because you can go on eBay and buy a knife and it doesn't ask for ID. You can go on Amazon, same thing.

Once a knife's packaged and sent off, we don't know what it is. That's where we need to look at. Thank you, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452, Park Cakes, Oldham: Here to support the motion. The weekend before we travelled down to Conference, there was two stabbings in Oldham. They weren't kids, the first two that happened was two gents, been on a night out, they were known to each other, one stabbed the other. The gentleman that passed away was 40. The gentleman that stabbed him was 31. The following day, there was another incident in Oldham, in Glodwick, somebody else was stabbed, fortunately not fatally. The police then said for the weekend, from midnight to 7 a.m. the next morning, we're going to be doing stop and search and so they should, but then we've got the others who are saying you're going to pick on certain individuals, you know. It needs to be amongst everybody. It's not just the kids that are carrying knives, it's adults, you know. The gent that died, it was a friend, a so-called friend that killed him. It's shocking and it does need to stop.

The police are doing something. There was a report on Granada reports one evening and the police are going out now to little infants schools, junior schools and they were showing them, they had Vimto in a plastic container and they had the kids squeezing it and squeezing it and they said look at that now, that's how you can bleed, bleed-out, you know, two minutes, a life gone. That's what we need to be doing, but it doesn't have to stop at the children, it needs to be done for everybody and I've got two sons, you know and if I thought they were going out with a knife, I'd lock them in, do you know what I mean, I'd go mad myself and take them. Parents have to take some responsibility too and educate our children, that's not the done thing, you know. If you ever fall out with somebody, you give them a slap or you give them a mouthful, you know. Sometimes that can be bad enough, a punch, but let's not do it with knives. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: You know what, this is with a heavy heart. I'm going to oppose this, yes, I am going to oppose this, you know. If it'd have been the last little bit of it, education, I'd have been jumping up in joy, yes, but it's tougher sentences. Have we learned nothing? We've been giving tougher and tougher sentences for this for the last 40 years, it's not worked. If you want to see what tougher sentences do, yes, go Baltimore and ask the Americans there what tougher sentences have done to their city, it's not worked, it's not worked. I wish it would, I wish it would, like, you know, come here, right, you've been carrying a knife and we'll give you a tougher sentence, they just learn how to become a better criminal inside, you know, they do, they learn that. It's a university for crime, you know, prison. I spoke about my past. Most of my mates have been in prison, they don't, it doesn't do anything for them, it doesn't do anything at all for them. It just turns them into hardened, bitter, better criminals and prison ain't a walk in the park. You want to hear the stories they do and you think oh, make the prisons tougher then. Do you want our prisons to become like the American prisons, where it's constant gang warfare on there? I wish it worked, it wish it would.

I've seen, I've lived on the streets, I've seen three murders. It made me want to cry. I've seen a guy get a screwdriver in the eyeball, in the middle of St. Pauls, in Bristol. He was just left there, bleeding, because it was an area, if you know St. Pauls, the cops don't go there. Any cop van that walks down, any cop van that goes down St. Pauls is a, has to be an armed response vehicle, you know. I've seen it where they try and have, it's an open-air junk market on the front line, they try and have, bring in the undercover and they'll stand there and they'll start looking at it and then the bricks start flying at the cop vans and they skedaddle out there. I wish tougher sentences would work, but it won't. I applaud the sentiment, but it won't work. There is a solution and that's education, better housing, better jobs, building communities, that's the answer, building community. The thing that's been destroyed by 40 years since that bitch Thatcher came in.

[APPLAUSE]

Sorry, I'm opposing.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, AB, Liverpool (EC Member): Yes, as has been stated before, the motion does say without a reasonable excuse. I'm not just blaming young people, that's why I mentioned communities on a number of occasions and most of the research that I did, it was young people, but that doesn't mean to say that it is all the time and it seems to be in this country, when we talk about a tougher, longer prison sentence, we seem to like treat it like a hot potato.

While sometimes these people, who commit these crimes, are walking the streets after a couple of months or a couple of years, the victims face a lifetime of being scarred, being scared

[APPLAUSE]

while the person who did it, is walking free. We've spoken this week, many times, about justice and about people being held accountable. If you don't want to do the time, don't do the crime and even though I'm going to finish on this bit now and this wasn't a stabbing, but you'll all remember Jamie Bulger, a two year old lad who was taken away from the Bootle Shopping Centre in Liverpool, taken away and murdered by two young kids, right. Those two young kids, right, were let out a number of years later, right, at our expense, right, identities changed and this, that and the other, one of them has carried on doing these crimes of like looking at images and this, that and the other, so by those, those people getting a short term imprisonment, didn't do them any good and those two rats should have been jailed for life

[APPLAUSE]

and they should never ever have walked the streets of this country again.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Okay, that's carried. We're going to go for a brew. Come back by ten to. Thank you very much. When you come back, we're going to have Helena, but oh sorry, yes, just before you do go, obviously Branch 529 would like to raffle their quiz prize that they won and donate the proceeds to the food banks.

[APPLAUSE]

You can buy, you can buy £1 strip raffle tickets from Marilyn and Joanne and it's going to be drawn before the end of the Conference. It's Penderyn, Welsh whisky. I expect the Welsh to really, really put that money in their pocket, but it's all going to the food banks, good cause.

[BREAK]

Okay, can everybody come in from outside. Can we shut the doors. Okay, Conference. Can everybody take their seats, please. I know it's really important that we sell the raffle, but the rest of it can be done at the end of Conference, please. Please take your seats, because obviously all week you'll have noticed we've had, this young woman at the end, for older Delegates they'll know exactly who she is, for newer Delegates you've probably met her during the week. Helena England, sat on our Executive, she was the Branch Secretary at Fox's in Batley. She did a phenomenal job, groundbreaking jobs in many ways, because obviously in years gone by, women Branch Secretaries were a rarity. It shouldn't have been the case, but unfortunately it was, but the Executive, you know, wanted to recognise the work that Helena had done and actually continues to do. She's still, you know, despite retirement, continuing to promote the Union and promote the reasons why people should join Unions, so we want to invite Helena, who's the Executive's Conference guest to give an address to Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Helena England addresses Conference

Sister Helena England: Well, I don't have to say anything, he's said it all, so I can just say hello and goodbye [LAUGHTER].

No, I started work at Fox's Biscuits a long time ago and when I first went there, I'd never worked in a factory environment, I'd been a stay-at-home mum and I thought oh gosh, I'm not going to stay here long, me, but I was very lucky in that people saw things in me that I probably didn't see, because I left school at 15 with no education, well, I had an education but I went straight to work and I'd had various roles in Fox's Biscuits, I was lucky, as a chargehand, as a data collector, so it kept me there, it kept me busy and then one of the Reps asked me, Union Reps asked me if I'd be a Shop Steward and I went, no and he pestered me for about a month. He said, why? I said, because I don't want to, I don't know nothing about it and I worked on nights for 20 years, so I was on nights and one night I was in and this fella came into the canteen and he said, why won't you be a Rep? and I went, who are you? and he said, I'm Brian Scarfe, Branch Secretary. Well, I'd never seen him, I'd never seen him in all of that time, because obviously he was on days.

Anyway, I became a Rep, to cut a long story short and it was the best thing I ever did. I worked myself from a Rep to being on wage negotiations and then becoming like Brian's second in command and then to Branch Secretary and it's not an easy job, but I would say and I would encourage any of you here that if asked to be a Rep, do it, do it, it's fantastic. My excuse at first was, I might have to stick up for somebody I don't like, or they might tell lies to me and why would they want to tell lies to me when I want to help them? Brian's answer to that was, you'll get used to it and you do get used to it and you do end up telling a few lies yourself to get them out of situations, but the education I received in going down that path.

I will not, I cannot, you know, I've got to give credit to the Union for that and a fantastic course I've been on, the things I've learnt, the people I've met and I know we've lost the Learning Services, but they're still out there. I've even been looking at courses myself to do, because I can't just sit still and there's courses out there for you to do that'll give you that confidence, that'll give you the boots to stand up and be a Rep and to stand up, because the workplace now is getting very, very unsettling, it's getting, they're just doing what they want to some people now, you know what I mean? and you've got to be able to stand up, you've got to be able to show them that you're not going to take it any more, it's not fair, you know. People have worked all their lives to get where we are. Union's worked all their lives, people have done things to get us what we've got and we're going to lose it all.

We need, yes, we've talked about the younger generation. We do need the younger generation come up, we do need new members, but we've got to remember about retaining the members we've got. Yes, it's hard if you've got redundancies, you're going to lose them but, you know, even in the workplace, if people come to you and say, because we are in times where people are watching the pennies, well, I don't need my window cleaner any more, I don't need to have the newspapers, I've never used the Union, I'll stop paying that. We need to retain the ones we've already got, we can't let that get to a low level neither, you know. So, I would encourage you all to go back, if you've thought about it and become a Rep, whether it's a Learning Rep, whether it's a Shop Steward, whether it's Health & Safety, you know, whatever is on offer, take it, take the education that's offered to you. I mean, I was in my late 50's/early 60's and I did a two year long diploma course at Northern College, not because it was going to do me any help, because I was coming up to retirement, but because I could do it and because it was there and I wanted to do it and I passed them both, you know. My daughter said to me, mother, what are you doing that for at your age? I went, because I can and I've got the ability and the Union behind me to do it, you know and I've met some fantastic people, you know, I've had some great fun, you know and like we're all here back now together and it's lovely to see old and loads of young new faces as well and some young older new faces, so I'd encourage you, you know, to really, really go for it.

So that's that on that. It's a short snapshot, but there's one thing I do want to mention what I think, there's been some very good motions today, but I think the mental health one has been fantastic. For them young men to stand up here and tell them stories, I don't think there'd have been a dry eye in this room actually, because I know I nearly was in tears, but I think that's because we, all us, we're not just comrades, we're a family, we're a family, you know, we know everybody on here. We're always known as full-time Officers, we're always known as Branch Secretaries, we're always known as Reps, we're a family and I think it's us as a family that's given them people the confidence to get up there and say what they did and I respect and applaud them people. I think they've done a fantastic job on mental health.

[APPLAUSE]

I really do, you know. If we can encourage people to get up and do that, what else can we do as a Union, you know. That is fantastic. So, I'm only going to keep it short because I know we're coming to the end of our week and you all want to get home, but I've just one more thing to do. I've a presentation to make. Can my friend, Jenny Oates, come down please. No heckling, please. Right, having gone through, there's been a lot of fringe meetings and there's been some fantastic ones and we've attended some good ones, but we attended one particular where we found out that we've got a full-time Officer that's got skills nobody knew about. So, can Mr Bobbly-Pom-Pom Streeter come down, please.

[APPLAUSE]

Come on, you've **(unclear)** this week. Oh, he has given us some stick and by the way, his nickname for us, I'm Knit One, she's Purl One, that's the nice names. Right, Mr Bobbly-Pom-Pom Streeter, because you've shown the skills we never knew you had, we'd like to make you a presentation, it's what we've made up ourselves. There's a plaque for you, show them all what it says and some knitting, well, they're not knitting needles

[LAUGHTER]

come back, pom-pom. Come back a minute, we've got something else for you, just come back.

[LAUGHTER]

We didn't have any knitting needles, so we've used two of them **(unclear)** to knit some squares and two pencils. Right, there you are and give him these others, there you are. You see, you've got Officers you didn't know had these skills. Right, that's it, I've said enough, not any more. Thank you very much everybody.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thank you ever so much, Helena and, you know, it was an absolute honour when I took over afterwards when I became the Female Executive Member following you, there was some very big footsteps to fill. Thank you for joining us this week, I'm so glad you've enjoyed it.

Helena's just told me to donate the biscuits to the food bank which is, I think, brilliant. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Sister Helena England: Thank you, that's lovely, thank you, Sarah. Thank you, love.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: and we'll give you £100 as well.

Sister Helena England: Oh, thank you, love.

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay Conference, back to your Agendas and it's motion 40. Motion 40? Come on, Doug.

40

Branch 356

We condemn the governments new laws restricting the right to protest. We see this as a growing authoritarianism in this country to stop ordinary people to make their voice heard.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Hiya. You know what, I spend a lot of time in this Union going round, standing outside factory gates and our President came and joined us the other week, you know, him being annoying. It's lovely being annoying to these bosses. I like being annoying, it's great being annoying, annoying the hell out of them, saying to badly abused workers, come on, join our Union, except now, Priti Patel says we can be arrested for being annoying. We can go to prison for being annoying, but there's lots of things that I find annoying. I find Priti Patel annoying.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

I find Boris Johnson annoying.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

In fact, I find all these Tories annoying, you know. I've never tried to have them arrest, well, I have tried to have them arrested, but, you know [LAUGHTER], but it's, this is freedom of speech, you know. You might not like a protest, but I've never tried and stopped somebody from protesting. I don't like a lot of things, you know. Now Priti Patel's going to tell me what plaque or board I can have. Priti Patel's going to tell me how noisy I can be, what I can shout out. Priti Patel's going to tell me, you can only have your protest from 1 'til 2. It's not for Priti Patel to tell me what I can say, what I can do, what I can protest about. It's not for Priti Patel to tell me that. It's for us to decide, it's how we make our voices heard, because let's face it, there's hardly anybody who speaks for us in parliament, they speak for their banker friends. They speak for their, you know, their company directorships. They speak for the tax havens, they don't speak for us. So we have to make our voices heard through protest, that's how we won our rights. That's how women won the right to vote. That's how we all won the right to vote. That's how we won the right to say, I find Priti Patel annoying. Vote for this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Any speakers? Listen, quite clearly, I mean obviously Dougie explained exactly the reasons why you need to vote for this motion. I mean, obviously, you know, we aren't born with liberty, you know, we have to win it and to take it away and make it illegal for us to do that, then the chances of improving our lives just won't be there for us, I mean, so, you know, the Executive would ask you to support the motion and obviously, you know, on 18th June there is going to be a demonstration in London, organised by the TUC and what we would be saying is go there, you know, take those, was it vuvuzalers or whatever they were called that they had in the World Cup and take anything to make as much noise as possible, because let's make a racket on 18th June in London, because they should never allow our voices not to be heard and whichever way we wish to do it, then we should make sure that they hear us and ignore their, ignore their laws, because that's the way forward is to ignore their laws, because that's why, that's how we've always improved our lives. When they restrict us, when they restrict us, it's our duty, it's our duty to take part in protest. It's our duty to fight back. It's our duty to fight for the next generation that's coming through. That's always our duty. So Conference, the Executive would ask you to support the motion and maintain our rights to protest and if they want to take it away, we go out and we protest more to achieve that. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 41.

That this conference agrees that we lobby the government to make the Royal National Lifeboat Institution a fourth emergency service and the volunteers to become professionals in this field. The job to be full time, manned 24hrs a day, 7 Days a week, 52 weeks a year and to be paid by our taxes.

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: That this Conference agrees that we lobby the government to make the Royal National Lifeboat Institution a fourth emergency service and the volunteers to become professionals in this field. The job to be full-time, manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year and to be paid by our taxes. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253, Greggs, Treforest: Morning Conference, Executive Members and Delegates. Right, I'm going to do the hornpipe for you now, or perhaps a sea shanty. Anyway, it's supposed to be a joke, that [LAUGHTER]. Anyway, as most of us are well enough aware, the RNLI is independent of government and it relies on its brave volunteers and supporters to run this crucial lifesaving service and I for one am in complete awe of them, putting out to sea in the teeth of sometimes absolutely the worst atrocious weather conditions imaginable. I've spent time at sea myself, I was in the Royal Navy and I can tell you that being in the grip of a North Atlantic swell, with waves 40 – 60 feet high, is no joke, I can tell you, no joke at all. A few facts and figures. The service costs a lot of money to run, it's upwards of £140 million per annum and the bulk comes from that, it's made up of 92% donations, charitable donations and the rest is from trading and investments, which equates about 8%. Donations, believe it or not, amount to an average of £7,000 per day and these donations, after the RNLI claiming gift aid, can boost that amount by 25p in the pound, so in effect another £1,750 to be added to that so, you know, it's not to be sniffed at.

The RNLI does not accept government support and that is purely because the charity wishes to be free and independent from outside bureaucracy which, if they got involved or whoever that was, it would inevitably undermine the organisation and end up with this much-loved charity being compromised in its aim of saving and preserving life at sea. I've been fortunate to go on board a Trent-class all-weather lifeboat, which was named the Roy Barker 1, on the Island of Alderney in the Channel Islands (cough, excuse me). It truly is a magnificent vessel, absolutely. It's capable of a high speed of 25 knots, which to convert that is 28 miles an hour. It's got a range of 50 nautical miles and it's full, packed full of advanced technology. They're inherently self-righting in the event of a capsize and cost, those Trent-class, cost £1.1 million, quite a lot of money. I had the pleasure of talking to the Coxon, that's the guy that steers it, the vessel, who inferred that the RNLI do not take kindly to outside intervention or interference. Their overriding priority is to save and rescue those unfortunate enough to be in life-threatening situations. So please leave these brave volunteers alone and let them get on with their work. Once again, respectively, I ask you to oppose this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any speak

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Obviously the RNLI are an amazing organisation and they do a job which obviously puts their lives at risk every day, but the reason I oppose this motion is because of the funding. Will this water-down the funding that we may give to the, you know, the police, the ambulance, fire services etc, because if it was part of our taxation, I don't think, well, it will increase tax, everybody will oppose that, so what they'll do is, they'll water-down and take taxes from other organisations. There are other rescue services, the Mountain Rescue, Dog Search and Rescue, the Air Ambulance, these are all services basically which are run with donations, so how far-reaching is this? I mean, you look at one organisation, then another organisation, why shouldn't we fund that, or be part of our taxation? So, it's just the way for me that, the watering-down of funding for other, you know, important organisations. I'm not saying they're any less important, in fact I find them to be one of the more important ones as well, because I think they're in far more danger in some situations than some of the other forces basically. So that's the reason I oppose it, just the watering-down of funding basically, the possibility of increasing taxes and there are a number of other, you know, regulated search and rescue organisations that need the funding as well. So, I oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558, Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield: I'm here, I've had to double-check what's going on here, I must be a bit thick or asleep. I'm here to support it and I'll tell you why I'm here to support it, right?

When I go to Filey, I go for walks, I always tip up to this institution, yes, but as I say, I must be a bit thick, because I didn't even realise they were volunteers. I must have been asleep for the last 40 years or doing something else. I didn't even realise these people volunteered to do that. So yes, get them on the payroll, pay for them, they're saving lives.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Speakers? No? Alright, okay.

Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253: Here to speak on behalf of the Exec. The Exec would ask you to oppose this motion. It sounds quite controversial. They like being independent, they like not being bossed around by some bloke who lives in a big house. They like being volunteers. Please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, right of reply? Right of reply?

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: Yes, I'm going to oppose my own motion. Thank you.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: So, what you're saying, what you're saying, Jan, is remit it. Remit the motion. Okay, remit the motion. Okay. Well, what we'll do now then is Jan, we're going to go to emergency motion No. 2, which I believe is you.

Emergency Motion 2

That this Conference agrees to support the families of the ten children convicted of joint-enterprise murder in Newcastle on 1st June, to show visible Solidarity at the sentencing hearing at Newcastle Crown Court when the date comes up in August

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: Emergency motion, yes. That this Conference agrees to support the families of the ten children convicted of joint-enterprise murder in Newcastle on 1st June, to show visible Solidarity at the sentencing hearing at Newcastle Crown Court when the date comes up in August, which I can let people know about. Our Union led the way by being the first Trade Union to support the JENGBA Campaign, which is the Campaign I co-founded almost 12 years' ago. JENGBA stands for Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by Association and the Not is the important word there, Not Guilty. We now need to make these words of support real acts of Solidarity, support the families of the 10 children, they are children, I've spoken to three of the mothers already this week whilst sort of on my dinner break during Conference, basically to attend and protest at the hearing in August and I send a statement of Solidarity to the families, make a public statement of support to the families.

Now, I don't know if any of you have heard of the case, it is tragic and we've got to be mindful that an 18 year old was stabbed and he died and, you know, nothing can take that away, you know, the absolute tragedy of that and what his mother must feel like right now and we can, we can be mindful of that and we can have respect for that family. Now, one boy in that case was 15 years old and we've talked about knives already today and he was foolish enough to have a knife and he used it and he killed another young man, an 18 year old, but that 15 year old, when he was arrested by the police, pleaded guilty, he admitted that he had the knife, he used the knife, he was guilty. The police then arrested nine other children, the youngest being 14 years old.

Now, I didn't go the trial, so I didn't hear all the evidence, but I did have the privilege of someone from the BBC ringing me up most days saying the evidence in this case is absolutely dreadful. If they find them all guilty, what will happen? and I said they'll all get life sentences for murder, even though the court, the police, everybody knows it's one boy and this particular journalist said it was haunting him thinking that these kids were all going to get found guilty and I had to tell him to get a grip, because that's what's going to happen because that's how bad the law is right now in this country. You can be at a trial, you can see who's done it and you can see that the evidence is, doesn't show that anybody else has committed murder, in fact you're found innocent, you're proven innocent should I say, the trial process proves you innocent, but you're found guilty and the verdict comes back as guilty because the law that we have right now is such, it's not even a law, it's a common law doctrine, it's not even in legislation.

We're being attacked here, our children are being attacked here and when I say they're being given life sentences, these nine children, the youngest of 14, when I did speak to his mother on Monday, she was heartbroken, she'd just given birth to another baby, so she's got a two week old baby and a 14 year old that she said – I'm going to get upset now – a 14 year old that, she's now waiting for him to get a life sentence for murder, who she's never been apart from and she said, he doesn't know why he's in prison, he has no understanding of why he's in prison, because he was holding a can of pop and drinking it when a fight happened in front of him at the fairground.

And because he was quite shocked by it, he dropped the can on the floor and then bent down and picked it back up again, didn't touch the victim, didn't encourage anyone else to touch the victim, didn't know some of the people that have been charged of murder with him and he's now looking at a sentence of probably between 15 and 24 years and he's 14 years old.

You might want to know why I'm so interested in this and why I believe this mother, well, in 2017 my two sons were charged with murder. I went into both their interviews in the police station, I listened to both their interviews, I listened to the statement of all the other young people that were arrested and I'm not a detective, I'm not a copper and it was very clear to me who'd done the crime and it wasn't my children, but they were still charged with murder and we had to go through the trial process and I thought that was something to do with giving the victim's family the process of justice and having justice be served and done in front of them and as a mother with, you know, two children I thought well, I'll sacrifice this six months and this horror of a trial, because there's a man dead. I know my children didn't kill this man and they had nothing to do with it, so I was prepared to sacrifice that, that chunk of our life and go through that nightmare, because I believed justice would be served, my children would be acquitted, the victim's family would get the truth, but that's not what happened. One of my sons was acquitted and the other one was 15 years old and he was given a life sentence for murder. He didn't touch the victim, in fact he couldn't even see the victim, because he was blind and the courts decided that the evidence that was used against him was that he should have had or may have had the possibility of foresight to see, to foresee what someone else might or may cause serious injury or murder, or death should I say and my argument has always been, how can a blind child foresee the actions of another, when he can't even see that other person in the first place?

So when I'm asking you to support these families in Newcastle, I'm asking you as a mother that has gone through the same trauma. I believe these women, I've only spoken to three of them so far and I can hear the pain in their voices. I can hear them say the same things, but there was no evidence and I've been through that and I can tell you, there is no evidence in these trials and the fact that 10, they've taken 10 when everyone in that trial process knows it was just one and I know we've talked about knife crime and I know we're all really sort of angry about this and the young girl in Liverpool who was stabbed, but in Liverpool the boy that did it went to prison, not nine of his friends either, so Liverpool did the right thing in that case and that's what we should be doing with every case, we should be doing the right thing. So, I'm just asking for support and Solidarity from now on for JENGbA. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you seconding it? You're supporting it and seconding it, okay.

Brother Michael Black – Branch 417, Hovis, Golborne, Wigan: I first met Jan a couple of weeks' ago at Regional Council Meeting and travelled down with her to Conference, with John Fox and his wife. I can't add to what she's said, it's an absolute tragedy, nightmare. So I'm just asking you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, Conference, obviously we've passed a motion in the past from Conference in support of JENGbA. This is, you know, obviously continuing that position on support, because we are going to ask you to support, but I mean, let me just tell one story. I mean, a young lad goes out, meets, goes to a pub, there's a fight breaks out and he's there, he knows the person involved in the fight, the lad that was in the fight, that was his mate, gives a guy a punch, the guy dies and he gets life in prison, that could be any one of us. I mean, Joint Enterprise was brought back in 1984 and it was brought back to contain the miners, to make sure that the miners couldn't take part to protect their communities and what they did with that law, common law, was to then use it against our kids. They use it against our kids and it could happen to anybody in this room and especially if you're not white, because what they try and make out is that if you go out with your mate and they carry out an act of violence that leads to somebody's death, then you knew and you can come home from work one day and find that your child is in a, you know, been locked up by the police and you might never, ever get them free again, because unless they admit that they committed that crime, they won't release them either, even if they didn't do it, even if they didn't do it. So I'd ask Conference to strongly support this motion and also if you can, support any activities and campaigns that JENGbA take part in, because it isn't justice for the victim if the people who are imprisoned had no involvement in the crime. That's not justice, justice is when the person who committed the crime is convicted and serves the time, not the people who are innocent. So, please support the motion.

To the vote, all those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. Motion 43.

Many of the companies who have gained contracts during the pandemic from the government have dubious connections with the Conservative Party. Therefore, we call on Parliament to hold an independent inquiry into how contracts were metered by the Government.

Brother Douggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Sorry, it's me again. Do you know what, I've seen some dodgy Tory governments in my time, we all have. I've seen some corrupt, conniving and I'll go to Standing Orders, evil bastards like they are in my life, you know, I have, but this lot, this lot takes the biscuit. They really do, you know. They brought in deliberately some of these contracts, yes, some of these contracts over Covid, you know, instead of hiring in decent health companies or just keeping it really as it should be, in the NHS. It's why the vaccine was such a success, it was kept in-house by the NHS. Track and Trace, run by Dido Harding, I would, you know, Dido Harding amazes me. She's the only person to run a company that was given like the worst customer service by the Daily Mail, of all people, two years' running, not one, but two years' running. She is incompetent. I wouldn't have her track, track herself to the end of her drive, you know.

They hired in a company that was, to do PPE for the NHS, paying it 51 million, a company that is registered in Mauritius, that has two government advisors on its, on its board. They paid them 51 million and they ended up getting a load of PPE that was not fit for requirements, did not come up to health and safety standard. They still haven't given back the 51 million, they're happy hiding it away in the tax haven of Mauritius and it constantly goes on and on. The corruption they have put through, they're not even trying to hide it like they do, they just come out with it, absolutely. They don't, let's face it, let's face it, they haven't given a damn about all the people that has died, haven't given a damn. We've got the highest death toll from Covid in Western Europe, one of the highest death tolls per capita in the world and yet they're just giving free lunches out to their friends. Let's vote for this motion, let's send them, say like we don't accept your cronyism, your corruption, we don't accept what you're doing. Let's vote for this motion and send a message to Downing Street. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Yes, I oppose this motion. I'm fed up with all these inquiries we're doing over the last few years. An inquiry can cost up to half a million pounds and then what outcome do we want, because no money's going to be paid back. I mean, Covid was an unfortunate situation which, with hindsight, we'd all be amazing. I'd be the most amazing Prime Minister, with hindsight, of how we should have coped with Covid, yes, it would have been great, but I know, you're probably going to shout at me for this. I congratulate the government in certain aspects of it, that they were dealing with a situation that we've never dealt with before and I know, there was an argument a couple of days' ago, that, I think it was Douggie said, that there was a situation where they had a pandemic-type, idea, of how we should approach this, but it's alright having a thought of how we should approach it, but until it actually happens, I think the Black Death was the last one basically, back in hundreds and hundreds of years ago, where it was almost a worldwide pandemic, but having these, having these inquiries, it's just, I hear about inquiries constantly and what and then at the outcome, at the end of it, it's yes, this is what we found, right okay, that's cost us half a million pounds, that's another, some more taxation we'll take for doing that inquiry, yes, we agree, that shouldn't have happened, but nothing ever comes from it. It just seems like, a lot, there are certain inquiries I think that need to be sorted, where it's to do with a legal aspect or somebody's broken the law. I don't feel anybody has actually broken the law here. I just feel we'd be spending money, whatever it is, a million and a half, a million pounds for something, at the end of it there will be no relevance to it. So that's why I disagree and I oppose this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558, Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield: I'm here to support this motion. I can't believe what's coming out there. We've been totally fleeced through this pandemic, everyone in this room has. PPE was just the tip of the iceberg what was going on. Cummings' statement and his contempt for everyone in this room is something you should all remember when you're talking about these people. If, I'd go further with this motion. There's people that have taken contracts and backhanders throughout this pandemic. I'd do what the French did, I'd just guillotine the lot of them.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you speaking on this, Mohinder?

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: It's a joint-enterprise. Send them all to prison.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Any other speaker? No? Obviously just as a point of information, there has been an actual inquiry launched and by the way, there was also a criminal prosecution that found the government guilty of not doing enough for people in care homes and actually failing in their duty to protect the older generation, so there needs to be an inquiry. I do agree from the point of view that nothing happens when they hold those inquiries, because the governments never hold themselves to account, never make themselves responsible for their failed decisions which leads normally to working class deaths, but they don't value our lives in any way, anyway, so we shouldn't be surprised in that, but they should be held accountable for it and that's why we have inquiries and yes, we've already submitted from the Bakers Union to those inquiries too, because what you did was save lives, what they did, what they did, you know, should make them lose their jobs in Westminster, it should lose any opportunity for them to earn an income outside of Westminster based on what they did in murdering people, in my opinion, in those care homes and they need, actually you're right, Jan, they should be facing prison sentences and Boris Johnson should be taken there immediately and not released until he's admitted his guilt. Support the motion. Obviously you've got the right of reply.

Brother Douggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: I think I'm alright, really I can say about like what the President has

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay then, that's fine. Let's go to the vote then.

Brother Douggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: There's a little more, but, there's another thing, you know. Parliamentary scrutiny was supposed to be observed, yes, if we don't have an inquiry. That means you have to rely on parliamentary scrutiny. The trouble is, do you know who was the person in charge of the committee, scrutinising all these contracts? No, it was Dido Harding's husband, it was Dido Harding's, one of the most corrupt individuals, it was her husband who was looking into her contract. That beggars beyond belief. Just as an example, loads of Tory MPs were caught up in this, with directors or spouses were on the board of these companies, you know, all got executive directorships, you know, tied to the companies who owned the companies. It beggars beyond belief. It's only an inquiry that's going to actually expose them, really, it's only an inquiry and I agree, let's jail Boris Johnson until he admits he's guilty, although

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Absolutely.

Brother Douggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: although I think it'll take a long time for Boris Johnson to start telling the truth. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: A long time in jail, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. So, 44.

44

Branch 405

That this conference agrees.....That this union is to work with all interested parties and bodies to end the undemocratic anomaly of the House Of Lords.

How can this collection of ancient hereditary lords and recent appointees be compatible with a 21st century democracy, and to be replaced by an elected body. By the people of Great Britain.

Sister Jan Cunliffe – Branch 405: That this Conference, do you know, that this Conference agrees that this Union is to work with the interested parties and bodies to end the undemocratic anomaly of the House of Lords. How can the collection of ancient hereditary Lords and recent appointees be compatible with a 21st century democracy and to be replaced by an elected body of the people of Great Britain. Can I just add that it's even more important now because it's the House of Lords that keeps voting for these, the laws that are coming in, the right to protest and they're not taking our side either are they? Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Yes, I'm speaking on it and seconding it.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Are you, alright, okay. That's cool. I just had to ask.

Brother Mohinder Badhan – Branch 331: Chair and comrades. I'm here to support this, but before I speak on that, I'm not very well but my gearbox is chattering and I have got oxygen.

There is a friend sitting at the back, Brother Joe Marino, right and it is he who inspired me. I will speak later. I want to thank the Union for something, but on this issue, I have a great respect for the people in the House of Lords. They have given a wonderful service to the nation. I am a keen listener to that BBC, to debates of the House of Lords and what I see now, I'm 76 and most of them are older than me and these people, most of them can't, they have listening problem, walking problem, some of them have very weak eyesight, their bodies are very fragile and I think it's about time letting these people have a rest before they move to the next planet, right.

[LAUGHTER]

And I have **(unclear)** for them, but on top of that, that House is undemocratic. Britain is known as the Mother of Democracy, is that democracy? No. So please let them have a rest now, because when they move to the next planet, they will have to take over the same sort of roles there, right. I'm 76 and I think I will join them, I will work with them. The people say there is a Heaven there, I don't know, I don't believe, right. Heaven and hell is on this earth, right. I will give you explanation later on why I call it, because of something else, so please, please let these poor species, wonderful species, have some rest and peace of mind, so they can get prepared for the next world, to serve the people there. Thank you very much, thank you, thank you.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Speakers? The Executive would ask Conference to support the motion. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried.

Conference, I'm going to do, because obviously we want to get through business and I know you would prefer to go for your lunch, so I'm just going to take movers and any opposers, okay? So the mover of motion 45. And I want you to rush when you get to the rostrum [LAUGHTER].

45

Branch 432

That this conference agrees that the government should do more to assist wheelchair users moving around our towns and cities by giving councils more money to address this situation. Wheelchair users face daily obstacles around our towns and cities.

Brother John Owens – Branch 432, AB, Liverpool (EC Member): You should walk. Health and safety. Motion 45. Moving the motion and speaking on behalf of the EC, who ask you to support this motion. That this Conference agrees that the government should do more to assist wheelchair users moving around our towns and cities by giving councils more money to address this situation. Wheelchair users face daily obstacles moving around our towns and cities. I put this motion forward at our Branch Meeting because of what I have seen over the last few years.

I have a friend whom I have known for many, many years and she has a few disability issues, which don't let her walk around like most of us can and for a good 10 years she has used, getting around, by using two sticks. By using these two sticks daily, she has knackered her shoulders and her neck, so she was told she would have to get a wheelchair for her mobility, so when she did, she got a nice electric wheelchair, great, happy days, now she could get out and about and she could go to places that were impossible before, but then came the dreaded dropped kerbs or lack of them and when I used to bump into her, she would say, yes, the chair's brilliant, I can get out to more places, I can go to Southport, Chester, I can go into town and I can go over to the water, the Wirral, that's where all the plastic Scousers live, but there is one problem and she told me about the difficulty she had with the no-dropped kerbs or poorly maintained ones and the next few times I've seen her, she would repeat the same difficulties.

One time she was coming off a poorly-maintained dropped kerb and the chair tipped and she fell out, split her head open and broke her arm, so I said the next time you're out and I'm off, I will come round with you, so I did and I was horrified, I was shocked and do you know what, I felt a bit ashamed that I had never noticed this before. I was shocked how many times she had to go onto busy roads to get around. I like to keep busy in my community, doing various activities, but I had never noticed this before, so I thought right, I'm going to try and do something about this and I am very friendly with my three local ward councillors and I took it to them and I was horrified to hear the information that came back. Liverpool City Council allocates around £40,000 each financial year to improve on-street accessibility throughout the whole of the city. The budget is used to provide dropped kerb crossing facilities to assist wheelchair users, pedestrians with pushchairs and those who are visually impaired. So the £40,000 is spread between the wards in Liverpool, to which there are 30, so give or take a couple of quid, that's £1,300 per ward per year. This is disgraceful.

I don't know how much each job costs, but you aren't going to get many done for £1,300. Some may blame the city councils, but when city councils have seen massive cuts in their budgets from this vile government. Liverpool City Council, over the last 10 years, has had £500 million in budget cuts and these cuts are then passed on right across to all services that the council provides, attacking the poor and the vulnerable. I don't know what it's like where you live, but perhaps like me, you've never noticed, but the next time you're out and about, have a look. My friend didn't ask for her disabilities and she should not have to struggle to get around.

I'm glad to say that the two dropped kerbs in her street, that needed doing, have been done, which makes her life a bit easier to get around, but more help, you know, needs to do some more and I just want to finish on this bit, that sometimes we can blame the government or we can blame our councils, but those motorists who park over and block dropped kerbs while they nip into someone's house or the bookies or the chippy, you need to stop doing it. I would like to think that those who do this do it, they just don't think, rather than being inconsiderate and a couple of months' ago, my missus had a hip replacement and I had to push her around in a wheelchair a few times and I met that on a daily basis and not just once or twice, on many occasions and some people say I've got a big gob and if I saw the driver, I'd ask him why he'd parked there and he'd apologise and I'd say, I don't want you to say sorry, I just don't want you to do it. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, is there anybody who wishes to oppose the motion? No? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Okay.

Brother Dave Suddards – Branch 561, Hovis, Bradford: I'd just like to make a point of order on, why do we come to Conference? Do we come to Conference to debate motions, to bring motions? When we do this, we seem to be doing it every time we come to Conference, getting late and not being able or not allowing people to debate the motions fully. Now, I know these courses are there, can we not jiggle the break in between?, but I think it's very important to hear. I learn more listening to these motions

[APPLAUSE]

and debating them than I do anything on them courses. The courses have been great, they fill the gap, but the thing with Conference is the motions. So I'd like the President to retract that and do something so that we can hear all motions and debate them fully. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay. Well, on that point then, Dave, what I'm prepared to do is, obviously I know I normally get complaints about going above what you expect me to do in relation to your lunchtimes. All I was trying to do was make sure I could meet your needs to finish at half past 12, but what I will do is, if that point of order has been moved, I'll ask Conference to vote. Do we agree that you're prepared to allow us to move the times for when you get released for lunch and in which case then I'm happy to go to those people who want to take part in the debates? So, those in favour of, you know, having a later lunch, please show your hands. Those against? Well there you go, you're going for a later lunch. Okay. Well, in that case then, we'll reinstate it.

[APPLAUSE]

The mover of motion 46.

After leaks have revealed that the Foreign Office and British Intelligence services have been using news organisations such as Reuters, the BBC and Bellingcat to propagandise regime change in other countries the BFAWU should call for a public inquiry.

Brother Douggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Hiya, hiya. Pardon, aye? Aye? Oh God, am I doing the wrong one? It is me, yes, I knew it was me, I knew. Sorry. After the leaks that the Foreign Office and British Intelligence Service had been using news organisations, such as Reuters, the BBC and Bellingcat, to propagandise regime change in other countries, regime change, the BFAWU should call for a public inquiry. Let's face it, we all rely upon the news, we all rely upon the news to inform us truthfully and honestly about the world and I know they don't, but I'm just calling for something to be done on this particular one. I'll use an example. Many of you, I among them, cannot stand Bashar al-Assad and his murderous regime. They're a horrible regime, guilty of many war crimes. They're certainly guilty of murder and torture, but one thing Bashar al-Assad is not, he's not an idiot.

He's not an idiot and as far as the leaks that have come forward from the OPCW, Bashar al-Assad has not used chemical weapons in Syria, yet everybody believes they used chemical weapons in Syria. The evidence is not actually any evidence that Bashar al-Assad used chemical weapons on his own people. He's done a lot to them, you know, but he believes the people who probably were responsible were those lovely people in Jabitull ? Islam or Al-Nusra Front, the Al-Qaeda affiliate, who gained the precursor to the chemical weapons from probably Turkey and Saudi Arabia, but it's Bashar al-Assad who did that. If you want to know why Vladimir Putin, it's one of the reasons why Vladimir Putin, as horrible as he is and he is horrible, yes, is so angry with the West is that these organisations were deliberately training journalists and other people, so-called Human Rights guys, to go into Russia and to organise a regime change in Russia.

Now if I know it, I'm sure Vladimir Putin knows it and that's dangerous, that's dangerous. This is us interfering in the affairs of other countries and we all know where this leads, Iraq and a one and a half million people dead. Again, I wish Vladimir Putin would go to hell, yes and join all his other mates, do you know what I mean, but it's up to, it's up to the Russian people to get rid of Vladimir Putin. It's up to the Syrian people to get rid of Bashar al-Assad and I talk to many Syrians. It's not up for the West to go around and play God and try and organise regime change after regime change, it's not up for us, because we know where that leads. It leads to 20 years of war in Afghanistan. It leads to one and a half million dead in Iraq. It leads to the war on terror where I can't, I can't, I've stopped even counting the number of wars that are going on that the West has its fingers in. I've stopped counting it. I can't even, I can't even give you a rough estimate on the dead bodies and we've got our Intelligence Services playing round with these dubious and dodgy news organisations who are just promoting Western interest to say oh, it's alright, because we are the good guys, we are the good guys, we're doing it for the right reasons. I think it was George W Bush's favourite philosopher, Jesus Christ, who pointed out that the hypocrite is somebody who criticises other people's crimes and fails to look at his own. So, please vote for the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558, Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield: Right. I'm looking at the wording on this. After the leaks that the Foreign Office and British Intelligence Service had been using news organisations, such as Reuters, the BBC and Bellingcat, to propagandise regime change in other countries. I'm going to oppose it on the "other countries" and I'll tell you why. The BBC and Intelligence Service were propagandising regime change in our own country, through Covid. If you're having parties, grass your neighbour up. If you're doing this, spy on people. The BBC were driving that from the government and the British Intelligence Services, you know. We've had regime change in this country for two years. We've been told to stay at home, we've been told not to go to work, we've been paid to, no, I'm opposing it on that basis alone and I daren't go back to my missus and tell her otherwise.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Yes, I oppose this motion. They're not stupid, the Foreign Office and British Intelligence. Of course they probably use a little bit of Reuters, they'll probably use the BBC. International journalists, you know, internationally recognised and respected, but they'll use, they'll use, there'll be plenty of other areas of investigation that they have a facility to get to, so they're not just, what's in the point in, again I'm talking about the cost as well, what's the point in us doing another inquiry? It's another million pounds basically and we'll find yes, they do use BBC, they do use Reuters, as well as another 100 other organisations or information areas, so I don't see the point of an inquiry on this occasion. So, I oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560: Here on behalf of the Executive Council, who would ask Conference to support this motion. If anybody knows Douggie Johnstone, they'll know he knows his stuff, so yes, support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Douggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Right of reply. Do you know what, what Sean said about, you know, regime change in this country, you know. The funny thing is, he's so right. There's new leaks come out, there's new leaks come out, yes, that has actually said and if I'd have had time, I'd have put a motion in for Conference about this, that's actually said the Intelligence Service were up to their necks in making sure that Boris Johnson became the Prime Minister, not you, but Boris Johnson

[APPLAUSE]

That's, I know how dirty and disgusting they are and Mark, Mark, they're not stupid, I even agree with that. No, they're not stupid, but they are evil and amoral and they deserve to be held to account, because democracy dies in darkness, democracy dies when we don't know the truth, you know. That's how you end up with totalitarian regimes, that's how you end up with that, you know and by having an inquiry and you call people to account for what they've done, you know, we can actually make a difference, because democracy dies in darkness and if you want to see how an inquiry really exposes the Intelligence Service, go back to the 1970's when the Church Committee exposed the CIA and their murderous regimes. It's about time we did the same with British Intelligence, about time we held them to account and learn the true history, how they done a hell of a lot of things and how much blood is on their hands. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 47, it's you, Doug. Don't go back and sit down now [LAUGHTER].

47

Branch 356

That as a union we abhor the apartheid Israeli regime and their treatment of the Palestinian people. In fighting this we should support the BDS (Boycott Divestment and Sanctions) movement.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: It's, I bet he's sick of seeing my face, ain't you?

[LAUGHTER]

Thank you, thank you, it's nice to have a vote of confidence by Conference. Oh. Let's face it, we've always been strong supporters of the Palestinians, you know. We've always known it, what they are. An Israeli state is an apartheid state, but you needn't take my word for it, yes. B'Tselem, internationally recognised Human Rights, Israeli Human Rights Organisations called Israel an apartheid state. Amnesty International, Human Rights, internationally recognised Human Rights Organisation calls Israel an apartheid state. Human Rights Watch, a small Sikh conservative Human Rights Organisation, internationally recognised, calls Israel an apartheid state, but you don't even like listening to them. Think about the words of two people who know something about apartheid. Nelson Mandela called Israel an apartheid state. Desmond Tutu called Israel an apartheid state. In fact, he did, he said what the Palestinians are now happening to them in the West Bank is worse than what happened to them in South Africa, because at least the white South Africans wanted the black South Africans for cheap labour and they wanted them alive. Israel wants the Palestinians even gone or dead.

We all saw when they bombed Gaza, when a UN charity guy, Chris Gunness, a man used to dealing with media, sat on the thing. They told Israel time and time again, where there were shelters, they were using these places as shelters and after the fourth shelter, there was triple the capacity, had been bombed by Israel. He couldn't take it any more. He stood on Al Jazeera and he just broke down in tears. This was a man. Let's think about the attacks on Al-Aqsa, the third Holiest shrine in Islam, attacking it during the Holiest night of Ramadan, sending guys in there with, Israeli police in there with like tear gas cannisters, rubber-coated bullets, shock grenades and if you saw the picture of an 11 year old Palestinian little child who had been hit in the face by a tear gas cannister, you saw the picture when a guy came out carrying her. The child was sitting there stunned, did not know what happened. Imagine that, an 11 year old child. You're really brave Israel, aren't you, you're really brave. Or the three year old child they tried to arrest this year for throwing stones. I mean what three year old child doesn't throw a stone? But my God, to terrify a three year old child when you've got big Israeli border guards strapped to the nine tails with M16's, body armour, launching a whole unit against a three year old child.

Every year in the Knesset, the Palestinian MPs tried to bring a law to do with, tried to bring a law saying that Israel should be a country for all its citizens. It is blocked every year by the supreme court in Israel. This is apartheid. They are being oppressed. They are being terrified. They're shooting children. It should stop. Let's send a message. Let's do the thing what we did and let's join BDS and say, stuff you, Israel, because we did it against South Africa and they changed their ways, now let's do it against Israel, a state that's been an apartheid state since 1948. Let's do it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Seconder? Formally seconded, thank you very much. Any speakers? It'll be you.

Brother Dimitru Manole – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: Speaking on behalf of the EC. When they fought against apartheid, South Africa, one of our main weapons was sanctions. Deciding not to support the racist country, not to buy their goods, banning them from international sports. Saying that, if you are **(unclear)**, then we will treat you as a pariah, because you have, you behave like a pariah, yet we have heard a **(unclear)** that is backed with all the hi-tech weaponry by the West, urging that **(unclear)** abused the Palestinian people. They still, Palestinian, demolish their homes, they bring laws that discriminate against, banning Palestinians from driving on certain roads, arrest Palestinian children, taking them to military tribunals. Israeli children who break the law, they have family courts. Palestinian children have military tribunals, just by the Israeli Defence Force. They often, in these cases, force Palestinian children to sign confession in Hebrew, a language they do not understand. All cases are tried in Hebrew, many of these charges are not backed up by evidence, just a word is all that is needed. All they have to say is that a child threw a stone and that's it, the children goes to prison.

They have turned Gaza into the largest open air prison in the world, which according to the United Nations is now unfit for human habitation. Water is poisoned in Gaza. **(unclear)** sending in, the military in to bomb homes, schools and hospitals and one of the **(unclear)** who, according to the former Israeli Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, displayed real **(unclear)** in Gaza. One study carried out by the psychologist on Palestinian children found they were losing the hope to live. This is not because we are holding Israel to some higher standards that we do not hold others to. This is because we are holding Israel to the standard that we expect all to follow. We hold Israel as a pariah, because it's behaved like a pariah. Please vote this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Thank you very much. Motion 48.

48

Executive Council

This conference calls on Russia to end the invasion of Ukraine, and say that war can never be an answer to international affairs. Furthermore, our solidarity, prayers and hopes all go out to the people in Ukraine. We call on everyone to pull back and let what Abraham Lincoln called 'the better angels of our nature' take over.

Brother Dimitru Manole – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: Motion 48. Speaking on behalf of the EC and, sorry, speaking on behalf of the EC. So, this Conference call on Russia to end the invasion of Ukraine and say that war can never be an answer to international affairs. Furthermore, our Solidarity, prayers and hopes all go out to the people in Ukraine. We call on everyone to pull back and let what Abraham Lincoln called the better angels of our nation take over. **(unclear)** more innocent are condemned to die and refugees to flee the horror of war. War is never the answer to the ills of the world. At the Nuremberg trials after World War Two, the leading Nazi war criminals were tried under three major charges. These were as follows: the planning of the waging of war, the waging of aggressive war and the crime against humanity. One of this, the second, the waging of aggressive war was the most serious of charges in that it contains the evil of all of the whole. For in this motion, we call on Russia to end its invasion. For what they have committed in the most serious of war crimes, the supreme war crime, which is the waging of aggressive war. It also calls on all others in this conflict to pull back. That means that flooding the Ukraine with weapons is no answer to the war. Attacking the **(unclear)** with heavy **(unclear)** battalions is not an answer. Expanding **(unclear)** Russia is not an answer. The answer is pull back and do what is best for all and listen to all sides and compromise. The answer is to sit down and talk. The answer is negotiation and understanding. The answer is war, to war is peace. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: It's formally seconded. Speakers?

Brother Mohinder Badhan: Friends, I don't know whether to laugh or cry. Now, those people, you see on the TV every day people suffering, kids being burnt, right, a lovely country has been destroyed and those people have been pushed into that by NATO and NATO now they are supporting them, right, giving them weapons and saying fight, now fight, right. How many people have died, right. You have grandchildren, I have grandchildren, right. Little babies burnt and we all know when you have a grandchild or son or daughter little, if they have, if they have some little bit injury, bleeding, your heart cries, right and I've got grandchildren, every little thing their parents do and they ring me, grandad, my dad said this, my dad said I'm bleeding, right. Now whole **(unclear)** is seeing that drama, right and they push them there, while, I don't want wars, but to put somebody in that situation, then hide, right. It's about time, the fight is not, the wars are not the solution. This is the advice people are giving them. What should they do now? and get killed and people, America and all this Western world is watching them.

If their, if it was their children or their grandchildren, situation have been different. So, it says we are with them, prayers and that, right. I don't believe in prayers. You pray God, right, is He coming down, is He going to help them? Prayers, if you lose somebody, I lost my son, well education person, he was in the high position in Jobcentre over several area, offices, in London. I lost him three year ago, with cancer, right and it hurts me, right, although he was about 60, but little babies being burnt and the West is laughing. We're helping you, they're not helping, they're saying have the weapons, get killed and we are backing you, right. I'm an old man, if I'm dropped on there and I need somebody to help, to wake, to make me stand up, not prayer, God is not coming. I live in Wolverhampton, in the town centre I see preachers and Christians and all sorts of people and they say, they give lectures. Jesus is coming soon and I say excuse me, when the people were watching me, I said, please ask Jesus, Jesus was a great man, he sacrificed his life for us, right and I said, please ask him to come down soon, because the virus, Mr Virus and Mr Corona is killing the world and he is going to wait until the whole, whole creatures on earth, everything has been destroyed?

So, if there is a God, I'm in doubt whether I believe it or not, I'm agnostic, right, but I will believe in religion if the God comes down now and saves the world from Mr Corona. I call him Mr Corona, the reason, because scientists says he is a living creature, germ, I don't know what they call, that he has got a life, so you either kill that or you treat this corona. So, I'm at a loss and giving prayers, prayers and I used to have a drink at night when I got, when I wake up sometimes in the middle of the night and I see the scenes of the poor babies, right and NATO. What's NATO? and if they have any guts, they should have a go at Russia. Thanks, Brothers, thanks for listening to me.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you and actually I had come here for something else, but I wanted to go back the same way, because 4th June my grandchildren and my family was gathering, putting things there, grandad Happy Birthday and it's old man. Got up early and ..., right, so I will, that's a different thing. If my friends

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: No, Mohinder, we're going to have to wind up, because we've got other speakers

Brother Mohinder Badhan: Alright, thank you, thank you

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: so, so if you wouldn't mind, okay, cheers.

Brother Mohinder Badhan: Thank you.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Next.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: Dimitri, with all respect, I'm opposing this motion and that is simply on the wording. It's lovely and it's an ideal world, but I disagree with you and everyone in this room, as Socialists, Trade Unionists, whatever, should disagree with that bit. Sometimes wars are necessary. Sometimes it takes a war to solve an international problem. Franco wouldn't have just listened to you debating with him. I know Adolf certainly wouldn't have just sat there. Oh sorry, don't do that, we're going to sanction you, we're going, if you were the, you know, a better, sorry, we don't like you. No, sometimes you have to go to war. I'm sorry, I don't like it, but sometimes you have to be militant. So for that reason, for the wording, I'm opposing it. If you want to send a message saying God bless Ukraine, I'm well up for that, but I can't support something that takes my right to armed struggle and militancy away from me and nor should any of you. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Mark Dickens – Branch 568, Fox's Biscuits: Short and to the point. This is about the motion, opposing the motion. How do you negotiate with a warmongering society, basically? We should have done this years ago. He's gone into Crimea, he's already taken some of the areas of Ukraine, basically, so we did have opportunities and we have negotiated with this guy as years have gone by and it's made no difference at all. So it's come to this point now. I hate war, I hate murder, I hate killing basically, but this guy, he needs to be, he needs to be put to task for war crimes and nothing more and if it means going into war basically, trying to get rid of them all, trying to get rid of the regime, that's what we need to do, but I do hate war and I understand the sentiment, but no, disagree.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Duggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Hiya. I'm supporting this motion, yes. I'm supporting this motion because it calls for peace, yes and Mark, I understand what you're saying, this guy, yes. As much as I can't stand Vladimir Putin, yes, you obviously have not read about how this conflict developed over years and years. This conflict's actually not been going a few weeks since Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine, this conflict's been going on since 2014 and if you talk about it, there has been a negotiated settlement that was done in the Minsk Courts.

The Minsk Courts were constantly violated, not by Vladimir Putin but by the Ukrainian side. They constantly violated. Now, I can't stand Vladimir Putin, he's horrible and I'll tell you one thing, if he gets done for war crimes, yes, I'm okay with that, but I'm also okay with Tony Blair and George Bush being done for war crimes.

[APPLAUSE]

You know. Jeremy Corbyn said a great thing about this. Jeremy Corbyn really shows you how a true leader of the Labour Party acts and he said, he said what we've got to do is that all wars end in talk. Let's get past the fighting and let's go to the talking. Why don't we do that? In fact, another person who's called out for negotiation and I can't believe I'm even going to praise this guy, because he's an affront to every decent human being and that's Donald bloody Trump. Donald Trump has called for negotiation. That's the only way we're going to get out of this, it's the only way. Let's everybody pull back and that's what I love about this motion, because it says let's pull back, let's show that we're decent human beings, let's not, Dimitri said it brilliantly. He said it fantastically. Let's not flood the Ukraine with weapons, because we know the only people who's going to be dying is our class, you know and I condemn Vladimir Putin, but I also condemn the war for the 14,000 killed in the Donbas, who've been killed since 2014. Let's get past this, let's start talking, let's show what Abraham Lincoln called the better angels of our nature. In fact, I wrote down the full quote: we are not enemies, we must not be enemies, though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as they surely will be, by the better angels of our nature. Support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Glyn Tozer – Branch 508, Lightbody's: Just a quick one. Just a quick opposing, just to the wording, the whole pulling back thing. If we pull back, they're going to get steamrollered and then who's next? The next country on the line? Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Right of reply?

Brother Dimitru Manole – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: Yes, I have a reply. Speaking on behalf of the EC. Gentlemen, Brothers and Sisters, for the one who are opposing, I got two sentences for you. **(unclear)**.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Okay. Those against? That's lost. Okay. 49.

49

Branch 356

That the conference is disgusted by Saudi Arabia's attack on Yemen, which has according to the United Nations (UN) has made the country the biggest human catastrophe on earth. We hence call on the UK government to stop all arm sales to Saudi Arabia.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Hiya. I was going to say something if the last one had passed, like, lots of us condemn Vladimir Putin for war crimes, a lot of us condemn say like, condemn Bashar al-Assad for his war crimes, you know. A lot of us condemn, it's always like the worthy and the unworthy victim, as Noam Chomsky put. We're all bothered about the worthy victims, but nothing is said about Saudi Arabia. What Saudi Arabia has done makes what in the Ukraine, happening in the Ukraine, kids play. Saudi Arabia has killed, before the Ukraine war started, 347,000. They bombed water treatment plants, causing the biggest cholera outbreak in the history of recorded history. Saudi Arabia has blockaded Ukraine, meaning that millions of people are going to starve to death. Nothing is said, no-one, didn't happen. Saudi Arabia buys our bombs, great.

We're supplying a dictatorship that carries out, in the words of Mohammed Daoud, said Saudi Arabia are basically like an Isis that's made it, not my words. Saudi Arabia do all the same kind of things. They execute people in public, they stone people, they carry out crucifixions, that's Saudi Arabia, but we seem to bend our, bend our knee to the guys in Riyadh and the Saudi King, we have all the flags are at half mast. Saudi Arabia, I can't even, I couldn't even like tell you the amount of crimes Saudi Arabia has committed. Saudi Arabia has no regard for human rights. They bombed Yemen into an absolute, they've almost flattened that place, almost flattened it and it is the poorest country within the Middle East and that's saying something. Poverty abounds. The biggest cholera outbreak in human history, millions of people due to start starving to death. Let's call out Saudi Arabia for what they are, an evil, theocratic dictatorship that cares about no-one. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Dimitru Manole – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: Speaking on behalf of the EC. If I sold somebody a knife, knowing full well that he is going to murder someone with it, am I not guilty of aiding and abetting? For a crime is being committed in Yemen. Hospitals bombed, school bombed, market bombs, water treatment plants bombed, all this being have happened and being enabled to happen by the British and American governments and arms manufacturers. We (unclear) with indignation at war crimes in the Ukraine, but when it comes to those of Saudi Arabia, there is nothing but silence. We cry, we cry out Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but when it comes to Saudi Arabia, there is nothing but silence. We cry out about freedom of the press, but when Saudi Arabia government murder Jamal Khashoggi, it is forgotten in a couple of months. There are tears for the victims of the war in Ukraine, but when it comes to the hundreds of thousands killed in Yemen, nothing is said. How often have our bought-out, sold-out corporate media dealt with the Saudi Arabian invasion of Yemen? How often do they talk about the human catastrophe that is being visited on Yemen by the Saudi regime? The fact is that Mohammed bin Salman body count dwarfs that of Vladimir Putin many times over. What is said about that? I tell you, absolutely nothing.

Nothing is said about the millions driven to starvation by the Saudi blockade on the largest cholera outbreak in recorded history. Press and politician alike are silent. They say it is important to the British economy, but the fact is that Saudi Arabia accounted in 2016 for 1.3% of all UK exports. For the US, they accounted for 1.6% of American exports. Not really a great blow to our economy, is it? But let's talk about the allies who are fighting alongside Saudi Arabia in Yemen. You are bound to have heard of them. Do you know who am I referring to? It's Al-Qaeda. It is widely reported that the Saudis are fighting alongside Al-Qaeda in Yemen, not surprising, since even the US State Department have admitted in leaks of course, WikiLeaks, that the major backer of Islam (unclear) is Saudi Arabia. Not surprising, is it? Let's face it, Saudi Arabia gave us 15 of the hijackers on the 9/11. So vote for this motion, vote for human rights of what that says, our morals are not for sale, that we stand for those without power against powerful, that we stand with the victims and not the perpetrators. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 46, oh sorry, 50, 50. I was going backwards, I said 40 [LAUGHTER].

50

Executive Council

We stand in solidarity with the people of Kazakhstan, and callout for justice for those killed in their protests for their rights.

Brother Dimitru Manole – Branch 357, Greencore, Northampton: Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council. We stand in Solidarity with the people of Kazakhstan and call out for justice for those killed in the protest for their rights. This is a motion for dignity, this is a motion that calls for justice for the 235 people killed in Kazakhstan. For after Human Rights Watch investigated, they said Kazakhstan has failed to properly investigate the death of over 200 people in protest and riots in January, 2022. Human Rights Watch said today, security forces detained several injured protesters who were receiving hospital treatment and are accused of torturing them. Few members of the security forces have faced charges for unlawful death, (unclear) or torture. Kazakhstan should urgently establish an independent investigation, including both national and international experts into the January events. Despite many announcements by Kazakhstan in the last four months that they are investigating the January events, survivors and their families tell a different story. Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia Director of Human Rights Watch, he said, criminal investigation into killings has not been transparent and timely, while investigation into torture and other ill treatment allegation have been delayed with complaints passed from one state body to another and no suspects identified. Yes, the new president of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, has put forward amendments that will strengthen human rights within their constitution. We say that there is one way to improve human rights in Kazakhstan. Give justice to the families and victims of those injured and slain in the protest earlier this year. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Formally seconded. Any speakers? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 51.

51

Branch 356

That the BFAWU condemns the sanctions that have placed upon the governments of Nicaragua and Venezuela. These are governments who have been democratically elected by their people, and all independent observers to their elections have said so.

Brother Douggie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Hiya. The BFAWU condemns the sanctions that have been placed on the governments of Nicaragua and Venezuela. These are governments that have been democratically elected by the people, all independent observers have said so. In fact, Jimmy Carter, hardly an anarcho-syndicalist, formerly declared that the Venezuelan elections were the freest ones he had ever seen. Venezuela has continually improved the education of its people, saying what their rights are on a constitution in subsidised food markets, ones that are trying to be bought by the United States and Europe. They tried to give Venezuela, they said that Nicolás Maduro, I admire Maduro because he's a guy who went from a bus driver to the highest position in Venezuela. I think he's a guy that we could all admire. Nicolás Maduro, they tried to say that the true guy was a guy called Juan Guaidó, everybody said Juan Guaidó is the president of Venezuela, apart from most people in Venezuela had never even heard of Juan Guaidó, let alone voted for him. In fact, you can see footage online, when Juan Guaidó goes to a working class barrio, the people in the barrio nearly wanted to rip him apart, the police had to hold them off. They often say about violence, apart from the violence has been taken part by the opposition in Venezuela, backed fully to the hilt by the United States and Britain. Venezuela is now one of the largest producers of oil and oil is priced in dollars, so whatever you sell crude oil in, it has to be done in dollars, it's always been done in dollars since the 1920's. The trouble is, Venezuela has now been banned from using the dollar, it can't even trade. All commodities in the world are priced in dollars.

Venezuela are barred from using the dollar, they're struggling, struggling over and over again. In an age of Covid, when Venezuela tries to treat its people, a damn sight better than our damn government, they have all the medical equipment blockaded it. It's only through great help from places like Cuba, who have a reputation and we support the Solidarity for Cuba and I'm glad we're part of a Union that does, that is noted for its kindness of sending medical equipment all around that world, that's been helping Venezuela. Nicaragua had the temerity of guess what and let's face it, the United States history with Nicaragua is not a good one, the United States is the only country to be convicted in the World Court of international terrorism against the people of Nicaragua, when they used the Contras in the 1980's and blockaded their, mined their harbours. Nicaragua has had the temerity to vote for a Socialist government. Oh, that's so bad, isn't it? Voting for a Socialist government, people using their democratic rights to vote for a government who care about them, who wants to provide them with free health care, who wants to provide them with free college education, who wants to improve everybody's rights. That is a terrible crime, but our government and the United States seems to think it is and they call them an illegitimate government, despite the fact that all observers saying that their elections were far more free than the ones we held in this country and far more free, but they have a crime because they want to help their people and they're going to be sanctioned. Let's say no to the bullies, the bullies against governments who want to help their people. Let's say no, you can use your, you can stuff your sanctions. Let's stand in Solidarity with the people who had the temerity to vote for Socialist governments.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? Okay, Dimitri, oh, it's you, oh sorry, yes. Oh right, okay [LAUGHTER]. I've got so used to you getting up, Dimitri, I'm looking at you. The Executive would ask you to support the motion. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 52.

This Trade union recognises the struggle of Clover dairy workers in South Africa to defend their jobs and the productive assets against MILCO, an Israeli corporate. MILCO is notorious in Israel for shamelessly supporting illegal Israeli settlements in Palestine.

MILCO bought the 120 year old Clover brand and is now cutting workers wages, downsizing jobs and closing down productive facilities in small agricultural towns. While 1,200 Clover workers will lose their jobs, the jobs of many more farm, distribution, commercial workers are also threatened.

Many of the gains made in post-apartheid South Africa are now at stake as the livelihood and future of the people is now threatened.

We support the Clover workers and their unions, GIWUSA (General Industrial Workers Union of SA) and FAWU (Food and Agricultural Workers Union) in their hour of need. This strike has lasted 16 weeks with terrible suffering and difficulties for the unions themselves.

We support the union's demand for nationalisation and democratic operation of the plants by the workers in a public cooperative.

We therefore send this message of solidarity to GIWUSA and FAWU and donate to this cause.

Through the officers of the Bakers Union (BFAWU) Executive committee we call on the South African government to revoke the MILCO take-over of Clover for the violation of their agreement. The South African government should stop asset stripping and support continuous Clover production for the people of South Africa.

We urge all affiliated branches, trade councils, national unions and international trade unions to actively support this struggle of the Clover workers

Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary: Conference, the motion goes into depth about the situation the Clover Dairy workers are facing in South Africa to defend their jobs and productive assets against Milco. The food industry, as we know, is global and when our Brothers and Sisters are under attack in other countries, we need to stand with them in absolute Solidarity, just as we would if it was a site here and Conference, we need to send our Solidarity to the General Industries Workers Union of South Africa and the Food and Allied Workers Union who are both representing the Clover workers. These workers are looking at a minimum of a 30% salary cut, which is crippling enough, but others are looking up to 60% of their salaries being cut and unsurprisingly, it's only impacting those on the shop floor, not the executives of the company, workers who are low paid and barely surviving on their current wages, who have built the company up over many years, being thanked for their loyalty and hard work by being stripped of their wages. It's a disgrace and it's little wonder then that their Unions are demanding nationalisation and democratic operation of the plants in a public co-operative. The workers have engaged in industrial action, they are still taking part in industrial action because the fight continues. We ask that you support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Okay, it's formally seconded. Any speakers? To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. 53.

53

Branch 356

The BFAWU warns against the growing tensions between the west and China and Russia. We believe that we are at the beginning of a new cold war, at least as dangerous or if not more hazardous than the previous one. The last cold war risked all humanity with the world only narrowly getting in one piece. We therefore call upon all parties to tone down belligerent actions, and start a process of détente, talking and treating to one another with respect.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: 53, isn't it? Hello. Hiya. There's a Cold War that's happening, it's been happening for a long time and again I know the regimes that we suddenly like, you know, abhor, yes, they're not good regimes and it's not a call about support. It's about keeping humanity alive until the next century. It's about surviving, you know. This new Cold War is far more dangerous than the last one and again, I'm going to bring up Russia, yes. Russia is not a nice place, it's not a good country, it has not got a great leader, you know, it is, but you want to know why they ended up with Vladimir Putin? and it's got a lot to do with how we treated Russia after the end of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. If you want to talk about how, about talking with Russia, let's just go on about the treaties we have broken with Russia. Let's just talk about some of those treaties. We promised Mikhail Gorbachev, who said Germany could reunite, we promised him that NATO would not move one inch to the west. 1990's, Bill Clinton comes along, the US Defense Industry says where are going to find all these new weapons, sell our new weapons and they says the great way is to expand NATO eastward, do you know what I mean and Yeltsin rang up Bill Clinton and begged him, begged him to actually not go through with this, please, you are making me look bad, you are making me look bad and he went, he just ignored him because Russia weren't deserving, you weren't the big enemy no more, you're weak, we'll pass you aside, yes.

George W Bush broke the agreement of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, another one signed between Reagan and Gorbachev, broken. The United States bilaterally pulled out, as they started to, bases surrounding Russia. Donald Trump, apart from being a Russian pawn, pulled out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, another one signed by Gorbachev and Reagan, as they built their forces up and expanded NATO. This is why Russia doesn't trust us, you know. In fact, Russia gave the United States, the third person who rings George W Bush after 9/11, the third person who rings him up, offering support, is Vladimir Putin. They would never have been able to resupply their troops had it not been for the Russians saying yes, we will allow you to resupply your troops in Afghanistan through Russian territory. Let's face it, you couldn't use Pakistan, because Pakistan is just not safe enough and they surround it, breaking treaties and the thing is, it's not even me that's warning about this. The guy who was the actual architect of Cold War Policy was a guy called, an American diplomat called George Kennan, highly distinguished, nowhere near a left-winger.

George Kennan, in 1998, as NATO expanded, wrote a piece saying, decrying this, saying there was no reason for it, there was no justification for it. This is the guy who came up with containment of the Soviet Union, no shrinking violet by any means. He condemned it. Of all, it's the issue about NATO expansion, it's the only issue where you can find Henry Kissinger and Noam Chomsky on the same side and if you want to know about how this breaking of treaty after treaty leads you, Stephen Cohen who wrote the book War on Russia, turned around and he remembers in the 1990's, he was a Russia expert, Professor of Russian studies, lived in Moscow, was friends with Nikolai Bukharin's widow, held her coffin at her funeral, was one of the pallbearers, knew Mikhail Gorbachev, knew a lot of people, remembers in the 1990's is they broke agreement after agreement, just after the bombing of Serbia, NATO did and turned around and bumped into a Russian, a liberal Russian who was in the Duma, who told him, he said, you keep, keeping us like, teaching us like this and there's going to be a comeback.

He didn't see him for several years and then he bumped into him after Putin, a couple of years after Putin had taken power and the guy turns round to him, he says, don't talk to me about Putin, he's your creation, meaning the United States and now we've got China on our sights, as bases surround China like a noose and this is dangerous, this is dangerous. The nuclear weapons, it only takes and if you, Stanley Kubrick couldn't make this up, it only takes around three of these big nuclear weapons to go off and you end up with a nuclear winter, only three of the big ones and we've got thousands in the world and an accident could happen. Three big nuclear weapons goes off, world ending as a nuclear winter encapsulates us all. This is a dangerous world. The scientists at the Nuclear Bulletin have moved it to 30 seconds to midnight, midnight is world's over. We are looking at a holocaust that is coming, if we don't do something to end this. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Nick Mead – Speaking on behalf of the Executive: The Executive would ask you to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Motion 54.

54

Branch 356

That conference condemns the seizure, taking to the USA of the Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab, who is now on trial in America. Saab's real crime is breaking the US sanctions placed upon Iran unilaterally by America. This is not being done under international law by the United Nations but by the US and its allies on its own volition.

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: Do you know what? I'm going to make this short.

Support this motion, because it's a good motion.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: I'll try and keep it short. I've actually discussed this with Dougie and me and him were both at a point where we didn't quite know whether to remit, whether to put it in. The sentiment is absolutely lovely, however, Alex Nain Saab Morán, as he was born in Columbia, the Venezuelan diplomat in question. To keep it brief, he's a bit dodgy. Going back to the Housing Mission Project in Venezuela, the government wanted to build houses. Basically they got contracts to build 25,000 units of low income housing, etc, etc. We've referred to Madura, Maduro, Madura, yes, that's him, basically Alex Saab formed a couple of companies with his stepsons and they started getting the contracts from the government to get the Housing Mission, also to get the local committees for supply and production and that was getting the food for the poor people and that was absolutely brilliant, absolutely great ideas, we support that. The problem is, with him and his mates, first off, they took a payment of 159 million US dollars to buy the housing materials. They delivered 3 million US dollars-worth of material, so somewhere along the line these guys, well, I don't know, do you know what I mean, 156 millions disappeared and that's just one of these things.

He's got a complete list of things going through that he has been investigated for, charged for, whatever, but funnily enough, he's got some powerful friends, as I say and by 2012 – 13, Ecuador, Columbia and Venezuela were all investigating him. Funnily enough, cases were dropped, investigators were threatened, felt the need to leave their country for their own safety, etc, etc, etc. Right, so Saab's feeling a bit, you know, beleaguered, him and his mates move some of their firms and holdings to Hong Kong, Turkey, places like that and if it's not against the law, it's not against the law. Anyway, from 2016, American DAA are investigating him.

Also, the Columbians charge him while he's in exile, because he refuses to answer charges, in 2018. The US in 2019, the Swiss round about the same time, but they came to the logistical decision that they'd never get hold of him, so they dropped the charges in 2021. Do I need to keep going on?

This bloke, right, this bloke is a bit of a naughty boy. He's got his fingers in the jar, he keeps getting caught. Right, just because he's doing it on behalf of a Socialist government, doesn't make it right, okay? So, I ain't going to support him, simple as that, 'cause he's taking, he's lying, he's taking money to feed the poor and house the poor and it's going in his own back pocket. Yes, he sits in an American jail at the moment, waiting on decisions, etc, etc, etc, but here's one for you. The Venezuelan government didn't even want to know him until he got nicked in Cape Verde, when he got dragged off the plane which, yes, you know, America, whatever, but all of a sudden, imagine the workers of Solva Foods. They were happily, you know, turning up for work, their bosses came down and went, you're not working today, lads, you're coming to do a video, you are going to be video stars and you're going to be taking part in videos supporting Alex Saab and they're like, poor people going like, who the poops Alex Saab, never heard of him. You wouldn't would you, why would you? Anyway, so

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Start to wind up now, Mark.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: Is what?

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Start to wind up now, Mark.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: I am, I am, but I just want to

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: You've gone over, you've gone over your time.

Brother Mark Hilton – Branch 558, Leeds: Oh, come on. I will then, alright. But basically imagine their happiness when they're told, they went, well, we don't know him, we're not doing it and they went (tittering), think about your jobs, your houses and your food, because you won't have one if you refuse to support this. You know, that to me is threatening workers, threatening workers that are members of Unions, right? So, I'll wrap up, I'll leave it there. All I'll say is I am not prepared to give my support to help this criminal. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Brother Sean Molloy – Branch 558, Branch Secretary, Rathbones, Wakefield: First of all, I want to say how enjoyable this session's been, it really has been. It's testament to this Trade Union how a point of order was raised and everybody sat here and listened to good, honest, healthy debate. I found it really enjoyable. I might be slightly mental, but I honestly felt like I was an inmate in the Strangeways Riot in that, at some point the tensions were getting that bad, but I'm going to support the Branch. The Branch are opposing this for one reason only. He's got, whatever it is, but I don't even know this kid, you know what I mean, I know nothing about him. He's spent time telling me who he was, but he don't work at our place and I'm sure he's not a member of this Trade Union, so I'm opposing it.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716: Afternoon, Conference. I'm here to speak for the Executive Council. We're asking you to oppose the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Brother Dougie Johnstone – District Branch 356: I'm remitting.

Brother Ian Hodson, National President: Oh, right, okay.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Okay, Conference. Obviously you've got a load of Ocolan folders on there. Lukasz, can you come up here, could you hold those Ocklon? folders up while, while we just come to the end of Conference. Mick, can Mick come up? Okay, could you stand up with them, stand up with them? Does the Executive want to get in the picture? Okay, could you, hold it up at the back, hold them up, so people can see them when he's taking this photograph. Solidarity, freedom to our clan?, go on. I'll tell ya [LAUGHTER]. Have we got them? Okay, that's cool, that's cool. Yes, get your banner ready, we're finishing with Mick.

Okay, so Conference, Conference. Okay, Conference, obviously we'd like to thank the Standing Orders Chair and the Committee. Obviously thanks to the Vice President, the Scrutineers, the FTOs for door-keeping and for making sure Delegates got here, some people did that job better than others. We want to thank the office staff, Jan and Vicky and obviously all the office staff who work across all of our Offices. For all those who set everything up in the Hall, oh, that was me and you and yes, some other people.

Obviously, those who have made sure that we can see everything on the screen. All of the stallholders, all of the people that held the sessions, all of the artists that we've had, including Plastic Bertrand, who made an appearance last night. Obviously you for the way you've acted during Conference. Obviously it was a different format to how we normally deal with Conference, but we thank you for taking part. I'm going to invite Mick to give the closing address and that will be the end of the Conference sessions, to make sure you can get your lunch, because it's only 1 'til 1.30 that you've got to be able to get served downstairs and then obviously back in your sessions at 2 o'clock.

So, Mick, please close Conference for us.

Mick Mcdonald, Chair of Standing Orders, Closes Conference

Brother Mick Mcdonald – Chair of Standing Orders: I certainly will. You've pinched a bit of my thing, so I'll have to knock some off. Mick Mcdonald, Branch 577, Chair of Standing Orders Committee. Conference, this is my final address of the 2022 103rd Annual Conference. This year we have all been first-time Delegates to a format what we're doing, everybody's new to this. We have had a varied range of motions, less than previous years, but the debates of these motions have been truly inspirational, by our Delegates. The knowledge and awareness of our Delegates is amazing and the way they conduct themselves in debates is outstanding.

We have had issues with the siting of the Standing Orders room, I had my natural rants and raves and, things can only get better. We have four new members of Committee, we have Region 1 and I want a member from them next year, as no member on this Standing Orders. Region 2, Terry Povey, Region 3, Mohinder Badden?, Region 4, John Fox, I'm in No. 5 and then Peter Algie? from Region 7. This has been a steep learning curve for all of the new members of Standing Orders, also for older members really. We have also had marvellous help from Jan Hawke?, very knowledgable and Vicky Sykes, a very quick learner, she's had to be. They have had a hard and stressful job, setting up photocopiers, etc. These people deserve a round of applause from Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

Well, Conference, we've only collected 20 quid in fines, but we're going to pass this on to the food bank, so I don't know, you've got and you've got a raffle, that's all going to the food bank with that food over there.

Right, Conference, on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, I would like to thank you for all your respect, patience and consideration you have shown to us and we would apologise for talking, but that is the nature of Committee, to discuss.

Thank you, Conference and a safe journey home to everyone.

[APPLAUSE]

[CONFERENCE ENDS]

