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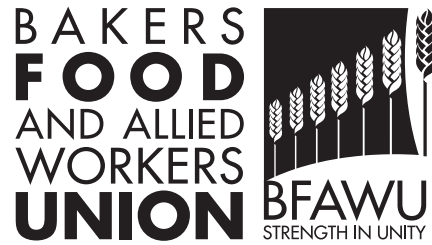
**The  
One Hundred and Seventh  
Annual Conference  
Yarnfield 2026**

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**Verbatim 2025**

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**Official Report  
of the  
106<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

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

**from  
Saturday 14 June 2025  
to  
Thursday 19 June 2025**

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# Sunday

## 15th June 2025

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay Conference, we're going to go to the roll call. General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Region 1. Yes please, Peter, that's what we decided yesterday at the EC meeting. I'll go to Region 2.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Region 2?

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Have you counted yourself and Standing Orders? Oh, this is going to be a long hard .....

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Don't forget to include yourself and the Standing Orders person. Unless the Standing Orders person isn't a Delegate.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Peter, have you got Region 1? How many? No, but we'll sort it out. Region 3, yes. Region 4. Thanks, John. Region 5. We've got, Region 6, Region 7 and we've got one, two, three, four, five online. Thank you. You're going to have to get better Exec.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, just to remind everybody about some of the logistics. Obviously unless you've already organised something with the Standing Orders in relation to needing to have your 'phone on in case of an emergency, our preference is that you turn them off, because we don't want them going off in Conference and if they do go off, it's likely that Standing Orders will fine you for them going off in Conference. Toilets are just through those doors. You'll also see that the fire exits are clearly marked and obviously if there's a fire, a fire alarm goes, which I'm not aware of one that's being planned, we go down those, actually just follow me, because I'll be leading from the front if there's a fire and we just go outside and we'll meet outside. Obviously we'll get the EC collectively to understand how to count and take your names to make sure you're all there, so let's hope there isn't an emergency, because it might take us a couple of days for them to be able to get that. Obviously nobody's allowed in the Standing Orders room unless invited by the Standing Orders or because they want to move an emergency motion, but again you'll need to request that through the Standing Orders. Through Conference, the Standing Orders, you will be able to locate mainly on the door, they will be doing the doors as you come in to Conference Hall, so I've seen most of the Standing Orders in here. If you just want to put your hand up so everybody can identify the Standing Orders. If you have a look, you will see them stood round the room.

So if you do need to see Standing Orders, just grab hold of a Standing Orders person and they will be able to advise you whatever information it is that you need to do things, whatever it is that you need to do with Standing Orders. Obviously there is no smoking in the building or in the rooms and obviously I know there's some new Delegates here. I just want to make it very, very clear that if you do smoke in your room and it is caught by the staff here, you will face a fine, because obviously the law's, the legislation's been in place for quite a number of years and they will fine you and potentially it may be that the Standing Orders take action or request the Executive to take action following Conference, because obviously we expect people to uphold the rules and the regulations that require people not to smoke in their rooms. There are smoking areas, it's not outside here, it's round the corner and I think most of you will have found it last night anyway. That's because I've shut up. Okay, so obviously that's on the smoking, I can't be any clearer on that. So Conference, if you could make sure, just on the rules of the hotel.

Donations for the food bank, just over there by the door, or I did hear this yesterday. If you park near Sarah's car, to save her having to drag it from here to her car, just tell her and obviously when we're getting to the near, end of Conference and we can transfer it from your car to her car, that would be an awful lot easier, won't it, yes, okay. There he is over there and Robbie's got some badges and some magnets and are you selling them to raise money as well? All donations to the food bank. They're great badges, great magnets. Invest, invest heavily. People need our support and assistance at this time.

Okay, so in your packs you will have seen there is a Code of Conduct. That Code of Conduct is really, really important. It is linked to the Rule Book and you are expected to treat each other with the dignity and respect that you would expect to be treated with yourself while you're in Conference, while you're outside of Conference. We uphold the belief that everybody should be included, nobody is excluded and we recognise that the, the importance of people being able to feel secure, because we want Conference to be a place where everybody feels that they can take part, regardless of their background, regardless of any way they identify or live their life.

We believe that Conference is a place where you can be who you are and we expect everybody here to appreciate and accept people's right to that too and I'm looking for my Standing Orders guy, of course he is, I was looking at him. I know, it is Sunday, my eyes aren't working properly and it's not because I was drinking, but obviously you can come down and give a report if you want.

For obviously new Delegates, what normally happens is, the Standing Orders will give obviously the opening address because they're responsible for Conference and they will go through some rules as well. They are also responsible for the motions at Conference and they will tell us what motions have been withdrawn, they will tell us what motions have been amended, they will tell us what motions are standing and they will make us aware of any emergency motions. Every time the person from Standing Orders speaks and I'm pleased to welcome Nick Mead, who's been elected the Chair of Standing Orders and I believe Noel Mullen was elected the Vice Chair of Standing Orders, I congratulate him on his election and give him the floor to address Conference and give his opening gambit to Conference, but just to clarify, when he comes on here, when he's moved the motions, I will ask Conference to accept his report. If you don't accept his report, then you have to come down and tell us why you don't accept his report, but other than that I'm just looking for a show of hands that you accept his report. So for the first time, Mr Chairman of the Standing Orders, please address Conference.

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** Mr President, General Secretary, Exec, Conference. On behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, I welcome you all to the Annual Conference. It is the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee that the procedures for this Conference are as follows. Conference will be called to order each morning at 9.30 prompt until 12.30 and each afternoon 2 until 3, followed by a fringe meeting today, tomorrow and Tuesday. Tea breaks, guest speakers and all presentations will be at the President's discretion. Each session will begin with a roll call taken by the General Secretary, with some assistance hopefully from the EC. Delegates not in the Hall for any roll call will be classed as late and will be sent to Standing Orders Office to be fined. If you need to leave Conference for any reason, then you need to first visit Standing Orders. If you fall ill, then please make your Executive Council Member aware so they can inform Standing Orders. Will Scrutineers please collect all nomination papers for TUC Delegates as early as possible and bring them to Standing Orders by 11.00 a.m. this morning. The Office door will close promptly at 11 o'clock. Tomorrow morning, Scrutineers are asked to collect all ballot papers and again have them up to Standing Orders by 11 o'clock. The doors again will be closed at 11 o'clock. Members of the Committee will be on duty outside the doors to answer any questions. Any Delegates coming to Standing Orders on Conference business must have the support of their full Delegation. Please carry your credential card with you, on your person, at all times. If you leave it on your table at lunchtime, you will not be let through until you have been to Standing Orders and there is a strong possibility that you will be fined as a latecomer, be warned. Finally, another reminder, switch off your mobile 'phones, because any money we raise will be going to the food bank.

Will you now please turn to your Agendas, it'll be the first part of the Agenda dealing with the rules. Motion 1, out of order. Motion 2 is withdrawn. Motion 3 is ruled out of order. Motion 4, out of order. Motion 5 withdrawn. Motion 6 withdrawn. Motion 7 withdrawn, Motion 8 withdrawn. Motion 9 stands, motion 10 stands. Motion 11 is now withdrawn. No. 12 stands, No. 13 stands, sorry, 14 stands, 15 out of order, 16 out of order, 17 stands, 18 stands, 19 stands and 20 stands.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay.

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** This is the end of this report.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay Conference, all those in favour of accepting the Standing Orders Report? That was pretty unanimous. Anyone against? Yes, I was right, it was unanimous, my eyes are working now, that's good, that's good. Thank you, Nick and thank you very much for that.

Okay, Conference. As you know, new Delegates you won't know this, but obviously Delegates that have been here before know that we used to invite the Mayor to open the Conference, but we decided that we're the Bakers Union and actually Mayors and politicians aren't really our thing, we'd rather have people who represent our class and who stand up and fight for our class and last year we were delighted to have John Dunn as the first speaker to open our Conference who's a real working class hero, a NUM member, someone who stood on those picket lines for 12 months, someone that obviously has continued the fight for Orgreave, someone who knows exactly what it's like to stand up for working class people and our communities. This year, obviously people will have seen on the news that there is a long-running dispute going on in Birmingham, the Birmingham bin strikers, which stands as a powerful example of workers standing up against injustice. Refuse workers who have taken brave action and sustained action in the face of unfair treatment and job cuts and the expectation that working class people should have to have up to a £10,000 a year pay cut, £10,000 taken from their wages, because politicians mismanaged the economy.

Why should workers pay the price? And I've got to say, it's a real honour and a privilege that today we're able to invite one of those brave and courageous workers and strikers to address our Conference. Please welcome Mike from the Birmingham bin strike and give him a Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union warm welcome.

[APPLAUSE and CHEERS]

### **Brother Mike Masters, UNITE the Union Shop Steward, opens Conference**

**Brother Mike Masters, Unite the Union Rep and Birmingham bin striker:** Thank you for that introduction, I'd better be good. My name's Mike, from Perry Bar, I'm a Driver/Team Leader and been Unite Shop Steward since December. Friends, September 2023 is a date to most of you of no significance, but to 370 workers this is when Birmingham City Council announced it had issued a Section 114 Notice, effectively declaring bankruptcy and announcing debts of £760 million due to equal pay claims. In October '23, the then Tory government send in six commissioners with Max Caller at the helm to overhaul Birmingham City Council, with powers of finance and decision-making, scheduled to last five years. Birmingham City Council then passes budget cuts, the largest in local authority history, cutting 600 council jobs, selling 11 community centres, moving bin collections to fortnightly, council tax rises by 21% for two years. Now, in July 2024, Labour take control of government. The six commissioners, instead of being dismissed, are told to continue with their plans for Birmingham City Council, under the guidance of Angela Rayner. Within those two years, they have announced their plans to restructure the waste service and as we now know, us workers are yet again to suffer.

Firstly, they've removed a safety critical role, then they removed the Grade 3 role completely, with loaders, my worker especially, losing £6,000 a year. That's the difference between sitting in the living room and sitting in a cardboard box, because that's his mortgage, £650 a month. Now suddenly, after reassurances, 18 months previous, drivers have now been told to expect a downgrade and losses of up to £10,000 and I've been quite generous with that, because there's some people losing £12,000. Friends, Angela Rayner recently visited Birmingham, but not a picket line I hasten to add and told bin workers to accept the generous offer that had been, the generous offer that had been offered. This same offer, which Birmingham City Council leader John Cotton said and I quote: 'no-one will lose any money'. Enough is enough. Why should we be made to pay for our employer's mistakes and be forced into austerity? Let the fat cats pay, with the 5.7 pay rise they gave themselves.

[APPLAUSE]

Six commissioners to add insult. Recent figures show the government-appointed fixers have racked up £2 million in fees and expenses, daily fees of £1,100, with Max Caller getting £1,200 a day expenses.

Bin workers were accused of holding the City to ransom and being greedy. Now not only have Birmingham City Council got an unhappy workforce, they now have the residents of Birmingham to answer to and all this under the eye of Keir Starmer, Angela Rayner and the Labour Party. This strike has been compared to strikes of the past. I'd like to think this is the strike that shapes our future, a future with no worry, no fear, a future where holidays mean kids are going on holiday. No fear of losing your house, no visiting food banks. Figures recently released show Birmingham City Council, since January 6th, have spent £200 million, £200 million on agency workers, security guards, police and more recently high court injunctions against their own employees. Our employer also making false allegations against its own workforce, workers arrested, held in cells for 10 hours, to be released without charge and now me, on Tuesday, facing dismissal, because a manager used a bin wagon to run me over and I complained about it and then got suspended.

Friends, we have stood strong, as our families have and without their support, this would be an even bigger fight. On a personal note, I just, every time I do this, I thank my wife for being with me.

Finally, on behalf of 370 proud Brothers and Sisters, thank you for your Solidarity, thank you for your support. Thank you for your time.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** So when people come to speak at our Conference, we present them with a little bag of goodies made by our members, some of them might be distributed by Unite drivers, but they're definitely made by BFAWU members .....

**Brother Mike Masters, Unite the Union Rep and Birmingham bin striker:** Thank you very much.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** and we sometimes give out a pewter baker, but we thought it would be more fitting this time to make a donation to the strike fund, so we'll get that sorted for you and put some money into that as well.

**Brother Mike Masters, Unite the Union Rep and Birmingham bin striker:** Thank you very much.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Thank you so much for coming.

**Brother Mike Masters, Unite the Union Rep and Birmingham bin striker:** Thank you, thank you.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** So are you ready with your let's support the bin strikers? Where do you want us, Neil, all down there? Yes, come on then.

**Neil Terry (photography):** Right, the only thing is Conference, if you, any that side and that side, I won't get you in, so if you can all come into the middle as much as you can for me, please. Can we have you three right in the dead centre, please. Yes, if you could come over for me. So if you come round to this side for me. Brilliant, hold them up as high as you can for me. Oh my God, that looks good. I'll try and get as many in as I can. Brilliant, thank you, comrades.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Is that, I'm on now, aren't I? I'm on, I'm on, wahay! Okay, thank you very much, Mike and obviously you take the support and Solidarity of the Delegation here in this room, but more importantly from every workplace across the country that we organise in and we stand with you and wish you all the best and every success, because you and your comrades absolutely deserve it, so thank you for coming and officially opening Conference.

So, clearly, now I can give you a bit more detail, because if this is your first time at Conference, this may feel a little bit strange. What on earth is going on, is probably running through your minds, but we are going to be as helpful as possible, we're going to try and make sure that we make it as easy as possible for you to be involved in and as easy for you to understand what the processes are, but if you feel that you have a question, please don't be shy, you are at Conference and you're amongst friends and if you have a question, you are welcome to come down and just come and ask on that microphone there. I know that sounds daunting, but it's not as daunting after you've done it once, trust me. I've got some sand to sell.

Okay, so we have got stall holders and those facilitating fringe meetings are going to be amongst us. We have got Thompsons, which are over there, or they will be in a bit. We have got Watkins and Gunn, who are coming today and they're going to be over there, they'll be over there. We have got Credit Union, Credit Union at the back. PayPlan is coming tomorrow. We have got the National Shop Stewards Network at the back, the stall's at the back anyway, yes. Stand Up To Racism, they're not here yet, but we think they'll be here at some point. Ron Todd Foundation's not here. We've got Janet from Hazards and obviously we'll be hearing from you this afternoon, great. GFTU, they're coming tomorrow. The Morning Star, the papers are over there, cool. Heat Strike, they're coming later and they will have a stall at the back, yes. TC Branding, which I believe I've just seen over there, okay. The Rosa Luxembourg, they're not coming, okay. The Union Insurance Services, which are over there at the back. Neil Terry who's obviously, you've already met, he's doing the photography and then obviously the fantastic Erwins doing our tech and filming and always do a fantastic job for us and even at most times is able to decipher what's been said, which is an incredible achievement, because most of the time I haven't got a clue what I said.

So, we have got quite a number of first-time Delegates this year, to Conference, so it's a good job that **[unclear]** what's going to happen, but can I just say, a warm welcome to in Region 1, listen, by the way, you may notice my pronunciations are not very good, yes, especially when it comes to names, especially difficult names, like Smith, so please don't feel insulted if I get it wrong, I'm telling you upfront I'm pretty crap at pronunciation and I'm not going to say it's because I'm a northerner, I'm just going to claim it's because my eyes don't work properly any more. So, can I welcome Abs(?) Chaudhuri from Warburtons, Enfield. Can I welcome Mohan Singh, also from Warburtons, Enfield. Joseph Williamson from 112 Kettle Foods and I think that's the first time Kettle Foods has been to Conference as well, isn't it? Did they come last year?, I don't remember, don't remember. Paulina, who people may, if you've been coming for a long time, remember Vince Payne, who used to sit on our National Health & Safety Committee who's, I think he's retired, no, not yet, not yet, he keeps telling us he's retiring. I think actually he's become part of the fittings of the workplace, so he's still there, but he's passed over the reins now to Paulina, so welcome Paulina from Allied, Stevenage. Dariace(?), also from Allied, Stevenage. Joshua from Hovis, Seaborne. I mean, that sounds like a footballer's name, by the way, it is a footballer's name, isn't it, it's a footballer's name that, isn't it? Is it not?

[LAUGHTER]

It's similar to it. Is it not the one that United and Tottenham are fighting over? No? Is it not? Susan May from Greggs, South East. In Region 2, we've got Wilf Holyoak. See, I did that one alright. From the South Wales district, Paul Parry. From Memory Lane Cakes in Region 3, I think you're all sat on this table over here, aren't you? We've got Mohamed Ibrahim, Ahmed Gomas, hey and Ashley Barman, hey. Region 4, Michael Wheeler, Paul Thomas and Neve Bland from Fine Lady, from Greggs and from Warburtons, that's Neve, isn't it? I didn't see, is there an 'i' in your name? No, I always thought there was, I think I've been putting an 'i' in it, but now I know, I'll take the 'i' out.

Region 5, we've got Zeal Machin from Suma, Lee Jones from Fox's Batley, Christopher Fowler from Jacksons, Karen James from Greggs, Callum Allen from [unclear], Brian Hewitt from Warburtons, Stockton and Neil Benny from the ..... oh, Nell Benny, sorry, see, glasses, not working, steaming up. Nell Benny from SALT and is there any on the back? No, that's alright then. That's me done, I know the rest of them.

So, can I welcome you all. Obviously, like I say, we go through how Conference runs and what the different books are and we've coloured them both in red, so you'll be able to identify them easy, but we change titles on the front, but we'll explain them to you as we go along too.

It's also my pleasure to introduce to you, are the screens on? Yes, the screen's on, so I need to go to the screen then, we'll be there. Oh right, okay. So, Region 1, we've got our very own, which is Peter from Region 1, from the Executive Council. Region 2, looking very smart, if I may say, Tony, we've got Tony. Region 3, we've got Michael and Imran, is over there, yes, Imran. Region 4 and obviously sitting in as the Vice President, because the Vice President is online, which is Kevin, which you've not seen, but he's there, I can assure you he is there, he's there, Kevin's there. Obviously John Owens is from Region 4, Kevin is from Region 7. We've got Dave, who is over there and obviously I'd like to thank Sean, because as most people probably are aware, unfortunately there was a massive redundancy at Morrisons and we unfortunately also lost Sean off the Executive when he was made redundant and clearly we'd like to thank him for his contributions. Before he became a member of the Executive, in his time has been a Branch Secretary and standing up for our members in Wakefield during that very difficult process and redundancy talks for the role that he played in the Region and obviously for being a member of the Bakers Union. So we'd like to thank Sean obviously for his role when he stepped up to the Executive too and wish him well in .....

[APPLAUSE]

We have Rachel, who's online, who is there and waving, our Women's Representative. We have a Young Members' Representative, which is the old guy in the corner, Curtis. So yes, we've got a few people on the Executive and obviously you'll hear from me and the General Secretary because we take part in it, yes, we talk a lot, so you'll get to hear us.

I've got a couple of messages that I've been sent, so: Hi Ian, please pass on my Solidarity to all Delegates. Hope it's a good and thoughtful Conference that resists the immigrants are to blame culture. Look at the issues that need attention, like poverty, starvation and mass murder of Palestinians. Israel are trying to wipe out Iran and Palestine off the map. We are in very dangerous times and Israel are causing these times. Solidarity, comrades and that came from Sam Vickers.

We've also been sent a message to, about action that's going on in Pakistan, which is about the arrest of Trade Union leaders and they're asking us to stand in Solidarity and I think from this Conference we would like to send a message of support to the arrested working class activists and we'll get this circulated later, rather than me trying to read it all out, because it's quite a lengthy message, but obviously we, I'm sure from this Conference, will send our message of support and Solidarity to them. Yes and we've had general messages of support from PCS, from Unison and other Trade Union colleagues as well.

As I said before, door duties will be performed by Standing Orders. If the Standing Orders need to leave, then the Executive will take over the responsibility of the doors. We also need to have Scrutineers. We've only currently got one in Region 2, so we need a Scrutineer in Region 1, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5 and Region 7. Do you know if, before you came to Conference, you elected a Scrutineer in Region 1? Have you, does anybody know? No? Or Region 3, did you elect one? No. Region 4, did you elect one? No. Region 5? No. Region 7, did you elect one? No. Well, in that case then, do we have a volunteer from Region 1? It's basically making sure that the votes, like for the TUC and Standing Orders are collected in this room and taken to Standing Orders and basically observing to make sure that the count is done appropriately. Do we have a volunteer? Thank you very much. Region 3, do we have a volunteer? Cool. Region 4, could we have a volunteer? Cool, thank you very much. Region 5? Region 7? Cool. Thank you very much.

Okay, so finally there will be photographs taken at Conference by Neil, who obviously you've already seen, who you will see wandering around. Does anybody have any issues with having their photograph taken? No? I mean I always say they have to make me look like Brad Pitt, I mean, anything's possible, but you know, but something to put on the fridge afterwards I suppose, to keep the kids away. Obviously if you do, then please let us know and obviously if you let Neil know then obviously he'll know not to take a picture of you, but obviously if you're happy to have your picture taken, of course we want as many pictures of Conference so people can see what Conference is actually like and hopefully encourage more people to come to Conference in future years.

If you witness or experience any behaviour not in line with our policies, or the Conference etiquette, then obviously we need you to inform Standing Orders. Remind anybody if you require or need to leave Conference, you must go to Standing Orders, you can't just leave if you do, then you, well not you personally, but obviously your predecessors who attended Conference put in rules about how we govern Conference and if you leave Conference without seeking their permission, you will face being banned from the next Conference, so that's normal practice, so please make sure that you get the acknowledgement from Standing Orders if you're intending to leave Conference, to make sure that you don't fall foul of that and again, if anybody feels that they're being made to feel uncomfortable, again we need you to go to Standing Orders, because nobody should be made to feel uncomfortable here. Just to reaffirm what Nick said, the Chair of Standing Orders, the nomination forms for the TUC need to be in to Standing Orders by 11 and the Standing Orders ones, so will the Scrutineers, which are, can you read them out, the ones, yes, just to confirm so everybody knows who they are.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** I'm not sure I know your name, sorry. Michael, so that's Michael.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Next to Mike. So, [unclear], Bobby, Michael, next to Mike, Ruth and George, if you can collect those papers and the Standing Orders room is .....

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** No. 9, just out, round the corner, back on yourself.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** So make sure they're in there before 11 o'clock. Let me look at the time. We'll probably go, probably go for a break before 11 anyway, so I'm probably looking at about quarter to, well, it depends on you actually. We are now going to have a, have we got a thing for the screen? We're going to put the obituaries on and can I also make a special mention, because people may be aware or they may not be aware, I'm sure his colleagues from No. 7 are aware, that Noel lost his father the other week and obviously he's here at Conference and I'm sure we're all pleased to see him, but it must be a very difficult particular moment for Noel to be at Conference, so please hold that special as well for Noel and obviously our deepest condolences to him and his family at this very, very difficult time and we do appreciate the time and effort he's put in to coming to Conference, but we're now going to put up the obituaries and stand for a minute's silence.

[MINUTE'S SILENCE]

For new Delegates, so you're clear, right, you've got, which the one that Nick referred to before, which was the Final Agenda, which is where the motions are contained, so just so you're aware, that's where the motions are contained. The first thing that we do on a Sunday at Conference and we do this all the time at Conference is, we go through the other book, not the one that's the Final Agenda, the one that obviously says Annual Report and Treasurer's Report 2024, so it's the slightly thicker book. Has everybody got a copy of that, yes? Okay. So what we'll do and I'm looking for Julie, because I know she'll be down here at some point, it could be Julie that comes up first, but if it is, you'll see what Julie does and basically that's what you follow. I'm not picking on you, Julie, by the way, I'm not saying you have to get up, but obviously I anticipate you probably will, so you're going to be the guiding light for people.

So, we go, okay, so we start on Page 50 and we will all start on Page 50 when I find it and so basically what we're going to be doing is we're going to go through all of the Executive Briefs. If you attend Regional Councils, you get these at Regional Councils. If you don't go to Regional Council, you're probably thinking what on earth is all this about, but obviously I'm sure you'll have had time to read it, I'm sure last night you were all busy in your rooms, taking every letter, every word, every sentence, every paragraph and making sure that you had every detail ready for this morning. So we're starting on Page 50. In bold letters at the top it says Executive Briefs and the first one is 7th – 9th August and the reason why it starts at 7th – 9th August is because that's the first Executive meeting following Conference that's held. We do hold one at the end of Conference, but that's really normally just to go over the issues of what's gone on at Conference, to make sure that we're all aware of what we've just done, to make sure everything's been put in place correctly and if there's anything that we've been expected to do that we're in preparations of doing it. So I will read out the pages and if you want to come and raise an issue on that page, then just put your hand up and just walk down to the rostrum, just so I know you're coming you see, so I don't move on. So I'll call out the pages and I'm sure somebody will show you how it's done.

So Page 50. Page 51. Page 52. Also on Page 52, you will see at the top, it says 6th – 8th November and so obviously now we're going to, I'm going to call again the same page because obviously we're moving on to a different Executive meeting and because yes, I mean obviously we've got a big picture of Sarah's cheesy smile there. I'm not sure if it's a picture of something that was going on outside here, isn't it? You might recognise yourselves. So Page 52, 6th – 8th November. No? Okay, 53. 54. Still on Page 54, we're moving on to the 7th – 9th February. I did say that people would be able to find out how it's done, didn't I? Sorry, 54, 7th – 9th February. Page 55. Nice picture of Shelly. Page 56.

Those who don't know who Shelly is, Shelly came and spoke at the Conference last year. She also heads up the TUC Health & Safety and during Covid she was an absolute amazing resource for us in our Union and I'm sure for every other Trade Union too. She gave a great presentation to Conference last year. So staying on Page 56, you will see at the top 6th – 9th May, so I'm going to call on Page 56. Page 57. Page 58. Okay. Oh right, okay.

So, what we do now is, we now go through the Accounts, the Accounts again, I'm going to read out the pages. It's the same process of what I talked about before, which obviously I've not had a demonstration of, but I think there probably will be a demonstration and it's nice to see you, Kasha obviously, Kasha, I did say Kasha, I didn't call you Agnieska? I just obviously remember, I'm not drinking now, so I remember you. We're going to go to the Accounts, so Page 1. Come and show them how it's done, Julie. We're trying to put a maze up for you, just to confuse you.

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Yes, I think that was the idea, keep me sat down. Page 1, if you look down at .....

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Julie, don't forget to introduce yourself.

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Sorry. Looking at, under Less Expenditure, we've got Benefits, Grants and Legal Services, that's gone up massively, from £71,000 to £108,000, so I'm wondering why it's increased so much and then obviously underneath, we've got the Trade Unions and Other Affiliations and that's gone up £12,000 as well and I think from a Union that is saying we need to be cutting cost, I'm just wondering why there's such an increase?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Thanks, Julie. So on the Benefits, Grants and Legal Services, we've had a couple of really big member cases, like £20,000+ costs to go to tribunal and pay for that, which is obviously part and parcel of what our members expect when they ask us to provide legal services, so that has bulked that up significantly through 2024. In terms of the Other Affiliations, we did have two affiliations that we didn't pay in 2023, so they were double paid in 2024, just to keep our affiliations live. I can get the details of which ones to you, they're not on the tip of my tongue right at this very minute. I think Unions 21, but I can't remember what the other one is. So that's why that's increased this year as well.

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

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Anything else on Page 1? Page 2.

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Are you ready? Looking at under the heading Change in Plant Assets, administration expenses were £86,000 and now they're £109,000. We're supposed to be saving money, what's going on?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** I will double-check, but if you remember, there was a financial crash when Liz Truss decided she was going to do what she did overnight and we had to have a re-evaluation of the Pension Schemes as a result of that. We had to do a big piece of work around where our investments went and obviously that cost money, to keep the Pension Scheme where it should be. Unfortunately sometimes the government or the American government decides that they're going to mess about with the world and it impacts our Pension Scheme, so we have to then take measures into place to keep it where it needs to be. So yes, we did have some extra work in 2024 as a result of issues that were out of our control unfortunately, Julie.

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** And further down the page, Amounts Recognised in Profit and Loss Account, Pension Fund contributions paid for by the General Fund, that's gone up another £16,000. We've gone up from £351,000 to £367,000, another increase.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** I think if we look at the year before, it went up as well. We have got people in our Pension Scheme and it costs money as an employer and as wages go up, our pension contributions go up as well, so it is literally just the offset of, just like in your workplace, Julie, when you have a wage rise, your employer's National Insurance and Pension contributions go up too.

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

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

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** There's a spare seat there, Julie, if you want to sit there.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Page, Page 3? No? Page 4. Page 5. Page 6. And then when we've got Page 7 – 10, that's all to do with the Pension. I don't know if anybody's got any specific questions on the stuff related to the Pension? Alright, okay, I thought you were coming down then, Dawn. No? Okay. So, Page 10 and 11, 11, Page 11. Page, oh sorry, Julie. Is it on Page 11? Cool.

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Under the Benefits, Grants and Legal Services, I think Sarah sort of touched on this before, but Legal Defense Cost incurred in the period has doubled from £35,000 to £76,000 and also on the same page, the Trade Union and Other Affiliations, the Affiliation Fees and Contributions to Industrial Committees, that's gone up from £5,581 to £14,388, a massive increase, so I'm just wondering what that's all about?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Julie, this is a breakdown of the expenses on the first page, so I have already answered it. The Legal and Defense cases will be because we've had some big cases and the Affiliation Fees will be because we paid some 2023 ones in 2024. It's exactly the same figure as before, it's just broken down.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. Anybody else, anything on Page 11? If not, I'm going to Page 12.

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Sorry, I'm here again, Ian.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** It's okay.

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Working Expenses and Other Outgoings, the Retirement Benefits Scheme admin costs from £65,000 up to £72,730, another £7,000 increase?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Again, Julie, it's a breakdown of the, it's the same answer as I gave last time, it's due to the additional work that needed doing after Truss decided to ruin the economy overnight.

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Thank you.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, Page, anybody else, anything else, sorry, on Page 12? No? Page 13 then. Page 14. Page 15. Okay, so Conference, what we do now is we have just gone through all of that, you've had an opportunity to question it, Conference signs off both the Accounts and the Executive Minutes, so in respect of obviously the questions that have been asked, there wasn't anything to come back to, was there? No? So we ask, we put both the Accounts and the Executive Briefs to Conference and ask you to vote to either support what's just been said, or oppose it. I mean, obviously we'd be looking for you to support it because quite clearly everybody seemed content with it, so those in favour of accepting the Report? Anyone against? That's passed unanimously, thank you very much.

Yes, we're not there yet, are we? What time is it? Half 10, hey, how was that. Come back in here for 11 o'clock, thank you very much.

[BREAK]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Can we make sure everybody's back in the room and shut the doors.

Everybody back in the room?

Okay, just a reminder, Bobby, is Bobby back in the room? I'm just making sure he's remembered to take the forms. Oh, he's, right, okay. That's cool then, that's cool. As long as he's done his job. A well oiled machine, that's what we like to hear. Okay.

I believe we have a, what's the Conference? So we have a hashtag, which is #bfaw25, obviously that was the, I mean that was like lots and lots of people sitting down in a room and came up with that, I think that's amazing. Fortunately, Julie, we didn't pay anybody, it was done for free.

The Ron Todd Foundation isn't going to be here. Bianca's not going to be here, so we think a number of people have put their names down to go on the, I know a number of people have put their names down to go on her fringe meeting, so we need you to change, because she isn't going to be here, so we need you to change into a different fringe, but I believe now we've got, is it Earth Strike? Earth Strike is now going to be on at 3, same time, same time, that was good, that makes it easy, doesn't it, whatever time that is, it's going to be on and the lists are over there, the lists are over there, does it have the rooms on? But you don't need to know them until you go into the room anyway, so that's cool, isn't it. Obviously I'm just trying to find out where I am. If anybody that's worrying that I've forgotten what I'm doing, you're quite right, I have. Twelve months is a long time, you know, since I was here, did it last time and the good thing is, we can cut this bit out, that's probably what I'm looking for, yes and just before I sent you for your break, I remembered that I was supposed to do a bit of speaking, but I think I wanted a brew, so I've got to hand over to you.

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Okay. Please welcome our National President, for his opening speech.

[APPLAUSE]

### **National President, Ian Hodson, gives his Opening Address to Conference**

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I'm going to take this bit of water with me, because my mouth will go dry. Nerves, you see. I do understand, I do understand what it's like to go over there and speak for the first time. We all did it, you know. My first speech to Conference, my first speech to Conference was to say what a wonderful job the National President and the General Secretary are doing, because I got told if I did that, I'd get a round of applause from the Executive and it would make my experience at the rostrum really, really easy. The problem was, they didn't like the rest of the content where I said that actually we, whilst we welcome the fact that you are a good National President and a good General Secretary, we believe the Union should stand against selling-out bank holidays and we shouldn't be accepting money for them, we should be making sure people take their holidays for them, which apparently wasn't what the majority of people at that particular time wanted. So although I got a nice welcome for saying what a wonderful job they did, I got a bit of a boo for saying don't sell bank holidays, work them, yes.

So, Conference, it's been a year, just over a year since we were in this room and what a lot's changed and what a lot hasn't. This time last year, we had the Conservative government and implementing austerity. Apparently we were being promised potential change by a Labour Party, that was going to be totally different and en masse, people went out, alright, maybe not en masse, or the people didn't go out and vote. I think it was the lowest ever turnout for a general election in many, many a year, but the people that did go out put in a Labour government and everybody cheered, or was it jeered, I can't remember. I'm trying to remember that night, I'm trying to remember that night of that fantastic election, when everybody was so excited about putting in power Keir Starmer, sorry, Sir Keir Starmer, Sir Keir Starmer and his band of centralist politicians that have now taken control and kept the status quo, maintained austerity, in fact gone further. I mean, the announcements in relation to disabled people, I think are absolutely appalling, it's absolutely shocking. The most vulnerable people in our society and they intend to make them pay for the deficit rather than taxing the rich. How is that what the Labour Party was founded for?

That isn't what the Labour Party was founded for, that wasn't what Labour politicians got elected to do, to cut the benefits of the most vulnerable in our society. Just as it wasn't the job of the Labour Party to cut the Winter Fuel Allowance for the elderly. They've had the good sense now, but only because they got a kicking at the election, to restore that, but what sort of message does that send to the people who they are supposed to represent?, which was us. Fortunately we had the foresight, we knew what this Labour Party was, we knew it wasn't on our side and it's very first act, I don't know if you can remember, it's very first act was to kick out a number of Labour MPs because they had the audacity to say we should take children out of poverty and voted against measures that stopped the introduction and ending of the two-child cap. That two-child cap keeps children and families in poverty. They admit that they could raise children out of poverty by ending the two-child benefit cap, but they chose instead to dismiss or suspend, sorry, I don't know what they're doing with John McDonnell actually and **[unclear]**, I mean they haven't been allowed back in the Party, even though the Party now is reconsidering its position on Two Children Benefit, but those brave and courageous MPs, there wasn't that many of them, but those that did, half of them are still outside of the Party because they don't represent the interests of Sir Starmer and his band of austerity centralist politicians who, as we've seen over the last 12 months, have found money, tons of money to invest in wars, to defend Ukraine.

Of course, nobody wants to see Russia invade any country, nobody wants to see NATO moving further and closer to Russia. Nobody wants to see wars anywhere. We don't want to see the destruction of Palestine. We don't want to see the destruction of Israel. We don't want to see the destruction of Iran or Lebanon or Syria. We don't want to see a war between Pakistan or India. We want people to lead the world, in elected positions, to invest in homes, in hospitals and in education, because that what our taxes should be being used for. It should be used in making sure that the people of every country are not faced with inequality, they're not faced with poverty, they're not faced with insecurity, but they have the opportunity to have decent lives, decent homes and to be able to go about their day-to-day lives without fear of being killed by a bomb or being killed because of their religion, or being killed because of their sexuality or the gender that they, I mean, how is it we've become an island that's more worried about how somebody identifies than a dictator who's taken over the United States of America? How is it that we're prepared to give people like Nigel Farage, who has used the whole of his political career to divide communities and give him the space and opportunity to preach his hate that keeps us poor?

How have we allowed the country that we live in to believe by demonising the poorest and some of the most insecure people in our communities, that that somehow makes us wealthier, or will make us wealthier? How have we become that country that believes that actually the sex crimes in this country are committed by migrants, even though it's very, very clear that predominantly sex crimes and the women in this room I'm sure would confirm it, are committed by white men and actually the government, in 2020, which [unclear] was part of, confirmed that, which is why they didn't release the statistics, but if you read my article in the Food Worker, you'll see them in there and you'll see who's doing it and now of course Starmer's decided that he's getting in on the act. I mean, he's decided that we're going to now recall Enoch Powell. I mean, what sort of, what sort of a country leader decides to go back to a time when Britain was divided on race, on hate? Who decides and what sort of minds around him decided that we should have the rivers of blood reincarnation? It's never been a migrant, by the way, that's made you go on a zero-hours contract, that was a political decision and I say this quite regularly. It's never been a migrant that's stopped your doctor from making an appointment, that's been cuts to the NHS. It's never been a migrant, never been a migrant that forced working people to go and queue up at food banks, those were political decisions and the ability of employers to pay you less than what you need to live on.

Those were decisions, political decisions, like two-child benefit cap, like the need for pensioners to go to food banks because they can't afford to pay for their heating because they had their fuel support cut, but this is the country that we are now living in, a country that we, as Trade Unionists, are witnessing in our workplace. How many people go into their workplaces and hear people say, I haven't got a problem with people coming here, it's just the illegal ones we need to stop. Who knows an illegal human being? Never met an illegal human being. People who are coming to this country are coming because of persecution. They're fleeing war, whether you like it or not. It doesn't matter how they're described by Farage and his cronies, they are coming here because they are fleeing persecution. They're fleeing the wars and from the bombs that we are passing over to them because we can make a profit out of them and we need to be bold and say that in public and we need to be bold and say that in our workplaces and actually tell people the truth. The people who are telling you and it's the same people, by the way, that if you voted to leave the European Union, we never got into that, yes, we voted to come out of the European Union and yes, we campaigned because we don't believe we should be part of a Capitalist club, but we didn't say that there should be an exodus of people who've lived and built this country from this country. We said people should be able to flee no matter where you come from in the world and if you're fleeing persecution, you have a right, you have a right to come and seek safety and sanctuary and the same we would expect that if we were being bombed, I know it's unlikely, is it? Russia keeps, they're bigger than us, aren't they, don't know if anybody wants to take on Russia, like, but if they do, where are we going to go? Are we going to hope that somebody will take us in, because we don't want our kids to be bombed by the Russians? Would we expect them to be treated in the same way that we've treated people that's fled bombs in other countries, would we?

I know this sounds a bit like a lecture, but it's really, really important and I know it's a Sunday morning, but I think it's really, really important, because our workplaces are becoming the battlegrounds for people who think it's safe to vote for right-wing authoritarianism in our workplaces and you are the front line, you are the people that have got to make the arguments of why it's not right. Why our fight is not with each other. Why our fight is against the people who are responsible for the hardships that we suffer, who have made decisions that have made our hardships so hard, that have made those decisions that make it difficult for us to find homes, because I see it all the time, I wish I didn't do it at times, but when I look on X and I see, all of these migrants are coming over here and they're taking our homes, what homes? We sold them all off and we haven't built any. That's the reason why you can't get a council house. Now we have affordable homes, but if you're a zero-hours contract worker, you aren't going to get a social house or an affordable home, because the landlord won't take you on and the bank won't give you a mortgage, because you're in insecure employment. That's the reason why kids are having to live at home. So you have to change the situation that we're in.

Now we used to understand that for generations as Trade Unionists, by the way, we used to understand it's only by standing together that we win things. It's only by understanding when we stand united and in Solidarity with one another that we make change, because politicians will always choose to divide us. There was a National Front that used to say take away our ability to hate and you take away our ability to organise and it's true. If you take away the ability to hate, you take away the ability to divide and if you take away the ability to divide, then what you get is a united working class that can make a change to this country that we haven't seen for generations and we've done it before, you know. At times in our history, we've done it. At times in our history, when you look back, when we realise enough is enough and we've come together as a people, we've made a stand.

If anybody goes back and looks at how at the end of the First World War we were promised a country fit for giants and they let us down, so they made sure, after the Second World War, that wasn't going to happen, so they organised, we became the organised working class and we came back from that War and we demanded change and the politicians had no choice but to listen and they implemented a National Health Service, a care service from the cradle to the grave, called the Welfare State. They built council homes to stop us having to live in squalor, because that was what we were entitled to as a people that defeated Fascism and the corporate authoritarianism which came side-by-side with it, which is what we're seeing today. It's no different to what Hitler stood for back in the 1930's. It's exactly the same, it's about division, it's about hate, it's about the transfer of wealth from us to them, because that's what it's about.

[APPLAUSE]

It's the transfer of your money, your wages, your securities and your family's futures to them and we have to be as viscous and as angry as they are, because we have a right and I can't, you know me, I've been campaigning for a number of years for improvements to the minimum wage, well, I'm sick of fighting for a minimum wage, I don't want our members to be on minimum wage any more, I want them to be on a wage of dignity, they should be having a dignified wage, a wage that says they're entitled to decent food, a wage that says they can afford to pay the rent .....

[APPLAUSE]

without having to use a credit card, a wage that says they have the ability to pay for their children's birthdays, for their Christmases, without the use of debt. We're entitled to that as working people. We are the backbone of this society. We are the builders of this country. It's our country and that's all of us. It doesn't matter where we originate from, it's the contributions we make and give to one and each other, that's what matters, because that's what we are, we are a class of people and you know, I've also seen this week that some people are accepting honours. My role, I must say, as a Trade Unionist, I always believed was to smash the system, not join it.

[APPLAUSE]

I believe a Trade Union is not here to be part of it and to manage it, it's here to replace it and that's what Socialism is supposed to do. We're supposed to replace it and Trade Unions are the vanguard of building that change, building that society, that we are all entitled to. That's our future, a future for us, where our families prosper, where our children's lives are better than ours, where every generation improves, where we don't have to worry about having to kill people to be able to win power. Where we do our bit, where we do our bit by making sure that we contribute to one another's lives in a positive way, by educating doctors and investing in education, by building homes and making sure they're available for everybody. Now I know some people will say well, hold on a minute, my taxes are being used, my taxes are being used and they're coming over here and using my Health Service. Well, I'm not being funny, right, when we started the Health Service and Attlee was asked that question and Bevan, I don't know if you remember that, they were the people behind it, but when they were asked that question, they said good, because what it'll mean is that people coming over here and understanding about the health care system that's about supporting people, will go back to their home countries and make sure their own governments start putting a Health Service in there, because that was what it was supposed to do, but politicians through the years have recognised that the Health Service is a massive profit opportunity, so they used the NHS, they used the NHS to divide you.

All those people coming over here, that's the reason you can't get a doctor's appointment. No, no, they charged student nurses to pay for their education, nurses who are going to work in the National Health Service have to pay to be able to work in the National Health Service. Doctors, they started sacking them off. They started cuts to our National Health Service and I don't know what your hospital's like, I go to mine, it's got Virgin on the outside, it's like a shopping centre when you walk in and there's a lot less beds, which is why people are stuck in A & E. I mean, we've opened up a new emergency ward, but it shuts at 12 o'clock. You might be too ill to actually be on the A & E ward, but at 12 o'clock you're out of there. I was speaking to a couple of people here who have had the same experience in their hospital. Those are decisions by politicians that have caused that by the way. It wasn't somebody in France who hasn't got here yet, it wasn't the people coming over on the boats that did that and if you listen to what they said in 2016 when they told you if you left the European Union we'd have an exodus of all these migrants leaving here and we'd stop them all coming in and you'd all be better off, it's now exactly the same people telling you because 20 people got on a boat from Calais, that's the reason you haven't got a house, that's the reason why you haven't got a NHS, that's the reason you haven't got the ability to have decent pay. It's lies and excuses for their failure, because it is political failure, it's political failure and that's why it's really important this week that when we're taking part in these debates, we understand what we're taking part of. We're taking part in making decisions about how this Union functions, how this Union works and how this Union will go forward.

We are the oldest Trade Union. We are here as an Executive, as the Conference Delegates, remembering the role that we have to play in securing the future of the oldest Trade Union in the Labour movement, but not an ordinary Trade Union, a Trade Union with a history. A Trade Union with a history of being **[unclear]**. Some people say what difference do Trade Unions make and I remind them sometimes. When our Union was formed, in 1847, I wasn't there, I know a couple of people who might have been, obviously Ronnie, but Joe probably definitely, but in 1847, the average lifespan of a baker, 32 years old, in a cellar, some dark and dank dungeon room. Unions came into being because they didn't think that was right. We came into being because we believed we could do something about our lot. The people were dying in pain and in agony, 32 years old, because they wanted to make products to feed people. So what difference does a Trade Union make? Look at the life expectancy of a baker now compared to when we first started. What kind of life expectancy? And look at how we stand now, we don't stand with stoops, we stand tall, because we're organised and we can fight. In those days we used to be hidden in cellars, now we're out on the streets and we're prepared to go on the gates. Why?, because we're organised, because Trade Unions, they can emancipate us and that's where Solidarity comes from, you know.

Solidarity comes from understanding and supporting one another makes our lives better and makes a real difference. Some people will think he's talking a load of nonsense. That's great, enjoy Conference, have a great time. Some people will realise that the comments I'm making are what's happening in your workplaces. The comments I'm making is what's happening in your communities and if we don't organise, they will and if you think life's tough now, life's about to get an awful lot tougher, an awful lot tougher. The idea that a political party is pushing the idea that diversity is an issue, anybody know what diversity is? Does anybody understand what that means to end diversity? The right to understand, to educate, in understanding others' issues, inclusion, the right to be included in things and not excluded? As Trade Unionists, it's supposed to be our bread and butter. Equality, I mean do women really not want equality? Are men actually going to say they want to go back, that women shouldn't have equality, people shouldn't have equality? People who identify differently to me shouldn't have equality? That people shouldn't have equality? Where, which groups do you want to stop at? I mean, it's a really serious situation and our job, like I said, is to be organised and to be prepared to fight back, to fight back for the things that we need. To organise our class, to demand the changes that we want to see, to demand the lives that we expect, to demand the lives and the expectation that our children's lives are better than ours.

We're only going to do it if we stand in Solidarity with one another. We want better pay, we want job insecurity ended. We don't want flaky employment changes that get rid of some but not rid of all. We have called for the abolition of all zero-hour contracts and we expect that to be delivered, that's what we want to see. We want a minimum wage, yes, of £15 an hour, but actually no, we want a wage of dignity, of no less than £17.20 an hour. I believe that's where we need to be heading for now and why do I say £17.20?, because £17.20 by the way, if you look at what the people who set the wage, set the wage at and say this is what you need to be earning as an hourly rate, to get that rate of pay, you have to be on £17.20 before tax and then your hourly rate reflects your ability to live at the level that they've set it at. So why should we be paid less than that and why should we accept it? But it's not going to happen overnight and I realise that, it's only going to happen if we organise.

I also understand that some people say oh, hold on a minute, I only get the minimum wage here, it's going to be so difficult, how am I going to negotiate that, I don't know if I want to get involved in that and I understand that too. That's the job of the Union to work with you to achieve it, isn't it? We're faced potentially with a huge crisis in this Union, because mergers are happening. We've seen Greencore Bakkavor which is virtually done, potentially the Hovis and Allied one, which is now potentially done or being done and that will have a devastating impact on this Trade Union and we should be open and honest about that, we should be open and honest and it'll have a devastating Trade Union if we don't understand why we're here, why we're here to make sure that we work collectively together to understand one and each other to stand in Solidarity, because when we go to our workplaces, if we accept the idea that some people are more entitled to rights than others, then that's how they divide us.

If we accept that some people are responsible for our hardships and others aren't, that's how they divide us and that's how they win. If we say actually, it's not any individual's fault, it's not any group or marginalised part of our community's fault, it's the people who've had power over us for years, it's them that's at fault, it's political decisions, it's the employers, it's the people that have the power over us that have made the wrong decisions and we, as working people, are going to recognise that our strength and our power is Solidarity and we are going to stand together as one and we're going to fight, fight to end zero-hours contracts, fight for a wage that we can all live with dignity on, fight against benefit cuts to disabled people, fight to end child poverty by ending the two-child benefit cap, fight to say that actually food banks should be a thing of history, not a thing of the present...

... by making sure we have a right to food and that we are all entitled to a decent life and decent homes and we demand council housing and we refuse to take part in elections and vote for people who refuse to stand by us and if people are more interested in investing in war than investing in education and investing in building our society back, then we must make sure that we start to organise a political organisation and a party of our own. We must do that, as a working class, a strong, determined working class that can start here in this Conference Hall, by you, the innovators, the people who have done it before, the people who can do it again. So enjoy Conference, Conference, enjoy your time here, enjoy getting involved in the motions and the debates, but most importantly, when you go back to your workplaces, there isn't any division in our workplaces unless we allow it. We stop it, we end it and we build unity together. Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, unfortunately, I was of the belief that we, I'd timed everything perfectly you know, but we'll do an hour now, but I've just been told, I've just been told that dinnertime's actually at 12 o'clock, not half past, but I was only going off what was put in front of me. So dinner will be at 12 o'clock.

So, thank you for your indulgence. We are now going to go on to the Agenda. Everybody know what the Agenda is? It's the one that says Final Agenda at the front. I don't go page by page on this, for any new Delegates. What I do is, obviously after Standing Orders have already told us, can you pass my glasses, I wondered why I couldn't see, still can't see now. So I call out the motion number and then obviously the mover comes down, the seconder can either come down and second it in person or they can formally second it, which is a show of their hands and then speakers follow the seconder, okay? So, the first one is, it's motion No. 9, which is by the Executive Council. General Secretary.

## 9 New Rule 14.8m

## Executive Council

*Equality representatives shall be elected from the members of the Branches. The duty of Equality representatives is to implement changes on sites, promote equality and tackle discrimination. They shall forward best practice to the EC for discussion.*

*Equality representatives are to stand for re-election after five years' service, and their credentials should be progressed through the Regional Council.*

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Thanks, President. Conference, the purpose of this rule change is not a tick box exercise, not as an afterthought but as a vital and necessary step in making sure that equality truly lives and breathes in every corner of our Union and across our industry, because equality, real equality, isn't something that we just talk about in policy documents, it's not something we dust off for Conferences and awareness days, it's something we live, it's something that we fight for and it's something that we must build into the very bones of our Union and that starts at Branch level, it starts where our members are. This motion calls for Equality Reps to be elected from among the membership of our Branches and that's important, because our Reps need to reflect the very people that they represent, they need to know the issues on the ground and they need to be accountable to the workers that put their trust in them.

Equality Reps aren't just figureheads, they're organisers, they're educators, the disruptors of the status quo. Their role is to challenge discrimination whenever it shows up, whether that's racism, misogyny, ableism, homophobia, transphobia or classism. It's their job to push for structural change, to create safer, fairer, more inclusive workplaces and to share what works so that we can raise the bar across every Region, every site and every shift. But Conference, we know this work isn't easy. Equality Reps will take on tough conversations, they'd stand up in rooms where they might be the only voice naming a problem that others would rather ignore. They will be expected to fight for policies that aren't always popular with their employer, but will be absolutely necessary for the members we represent. So we don't just need to have these Reps in place, we need them to be valued, supported and respected by their Branch and their peers.

This motion gives structure to that work, it would give our Reps a mandate and give our Union a standard, because let me be honest and the National President touched on this in his opening address, in too many workplaces inequality is still business as usual. Women are facing sexual harassment and being told to keep quiet. Black workers are being overlooked for promotion again and again. Disabled workers forced to prove that they deserve the adjustments that they need. LGBT+ workers hiding who they are just to get through that shift. Migrant workers being exploited, isolated and underpaid, whilst being told they should be grateful to have a job at all. That's the reality for too many of our members, Conference and if we don't take action, real resourced representative action, then we become part of the problem, not part of the solution. So let's make sure equality isn't just a word in our Rule Book, but a living practice in every meeting, every campaign and every fight that we take on. We need to empower our members to lead this work, but let's make it clear. Equality is everyone's responsibility, but it should be somebody's role in the Branch.

The Executive asks you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Formally seconded. Speakers? No? Are you speaking? Okay, just to remind everybody, when you come to the rostrum to speak, please give your name and your Branch before you do, so we can pick it up on the telecorder over there.

**Brother Jhon Fredy Velez Rodriguez – Branch 547:** Hello, Conference. I welcome this motion. This is something that I've been waiting for for a long time. Our Union is diverse, our Union needs Equality Reps, we need equality at work. There are a lot of bakers that still need fighting for. In these challenging times, I think we need these Reps more than ever. We need to give them the tools, the location, the knowledge they need to defend every single member of this Union, whatever their origin, their background, whatever they are, so I welcome the motion and I'm asking you to support this motion. It's much needed and I welcome this here, now.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Are you speaking, Mohinder?

**Brother Mohinder Baddhan – Branch 331:** Mr President and Secretary General. I've heard the speech of the President, brilliant and I myself in the Bakers Union since last 52 years and before that I was a member of TUC, no, another Union, I was on the buses, Transport and General Workers' Union and I come from India in 1963, I was only 16½ and I was born among so-called 'untouchables', people who still have no human rights and because I suffered, I had education but English wasn't very good and then I got involved with the Trade Union movement, a couple of years general position of Trade Union, then I joined the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union. So, discrimination, all sorts of discrimination, it's not the colour, right, all people are equal and the father of Indian constitution, my mentor, whom I follow, he was himself 'untouchable', right and he was insulted at school and he had to sit, not with other children, he had to sit on there and he had a burning desire in that I, if I study and then I will fight for these people and I don't believe in God, because if there is a God, then people should not be treated unequally and my mentor, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, if you go on the Google, it's full, right. He is a one and only one person in the whole world and even in the future generations, he has 32 degrees, not degrees from [unclear] universities. He was educated Columbia University in America, he was schooling at [unclear] Law Institution and he was also at [unclear] School of Economics and he shortly was in [unclear]. The reason for his education not to become something rich person and he fought for the untouchables and he, when India became independent and he was the, he was elected to be Minister of Law. He drafted the Indian constitution, which is based on equality, liberty and fraternity and he fought his whole life and I'm following in his footsteps. I fight against discrimination .....

[APPLAUSE]

...and I will fight up to the last man. If there is a God, I will go there and hit him on his head, right and if we are all children of God, then why the hell people are treated differently? Now, discrimination is my main subject, because of that, I went to United Nations and [unclear] scholarship with Ian and then I have some, I had a, JNU, India's biggest university, JNU is Jawaharlal Nehru University and a Professor there is a friend of mine. He said, Mohinder, if you come to India, you will address my students on sociology, right and I live in Wolverhampton and since 1963, I founded an organisation, Dr [unclear] Committee, if you look under Google, I'm the founder of that in 1969 and this country, first of all [unclear] Bakers Union and I have done about 40 courses with GFTU and at the age of 79, I am still fighting for those people. I was attacked .....

[APPLAUSE]

...my home was attacked, I was, some years back I had police protection and I had threatening calls that you are insulting Indian people. I insult everybody who's discriminating people and it's thankful, the first graduate to go through the Bakers Union and then the second is GFTU. Now, President's talk about the Union, right and the Union, we need the Union like off Scargill, we need the Union people of Clement Attlee and the modern Union, whether it's any Union and the people elect them and when they go up there, they're not your people. They travel the world and they get all sorts of expenses and .....

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Mohinder .....

**Brother Mohinder Baddhan – Branch 331:** we should fight against any discrimination, class, creed and if we are a human being, supposed to be called a human being, we must help other people.

[APPLAUSE]

Asylum seekers. This Labour government and this Labour government is still a Labour government. There's no difference between Labour and Tories. The area where I live and I sometimes vote Labour, other time I'll vote Tories, because one person is true representative of the people. So, what we need is all, I know you come here and I think, I believe that you have some passion and you have desire to vote for people and to the junior leaders, I said when you go higher up, do not forget the people, because the people have brought you there, but I .....

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I still have to ask you to wind-up, Maninder.

**Brother Mohinder Baddhan – Branch 331:** Thank you very much.

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

**Brother Mohinder Baddhan – Branch 331:** Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Just before you come on, I've got Joanne, who's been waiting very patiently. She online? Cool. Are you on mute? You're on mute, Joanne. Is that it? I mean, it was nice and quiet.

[LAUGHTER]

**Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs):** Can you hear me now?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Yes, we can hear you now.

**Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs):** Sorry about that, guys. I'm getting used to all this new technology. I'm a bit of a dinosaur. I'm here to support this motion. I think an Equality Rep's very important in this day and age. We are a multi-cultural society now. It doesn't matter what colour, creed, sexual orientation you are, we are all in a Union, we all support each other and we're all Brothers and Sisters at the end of the day. So, I'm here to support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** Here to support this motion. Conference, comrades, we've had a perfect example of the difference between diversity and discrimination with the guy who gave the speech for the bin strike. The cause of that was Labour Party in Birmingham trying to discriminate against women workers and losing and that's why it's in a mess, Birmingham. If they had been forced to be equal, to not be able to discriminate, this wouldn't be happening. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Les Bramhall – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool):** Morning, Conference. I'm here in principle to support the motion, but to ask perhaps to think about it before you vote for it. In my opinion, we've got these Equality Representatives in place at the moment and what they are is Shop Stewards in the workplace. We already have difficulty in getting people to come forward in the workplace to be a Shop Steward, so I'm sort of asking the question of you before you vote, how are we going to get people to come forward to be an Equality Rep if we can't even get people to come forward and be a Shop Steward, think about that and also there's the cost to the Union about getting them trained and also will the companies, when they're going forward in their role, will the companies recognise them in the first place? So, in a way I do support the motion, but part of me wants to vote against it.

So I guess I'm asking you all to sort of think long and hard about it before you do vote, but in my opinion, we do have Shop Stewards in the workplace and they are our Equality Reps. Any discrimination issues, they should be taking forward on the members' behalf. So I guess if you ask me the question will I be voting for it, the answer is no, because I'm all for equality for everyone and back up entirely what our President said in his speech before, equality is for every one of us, no matter what the colour of our skin is, our gender, our race, religion or whatever, I'm all for that, I'm not racist at all, but I do believe that we've got these people in place now and they are Shop Stewards. Thank you, Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Les has mentioned quite a few of the things that I was going to bring up. Obviously release from the company. We had to go through an exercise a couple of years ago when Ronnie Draper was invited on site, because the company wanted to restrict any recognition and obviously reduce the amount of time that they gave us to complete our Union duties. I don't believe we need an Equality Rep as such, because I think we all do this currently in our Branches. As a Branch Secretary and a Shop Steward, I've been part of a committee that has put a prayer/quiet room in place for the males and females. We're a multi-cultural and diverse workforce. We've just had the toilets refurbished, so they've now got a wash room for people to use before prayers, we've also had toilets fitted with bidets to accommodate other cultures.

I've represented people who've been against forced marriages and put them in touch with the relevant people and I've also been involved with a gay Muslim man whose father was actually putting a contract out to get this guy killed. So I believe we're already doing this and I think you're trying to water-down what we're currently doing and I don't believe there's anything different and why we should have another title and somebody else to take on the role of what we're doing. Some of these people, I don't believe would go to an Equality Rep depending on their race and culture, because obviously they're small communities, they all know each other and the last thing they need is somebody saying did you know such thing's happening to them, they don't want that. So I do believe, you know, they would rather approach a Branch Secretary or a Shop Steward that they already know. So, I am opposing this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Armilson Correia – Branch 110:** Afternoon. I support this motion because of, I think we need Equality Rep because there will be more education, be able to **[unclear]** specific situations, so I do support this motion because I believe we do need it. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** First-time speaker as well, thank you very much, comrade.

[APPLAUSE]

Any other speakers?

So, because there was two, I believe, people opposed it, for the new Delegates, what that means is, there is a right of reply and the person who gets the right of reply is the mover of the motion, so it's just so you understand why the mover of the motion is able to get back up so and then obviously after the mover of the motion has had the right to reply, then we will go straight to the vote. Okay? Cool. General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Thank you. So we have a couple of points. How do we get people interested in doing Equality Reps roles when we struggle to get people interested in doing Shop Stewards/Health & Safety Reps? Not everybody wants to go in a room and face a manager, not everybody feels like or wants to learn the intricate details of Health and Safety legislation to be a Health & Safety Rep. This motion, this role, would mean that we could have more activists in our Branch, people that don't necessarily feel comfortable doing the nitty-gritty work of Shop Stewards and Health & Safety Reps, but actually want to make a difference to their workplaces and support their members. We had some great examples by Julie of things that have gone in your Branch and that's fantastic, Julie and I wish we'd know about them, we could put them in the Foodworker so that other Branches could hear about the fantastic work that's going on at Park Cakes. The idea of this is not about watering-down the roles. As I said in my contribution when I moved the motion, everybody's got a responsibility around equality, but what it does allow for is Reps that are already established, that are already dealing with wage negotiations, disciplinary hearings, you know, everything else that you do every day as part and parcel of your roles, somebody's role in the Branch is to focus on equality and support the work that you're already doing.

We're not saying that members can't ever come back to you and say because you're a Branch Secretary you're not an Equality Rep, that they can't talk to you about equality things, but having somebody in the Branch that's focused on equality issues, that's highlighting things, feeding in to the Reps, being active in their Branch, we want more activists, we need more activists in our Union. Not everybody wants to be a Rep, not everybody can be a Branch Secretary, because you only have one in a Branch, so let's spread that load out between our members, between our Branch Officials and get people focused on things that our members are talking to us about. We have Network Meetings, LGBTQ Meetings, Women Network Meetings. Issues are being brought to us every day about what people are facing in their workplaces. These could be feeded back into Equality Reps, fed back even, that was terrible grammar, into our Equality Reps, so that they can start putting plans together to support them in workplaces. It's not about diluting roles, it's about trying to get more people engaged in our Union. We ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. All those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Thank you and guess what? It's two minutes to 12, so you're going to be back in here for half past one? Enjoy your lunch. Half past one, yes.

[LUNCH]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Are we on? Hello? Are we back in the room? Can we shut the doors, please. Thank you very much. Anybody that comes in now, we're raising funds.

This is going to be really interesting because we're going to find out how the Executive have, you know, or if the Executive have learnt to count and whether they can follow a plan, which is we first off call on the General Secretary to call the roll, before the EC respond.

[LAUGHTER]

General Secretary to call the roll.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Region 1, we've lost six from this morning. Region 2. Region 3, found one from this morning. Region 4, good old John. Region 5. Region 6. Region 7, say that again, sorry. Yes, right, okay, so we've got four, because I'm doing online separately. Thank you though, George and then online we've got (counting) nine. Thank you.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, Conference, so, there's a lot of people lurking about, there isn't something I've missed is there? Oh, that's alright then. Okay. Before we go onto anything else, so obviously this morning people will have filled in forms, they were nomination forms, they were for, to nominations, there was one for Standing Orders and one for the TUC and I'm now going to read out who the nominations are. The voting papers will be out in the morning and the first ones I'm going to read are the nominations we've had for Standing Orders. Obviously if there isn't a need for a ballot, there won't be a ballot, but obviously if there is a need for a ballot, you'll notice I'll say more than one person is standing. It's the giveaway. In Region 1, there's two people standing, so Amilson Cureila (? spelling) is one of the name's that's been nominated and Joshua Berry/Perry?, I was nearly, so apologies, but I was close. I will get better and I take it both are standing, yes?

Region 2, Nick Mead.

Region 3, there hasn't been a nomination in Region 3, so we will be writing to George to advise him that they haven't had a nomination and the Region will elect from the Region when they go back to Regional Council.

Region 4, John Fitzpatrick.

Region 5 is Pete Ford and Mark Sweeney and Region Seville, Region Seville? Trying these teeth, trying these teeth, not very good, I might take them back. Region 7, Noel Mullen.

So there will be elections in Region 1 and in Region 5.

Right, TUC Conference nominations. So the TUC has a rule that says for every male Delegate we elect, we have to elect a female Delegate. Obviously the General Secretary helps us out there, being a female, so it means that we can send one male to go with the General Secretary. Because we haven't had a female nomination, which is very disappointing, because I look round the room and I see lots of women, for the TUC and unfortunately nominations have closed, it means that only one person will be elected from the following, so there will be a ballot, so obviously if your name has been put down and you don't want to go, you need to tell me you want to withdraw, but obviously if you want to go and I read your name out, then you don't withdraw. You don't have to say anything, you just keep stum, okay?

So, TUC Conference nominations, Abs Chaudhuri (? spelling) from Region 1 has been nominated, Nick Mead from Region 2 has been nominated, Michael White from Region 2 has been nominated, John Fitzpatrick from Region 4 has been nominated and Pete Ford from Region 5 has been nominated. Who's talking when I'm talking? That wasn't us, was it? (lots of tuts).

Okay. So those ballots will be out in the morning and obviously you'll get one vote for your chosen person. Okey cokey and just to clarify that obviously, we're going to get on to the motion, but I'm going to answer the question anyway, we're going to get on to the motion, motion 12, about obviously the full-time Officials currently. Full-time Officials cannot be nominated for any role, they're debarred from, because they're now in a different Trade Union. Now, we are going to have to change rules to make it so there's a reflection of that in the Rule Book, but currently as it stands, we can't elect full-time Officials and they can't be nominated, because our Rule Book currently says they can't. If anybody wants to check that out, it's on 9.2, it's Rule 9.2, but you'll see it there, because we have had a nomination for Lizzie, but unfortunately we can't accept it, because she's a full-time Official. So I just wanted to give that point of clarification. Obviously we will be reading the statement out and obviously taking a debate on motion 12 anyway, but clearly, I just needed to clarify that point, so you understand the reasons why and obviously we've answered the person who put that nomination in, so they're aware of it.

Because, I'll tell you what I'll do now, because there's a load of Morning Star's over there, right and I know that you're all looking for reading materials when you go on your next brew and so The Morning Star over there is really good reading, so make sure you pick one up on your way out and obviously if you haven't got time because you're busy holding counsel, then read it this evening.

Good bedtime reading and the rooms for the fringe meetings, we've got Room 4, which is the Branch Secretaries, Room 11 which is, that'll be you, Janet, won't it, they're going to hear you twice, they are indeed, Room 10, which is Socialism versus Capitalism and Robbie's running that. We've got Room 8, which is a strike and we've had apologies from Stand Up To Racism and there's no online ones because we realise the amount of hours that you will have been on online probably is sufficient for looking at a computer screen, so we do apologise but we're thinking of your health and safety.

No more others? No more others? Great, it's great, isn't it? Oh yes, you'll see we've been joined, some people will recognise the woman that's come and joined us, some people might not, because they're a first-time Delegate and have never seen Janet Newsome at our Conference before, who has been here on many, many occasions and over the years has worked with our Union in advising us and giving guidance and supporting us through all sorts of issues, from dust in the air, manual handling. I mean obviously her predecessor, Hilda Palmer, that we recognised a few years ago when she stood down, because Hazards has always been there for us, Hazards is an important resource and it's an essential tool for health and safety and it's a really important organisation that we've been proud to support and obviously I knew Janet actually before she worked at Hazards, as a tutor at Preston College and other places as well. She's a phenomenon as well, because obviously I think, I don't think, do you ever stop work? Even when you do, I think you're off to the glam rock gigs aren't you, which is a great, anybody who hasn't been, I'd definitely recommend the glam rock nights, but Janet has been a friend of this Trade Union for many, many a year. She's an absolute mine of information and obviously I'm really, really proud and privileged to be able to invite Janet Newsome to address our Conference. Welcome to our Conference, Janet.

[APPLAUSE]

### **Janet Newsome, Hazards Magazine, addresses Conference**

**Janet Newsome, Hazards:** Thank you very much. Thank you very much for that introduction and for inviting me to the Conference today. It's brilliant to be here. A real honour for me to be joining you all and I wanted to just say, I stand in Solidarity with the Birmingham bin strikers and we know in the Hazards movement that as your pay goes down, so too does your health and safety at work and so we need to be making sure that we are on decent conditions, decent pay and it's decent for our lives at work and I think it's an important time for us all really in terms of a new government and we need, you know, dignity and safety for all workers and for world peace, because as I remember, I see the Palestinian flags over there, that thousands, we know that thousands of people have been killed including children and women and it's abhorrent, it's desperate, but included in that are all the aid workers and the journalists and the bakers, you know, and people that are just carrying on trying to do their job and it's an awful situation that we need to support and we need to stop and it's a genocide that absolutely needs to end. We need to put as much pressure on our government to do that and as the T-shirt says, we didn't vote to die at work and when we voted for whatever, however we voted in the last election, what we need to make sure is that we have some safety at work and so first of all I'll just say thank you, are there any Safety Reps in the room, put your hands up? Absolutely thank you for the job that you do, you keep people twice as safe in an organised workplace than you would if there was no organisation there and there are hundreds of thousands of people out there not in Trade Unions, on zero-hours contracts and precarious contracts where they can't talk at all about the conditions they're working in, or challenge their employers, so you make people safe.

I was, as an organisation, so I work for Greater Manchester Hazards Centre, we're an organisation that gives advice to any worker that rings us up and any worker because of the numbers of people that are not in jobs, not in Trade Unions, but probably the first thing that we would advise people is, join a Trade Union, because that organisation, that's what's saving you nowadays and I'll talk a little bit about the enforcement etc in a minute.

So we try to hold everyone to account, so as part of the Hazards Campaign, which is a network of all different organisations including Trade Unions, the Hazards magazine and I've got some copies at the back and if you get chance to go online and have a look at that or you subscribe at your Branches, it's brilliant. The person that writes that is one of the giants of the health and safety movement and he sits, he goes along to international conferences, international organisations like the ILO, trying to fight for our health and safety and proper standards of health and safety that then force our government to address and to keep us on health and safety in our legislation as well and I would, so why is it so important? I'll come in to the figures in a minute.

I was at a British Aerospace plant this week, talking to a room of Safety Reps, it's their British Aerospace Safety Reps Forum at Broughton, probably about 70 Reps there, this is one site, one Union and about 70 Reps in the room, but no matter how many Reps were there, they were remembering a little worker that died there a few years ago, they'd had a death in 2011, Donald Williams, a highly respected member of the Airbus team and Airbus ended up being fined £200,000 as a result of that and £58,000 in costs after admitting to a health and safety breach.

It was so unusual in that environment. Actually there's been another death at Brough, but it shows, I think it showed, it reminded me that it doesn't matter where you work, if your employers do not take your health and safety seriously, it doesn't matter where you're working, then you're all at risk. The prosecutor in the place, the prosecutor told the court that the accident was entirely avoidable, there'd been no training given to Mr Williams and other maintenance workers, there was no manual available for the tractor and the task of fitting the implements to the tractor had not been subject to a risk assessment and Airbus pleaded guilty, they couldn't do anything else and it was devastating to his work colleagues, especially those that were involved in health and safety on the site. The defending barrister said Airbus was a world leader in health and safety, but tragically the work of maintaining non-aircraft building items had at that time been outside the main works operation, so that's a company that takes health and safety seriously, they spend thousands of pounds on health and safety prevention.

As I said, more than 70 Reps in the room and we know that in many workplaces there isn't one, or we barely have one Safety Rep in the room. I work with the UCU as well, that's the College Lecturers, University Lecturers Union and all the time they come on the courses, we're talking about workload and they come on the courses and say well, we've got one Health & Safety Rep for this University and if you've been on a university campus, they are vast. I mean, you know, you would expect to have one in every building, every department and they've got one for the whole site and they were told by the management you can't have more than one, you know and it's ridiculous. I worked at Aerospace when I first left school and in our department of 200 people, we had 17 Health & Safety Reps.

So every Workers Memorial Day, we remember those people that have died because of work and the truth is, more than 50,000 people die each year in the UK because of work and you never hear that as a headline on a newspaper, you hardly hear anybody talking about it, the HSE will talk about 132 people have died this year, which is too many, but they won't talk about all those hundreds of people, thousands of people who are dying from diseases, being exposed to toxic and hazardous substances and toxic workplaces, that causes diseases, that mean that people's health suffers and their life is cut short. They're developing chronic life-limiting diseases after years of physical and mental abuse and those are the sort of, we do something called The Whole Story every year, which tries to analyse what the actual death rates are, because it's important that we start to put pressure on employers and on government, because if you don't talk about those figures, then they don't know that there's a problem and well, they should know there's a problem, because we talk about them all the time, but included in those figures are people that died from suicides and we reckon about 10% of suicides are work-related. We haven't got a, we haven't got that figure and we haven't got that figure because, in this country, they are not recorded, reportable to the HSE, they're never investigated and employers never learn as a result of that and it was 10%, because that's based on what happens in other countries. So, for example, in France, they make sure that all suicides, so if somebody dies with a uniform on, they die in the workplace, they did, they've left notes on computers, notes in their pockets, anything to do with the workplace, they are investigated and actually there's companies in this country, French companies in this country, if there's a suicide here, will investigate it. So isn't it bloody nonsense that we don't investigate that, investigate those.

So we need to make sure and so we're trying to put pressure and campaigning for the HSE to say that it should be reportable, should be investigated and it should be, we should learn from it. There was a case just a few years ago of a young lad, George Arthur Cheese, he worked in an Audi dealership, he was an apprentice there and he was coming home from work and he wasn't happy and he was complaining about the way he was being treated and this is a young lad, an 18 year old lad on an apprenticeship and he came home one day to his dad and he said, I don't want to go back, he said, it's too much, I don't want to go back. He ended up at the doctors and ended up on medication, but he said I really want to end it and I can really imagine that conversation with that young lad, because as a mum, trying to get my kids into apprenticeships, trying to get them into something, into work and you're saying all the time, just go back. You know, I could imagine having that conversation with him and saying, you've only got another 12 months, keep your head down and you'll be fine like, you know and you'll come out of it, you've got your apprenticeship, you'll go anywhere then, that's the conversation I would have had with him. I don't know if it's one that he had, but he went to work the next day, his mum and dad convinced him, went to work the next day and he went into the local wood and hung himself and when it came out at the inquest, because his mum and dad had gone down to the company before that and said look, he's not happy, what's going on like and they said oh, it's just a bit of banter like, you know and we'll sort it out, so the employer knew exactly what was going on and he and so when it came to the inquest, they said that bit of banter we've had, to do some training with people and it's fine and nothing happened to those people that were bullying him. They were locking him in a cage, pouring lighter fluid on him and setting him alight. They were holding him down and beating his leg until he limped home. Now, that's not banter, that's forcing somebody to die by suicide.

That's, you know and the fact that the employer knew that, knew exactly what was going on and did nothing to stop it, means they're culpable and they should have been prosecuted and jailed probably in the process.

So, we've got a long way to go to make sure that people are protected in all workplaces and that's in all our workplaces. We need to make sure that people are not in those positions.

So for the last 12 months, you might not know, the Health and Safety at Work Act came in in 1974/5 and for the last 12 months we've been discussing the success and challenges of the Health and Safety at Work Act. That's the main bit of legislation, the umbrella bit of legislation that encompasses the general duties on employers to keep us safe and healthy at work. It says that you've got to keep us physically and mentally safe and healthy at work. That's their duty, it's a legal duty that they've got to, that they have and underneath that are all sorts of other duties, like under the Management Health and Safety at Work Act that says you have to have suitable and sufficient risk assessments, to ensure the physical and mental health and it's a proactive legislation. One thing about health and safety is that it's fantastic, because it's proactive. It says you don't wait for somebody to be harmed before the employer has to control the risks, they have to control the risks before people are harmed. They have to go out there and think what could harm people and then control those risks and that's why it's such a useful bit of legislation for us in workplaces.

So for the last 12 months we've been discussing the success and challenges and I started work about five years after the Health and Safety at Work Act and you'll all go, I can't believe that, about five years after the Health and Safety at Work Act was introduced and I've worked in all sorts of different occupations since and I've asked some comrades in Lancashire about their memories of the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act and Terry, an old comrade in Preston Trades Council, who worked at Leyland Motors in Leyland and he said the employer was really concerned about it coming in and even though they had a strong Trade Union organised workplace, the employer was worried about being prosecuted, that if they did something wrong and the Trade Unions were hopeful that their workplaces would be safer and healthier. So at the start of the Health and Safety at Work Act journey, there was a deference and hope that workers had for the new Act and although it's been an enduring piece of legislation, which has helped keep many workers safe, the Trade Union, so it's built on the basis that there would be a tripartite arrangement, the Trade Unionists had a seat at the table in making sure that workers had just as much say as employers and that kept us safe as well, but since then, we've seen that the Trade Union influence has actually halted, hasn't it, we've less people in Trade Unions, it's been diminished and there's been attacks on our health and safety system and you might have heard, you know, you might have heard some of your colleagues at work saying it's a burden really this, we shouldn't be doing all this health and safety, it's just a burden, it's just red tape and we need to, you know, we just need to get on with the job and what they've done is successfully, the government and the establishment and our employers, have starved the enforcement authorities of resources and money.

They've cut something like, 50% has been cut in the last two decades of funding and that's according to Prospect and Prospect is the Trade Union for Health & Safety Officers and in real terms, staffing cuts by 35% and the number of inspectors has fallen by 41% and what that means is, in real terms is impact on our enforcement. It means things like pre-pandemic the HSE carried out 18,000 inspections in 2015 – 16 for approximately 900,000 workplaces, for which they've enforced responsibility and that meant that an average workplace could expect an inspection once every 50 years. This is a decrease from the once every 38 years in 2010 and prior to inspections by local authorities have fallen by 97% and the overall inspections by 65% and in addition to the number of enforcement actions taken by local authorities for the health and safety issues has fallen by 64%. It's a nonsense. How are we getting, how are we making sure that employers are actually protecting us?

I notice that Birmingham Council, which enforces 23,000 premises, the local authority, it made just 39 health and safety visits in 2016 – 17 and it's not gone up, you know, so this is, means that for any business there was a chance of one inspection every 578 years, just nonsense.

So because of lack of resources, our enforcement bodies and the political will, many workers will never see a Health and Safety Enforcement Officer and if they come on your site, they should be talking to you, they should be making sure that they are knocking on your door and saying, I'm the Health and Safety Executive and I want to, I want to have your opinion separate to the employers of what's going on there.

So many workers are exposed to indecent working conditions, where they're sacked for spending too long on the toilet, dismissed for having to take sick leave because of urinary tract infections caused by not drinking enough water or because they can't take the time to go to the toilet or being killed or sacked because they had to leave their lorries or trains to urinate at the side of tracks or roads. How have we got to that situation? Actually the train drivers is, I find incredible, something like 90-odd% of train drivers are in a Trade Union and they were still shitting in plastic bags and urinating, weeing in bottles on trains because there's nowhere for them to go.

How have we got to a situation where, you know, call centre workers are having to, their going to the toilet is timed and at the end of the week, if they've gone over a certain amount of time, they're disciplined and sacked. How have we got to that situation or that indignity at work? and we need to stop it. We need to make sure that's not how we're treated. It's driving people to an early grave. Temporary jobs are leaving many of us in a permanent state of despair and for many young workers who've entered the job market over the last few years, they only know working conditions like this and don't know they can or should challenge them.

2020 will have lasting trauma on many, on us. We've all been impacted by the pandemic. Thousands of workers have died because the infections weren't controlled and we had governments steeped in greed and eyes firmly on the global free market, allowing infections to spread in work and in our communities and the public inquiry is only scratching at the surface of the corruption and lies at the centre of the Tory government's incompetence and the political dogma as it placed profits before lives and a similar scene in the US, with Trump and now the current US government professing to be standing up for the people whilst simultaneously dismantling their occupational safety and health system. We shouldn't fall for the lies, we shouldn't fall for the lies of Reform or any of these politicians that say this and don't act on our behalf.

So work contributes to a huge amount of public ill health, to health inequality, to lower life expectancy and less years of healthy life and we've witnessed many examples, with those best placed to manage the risks do anything but manage them and they are the people that are responsible for the deaths of the 72 in Grenfell Tower, the fire where safety standards were ignored, without inspections and along with the pleas from the residents they were examples, there's loads of examples I could give, we work with families of people who have died at work and as the HSE say, most work-related deaths and injuries are preventable and we should know that. You know, whenever there's an injury, an incident in our workplaces, we should be looking for the underlying causes of it, not blaming the workers, but looking what's causing it and if they're rushing, why are they rushing to do the job, why are they tripping, why are they doing these things, is it because they're under pressure? I've got two sons that work on low wages, one on a non-permanent contract, he's got no way that he can challenge his employer for any of the unsafe acts, unsafe things that are happening to him. The violence, the threats that he gets in a call centre, which nobody should receive and people in this room will have been subjected to some of this as well.

So as the HSE say, they are unpreventable, so why weren't these prevented and the thousands of other deaths prevented? So how can we organise? You'll have to tell me when to shut up.

So how can we organise for safe workplaces? We need to use the legislation as leverage. We've got legislation that says, places legal duties on our employers, so let's use it. If you do an inspection, make sure you do four inspections a year. Use the SRSC Regs. This is our right, this is our duty, we're allowed to do these and they're not restricted by hours, you know, just the job to do it. So make sure the four inspections, make sure you're talking to every worker in that workplace, because that is your right to talk to every worker. You know, use body mapping. Make sure that, you know, challenge the employers and their risk assessments on your mental health as well as your physical health. They're supposed to have done organisational level risk assessments on your mental health using the management standards. That's not just individual ones when people go back to work after they've been off with stress, this is prevention, this is upfront prevention, what is causing our mental ill health in workplaces?

So in the HSE movement, we say that health and safety's all about love. It's about preventing those we love from being harmed at work. It's about making sure that those we love come home without being injured or made ill by work and it's not just a worker's physical health, as I've said before, it's their mental health.

So Trade Unions need an organising agenda, not just for recruitment, not just a recruitment agenda and there's no more relevant agenda for organising than around health and safety and welfare at work.

We've done lots of work on manifesto, trying to put in place, trying to put pressure before the last and the previous ones, what we want to see in terms from the government. Our HSE, not only is it under-resourced, it's become a commercial enterprise. So if you go on a HSE stand on some of these health and safety affairs, you'll see that they're selling training, you know and you think there's a conflict of interest here, when they're selling products, when they're the enforcement bodies and we need to stop that. So we need to take the commercial aspect out of it. It's lost its political independence, they've just newly appointed the Chair Sarah Newton, who was a Conservative MP for nine years. The CEO of the HSE was a career civil servant and you used to just ring up the HSE or your local authority enforcement and say, look, I've got this problem at work, can you just tell me if there's an issue here like, what can I do about it? They took away the 'phone lines, they took away your ability to email people and to know who your person is in those enforcement bodies and we need to go back to that and we need tripartitism in everything back on the agenda.

And then there's other things that we need to look at in terms of women's health and safety, which has been largely ignored over the years. Women's bodies are different, we've got different fats in them, more fats, thinner skins, so we're more susceptible to chemicals in our workplaces and we need to make sure that we've got better protection and I don't know, in your own workplace, the PPE, is it acceptable for protecting women as well as men? And the research has never been done on women's bodies and then the sexual harassment, the end not defend, absolutely we should not be experiencing sexual harassment in our workplaces 40-odd years after the Sex Discrimination Act came in. How is that right, that we're still having to be subjected to those conditions at work? It's not right, it's not decent and it needs to stop.

So we've got a mental health crisis, as I said before. We need to sort out the suicide, the SRSC Regs need to be enforced, occupational health in your workplace is a disaster. Diseases aren't reported. Something like 0.02% of all diseases are ever reported under RIDDOR and RIDDOR's the one that our employers should be reporting. It happens after work and they're not being, it's not being investigated as to what's happening. Gig workers, casual workers, as I said before, an eighth of workers according to the TUC work in precarious employment and that's increased by 70% since 2011.

So we need to re-establish HSE as a workplace enforcer, with adequate resources and staff and ensure they are independent of political and commercial influence and the main focus must be on prevention, proactive inspections and workplaces and all workplaces are potentially dangerous

So we've got climate crisis, we've got air pollution. Working in a bad climate impacts on all aspects of workers' health and safety. Women working with Heat Strike, so extreme temperatures is what we're all experiencing now because of the climate changes and there's lots of things that we need to challenge in our workplaces and we need to organise around, we can do things around them. Hybrid working, AI have brought additional challenges and young workers are in ever more vulnerable working conditions, conditions that shackle them to workplaces without regular or decent wages and conditions reminiscent of Victorian workhouses. Their every movement is monitored, scrutinised and their workload ever increasing and bullying and violent conditions and their safety and health put at risk every day, so work has become less structured for many people, workers without permanent bases, their work activities controlled by apps, monitoring of key strokes or routes and many with no security of hours, pay or a job. Amazon work exposed by the GMB included workers have no time to go to the toilet. I spend more time talking about toilets by the way at Reps meetings than anything else.

So our health and safety system needs a radical intervention. It's pointless having a law if it isn't enforced. There are many examples of where nominal standards and guidance are dismissed and ignored, where employees still have to endure, will still kill and injure and harm workers. Our loved ones' lives devastated through injury and trauma, their health suffering from deadly diseases and toxic poisons. Their deaths go by without little justice or penalty.

Our health and safety system, we need a health and safety system establishing that work is safer, with strong Unions, strong laws, strict enforcement and strong active Trade Unions. So it's incumbent on all of us to ensure our employers are held to account, that they carry out their legal duties and enforcement authorities as well are carrying out theirs and the government is held to account and if you get chance, join us at the Hazards Conference, to discuss this and other important issues. We say in the Hazards movement, we remember the dead and we will fight for the living and we'd rather have red tape than any bloody bandages. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Janet, thank you ever so much for coming and speaking to us. We've got a beautiful limited edition pewter baker for you, to say thank you ever so much, not just for coming and talking to us, but for everything that you do on behalf of our members always, because we couldn't do what we do without you doing the work behind the scenes at Hazards and then there's some lovely goodies that have been made by our members and a lovely tote bag too.

**Janet Newsome, Hazards:** Thank you so much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** And if you've got any questions for Janet, you'll be able to ask them when you go into the fringe meeting. I think they'll be preparing now. You've had a bit of a token of what you're going to be talking about, so you can prepare your questions in advance. Test her knowledge. Thank you very much, Janet.

Okay, everybody back to your Final Agenda. Oh, was I not turned on? I bet you still heard me though, didn't you? I thought you might.

Okay, we have got motion number 10 I believe, is it No. 10? It is, it's General Secretary.

*Branch Organisers shall be elected from the members of the Branches. The duty of Branch Organisers is to increase membership within the branch by recruiting new members and increasing engagement. They shall forward best practice to the EC for discussion.*

*Branch Organisers are to stand for re-election after five years' service, and their credentials should be progressed through the Regional Council.*

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Conference, organising is at the very heart of what makes this Union powerful, because we're all organisers, every single one of us. Every time we speak to a new worker about joining the Union, every time we challenge injustice and say we can do better than this, every time we bring people together to fight for something bigger than themselves, we are organising, but we also know that some people have a real spark for it, the instinct, the drive, the deep belief that workers have power when they stand together. We've seen some of that in the Rosa Luxembourg sessions that we've held over the last couple of years and this, I'll put my teeth in, I think we're sharing, this motion is about nurturing that. It's about recognising it, it's about nurturing it in our Branches, because our Branches need organisers.

The motion proposes that Branch organisers would be elected in their Branch, because that means that they know the workplace, the challenges, the conversations that need to be had, they'll be grounded, they'll be trusted and they'll be accountable. Their job, purely and simply, is to grow the Union. To go out and talk to new workers, to the quiet ones, the unsure ones, the ones who've been told it's not worth it and to say you're not alone, we've got your back, we are a Union and they won't stop at recruitment. It will also help, we hope, to build engagement, making sure our members don't just join the Union but get involved, get informed and get active, because the truth is, a membership card in somebody's wallet or their back pocket isn't enough. We want members to be connected, confident and ready to stand up for their rights and each other when that time is needed. It also asks that the Branch organisers would share what work that they've done, passing on best practice through the EC, so that we can learn from them, because we also know and we've known for many years, that what works in one Branch doesn't always work in others, but might work in somebody else's too. It's not just about one role in a Branch, it's about changing our culture, to a culture that says organising isn't the job of a few, it's the responsibility of all of us.

A culture that recognises that Unions don't grow because they're right, we grow because we reach out to people and a culture that says the best thing we can do for our movement is to build it, brick by brick, person by person, shift by shift. We've got to grow, not just because numbers matter, but because people matter. Every time a worker joins our Union, they are saying, I believe we're stronger together. I believe we deserve more, I believe we can win. So let's make sure that everybody, every Branch has got someone elected to lead on that work. It's not taking responsibilities away from others, it's so that someone is focused on mapping the workplace, building their Branches and increasing our power, so that the points that were brought up this morning around wage dignity become a reality. We ask that you support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Formally seconded. Speakers? I've just realised, it's like that, you know that puzzle you used to get when you were a kid, your parents used to let you do it when you were on long journeys in cars, that's what we've done to you, Julie.

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** I know, I noticed, obstacle course, health and safety. Here to oppose this, because I do believe we already do that in our Branches. Like I said earlier, we have problems getting release for some people and we recently discussed at Regional Council about our inductions have now been put on tablets and we've noticed that joining the Union is no longer part of that induction programme. Our full-time Official actually sent us a PowerPoint presentation. We asked, could it be put in the induction, wasn't a big problem, you know, the IT Department could have slotted it in, no problem and the company turned round and said, we do not promote, you know, we accept there's Union on site, but we don't promote specific Unions. Now for us to actually get somebody on site as a Branch organiser, that solely just does that job, it's not going to happen. So I do believe, like I said, Shop Stewards already, you know, are doing that role. We also have the opportunity of roadshows where full-time Officials can come on site, the Credit Union can come on site and, you know, they've got the time and the facility to sit and try and engage. When you're on a job, it's very, very difficult to get round everybody on site. So, you know, although part of it, yes, I understand what Sarah's saying, I'm sorry, but it's not going to happen, we're not going to get release. So, please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any other speakers? Are you speaking? Okay. You don't have to ask for permission, all you have to do is just come down now.

**Brother Zeal Machin – Branch 547 (Suma Wholefoods):** Hello, urm.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** You haven't forgotten your name though, have you and don't forget, first-time speaker.

**Brother Zeal Machin – Branch 547 (Suma Wholefoods):** Hello, everyone. First-time speaker.

[APPLAUSE]

I guess I'm unsure, I'm not opposing or for right now, maybe when I get a response it might sway me one way or the other, but just would it not be better to encourage us as a whole to be doing this organising rather than selecting one person to do it and I feel like that would, yes, with that sort of like education and training and encouraging everyone within the Branch to recruit within that Branch, that would be better. Does that make sense? Yes, right, thank you. Sweating, aren't I?

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Thank you very much. Well done and first time Delegate as well, yes. Well done, well done and you came on your bike, didn't you? And you came a long way. Where was it you set off from? Don't spoil this, where did you come from? Well, on your bike, there you go. Are you ready? No-one else is speaking then? General Secretary, right of reply.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Thank you. Look, we understand the reservations around release and other points that were raised, but we did run a trial in Region 3, we ran a project for around 12 months, where we gave Branch activists dedicated roles, such as being focusing on organising, to see if it would build structures in the Branches, build membership in the Branches that we focused on and we saw it work. We saw, when it was somebody's responsibility to take that mapping document and map their workplace and feed into the Branch structure and design and implement a strategy of where they were going to target, whether they were going to target members, whether they were going to target new Reps, we saw it grow, we saw the Branches grow, Fine Lady Bakery, you can't see him because he's online, he's one of those. We've had an influx of new Reps, we've had an influx of members, because they had somebody focused on organising. It's a Branch role, it's not a company role. It's for you as a Branch to decide who's going to be your focused organiser. It doesn't have to be a separate position, it could be that you've got six Shop Stewards and one of those is going to take on that role.

It's about making sure that we grow as a Union, because for far too long we've been shrinking in size and organising is at the very heart of everything that we do. If you go out on strike and you're not organised, who's going to turn up to your picket line? If you're fighting for a pay rise and you're not organised, who's going to vote yes for it? If you've got an influx of new starters that dilute your membership and your density, how are you going to be powerful? How are you going to stand up to your employer? This is about having somebody in the workplace that's focused on growing our Union, your Union and your power. So we would ask that you support this motion and we'll work together to develop how that might look like and how the training will be, but organising is at the heart of everything that we do, because if we don't organise, we won't be here. There'll be no Union, there'll be no pay rises and the employers will screw us over even more than they already are trying to do. So we ask that you vote for this position and vote yes to this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Put your hands down. Those in favour again? It looks a different vote this time, doesn't it? Because obviously on a rule change there has to be two-thirds in favour. Okay, they're voting online now. Right, those against? That's carried, that is carried. The second vote, more of you seemed to vote in the second vote, I don't know what that was all about, but there you go.

Motion 11 is withdrawn, so controversial, what's all that about? Motion 12, motion 12. It's alright sitting in the middle, until you try and get up.

## 12 Rule 22.20

**Executive**

### *Remove Rule*

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, Conference, we know obviously as an Executive there's been some discussions going on in various places about what's going on, the full-time Officials aren't in Conference and, you know, they've said they're going to make a statement, they aren't going to allow us to vote on a motion, what's all that about?, that isn't democracy in the Union.

We're aware of all that, but we are the Executive that you elect and put in place to protect the Union and make sure it complies with its legal obligations and this rule and the changes to this particular rule are because things have changed, because as an employer, we employ people, we employ clerical staff who are represented by the GMB and we employ full-time Officials who used to have a committee that was a Bakers Union full-time Officials committee, which this rule was actually related to. Now, we put this motion in well in advance of the decision to then not move this motion at Conference but make a statement on it, so we kept you informed about the situation, because we didn't think we'd be able to get the legal advice back in time to be able to actually put the debate onto the shop floor.

So it wasn't about denying anybody a vote, it was about not being in a position where we thought potentially legally we wouldn't be in a position to take a vote, but as it happens, we happen to have had the legal advice back and we've been able to make the necessary responses to the appropriate Trade Union of the full-time Officials, in response to their letter before action that they issued to us at the May, just before the May EC and now obviously we are in a position following that legal advice where we can obviously move the motion that we are asking you to support and this is the statement I'm going to read out in relation to that. So basically this briefing paper has been prepared to inform Delegates ahead of the Conference debate on motion 12, which was to propose to remove the Rule 22.20 from the BFAWU Rule Book. This is not a punitive action, it is a necessary step to preserve the independence, integrity and democratic functions of our Union.

Rule 22.20 currently allows full-time Officials specific to Regional Officers and organising Regional Secretaries to attend Conference with speaking rights on five motions, although with no voting rights. This rule empowers full-time Officers' committee to determine which motions are spoken on and by whom. Since the establishment of a recognition agreement with the Union Workers' Union, the BFAWU full-time Officers are now represented by an external Union on employment matters. A joint consultation and negotiation committee have been formed, rendering the, I need to get my teeth tested, don't I?, rendering the internal FTO committee and its functions redundant. As a result, the operation basis for Rule 22.20 no longer exists. After seeking clarification, the legal advice from Thompsons Solicitors has confirmed that Rule 22.20 is now effectively obsolete. However and this was the bit we needed to double check, however until it is formally removed by a vote of confidence, it remains in force. Any decisions to prevent attendance based on this rule must be democratically confirmed via Conference vote. That's relating to their ability to speak at our Conference. So, it's whether or not you recognise the right of a third party to speak and address and influence your rules at Conference, because that's what you're voting on and if you do, you know, not to support the position on withdrawing Rule 22.20, potentially you will be giving the right to UWU to influence our Conference and we don't think that's right, we don't think that's right.

So, UWU is not an independent Trade Union as defined by the Trade Union and Labour Relations and this isn't by us, this is by Thompsons Consolidation Act and therefore its members cannot claim certain statutory protections under the Act. Motion 12 proposes the complete removal of Rule 22.20, this will bring the Rule Book in line with the current structure, prevent any confusion regarding Officers' attendance and ensure that BFAWU remains accountable only to its members and removes any ambiguity, risk of influence from external organisations not answerable to our membership.

So that is the reason why Rule 22.20 has been put and we are requesting that you support the Executive position to remove it. It's not a penalty or punishment, it's because things have changed. Our Officers are entitled, as employees, to join a Trade Union. They have made that decision, as a group and they have asked us to recognise them as members of the UWU, the same as in your workplace, it's absolutely no different.

So, we can't refuse their recognition and we have to recognise that we have to put in place the consultation and the joint consultation body that has formed part of that recognition agreement, which means we have to take this out, because we can't have both, we can't have both structures, because they don't work, you know, to supplement or, you know, make things easy, it would complicate matters incredibly.

So the intention was never to deny Conference a vote, the intention was not to inform Conference of what the justification was, the problem we had is because there's legal requirements placed on us because of the legislation, we have to comply with those laws.

Now we're sorry if some people have been, you know, led to believe it's a different issue, we can't help that, the rumour mill will always be full of rumour, we can only tell you the facts and those are the facts. Now I said this morning when I was talking, the job of Conference is to make sure the integrity of this Union, to make sure the history of this Union is kept as owned by the members of this Union, so we are asking Conference to support the position laid out by the Executive and vote to agree to remove Rule 22.20. I move.

[APPLAUSE]

It's formally seconded. Any speakers?

**Brother Wasili Ali – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford):** Afternoon, Conference. Here to oppose the motion. The mover, the National President, has asked us to support what they've already done. I believe they're going about it the other way around. They should have waited for Conference, bring it to the Conference, we discuss it at Conference, then we take that step they've taken. That's my opinion. The full-time Officials, they are the guys, they are the Officers, they work with us day-in, day-out. They are an extension of the Union. We can't choose where we want them to fit into the organisation or where we don't. They attend our Regional Boards, they run the Regional Boards, when we go to these meetings, so are we saying only Conference is important, or only Conference is, I don't know, of paramount importance? We should be taking a decision based on what are they, who are they, what do they do, do we need them in the organisation?, because them changing or moving to a different organisation or Union doesn't make them bad guys. Are they unruly, are they disruptive?, there's a lot I could say.

We saw it this morning, there was a bit of confusion, I'll call it teething problems. When the full-time Officials were here, this Conference was run smoothly, they controlled the flow, controlled it. So the new guys, obviously I feel for them, maybe they were thrown in the deep end, they were not ready for the new rule, but the decision taken by the Exec, they have a right to run the Union, but I think it's a bit of dictatorship, you know, if I may use that word. We are trying to say we are not the Starmer's of this world, but just acted like a Starmer or a Kier Starmer of this world. In short, I rest, I ask you to oppose the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** I'm also here to oppose this motion. Ian mentioned earlier Rule 9 and it was 9.2 Exclusions. Should any member become an Officer of any other Trade Union, they shall not be eligible to hold any Office or Delegateship within this Union. They haven't become Officers of any other Union, they've become members of another Union. Also, I believe that quite a few of them have got dual membership, they are still Bakers Union members.

[APPLAUSE]

There are others who chose not to join the other Union. We're now saying those people can't come either. That's not right, that is not right. We did hear, at our pre-Conference meeting, that this wasn't going to be put to the vote and everybody was in an absolute uproar and I can't believe there's only two of us that have got up to speak against it. I just feel it's wrong and that we're discriminating against other Bakers Union members. Please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Jhon Fredy Velez Rodriquez – Branch 547:** I do think this Conference is not prepared to vote on this yet. I do think we need more discussion about this, it's a very serious issue what we're talking about and I personally feel that not having the full-time Officials in here with us, for us to listen to them, to get their point, to listen what is their position within the Union, is totally unfair for us to vote today. So I don't think the Conference is prepared today. I think we should oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. We've got Joanne online.

**Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs):** Hello, can you hear us?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Yep.

**Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs):** Hello, can you hear me?

[DELEGATES say "YES"]

Great, because I don't want any problems like last time. I'm also here to oppose this motion. Our full-time Officials are very important. Like you say, they've just joined another Union, there's a lot of, there's a few that haven't and I feel as though they're getting penalised and it's not fair and as a Union we're all about fairness and what's right. Our full-time Officials do a fantastic job, they support the Shop Stewards through, all the way through everything and I'm here to support them. So I oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Firstly, this is not about not having full-time Officials. This is about whether or not you recognise their right to be in a Trade Union of their choice.

They are in the Union Workers Union, who have put forward, which we have agreed, a recognition agreement that sets up a mechanism for members of the Union Workers Union, which covers their rights to negotiate terms and conditions and the role that they will play within the Union. That's what they requested, that's the agreement that we have signed, because we have an obligation as a Trade Union that believes if workers want to be recognised, that we meet that request. So let's be very, very clear. We didn't say to the full-time Officials join another Trade Union. They said to us, we want to form part of another Trade Union and they went off and they decided, a number of them, to create a group of full-time Officials that joined a different Trade Union. Then once they became the majority, they came back to us with a recognition agreement and letters signed by the Union Workers Union.

Now, are you suggesting that we should have turned round to the employees of this Trade Union and said sorry, you have no right to form a Trade Union, is that what you're really saying we should have said to them? The Bakers Union is going to deny its employees the right to form a Trade Union. Well, I think that would have gone down like a bit of a lead balloon, whichever way you look at it.

We recognise our employees right, if they wish to do so, to form a Trade Union and join whichever Trade Union they feel is appropriate. That's their right as workers and that's our obligation, as a Trade Union, that believes in the right of Trade Union recognition. What sort of a Union would we be if we said, like employers often say to us, you have no right to form a Trade Union, no rights, we're taking them away from you, you're not having the right to join a Trade Union, we'll make that decision, but we can come to our Conference and you can maybe moan a little bit about it, but we're not giving you the right to form your own Trade Union. How do you think that would have played? What do you think would have happened? How do you think you would have been viewed? What chances of organising in your workplace or in other workplaces, if we don't practice what we preach?, which is the right for workers to organise, regardless of what status they have. It's up to their Union and the members of their Union to work out what they want to do about how they operate in this Union and it's about the Executive, that our members elected, to negotiate with that Trade Union, to make sure that we put the structures in place that enable a good working relationship. The full-time Officers' job is not impacted by if they do or don't come to Conference, but let me tell you another thing too, because this is another thing that we think is a bit unfair and I know that someone suggested that they're not Officers of another Union, well actually yes, they are, just like you're Officers of this Trade Union, whether you realise it or not.

You get credentials as a Branch Secretary, as a Branch President, that makes you an Officer of another Trade Union and we think it might be slightly unfair that people who've put themselves forward to represent the workers that we employ as full-time Officials will be debarred from taking part in anything to do with the Bakers Union going forward, so actually by voting against this motion, you would be denying people the right, I'm going to retire soon, believe it or not, I've not stood again so you will get rid of me, it'll be rather quiet without me, I'm sure, but if they want to stand to take my place, two people who had the courage and the guts to stand up for their Trade Union, on behalf of their workers, would be denied the right to stand in this Union to become a National Officer. Do you really want to take that opportunity away from them? Do you think that would be fair or reasonable? I absolutely don't.

You have a choice, you have a choice. You either recognise the right of recognition of people being able to choose which Union they want to belong to, or you can turn it down and we'll go back to them and say, Conference said you can't be recognised, because that's what we're asking you. That's the debate. That's the motion that's in front of you. Conference, support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Thank you very much. Motion 13.

## 13 Rule 18

## Executive Council

*Remove current rule and replace with:*

### **18 Union's Balloting Procedure – Election of Officials**

*Organising Regional Secretaries and Regional EC Members shall be elected by Members in the Region concerned. The National President; General Secretary; EC Women's and Young Member's Representatives shall be elected by the membership nationally, provided it complies with current legislation.*

*In each election, the following rules shall apply:*

- i) The EC shall cause to be printed or electronically generated a number of ballot papers or online voting credentials in the form hereinafter provided, sufficient for the holding of a ballot in accordance with these ballot rules. Every such ballot paper should be stamped with the stamp or seal of the Union, or where voting is conducted online, authenticated by a secure digital verification process. No ballot paper or online vote shall be used for voting which is not so stamped or verified.

- ii) Nothing shall be written or printed, and no mark shall be made on any part of any ballot paper, online ballot, or envelope, or be inserted in any envelope, save as provided in these Rules. In particular, nothing shall be marked or indicated on any ballot paper, online voting platform, or envelope, or inserted in any envelope by any person in a way that can identify the Member voting. Any contravention of this Rule by a Member voting shall render the ballot invalid, and the vote shall not be counted.
- iii) The ballot shall be conducted so as to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, those voting do so in secret, whether by postal, workplace, or online voting.
- iv) Entitlement to vote in the ballot shall be accorded equally to all Members except those not in compliance with Rule (10). No Member shall be entitled to more than one vote.
- v) Every ballot shall be conducted using a form or platform that ensures security, anonymity, and accuracy in voting, with a structure that enables clear selection of candidates.
- vi) Every Member who is entitled to vote shall:
  - a) Be allowed to vote without interference from or constraint imposed by the Union or any of its members, officials, or employees; and
  - b) So far as is reasonably practicable, be enabled to do so without incurring any cost to the Member themselves.
- vii) Subject to (viii) below, so far as is reasonably practicable, every Member who is entitled to vote shall:

EITHER a)

  - i) Be sent a ballot paper by post or provided with secure access credentials for online voting;

*and*

  - ii) Be given a convenient opportunity to vote by post or online. OR b)
  - i) Have a ballot paper made available to the Member, or be provided with secure access credentials for online voting;

*and*

  - ii) Be given an opportunity to vote immediately before, immediately after, or during their working hours, either at their place of work, a place more convenient for the Member, or via an online voting platform.
- viii) These ballot rules are not complied with, even though it is not reasonably practicable for paragraph (a) or (b) of Rule (vii) to be applied to any Member, if it is reasonably practicable for the Member to be otherwise enabled to vote, including through secure online voting.
- ix) In these ballot Rules, a member to whom paragraph (a) of Rule (vii) is applied is referred to as a member 'given a fully postal or online vote' and a Member to whom paragraph (b) is applied is referred to as a Member 'given a workplace or online vote'.
- x) Subject to the requirements of Rules (iv) to (vii):
  - a) Rules (xiv) – (xviii) shall apply in relation to Members given a fully postal or online vote; and
  - b) Rules (xix) – (xxx) shall apply in relation to Members given a workplace or online vote.
- xi) The Union shall, at the request of any Member, supply the Member with a copy of these ballot rules free of charge.
- xii) The EC shall determine the date on which the counting of the votes will commence.
- xiii) Notice shall be published in such a manner as notices are usually given by the Union to its Members that a ballot will take place for the election of . . . . . [position] and that the Union will, on request, supply any Member with a copy of these ballot rules free of charge.

The notice shall also specify, as appropriate:

  - a) The date by which the ballot papers or online voting credentials will be sent to Members given a fully postal or online vote (as determined under Rule (xiv));
  - a) The date by which the workplace ballots will be taken (as determined under Rule (xx) (b)); and
  - b) The date before which the ballot papers or online votes must reach Head Office (under Rule (xviii)).

### **Rules for Members Given a Fully Postal or Online Vote**

- xiv) xiv) Where any Members are given a fully postal or online vote, the EC shall determine the date by which the ballot papers or online voting credentials shall be sent to those Members, which shall be not less than three weeks before the date on which the counting of votes will commence.
- xv) The EC shall ensure that every Member given a fully postal or online vote is sent:
  - a) A ballot paper or secure access credentials for online voting; and
  - b) An envelope (for postal voting) or instructions for online voting authentication.
- xvi) Every Member given a fully postal or online vote who desires to vote must return their ballot paper by post or submit their online vote through the designated platform before the date on which the counting of votes is to commence. The General Secretary shall ensure that such envelopes and online vote records are securely stored and not accessed until the time fixed for the counting of the votes.

### **Rules for Members Given a Workplace or Online Vote**

- xvii) For each place of work, or other places more convenient to the voter, which is to be used for voting by Members given a workplace or online vote, the EC shall secure that Scrutineers are appointed to be in charge of the taking of the ballot.
- xviii) So far as is reasonably practicable, every Member given a workplace or online vote shall be informed of the time or times and place at which they will be able to vote, or the time window for online voting.

### **Counting Rules**

- xix) The ballot shall be conducted so as to secure that the votes given in the ballot, whether by postal, workplace, or online voting, are fairly and accurately counted.
- xx) The EC auditors appointed under Rule 21.2 shall be the counting officers, and, at the date and time appointed for the counting of the votes, shall supervise the counting of postal, workplace, and online votes. Online votes shall be securely extracted from the voting platform and verified before counting.
- xxi) The counting officers shall decide whether any vote shall be rejected as being invalid under Rule (iii) and shall forthwith separate any such vote and mark it 'Rejected'.
- xxii) The total number of votes given for each candidate, and the total number of votes rejected, shall be recorded in a return signed by the counting officers.
- xxiii) The EC shall ensure that all ballots, whether postal, workplace, or online, are securely stored for at least six months following the election.

**Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390, Manor (Stoke), (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** I'm here, moving this motion, on behalf of the EC. Somewhere or other I've managed to pick up the largest motion we've got at Conference and neither yourselves nor me want me to read it out word for word. You've all got it in your Agendas and you've had the time to go through it. Basically this motion calls for the replacement of the current Rule 18, in order to allow us to use an online ballot alongside the current options. When I say replacement, I'll qualify that. In most sections, it uses the original wording with the addition of the online voting options. In a lot of the text, the original Roman numerals for the sections are reused, so members can see there's a direct comparison between the old rule and the new one. This comes with the benefit of correcting a few typos that are in the old Rule Book, hey-ho. I'll just stress that there will be no pressure on members to vote online if they're uneasy or don't have the equipment to vote. Paper ballots will still be available, both by post and in workplaces, just like we do now. The option to vote online obviously saves a little bit of money on postage costs, for those members who choose to do so and that's got to be a benefit to us. It also allows members the freedom to vote whilst off-site from work, or even when they're on holiday and might normally miss out on being able to take part in the ballot. Having the option to vote online might actually increase the members participating in the vote, which as a democratic Trade Union, has got to be good. Political parties already use online votes alongside paper ballots on their internal elections, companies use online voting at their AGMs and it's time we took advantage of this option too. The Executive Council would ask you to support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Formally seconded. Any speakers? Okay. Are you speaking? Okay.

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253:** Whilst I'm in support of this motion, what has failed to be carried out, as requested, is an explanation as to where it falls in the Rule Book. Rule 18, for this motion, is actually in the Appendix at the back of the Rule Book, so if you're looking for it, look at the back in the Appendices, please.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I think that was probably a point of order, wasn't it? Yes, well, you're right, but no, you're absolutely right, yes.

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Obviously Nick's just come in there and stole what I was going to say, because actually Rule 18 is about Regional Organisers. So, to me, it should be remitted and brought back next time, because as far as I'm concerned, it's out of order. It doesn't say Appendix 18, it says Rule 18. So, to me, it's out of order. Please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Are there any other speakers? I mean, just to answer your question, it can't be ruled out of order unless the Standing Orders say it's ruled out of order and they didn't. But they ruled them out of order, Julie, because they didn't meet whatever criteria it was they were looking at. This does exist and it is there. I don't disagree with you, but it comes under Standing Orders and they accepted it, so I mean we really shouldn't be having this debate by the way, but obviously it's not down to us, they've said it stands and can I just remind you, by the way, you voted in favour of accepting the Standing Orders this morning, so if you really wanted to oppose what the Standing Orders were saying, you should have moved it then, as should the Chair of Standing Orders by the way and my job is just to make sure Conference flows and if the Standing Orders tell me they've accepted that motion, I'm not bothered where it comes from, they've accepted that motion. My job is just to make sure that, obviously if people raise questions like yours, I try and give you answer because I think that's fair, but it's not for me to rule something out of order, unless you want to give me that power, but we have a right to reply, I think we have a right to reply, because I know there were more points of order than actual opposition. I'm at a little bit of a loss, I'm looking at the General Secretary for guidance. Did you say oppose? Did you say oppose? You did, right, okay, sorry. I thought it was just because it was, I thought you were asking to remit it because.

**Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390, Manor (Stoke), (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** With the right to reply. In the Agenda, under motion 13, Rule 18, remove the current rule and replace with 18 Union's Balloting Procedure, Election of Officials. In the rule at the back of the Rule Book, it says Section 18 Union's Balloting Procedure, Election of Officials. I think it's clear enough what the actual rule is referring to, so there's no confusion, just please vote for the motion as is written. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's lost, isn't it. Would you say it was lost? Okay.

What time have we got, what time have we got? 10 to 3. Okay, I've just been updated that motion 14 has been remitted, so motion 17, which is Branch 503. Pardon? It's been remitted.

**17**

**Branch 503**

### **Demand for Universal Free, Nutritious School Meals**

*Conference notes the outrageous levels of child poverty in Scotland – about 25% of all kids – and the simultaneous epidemic of obesity and ill health.*

*Whilst calling on the Scottish government to help address this through measures like universal, non-means tested child benefits, we specifically also call for universal free, nutritious school meals for all children, from pre-school and nursery, through all primary school years and throughout secondary school years.*

*Conference welcomes the partial introduction of free school meals to Primary 1-5, as a result of long-running campaigns, but condemns the 2024 decision by the Scottish government to halt its roll-out to Primary 6-7.*

*Conference furthermore calls for this to be a universal provision - including at secondary schools - to remove the stigma of the means-tested system, and provide at least one healthy, warm, nutritious meal a day that will help improve learning outcomes and health amongst our young people, in a period of escalating poverty and deprivation in the population, and the growing educational attainment gap.*

**Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill):** Moving motion 17. Demand for universal free nutritious school meals. Conference notes outrageous levels of child poverty in Scotland, about 25% of all kids and a simultaneous epidemic of obesity and ill health. We must call on the Scottish government to help address this through measures like universal non-means tested child benefits. We specifically also call for universal free nutritious school meals for all children, from pre-school and nursery through all primary school years and throughout secondary school years. Conference welcomes the partial introduction of free school meals to primary 1–5, as a result of long running campaigns. It condemns the 2024 decision by the Scottish government to alter to primary 6–7. Conference furthermore calls for universal provision including secondary school levels, to remove the stigma of the means tested system, provide at least one healthy nutritious meal a day that will help improve learning outcomes and health amongst our young people and escalating poverty and deprivation in the population and a growing educational attendance cap.

Although this motion calls and talks about Scotland, it's more a nationwide point and I suppose we should have put that in, but as it stands now, so we've already had debates and talks at previous Conferences, I think one was last year as well, where children will eat half of school meals and take the rest home for themselves or their siblings because they don't have anything to eat. It's a sad state of affairs that in 2025, we're even having a conversation about feeding children at school, especially with this government. Previous Tory governments have always found enough money to bail out the banks, to give themselves exorbitant pay rises, to fund wars, to fund genocide in Palestine, which is causing the death of hundreds of thousands of children, they can find the money for that and they can find the funds for them to help their pals with the contracts, like Michelle Mone with her dodgy PPE contract, I use that as an example because she's Scottish and she grew up in one of the most deprived areas of Glasgow and her family survived on benefits and her first job, when she took her seat in the House of Plant Pots, was to cut disability benefit and that's just ridiculous, somebody coming from a working class background, using that position. I digress a wee bit, but sorry I had to get that in because she's voicing a documentary?.

Providing even one healthy nutritious meal at school can provide a child with enough energy to see them through the day, but other effects are hunger and food insecurity in kids and physical and mental health issues and this can undermine the child's ability to learn and therefore benefit their school education. Another benefit of a good healthy meal at school is children will be less likely to go to snack vans, that are conveniently sitting outside school gates and selling unhealthy high fat, high sugar content foods, which is adding to the issue of child obesity. This isn't the first time the government has taken nutrition away from kids. Some of us are old enough to remember when, I hate saying her name, Thatcher stole the milk [unclear] at school and for some kids it was their only source of calcium. That's why she earned her nickname, Thatcher, Thatcher, the milk snatcher. I always remember that.

We know it is a struggle for the working class, so any free nutrition for kids is welcome for the families and she took that away, the same as this government's cutting school meals for children now. Here's something for you all to think about. Research published by the Food Foundation found more than four million children in the UK, four million, live in households that struggle to afford to buy enough fruit, veg, fish and other healthy foods to meet the official nutrition guidelines and that's a figure that's increasing day by day, that's official guidelines, four million people, it's shocking. We, as a Union, should be at the forefront of it, the food campaign for workers and we need to do the same for the kids, for the future workforce and hopefully future Trade Union members. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs):** I'm here to support this motion. Working with Greggs, we have the Greggs Foundation, we do the Breakfast Clubs and Greggs have said it costs 25p to feed a child a breakfast in a morning, that's it, 25p per child, it's not much. Like has been said before, they can find money for weapons, they can find money for bombs, they can find money for their mates, but they can't help the most vulnerable people out there. I think it's absolutely disgusting. I'm asking you to please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any other speakers? Okay. Just so you know, these are no longer rule changes, these are policies. There's a difference in the way that we vote. Whereas with the rule changes you needed to have two-thirds in favour, now it's just a majority, it's a simple majority, so whereas before I had to have a look, now it's just as you vote.

Are you, on the next one? Oh, I didn't think you were coming up, sorry. Sorry.

**Brother Imran Hussain – Branch 303 (Speaking on behalf of the EC):** The EC would ask you to support this motion, based on numerous points, the first being kids who get a healthy meal also do well academically, it reduces the financial strain on families when it comes to providing meals. I think, I tried to look at Scottish laws and I think one of the reasons that will refuse you free meals at 6 and 7 is if you get £850 or more in Universal Credit, which we all know is absolutely nothing for a month, so these are one of the things, but one of the main points is what the mover said is stigma. Stigma is, kids get bullied for that and if it was made universal for everyone, that would stop a lot of bullying. You know, how many times have we seen kids get bullied in school, you know, the amount of times it leads to suicide and, you know, it's our duty to stop stuff like that and the last one, which is also really important, is anti-social behaviour. No-one's going to go hungry, so they'll probably go to the shops and steal or they'll probably find another way and a lot of kids, you know, we've seen it before, eight, nine, 10 year olds, move drugs just so they can get money so, you know, if they can get a meal, it will hopefully deter them from going off-pat. So the EC, you know, can you please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I do apologise, Imran, I was looking at my papers and I didn't see you coming. So, I'll go back to what I was explaining before, before I rudely interrupted Imran. Obviously on a rule change it had to be two-thirds, now it's just a straight forward the majority showing hands is the way we roll, so just so you know. So, to the vote. All those in favour? Those against? That's pretty unanimous and I do believe, it's three minutes, it's three minutes, three minutes. I'll tell you what, because it's Sunday, right, I'm going to give you half an hour before you have to go to your fringe meetings, how's that? We've had a busy day, haven't we and no doubt you had a pretty hectic night last night, so, all back in here for 9.30 in the morning.

Thank you very much for your indulgence today. Just remember, enjoy the evening.

# Monday 16th June 2025

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Morning, everyone. Can we shut the doors, please. Anybody that comes in, make sure they go to Standing Orders. We're doing some fundraising. I hope everybody's raring to go. You're all looking amazing out there. Can I just, before we go to the roll call, just say that anybody that attended the little bit of a shindig in the bar last night could not have been impressed by the fantastic entertainer, one of our own as well, Chris Magill.

[APPLAUSE]

I mean we are very, very grateful and absolutely delighted that we got to hear you because absolutely brilliant, I can't say any more than that. If you ever see his name anywhere in a bar, just make sure you go in, because you missed it last night if you didn't go in and anybody who was there, just ask them, he was absolutely brilliant. So thank you very much, Chris and we really, really do appreciate what you did and the time you gave up and I think, it was an hour's pay, wasn't it, yes and obviously a dignified hourly rate, yes

[LAUGHTER].

Was there anything else I had to say? There was, wasn't there. There was something else I had to say, but like my eyes that aren't working very well and my teeth that I'm breaking in, my memory's gone as well, so at some point I will remember what it was and I will remember to tell you, so do bear with me. I knew there was something else. Can I also wish Linda Moorehouse, the love of Andy's life, a very Happy Birthday for today, because it's her birthday and obviously I picked it up on Facebook this morning, so best wishes to your better half, Andy, as well.

General Secretary, roll call.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Region 1. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4. Region 5. Region 6. Region 7 and we've got nine online. Thank you.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. Everybody's settled back down again, we're all ready to rock and roll, yes? Obviously just to remind everybody, the lunch will be at 12 o'clock, so if you are arranging to meet anybody, it's 12 o'clock or thereabouts, it might be a minute earlier, a minute late, I mean you owe me three minutes and I do count, so we're going to move on to, just a reminder the Final Agenda, we're going to move on to motion 18. I think we need some red string.

**18**

**Branch 452**

*That the government enforce that bicycle manufacturers sell bicycles with front and rear lights already fitted at the point of sale.*

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Here to move motion 18. That the government enforce that bicycle manufacturers sell bicycles with front and rear lights already fitted at the point of sale. Most people should know that it is illegal to cycle on a public road after dark without lights and reflectors. The most basic requirement of the law is to fit a white front light and a red rear light, which must be clean and working properly when cycling between sunset and sunrise. Reflectors should also be fitted to pedals and the rear of the cycle. If you are involved in an incident at night, any slight irregularity could be challenged in court and may be regarded as contributory negligence. Lots of cyclists are currently using the roads and cycle lanes without any lighting, making it difficult to see them, especially when wearing dark clothing. Rule 60 of the Highway Code states: at night, your cycle must have white front and red rear lights lit. By manufacturers selling bicycles already fitted with lights, everyone would be cycling legally and safely. Health and safety doesn't just stop in the workplace so, you know, please support. Be seen and be safe.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? Are you coming? Cool.

**Brother Michael Redshaw – Branch 459:** I'd like to support this, Julie. I think it's very important. I'm a cyclist myself and like you say, a lot of bikes do actually have lights fitted to them, but like you say, it's for their own safety. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Armilson Correia – Branch 110:** Morning. I am cyclist myself and when cycling especially at night-time, the problem is not what the cyclist sees. He must make himself visible to the cars and pedestrians and I think the manufacturers should at least fit a strobe light or fit a **[unclear]** light to make sure the cycles are being seen. I support the motion, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes):** I would agree with this. As a driver and when I'm working in the winter, it takes me 15 miles to get to work and you see a bicycle riding along the road, where I live in Wiltshire, it's country lanes, dark and the bends are really sharp. You come round the corner with your car and the next minute you see the bike. If there was lights on there, at least that way, as a driver, you could see them and I used to, in my younger days, as a teenager, before I even passed my driving test, I used to ride a bike and I nearly got hit by a car. I think I was a typical teenager, never had lights on my bike and I nearly got hit, but as you get older you learn, find new experience, you think what an idiot was I, you know, I should have had lights on my bike, I should have had a high-vis vest, but you don't as a teenager, but if it was a common thing as a manufacturer on a thing and mandatory, the accidents wouldn't have happened, it will reduce the hazards of that kind of thing. So I support this motion, thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Sean Winfield – Branch 390:** I just want to echo quite a lot of what that guy's just said. I was thinking about that on my way up and I thought I'm going to say this and he's just said most of it but yes, there's a lot of cyclists, when I'm on my way to and from work and it's dark and there's no lights on, they've got no high-vis or anything and they're all wearing black and you can't see them and it's just an accident waiting to happen. So please, I ask for people to vote for this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, (AB, Liverpool):** The League Champions, I've waited a long time to say that.

[CHEERS, APPLAUSE and BOOS]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** That's an inappropriate comment, by the way.

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, (AB, Liverpool):** Sorry. I'm here to support the motion. I am a cyclist, I cycle to and from work and I also am a leisure cyclist as well and during the winter-time, my bike is like one of the trams at Blackpool in the illuminations, but it doesn't stop inconsiderate motorists nearly knocking me off my bike all the time. So, I agree with the motion that people should have lights on their bike, but I think motorists should take a bit of due care and attention when they see a cyclist and they've got lights on not to nearly knock them off their bikes, but I do support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** There isn't anybody else speaking, obviously there's nobody can speak after Pete speaks, Yes, yes, no, okay, cool, that's cool.

**Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** Morning, Conference. We support this motion. Obviously 5,000 people got injured on the roads, cyclists, this year and every year, so if they can be seen at night. There's no statistics basically on how many people get injured at night, but obviously 30% are being injured. Support the motion, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That was unanimous, so that's passed.

If people notice, we've been joined on stage, but I think we're going to give you about 15 minutes to get used to being here and listening for a bit, if that's alright, but welcome Rebecca Long-Bailey, she's somebody who this Union supported to be the leader of the Labour Party and someone we've always had a lot of confidence and trust in. We're really pleased you've joined us today and will be speaking to us shortly. I believe I've got the Chair from Standing Orders, who's coming to give us an update. I was just filling in until you got here, I know you're getting your steps in. That's good, that'll double your steps.

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** If you can please turn to your Agendas. The following motions will stand. Motions 21 – 47. Nice and simple, it was short and sweet, I know, right? Don't worry. Can I ask Scrutineers to re-collect all the TUC ballot papers, we need to recall them, there's a slight error.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Oh, right, right. You'll just have to wait a minute.

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** That ends this report.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** It doesn't quite.

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** Sorry?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** It doesn't quite, it doesn't quite. I've got to take a vote yet, but obviously .....

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** I say this ends this report and then it goes to you.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Yes, because obviously I've got to make all these down, because you didn't say them one by one.

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** Actually my notes say I don't have to.

[LAUGHTER]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Oooh.

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** Carry on ticking off, I'll keep talking for you.

[LAUGHTER]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Oh aye, yes, 45's been withdrawn, hasn't it? Oh, hold on a minute.

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** Not according to my document.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Well it says it on here, 45 withdrawn, in the booklet.

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** It's alright, I have not been informed that it had been withdrawn. 45 is withdrawn.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Do we accept the report? Even though we cheated a little bit? Anyone against? That's carried unanimously. Thank you very much.

Okay, we're going to go to motion 19, Branch 258.

**19**

**Branch 258**

*This conference agrees that we need to nationalise social care in the UK. Nationalisation would mean establishing a publicly funded National Care Service (NCS), like the NHS, with care provided free at the point of need. The NCS could improve the quality of care for older and disabled people as well as working age adults. The NCS could address the shortage of care workers by providing better pay, T's & C's and training. It could also end the current reliance on profit making private companies who trade profit over quality service provision.*

**Brother Tony Mansell – Branch 258 (Memory Lane Cakes, Cardiff):** Morning, Conference. This Conference agrees that we need to nationalise social care in the UK. Nationalisation would mean establishing a publicly-funded National Care Service, or NCS, like the NHS, with care provided free at the point of need. The NCS could improve the quality of care for older and disabled people as well as working age adults. The NCS could address the shortage of care workers by providing better pay, terms and conditions and training. It would also end the current reliance on profit-making private companies who trade profit over quality service provision. I was prompted to write this motion after the situation myself and my family found ourselves in regarding my mother, who was diagnosed with dementia last September. As time went on, my mother's condition worsened, my dad found it harder to cope and reached out for help. He's 76 and not in the best of health himself and after being together for 60 years, he felt that it was his duty to care for his wife.

They were finally assigned a social worker who came to assess the situation, but then every so often a new social worker would be assigned and all of them full of empty promises and unanswered 'phone calls. Four weeks ago, my mother had a fall outside of the house and cracked her head on a pavement. She was eventually, but that's another story, taken to hospital, where she still is to this day. We are waiting for her to be transferred to our home town hospital where there is a specialist dementia ward, but she is obviously in a lengthy queue and from there ultimately to a place in a care home where she can hopefully get the care and attention she fully deserves. Sorry, I'll just take a minute. The care system .....

[APPLAUSE]

the care system so far has failed my mum and dad to a certain extent and needs to change to ensure that all elderly, disabled and vulnerable people are properly looked after with the utmost care and dignity that they so richly deserve. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Brother Paul Parry – Branch 258 (Memory Lane Cakes, Cardiff):** First-time speaker.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

I again have gone through similar experiences, as Tony, with grandparents. I believe as a nation we should look after the elderly.

We're getting older, our people are getting older and we need better care, standardised care and free at the point of entry. Instead of not looking **[unclear]**, everything else just be looked after. So I would ask you to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** Here to support this motion. My mother-in-law is currently in a home for dementia. She's 88 and was brought up with the idea of the, that care would be provided from the cradle to the grave. Well, she isn't in the grave and she isn't being cared for. It's costing a fortune to get her looked after, because she can't look after herself, because of the dementia. It is criminal what's happening. Like I say, it's costing a fortune and it shouldn't be happening. The system was there in place, somebody removed it and we all have to pay for it now. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Zeal Machin – Branch 547 (Suma Wholefoods):** Hello. Thanks, everyone, for sharing your stories, it's really appreciated and good to hear that, well, good for you to share them and it brings into stark reality what happens. My mam was a carer, a community carer and I remember being a child in the car, because she couldn't get childcare for me and I was a bit naughty and I didn't go to school that often and I just remember her being dead stressed and like rushing around from person to person to person because she wasn't getting paid for the journey in between house to house to house, but the time between houses was like really like constrained. I think it's abhorrent that like in our society, children in care, adults in care are running businesses for private profit. I think the most vulnerable shouldn't, like profit shouldn't be in question, it should always be like, it should just be run to break even essentially. Yes, so I support this motion and I think yes, care workers would be better off which would translate into better care for people they're caring for. I'm shaking, but yes, thank you very much, cheers.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Well done. Okay, Joanne, online.

**Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs):** Our elderly are working class, they've worked all their lives, they're the backbone of this country and the way they're treated at the moment is shocking. They've paid taxes all their lives, they've paid National Insurance all their lives and they should be entitled to good care. I support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** On behalf of the Executive as well, which is why there's not going to be any Executive, so unless there's anybody else getting up, I'm going to go to the vote. Okay. All those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous and I'm going to move on to Branch 503, motion 20. Can you sing it?

**20**

**Branch 503**

**Public Ownership of all forms of Energy**

*Conference condemns the increased loss of skilled workers' jobs in the North Sea industry, Grangemouth oil refinery, and other sectors of the fossil fuel industry.*

*Conference fully accepts that the science proves the urgent need to end fossil fuel production, to combat the climate catastrophe, but completely rejects the idea that workers in the sector should pay the price, in the same way coal miners and their communities did in the 1980s.*

*Conference has no faith in private capitalist corporations tackling the climate crisis that they were instrumental in creating, despite all their greenwashing, nor do we accept that nuclear power is a clean form of energy production.*

*Privatised ownership of renewables, such as the growing wind power sector in Scotland, has not led to green job creation – the number of Scottish jobs in wind power fell by 4,000 in the past year - and highlights the need for the Scottish government to develop an industrial strategy centred on public ownership and control, to make a rapid green transition benefit workers, communities and the planet. Reliance by the UK and Scottish governments on private energy companies has been a disastrous failure.*

*Conference calls for democratic public ownership of all forms of energy – including Grangemouth, North Sea operations, and renewables – as the foundation for a rapid transition to green energy production, without loss of jobs or conditions, through alternative plans of green production drafted by experts in the field, including energy workers themselves.*

*A Socialist Green New Deal based on democratic public ownership could create tens of thousands of skilled jobs and apprenticeships in Scotland, slash heating bills, and help reverse the environmental damage done by decades of production for profit by the fossil capitalists.*

**Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill):** Moving motion 20. Public ownership of all forms of energy.

Conference condemns the increased loss of skilled workers' jobs in the North Sea industry, Green Oil Refinery and other sectors of the fossil fuel industry. Conference accepts that science proves the urgent need to end fossil fuel production to combat the climate catastrophe. They completely reject that workers in the sector should pay the price and the same with the coal miners in our communities in the 1980's. Conference has no faith in private capitalist corporations tackling the climate crisis that they were instrumental in creating. This might be greenwashing, not that we accept that nuclear power is a clean form of energy production. Privatised ownership of renewables such as the growing wind power sector in Scotland has not led to green job creation. The number of Scottish jobs in wind power fell by 4,000 in the past year and highlights the need for the Scottish government to develop an industry strategy similar to public ownership and control to make a rapid **[unclear]** benefit workers, communities and the planet. Reliance by the UK and Scottish governments in the private energy companies has been a disastrous failure.

Conference calls for democratic public ownership of all forms of energy, including Grangemouth and North Sea operations in renewables as a foundation for a rapid transition into green energy production without loss of jobs and conditions **[unclear]** plans for green production drafted by experts in the field including energy workers themselves. A Socialist green new deal based on democratic public ownership could create tens of thousands of skilled jobs and apprenticeships in Scotland, slashing heating bills and help reverse the environmental damage done by production for profit by social Capitalists. That was quite long that one. Starting with Grangemouth. I know **[unclear]** with Scotland with a refinery. What a shameful act of betrayal by the UK and Scottish governments who plundered the riches associated with oil through the decades, then allowed unregulated companies to charge exorbitant prices for fuel and energy to the public.

The same companies are now **[unclear]** this year that they're going to cut the fuel bills in the summer, but they would raise them higher than previously in the winters. Imagine letting profiteers having a say in a green new deal or a transition, which is the last thing **[unclear]**. Bring it back to public ownership, with just transition for everyone with affordable energy bills. **[unclear]** in Scotland and if we can't get independence through a ballot box then hopefully a big massive gust of wind will do it for us. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Formally seconded. Speakers? I think he said it all. Any other speakers? Curtis.

**Brother Curtis Tierney– Branch 258 (Memory Lane Cakes, Cardiff):** As Socialists, obviously public ownership is obviously what we want. Nationalised, obviously, transport, energy the main ones. To be honest, Chris has basically said most of what I was going to say, you know. Support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Well done. That's the way you do it. To the vote. All those in favour? Those against? That's carried unanimously. When you say everything, Chris, you say everything, don't you, you know what I mean?

Okay, obviously we're not going to move another motion now, we're going to hear from our guest speaker. I mean obviously people who remember the Corbyn Labour Party, will know that the politics and the change that they offered was significantly different to the Tory policies and continuity programme that's currently offered by Keir Starmer and his band of centrists. We know that the politics that Rebecca Long-Bailey offered, as a Shadow Minister, would have changed people's lives significantly. It was on a proper deal for working people, the environment and the opportunity to be able to get transport to go to shopping centres, from everything that would have raised and levelled up all of our communities. If Rebecca Long-Bailey would have got into power, our lives would have been enhanced so much. We wouldn't have been talking now about blaming people, because our lives would have been so much better. We wouldn't have been looking for scapegoats, because politics would have been delivering the change that we deserve, that we need.

So it's my pleasure to invite Rebecca Long-Bailey to address the Bakers Union Conference, as our new, replacing Ian Mearns, parliament to lead and I've forgotten and I've forgotten what time we gave you actually, Rebecca, the Chair of our Parliamentary Group, but welcome to the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union Conference, Rebecca Long-Bailey.

[APPLAUSE]

## **Rebecca Long-Bailey, Chair of the Parliamentary Group addresses Conference**

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**Rebecca Long-Bailey, Chair of Parliamentary Group:** Thanks so much for that really lovely introduction. It's always lovely coming to your Conferences and it's lovely chairing the Parliamentary Group and for anyone who doesn't know, the Bakers Union Parliamentary Group is meant to be a cross-Party group of MPs who essentially support the Bakers Union and want to be your voice in Parliament and it's easy to be your voice in Parliament because I agree with every single thing that everyone's said at this Conference so far and I think politically and socially we're very much on the same page, so it's an absolute pleasure to represent you along with the other amazing MPs in Parliament who do the same thing.

[APPLAUSE]

And it's a bit weird hearing about the leadership election in the Labour Party because I try and block it out now, but one thing I would say is that imagine how many things we would have nationalised by now if I was the Prime Minister.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

We'd be drawing up a new list because we'd nationalise all the things that we wanted to nationalise to start off with and we'd be thinking of new things. But no, it's an absolute pleasure to be here and I'd also like to thank Ian Mearns, who was the Chair of the Parliamentary Group previously. He's gone off to have a very well deserved retirement, but he was a very dedicated Chair of the Group for many, many years and did an awful lot of work in Parliament. I'd also like to say a huge thanks to Sarah Woolley and Ian Hodson for their tireless work, both in and outside of Parliament. They keep us up-to-date in the Parliamentary Group on issues that are emerging in the food sector, but beyond the food sector as well, because we know that your Trade Union is about representing your workers, but it's also about social justice and building the society that we all want to live in. So I want to thank you all, as well as Sarah and Ian, for your tireless dedication to building that world.

[APPLAUSE]

I also want to say a special thanks to Michael Calderbank, who's sitting at the back there, because he is the Parliamentary Group's liaison and he does outstanding work, ensuring that us MPs actually do our jobs. He gives us our instructions, basically he's like our boss, aren't you and he drafts our motions and makes sure that we're equipped with all of the information that we need in Parliament to be your voice, so the action that we've taken so far wouldn't have happened without him and Charlie from my office as well is also here. I'd like to give her a special thanks for the work that she's done to support the Union too.

[APPLAUSE]

Again, Charlie's my boss, well, nothing happens in my office without Charlie saying so. So, in terms of our Parliamentary contingent following the election last year. We were quite a smallish group, but we saw some new members join the group, which has been fantastic and excellent to see. We've seen good engagement across both Houses of Parliament, we've got members in the Lords as well. We've had parliamentary campaigning in the recent months on a whole range of issues and you'll see from the written report that I think you've all got, that there's a whole range of work that's been undertaken over the last couple of years.

Now, I've got this theory that all the amazing things that have ever happened in the world have some direct link to Salford and the Bakers Union is no different here.

[APPLAUSE]

So with the docks, Salford long had many people working across the food industry, as I'm sure many of you know, from the mills to the bakers to the distributors along our roads and waterways and when you look at the BFAWU's history, the Manchester Friendly Association of Operative Bakers was established in 1849 and by 1854 it was led by Thomas Hodson, is he a relation? Yes? And he first expanded the Union to represent bakers in Salford, yeah, which the history books note make it the first Bakers Union in England to cover a wide area.

Now, we know that that work happened all those years ago in Salford because of the importance of our food industry and we know that there's a duty for parliamentarians to champion that industry, but also to champion the workers within that industry, because those workers are a necessity for our very survival, our physical health, but as you know, as well as I do, food is much more than that, whether it's a child getting enough food to make sure they can concentrate at school, a couple sharing a dish of nice spaghetti on a date or an international group sharing food and recipes from their home countries at local community events. Food heals people, it sustains us and it brings communities together. It's one of the most important parts within the fabric of our societies.

So as an MP, along with the other MPs, we're well aware of the importance of protecting workers' rights and jobs in this really important sector and that also of the value of the food industry to both our local and national economy, as well as the nation's well-being and we've been able to support you on a range of issues in Parliament on that basis. In relation to specific workplaces, we shared your very serious concerns about the decision of a public equity firm, Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, who announced that they would cease production at the Morrisons supermarket, Rathbones site in Wakefield, which would put 400 jobs at risk and presented workers with the option of retention to produce morning goods, but only if they accepted reduced pay, terms and conditions. We put down an early day motion, which is basically a motion that all parliamentarians kind of sign up to to show the strength of feeling on a particular issue, so the government knows how many MPs are angry about that and we know that your Union did a huge amount of campaigning on this and were also able to successfully negotiate on the retention of jobs and for decent redundancy terms in this case.

In another example, Five Equity Endless LLP, evented Hovis into merger talks with Allied Bakeries, who produce the Kingsmill bread. Again, we've put down a motion on this, which expressed our worries that a merger on this scale of such giants in the baking industry might result in cost-cutting measures, as we've seen with all these big mergers and acquisitions across the food sector. It could also result in restructuring or rationalisation that impacts thousands of workers, job security as well as the serious implications for competition in the sector and just last week, we raised concerns following the agreement in principle from shareholders of Bakkavor, a major food manufacturer, which employs about 14½ thousand workers across the UK, on their acquisition deal from rival food giant Greencore, which itself employs 13,600 workers across the UK and in Ireland. Again, we're worried, as I'm sure you are too, that this risks concentrating the market in the supply of particular products including supermarket ready meals and risks site closures and job losses.

Now it does show, I think those three cases, how supermarkets, their suppliers and supply chains in between are at risk by private equity ownership and it also highlights the importance of your Union's work in protecting workers from the vagaries of owners being mainly motivated by short-term profitability, which we've seen so many times across the food sector in recent years and we've seen very little action from the Competition and Markets Authority or governments of the time to stop this from happening.

Now, the Parliamentary Group's quite clear on this. We've maintained that the government has to launch a proper investigation into the impact of private equity acquisitions over UK grocery retailers, while the Competition and Markets Authority needs to exercise its full powers to ensure deals and mergers don't run counter to the public interests and will continue to follow up and let you know what's happening with this work in the coming months.

We've also been dealing with a very interesting matter and we've been supporting your Union in relation to their Sex Workers Union Branch members who are working in Newcastle, where dancers receive threats and abuse for joining the Union and raising their concerns about health and safety improvements. We've been engaging with Newcastle MPs, Mary Glendon and Chi Onwurah, as well as Newcastle City Councillors and while within Parliament this divided opinion on how we should view sex work and the recognition of sex workers and it's come up quite a lot, particularly with the Crime and Policing Bill and other legislation that's passing through the system at the moment, but regardless I think of any single MP's opinion on that industry, the fact remains that sex workers exist, sex work is real work and these members are often at high risk.

[APPLAUSE]

They have very little protection, very little health and safety protection and the Parliamentary Group maintains that they deserve our support for the campaign to secure their safe and fair working conditions and it's hoped that if we can help with this small group of Trade Unionised workers, we'll see mass Trade Unionisation of the industry right across the UK and we can protect people from exploitation and, as you know, it's an industry where that is rife and there's very little regulation and safety measures in place.

In terms of the Union's wider campaigns, we've been doing quite a lot of work relating to food pricing and regulation and an organisation called the Grocery Code Adjudicator, which sounds really boring but it's actually really important.

Now, you'll know full well that people working in the food industry, but also as consumers, that there's all sorts of things that have driven up food prices, which has contributed significantly to the cost of living crisis, but what we've also seen is the driving up of prices which can't be explained by other factors and what we also saw following the cost of living crisis was the engagement of the big supermarkets and the thing that they call 'rocket and feather pricing', so they push the prices up dramatically when something happens like, for example, there were blockages in the supply chain, but when those prices come down, the price on your shelves doesn't come down.

So the supermarkets then go on to report record profits and you have to ask yourself, is it fair and especially is it fair when you're seeing down the driving of terms and conditions and pay right across the food industry. So something's going wrong somewhere and unfortunately the Grocery Code Adjudicator, which is supposed to be the organisation that tackles unfairness within the food industry, one, it doesn't have very much in terms of legal teeth, so it doesn't take the action that's required, but even the action it can take, it hasn't taken. It hasn't fined a single supermarket since it was created years ago, despite the fact that we know that there was mass kind-of market abuse happening within some sectors and some areas. So we shared our very serious concerns, in numerous debates within Parliament, about this and asked the government to increase the powers of the Grocery Code Adjudicators and to make sure that it was given the teeth that it needed to take the action that was required. We also asked the government to look more widely at the role of supermarkets within the food sector and their abuse of their market position and again, when it came to mergers, we also asked the government to investigate, as I mentioned before, mergers and acquisitions, both in the supermarket sector and beyond, so that we could have more fairness injected into the system.

Now, looking at the wider picture in Parliament and this is the bit we have to promise not to tell anybody because I'll probably get sacked, because I'll be gossiping, the wider picture in Parliament has been, there's been some positive stories in the last few months, but also some quite upsetting stories in the last few months and we all know that the Labour government, the Chancellor in particular, took power and made quite a dire financial inheritance, we know the Tories absolutely destroyed the economy, our public services, everything was in a terrible state and it has been wrought with challenges. Well, there have been a number of positions that the government has taken in certain policy areas, that have been very difficult both for MPs, but also supporters of the Labour Party more generally in recent months. So the first was Winter Fuel Payments. I personally didn't agree with the government's position on this and I welcome that they've u-turned on that now .....

[APPLAUSE]

because there were a lot of pensioners, particularly in my constituency, but I'm sure in every part of the UK, who were worried sick about how they were going to pay their heating bills last winter and this winter and it undermined the very principle that suggested to that generation that if you paid in, when you needed it, you'd be supported and you'd get back out. It's a bit like the Social Care motion that you were discussing earlier and taking away the Winter Fuel Payment undermined the very concept of that social security welfare state, that you worked hard, you make your contribution, but if you ever needed help, they'd have your back and many pensioners felt that they'd had the rug pulled from under them and quite rightly, so the government has made the right decision in restoring that payment. The second area of concern was around the two-child cap on Universal Credit and just to explain that to people, basically it's an additional benefit to the Universal Credit recipients, but you can only get it for the first two children. So if you've got more than two children, you won't get those payments for the remainder of your family. It was brought in by the Conservative government, it was opposed by the Labour opposition at the time that it was brought in, because it was morally wrong. It's not a child's fault that they live in poverty and they shouldn't be penalised for that .....

[APPLAUSE]

and one of the sad things, I think, on winning that massive landslide, when Labour took office, was that myself and a number of MPs were concerned because there was no mention of scrapping this two-child cap in the first King's speech and we thought this is what Labour stands for, you know, Labour always stood for lifting children out of poverty, this is bread and butter to us, you'd think it would be one of the first things that we would do and it wasn't there, so a number of us pushed for it to be put in the King's speech and, as you know, seven of us got suspended for that .....

[APPLAUSE]

and we continue to push on that and the government's tone, to be more positive about it, the government's tone seems to be shifting on this. They're undertaking what they call a child poverty taskforce at the moment and what I do know, from speaking to a lot of the charities that are involved in that taskforce, is that the number one thing that they're calling for is the scrapping of the two-child cap, because ultimately it would lift nearly 500,000 children out of poverty overnight.

[APPLAUSE]

So I'm hoping that the government will eventually move on this and maybe in time for the budget, we might see some change in direction which will be positive.

Just to let you know, I've been let back in the Party for this week .....

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

so we'll see what happens next.

Now, the third thing is something that's coming down the track and this is very worrying for a number of reasons and it's the government's policy paper in getting disabled people back into work. No-one's got a problem with providing support to those who might be able to work, but there's a huge number of people who can't, because they're sick, they're disabled, they've got a whole range of issues that stop them from being able to work, but the more worrying part of the policy is the fact that not just that the government is providing support for people to get them back into work, if they want to work, that's fine, the second part to this is that there are plans to cut disability benefits, Personal Independence Payments being one of the key ones, there's a whole range of other benefits that are affected as well, from Carer's Allowance all the way through to young people's disability support, but it's going to drive hundreds of thousands, if not millions, into poverty, because the statistics that have been analysed by all the charities that you can possibly imagine show, that there'll be a tiny number of people that can be helped into work and that's for two reasons. One, people who are claiming disability benefits are genuinely either ill or disabled, because it's that difficult to get them, as you know, we've got a really punitive and draconian system that dehumanises and stigmatises and makes it incredibly difficult for people to access the support that they should be entitled to, but secondly, the jobs just aren't there. Employers aren't in the place, in many cases, where they'll provide the extra support and time to an employee that needs that additional support and help in the workplace. So even if there are a number of people who could access work, the fact is is that our workplaces aren't ready for that yet and we should be doing more to encourage and support employers to support people into work where that's possible, but the worrying thing is the fact that the government is bringing through these proposals, knowing that huge numbers of people are going to be driven into poverty.

Every single charity group, social policy organisation, has spoken out and said no, the government shouldn't do this. There are huge numbers of MPs who are speaking out against this. There was a letter from 40 of us that went to the government a few months ago saying that we were not going to vote with the government on this and then there was a secret private letter from 100 other MPs who, I think, didn't want to be publicly named who said the same thing. So there's between 140 – 170 who were really upset about this because they know the poverty that this will cause and they know that it's morally wrong and economically non-sensible quite frankly to do this to people. So the government in the last week or so and I'm going to hear more about this today when I go back, because obviously you've got to take with a pinch of salt what you read about in the press. Allegedly we're being told that the concession that's been made to MPs who are concerned is that disabled people are going to be told that they can keep their benefits for up to, I think, it's 12 weeks, so three months before the PIP cuts hit, so it's basically like a redundancy payment, you can have three months but then you're on your own and it's not acceptable and it's not what we should be expecting from a Labour government. So, rest assured .....

[APPLAUSE]

rest assured, we'll be doing all we can as MPs, right across the House, to keep fighting on this and I hope the government does listen and changes course, because no-one underestimates the state of the financial inheritance that they've been given from the Conservatives, but there are different ways of raising money and it's not on the backs of the poor and the most vulnerable. It's about taxing wealth, in the way that it should be taxed.

[APPLAUSE]

Now, I'm depressing everybody, like there's been nothing happy in the last months at all. There have been some good things. So one of the most exciting things we've seen is the Employment Rights Bill, which brings forward the biggest increase to workers' rights for a generation. It includes introducing employment rights from Day 1, Union recognition arrangements and access to workplaces and it's to be celebrated and of course it's not the whole package of stuff I would have liked it to have been, but it's definitely the most game-changing piece of legislation that we've seen in a generation and we just need to keep fighting to add and increase and improve over the coming years.

We've also seen the nationalisation of rail, so as every contract comes to an end, our railways will be brought into public ownership. We've also seen the rolling out of bus networks across the UK and the ability for local areas for take their buses into public ownership and all of that work has to continue and it must continue. There's also exciting announcements on social housing that were made in the last week, 39 billion for social housing which, as we know, won't even touch the sides, but we haven't heard numbers like this for at least 30 years, so it's something to be celebrated and built upon.

So this work must and will continue to progress as quickly as possible and the Parliamentary Group will listen to any concerns that you've got and remember, we're your voice in Parliament, you're like our bosses basically. So anything that you think that we should be doing, make sure you tell Ian and Sarah and give us our instructions and we'll go off and do it, because we want to make sure we're representing you as effectively and as **[unclear]** as we possibly can.

And I can assure you that we'll continue to impress upon government ministers the importance of protecting our food industry workers in your myriad of different roles at different stages of the supply chain and strengthening your rights and protections as workers and I just want to finish by thanking you for everything that you do and look forward to support you all over the coming months. Thanks very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Are you going to take a couple of questions for us, yes?

**Rebecca Long-Bailey, Chair of Parliamentary Group:** Yes.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Has anybody got any questions? If you do, do you want to come, don't forget the rules, name, Branch, question.

**Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes):** I'm a Bakkavor worker. We got told in March, late March, about the merger with Greencore, but for me I feel like history's repeating itself, because with me, I was West Country Food Fresenda and in 2000 we got bought out by Fresenda, within eight years Fresenda shut our last factory in 2008 and all West Country Foods, over the eight years, closed and I, people say, the management say at the site at the moment oh, it's nothing we're going to worry about, it's going to be the bigger management, Greencore haven't got a bakery sector, so we'll be alright, but in my mind I feel like history's repeating itself. Greencore are gradually, once they've got us, they'll take all the other Bakkavor sites and then gradually get rid of one, build another site bigger, build another one, get rid of that site and that's in my worry. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** What do you want to do, take a number of questions together and then answer them all together?

**Rebecca Long-Bailey, Chair of Parliamentary Group:** Yes, that's fab, yes.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, looks like we're going to have four altogether, so we'll get the four questions out and then you can come back and answer them.

**Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** Concerns over green belt land. We have a motion to discuss later on in the week, Rebecca. Are we challenging the watering down of green belt regulations? Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** Apologising to Rebecca for what I'm about to say. I'm an ex-Labour activist, very ex. In relation to all the events that we've been talking about, everything that you've said, the u-turn, they've only u-turned because it's been seen to be a disaster, PIP will be a disaster. They think it's a good idea. Why do they think all this shit, apologies, I'll be at Standing Orders in a bit, is a good idea, when everybody knows the answer? You watch Question Time. The audiences are saying nationalise energy, nationalise water, that's an answer. Tax wealth, assets etc, that's an answer. Rather than cutting things, tax and spend. Why are we ignoring increasing the tax revenue from other areas instead of taxing the, us? The focus is totally on earned income from workers. Okay, apologies for my rant.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 (AB, Liverpool):** On 24th September, 2024 Keir Starmer confirmed by the next anniversary of Hillsborough, which was on 15th April, 2025 that the Hillsborough Law will be introduced to Parliament. I was at Hillsborough and I was in the Leppings Lane and we've waited over 25 years for a proper inquest and for the verdict of unlawful killing. Have we got to wait another 25 years for the law, the Hillsborough Law, that will rebalance the scales of justice? Justice for the 97.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Nobody online? Okay, over to you.

**Rebecca Long-Bailey, Chair of Parliamentary Group:** Yes, fantastic. I'll start with Hillsborough Law first and I think just so that it's clear, all the campaigners have got my full backing and support and I think Ian Byrne, our MP, who's part of the Bakers Group in Parliament has been doing an enormous amount of work on this, along with, I think, Kim Johnson as well and a number of the other Merseyside MPs. We were not happy at all that this was not brought forward and that it appeared to be watered down when it was and there are other campaign groups now that are supporting the Hillsborough campaign, there's two. So one group that I do a lot of work with are the Nuclear Testing Veterans, who basically were men that were sent out to the South Pacific in the 1940's, 50's and 60's as part of National Service and they weren't told that they were going out to witness atomic bombs being set off and they weren't told that the reason that they were being sent there was so that they could be monitored to see how the radiation was going to affect them, so that the government had a record of how radiation affects the human body and they've been fighting for justice

and they've not had any information given to them, everything appears to have been covered up, whether it has or not remains to be seen, but they've been searching for answers for years and years and years and years and they saw striking similarities between what happened to them and what happened to the Hillsborough families and they wanted to offer their support, because ultimately this is about showing, when a state has acted wrongly towards its people, the people should have the ability to find out the truth and hold the government to account and at the moment, they don't have that right and the scales of justice, as you say, are not in favour of the people and that's what Hillsborough Law was designed to address and we've been hearing murmurings that the government's going to come back with something more robust in the coming months and we'll make sure we keep doing all we can to keep campaigning on this and anything that you want to send through to my office, then do give me a shout.

On the u-turn, it wasn't, I don't know where the gentleman's gone now, it wasn't a rant and I agreed with pretty much all of it, apart from leaving the Labour Party, because obviously I'm still there. I think a lot of politicians and Labour members and Labour supporters and just generally people within the public have questioned who on earth is advising on people to come out with policies like this, because they're not Labour policies and I think that's what shook so many people really, because they expected these sorts of policies from the Conservatives and they were the last thing that they would expect from a Labour Party and I don't know if there was just concern within the Treasury and the Prime Minister's office about the state of the public finances and we know that they're dire, but there are other options available. You don't need to look for savings that are going to impact the most vulnerable in society. You can look at wealth taxes, which I think the gentleman discussed and they're hugely popular.

There's a group called Patriotic Millionaires, who are a group of patriotic millionaires and they've done an enormous amount of research and they found something staggering, I think it was like 80% of the British public supported wealth taxes, because they saw it as fair and that included a large number of actual millionaires themselves, who said you know, tax us more, we don't think it's right that you tax income from a job at a higher rate than you tax us, that doesn't make any sense and it's not fair and all of these arguments that if you start taxing really wealthy people they'll all leave, they won't leave and if they do leave, well, that's not very patriotic to me and on the other point about nationalisation being popular, it is popular and again when you do look at surveys and do research within the general public, huge numbers of people think that nationalising rail, mail, water and energy is the right thing to do, they think it's right to control those major pieces of infrastructure, so that we can build on our industrial strategy. So one of the things that I was doing when I was in the Shadow Cabinet was the green industrial revolution and it was like the motion that you were talking about earlier. It was about making sure that we didn't have a repeat of the 1980's, where industry like Grangemouth shut down and there were no jobs to replace them.

It was actually planning the economy so you could make sure that the new industries of the future were being put in the places that you knew were going to be most affected, so that those workers were guaranteed new well paid jobs and to be able to do that, you had to have some element of control over the infrastructure so that you could build on that, so that you weren't at the whim of investors and even governments from overseas who owns parts of our water and energy companies, it's just bizarre that we don't engage in nationalisation more and look at nationalising those key areas, but the thing that worries me the most about not doing that is that we're seeing the emergence of Reform at the moment within our communities and we know that they're an extremely right-wing force, but what worries me even more than that is that what they're doing, because they're not daft, they're starting to talk about quite left-wing economic policies, so they're talking about nationalising water, they were against the winter fuel cuts, they're talking about scrapping the two-child cap on Universal Credit, all things that I agree with and that I would support, but then on social issues, obviously they're extremely right-wing and that should worry us all, because a lot of people, if they're not getting the kind of change that they think we should be delivering as a Labour government, they're going to start looking elsewhere and they're going to start going oh, well he's talking about nationalisation, well, I agree with that, he's talking about lifting kids out of poverty, I agree with that and that's why it's so important for all of us, Labour politicians, Trade Unionists, to make sure that the Labour Party gets this right and starts offering the policies that our communities want to see, because I'm frightened that if we don't, we could be seeing the country heading in a very dangerous and worrying direction in the next few years and we're the vanguard against that, we're the people that are meant to offer that hope and change that we need to see.

On the issue of green belt and the watering down of green belt land, there's a number of proposals that have been made as part of the, I think it's the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, it's making its way through Parliament at the moment and myself and a few other MPs supported an amendment last week by an MP called Chris Hinchcliffe, he's one of the new MPs, who was trying to put more stringent measures in place in relation to protecting biodiversity and areas of kind of special biological importance and things like that, but there is a worry that we will be losing part of the green belt.

I think, as I understand it and I'm not an expert on this by the way, but as I understand it, there's a presumption in favour of developing on your brownfield and your greyfield land first, but there is the ability to develop greenfield land where there's a case that's made for extreme need. Now we know we're in a housing crisis, but what we need to make sure is that we're not developing green belt land, because particularly in a lot of cases, developers will opt to build on fresh land, for want of a better word, because it's cheaper, they won't want to go to the brownfield sites where they have to remediate, get rid of all of the chemicals that have been there over the last kind of 60 years if they've been factories there, for example, that costs an enormous amount of money, so I think the government should be looking at ways to support, you know, if developers are saying we're not doing it because it's too expensive, if it's a choice between developing a greenfield site or a brownfield site nearby, I think the government should be looking at ways to incentivise the developer to develop the brownfield site first, because we shouldn't be developing on green belt land, because our green belt land is really, really important and once it's lost, it's gone for good.

And then the final point on Bakkavor, about history repeating itself and I'm sorry, I don't know where the gentleman was that was talking about it. I'm sorry you've been through that, because you shouldn't have to worry like that, every few years there's another merger and a takeover and you're worried about whether you're going to have a job or not. It's no way to live and that's why it's so important for the government to do an investigation into these mergers and takeovers, because it's not just a case of merging and oh, everything's fantastic because we've got a bigger company and we can cover more area. Workers will worry that certain types of jobs will be lost where there's an overlap of particular functions and things like that and it's not fair and it's not right, so we'll be doing everything that we can to push the government on that and any help that we can give in your particular case, as I say, just let us know and we'll be there.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** A big round of applause, please. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** So as is customary when we have guest speakers, we give you a bag of goodies made by our members and there's all sorts of bits and pieces in that and a lovely new tote bag. Beccy's already had a pewter baker, so rather than give her another one, we're going to make a donation to a charity of your choice, you can tell us now, you can tell us later, it's entirely up to you, but then we'll sort it out and make that donation.

**Rebecca Long-Bailey, Chair of Parliamentary Group:** Fantastic.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** So thank you ever so much for .....

[APPLAUSE]

**Rebecca Long-Bailey, Chair of Parliamentary Group:** Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Thanks so much, everybody and like, my office is going to be so excited when they see that I'm coming back with a bag of biscuits and cakes. I'll be like the best boss ever.

[LAUGHTER]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** We're going to end for lunch, no, we're going to go for a brew, so back in here for 11 o'clock.

[BREAK]

Can you just tell them it's a two minute warning, please. Okay, I believe, I believe we've got to tell them, get ready to shut the doors, please. Thank you very much. Can the Scrutineers from, I believe, it's 1 and 5, where the election's taking place, oh, it's all of them, the TUC one as well, right, okay, sorry, misunderstood, that's alright. Can all of the Scrutineers go to Standing Orders, please.

Okay, we did 20, didn't we, that was just totally everything, wasn't it, it was brilliant. So, we're 21 then. I'm glad we're helping you with your steps anyway.

*That the BFAWU lobby the government to ensure that the wearing of cycle helmets is made compulsory.*

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Thank you. Here to move motion 21. That the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union lobby the government to ensure that the wearing of cycle helmets is made compulsory. Wearing a bicycle helmet is not a legal requirement in the UK, whilst the Highway Code recommends it, it is not law. I was unfortunate enough to see a young schoolboy get knocked from his bicycle earlier this year.

Fortunately the driver was turning a corner at reduced speed, when the cyclist rode out in front of them. He fell off his bike obviously and his head was striking the road, enough to leave him dazed and with concussion, very lucky. If the car had been travelling faster, he might have been fatally injured. As parents, if we allow our children to ride bicycles, we should be ensuring that they do it safely. Kids might argue that they lose their street cred or spoil their hair. I would rather them be protected. In 2023, 87 pedal cyclists were killed in Great Britain, whilst 3,942 were reported to be seriously injured and 10,970 were slightly injured. In a list of causes of bike accidents, the fifth on the list states about inadequate protective gear. Despite the fact that 70 – 80% of all fatal bicycle crashes involve head injuries, only 18% of all cyclists wear a cycle helmet. When a survey was carried out, men and women said they did not own a helmet, they thought it was inconvenient or it was uncomfortable, but wearing them is known to reduce serious head injuries by 60%, it reduces traumatic brain injury by 53% and reduces the number of cyclists killed or seriously injured by 34%. I ask you, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Are you seconding it? Oh, formally seconded, thank you.

**Brother Michael Redshaw – Branch 459:** I'd like to support this motion, Julie. Obviously you've spoken about a lot of things that I was going to speak about, but like you say, you get that many people that obviously don't use helmets and I think if somebody could purchase a bike, they should actually make it mandatory where you need to have a helmet. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** Here to passionately support this. The only reason I'm stood here is I was wearing a helmet. Twenty-odd years ago I got wiped out in a, well, I was cycling to work, bumper broke my leg, bonnet broke my ribs, head first into the pillar on the side of the van that hit me. If I hadn't have been wearing a helmet, as the doctor said, the best outcome I would have had was I would have sat in a wheelchair, dribbling. Because I had a helmet, I'm still in one piece, to an extent. I've got a lot of metal in me because of the crash, but I'm still here, okay. Please support this, it's vital. Anybody at work .....

[APPLAUSE]

I'm a pain in the arse at work. Chase the cyclists, if they haven't got helmets on. Please, I'm notorious at work for this, please, chase people to wear helmets. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes):** I agree with this motion. Going back when I was about 13–14, I used to ride my bike everywhere and I can remember one day, I never wore a helmet, typical teenager, going on my paper round, I jumped the pavement, lost control of the bike, went over the handlebars, smashed the whole of the front of my face, my knees, broke my tooth, it took me two years ago to have it, to have a crown put on it because it was a dead tooth and the kind of thing is, like my mum and my dad used to say to me, they go, son, if you had a helmet on, you would have been a lot, it would have helped you. He goes, they said, what happens if there was a car coming down and you hit that car? He goes, you wouldn't have been here today and I was a difficult teenager, never wore high-vis jackets, I didn't want to wear them because I was like, my friends don't wear them, I don't want to wear them and when I had that accident, I was like, I can remember I didn't go to school for two weeks because I ripped my knee open, I grazed my face all the way down there, like I said, I broke the front of my tooth as well up here where I hit the pavement, because I went over the handlebars and my paper bags went over and all that, but the kind of thing is, when I look at it now, when I look back at myself, what happens if there was a car coming down, I wouldn't be here today, because I had nothing. I was a typical teenager, just thinking my friends don't wear it, why should I wear it? I really support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any other speakers? Online? Over to you, no, it's just you, mate.

**Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** Morning, Conference. We'd like you to support this motion. Obviously they've stolen my thunder about statistics. Usually people under the age of 18 are 30% more likely to have an accident with head injuries. I did see a survey and it said over 80,000 people have gone in for head injuries from cycling. I'm not sure if it's over the last five years or 10 years, but there's too many. Please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you very much. That means 22, that's you and just as Les is coming down, obviously we announced obviously Linda's birthday this morning, it's also Laura Graham's birthday, who's the full-time Official over in Region 7, so I'm sure Conference would like to send her very best wishes for a very, very Happy Birthday.

[APPLAUSE]

**22**

**Branch 432**

*That this conference agrees that companies employing cyclists to deliver their food orders that they insist they wear proper safety gear Helmet, Lights Hi visibility clothing etc.*

**Brother Les Bramhall – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool):** Morning, Conference. Here to move motion 22, which says that this Conference agrees that companies employing cyclists to deliver their food orders, that they insist they wear proper safety gear, helmet, lights, high visibility clothing, etc. This motion is all about much of what's been said already, but what I'd like to add is that the amount of cyclists delivering food on our roads without high-vis clothing, lights on their bike, no helmet and dark clothing, how many would you say there are? I'd go as far to say that if you spot one of them, you're a very lucky person indeed and if you're a driver who collides with a cyclist without the said equipment, on a dark winter's night, you'd likely be the one who is blamed. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Here to second this motion. I fully support what Les has said. These fast food delivery cyclists are a bit like our Amazon drivers, rushing around to get as many deliveries in as possible. I also think that they shouldn't be riding on the pavements and when they do ride on the road, they shouldn't be jumping red lights, but as I said before, even with all the safety gear, a bit of dual respect is also needed between cyclists and motorists and with all this safety gear, wouldn't it be classed as PPE as well? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother George Hoye – Branch 703 (Hovis Bakery):** Also Health & Safety Committee. I'm backing this motion, but I would like a wee bit added to it as well. These delivery drivers are on a basic salary of £10.20 an hour, that's lower than a minimal wage. They have to rely on tips and bonuses to make up their minimum wage. Next year, we'll bring a motion in for the drivers to be paid at the maximum minimum wage, but please stand this motion. Thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Armilson Correia – Branch 110:** I support the motion, but one thing I think it should be and there should be enforced more the maximum speed in the bike, because they should be restricted to 15.5 miles an hour and some of them, they're doing 40 miles an hour, some of the bike and the brakes, they're not ready for that speed and if they hit somebody with the electric bike at 40 miles an hour, there are going to be serious consequence, so I think they should make sure all the delivery driver follow the rules as well, speed rules. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Zeal Machin – Branch 547 (Suma Wholefoods):** Yes, I support this motion and the one before. I just think we have to be conscious that a lot of people riding cycles will be like quite poor off financially, so like to bring in like compulsory helmet-wearing, I think we should be looking at ways of like how that would be funded, so say kids going to school, maybe the school should be, I know schools are underfunded as well, but maybe the financial burden goes onto the schools or like in motion 22, I think rather than it be an insistence from the employer that they wear this, the proper safety gear, that it should be mandatory that the employer supplies that PPE, because as my comrades said earlier, they are on minimum wage generally or like underpaid quite thoroughly and it could be another financial burden that they don't, can't afford, so I think it should be provided by the employer, not insisted. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Anyone else? Okay, Pete. We're getting your steps in now, aren't we?

**Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** Morning, Conference. Obviously everyone has spoken about, we've had a few conversations about cyclists today. I mean, these guys are, they're on zero-hours contracts and I think they have to do three or four jobs just to make £9 an hour, so they are below the minimum wage, when you break it down. They should get support. These people who employ them should buy the PPE, as Jules? stated and they are a danger on the road because I'm a driver and I do struggle. So, support the motion, please. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the, I mean obviously we were going to make Pete do it in his lycra, but he said no, you said the Executive have to come smart.

[LAUGHTER]

To the vote. All those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. So, 23.

**23**

**Branch 582**

*That this Conference agrees that there should be a legal right to paid time off for the death of a dependant in the UK.*

**Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** Good morning, Chair, EC and Conference. Bereavement leave. That this Conference, it should be a legal right to be paid for time off for the death of a dependant in the UK. Companies allow this, but it all depends on the agreement you've got. Some may get two days, some may get five. Most of us will experience the death of a close family member during our working life. Although grief is a natural response when dealing with bereavement, it can affect every one of us in different ways and profoundly impact on every aspect of our well-being. The initial shock of losing someone close can be a devastating effect and can put most of us in a very vulnerable state of mind. This can have a huge impact on our ability to perform our work duties and make it extremely difficult to control our emotions and our ability to remain safe in our work environment to ourselves and our colleagues. Although we have legal right to time off when a dependant dies, there is no legal right to pay time off for bereavement unless it's the death of a child under the age of 18 or stillborn. In a survey by Marie Curie, in 2021, it was discovered that nearly one in five employees in their survey didn't receive any pay in bereavement, a shocking statistic in modern Britain. So I ask you to please support this motion, to pay bereavement. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Secunder? Formally seconded. Speakers? No. Remember what I told you, no emotion.

**Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes):** I've been in this situation about, coming up to about four years' now. I lost my mum and all my company said, I had four days' bereavement. For me, I felt it was not enough, I needed more, but when they said, you don't have to come back to work, but the only problem is it would be unpaid and I thought I need to come back to work, because I would be sat there looking at four walls and I was in my mum's house, it was strange, I needed to come back to work and I thought I need to come back to work to get back into that environment again, plus the kind of thing is, I can't afford not to get paid. I know I needed to see my family, I needed, you know, my girlfriend around me, everything else, but I thought if I don't go back to work, I'm not going to get paid, so how do I pay my bills?

Plus I had the problem as well, I had to pay my mum's rent, because they turned round to me and said your mum's passed away now, you need to start paying the rent, so I was like if I don't go back to work, I'm not going to get paid and I'll only get myself in debt, plus I've got a bereavement and I'm breaking down and all that and, you know, four days is not enough, sometimes you need a little bit longer and this is why I really agree to support this motion, because I can remember they said to me remember Michael, as well, you need to keep that bereavement for the funeral, they said, or else, you won't get paid for it, so they go, remember to put that in the count, you need that for the funeral as well. I was like, I'm trying to look, you know, trying to sort my life out, my walls were all collapsing in. I went in to, I thought I was alright until about last year, until the company started noticing and then I had bereavement counselling last year and that helped me, the counsellor helped me how to, you know, how to work on life, it learned me how to, if I'm going into mood swings, to walk away, how to breathe through a pressure pot? and things like that, but at the time you don't know what's going on so your mind's going all out of control, you can't control it, but you need your family there but you've got to go back to work, because you're worried about I need to pay my bills, how am I going to pay my bills, I've got all this. So please, really support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Patrycja Garbarczyk – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** I'm looking on a different side, because they've giving us two days for our family. I'm an immigrant. My Nana passed away two years' ago. They gave me two days to go back to my country, start a funeral, do all the documents and come back. It's impossible, you can't do it. Even if you're driving, it's take you 28 hours just to get there. So imagine if you have to choose, to work or go and say goodbye to somebody who's really close for you. So please, support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** And a first-time speaker too as well, I believe. Well done. Thank you very much. Any other speakers? Anybody online? No. Dave.

**Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC):** I believe Peter's covered all the main points and very thoroughly as well. Each of us deals with grief in a different way, in our own special way, whether we lean on those closest to us, whether we need some privacy, in an attempt to come to terms with the trauma of the event or turn to whatever comfort our beliefs will bring us. The decent thing for every employer to do is to respect the loss of life, to acknowledge the pain that their employee is going through and to help their grief with dignity by providing a paid minimum. That's all we're asking, a minimum bereavement leave. On behalf of the EC, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. 24.

**24**

**Branch 503**

**For a 4-Day, 30-hour Week, on 5 Days' Pay**

*Conference condemns the outrageous system where millions of workers on zero hours and short hours contracts cannot get enough work and wages to live on, while millions of other workers suffer physical and mental ill health from overwork and long hours.*

*Conference recognises the trade union and socialist movement has a long, proud history of campaigning for a shorter working week without loss of earnings, including May Day strikes and marches for the 8-hour day from the 1880s, and mass strikes and struggles for the 40-hour week around 1919.*

*However, for decades we've seen very little progress in the reduction of the working week, despite unprecedented advances in technology.*

*Conference agrees to campaign for a 4-day week on 5 days' pay for all workers.*

*Conference notes that every experiment with a 4-day week has been popular with the workers involved, improved productivity, cut down sickness and absenteeism, and improved the work/life balance of workers and their families.*

*However, the BFAWU does not believe a shorter maximum working week should result in pay cuts, nor in 5 days' workload being jammed into 4 days, nor in the same number of hours being worked over 4 days instead of 5.*

*Conference instead calls for a 30-hour maximum working week, based on a 4-day week on 5 days' pay – cutting hours, not pay, jobs or conditions.*

*That measure would reduce drudgery, stress and ill health; improve workers' leisure time; create jobs and additional hours for workers currently suffering underemployment and unemployment by sharing out the work; and could be easily organised with all the massive advances in technology.*

*Conference agrees to produce campaign materials in favour of this measure; raise it as a policy in the wider trade union movement; and include this demand in pay negotiations with employers*

**Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill):** Moving motion 24, for a full day 30 hour week, on five days' pay. Conference condemns the outrageous system where millions of workers on zero-hours and short hours contracts can't get enough work and wages to live on, whilst millions of other workers suffer physical and mental ill health from overwork and long hours. Conference recognises that the Trade Union and Socialist movement has long produced a history of campaigning for a shorter hour working week without loss of earnings, including strikes and marches for an eight hour day from the 1880's. I think Ian was on that march, I'm not 100% sure .....

[LAUGHTER]

...and mass strikes and struggles for a 40 hour week around 1919. However for decades we've seen a lot of progress in the reduction of the working week, despite unprecedented advances in technology. Conference agrees to campaign for a four day week at five days' full pay for all workers. Conference notes that every experiment with a four day week has been popular with the workers involved, improved productivity, cut down sickness and absenteeism and improve the work/life balance of the workers and their families. However the BFAWU does not believe that a shorter maximum working week should result in cuts in pay, nor five days' work being jammed into four days, nor the same amount being worked over four days instead of five. Conference calls for a 30 hour maximum working week, based on a four day week on five days' pay, cutting hours, not pay, not jobs and not conditions. Let's reduce the drudgery, the stress, ill health and improve workers' leisure time, create jobs and additional hours for workers currently suffering underemployment and unemployment by sharing out the work.

It could be easily organised with all the massive advances in technology. Conference agrees to produce campaign material in favour of this measure, raise it as a policy in the wider Trade Union movement and demand pay negotiations with employers. I've not really got much to add to this. The Trade Union movement, through history, has been a vehicle for change, change that has brought us eight hours a day work, weekends off, bank holiday shift allowance and other benefits, so please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 282 and Kernow District Branch:** I'm here to support my Celtic Brother in this. We deserve better, you know. Cornwall has an issue with work, work isn't there all year, it's, people are scrimping, scraping, fighting, dog eat dog. A four day week, with five days' pay will improve the lives not just of our members, but our communities, our families and Chris is right, we need a better work life/leisure balance, you know. I live in a wonderful part of the world. We don't see the beach, the sea, the tourists, because we're too busy scraping for work, working long hours for little pay, I nearly said it .....

[LAUGHTER]

...but I didn't. I will support this, Cornwall will support this. We are a strong, well, fighting fit Trade Union. We need to push this, we need to push the TUC to support this and we need to take this fight further and further and further for the benefit of us, the working class. We're not robots, we won't bow down to the Capitalists, to work, work, work to make them profit. Give us something back, support Chris' motion, let's take the fight to 'em, Brothers.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** And he added Sisters as he was leaving the rostrum.

[LAUGHTER]

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** I understand the sentiments of this motion, but I'm here to oppose it, because I'd have preferred if it had said Monday to Thursday, it's just saying a four day working week. Our companies are very good at manipulating and those four day weeks could be Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, that's your family time, so you could be working when your kids and your partner, your spouse is at home. So I would have gone for it if it had said Monday to Thursday, but it doesn't do that, so I do think it's open to be manipulated for the company benefit and not for ours. Please oppose.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** Here to support this motion. We could have been doing this for eight years, if Corbyn hadn't been torpedoed, a pity Rebecca's not here, isn't it, to hear that. Everywhere across Europe have experimented with this, 95% have not returned to a five day week, it has been that successful, 95% of the companies across Europe that have done this and that is a lot now, I think it's something like 20% of companies across Europe have tried this and almost all of them have retained it, it has been that successful. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any other speakers? No? Do we want to go to Kevin then, online?

**Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716, Region 7 – Executive Council Member/Vice President:** Sorry. I would like to support the motion on behalf of the EC. Most of the people have said the stuff that I've just been going to say, basically Andy. So, please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Chris, you have the right of reply as well. Are you sure? Okay. To the vote. All those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Thank you very much. What time is it? 11.28. Motion 25.

**25**

**Branch 582**

*That this Conference agrees that the free period products provided to girls and women in their place of study be expanded to all women in their place of work across the UK.*

**Sister Patrycja Garbarczyk – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** Morning, again. Well, not a first-time speaker any more

[LAUGHTER].

[APPLAUSE]

So mental health and well-being at work is and has been promoted in Premier Foods in Barnsley for the last few years, but after our Branch similarly undertook toilet inspections at work, we raised the issue surrounding the provision of three sanitary products with HR and was told it would probably be too expensive or in their opinion it works better in an office environment. In England, all children in state banded schools and students from 16 to 19 have access to free period products. After this, it appears that the government no longer cares, so for those struggling on apprenticeship wages or those on the National Living Wage struggling to live and for many who have to choose what to miss out on, whether to put food on the table or the heating on, sanitary products may be something they sacrifice. Scotland became the first country in the world, in 2020, to make period products free for all, placing a legal duty on local authorities to provide free items to those who need them. ALDI began offering free access to pads and tampons from March this year and there are charitable organisations that will provide free products, but what this motion is asking is for the government to end period poverty across the UK. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Secunder?

**Sister Katarzyna (Kasia) Damek – Branch 515 (East Kilbride, Scotland):** I am here to support this motion. Yes, in Scotland we have free period supplies for women, but not **[unclear]**. So that's about dignity, because you cannot choose when you will get your period, sometimes it comes unexpected. What happens if you forget to put some towels in your bag? There are vending machines in the toilets, but they are usually coin machines. Many people are not using coins any more. What will happen if you don't have that £1 coin in your bag? So what we did at my workplace, we were asking for ages to get free dispersal in the toilet, the company was looking for that for three years, five years. I got annoyed, I look it up myself and it costs between £400 up to £700, to provide one fully supplied vending machine for the toilet. I presented that information to the company and after another few months I convinced them to put it there. It's not so expensive, they are spending more money for tea and coffee for the offices. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253:** Chair, Platform, Delegates. Here to support this motion. Women don't always know when they will need them, so to be provided with these in the workplace is essential. In fact, I'm going to make it my mission to go back to my workplace, Greggs and start another mission, on providing sanitary towels in our workplace. This is a no-brainer. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes):** We had this problem last year in Bakkavor and since February this year, we arranged with HR and the Operations Manager for female first-aiders will carry sanitary towels in their first aid bag, because they've got bum bags. Any woman can go up to a woman manager or, you know, team leader and they'll go and get some, or HR, get one from them, because we've decided, you know, if you need them, you know, you go and ask one of the females on-site, they will get you one and like the woman first-aiders said, they will carry, because they've got to carry their bum bags, they said they'll put two in their first aid bag, so if somebody comes up to them, they can give it to them, but we are working on more, because we are having that raid on new toilets, so we've got things, we're working on that now as well, so I support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, whilst you're coming down, Julie, I'm going to bring Joanne on, online.

**Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs):** I'm here to support this motion, 100%. Sanitary products are actually taxed. It is not a luxury for a woman to be able to have sanitary products, it is a necessity. So, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Last year, during our wage negotiations, they're always conducted on the 4th floor, which is the boardroom where the General Manager sits and most of the office staff have offices off that corridor and I happened to use the toilets in their vicinity, absolutely lovely. Artificial plant pots, there was a basket on the side, free sanitary products. I thought that's fantastic. You're doing it for managers and hierarchy who can afford to buy these things. What about the people on the shop floor? Went back to the management and said I cannot believe that you've got sanitary products in the management toilets, what about people on the shop floor? Like you've said, nobody knows when it might happen, you might be prepared, you might not have the funds for it. We've currently been affected massively by the cyber attack at M&S and a lot of staff are being asked on a daily basis do you want tomorrow off, permission granted, unpaid or do you want to book a holiday? You know, we've got agency staff that do come on our site and they might be lucky to get a day's work. That's a massive cost if they have to start buying sanitary products.

We had a machine in our ladies toilets and like it's been said by my comrades, £1 for one pad or maybe two tampons. It's not good enough, you know. I don't even, we've had the toilets refurbished, but I don't believe there's a machine in there and that's ignorant of me not to notice because obviously I don't need them any more but, you know, I do think of all my comrades who do and you can't afford them, because like everything else, the cost of living, the prices are just going through the roof. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529 (Women's EC Representative) (Speaking on behalf of the EC):** Hello, everybody.

Are we alright? Obviously here to support the motion. From my recollection, this has been brought to Conference a few years and I think the message from the EC would be, you know, just keep fighting for things like this in your workplace. Myself, at my Branch, we as a collective in our joint Shop Stewards meeting in my workplace, a bakery, we managed to get them, no bother. I think because some of the managers and obviously personnel are women, they had sympathy. Obviously I know it might be more difficult in male-based workplaces, because there's, you know, a lack of understanding, a lack of education. I bet if men bled every month, I bet there'd be a better solution but that's a different debate for a different day. Obviously we've talked about vending machines and I think it's not just the fact that people don't use coins any more, I think it's because they're so expensive. You pay like £3 for like two tampons or two pads, which is absolutely extortionate. Even if you can afford it, it's just daylight robbery and I think obviously what Joanne said about them being taxed, I don't even know where the logic or theory is behind it being a luxury item, because I really, really don't classify bleeding every month is a luxury, it's a bloody inconvenience and sometimes...

[LAUGHTER]

...it can be agonising for some women, you know, both physically and mentally.

Obviously you've got the physical pain to go with it, but mentally if you're worrying about making ends meet and, you know, where you're going to feed yourself for your next meal and then you come on and you haven't got anything in the house, yes, some places like supermarkets and that do their own brands quite cheaply, but it's like anything, clothes, shoes, not one size fits all, you've got to find the product that fits your body. Some pads might work for other women, some tampons might work for other women and depending on the branding, the fit of it, sometimes they are more expensive. You're talking up towards of £8, which may last you a few days of your period, so if you're paying, you know, £16 – £20 every month and you're already on the bones of your bum, it's just, you know, it's not fair. Women have been, you know, second-class citizens and this is still where we are being treated second-class, having to pay for something that we can't help. So obviously the EC want you to support this and, you know, just go back to your workplaces and keep it on the table, keep fighting for it and obviously we should be lobbying through the Parliamentary Group about it, making it law that they should be free. Obviously the tax should be taken off first of all, that would be a start, but they should be free, full stop. It's not a luxury and it's just wrong, so support. Sorry, I'll stop ranting now.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, Conference. To the vote. All those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous.

Okay, you can shut your Final Agendas for now. We've got a great pleasure in, or I've got the great pleasure of introducing our General Secretary to give the General Secretary's first opening address to this year's Conference. General Secretary.

[APPLAUSE]

### **Sarah Woolley, General Secretary gives her Opening Address to Conference**

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Morning, Conference. It's an absolute honour to welcome you to this year's Annual Conference, whether you're a first-time Delegate and I know we've got a fair few here this year, or a long-serving Rep, thank you for being here and thank you for everything you've done over the past 12 months for our Union.

We come here this week as one Union, built in our bakeries, our food production plants, our farms, our shops, our canteens, our kitchens, our clubs, by workers who know that Solidarity isn't just a slogan, it's a lifeline and this year more than ever, it's clear, the challenges we face are serious, but the strength we've shown is even greater. Over the past 12 months, this Union has stepped up and it's stood tall. We've supported members through the cost of living crisis, fought back against exploitation, negotiated deals that have improved pay, security and dignity in workplaces across the food sector and allied trades.

We've defended jobs, we've trained new Reps, we've held employers to account and we've kept our values at the centre of everything that we do. Solidarity, justice and collective action.

Let's not underestimate what that means. In a political climate that too often scapegoats workers and strips away rights, we've been a voice of defiance and one of hope and I want to shine a spotlight on two newish parts of our Union family, doing extraordinary work in some of the most precarious and poorly protected sectors in our economy, the Sex Workers Union and Solidarity Across Land Trades. To our friends in SWU, your organising is courageous, it's essential and it's trailblazing.

[APPLAUSE]

You are challenging stigma head-on and building real power in a sector where workers are routinely marginalised, criminalised and left without basic protections. By demanding rights, safety and dignity for sex workers, you are not just building a Union, you are leading a movement for justice that speaks to the very core of Trade Union values. Your work reminds us that every worker, every worker deserves representation and no worker should be left behind.

[APPLAUSE]

And to our incredible friends in SALT, organising agricultural and land workers across the length and breadth of the UK, your work is connecting the dots between food, labour and the land itself. You are uniting seasonal workers, growers, rural food producers and land-based workers in one powerful voice. In an industry often hidden from view, where exploitation can thrive, SALT is a shining light and planting the seeds of real, sustainable worker-led change. SWU and SALT aren't just a part of our Union, they are showing us that our Union is inclusive, it's radical, it's rooted in class struggle and unafraid to organise in the hard places which we've always known and shown throughout our history and yet as we celebrate this week whilst we're here, we also face serious challenges. We've seen seismic shifts in our industry. The proposed merger between Allied and Hovis and the consolidation between Greencore and Bakkavor are not just business stories, they are matters of survival for our members. Behind every corporate deal is a workforce worrying about jobs, that we heard this morning, pay, shifts, pensions and livelihoods. We've seen time and again how these mergers promise efficiency, but deliver cuts, closures and nothing but chaos.

But we've got a message for these companies. Our members are not disposable, YOU are not disposable. We will always demand full consultation, we will always fight for job security and we will always resist any attempt to use consolidation as a cover for slashing workers' rights, but we also know that we can't wait for these decisions to be handed down from boardrooms, we've got to build our power now, on the shop floor, on the land, in kitchens, warehouse, farms and factories, but it's not just mergers we're up against. In the past year and we've touched on it, Rebecca did this morning, we've seen the brutal face of private equity tightening its grip on our industry and nowhere was that clearer than Rathbones. Let's be honest, this wasn't about falling demand in the supermarket chain, this wasn't just about mismanagement, this was about profit, pure and simple. Workers with years, years of skills, loyalty and service were cast aside so that a private equity firm could squeeze out more money for shareholders. It's not just immoral, it's an absolute direct attack on everything that we stand for. To our members who lost their jobs at Rathbones, you deserved better from your employer and this Union will never, ever stop fighting for an industry that puts people before profit. This is what happens when finance capital is allowed to run riot through working class communities and we cannot sit quietly while more lives and livelihoods are thrown on the scrapheap.

We've also taken a hit to one of the tools that empowers our members to resist and rise, education. The loss of the Scottish Union Learn Fund is a huge disappointment. Access to skills, learning and training should be a right, not a luxury and we know how vital Union learning is to confidence, progression and power in the workplace. That's why we're doubling down on our commitment to build and strengthen our network of Union Learning Reps, plus come to the fringe tomorrow if you've not already signed up, whether it's digital skills, literacy, health and safety or political education, our goal is simple. Education for all, on our terms, for our future. We've got brilliant training opportunities available for the GFTU and I'm sure we'll hear about some of that this afternoon and the TUC and other friends of ours that facilitate, but we need you to engage with them. Sign up, bring others with you. Let's create a culture where learning is part of how we fight back, because the only thing that will protect us, the only thing that ever has protected us, is each other.

Before I close, I want to take a moment to recognise a change in one of our Regions. After years of dedicated service, Roy Streeter retired from his role in Region 4 at the end of March and I know you will all wish him well in his next adventure, I think he's on holiday at the minute and thank him for everything he's done over the years to support members in Region 4.

[APPLAUSE]

And with that, we're proud to welcome Zane Wells into the role of organising Regional Secretary in the Region and by all accounts he's started off doing really well, so that's great.

Delegates, organising is no longer an option, it's essential. We just grow this Union, not just in numbers, but in strength, confidence and militancy. Every conversation with a new worker, every collective grievance taken forward, every member who decides to be a Rep, that's how we win and we've got the power to do it, we've done it before and we'll do it again. Whether it's fighting back against corporate consolidation, supporting precarious workers to Unionise or standing with migrant and rural workers demanding better, we are proving that our movement is not just about bread and butter, I told you I'd get some puns in, it's about dignity, power and justice. So here's my ask to every Delegate in the room. Leave this Conference inspired, but more importantly, leave it organised. Organise your Branch, organise your workplace, support the unorganised workers in our communities and our sector, bring new people in, use the resources that are available to you in your packs, on the website, through the courses that are available and always, always stand in Solidarity, because when the bosses cut, we organise, when the media vilifies, we absolutely should be speaking up and when they try to divide us, by job, by contract, by sector, by postcode, we come back stronger, louder and more united than ever. This is our Union, this is our movement. Let's go forward with pride, purpose and the unstoppable belief that working people, our members, deserve the world. Thank you.

[CHEERS, WHISTLES and APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Can I just say, obviously every word you said there was so, so important and I think you're right, absolutely, on the need for us to understand our Solidarity and our commitment to one another is so important. When we leave here, we go back to those workplaces, the inspiration that we need to put in those workplaces, to build this Union, you know, is essential, so thank you very much for those words, Sarah, I think they were really, really important and because you decided to cut it short a little bit too, you get to go to dinner early.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

So, can I just say everybody back in the room for half past one. Thank you.

[LUNCH]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, if you can shut the doors, please. Thank you very much.

General Secretary to call the roll. Have you done it? Yes, you're on.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Region 1. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4. Region 5. Region 7 and we've got eight online. Thank you.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. We've got the results of the ballots. In Region 1, Amilson?, this is terrible writing by the way, anyway, you've been elected.

[APPLAUSE]

Region 5, Pete Ford, you've been elected.

[APPLAUSE]

Just so you know, Joshua and Mark, if for any reason they're unable to attend next year's Conference etc, then you would be the substitutes, yes? Cool.

TUC, we've got Abdussamad (Abs) Choudhury 32, John Fitzpatrick 30, Peter Ford 9, Nick Mead 10, Michael White 6. There were three void papers. Because there was no woman elected, only one person could go, so Abs Chaudhoury has been elected to go to the TUC.

[APPLAUSE]

And if you, do you mean, right, so, if you see Sarah when we break for fringe, yes? Cool. There's no other announcements, is there? No, no other announcements? In that case then, as you will see we've been joined on stage by somebody who was sat at the back before, sat at the back, it's this geezer over here, you didn't think I'd do it, did you? We've been joined on stage, anybody who's gone to the GFTU, anybody who knows anything about the GFTU probably will recognise the person who's joined us on the stage, which is Gawain Little, who's the General Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions, which has been responsible for educating so many of you. Gawain is a committed Trade Unionist and educator with a strong background in organising, campaigning and organising Solidarity. I mean, one of the things that people probably will have noticed is the upping of the General Federation of Trade Unions, you know, moving to getting involved in organising and campaigns, no longer just involved in educating people but actually being out there on the front line, organising events, up and down the country, involved with stuff like Organise Now and Strike Map, amongst many, many others, which you might mention so I won't go into them, but Conference, can we please give a warm welcome to Gawain Little, General Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions.

[APPLAUSE]

## **Bro Gawain Little, General Secretary of GFTU addresses Conference**

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**Brother Gawain Little, General Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions:** Thank you very much, Conference, for the opportunity to address you on behalf of the General Federation of Trade Unions. Thanks to Ian for that lovely introduction and for being so welcoming while I'm here at your Conference. I also want to give my thanks to Sarah, your General Secretary, both for welcoming me here but also since I was elected General Secretary of the GFTU just over two years ago, Sarah has served that same period as President of the BFAWU and has been an incredible support throughout my time there, so I really want to thank her for that, but I also want to thank all the Reps and activists from the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union in this room who've been on GFTU courses. It's fantastic to see you again, look forward to talking to you all later on.

On a personal note, just one other thanks, on a personal note, as a Liverpoolian born and bred, it is fantastic to be at a Trade Union Conference where it is made very, very clear, abundantly clear from this stage, that the scum newspaper is not welcome at all.

[APPLAUSE]

Justice for the 97!

[APPLAUSE]

Now, not everyone here may know much about the General Federation of Trade Unions, so I'm going to start by telling you a little bit about us. We were founded by the TUC in 1899, so not quite as old as the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, which is believe is the oldest Trade Union in the country, not quite as old as that, but we have a huge 126 year shared history. Now, you joined, officially joined the GFTU in 1994, but when looking back through our records I did note that one of our founder Unions back in 1899 was the Federal Union of Bakers, which I suspect is the Union that eventually got amalgamated into this Union, so I do feel like you've been with us on that journey for those whole 126 years, not that I was personally there for all of them I hasten to add, but our original purpose when we were founded was as an Industrial Federation. We were founded by the TUC to bring together Trade Unions in struggle, to pool their resources, to pool their financial resources and support each other through strikes, through lockouts and also to be the international face of the British Trade Union Movement. That was 126 years ago and our role has changed an awful lot during that period. The TUC itself has become the main Trade Union centre in this country and the international face of the movement and today the GFTU plays a role as a Federation of Specialist Unions catering to the needs of Unions like yours, which organise in one industry or one sector of the economy specifically and we work to support a whole range of those Unions' needs, but we still remain true to our three founding principles, which were education, Solidarity and unity in action.

Our unity in action, as Ian has said, comes across in a variety of ways including the campaigns and organising support that we provide to affiliate Unions and out in the wider movement, which is everything from bringing Unions together alongside the campaign for Trade Union freedom, to campaign for improvements in the Employment Rights Bill which we know we so desperately need and was mentioned this morning, right the way through to we were very pleased to be able to provide online political lobbying campaign support during the fight at Rathbones against job losses, which as Sarah made clear earlier, job losses which were not necessary, but were due wholly to private greed.

Our Solidarity across the movement again involves a huge range of different actions, but in particular as Ian mentioned, we are the home of Strike Map. For those who don't know it, it's well worth looking up online. Strike Map is an online website which lists every single strike, it's the only record of every single strike that takes place in Britain and Ireland. It provides a platform whereby people can put in their postcode, identify their nearest strike, nearest picket lines, send Solidarity messages online, but crucially get out and join people on the picket line and give their support and for us, we think that's a crucial tool in the battles that we face when we're taking action to build Solidarity between our Unions.

We're also still very involved in international Solidarity work and I couldn't let talking about our work pass without talking about our ongoing Solidarity at the moment for the Palestinian people, experiencing genocide from Israel and fighting against the complicity of our government in that genocide, so we continue to express our support on international issues too.

[APPLAUSE]

But the biggest part, the biggest part of what we do as a Federation is the provision of education. We have one of the largest Trade Union education programmes in the movement and it's a mixture about 50/50 of online and residential education.

We have a residential training centre in the East Midlands, many of you have probably been there, give us a wave if you've been to Quorn Grange for training, yes, quite a few people who know it. To us it's really, really important that we continue to provide that residential education that links people together, that allows people to build the proper bonds that strengthen our movement. There's something different about being in a room with someone, as you are today and building Solidarity together. I think it's fundamentally different from what you can do online, yet we also do have a wide range of online courses and it's the importance of Trade Union education I wanted to say a little bit about today.

We live and organise and build our Unions in very dangerous times at the moment. The recent election results and the rise of Reform in the polls, alongside the associated far right street violence that we've seen threatens to tear our society and our communities apart. Not only the threat that Reform and the far right pose themselves, but also the way in which they've dragged the politics of mainstream parties to the right. The attacks on immigrants, on refugees, the attacks on the social fabric of our society cannot, should not and cannot be tolerated by our movement and I think it's shocking that this week when, as a country, we should be celebrating refugee week, a point where we look at the role that immigrants have played in building our society, the society we live in together, that we're seeing a Labour government, the government we elected a year ago, doubling down on the pressure and attacks on refugees and immigrants.

Now, I think it's really important that we, as a Trade Union movement, understand what is happening here, because I'll be honest with you, I don't think that people just woke up one day feeling a little bit more racist or that they just decided one day that they supported the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the far right, I think instead what we've got is a deep-seated anger in our communities and let's be honest, people are right to be angry, they've seen their living standards plummet over recent years, they've seen public services stretched to the very limit and they've seen their jobs, their terms and conditions being broken, not by immigration, but by privatisation, by underfunding of public services and by the profits extracted by the super rich, exactly what we say with the attack on jobs at Rathbones and it's no wonder that people are angry, but nobody is offering them a solution. The Labour government we elected a year ago, in spite of some positive improvements, I don't believe is moving far enough or fast enough in addressing the needs of working people.

[APPLAUSE]

And the reality is, when you leave that gap, when you show people that there's nobody up there on their side, it leaves a vacuum into which the poison of the far right moves. Those people looking for a solution, if they don't find it from us, from their Trade Union movement, will look for it elsewhere and of course these people, as Rebecca said earlier, who are stealing our clothes, who are claiming that they support re-industrialisation, claiming they support nationalisation, claiming to support our strikes even, support working people not one little bit and they expose themselves every time in parliament when they vote against improved worker rights, when they vote against cutting zero-hour jobs, when they vote against giving people employment rights from Day 1, they expose themselves and yet if people aren't offering an alternative, that is where people will turn. Let's be honest, the far right Reform hates what is happening here in this room, they hate every single one of you. Why?, because here in this room you've brought together a diverse segment of our society all working together, debating, discussing together, men and women, black workers and white workers, immigrant workers, people right across our society, to building common endeavour and shape your future as a Union in your industry, in your communities and they hate that, because their politics is the politics of breaking apart our communities, pitting worker against worker and the politics that divides and rule.

So, what do we do when faced by that from the far right? I think we have to do three things. First of all, we have to confront it, we have to confront them. Sometimes on the streets, there will be a hardened core of people who simply need to be confronted in that way, but there are many more who've just been taken in by these lies and so secondly, I think we need to challenge mainstream politicians every time they slip in to that racist anti-immigrant rhetoric and they build up support for that in our society, but thirdly and most importantly, we actually need to see real change, real economic change. Our lives, your lives, getting better. We need to see wages go up, we need to see investment in our public services, we need to see better Trade Union rights and jobs protected, that means we need sectorial collective bargaining rights across our economy, we need to sweep away the anti-Trade Union laws and we need strong, well organised workplaces to fight for that and that's where I believe Trade Union education comes in.

Your General Secretary said in her speech earlier today that learning is part of how we fight back and I fundamentally believe that's true. If we're going to organise our workplaces and organise our movement to win the improvements that we need to see, to win improvements in our living standards, those of our families and those of our communities, then we need to invest in building leaders at every level of the movement, workplace leaders, regional leaders, national leaders in our movement.

We need to invest in economic education. If we don't understand the economy in which we're negotiating, within which we're fighting for better wages and conditions, then we won't be able to win those battles and we need to invest in political education, so people understand how we bring change, how we put pressure on the politicians that make the decisions that affect our lives. We also need to understand the struggles of the past, those that we won and also those that we lost and that means having that education on the history of our movement, our movement's culture.

So I hope together going forward that we can build on that broad definition of education together and that many more of you, but crucially the workers in your workplaces, those who show the potential to be future leaders of your Union and of our movement, that we work together to build education right across that. Please get involved with the General Federation of Trade Unions. The vast majority of our courses are 100% free to members of this Union, that includes residential courses, with free accommodation and free food as part of it. It is there for you to get involved and for you to build and strengthen your Union.

I'll be running a workshop later on at 3.30, I think, which you're welcome to come along and talk more about how we do that education work, but together let's shape the Trade Union movement and win the battles of the future that we need for our people and our class. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** So as is customary for speakers, we realised earlier that most of our Delegates will have never seen a pewter baker, so I'm going to deliver it to Gawain outside of the box, so you can see what it looks like and Neil can take a photo, but we would like to present you with a pewter baker as a thank you for coming and speaking to us and also a bag of goodies. Now, I think the majority of them in there are vegan, but please .....

**Brother Gawain Little, General Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions:** Catherine and the kids will eat all the rest, I'm afraid.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Thank you, but they're all made by our members and the majority of them are vegan.

**Brother Gawain Little, General Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions:** Thank you, that means an awful lot.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** No, thank you for coming.

[APPLAUSE]

I'll leave it there and people can have a look at it. Gawain has got one in his bag. Don't drop it.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. Guess what? We're back on the Agenda and we're on, we're on motion 26. Take your time walking up, we've just got the photographer just doing a bit of a, bit of a modelling shoot. Are you done? That's it then. Motion 26. Oh, hold on a minute.

## 26

## Branch 582

*That this Conference agrees that there should be 2 days paid pet bereavement leave in the UK*

**Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** Good afternoon, everybody. I'll start again. Good afternoon, everybody. That this Conference agrees that there should be a legal right to two days' minimum paid or unpaid for pet bereavement. In the UK, we have no legal obligation for paid or unpaid bereavement leave for pets, yet saying goodbye to them can be extremely tough and an emotional time in our life. For many, their pets can be all they have to go home to and losing a treasured pet can be just as emotional as a bereavement for a family member. As our employers place a great emphasis on employee well-being and many of the issues that we believe urgently need addressing, any argument that will be open to abuse can be used for the potential compassionate act and that we believe we should be entitled to, so please ask for your support for this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Brother Mike Wheeler – Branch 407 (Fine Lady Bakeries, Newton Heath):** First-time speaker.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

I'd just like to say to start that I agree with Pete in principle, entirely. I understand where he's coming from. For certain individuals, a pet can be as important a family member as anyone else, any individuals. From a point of view, we had a look at it in family situations. But I have to say that I'm against it in practical matters, not that I think it's something that shouldn't be put forward, but I feel that particularly as it's worded, it's quite open to interpretation and open-ended, simply saying bereavement for loss of a pet should legally entitle somebody to two days' leave.

Somebody who owns a dog they've had for 10–15 years, I can understand, but there will definitely be individuals out there who will go out and buy some fish. So as a practical matter, although there are individuals out there who could, as is written, as most of it is written, could easily take advantage of it. In addition, not that I'm suggesting Peter's doing this, but this seems to be an example in a way of positive discrimination. There are certain individuals who don't have pets for whatever reason, religious or otherwise, who would essentially be disadvantaged for not having a pet. I'm not going to suggest for or against, I actually would think the better option would be to remit it, to give it a better chance of increasing, it being accepted in order to overcome the objections I've put out, because again, as I say, I'm for it in principle, but looking at it from a company's point of view, I would not be for this for the reasons I've previously mentioned. Sort of as an aside, there are charities like Veterans for Dogs and other such charities who have emotional support animals, so I believe there is precedent for something like motion 26 to be put forward, but in its current form, I feel it could be a lot stronger and for that reason I suggest that it be remitted. Thank you for your time.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Armilson Correia – Branch 110:** I support the motion, because on my team, I have a person who have a dog for I think it was over 10 years, the dog died, she have to be off sick because it's been over three months, time to time I find her in the corner crying, because it was the only thing she have to go back home to, like they say previously. She totally destroyed, she's not the same person no more. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any more speakers? Anybody online? No? Okay. Dave.

**Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC):** Mr President, Delegates. All dogs across the UK must be microchipped and registered by the time they're eight weeks old. All cats, just in England, must also be microchipped and registered by the time they're 20 weeks old. It is not mandatory in the rest of the UK and as far as fish go, Michael, I'm afraid I didn't look that one up, sorry. There are several databases you can register your pet, where you are required to give your address and contact details by law and it is your responsibility to maintain up-to-date information on your pet. So here we have a clear and robust means of pet purchase and ownership and an efficient system of providing and proving any legality to your employer of your ownership. It's a very similar comparison to motion 23, the mover, Pete, feels this is the right thing for an employer to do. Respect the loss of a loved one, help the employer, employee deal with their grief with dignity. So, on behalf of the EC, we ask you to please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I think there was, there was, no further comment, okay. To the vote then. All those in favour? Okay. Those against? That's carried. Motion 27.

**27**

**Branch 582**

*That this Conference agrees that full pay should be granted for 39 weeks of statutory maternity leave.*

**Sister Patrycja Garbarczyk – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** All pregnant employees in the UK are entitled to a year maternity leave but only 39 weeks' pay from the employer. For the first six weeks of maternity, the entitlement is 90% of the average earnings and an additional 33 weeks at the maximum of £151.97. Both of these figures are a very, very long way below the National Living Wage and for an extra mouth in the household, this can be often, place a huge financial burden on making ends meet during an already emotional and stressful experience. A recent survey discovered that 43% of mothers return to work within 12 weeks of the birth of their child primarily with financial worries. It's not only the initial burden of making ends meet, but also the fear of getting further into debt, debating whether to spend quality time with your baby by taking the full time, the full leave entitlement or returning early if chance to do so. Suddenly many mothers cannot work around their little one, so don't have a choice, so we ask Delegates to please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Sorry, you caught us just having a bit of a conversation then. Secunder? Formally seconded. Speakers? Nobody? Okay. Nobody online, apart from Rachel, who's going to speak on behalf of the Exec?

**Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** Hello. Yes, the Executive asks you to support the motion. Obviously, like the previous, the proposer stated that obviously you're entitled to the full 52 weeks off for maternity leave, but only 39 of those is currently paid, so for me, personally, this motion doesn't go far enough. Obviously we would want the full payment for those 39 weeks, because once again women are at a detriment for being women. It's not the men that lose out on money, although potentially there is now because we have **[unclear]** have split maternity rights, but still the first six weeks are 90% average weekly earnings.

That might not sound like a great drop in it, but once you move into the next 33 weeks, it's £187.80, or 90% of your average weekly earnings and on the government website it says whichever is lower. So if that was [unclear] higher, they're not being to us or anything, it's whatever's lower. So if your average weekly earnings is significantly lower than that £187, then that's what you're getting. Once again, women are at a detriment for having children and honestly, a lot more needs to be done, but this is a good start, so support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Okay. Those against? That was unanimous, thank you very much. And I'm going 28.

**28**

**Region 4**

*That this conference agrees to fight for the right that foster carers get the same rights as parents in the workplace.*

**Brother Michael Redshaw – Branch 459:** Motion 28. That this Conference agrees to fight the right for foster carers to get the same rights as parents in the workplace. Foster carers are not considered as employees, they therefore do not have employment rights and those who are employed, they are typically classed as self-employed or workers who have remitted rights. The question of employment rights for foster carers goes to the heart of why our foster care system is in crisis, with carers leaving in droves. They are the bottom rung of the ladder, this must change. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Are you seconding it? Okay, thank you. Formally seconded, if not, cool, cool. It's okay, it's okay.

**Sister Karen James – Branch 580:** First-time speaker.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

I'm supporting the motion, because I believe that if these children didn't have the foster carers, they would still be in the terrible situations they're in in the homes or in the care homes and I think that the care workers just need more support. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Anybody else? Anyone online? Okay. General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Conference, the Executive asks that you support this motion and to say clearly and unequivocally, that's not easy after lunch, foster carers deserve the same rights as any other parent in the workplace, because when someone opens their home, their heart and their life to care for a child who desperately needs stability, love and security, that's parenting, that is care work, that is labour and it deserves to be recognised and respected, yet right now, foster carers are being denied basic workplace rights that other parents take for granted. They may not be entitled to parental leave, they may be refused time off for appointments, transitions or emergencies, they may face impossible choices between keeping their job and caring for a vulnerable child. That's not right, Conference. We've got to be clear, foster carers are doing life-changing, sometimes lifesaving work. They are stepping up where the system has fallen short and often they are doing it under immense pressure without any guarantees, protections or recognition that they deserve. If we believe in equality, if we believe in fairness and if we believe that all children deserve the best care, then we have to fight to make sure that the people providing that care aren't left behind at work. It's about rights, but also about respect. It's about ending discrimination for foster carers facing the workplace simply because the children that they are caring for didn't come to them through birth or adoption. It's about acknowledging that love, support and parenting doesn't only come in one form and our laws and our workplace policies need to catch up with that. It's about recognising that many foster carers are working class people, trying to make ends meet. They're not asking for special treatment, they're asking for an equal footing. This Union has always stood up for those doing invisible, undervalued and underpaid work and that includes foster carers and this motion, should it be passed, is an actual extension of our values. Foster carers need to get the same protections, the same entitlement and the same respect as any other parent in the workplace, because no-one should be punished at work for stepping up for a child in need.

The Executive asks you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you very much. 29, isn't it. How many steps have I made you do today?

**Abolish the Council Tax – for a Progressive, Income-based Scottish Service Tax to Double Funding**

*Conference condemns decades of underfunding of local government, causing crises in every service.*

*The unfair, regressive Council Tax adds to inequality, with the maximum differential between bills on a millionaire's mansion and the poorest home of the lowest-income family being just over 3:1.*

*Conference calls for vastly improved Council Services and rejects both a Council Tax freeze – which adds to council cuts, and disproportionately boosts the incomes of the richest minority – or increased Council Tax bills, which disproportionately hammers the working class.*

*Conference notes the fully researched alternative, the Scottish Service Tax (SST). This tax is based on income, on ability to pay. It involves six income bands and progressively rising taxation rates.*

*The Scottish Service Tax would be deducted from pay, with the first £12,000 zero-rated; the income band £12-30,000 taxed at 4.5%; that between £30,000 and £50,000 taxed at 10%... culminating in a 20% Scottish SST on all income above £100,000.*

*Overall, 75% of people would pay less than they do in Council Tax, but higher taxation of the very rich would double funds for Scotland's councils - from £2.7billion to £5.3bn for the year 2021/2.*

*This measure is entirely within the powers of the devolved Scottish government. It would help redistribute wealth from the rich to the rest of us, whilst boosting council funds to not only avert every penny in cuts, but to invest in life-improving measures, including council housebuilding, public transport, social care, and green energy production.*

*Conference agrees to support the progressive, income-based Scottish Service Tax; produce campaign materials explaining it; argue for this alternative to the relentless cuts and inequality exacerbated by the unfair Council Tax in the wider trade union movement; and demand the Scottish government implement this redistributive tax without further delay*

**Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill):** Moving motion 29. Abolish the Council Tax for a progressive income-based Scottish Service Tax to double the funding. Conference condemns the underfunding of local government, causing crises in every service. The unfair aggressive Council Tax adds to inequality, with a maximum [unclear] and a millionaire's mansion and the poorest home in a low income family being just over [unclear]. Conference calls for vastly improved council services and rejects both the Council Tax freeze, which adds to council cuts and disproportionately boosts income of the richest minority on increased Council Tax bills, which disproportionately hammers the working class. Conference [unclear] of the Scottish Service Tax or the SST. This Tax is based on income and ability to pay and involves six income bands and progressively rising taxation rates. The Scottish Service Tax would be deducted from pay, with the first £12,000 zero-rated and an income band £12,000 – £30,000 taxed at 4½% and between £30,000 – £50,000 taxed at 10%, accumulating in a 20% Scottish Tax on income over £100,000. Overall 75% of people would pay less tax than they do in Council Tax, but higher taxation of the very rich would double the funds for Scottish councils, from 2.7 billion to 5.3 billion in the year 2022.

This measure is entirely within the powers of the full Scottish government. It would help to redistribute wealth from the rich to the rest of us, whilst boosting Council Tax funds do not only have every penny in cuts, but to invest in life improving measures including council house building, public transport, social care and green energy production. Conference agrees to support the progressive income-based Scottish Service Tax, produce campaign material explaining it, [unclear] to the relentless cuts in equality exacerbated by the unfair Council Tax and the wider Trade Union movement and demand the Scottish government implement this redistributive Tax without further delay. Scotland's councils, like many across the rest of the UK, for too long have been a cash cow for unscrupulous council leaders, whose poor financial [unclear] is often miles away from reality. This is a [unclear], given that the Council Tax with [unclear] household to find that communal areas, local libraries, community centres, essential care support for the vulnerable and leisure community facilities for the young, are closing, so this begs a question, where's the money going? Is the Council Tax set up fit for purpose? I think the answer to this is no, it's not.

A fairer tax would be the Scottish Service Tax, based on the elements of not where you live. This would be a fairer tax aimed at distribution of those in the higher brackets [unclear] of the less fortunate. The figures above are a couple of years' out, we know that and are purely for an example, however the scale of the difference in the tax system is nearly double. This would be a fairer tax both in letting others in the UK see the societal difference [unclear] local councils implement it and local communities can [unclear] it on a larger scale for the governments across the UK. Although this motion's based in Scotland, for a Scottish perspective, it's a motion to be carried by Conference and replicate it UK-wide.

Let us be the guinea pigs, let us try it first, because we were the first with the Poll Tax and the first with the Bedroom Tax, they didn't mind us being guinea pigs for that, so let's be the guinea pigs for something good. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? No? In that case then, Kevin, online.

**Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716 (Speaking on behalf of the EC):** I agree with everything Chris has just said, to be fair and I mean, obviously as you say, the motion comes from a Scottish perspective, but probably all over the world as well, tax is disproportionately paid by the working classes and as mentioned today and yesterday, the bin man, the council blew the money and then put it on the workers. So again, there's nothing more to be said on it, I mean, it's a good motion. Granted it's a Scottish concept, so support this motion. Thank you,

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Motion 31. Oh sorry, yes, motion 30. I was playing bingo. You might know where my head's going now, mightn't you.

**30**

**Region 4**

*That this conference agrees that the BFAWU lobby the Government to make travel insurance compulsory when travelling abroad. Too many people are travelling without and then having problems abroad and relying on 'go fund me' for support.*

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Moving motion 30, on behalf of Region 4. That this Conference agrees that the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union lobby the government to make travel insurance compulsory when travelling abroad. Too many people are travelling without and then having problems abroad and relying on GoFundMe for support. According to a poll in 2024, 40% of travellers buy travel insurance when they book a holiday. 14% purchase it before they leave, 5% already have it because their banks provide it free and 42% do not buy travel insurance at all. Martin Lewis himself was advising, advises getting travel insurance as soon as you book, this means purchasing travel insurance immediately after booking a holiday, not just before departure. It covers not only incidents during the trip, but also potential issues that might prevent you from travelling in the first place, such as illness or unforeseen circumstances. In 2006 my mum took poorly in the July and in the August was diagnosed with terminal cancer. I was due to go away for a two week holiday in the September and luckily, I'd taken out travel insurance at the time of booking. I asked the specialist at the hospital how long mum had and was told if I went away, to be prepared to fly home. I contacted my travel insurance and was advised to fill out a claim form under the circumstances and submit it. I lost £100 excess, the holiday was refunded and I was able to spend mum's last days with her. Without insurance, we could have lost everything.

[APPLAUSE]

At the time, it was more important to spend time with mum. Travel insurance can be relatively inexpensive, especially if purchased early and can save you a significant amount of money if you need to cancel or cut short a trip. Most folk shop online these days for the shopping, insurance quotes for cars, gas and electricity swopping, travel insurance is no different. It can be time-consuming, but there are sites where you can enter your information once and they shop around for you. No-one knows what is around the corner and it is not worth burying your head in the sand, it won't happen to me, I'll not bother. Last week, there were two separate occasions that I became aware of, there was a 29 year old gent from Wales, he'd travelled to Thailand with his friends, gone out drinking, during the evening he got separated from his friends, he was attacked. He ended up with severe brain injuries and was placed on life support. His family not only had to deal with the expense of travelling out there to support their son and be with him, but they're also worried about the escalating cost of his treatment and how they're going to find the money, hence a GoFundMe. There's also another gentleman, a grandfather, that was swimming in a hotel pool with his grandchildren and he was found unresponsive. CPR and a defibrillator were used, but he couldn't be saved. He hadn't purchased any travel insurance either, he thought he was just going to be fine, on holiday with his family, swimming with his grandkids. The repatriation costs to fly him home are out of reach for his family and more and more GoFundMe pages are being set up almost every day and week and could be avoided if folks only purchased travel insurance. I believe it's the responsible thing to do to have for your holiday and surely you can afford a few extra quid to safeguard your welfare and those of your family. Travel insurance is a smart investment to protect yourself from potential financial burdens and disruptions during your trip. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Michael Redshaw – Branch 459:** Yes, I'd like to support this, Julie. Like you say, I think this is an additional cost to the holidays, but obviously the impact that we see when things do actually go wrong, yes, the events we see on the television, yes. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Zeal Machin – Branch 547 (Suma Wholefoods):** Hello again. Speaking, well, I'm from Suma. Julie, I really appreciate you sharing your story and that sounds like a difficult situation and yes, thank you for sharing that, it's impactful. I'm nervous, but I think I'm going to object against this, mainly because like, I think we should focus more on educating people rather than making it a compulsory requirement. I think with better education, people make more informed choices, that allows people to make an autonomous risk assessment based on what they're doing. I also kind of, I don't know if I'm stubborn here, but I kind of resent paying private insurance companies for them to make record profits and stuff like that and I think it feeds into that and in terms like the GoFundMe pages, in my head that's sort of like, it feels, if it was more successful or if there was a similar sort of situation that did have more success, like it feels like community resourcing rather than relying on a private company to possibly pay you out or possibly not, to turn to your communities to help you in certain situations and maybe that would be returned in future instances, that feels like a more, within my values, so yes, I'll be objecting, but yes, I totally understand where you're coming from with that and I think yes, the points you also make are very valid but yes, thank you, cheers.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (Retired Branch), West Yorkshire:** I don't know if people are aware, but I go away quite often

[LAUGHTER]

...and I tend to go away maybe four or five times a year and I get a yearly policy that covers me and my wife and it costs £120 for the year, so it's not as though it's an exorbitant amount, but it just gives you that bit of confidence to go away and know that if anything does happen, you're going to get back home. So please support, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes):** I've never had an accident abroad, but I had a similar kind of thing seven years ago. I was out in Gibraltar, we were enjoying our holiday, just packing our suitcase to come home and I had an email which said your flights have been cancelled, back to Gatwick. I was like, we've got to be out in about four hours, lose our hotel. So I was like going down into the hotel and said oh, what do I do? They said, there's nothing we can do, you have to pay for the extra night. So I rung my insurance up and they said, we can sort it, but you have to claim when you come back, but you know, you pay for the night, so I had to pay like £125 per night for an extra five nights in Gibraltar, so I can go home. I had to spend another £100 to get transferred from Gibraltar to Málaga airport, but the flight was included because it was the airport, because they were the one that cancelled my flight, I had that included. I was lucky I had the insurance, I got all of my money back.

If I'd never had insurance, I wouldn't have got none of that back, but when we were at the airport, we met a load of people sat at the airport, just on the floor, because they hadn't, luckily I had money to go and pay for an actual, book the hotel for an extra five nights, people were sat there with kids and they go, we have nowhere, we've got no money, we've got no way of our families sending money out to us, so actually, you know and it made my eyes, I was like going, you know, I was lucky enough, I had money, but you don't think of that when you're on holiday. You've got your two weeks' holiday in the sun, what happens if your flight gets cancelled? You're coming out of your hotel and then you're stuck, you don't know where you are, you don't know the language. I was lucky, but there's a lot of people out there who can't be as lucky as me and you know, having that insurance, at least that way you've got a way to get home and I remember a couple of years' ago when Thomas Cooke went bankrupt, luckily you had that insurance on that thing to get you back home but, you know, if you hadn't got that in your holiday package, you know, you're stuck out in those countries and I do support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, I'm just going to bring Joanne in online.

**Sister Joanne Henderson – Branch 529 (Greggs):** I'm here to support this motion. As some of the people in Conference will know, six years ago my husband was killed in a motorcycle accident in the French/Italian Alps, he was on holiday when it happened. The accident wasn't his fault. Like Joe, we had the holiday insurance at a cost of £120 for the year to cover both of us. His repatriation cost alone cost £5,000 and that was just to bring him home and the costs went higher and higher and also we did have life insurance which covered his funeral and everything like that, that's a different insurance altogether, but I fully support this because at the end of the day, who has got, working class, has got a spare £5,000 just to bring a loved one home? Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Paul Thomas – Branch 459:** First-time speaker.

[APPLAUSE]

I fully support Julie on this. I've just looked on the internet and it costs £12.50 for a single trip, on average for a 30 year old, or 60 quid for an annual trip. For that price, £12.50 is two pints in here, isn't it, so .....

[LAUGHTER]

to me, to me it's not rocket science, is it. I fully agree with you, Julie.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Is it really £6.50 a pint, is it? £6.25, is it? Anybody else? Anybody online? No? Michael.

**Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390, Manor (Stoke), (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** We would actually ask you to vote against the motion. Thanks to Julie and the other guys for sharing your personal stories. I can understand how much horror that would have been for you, but holidays abroad are a luxury that many members of our Trade Union can't afford. Increasing the costs to those that can is punitive and will only increase the profits of already bloated insurance companies, as Zeel? was referring to earlier. People with existing health conditions and disabilities are already charged excess fees for travel insurance. On the BBC Breakfast News very recently, a couple of weeks' back, there was a section where a person had recovered from brain cancer and wanted to go on a trip to celebrate. He was quoted £3,000 for travel insurance, whereas his fiancée and friend, who were joining him on the trip, were quoted a 10th of the price. He was completely cancer-free, but just having cancer in his medical history multiplied the cost by 10. At the moment travel insurance isn't compulsory, but just imagine how much those costs would go up if it were to be compulsory. At present, UK citizens can apply for a UK Global Health Insurance Card, a GHIC, which is like the newer version of the EHIC that we had, which provides necessary state healthcare in the European economic area and some other countries, on the same basis as a resident of that country. This may be free, or it may require a payment equivalent to that which a local resident would pay.

While the GHIC does not provide the comprehensive cover, see that, I got that in there, of the better health insurance coverage, it is free, plus there wouldn't be that oh, you didn't read the extremely fine print avoidance that a lot of insurance companies will give you when you try to make a claim. Again, Zeel? was saying about people trying to claim through their health insurance or travel insurance and it gets turned down. One other point I'd like to make and Julie referred to this herself, is a lot of bank accounts already have free travel insurance as part of that account. Have a look at your bank account benefits, you might find that you're already covered on that. If anybody chooses to go abroad and wants to take out travel insurance, then it should be their choice, it shouldn't be forced on them. I don't believe that compulsory insurance is the way forward. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay Julie, you've got the right of reply. Okay. Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Okay. Those against? That's lost. Okay, thank you. Motion 31. I am right this time, aren't I? It is motion 31, I am right, I am right.

**31**

**Branch 582**

*That this Conference agrees that the child maintenance service should reduce the age of collecting a child's living costs from the non-resident parent from age 20 to 18.*

**Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** Good afternoon, again. That this Conference agrees that Child Maintenance Services should be reduced to the collecting of a child's living cost from a non-resident parent from the age of 20 to the age of 18. Child Maintenance Services is a financial support that helps cover a child's living costs. When parents are separated, it can be a crucial contribution to the child's upbringing. However, the process of determining paying and sometimes disputing child maintenance can be a, fraught with emotional and financial distress, particularly for fathers who feel decisions might not take in their full circumstances and to their accounts. Some fathers believe that Child Maintenance Service's calculations don't fully account for their situation, including their ability to pay for their living expenses and their commitments to other dependants. If a change in their financial situation occurs like job loss or reduced income, then getting the Child Maintenance Service to alter these payments can be extremely difficult, leading to arrears and possible further debt. Disputes over parenting time can also create further conflict within an already strained relationship and not of benefit to the child. Although the system is intended to improve, satisfaction amongst separated parents instead can and has led to widespread dissatisfaction.

The system can force parents to monitor each other's finances, jeopardising an already deteriorating relationship and undermining children's financial security. In many instances, the system can end up weaponising parents in conflict even further. The system also charges, for this service, 20% deduction for the non-resident parent and then a further 4% for the receiving parents, so your child only receives three-quarters of what you're paying of your maintenance fee. The system isn't fair when the child reaches 18, they can apply for Universal Credit and then the child maintenance should be terminated. It's not only that, it's, some parents yes, can also enforce their children to stay on at college, yes. The parent that is paying, whether it be a father or a mother, depending on how the court agreement has come, whoever the kid, child lives with. These children, yes are forced to stay at school, so that parent then has to continue paying. The government at this moment in time are looking at increasing that to the age of 22, yes. In 1991, when the Child Support Agency came in place, you look after your children until the age of 16. In 2012, when the Child Maintenance Service came in, they upped it to 18. Now the Labour government, who've only been in a year, they want to up it to 22. When is it going to stop for the, non-parent to stop paying? At 18, these people can choose their own lives and support themselves. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Are you seconding? Seconder? Formally seconded?

**Sister Katarzyna (Kasia) Damek – Branch 515 (East Kilbride, Scotland):** Sorry, I need to oppose this motion, on the base of how it is worded. I understand that you disagree with the way that the payments are calculated, so if that would be worded that way, I would totally agree, but increasing the age of the child, of the age when kids can receive it, that's not the way to go and if they are forced to stay at school, better for them, they are building their future. So that's, the way it is worded, absolutely. Please oppose this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. Any other speakers? The Executive has no position on this, so straight to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's lost.

Okay, you can put your Agendas away. We're going to do a couple of things now. One is, you're going to have your photograph taken, hey, you're going to be holding some stuff, you're going to be holding something up, so you need to get them out of your wallet. I mean, obviously what's been going on over in the Middle East is absolutely ..... if you can be quiet, what's been going on over in the Middle East, regardless of who you think is to blame, people dying in Palestine cannot be right. People being denied food, you know, women and children cannot be right, you know. If you believe in humanity, then you must understand that people have a right to life and it doesn't matter, you know, what you're born as, if you believe in humanity, you should believe in the right of all people to be entitled to the right to live without fear, without hunger and without hate and we're going to ask people to support the photograph that we've going to have taken and then we're going to ask Mike to come down to talk to us about the Credit Union, which is an amazing benefit that we've been offering for quite a number of years and we became the first Trade Union to actually have a Credit Union and obviously it's now under the new leadership of Mike and Mike, we made it easy so you could know who was who, so if you would, please start to position yourselves so we can take a photograph, just so we can say that we stand, we stand for humanity and the right for people to exist and to live. Okay.

### **Mike Andrews of BFAWU Credit Union addresses Conference**

**Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 252:** Can you hear me now? I'm going to do a little exercise and a little talk about the Credit Unit a bit. So, can you all stick your hands up if you save money? Okay, put them down. Can you stick your hands up if you've borrowed money from a bank or a building society? Okay, fantastic. That is what the Credit Union is all about and out of over 14,000 Bakers Union members, there's only 554 Credit Union members. Now, that is a massive 6% of membership that's a part of the Credit Union and the Credit Union is a massive benefit and one thing that I hope it's with the new organising Branch rule that's credited at this Conference, that those people that use that tool, as well as the existing people in this room, to recruit members. As it stands, it's currently 2.5% dividend paid once every year on savings. If you save and get a much better rate, you probably can get a slightly better rate in certain places, but a lot of people won't on savings and I'm not going to go into details, but at the AGM this afternoon, there will be a vote on that increase on that dividend, which makes it more attractive to members to join the Credit Union and also there's going to be a vote on the reduction of interest rates on new loans, another benefit of the tool you guys can use to sell the Credit Union. Myself and Michael Blundred volunteered to be Directors of the Credit Union three years' ago, or two years' ago, at this very event and there's been some changes, we're a lot more involved, people have spoken about concerns at the AGM, we're addressing all those issues.

Myself, I sign off every transfer daily, so members get their money quicker, which was a concern because it could take a couple of days, maybe a week, now it's generally within 24 – 48 hours of a working day. So this, we've got a table at the back there, we've got a load of literature, things are becoming clearer and we just need to see more membership and generally I will say to the North of the country, it's really popular, towards the South, it's not. I just think that's, this is a massive benefit to every single member, there's no negative side, so this is why I've been asked to speak on this because we're always going membership, membership, membership, we need it, we need it, we need it, it's not just about, you know, representation and negotiation for, you know, better terms and conditions and wage rises, this is a benefit that will benefit that person and that person's children and grandchildren, because they can be, have accounts as well. How many of you would like to save for your children or your grandchildren's future and get that dividend, get that interest, you know, on that? Any questions?

If you either have an active account already with the Credit Union and you leave the Bakers Union, yes, you can.

Yes? Yes, you asked the question and I'll take it to the next AGM meeting, oh sorry, the next Directors' meeting, which is on 2nd July.

In terms of a contact number, it is set during the office hours, however there is an email address and all the emails are responded to at the earliest opportunity. The email address is on all the literature at the back. This form I put together is brand new, it makes it easier to explain to you guys how to join, what the rules are of the Credit Union, what you need to do, the contact, it's all on there, it makes it easy and simpler, basically like a crib sheet, so you can easily set up the members, there's a QR Code which directs you to the Credit Union part of the Bakers Union site if you want key information and all documentation is downloaded.

You can just set up a Standing Order for your bank. I'm part of the Postal Branch and that's how I save.

That was one concern that was brought that you had to wait, it's literally every single day, between 5 and 6, I log on and approve any transfers to members, whatever, it's all done and dusted and I do that every day of the year, even if I go on holiday.

So, we're fully regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the ABCUL, which is basically a governing body we're a part of for Credit Unions, the Credit Union is in, I will say, a really good financial stable place. I don't go into figures, because I'll go over that in the AGM later on this afternoon.

It's depending on £2 a week or £10 a month.

Yes? As it stands, the maximum is £4,000. If there is a question of increase, we can take it to the Board Directors and agree if it needs to increase, but that's a discussion we need to have, because obviously it's, we are a Credit Union, there is risk to everyone that takes out a loan, which is a thing like anything else, but it's currently set at £4,000. If you were members of the Credit Union and want that to be discussed and opened, we can certainly open to do that.

Anyone else?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Can I thank you very much, really appreciate that.

[APPLAUSE]

Obviously there's going to be the Credit Union meeting, which is going to be in here, I believe .....

**Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 252:** It is.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** The GFTU meeting's going to be in Room 4. The NSSN meeting's going to be in Room 11. The PayPlan meeting's going to be in Room 10 and the, I thought it said adultery when I first read that, it says Quilter, it says Quilter, I haven't got my glasses on, do you know what I mean, but it just, I thought what? That's in, the Financial Services Quilter is in Room 8.

So, 10 o'clock in the morning.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay. Thank you very much. Tonight though, before you do go, tonight, I just want to make you aware, that there's something called the General Secretary's bingo .....

[CHEERS]

and I've heard, if you get a full house, you get an iPad.

[OOOH!]

I think I need the eye patches. So, bingo, 8 o'clock, back of bar, bit like back of net, it's definitely got some balls. Yes, they're all starting at half past 3.

## Tuesday 17 June 2025

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** And can we shut the doors, please. Merci beaucoup. I believe we've got some dirty drawers, is that right?

[LAUGHTER]

Anybody? Is that 22? Obviously she's not paying any attention whatsoever, she's probably wondering whose knickers she's taking next.

[LAUGHTER]

What, sorry Dawn, sorry Dawn, that was just showing you weren't paying attention, wasn't it, but .....

[LAUGHTER]

Obviously we've had a, the EC's received a request this morning from the people that attended bingo last night, that the General Secretary needs a pair of diapers for next year .....

[LAUGHTER]

and a set of balls that's got 90 in them.

[LAUGHTER]

Can I just start this morning and everybody knows I'm breaking these teeth in, yes and my pronunciation is not very good, but I'm going to attempt this one because it's quite fitting, right, for someone who always puts themselves out for us and it goes like this, right? Apologies, Penblowenlowen, which means Happy Birthday, Robbie.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

[LAUGHTER]

Can we wish you a very, very Happy Birthday, so if everybody will join with us, please. And we're going to sing to you, Robbie, how's that, mate?

[CHEERS]

[HAPPY BIRTHDAY SUNG]

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

And that's the only singing I'm doing today, so no putting me forward for karaoke, alright?

To the roll call, General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** I've got to find my pen. Region 1. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4, it's like fireworks displays, isn't it. Region 5, I couldn't count then. Region 7 and we've nine online? Thank you very much.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Cool-io. I've got nothing to say before, have I? I've done my singing. .... mentioned about what you needed to do for next year and obviously the investments we need to make, so I must be calling motion 32, please. You've got quite a few messages coming through, Robbie, saying Happy Birthday online, by the way, pal.

**32**

**Branch 405**

*That this conference agrees to lobby the government to put a cap onto all Politicians expenses of £866.32, as this is the cost of a bus pass to get them around their towns for the year. This will also help with the UK's Carbon footprint.*

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** Good morning, Conference. President, General Secretary, Conference. Moving motion 32, starting us going. That this Conference agrees to lobby the government to put a cap onto all politicians' expenses of £866.32, as this is the cost of a bus pass to get them around their towns for a year. This is also to help with the UK's carbon footprint. This motion is also pointing the finger at the abusive expenses with MPs that are still robbing us blind for tens and hundreds of thousands of pounds. It has no chance of succeeding at a political level, but it's just a statement from us that we're watching them and these lot need to change how they behave. Please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? No speakers? Nobody online? Okay, Imran.

**Brother Imran Hussain – Branch 303 (Speaking on behalf of the EC):** If I bring you back to the start of Conference, when we do our report, a number of people got up, questions, expenses, why they went up and rightly so. It's your job to question the General Secretary, the National President and the EC. It's also your job to go back and question your MPs, hold them to the same level of account. Go back, go through their expenses, check online and find out why they are making stupid claims. The EC will ask you to support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, Conference. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Motion 33.

**33**

**Region 2**

**This Conference notes the Employment Rights Bill moved by the new Labour Government**

*We welcome any improvements to workers' rights and conditions*

*This includes the promise to repeal some of the more recent Tory anti-union legislation, such as the Minimum Service Levels Act 2023 and the undemocratic industrial action ballot thresholds enshrined in the Trade Union Act 2016*

*However, this Conference believes that most of the improvements set out by the Employment Rights Bill are to individual rights of workers rather than collective ones*

*A key part of this is leaving most of the Tory anti-union laws intact, including the right for workers and unions to take solidarity action*

*There is also insufficient strengthening of collective bargaining, a key element in improving workers' rights after decades of erosion under successive governments*

*This Conference believes that the Bill leaves loopholes that bosses will exploit regarding 'fire and rehire' and 'zero-hour contracts'*

*We also believe that there is unacceptable delay in the implementation of the Bill, especially regarding the repeal of anti-union legislation.*

*This Conference calls on our Executive Council to:-*

- Demand that the TUC implements TUC 2024 Congress policy to call a special congress to review the Bill and demand its strengthening
- Draw up a list of workers' rights as amendments to the Employment Rights Bill Ensure that this includes the immediate repeal of all the Tory anti-union legislation. As a minimum, the promised repeal of the Minimum Service Levels Act 2023 and the undemocratic industrial action ballot thresholds in the Trade Union Act 2016 should be separated from the Employment Rights Bill and immediately voted through parliament as fast-tracked legislation
- Ensure that the list of amendments also includes: the total abolishing of 'fire and rehire' and 'zero-hour contracts', for a £15/hour minimum wage with no age exemptions, collective bargaining for all workers
- Table this list of amendments to the parliamentary group of our union, and which should involve Jeremy Corbyn and the Independent Alliance MPs and the 7 currently-suspended Labour MPs, to be moved in parliament
- Raise at the TUC and with all other unions that this workers' manifesto, along with opposition to any austerity measures proposed by the Labour government, should be the basis for a national campaign by the union movement, including potential industrial action 12

**Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 282, Kernow District Branch:** Here to pass motion 33, on behalf of Region 2 and many thanks for your birthday wishes and the song earlier ...

[LAUGHTER]

and where's my cake?

[LAUGHTER]

Me handsomes ..... you wait and see.

[LAUGHTER]

Me handsomes, here at Conference. This Conference notes the Employment Rights Bill moved by the new Labour government. We welcome any improvements to workers' rights and conditions, this includes the promise to repeal some of the more recent Tory anti-Union legislation such as the Minimum Service Levels Act 2023 and the undemocratic industrial action ballot thresholds enshrined in the Trade Union Act of 2016. However, this Conference believes that most of the improvements set out by the Employment Rights Bill are individual rights of workers rather than collective ones. A key part of this is leaving most of the Tory anti-Union laws intact, including the right for workers in Unions to take Solidarity action. There is also insufficient strengthening of collective bargaining, a key element in improving workers' rights after decades of erosion under successive trash governments. I've just added that bit in, because I thought it was fitting.

[LAUGHTER]

This Conference believes that the Bill leaves loopholes that bosses will exploit regarding fire and rehire and zero-hours contracts. We also believe that there is unacceptable delay in the implementation of the Bill, especially regarding the repeal of anti-Union legislation. This Conference calls on our Executive Council to demand that the TUC implement TUC 24 Congress Policy, to call a special Congress to review the Bill and demand its strengthening. Draw up a list of workers' rights as amendments to the Employment Rights Bill and ensure that this includes the immediate repeal of all the Tory anti-Union legislation. As a minimum, the promised repeal of the Minimum Service Levels Act 2023 and the undemocratic industrial action ballot thresholds in the Trade Union Act of 2016. It should be separated from the Employment Rights Bill and immediately voted through Parliament fast track legislation. To ensure that the list of amendments also includes the total abolishing of fire and rehire and zero-hours contracts and for a 15 hour, a £15 an hour minimum wage, with no age exemptions, collective bargaining for all workers. Table this list of amendments to the Parliamentary Group of our Union, which should involve Jeremy Corbyn and the Independent Alliance MPs and the seven currently suspended Labour MPs, to be moved in Parliament. Raise at the TUC and with all other Unions that this workers' manifesto, along with opposition to any austerity measures proposed by the Labour government, should be the basis for a national campaign by the Union movement, including potential industrial action. As I said yesterday, me handsomes, we, the working class, deserve better. We do not want anything watered-down. We need all anti-Trade Union legislation repealed, give workers' rights back .....

[APPLAUSE]

...to the workers. Please support this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253:** How can I follow that? We've got to support it, no way. Please support. I've got full faith in you all, but we've got to. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** Please support this motion. Yesterday when we had the GFTU talk, something interesting came up in that. Why have we got such bad pensions compared to the French? Why, because when the French decided that they were going to put it up, put the age up to 64, let's go burn the cars, that's France's reaction, but who organised that, who got people out on the street in every major French city? The Unions. We can't do that, we can't organise nationally, together, that sort of thing, we're limited. Think how much things could change for the better if the restrictions were taken off. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any other speakers? Anybody online? No? Anybody else? Are you coming down, okay.

**Brother Leslie Bramhill – Branch 432 (Liverpool Hotplate):** Morning, Conference. I'm here to support the motion that's been spoken about. I think it's one of the most important motions that we've discussed here this week and I can't actually believe you're all just sitting there and not standing up applauding what he's just said, because we've got a Labour government in power and they're not even repealing the anti-Trade Union laws and that to me is an absolute disgrace, not representing the working class people of this country. I spoke to Ian yesterday, over a cup of coffee, about what Rebecca Long-Bailey had said, if we had any issues, to take them to our National President or the General Secretary. So I said to Ian, is there any chance you could, you know, take to them the fact that, you know, repeal the anti-Trade Union laws and the legislation regarding learning in the workplace and Ian mentioned, correct me if I'm wrong, Ian, that they've got no plans to do that through Parliament at the moment. When you think there's a Labour government in power in this country and we're still in the position of them, you know, not repealing the anti-Trade Union laws, so please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Whilst Mohinder's making his way, just to add to that as well, because obviously there was great hope about the Heat Strike and I don't know if anybody noticed that they decided not to move forward that legislation around the Cool It! Campaign that we've been running for many years, which obviously has been a big disappointment to us as well, but I just thought I'd provide you with that information just whilst we're waiting for Mohinder to get to his spot. I know Heat Strike are probably going to cover that in their event this afternoon, but obviously it's a real setback, because we thought we were going to get some action on heat.

**Brother Mohinder Baddhan – Branch 331:** President and comrades. The Labour Party was born out from the Union movement and if they don't stand by us, then there is no difference between Tories and them. So please .....

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, is there any other speakers? No?

**Brother Tony Mansell – Branch 258 (Memory Lane Cakes, Cardiff) (Speaking on behalf of the EC):** Here to obviously support this motion on behalf of the EC. The Employment Rights Bill is a direct admission that the system is broken. For decades, working people have been ripped off, exploited and discarded by greedy bosses and weak governments who have done nothing but serve big business. This Bill includes some long overdue changes, but make no mistake, the Bill is not a gift, it's not a victory yet and we can't trust any government to simply do the right thing. If history teaches us anything, it's workers will only get what they are prepared to fight for and keep what they are prepared to defend. The Bill promises to scrap zero-hour contracts, expand unfair dismissal protections and strengthen Trade Union rights. These are all things workers have been demanding for years. It's not some radical transformation, it's just catching up with the basics of dignity at work, but here's the problem, it doesn't go far enough, it doesn't come fast enough and it'll be full of loopholes the bad bosses will exploit unless we are ready to fight back. So we must demand a real living wage for all workers, not just the scraps bosses are willing to offer, stronger rights from Day 1, with no delays, opt-outs or compromise, an end to fire and rehire, casualisation and bogus self-employment that allows employers to exploit loopholes and dodge responsibility. Anything less is a betrayal. We know what's coming. Bosses will cry that they can't afford it, whilst still raking in record profits and lining their shareholders' pockets. We don't buy that. Business owners will push politicians to water this down before it even reaches the starting blocks, we've seen it before. Politicians will try to backtrack the moment it gets difficult, even those who claim to be on the side of the workers, we know, can't always be trusted when push comes to shove.

We won't be fooled, we need to go further. We need action and we need to be ready to fight. We need mass workplace organising and direct action. Every worker needs to be in a Union, every Union needs to be ready to mobilise, to fight and to win. Bosses won't give up however willingly. We need to take it, get organised, get angry, get active. This Bill only matters if we make it matter. No more waiting, no more begging, no empty promises. It's time to build a fight back, growing movement and force through the change we need. We must stand together for real wages, real contracts with real powerful workers. We must not back down, we must not compromise and we must not stop until every worker in this country has the pay, conditions and respect that they richly deserve. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. All those in favour? Some pre-empted me. All those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. 34.

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**34** **Branch 405**

*That this conference agrees to ask the Authorities who did the Public Enquiry into the Post Office Scandal: Why did they not do a separate Public enquiry into the company "Fujitsu", Why did they have back doors into the program they developed? And if they filtered off any proceeds through this?*

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** Conference. You're going to be sick of me in a minute [LAUGHTER], I'm going to be busy. Motion 34. That this Conference agrees to ask the authorities who did the public inquiry into the post office scandal. Why did they not do a separate public inquiry or focus, I've just added, or focus on the company Fujitsu? Why did they have a back door in the programme that they developed and if they filtered off the proceeds through this? You've got to remember the post office scandal is because of a faulty computer system, designed and built by Fujitsu, but the focus has been on the Post Office who operated it, not the people who built it and knew everything about it. So, a key question that hasn't been answered yet, to my knowledge. Was the missing money missing money or was it a computer glitch in the numbers? Nobody as yet has answered that question and I've been paying attention to this one. So, please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? Anybody online? Peter.

**Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110 (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** Morning, Conference. Obviously the speaker has told you about Horizon. I won't go into too much detail. In 2019, Fujitsu were told not to bid on any more contracts. They got £80 million in April from HMRC, so they still use their system. Northern Ireland's school system, £100 million. Rishi Sunak, in 2022, gave this lot £3.6 billion contracts for Britain. So they're having these inquiries, but these people have still got **[unclear]** in our country. Please support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. Motion 35, isn't it, it's you and we'll never get bored of you. You're always welcome at this Conference. We never forget the heroes of our Union.

**35**

**Branch 405**

*That this conference agrees that we lobby the government to have a public enquiry into the exploitation of the covid crisis, which we believe was fraud from the top down, in giving public money to companies and individuals, and was awarded contracts of millions of taxpayer's money, that was either Unfilled or used poor quality products.*

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** [LAUGHTER]. Thank you very much. Back again. Motion 35. That this Conference agrees that we lobby the government to have a public inquiry into the exploitation of the Covid crisis, which we believe was fraud from the top down, in giving public money to companies and individuals and was rewarding contracts of millions of pounds, millions of pounds of taxpayers' money that was either unfiltered or of poor quality products. Again, there is an inquiry going on, but they're not really touching on this area, where all the money went. The volume of stuff that was bought at ten times the cost that it would have normally cost, but it was all substandard and then Rishi Sunak literally wrote it all off, to try and stop any inquiry into the massive fraud that went on. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (Retired Branch), West Yorkshire:** Morning, Conference. Yes, there's a certain lady called Michelle Mone, she walked away with millions of pounds of taxpayers' money for equipment that was absolutely useless. My wife works at the Pinderfields Hospital, they're still using crap up there that she supplied. It's absolutely ridiculous that people can just walk away with all that money for providing rubbish. If we did that at our workplaces, you'd have been sacked. Please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill):** Joe kind of stole my thunder there, but I mentioned earlier on in one of my motions, when we were talking about how they wasted taxpayers' money and Michelle Mone was an example that I used, someone who came from a working class background and knew what benefits and stuff were and she stole against working class people. They took the money for the PPE, they gave us substandard PPE and let us use it and work while they partied and while they had all the champagne and stuff, we couldn't even go to funerals. That's the type of thing they've done to us, with these contracts. They handed the money to their friends and then laughed at us, while we suffered. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any other speakers? No, okay. It's me. I'll see if my eyes work. I mean let's be clear, what happened with the track and trace app was no mistake. It was a national scandal. £37 billion of public money was handed over to private companies and Tory cronies and for what?, an app, an app that barely worked, an app that was riddled with errors, that failed to trace contacts effectively and in many cases, never even functioned properly. This wasn't about protecting lives, it was about lining the pockets while NHS staff were working double shifts, while care home residents were left without protection, while families were burying their loved ones. The government at the time, the Tory government, that's making all these things now about how good they are with our taxes and how much better they would use our tax money, they were lining the pockets of their friends and their donors and we actually know that there was an alternative to the £37 billion investment that they ploughed into that app, that went to, I think, it was Sones Company, an ex-Tory and we could have had a free one, a functioning app, which was offered to the UK but rejected, because there was no profit in it. The Tories chose their mates over public health, they chose corruption over competence.

£37 billion. y the way, could have rebuilt every hospital in the country. It could have been given to every key worker a pay rise, but instead it was put into the pockets of private contractors with no accountability, no transparency and no shame. We must not allow them to walk away from this. We must support this motion and we must demand an inquiry and we must demand our money back. It's ours and we deserve it.

[APPLAUSE]

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

36

Branch 405

*That this conference agrees through our Parliamentary group, to pursue the previous government on the scandalous Track and Trace App, and the Conservative party to refund the £37 Billion that this app cost to build. As the Country was offered several Track and Trace apps for free.*

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** Don't worry, this is the last one, so the last time you have to put with me, with a motion anyway. Following on from the President's speech, highlighting the track and trace, this motion reads, that this Conference agrees, through our Parliamentary Group, to pursue the previous government for the scandalous track and trace app. The Conservative Party and the Conservative Party to refund the £37 billion that this app cost to build, as the country was offered several track and trace apps for free. We were offered the joint Apple/Google one, which was used all through America and a lot of other countries, that was developed by Apple and Google together. We were offered a Korean one, free again and we were offered the German one, free again and they worked, by the way, because the death rate in South Korea was less than 1,000 and they had Covid for a lot longer, they had Covid before we had. It is absolutely and utterly a pure example of what the Tories thought of us, that they created something that just didn't work, it is pure Toryism, it is the ultimate example of that government, of Boris Johnson, of the Tories, of the whole damn shooting match. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Seconder? Formally seconded? Speakers? No-one online? Okay.

Conference, I mean, I don't know if you realise that there has been a public inquiry going on into what happened during Covid. I attended it on our behalf, I spoke to the people running it, which is normally a polling company that's been put in charge of the, gathering the evidence and to be fair, it was a really interesting thing to get involved in, but what was really, really clear is how that is being done and what is likely to be the outcome of it, because it's not really about exposing the corruption that politicians were involved in, it's not really about exposing how things could have been differently and it's not really going to hold the political parties to account either. Hopefully there'll be some learning outcomes from it, but let's be very, very clear. It wasn't just the Tories who let us down during the Covid, it was the Labour Party too, who failed to hold them to account. It was the Liberal Party too that failed to hold them to account. It was every opposition politician who thought that working with the government would somehow make the media more friendly towards them, rather than holding them to account. We lost members because of their inactions and because they saw an opportunity to make money. We lost people and our members' families are still having to deal with the inaction of politicians, because it was a political crisis that failed to protect us. So we ask you to support this motion, but recognise, our voice will always be round the table and making a difference where we can. Sometimes it becomes uncomfortable and sometimes we have to make decisions and believe it or not, the issue around the Labour Party, that was one of the main reasons for withdrawing from them. Their failure to stand up for our members, in our workplaces, that passed away and I see people here who are Branch Secretaries .....

[APPLAUSE]

who had to deal with the consequences of that. We shouldn't have lost a single member, because they should have stood up for us, they should have stood for our interest, because if you have the name Labour, you're supposed to stand with Labour people and that was us. We founded the Labour Party and we deserved their trust, their respect and to honour us as working class people and they failed us and Covid was a red line. They killed our people in work, not because they wanted to stand up, but because they wanted to stand aside and we should never, ever forgive them for that. Support the motion.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. 37.

**Free Public Transport – Combat Poverty, Pollution, and Social Isolation**

*Conference calls for democratic public ownership of all forms of public transport, made free at the point of use for people of all ages, to combat poverty, pollution and social isolation.*

*The escalating climate crisis is damaging human health; causing mass deaths through flooding, mudslides and wildfires; creating millions of climate refugees, who then suffer rising levels of scapegoating and racist attacks by the far right.*

*A major source of pollution is road traffic, also causing cancers, respiratory and coronary diseases.*

*If governments are serious about reducing car usage and traffic pollution, they need to make public transport financially and physically accessible, reliable, vastly expanded, integrated, and powered by green energy.*

*Conference condemns the above-inflation fare increases on trains and buses; peak train fares, (a regressive tax on workers); and annual government subsidies to the profits of privatised bus companies, who cut services and staffing levels, with no public control.*

*Conference rejects proposals agreed by the Scottish government and some councils to introduce workplace parking fees, which would do nothing to reduce emissions, but would drastically slash workers' disposable incomes.*

*Conference calls for a public transport service under the democratic control of elected representatives of workers, communities, local councils and national governments – and free at the point of use, in the same manner the NHS was originally founded to be.*

*Free public transport for people of all ages on all modes of transport would cut poverty and social isolation, slash pollution, and create hundreds of thousands of skilled, unionised jobs and apprenticeships (70,000 in Scotland alone).*

*Conference agrees to help publicise this policy – already practised in over 100 cities, regions and states across the world – argue for it in the wider trade union movement; and demand the UK and Scottish governments urgently plan for free public transport*

**Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill):** Moving motion 37. Free public transport and combat poverty, pollution and social isolation. Conference calls for the democratic public ownership of all forms of public transport, made free at the point of use for people of all ages, to combat poverty, pollution and social isolation. This climate crisis is damaging human health, causing mass deaths through flooding, mud slides and wildfires, causing millions of refugees who are suffering rising levels of scapegoating and vicious attacks by the far right. A major source of pollution is road traffic, also causing cancers, respiratory and coronary disease. If governments are serious about reducing the usage of traffic pollution, they need to make public transport financially and physically accessible, reliable and vastly expand, powered by green energy. Conference condemns the above-inflation fare increases on trains and buses. Peak train fares are an aggressive tax on the workers. An annual government subsidises to the profits of privatised bus companies to cut services and staffing levels, with no public control. Conference accepts proposals agreed by the Scottish government that some councils charge workplace parking fees, which will do nothing to reduce emissions but would drastically slash workers' disposal income. Conference calls for a public transport service under the democratic control of elected representatives of workers' committees, local councils and national governments and free at the point of use in the same manner as the NHS was funded to be. Free public transport for people of all ages, all modes of transport, would cut poverty and social isolation, pollution and create hundreds of thousands of skilled Unionised jobs and apprenticeships, 70,000 in Scotland alone.

Conference agrees to help publicise this policy, already practised in over 100 regions and states across the world, argue for it in the wider Trade Union movement and demand the UK and Scottish governments urgently plan for free public transport. Starting with the bosses and again, I know this is based in Scotland, but it could go nationwide easily. So each council in Scotland's got a right, under the 2019 Scottish Transport Act, to take bus services out of council ownership. Three main bus operators currently work in Scotland, Stagecoach, First Bus and McGill's, no relation, so all three of them, all three of these companies, the owners are multi-millionaires. **[unclear]** off the back of the bus and privatisation, it's easy for you to say, isn't it, privatisation, I think I've got Ian's teeth in. How do they accumulate their millions? Sky high fares, cutting essential routes and having a free hand as they see fit. That'll **[unclear]** a free buses at 60 year old, for everyone in Scotland, comes at a cost of £400 million, from the taxpayers' money that the Scottish government subsidise. So free buses which we'll already have paid for. Imagine with £400 million a year, with support, free bus travel for everybody.

For many people travelling in the LEZ zones, which means if you can't afford a new car that's specific, then you must pay up to £13 an hour to park your car, but then you may continue your journey using transport with fares that have been hiked up. Somebody's always making money out of us at every turn. Another point, but something that disgusts me and my wife, because she's been writing all my stuff out for me this week, with LEZ zones, a lot of people don't have cars to get to these LEZ zones, they're having to park miles away from where they work, they're having maybe to walk to work or try and get public transport and with the shifts that they're doing, they're coming back and it's dark, so these car parks are big empty spaces, some of them have enclosed undercover car parks, people could be lurking, it's putting them in danger as well just because they want to make money off us. So, initially the motion is about the vital benefits of free public transport from government commitments. Let's see if they mean what they say. If the Scottish government and local councils are serious about tackling global warming and air pollution, they need to provide a viable, expanded public transport alternative to car usage and free at the point of use. That one measure would save workers at least £5.40 a day for the bus to and from work, that's £27 a week or £1400 a year just to get to work and research shows it would create 60,000 new green jobs. That saves care workers, along with other workers, having to pay to park at hospitals and health centres. That's wrong, these people are there to help us, they're saving lives and yet private car parks are making money off them, charging them.

We've got a couple of hospitals in Glasgow where visitors can't park because the staff have got to use it, the visitors' car park and it causes carnage in the streets. Some nurses are having to walk to work, because they can't get their car parked, it's terrible. I've got friends who stay in the Hebrides, which is Scotland kind of up the west, three islands, beautiful islands, beautiful people, they use ferries all the time, a company called CalMac had the contracts, but they never seem to have the ferries running so they're isolated, they're cut off, they can't get supplies over because the ferries are off, they can't get off the islands. The only way off the islands is on a plane and they cost, my mate flew down last week to see me for my birthday, it would have been cheaper going to Spain and flying from Spain back to London, from London back up to Glasgow, it would have cost him half the price to travel to Scotland. The islands are cut off due to poor ferry links, because there's a big problem with building ferries and the exorbitant ferry price in Scotland. **[unclear]** fantastic public campaign run by ASLEF is an example of what we can achieve if we all stick together. So let's end the profiteering and provide people with a transport service instead and one that we can be proud of. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Are you seconding it, yes? Are you seconding it? Cool.

**Sister Katarzyna (Kasia) Damek – Branch 515 (East Kilbride, Scotland):** I'm here to support this motion and mostly because in our work life we are often working with colleagues who are hired through the agencies, very often working for four hours or so, so while you are only getting so many shifts per week, or maybe one shift per week and it's limited to four hours and you need to pay for your transport on top of that, it's making it very hard to pay any of your bills or whatever and the other thing that for kids, for the transport, full education, it only covers them up to 21st birthday. After that, even if they are still in full education and they are not earning money, they need to start paying for the travel, so that makes it harder to complete their education. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Speakers? No? Just let me check online. I'm not as quick as Sarah. No, there's nobody there, so who's this from us? Okay. Kevin.

**Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716, Region 7 – Executive Council Member/Vice President:** Yes. Speaking on behalf of the EC. The EC would ask you to support this motion and my only caveat to the whole thing is, because it's a great motion and Chris spoke very well on it, is you'd think that the governments in the four countries in the United Kingdom could organise this. I don't think the country, the government here could and I'm not over sure the government at Westminster could, they can't agree in the **[unclear]**, but support the motion. Cheers.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** You can always tell those people that are not in the room, can't you? They're brave with language. I'm sure Standing Orders will send us a bill.

To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous and we'll go to 38.

**Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** Good morning Chair, Executive Council and Conference. That this Conference agrees that the Labour Party plans to build up to 1.5 million homes over the next five years should not be an attack on weakening green belt regulations. The Green Belt land in the UK is a protected area of a designated, to prevent urban sprawl, to protect the countryside and preserve the character of historic towns. The primary rule of building on green belt is generic, is generally prohibited except for very specific exceptional circumstances. However, we now see the Labour government are appearing to pressure local authorities into redefining the boundaries of the green belt to meet housing targets that the government has set. We are seeing more and more Labour government appearing, sorry, we see more and more of what once were classed as green belt areas to have classification changed to grey belt and granted building projects. We ask the Conference to support us in resisting the weakening of the countryside and open spaces around our towns to regenerate many areas that we see around the country. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (Retired Branch), West Yorkshire:** Platform, Delegates. Not only are they planning to build on green belt lands, they're also planning to build houses on wetlands, ignoring the fact that in the future those people that own those houses will not be able to get insurance and causing them untold problems. So, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC):** The mover of this motion discusses concerns regarding the declassification of green belt areas, but I also wanted to touch on a larger problem. One of the major issues with this policy of building new homes across many areas of the UK, whether they are in green belt areas, grey belt or neither, is the lack of sufficient infrastructure to support the influx of new homes, new families and new communities. New communities that need a doctor, a hospital, a dentist, school to attend, an area to play in and many other social services that the majority of us are already suffering to gain access to. The struggle for many of us to get to see a doctor is real. Our existing services are already overburdened. We accept the need to build and provide more homes for a growing population, but when the government talks about creating communities, not just houses, too often we see areas where the infrastructure is already on its knees, with an ageing population and a struggling healthcare sector, it's a recipe for disaster and we're the ones that have to suffer. Green belt land was designated back in the 1950's for a reason. The mover mentioned some of the reasons why they were protected, but one of the most important ones has to be that a new community is built within itself, with the proper infrastructure to support the new community. On behalf of the EC, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

Okay, Conference, you can close your Agendas for now. We're going to do something that we don't normally do, because we normally never have time, but we think it's very, very important that we always hear, not just on motions, but we also hear what you think about the Union and how you think this Union could be done better, what you believe should be happening in your workplaces, how this Union should be helping you organise, how it should be maybe looking at training, you know, what sort of provisions are provided to you, resources are provided to you and I know we've got solicitors in the room, but even if you've got an issue with the solicitors, I mean it's a good time to raise any concerns over the support that is given. We want to hear your voices, we want to hear your thoughts and we may be able to answer your questions, we may have to say we'll need to take that away, we can't answer it here, but for certain, whatever question is raised, we will provide an answer to any question you may raise and we're going to run it now until half past 11, so there's the rostrum, ask the questions you want to ask. Oh, come on, just go up to the rostrum, just go up to the rostrum.

**Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** Good morning. My question is, zero tolerance policies. At this current moment in time, most companies have a zero tolerance on drugs and alcohol, but yet the police system has a different view on these things. If you get caught for drink driving or drug abuse, you do a breathalyzer test or a mouth swab, but your company seems to do urine tests, which these chemicals stay in your body a lot longer, so for argument's sake you could be on holiday in a legal country where they do allow drugs, you can come back to work six weeks' later, you do a urine test, yet you will fail that test and be sacked. I think that that should be changed, so that they do the same system as the police. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I think, just as a quick response to that, I mean obviously the policies that we have as a Trade Union are that obviously we will negotiate with the employer and after consultation we will try and make sure that the policy reflects what the law states as a minimum, but obviously as a Union we will always try and improve on that. I mean, I don't disagree with you the fact that in some cases employers do implement policies which are much, much sterner than what the legal requirement is, but again it comes down a knowledge and understanding of what we're entitled to do. In some cases, people don't realise that when a company moves from a policy of checking for cause to one of compulsion and mandatory, that's actually potentially a change of contract, but we tend to find, because people aren't aware of that and the company comes and says this is all about health and safety, we feel that we're obliged to just accept it and I think maybe that's one of the things we need to emphasise probably in our training, certainly for Safety Reps but maybe it's an area where we need to look at for the Shop Stewards too about how they negotiate, because it's clear that a lot of employers are moving to mandatory testing, even though there's one or two companies moving away from it, you know, there's a lot of companies now going down that path and it's not about health and safety, it's everything to do with saving money because it reduces the cost of their insurance.

We would have no problem in working with an employer who wants to protect people's health and safety, but when that's not the driving force and it's cost, then of course we should be able to be able to rebut what they're doing and play a role. I mean obviously in discussions, we tried recently, I mean Warburtons is one that I've been involved in, we tried to get them to take the advice from drugs counsellors and have them drugs people's knowledge actually advising them on that. Unfortunately they struggled to get that assistance in, they said, but one of the things that I am aware of is that we've recently been very, very successful, because what they said they were going to implement, they actually didn't implement it and obviously one of our Branch Secretaries, who I'm looking directly at, was very, very successful because the company didn't follow its own policy and because of that, was able to save somebody's job. So if the company implements something and it fails to address it and it fails to adhere to it, we can also be successful, sometimes before we get to an employment tribunal or sometimes when we're at an employment tribunal. It's always better for the individual if we can change the decision before we go to employment tribunal, but one thing's for certain, it is about knowledge and how we, as a Trade Union, make sure that that knowledge is imparted into our Reps and maybe that's something the General Secretary can take back to the GFTU, to make sure is in those courses, because I think there's going to be a lot more of it going forward. I hope that answers your question. You can clap if you want, I don't mind.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** We're having some, one of the toilet blocks refurbished at the end of the year and the company are wanting to put cameras inside the toilets, separate cubicles, but the camera outside those cubicles, but in the toilet block themselves.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Do you know what I'm going to do with that? I'm looking at Clive, because there's a potential that Clive will know what the legal position is on that. Do you want to come down here, because they probably can't hear you, Clive, could you answer that, for the legal?

**Clive Thomas:** At last, on the podium, fantastic, hey.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

It's a joy. Yes, that's right, first-time speaker.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

I've always wanted to say that. Yes, this is something, somebody flagged to me yesterday, so I was looking at it actually, because we're talking about fundamental privacy rights here, aren't we? And toilets are one of the most private spaces in any workplace and installing CCTV into these areas is always considered to be a severe intrusion into personal privacy. So UK law already prevents that, or defends that, under the Human Rights Act, also the Data Protection Act and it protects individuals from what they call disproportionate surveillance. The ICO, the Information Commissioner's Office has made it clear that surveillance in toilets is only justifiable in the most exceptional circumstances and it's got to be subject to a rigorous necessity and proportionality test, because of course there could be other ways of dealing with it by perhaps having a, I think it's to do with there being damage in the toilets, isn't it, is the cause of it.

So could they, for example, look at having greater inspection, so more regular inspection methods, also trying to get to the bottom of why people are damaging the toilets. Should they be speaking to the staff about that and looking to get under the bonnet a little bit about that, to discover what the issues are and maybe solving that at source rather than a draconian method interfering with people's privacy by having cameras in the toilets.

I think there'd be significant issues around that I think you should definitely rail against, because there's also risks of breaching voyeurism laws of course, under the Sexual Offences Act, especially if footage is misused or it's not properly protected, because who's looking after that footage and making sure that it's kept safe? In a way, the employer by putting that in, are giving themselves a real issue, aren't they, because they've then got this huge burden to ensure that that footage is looked after carefully. So it should be part of a transparent consultation and discussion, but I think the employer would have to provide a full, what they call a Data Protection Impact Assessment and legal justification before they could go anywhere near this, so very happy to help if you need any more.

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

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Armilson Correia – Branch 110:** Is about full-time Officers, because what I notice in my area, before Steve retired, he used to engage with us in the warehouse, he used to come there many times. Since he retired, we don't have much presence of full-time Officers. If and when I go to the shops, I'm speaking with the people in the shop, they don't know even who should represent them. I'm telling them they should have a full-time Officer, they don't know even how to contact them. So I don't know if there's a chance the full-time Officer should be more engaged in our Branch, because it's not happening at the moment. Thank you.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Thank you for that. I mean, obviously we have 12 full-time Officers and 14½ thousand members, so with the best will in the world they can't be everywhere all at once, but what you can do is, you can contact them and invite them onto site and they will come and they will meet you and they will spend time in the Branch and engage with the Reps and the members and, you know, we've got some fantastic FTO's that have been doing that for the last, well, as long as I've been General Secretary and before really, because I was one. In terms of the shops and with Greggs, there's 2½ thousand shops again, they're not going to get round every single shop. We do a lot of work to make sure there's communication about the Union in the shop, but realistically members should be coming to you as Reps first, the FTO's the last line of defence. If they're coming in for everything, it does, there's not as much leverage, is there? The FTO's should be coming in to site and scaring the employer, because you've done everything you can as a Rep and got as far as you can and they come in then to say hang on a minute, the big guns are here now. So what I would say is, we need to be encouraging members to contact their local Rep and in terms of Greggs shops, we've done a lot of work, I'm looking at Ruth, we've done a lot of work to update the list on the back office of where their Reps are. We know we've got a shortage of Reps in the shops and we're doing some work around how we can encourage people to take the role of Reps. In the Branch Secretary meeting this week, we've a lot of information around what the roles entail. We've tried, you know, that some of the reasons we've passed motions this week around changing rules to allow people to be active in different ways, because you are the Reps, you are the people that know the job you are doing and you are the people that know the policies inside and out, so we need members to be coming to you first and then the FTO's when we've got to the end of what we can do within the Branch, but we take your point. What I would say to you is, reach out to your FTO and ask him to come to site and he'll be there.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Joshua Bell – Branch 130:** Good morning, everybody. My question goes direct to our Officers and this is regarding to Reps. It has become a little bit difficult to recruit members now and this is because of, I'm going to use my site as an example. The Reps are not being responsible, they're not really responsible, they aren't doing exactly what they are supposed to do and it makes it a bit difficult for a member to understand the job of the Union. So I want to know how do our Officers make this Union responsible and how do they know if they're doing what they're supposed to do, because I can use an example of myself. The way I got into the Union is when I was going for the meeting, I was able to question some of the things going in in our site, I didn't even know if we'd got a Union in my site and later when they saw me being able to stand up and question management then they said oh, you can join the Union, you can speak for people, but they were not doing exactly what they were supposed to do and that's why I didn't know if the Union is existing. So I just want to know, how do our Officials make sure that the Reps are doing what they're supposed to do in their sites, because I know you're relying on us for information and you trust us, but how do you make sure that we are doing what we are supposed to do, because I've never seen anybody come into my site and maybe talking to the member, asking them oh, you've got Reps here, are they doing what they're supposed to do? Yes.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. I mean, obviously again, you know, we're as strong as the organisation that we are, the Branches are as strong as the people in the workplace that organise into a Trade Union. I mean one of the things obviously we've been doing, particularly with Hovis, is we've been, we've set up a six month plan and we are starting to see Branch Secretaries coming along. I think the shock of the potential Allied/Hovis merger has probably made people realise that we need to get organised. I think there's been an acceptance that obviously the Union that's there on site is negotiating the terms and conditions and they're just moseying along, so everything seems to be ticking over, so maybe there doesn't need to be a lot to do, but I think what people don't realise is, is that it's up to workers to organise. I know you come here and sometimes you get told that, you know, we're the Union. Well, we're not, you are the Union, you know, that's the first thing. When I worked at, whatever title we had at Burtons or Fox Burton's as it's called now and before that Horizon and before that Lyons and before that Premier and before that Blackpool Biscuits and before that loads of other different names too, you know, it was the job of us on the shop floor, not the full-time Official, but the job of us on the shop floor to talk about why we needed to be organised and we needed to make sure that there were as many people in the Union as possible, because the only way we were going to make sure that we were treated with respect and the dignity that we felt we deserved is because we organised.

You know, if we're strong as workers, then we get better deals and, you know, we managed to do that. I mean, you know, when I left Burtons, my Branch was like 95%, the 5% that weren't in it was the people that actually used the anti-Trade Union legislation to stop the closed shop in our workplace and we never let them back in the Union, I'm not sure if that was legal, but that was what we did and, you know, we understood that it's collective responsibility. The Trade Union is collective responsibility. We can't pass on the responsibility to somebody else. We have an obligation to ourselves and to each other. It's unity that makes us strong and that's the key part to organising. You know, we can always find reasons for why we shouldn't do something, it's dead easy that. The easiest thing in the world is to say why I'm not doing it. The hardest thing to say is why I am doing it. You know, it's really difficult sometimes to get people to engage, but they will always say well, the Union's crap, oh yes, the Union's crap. I'll tell you what, look at people who are in unorganised workplaces, look at their health and safety. I mean the reason we came into being, like I said at the beginning of Conference, was because our people died at the age of 32, that's what no Trade Unions mean, a lack of support and it wasn't Officers that did that by the way, it was people like you, it was the workers, coming together and recognising your strength is by being together.

So as much as it's important, you know and the reason we have Officers by the way is because Officers came out of workplaces, it was decided that we needed to put somebody who was seen as the same label as the management, but they were still part of us, not separate, still part of us, still part of the Union, still representing but seen, because they came in a suit, as being equal with the managers who had to be respected just like the managers expected us to respect them, but also they weren't beholden for their employment, that's why we employed Officers, but it's not just their role, it's all of our roles, from mine and the General Secretary's, to the full-time Officials and to yours and it's important that we understand that, because together we can make a huge difference. Now, that might not be what you want to hear, I hope you come and start joining us on those Hovis talks and we're going to have a joint meeting with Allied after and we're going to talk about some of the things that we have talked about, because we've put stuff together, we've got an explanation and a plan to how we're going to do things and we can do it ourselves and get that support as well, if we need it and provide you with the information if you don't know where to get it from, but that goes for everybody too. I hope that answers your question. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Julie Summersgill – Branch 452 (Park Cake, Oldham):** Raising an issue that we've had at Region 4. We use Thompsons Solicitors, most of us and we don't seem to have the same relationship that we have done in the past. You know, we've had issues and we've raised them and nobody seems to be feeding back. Now, I had a personal issue, raised it at one Regional Council and was told somebody will be in contact. They telephoned me, obviously as I'm driving back and I said I'll respond to you later, I've give you a ring back and then it's telephone tennis, because when they ring you, it's half past nine in a morning, we all work in a food factory, can't have your mobile 'phones on you. We get two breaks during the day and obviously it's a meal break, or you've got your colleagues coming, asking you questions, they want to join the Credit Union, they've got a grievance, can you write this, Union sick pay, you haven't got time to ring back. You ring out of your hours, when your shift has finished and you can't get through to who you need to speak to, because it's a team and they pass you to a certain individual, they're not at their desk, you leave a message, same thing happens the day after, they ring you during your working hours. It just seems an impossible task.

We did have one of the solicitors come to our last Regional Council in April and I spoke to him and said I've still got this issue, we're still playing telephone tennis, missing each other, I still need an answer, can somebody please get back to me and did actually say, I've got your number, I will get back in touch. We're now in June and I've still not heard anything and, you know, it's the same with people putting claims in, they seem to be struggling or a lot are getting knocked back and people are questioning and obviously I know we can ask for a second opinion and we've done that, but they just seem to be interested more now in injuries, personal injury and accident claims than they do anything else. So I'm just wondering if we continue to have that problem, can we take it to another solicitor?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, thank you very much, Julie. I'm very pleased that .....

[APPLAUSE]

Reuben, from Thompsons, is going to come down, yes? Come down and, so this might be very helpful for you too.

Thank you, Reuben, really appreciate that.

**Reuben Greenwood, Thompsons Solicitors:** Hi and thanks for the question, Julie. I'm sorry you've had the difficulties that you've had. I'll talk about that specific point first, I guess and then hopefully be able to speak a little bit more generally about Thompsons history with the Union, the work that we do and the way that we're always trying to improve what we do, Julie. First of all on the specifics, I think the person who probably came to Regional Council fairly recently and took your number would have been a chap called Phil Liptrot, so I know Phil and Phil obviously tries to keep me in touch and us all in touch with any issues that have been raised. If he said he was going to get back to you and he hasn't, I can only apologise for that, but what I can also tell you is I'll ring him as soon as we've finished this session and make sure that he or the person dealing with the case gets back to you today. Was it your individual case, or was it a case for a member? For you and was it a personal injury case or an employment case, Julie? Right, okay, okay, fine. So I'll speak to Phil in the break, or probably at lunchtime and make sure that someone gives you a call back. Probably obviously given that you're here and given the problems that you explained, it's probably clearly best to have an out-of-hours type discussion. We do do that. What you're probably looking at in that case, if it's not directly related to your employment, is a session with our free legal advice team and they do calls up to 8 o'clock at night, so any member who needs an out-of-hours call and I completely get what you say about shifts and working hours, etc, etc, we do have the facilities to be able to arrange that, because telephone tennis isn't any good for anybody, if we're constantly missing each other then, you know, we have systems in place where we can work round that. What it does involve though, of course, is making arrangements and booking something in that works for you as well, so it won't be an instant answer to your problem today, given that you're here, but somebody will be in touch with you to fix an appointment to go through it with you, Julie, if that's okay.

So that's done the individual point. On the wider point about communications, Thompsons is a national firm, we have 17 offices up and down the country. We have a dedicated legal inquiry team based in Sheffield, which covers the whole of the country and what we seek to do obviously is communicate with you in whatever way suits. Some members will say to us these are the times that I'm available, they'll give us their work patterns and shifts that we can hopefully fill in with out-of-hours calls if that's necessary, because we always try to be mindful as to the member's circumstances and obviously try and work, it's in nobody's interests to play telephone tennis, as you say, we want to get to the nub of what the problem is and deal with it as quickly as we possibly can. We're always trying to improve when it comes to communications and we always try to be sensitive to what the member wants because, as I say, not only in terms of their availability and time, but how we actually communicate, different people have different needs and so it's always important. Gone are the days when we would just write letters to members and, you know, that would be the main point of sort of communication, there's far more different ways of doing that now and also different times as well.

So, I'm grateful for your question and your feedback. I can certainly take that back to my colleagues across our network of offices, because that's part of my job to actually do that. So the specifics will come back to you on and I've taken away the more general point. I'm here all today, I'm doing a session this afternoon and I'm available for anyone who's got any specific points that they want dealing with, so come up and have a chat, or if you've got a more general point, you want someone to come along to your Branch or Regional Council, just please come and have a chat and we can hopefully talk through any issues that you've got.

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

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Andy Moorhouse – Branch 405:** Hello again, everybody

[LAUGHTER]

Question for the Executive. Big politics. Where are we with creating an alternative to the Labour Party, a national left-wing Party or coalition, that we can get on a ballot paper, because I fear that local activists, left-wing independents are not going to cut it in a national election, when the next general election comes. Can you tell me any ideas of where we are, etc?

[LAUGHTER]

Putting you on the spot, I'm sorry, Ian

[LAUGHTER].

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** General Secretary

[LAUGHTER]

First off, let's make it very clear. This Trade Union will affiliate with an organisation if it chooses to, not because I have a desire to, not because the General Secretary may have a desire to, but because you do, yes? You make the decisions on political affiliations, you make the decisions on whether we do or whether we don't and that's how it should be, because if we're going to be part of a political Party, then our members should be fully involved in the decision-making process. Of course, people probably know I have a political viewpoint and a political stance, I've never hid it, have I? and I believe it matters what most of you think, the majority anyway, the sound, sensible majority I may say. Apparently what I think is very left, I always thought I was a moderate, but that just goes to show how far politics has shifted to the right, doesn't it, do you know what I mean? I mean because, you know, I did start off as a very centrist type of political person, yes, yes, I believe that council housing, you know, was a good thing, I believe that the NHS was a good thing, I believe that, you know, people before profit was a good thing, I believe that the welfare state was a good thing, I believe that full employment and the right to work was a good thing, you know, I believe that if people were, you know, seeking sanctuary because they were escaping persecution for various different reasons, that was a good thing and, you know, I opposed to fight slavery, even though sometimes that used to be legal, I opposed stuff like making the poor people pay more than the rich people for tax and, you know, that used to be a normal way of thinking and so that was quite a centrist position, believe it or not, to hold, but now it's left and woke. I mean, if anybody understood the idea of what woke is, by the way, woke just means that you're awake and you realise the injustice and inequality and insecurity that people are suffering and who's responsible for it, but as for a political Party, well Arise seems to be the discussion point that I think we'll be having over the next few weeks and months.

They're one Party that definitely shouldn't be on people's agenda as Reform. They may have stolen our language, but they still represent the same corporate authoritarian elite that the Tories did, you know, it's just a different establishment. They are the establishment, no matter what they keep saying about their political establishment. We now have political parties from the centre-right, which is where the Labour Party currently sits, to the far-right, which is where Reform sits, that represent the same narrow interests, wealthy donors and I do believe we need an alternative. I do believe that working class people have a right to be able to vote for change. I do believe that we have, you know, an absolute right as a class to be represented in Parliament. People like Rebecca Long-Bailey represent us, they're in the wrong Party, you know, because the Labour Party is no longer our Party, they abandoned us and it's a real shame, because this Union, you know, set up a Political Fund in 1902 and funded the creation of that Party, funded it, created it, campaigned for it, all of those years and do you know, we still haven't had a letter from them to acknowledge that we disaffiliated. When it was raised at their NEC, they were told to shut up and not to talk about it, because they were moving on and they weren't discussing us, that's what they thought about us. A few more quid going to the Birmingham bin strike, that's great.

[LAUGHTER]

You know, every lining, you know what I mean, every cloud, but I think that politically we need to be clear of how and where our votes go and it should be for politicians that stand for our class interest, our needs, our demands and if they can't stand up and represent them and they can't recognise how important we are, then we should never vote for them, we should only vote in the interests of ourselves and that of our family and currently none of the mainstream political parties represent that and I do include Reform in that, because they are not change, they are just division, they are hate, they are anti-Trade Union, you know. I mean, we think it's bad what they're doing with the disabled people's cuts. Those people will not just cut the benefits to support disabled people, they will discriminate against disabled people and they will make it impossible for them to fit into a world that hasn't been created for them. So politics is really, really important. How we use our vote is really, really important and one day I hope this Trade Union, you know, is instrumental in being part of a working class political party that represents us in Westminster and builds policies that raise our lives, fights for our class, like those people have always fought for theirs.

I hope that answers your question.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Ranella Broxton – Branch 415:** I'm all nerves. I'm just wondering why we're still using Slater and Gordon Solicitors, as there is a worry. We had a young lad, he cut the tip of his finger off, he rung up, he did everything. As soon as, they didn't realise that he was a Union member and they were willing to take his case and as soon as they knew that he was a Union member, they didn't want to know him. Sarah knows about it, because I messaged Sarah, Sarah's tried, I've tried and now the lad has actually dropped his case, but why should he, because he should have had representation? Is that okay? Thank you.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Thank you, yes. General Secretary. We were just deciding who was answering, that was all.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Thanks, Ranella and I am aware and I have tried. Unfortunately Slater and Gordon aren't with us this year at Conference, so that unfortunately will have to be one that we have to take away and come back to you with, because I can't get them up onto the rostrum to answer that, but we'll get an answer and I'll come back to you. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Zeal Machin – Branch 547 (Suma Wholefoods):** I understand there's quite a lot of new Delegates or first-timers here, so I guess my question is, there's a lot of great motions in the Agenda and some have, like, passed really well and I'm just interested in what happens next after that, so for example where it says like this Conference agrees that there should be a two days' paid pet bereavement, if that passed, like what happens after that? Thank you.

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

[APPLAUSE]

General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Fantastic question. So what we've started doing is, when we've finished Conference, we put a grid together of all the motions that have been passed and put together a work plan and what you'll see in your Annual Report is what's happened with the motions that were passed last year. So we put them in and we don't just do this, you can come to us and say what are you doing, the EC are updated every quarter on where we are with things, but you can see in the Annual Report and I'm just looking through, trying to find the motions, because I couldn't remember what page they were on, from Page 8 and it'll say things like the rule changes, this has been added to the Rule Book, we've passed it on to our Parliamentary Group and they've done x, y and z, we've worked with our networks, there's a list of things. There are some motions from last year that we've not yet got round to and there's still an ongoing process, because there were a hell of a lot of motions last year, but that's how we keep you updated, but you can always ask us as well. I passed this motion, what are we doing with it, have you got an update for me and we will provide that to you, because members spend a lot of time and thought putting motions together and the last thing that we want is for you to think I've passed it and then they've not done anything with it. So it's there. We'll put things on the website, in the FoodWorker and just ask us.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** And you've got the last question.

**Brother Jhon Fredy Velez Rodriquez – Branch 547:** It's not, just a quick note, just to say that I really welcome this space, you know, for us to have the opportunity to make some time for us within the Conference, so I would like to see this like part of the Conference every year. It will be a fantastic space .....

[APPLAUSE]

...so I do know that you Reps are doing a wonderful job every year, you know, you are always busy, you are protecting people, defending people and I do think that very often we don't have the time for ourselves, you know, how we feel, how we do our work, so I do think a space like this is a good opportunity to do that every year, we should be doing it. Could we also have an opportunity to discuss the future of our Union, what we think about our Union in the next five, 10 years, you know, long-term planning, strategy, how are we going to make the Union a better Union and a bigger Union and a more powerful Union?

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** What an excellent question to end a session on and we really appreciate that. I can't make a promise that we could do this at every Conference. If you'd have come for the last few years, you'd have found out that's it been virtually impossible to get through the whole of the Agenda. This year, obviously we've not had as many motions and we all seem to be quite on the same page, so there's not really been a lot of controversy, maybe one motion was controversial, but I think we got through it and I think it's been, you know, I think it's good for us. I mean, we like being able to hear your concerns, because we don't often, you know, apart from when we come maybe round Regional Councils, to hear it, but again, you know, that's pretty formatted as well, so everything is pretty restricted about having that opportunity. We were sat up here and we were thinking what can we do to, you know, make it useful for you, make it useful for us and the Executive so when we meet, we can hear your concerns and the things that you feel are really, really important, which you've done and we really appreciate that. I mean, I'm going to pass over to the General Secretary, who's also going to touch on some of the answers to the question that you were talking about, about the future, strategy and planning and I'm going to say, General Secretary.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Brilliant question, Freddie. About 10 years ago, was it? .....

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** 2016, yes.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** nearly 10 years ago, the National President did a document for the EC called Future-proofing Our Union and the EC agreed at the beginning of this year that we'd update it and part of that update is looking at where we are now in comparison to where we were then, what's similar, what's different, what's changed, what needs to change, but a bit, part of that is listening to you. Now, you'll have noticed the last few years we've put a few surveys out, everything from mental health to, you know, Greggs-specific ones and everything and anything in between, but part of that future-proofing is we've got a survey that we'll send to Delegates and we'd ask that you fill it in, you pass it on to your members and your Reps and your Branches, because we want you to input how we change our Union going forwards. Our industry's changing, our sectors are changing. You need to develop your Union and we then put it into place, because it's your Union. We've got lots of ideas, but you are the people that are fulfilling the Reps roles, that are working day-to-day, that run our Union, we just do as we're told, because that's how they work, that's how democratic organisations work, members run the Union. So we would ask, after Conference, when we circulate the survey and it covers everything from Branch structures, to Regional Council, to Conference, to communication, everything and anything, please fill it in. Let us know what you need and I've said this to a few, I was talking to Neve and Andy last night, you know, when you get stuff through, if you don't think it's right, tell us, because when we put a lot of time and effort into creating FoodWorkers and Annual Reports and posters and social media posts, if they're not helpful and you don't tell us, how do we know? So, fill the survey in, feed in. If you've got ideas and I said this at the Branch Secretary meeting on Monday, if you've got ideas, what will help you fulfil your role, let us know, it's your Union, you're doing the role, you know what you need and let's build a future where we grow, get bigger than Unite and lead this movement even more, okay? So, fill the survey in. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. Have I turned myself, no, I'm still on, I'm still on. Give me a million members, I'll give you a revolution, by the way. Honestly, I promise you. Give me a million members, I'll give you a revolution. A Socialist revolution, of working class people at the forefront. There's a commitment for you.

We're still going to keep your Agendas shut and we're going to move to a really nice part of Conference, for recognition of people who have stood out and have been, you know, been given Awards on the basis of people putting forward nominations about the roles that they've performed during the year and so I'm now going to hand over to the General Secretary, who's going to make the announcement and name the people and bring them up and give them the Award. Are we doing it down there?

[APPLAUSE]

I'm not singing .....

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Oh no, don't sing.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** you heard me sing before, you know why I'm not singing. I can tell jokes, they might be a bit blue though. I only know blue ones. I could talk to Dawn, a chicken and banana .....

[LAUGHTER]

...loads of chicken, we'll have some chicken, are we having chicken for tea like, you know? Some chicken. I think I'd be probably tarred and feathered if I told some jokes like, you know. Proper Northern, like. Are you ready now?

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** I think so.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Thank God for that.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** I think so. Alright, okay.

Right, sorry about that. This is the best part of Conference, I think. We get to recognise people and all the fantastic work that you've done. So as Reuben's up here, we will start with the Pat Rowley Organising Award and the winner of that Award this year is a very special person in our Union. His enthusiasm and dedication is infectious, the work that he's done in Cornwall to build membership, put BFAWU on the map and to clearly let Ginsters know that we won't be going away, is inspiring. He goes above and beyond, organising not only in his own workplace, but across Cornwall and beyond too, throughout the movement, not just within the BFAWU and it's absolutely my pleasure to be able to give my best mate .....

[CHEERS]

the Pat Rowley Organising Award this year. Come up, Robbie.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

Which is sponsored by Thompsons.

**Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 282:** Thank you. Where's my cake?

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

It will go with my Ron Todd Award.

[APPLAUSE]

Comrades, I love this Union, I love this Union with all my heart. I will do everything I can to build and make this Union prosper. This Executive we've got, with you we can do it. Let's do it. Come on, the Bakers Union.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** And thank you to Thompsons for sponsoring our Pat Rowley Organising Award.

We've not sponsored Awards this year, because unfortunately, we're going to do the bad things first, unfortunately we received no nominations for the Olive Molloy Young Member Award this year, despite having over 900 young members in the Union, some fantastic ones in the room this week, we didn't receive any nominations for a person under 27, so what I would ask is that you go away into your Branches and you look out for those special people. I got an Award when I was a young person many, many years ago. Our Branch Secretary wasn't aware that I was under 27 at the time, so ask young people how old they are, because it's always worth doing, but we've got to recognise our young members, they're the people that are going to be following you, as Branch Secretaries, as Reps, as full-time Officers, as National Officers and we've got to nurture them, we've got to support them, we need them to be in spaces like this, you know. We had a fantastic motion put to our Conference, to ensure that people under 27 could come as extra Delegates to Conference and each year we see Branches not doing that. You need to get your young members involved and engaged. So, we expect lots of nominations next year, for the Olive Molloy Young Members' Award and for those that don't know Olive Molloy, she was a stalwart of our Trade Union.

[APPLAUSE]

We've also not had an Award for the Unionlearner Rep, which is why Clive's not had to come up and award anything this year and again, you know, it's disappointing because education is the lifeblood of our Union. We can't be Reps, we can't do the things that we do without being educated and supporting our members. So, we're going to try and build and we've got a ULR fringe meeting today, where the ULR Committee is engaged, it's committed to building our ULR network, so we hope that will lead to plenty of nominations next year, but education is important and we've all got a duty to play in that and it is disappointing that we've not had any nominations for Unionlearner Rep.

That's the end of the sad part of it.

We'll move on to our next Award, do this one next, which is the Dermey Best National Health & Safety Award and we decided last year to name this Award after our great friend Dermey, from Northern Ireland, because of all the commitment to health and safety he's done over his many years of activism. The recipient of this year's Award, I'm trying to get it out of my sweaty fingers, not to make loads of marks over it, sorry, the recipient of this year's Award has worked at Liverpool Hotplate for over 10 years. He joined the Union on Day 1, he was an active Union Rep in his previous employment and he was elected to the role of Health & Safety Rep and completed Health & Safety Stage 1 and 2 in quick succession.

He's also completed two COSHH course, I mean, one, I don't know how he did one, never mind two and, you know, he's a very active Health & Safety Rep and will challenge the company on health and safety issues, as well as our members, ensuring people are working in a safe environment. He does regular walk and talk audits, speaking and listening to members' concerns. He's also a fire marshall and a regular attendee at Regional Council and a very active member of the Union, promoting the Union and its values. This year's Dermv Best National Health & Safety Award is awarded to Les Bramhall, so Les, please come down.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

**Brother Les Bramhall – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool):** I'd just like to thank, a total surprise obviously and, you know, you don't realise that things that you do in the workplace get recognised, but health and safety's always been very important to me. In my lifetime, I've seen two bad accidents. I saw a guy get impaled with a forklift truck in the mid-1970's at Ford's, Halewood and I saw another friend lose two fingers on a lathe machine while he was doing some work through an agency. When I joined John at Liverpool Hotplate, he approached me about becoming a Shop Steward. I'd been 11 years the Senior Steward at Dairy Crest at Liverpool and then got made redundant and I felt like I wasn't appreciated much, so my sort of interest in being a Shop Steward went right down, but I did say to John at the time that, you know, I was fully committed to health and safety, which I still am now and there's lots of people in this room who've got more experience than me and I feel perhaps they might deserve the Award more than me, but it's totally appreciated, so thank you. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** You might remember last year we had a competition for membership, for trying to get you to go away and make us as big as Unite and UNISON and GMB and the rest of the big Unions and we said the first person to get to 10 members after Conference would win a prize and the Delegate that made the most members between the end of Conference and the end of December would also get a prize, so the first person to get to 10 new members after Conference was Peter Pine and he didn't know about it, because I haven't told him.

[APPLAUSE]

Come on, Peter.

[LAUGHTER]

John Wake and Andy Wylie weren't far behind him, but he just pipped them to the post, so Peter, you get a little Android Tablet PC. You're very welcome.

[APPLAUSE]

Do you want to say anything?

**Brother Peter Pine – Region 1, Branch 110:** Hello, everyone. I wasn't expecting this, to be honest with you and I appreciate it. Thanks very much, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** The Delegate who made the most members between Conference and the end of the year was Andrew Wylie, so come on down.

[APPLAUSE]

Maybe do it that way.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Andrew Wylie:** Thanks for this, but I think it's what everybody should be doing anyway, so I'll give that to one of my Reps. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Just one more. This is a new Award this year, let me have a minute.

[APPLAUSE]

I tried to get Ian to do it, but I think he'd have got emotional too. When we sadly lost Sean Welsby, the Executive wanted to keep his memory alive, oh gosh. For those of you who don't know Sean, if you're new to Conference this year, he was an activist from Region 4. This was a really good idea when we had the discussion at the Executive.

[Sarah gets emotional]

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

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** He was an activist in Region 4, he spent a period of time as our Vice President and a brilliant Vice President was he and of course he was heavily involved in Warburtons, because that's where he worked. So it was agreed, rather than change the name of an existing Award, what we would do, we would create a Sean Welsby Award that would be awarded to activists within Warburtons that go above and beyond, like Sean did. There are two recipients this year, due to the Committee in Warburtons not being able to decide, come on guys, not being able to decide between the two and they've been nominated for their conscientious work for their sites and their willingness to go above and beyond for their members. Both are true leaders for the Trade Union movement at their sites. They take everything they do for the site, with clear direction, taking them forwards. They're always willing and happy to help any member with whatever situation they find themselves in, even giving up lots of their own time, they're on free time to help members. They've both helped with guiding and bringing through several very good strong Shop Stewards from their sites and they're key members of the Warburtons team and are both shining lights for this great Union. So the recipients for the very first Sean Welsby Award are Andrew Wylie and Zane Wells.

Now ... come on down, Andy.

[APPLAUSE]

Unfortunately Zane's not here at Conference this year, but we'll make sure that he's presented with his Award at next Regional Council.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Andrew Wylie:** So this means the world to me, so I can only imagine what it'll mean to Zane and it's a shame he can't be here. He's, it was his best mate, you couldn't separate them. Yes, I'm going to get tearful now, so thanks.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** And that, Conference, is the end of the Awards. Thank you ever so much for everybody that's been nominated. Thank you ever so much to everybody that does the role of Reps and please get your nominations in early for next year. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Well done. Guess what? 2 o'clock, apart from the Hovis and Allied people, we want you to come in here for half past one. Hovis and Allied people, half past one, everybody else two.

[LUNCH]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, is everybody, are we all back in the room? I can follow instructions. I'm following, I'm following. Oh aye, yes, I can do this. I don't like doing nothing, you see. Might become a habit.

Heat Strike will be in Room 8, Thompsons Employment in Room 10, Thompsons Health & Safety in Room 11, ULRs will be in here and Watkins and Gunn will be in Room 4. So everybody knows what to do.

There's a plan, shortly, we have a plan, it's a cunning plan and the plan will be, when we start Conference again, advice to you. I'll tell you what, you're very good. I mean, I can hear a pin drop.

[LAUGHTER]

Well done ..... [*singing*] *Silence is Golden*.

Roll call. General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Region 1, I don't know what I wrote then. Region 2. Region 3, thank you. Region 4, we're not talking about Awards and trophies. See what I did there. Region 5. We've got now Region 7 and we've got 10 online. Thank you very much.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I better tell you what's going on, hadn't I? So we aren't going to do any more motions and the reason why we're not going to do any more motions is because we're going to finish the motions off tomorrow, how's that?

[CHEERS]

We have a speaker, but the speaker can't come until the afternoon, tomorrow, they're not coming today.

[LAUGHTER]

It would have probably been useful if they'd have come today, but they're coming tomorrow and they're coming in the afternoon, so I've got to make you all stay, to come back after dinner, so we decided not to do any more motions, but we're going to do some nice things, outside. We're going to go outside, on an adventure.

[CHEERS]

We're going to go outside, on an adventure and we're going to be led, by Neil, who's going to take everybody's photograph holding some stuff up, with some greenery, so people can see that we have a bit of scenery. Hey, I could have been a poet. Don't ask me to write songs, see, absolutely. So we are going to go outside, but I believe, I believe, I believe we might be, have we got it? Okay, then. Obviously, you know, it's somebody's birthday .....

[CHEERS]

so, well, don't just sit there, get your arse off the chair.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

**Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 282:** I've got me cake.

[female voice says, *'it's a chicken'*]

No, it's not. That's a chicken.

[LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE]

Who-hoo. Feather fart. That is brilliant. That's the best present I've had [*pressing squeaky chicken*].

[LAUGHTER]

I'm in my element with this, come on.

[*pressing squeaky chicken*]

Right, thank you.

[LAUGHTER]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** You're not stuck for words, are you, Robbie?

**Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 282:** Aye?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** You're not stuck for words? Never.

**Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 282:** No, no, no, no, no. I was just planning that when we're outside, if we all take a handful of leaflets each, we can get out and organise and see if we can sign up some members.

[*pressing squeaky chicken*]

No, honestly, thank you ever so much, everybody. Today has been fantastic. 42 years of age .....

[LAUGHTER]

well, that's what I told them at work and I'm going to write to our Executive to say please don't put my birthday photos on social media, because I did tell them I was 42 and I have rung in sick .....

[LAUGHTER]

...and there I am, with a fucking birthday cake, a squeaky chicken [*pressing squeaky chicken*] No, brilliant, it's been absolutely marvellous, I really appreciate you all and I love you all. You know I love this Union.

[CHEERS, WHISTLES and APPLAUSE]

Who-hoo.

[*pressing squeaky chicken*]

I'm going to keep .....

[*pressing squeaky chicken*]

I'd lose my toy. No, that's brilliant. Look at that. Are we eating it now?

[LAUGHTER]

We'll have it tonight at the quiz, shall we? We'll take it to the quiz, yes.

Yes, if you all bring a £1 coin, that can go to the food bank, can't it, aye? Why not.

Is that one for me? Let's have a look. What a bunch of wankers.

[LAUGHTER]

Look at that, a fucking chicken.

[LAUGHTER]

We were searching for a pair of them yesterday. Who-hoo.

[*pressing squeaky chicken*]

Happy Birthday!

[APPLAUSE]

And remember, don't swear in our Conference Hall.

[LAUGHTER]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I'm glad you did, because you got me off the hook, so thank you very much.

**Brother Robbie Woodland – Branch 282:** Wa-hey. No, brilliant, absolutely brilliant. Right, are we going for a walk?

[LAUGHTER]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** So yes, we're going to go and follow Neil, to where, yes, because obviously we're going to end Conference and then you're all going to go to your fringes after he's finished taking photographs. So the fringes are going to start round about half past, people, yes? Because you had extra, didn't you and when you've been to your fringes, you see, you'll be free, yes? We're going to go and help Robbie celebrate his birthday. Yes, as soon as the photographs, go straight to the fringes. So after the photographs, go to your fringes, yes?

**Brother Kevin Flood – Branch 716, Region 7 – Executive Council Member/Vice President:** What time tomorrow?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** 10 o'clock.

## Wednesday 18 June 2025

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I think we might have some fun this morning. I'm getting answers to questions I haven't asked yet.

[LAUGHTER]

So, or would never ask indeed, but at least you've brightened up the occasion. Are you ready? Always ready, that's what I like to hear. General Secretary, roll call.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Region 1. Region 2. Region 3.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** He's poet.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Vicky, you've got competition next year for the bingo calling. Region 4. Region 5. Region 7 and we've got seven online. Thank you very much.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, I've been sent a message. It says, today we come together to celebrate a powerful act of community, kindness, the sponsorship of the Junior Best Football Club by the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union. At first it might seem like an unusual pairing for bakers and footballers, but look closely and you'll see the connection. Discipline, teamwork, daily day tasks and the love of building something meaningful. By providing uniforms to Junior Best Football Club, the BFAWU has done more than just socks, shirts and shorts. They're giving these young players a sense of identity, pride and unity. Wearing that uniform, the players will seem, be seen to be supported and part of something bigger than themselves. This sponsorship reminds us that investing in youth is investing in the future, that even small acts like giving a team proper kits can spark big dreams and bring a whole community together. This sends a powerful message that success isn't just measured in profits or goals scored, but in the lives we touch and the dreams we help grow. To the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, for feeding the spirit for a village through sport, your support has impacted positively in the heart of this community. Miss, how do you pronounce it, Robbie?

Massai, Massai. Thank you for standing behind Junior Best Football Club. You haven't just sponsored a team, you've uplifted a village. Pass on our warm thanks and warm greetings to the Union at large. Thank you. Samson, the Team Captain.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

Exceptional work, Robbie. Exceptional work, mate.

Also, before we move on to the Agenda, last year people at Conference, obviously if you weren't here at Conference, you won't remember, but last year we had John Dunn, the first time we've actually not used a Mayor and actually used someone who's a legend of the Labour movement and, you know, a working class hero, who was at Orgreave and today is the 41st anniversary of the police riot at Orgreave, where the state set about attacking miners for defending the right to work. I mean, obviously, when you think about the Tory government at the time, they were demonising the unemployed and looking to attack people who found themselves on the dole, to actually send the state police to smash up workers, not just defending their jobs but also their communities and their way of life. Actually it should have been then as outrageous, but of course our media decided to spin the truth. They made it look as if it was the miners attacking the police and we didn't find out the truth until it actually went to court and the BBC was forced to provide the actual film footage, because the film footage that we were shown on telly was always reversed and when they actually played it the right way round, it was very clear that the paramilitary police that Thatcher set on working class communities was the ones that started the trouble at Orgreave.

They were sent there deliberately to provoke those workers and to smash heads and to arrest, so people in this country would stop supporting the miners' dispute and to some, I suppose, that may have been successful, but as we know, those miners stuck it out for a year and they were courageous and today is the 41st year of them still seeking justice, because they were badly let down by the state, by the government and by the police force, that isn't supposed to take the side of employers, but defend people in the community and I think that was probably the actual start of the loss of faith and trust in police forces in the community and I think until there is justice for Orgreave, as we need justice for Hillsborough and the Justice for Hillsborough Law and for Grenfell, we can never have trust in these government departments that are supposed to serve our interests. Why is it working class people can never get the justice we deserve? So, I think I'd like to send a round of applause to the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign and thank them for their continuing determination to get justice and tell them that the Bakers Union will and always will continue to stand in Solidarity to them.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much, Conference. I know some people might be struggling this morning, with their voices, some might be even struggling with their walking, I don't know, Mike, but let's see how you can make yourself down to the rostrum. I think you're the first one up, aren't you, mate? So yes, that'd be you like then, 39.

**39**

**Branch 432**

*That this conference agrees that this Government look at supporting the Football Supporters Association campaign on Football Clubs exploiting loyalty amongst its fans with high ticket prices and attacks on concessions for children and pensioners*

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Before I get to my motion, National President, last night at the Watkins and Gunn karaoke and quiz night, young Ashley here, first time at Conference, first time, don't look worried, Ashley, Neil, sorry, I thought you said Ashley, oh, sorry, Neil.

[LAUGHTER]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Zeel, Z-e-e-l (? spelling).

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Who, deal?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Zeal.

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Him, there.

[LAUGHTER]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I mean, if you can't get the story straight, I'm sorry, we're going to have to stop you talking.

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Oh, no, no, no, no, no. Anyway, the young man .....

[LAUGHTER]

got up to sing a song, a little lullaby, to Ian, that on his way home, don't be afraid of the dark, walk on through the wind, walk on through the rain, though your dreams may be tossed and blown, but where was Ian? Ian had disappeared into thin air. Where were you?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I'd suddenly realised that I needed to leave, because I was feeling physically sick.

[LAUGHTER]

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** There you go.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** I mean, it was nothing personal. I mean, I listened to your first song, I listened to you on the microphone, the first time round to be fair, but the second one was just too much.

[LAUGHTER]

And anyway, I'm going to ban it in future, it's a song that's never going to be allowed to be played again.

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Really?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Yes, yes, yes.

[COMMENTS CALLED OUT BY THE DELEGATES]

No, I'm going to exercise President's thingy in the Rule Book, it says if I stand up and I say it, then it's done and if you remember Marilyn McCarthy, she put that motion and it was agreed and for those people that weren't there or have short memories, I've got a good one and that's how I remember it, so that's what works for me. Anyway .....

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Anyway .....

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Motion 39.

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Motion 39. Still League Champions, EC member, moving the motion and speaking on behalf of the EC, who would ask you to support this motion. That this Conference agrees that the government look at supporting the Football Supporters' Association Campaign on football clubs exploiting loyalty amongst its fans, with high ticket prices and attacks on concessions for children and pensioners. If you ask any of your older relatives, they will tell you how affordable football was many years ago, not now. Some football clubs are playing on the loyalty of fans, with massive increases in tickets and season ticket prices and cutting concessions for children and pensioners. The FSA are a democratic representative body of supporters in England and Wales, sorry, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The FSA campaigns on away fans only paying £30 for away tickets, which has been in place since 2016 and it has just been extended. Also, campaigning to keep FA Club and League Cup Final tickets at a reasonable price and campaigning to stop the hike in tickets and season ticket prices and the attacks on concessions. Many football clubs in the past relied totally on ticket sales, but certainly in the Premier League that's not the case. The current Sky TV deal gives the clubs 1.6 billion a year between them, that's 6.76 billion over four years, as well as clubs getting money for shirt sponsors and other sponsors. Also the prize money. So last season, Liverpool, who won the League, have I mentioned that yet?, received £263 million extra. Arsenal, for finishing second, always the bridesmaids and reaching the Champions League semi-final, they received £276 million. Manchester United, for finishing 15th and runner-up in the Europa League .....

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

...they got 10 Woodbines and a Curly Wurly.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

I do apologise, fellow Man United fans, that's just for him. So roughly, ticket revenue is quite low, 7 – 10% of the total income that football clubs get. In 1990, a ticket at Liverpool was £4. In 26 years, it has gone up 875%, that's with no price increases for eight out of the last 10 years. In that time, bread has gone up 180% and a pint of lager has gone up 294%. The Bank of England inflation calculator says that if the ticket sales had gone up the same as the bread and all that, a loaf of bread would be £5 and a pint would be £12. Many clubs have put ticket prices and charges up £90-odd for Champion League games etc., scrapping youth rates and over 65 discounts. It's about time the government joined forces with the FSA and told these clubs enough is enough and stop taking fans' loyalty for granted. This is not just about the Premier League, it's about all the Football League clubs. I have had my season ticket at Anfield now for over 50 years and I'm lucky I can afford to pay for it every year, but I know loads of people who are being priced out of football, fellow Reds and fellow supporters of other teams. So, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Speakers? It was already formally seconded, because he moved it on his Branch and he moved it on behalf of the EC as well, so, oh, did he? Probably not mine, he's probably right, I'm probably wrong, he was probably more at it than I was, you know, these things happen.

Speakers? No? I wouldn't want to speak about the, how they caught us up, or two Premier League titles, that's about it, isn't it.

To the vote. All those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. I mean Leicester have got 50% as many of them.

I just want to double-check, I did do motion 38 yesterday, didn't I? I did, didn't I? Yes, yes, I did. Before I get ahead of myself, 40.

40

**Branch 582**

*That this Conference agrees that tougher sentences are imposed on those who manipulate and coerce minors to commit illegal crime for financial gain.*

**Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** Good morning, National President, General Secretary, EC and Conference. That this Conference agrees that tougher sentences are imposed on those who manipulate and coerce minors to commit illegal crimes for financial gains. In the 12 months up to 2024, it was reported that 14,500 children and young people in the UK had been criminally exploited in multiple ways, but this motion discusses how children are used to maximise profits and distance criminals from the act of physically dealing the drugs, with young children forced into performing the majority of the work and take the greatest risks in doing so. These activities can damage so many lives, not only the children involved in the acts but their families, their friends, their school colleagues and the general wider public, who can also suffer due to the influence of disturbing drugs in their local communities. There are, unfortunately, vulnerable people out there in our communities, those suffering with mental health problems, the lonely, the disabled and the elderly and many young children are easily coerced into being targeted by these organised crime networks. We demand tougher sentences for those running these gangs. Let judges deliver tougher sentences for these criminals, a stronger deterrent to be given. We also need greater support for those who have been victims of this terrible crime. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Brother Zeal Machin – Branch 547 (Suma Wholefoods):** Good morning.

[LAUGHTER when Delegate said his name]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Are you sure?

**Brother Zeal Machin – Branch 547 (Suma Wholefoods):** I'm going to object to this. Whilst I understand that they are, there is like a problem with children being exploited, I think this motion might be a little bit vague. So for me, I spent part of my childhood in the care system and I feel like part of that was like me being surrounded by children who were generally exploited, sorry, I've written loads of notes, so I'm just going to read them. So I think for me, the bit that I'm objecting to is what does tougher sentences mean? I think I'm quote opposed to locking people up in general. I think there's, as a society we should focus more on rehabilitation and education rather than like, primarily rather than locking people up.

I think the people that are doing the exploiting, I think there is some really bad people who are generally just like yes, that's an easy target and stuff like that, but I think some of these people doing the exploiting have also been exploited themselves and there's like a chain, there's like the people at the very top, but then there's people below them, below them and below them and people in the middle, they've probably come from that bottom part where they've been exploited themselves, so I think and I think part of that exploitation comes from these children being in like poverty, they're suffering from household abuse and neglect, they come out of the care system, so I think, well, 52% of children in care generally end up in the justice system, as opposed to I think it's like 12% of people that weren't in care. So again, children in care are more likely to be exploited and probably be doing the exploiting themselves at some point in that chain. So I think rather than focusing on tougher sentences, we should be focusing on community support and improving people's lives.

We should be trying to lift people out of poverty and treating generational trauma, so the people that are suffering this neglect which will lead to the exploitation, which will lead to the exploiting, generally come from broken families and if we can sort of like focus on that point, where we're trying to heal that part of the process, I don't think that's the right word, but anyway whatever, then I think that would be more beneficial than just locking people up, throwing away the key and like that's that done. Most people, I think 26½% of people go into the justice system, come out of the justice system and then go back into prison because it's not been treated. Prisons are run for private profit, the probation services are run for private profit.

Again, I ended up in the probation service when I was younger, I'm much more behaved now but I was a little bit naughty back in the day and even back then, like, it just felt useless, it felt like I'd turn up, they'd give me a load of forms, I'd fill in them, like and then you'd be on your way and there was no real sort of like aspect of like exploration of why am I behaving like this, like, what's causing this and if we'd like explore that a little bit more, we would have like found out like I did suffer from neglect and I did have, I am waffling on a bit by the way, so if you need to shut me off, do so, but like I did stuff from neglect and like I didn't have like those normal and standard like showings of love and stuff like that and I was quite a broken human being, whereas if we'd like explored that and like sort of tried to heal that, then I probably wouldn't have ended up back in court, again a long time ago, but and I think like I'm lucky, I've had really good people around me and support me and so I've like put myself in therapy and stuff like that and that's the bit that's like resolved my criminal activities rather than just like you're a bad person, you're going to go away, or whatever.

So yes, I am waffling a bit, but I think, I guess to summarise, I think rather than tougher punishments, I think focusing on rehabilitation, community support, lifting people out of poverty, helping this trauma within these families and renationalising prison services, probation services and stuff like that and I don't want to like, I'm not saying this to undermine like the serious problem that is happening with county lines and children being exploited, I just think that there's more of a process than just throwing away the key. Thank you very much, cheers.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Conference. Zeal, thank you so much for that contribution and giving us that personal element to the situation. The Executive are asking that you support this motion. We looked at it from a different perspective and felt that because at the core, it's about justice, protection and standing up for those most at risk of harm, because when adults manipulate, groom or coerce minors into committing crimes, often for financial gain, it's not just a criminal act it is, it's an act of exploitation, of abuse and cowardice, if we're going to be real. It's not misguided friendships, these are not poor choices made by kids, these are calculated decisions by adults who prey on vulnerability, poverty and desperation and use children as tools for profit and it's happening across the UK, in our cities, in our communities and sometimes the very places where our members live and work.

We've seen it in county lines drug trafficking, where young people, some as young as 12, are manipulated into running drugs under threat or false promises. We've seen it in organised theft, in gang activity and in scams where children are on the front line, whilst those really responsible stay in the shadows, pocketing the profits and avoiding accountability. These young people are victims of exploitation, often failed by multiple systems, housing, education, social care, austerity, you know and yet too often they're the ones who face the harshest consequences. Meanwhile, the adults who have coerced, threatened and used them walk away with a slap on the wrist, or aren't prosecuted at all and that's got to change, you know.

This motion calls for tougher sentences for those who commit these despicable kinds of crimes and we've got to support it, Conference, because we've got to protect young people, we've got to break these cycles of exploitation and we've got to send a message that children are not disposable, that our legal system has to treat this as serious as the abuse that it is, but it's not about criminalising young people further, it's about targeting those who profit from their harm. It's about recognising that there is a power imbalance and we've got to hold those that create that imbalance to account. So Conference, the Executive asks you to support this motion. No child should be a commodity, no child should be a shield for criminal enterprise and no adult who uses a child for gain should escape serious, meaningful consequences. We ask that you support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** You have the right of reply, you have the right of reply. You alright? Okay. To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's carried. Thank you very much. Motion 41.

41

Branch 582

*That this Conference agrees that parking bays are widened to accommodate the width of modern vehicles as the current standard, does not appear to be fit for purpose anymore.*

**Brother Pete Ford – Branch 582 (Manor, Carlton):** Good morning, again. That this Conference agrees that parking bays are widened to accommodate the width of modern day vehicles, as the current standards do not appear to fit purpose any more. The average parking space in the UK is 2.4 metres wide and 4.8 metres long. These dimensions haven't been changed since the 1970's, even though many cars have increased in size since back then. In 2018, a consumer group was reported that they have found 129 models in the UK are too long to fit in these limits and they estimate that cars are still getting larger. One very clear example of this is **(unclear MINI?)**, which came into production back in 1959 and was famous for its compact design, but now we find that the latest model of the MINI Hatch One is an incredible 53% larger than its original, 65 years' ago. The facts are very clear and although the motion only mentions the width of this public parking which is needed, a larger space would accommodate larger vehicles. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Are you seconding it, yes? Cool.

**Sister Ruth Stevenson – Branch 580 (Greggs):** Morning. Here to second this motion. The shop I work at is attached to an ASDA. We can park in the car park for free, great, however in the last 10 months, that car park has cost me £400. I've had two dints in the driver's door repaired. The car I drive is not a big car and I park out of the way, it's just that the space is too small and there's disabled spaces and child spaces with plenty of room around them and I bet their doors haven't been dented. I'm hoping that the architects, designers, the car park planners, whoever's responsible for these spaces have their car doors dented and know how it feels. Thank you. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any other .....

**Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (Retired Branch), West Yorkshire:** Here to support this motion and I don't think it actually goes far enough. I mean, the roads that are getting built nowadays, they're not even wide enough for the cars that are coming down. Most cars are in the middle of the road all of the time. You have to slow down and move over for them. It's a thing that's just got out of control. It's as though the manufacturers are just seeing how big they can make these bloody cars, so please support. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Mike Andrews – Branch 252:** Also here to support this motion. My local supermarket is LIDL and the spaces there are huge, you don't need a disabled car parking space, but then the supermarket that is next door, ASDA, they're literally tight. I drive a medium size SUV, it's easy to get in and out of spaces, things like that, but it is tight there, the car gets dented and you get scratches on your car. This comes out of our pocket, to get these things repaired and I, yes, fully support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Zeal Machin – Branch 547 (Suma Wholefoods):** Hello, again. Sorry. I don't know why I'm apologising, but I think I'm going to not object, I'm going to support, but I think we should be looking are more, reducing the amount of cars on the roads, reducing the size of the cars and promoting more sustainable ways of transport rather than trying to resolve a problem with probably more problems. I don't know, does that make sense, I don't know. Anyway, thank you.

[LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Anybody else? Anybody online? No? Oh Rachel, Rachel, sorry.

**Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529 (Women's EC Representative):** Hello. I nearly said Mullen there, been married over a year. Here to support the motion. Just from a parents' point of view as well, I don't know if you heard that, it's my child shouting for another biscuit, from a parents' point of view, obviously although quite a number of places now have parent and child parking spaces, but they are quite short sometimes so it's not always possible to get one of those spaces and if you have to try and drive around you either find a parking space on the end of a lane or outside a bus shelter, whatever, to try and get your child to avoid dinting the car next door. It is difficult, especially if the spaces are narrow. If they were wider, obviously it would be a lot easier to get children in and out of the car. I always tell my children to wait, well, the little one can't get out, just 100 miles an hour, I say wait if we're in a normal space, because I'll do the door, specifically because she might dint the car, but obviously if the spaces were wider, because I don't think they've taken into consideration getting little people in and out of the cars when it's car parks. So yes, support the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Anybody else? No? Cool. Dave.

**Brother Dave Lawrence – Branch 582 (Speaking on behalf of the EC):** There are so many modern cars that are far too long and wide for many parking bays around our towns and cities and far too big to fit in our garages. What's very worrying is any suggestion or potential for change, both from private business or local authorities, it seems highly unlikely unless they're forced to do so. A survey last year by Autocar found that fewer than one in 10 councils in the UK have any plans to increase the present dimensions. We may not all own a car and not all of us own vehicles that are too large to fit within the white lines of a car park, but I'm sure, as we've heard, that many of us have struggled to park at the side of one of these vehicles. I want to touch on a slightly different but relative subject. We're in the process of a mass state organised house building programme and we're seeing a large majority of new houses built with an integral garage. Again, the dimensions are ridiculous in relation to any car, let alone many modern large vehicles. The financial position no doubt by private companies with state funding and bonuses to meet their targets. Change is needed, Conference and on behalf of the EC, we ask you to support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. So that's, did I say 41? I thought it was 42. Is Nick here? Nick Mead, yes. Nick.

Okay, sorry about that. Obviously we're just making sure Mohinder's okay. We've taken him round to Standing Orders, they're going to keep an eye on him, make sure they keep a close, make sure he's okay, yes? So sorry for having that bit of a conversation and obviously stopping Conference, but obviously we thought that was probably a bit more important. It is 42, isn't it?

**42**

**Branch 432**

*That this conference agrees the Government look at putting in stiffer sentences for those carrying knives illegally and the use of knives in a violent manner. And better education in the dangers of carrying and the use of knives in a violent manner and broadly published the consequences*

**Brother Les Bramhall – Branch 432 (AB, Liverpool):** Morning, Conference. Before I start, let's all give that gentleman a round of applause to show him we're grateful he's okay.

[APPLAUSE]

Thanks to all the people who helped him. It goes without saying that's what we're here for, to look after each other. Here to move motion 42. That this Conference agrees the government look at putting in stiffer sentences for those carrying knives illegally and the use of knives in a violent manner and better education on the dangers of carrying and the use of those knives in a violent manner and broadly publish the consequences.

Earlier this month, a 14 year old boy was knifed and died in Manchester in broad daylight, apparently over a row about a bicycle. That's just one example of the numerous incidents we hear of on the news, which we hear of about more and more. This motion calls on the government to impose stiffer sentences on those carrying knives illegally and the use of those knives in a violent manner, with better education also. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Seconding this motion and also speaking on behalf of the EC, who ask you to support this motion. Knife crime remains a significant concern across the UK, with recent events causing complex and a troubling picture, with the deaths or serious injuries of far too many people, mainly young people. Social and economic issues, gang culture, exploitation, mental health, social media, cuts in youth services and the lack of police presence are all contributing to this issue. The impact on communities is devastating, causing fear and trauma, loss of life and injury, impact on education, future prospects and the strain on public services. It's sad that schools have metal detector archways and in our towns and cities, we have metal detector archways to catch people carrying knives.

Unfortunately, in the UK today, carrying a knife, for some people, is a part of everyday belongings, like your 'phone or your keys. Addressing rising knife crime requires a comprehensive approach that combines robust law enforcement with significant investment in preventative measures, community engagement and social support programmes to tackle knife crime. Yes, we need more stiffer sentences, but also we need to educate people before they start carrying knives, how wrong it is to use and carry a knife. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Just to confirm, John was seconding that on behalf of his Branch, but also speaking on behalf of the Executive, because I know a few people might have been caught out by the fact that he got up there and obviously was still speaking on behalf of the Executive. It just means there won't be an Executive Member speaking at the end of the motion. Just for clarification, because I know you were confused there, weren't you?

**Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes):** Yes. This is going back from a couple of years' ago, in our local town, it shocked us all and this is going back. Ellie was a 17 year old student from Calne, Wiltshire, who was stabbed to death on May 3rd, after she ended her relationship with her boyfriend. He was a fellow student from the same school. On the day of the murder, he got on a bus from Chippenham, to back to his home town on the outskirts of Calne and he waited, he hid in a cupboard and waited until his mum had gone to work. He grabbed his mum's keys, drove to the place where his girlfriend lived. He tried, he attempted to strangle her, so he caught a kitchen knife and stabbed her 79 times in the neck. After this, he went back home like nothing's happened and all that. After the families went to court and all this, I don't know if you've heard of the Ellie's Law?

Her family struggled through court and relayed through the House of Commons to get the Ellie's Law put in place, so later on, you know, in schools you can get self-defence done in schools, as well as tougher sentence for young teenagers and with this motion, it pushes this Ellie's Law even more to get more things done, because this young girl was only 17. She had a bright life ahead of her, she was, she loved horses, she was going to go to university, learn as a police officer and all that and this young lad, he's taken it all away from her. Please support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Joe Knapper – Branch 560 (Retired Branch), West Yorkshire:** Up here to support this motion. I mean, you can't even turn the television on nowadays without somebody being stabbed somewhere in the UK. Not many people remember a TV programme that used to be on the TV called Garrison's Gorillas, but there was a character in that called Chiefy, who carried a knife and we all, as gangs of lads, we used to carry knives, but we used them for throwing at trees to see who could stick it in the tree from the furthest distance, we didn't carry them round to stab people. Please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any other speakers? No? To the vote then. All those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much. 43, please.

Just as she's coming to speak, just to update you, obviously what we're going to do is, Mohinder's going to get packed up and obviously we wish him a safe journey and Bobby's going to go and make sure he gets home safe, so just so you know, just to keep you updated, so you don't worry if you don't see him later on, that's the reason why, we're making sure he gets home safely. Okay, thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

*This conference agrees that increasing the age at which the state pension is paid has been a disaster for workers in our industry. The stress, strain and general wear and tear on our bodies is a lot worse than in other, less manual, industries. As such we want the state pension to revert to being paid at 60 and will instruct our parliamentary group to lobby for this change.*

**Sister Jean Haynes – Branch 390 (Manor, Stoke):** This Conference agrees that increasing the age at which the State Pension is paid has been a disaster for workers in our industry. The stress, strain and general wear and tear on our bodies is a lot worse than in any other less manual industry. As such, we want the State Pension to revert to being paid at 60 and will instruct our Parliamentary Group to lobby for this change. As the years pass by, we're all having to work longer than our predecessors and quite frankly, it's a disgrace, an utter disgrace. We really do need to get abreast of this situation. Over the next few years, I and many others should be planning our retirements, as our parents and grandparents did before us, but no, we have at least seven or eight years more and it's rising all the time. We're putting ourselves, our bodies through pain and injury on our already battered bodies, purely due to our unforgiving industry. Our younger members out there, how it's going, you'll still be working when you're 70+. I have family and friends, or did have, who died at 72, so what lives might you have? This government wants us to revert to the early 19th century, when our ancestors literally died at work and didn't have any retirement to look forward to. This is an absolute disgrace. We must act now and protect our comrades. Please support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Well done. Secunder? Formally seconded? Thank you very much. Speakers?

**Brother Jhon Fredy Velez Rodriquez – Branch 547:** Morning, Conference. I do think we need to support this motion. It's a matter of dignity. So we're living a country where the government wants you to work until this week and go to your grave next week on retirement. That's basically how it works. I do think this country has one of the highest age retirements in Europe and one of the lowest values in terms of monetary contributions to our pensions, so it's an offence to us workers. We spend our lives and have, very often, very little time to enjoy our free time with families and friends. This motion, you know, it can even go further now, 60 could be a good age, but in other countries in the EU, it's even lower. Other countries outside of the EU, the age of retirement is even lower, so let's work together to stop this exploitation.

[APPLAUSE]

**Sister Dawn Scott – Branch 253:** Chair, Platform, comrades. I'm of an age when I first started to work, I was promised I could retire at 60. They have stolen 6½ years off me. I can't do what I did even five years ago and as a result, because I'm still working at 64, I've had to step down. I can't do the things I used to do. I need to retire, but I can't afford to. Please support this. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390, Manor (Stoke), (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** Good morning, Conference. We'd ask you to support the motion. In the UK, the State Pension age is currently 66, for both men and women, however it's scheduled to increase to 67 between 2026 and 2028 and to 68 between 2044 and 2046. For clarity, that's when the State Pension is payable, if you're rich. You can retire whenever you want and you'll not worry about it. In March, 2023 the independent review into State Pension age done by Baroness Neville-Rolfe, DBE, CMG, was presented to Parliament. I'll mention some of the findings and the recommendations from that review. The analysis of the data submitted showed by the age of 50, the healthy working life expectancy 7.34 years in the North East, to 10.73 years in the South East. Lower healthy working life expectancy for females 8.25 years, to males of 10.34 years. There's a lower healthy working life expectancy for those in manual occupations, that'll be us, like Julie's just saying, of 8.72 years. For those in non-manual occupations, of 10.3 years. I could go on and on with these stats and it's all crap. They are expecting us to work until we die. The recommendations were that they should lower the State Pension age for those in manual occupations. It's a recommendation, it'll never, ever happen. We need the State Pension age to be reduced, to 60 at a maximum. I'd urge all of you to vote for the motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Well done, Michael. That was a bit of a struggle for you, we can see.

[LAUGHTER]

To the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Unanimous, thank you very much.

Okay, just to update Conference. If you remember on Sunday, when we had another working class hero come and open up our Conference, who was part of the bin strike, he told us that he'd been hit by a, or he'd had a bin wagon drove at him and then he found himself facing a disciplinary. Obviously the disciplinary was yesterday and the outcome of that disciplinary unfortunately has been, they have decided to dismiss, which obviously we send our support and Solidarity to him, but his friends and his colleagues and his workmates and the members of the Branch have made it very, very clear they will not be ending the strike until he is reinstated.

[APPLAUSE]

Okay, motion 44.

**Addressing Violence against women**

*That this conference agrees to support and develop actionable strategies to combat violence against women, locally, regionally and globally. Violence against women is an issue that affects millions of women worldwide, including but not limited too sexual harassment, domestic violence and online abuse. Any form of violence against women undermines women's fundamental human rights, wellbeing and equality. There is a need for a unified voice from our union, our union reps and our members to support and amplify the rights of women and calling out all forms of abuse, harassment and violence, in whatever form it takes. We call on all branches, regions and the NEC to work together to develop materials that will help highlight the important discussions needed in workplaces and communities and in the long term, we need materials provided that shows the BFAWU supports an end to all forms of violence against women.*

**Brother George Hoye – Branch 703 (Hovis Bakery):** Member of the Health & Safety Committee. National President, General Secretary, EC, Delegates and guests. Motion 44. Domestic violence against women. That this Conference agrees to support and develop strategies to combat violence against women, locally, regional and globally. Violence against women is an issue that affects millions of women worldwide including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, domestic violence and online abuse. Any form of violence against women undermines women's fundamental human rights, well-being and equality. There is a need for a united voice from this, our Union, our Union Reps and our members to support the rights of women in all forms of abuse, harassment and violence, in whatever form it takes. We call on our Branches, Regions and the NEC to work together to develop materials that will help highlight the important discussions needed in workplaces and communities and in the long term we need materials provided that show that the BFAWU supports an end to all forms of violence against women. In Region 7, where I come from, the Northern Ireland Executive and Ulster University have researched a survey of over 540 women. Approximately 70% of those who took part had endured some sort of violence or abuse in the previous 12 months of the survey. Now, if that's a small country like Northern Ireland, what would it be like in England, Scotland, Wales? Any violence, mental or physical, is not on in this day and age. Please Delegates, support this motion.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Brother Michael White – Branch 202 (Bakkavor Desserts, Devizes):** I can remember when I was 17, my mum was, her ex-boyfriend was very violent. He would make sure she wouldn't go out of the house, she had to tell him where she had to go. When me and my brother got involved, he used to tell me and my brother, he goes, if you do say anything, I can make your mum turn round and chuck you out this house, she does what I tell her to do. He goes, if I want her to do something, he goes, I'll get her to do it and you can get out of this house. He goes, I rule her, but in the end, we went to my dad, him and her were divorced, my dad said, my dad got involved and got some friends what he knew through the military and got support. So he goes, he said to that guy, he went, at the end of the day, he goes, while my kids are in this house, it becomes my responsibility and my dad said, if I had to come down from Derbyshire to Wiltshire and put you on your knees, he goes, I will. He goes, I'll end up in prison more than you because I've got a military background. He goes, at the end of the day, while my two sons are in this house, it becomes my responsibility, because it's my ex-wife, he goes, maybe we've been divorced nearly 10 years, he goes, at the end of the day, it's still my responsibility. I did like that, my wife at the time, but my kids are in this house and it's still my responsibility. So, please support this motion. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Joseph Williamson – Branch 112:** First-time speaker.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

I do support this. I have an issue with it though. Why are we addressing it, why aren't we demanding it to happen? Tell, demand, say no to our workplaces, no to the court system, no to everyone and demand it to stop happening, demand, yes, demand it to stop happening. I've seen women go through so much exploitation through various things. My boy's mother, when we went through court, there was an issue that arrived saying her partner at the time, they got together when he was 18, she was 30. I mentioned it, said so are you going to do anything, don't even go there. How is that the response from courts? A girl that was manipulated, that had been through the social, how do you justify saying that? There's been so many other examples that I assume every woman here can give of abuse and it should end, we should end it today, it should never happen. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Anybody else? No? Over to you, Rachel.

**Brother Joseph Williamson – Branch 112:** Obviously the Executive Council would urge you to support this motion. I think the motion is quite clear in what it's asking we're to do. We are, you know, we are currently already working towards end domestic violence against women, but obviously like other issues that women have, they generally take longer to get resolved, because we are discriminated against in this day and age. Obviously people have told stories at the rostrum, but just the other day a thing popped up in the new on my 'phone from my local newspaper where a man had been jailed because he had violently abused his partner, but not only had he done that, that was obviously one part of the abuse, the second part of the abuse was when he demanded that she wear makeup to cover her injuries. I mean how, it just shows you the kind of people that we're up against and the kind of mentality that still needs to be broken down within society.

Obviously, you know, not all cases of violence against women or abuse against women are that extreme, that is obviously one of the extreme examples but, you know, even minor things like, you know, touching somebody, touching a lady's bum in a bar, you know, making a sexual remark in the workplace, this is all things that, you know, used to be accepted back in, you know, back in the day, but it's not acceptable and we need to hammer that home to our workplaces, well, not just our workplaces, anywhere where there is evidence that this is happening. So we just need to break down the barrier, break down the barriers, keep doing what we're doing to address it and, you know, it's not okay, we will not accept this any longer in our society. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, Conference. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you very much. Motion 46.

**46**

**Branch 258**

*This conference agrees that foreign right-wing billionaires such as Elon Musk should stop trying to interfere in UK politics. We've got more than enough right-wing nut jobs here, and his public intention to donate vast sums of cash to Farage and his right-wing Reform Party does nothing but further fuel the ever-growing right-wing fascism that's on the rise in Britain. He should stick to playing with spaceships and stop coming across as a wannabe Bond villain - he's one step away from shaving his head and sitting in a swivel chair with a cat on his lap!"*

**Brother Tony Mansell – Branch 258 (Memory Lane Cakes, Cardiff) (Speaking on behalf of the EC):** This Conference agrees that foreign right-wing billionaires, such as Elon Musk, should stop trying to interfere in UK politics. We've got more than enough right-wing nut jobs here .....

[LAUGHTER]

...and his public intention to donate vast sums of cash to Farage and his ring-wing Fascist Reform Party does nothing but further fuel the ever growing right-wing Fascism that's on the rise in Britain sadly. He should stick to playing with spaceships and stop coming across as a Bond villain. He's one step away from shaving his head and sitting in a swivel chair with a cat on his lap.

[LAUGHTER]

Conference, please support.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Well done. Seconder? Formally seconded. Any speakers? No? Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous, thank you very much. And, finally, motion 47.

*This conference demands that:*

- 1 The Labour government call for an immediate ceasefire from all sides in the Gaza Israeli conflict.
- 2 To impose diplomatic, trade sanctions, and complete arms embargo on the state of Israel until it withdraws its forces and reverses the settlements in occupied territories. Namely Gaza, West Bank, and Golan Heights.
- 3 The exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners to be implemented.
- 4 To enforce the arrest warrant issued by the international criminal court of those responsible for the genocide of Palestinians and the massacre of Israelis on the 7th of October.

**Brother Sean Winfield – Branch 390 (Manor, Stoke):** General Secretary, Chair, Executive Council, Delegates. This Conference demands that the Labour government call for an immediate ceasefire from all sides in the Gaza/Israeli conflict, to improve diplomatic trade sanctions and complete arms embargo on the state of Israel until it withdraws its forces and reverses settlements in occupied territories, namely Gaza, the West Bank and Golan Heights. Excuse me, sorry. The exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestine prisoners to be implemented. To force the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court of those responsible for the genocide of Palestinians and the massacre of Israelis on 7th October. I would ask Delegates to vote for this motion. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

**Brother Ahmed Gomaa – Branch 357:** First-time speaker, so I'm a little bit nervous.

[APPLAUSE]

I support the motion because I [unclear] from Egypt, so we're so close, so I know how it is when you lose someone. In 1973 I lost my uncle, it was Egypt war against Israel and I didn't have a chance to see him, because of the war and fighting and stuff and it's so hard, the feeling when you lose someone from your family. So please support the motion and thank you so much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Armilson Correia – Branch 110:** I think we should support this motion because when Russia first attacked Ukraine, everybody was supporting Ukraine and blaming Russia. Now Israel is much worse and it takes too long for the governments around the world to point fingers to Israel, so I think we should stop Israel doing what they're doing, because it's not right. They want to eliminate a race out of existence and it should be stopped. America shouldn't be interfering in Israel's war, because what do they do, they're giving more power to Israel to do whatever they want. So, please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Any other speakers? Anyone online? Hold on a sec. Oh, Jonathan, Jonathan online, please. Sorry, my eyesight doesn't see that far.

**Brother Jonathan Kay – Branch 570 (Aunt Bessie's):** Morning, Conference. Here to support the motion. I don't think the motion goes far enough. I think we should also be asking for the government to not support Israel against what's happening against Iran. Yes, basically Netanyahu is another version of Hitler, same as Trump, same as Putin. We need to stop all these dictators, basically doing whatever they want. So, here to support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Anybody else, before Michael? Last chance to get to speak on a motion at Conference. Anybody want to take it? See, good job I asked, wasn't it?

**Brother Wasili Ali – Branch 561 (Hovis, Bradford):** Yes, you did, you did. Normally I don't speak on a motion like that, because we are talking about human loss of life, loss of human life and it seems normal to other people the way Israel's been going about this. I appreciate and acknowledge the fact that on 7th October, a lot of Israelis were killed, it's unjustifiable, but the proportionate or the extent that Israel has gone in this conflict, there is no justification. It doesn't matter which side of the fence you're sitting on, there is no justification in loss of human life. Forget about everything else, the politics, where they started, 1950, '48, '60, whatever, look at the loss of life at this moment in time. How do you rationalise and justify that? Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Well done. One last call, looking at you, **Neeve (? spelling)**. Are you sure? Okay. Michael.

**Brother Michael Blundred – Branch 390, Manor (Stoke), (Speaking on behalf of the Executive Council):** Good morning, Conference. We'd obviously ask you to support the motion. Following the Hamas attacks on 7th October in 2023, which killed nearly 1200 people and kidnapped over 200 others, there's been a further dissent into brutality and mass murder in the Middle East. This motion calls for the arrest of the perpetrators of that attack and the release of the Israeli hostages, taking exchange for Palestinian, good grief, Palestinian prisoners. Of the reasons for the, to backup the measures called for in the motion, that's a call for a ceasefire and sanctions against the Israeli government, including a total ban on selling them weapons. As the previous speaker just said, the Israeli government's response to the attack on 7th October has been so grossly out of proportion, as to be seen as genocide in most parts of the world. Estimates of Palestinian deaths by The Lancet, which is a weekly peer review general medical journal founded in England in 1823 and one of the world's highest impact statement academic journals, said that there'd been over 64,000 deaths from traumatic injury during the period between October, 2023 and June, 2024 and likely exceeding 70,000 by October, 2024 and that was like a long time ago.

The tactics of the Israeli state in Gaza and the occupied territories represent a clear policy of ethnic cleansing and that's, they bomb out the Palestinians, destroy the infrastructure and then offer the prospect of safety and food availability in the very, very south of the country, but they destroy everything behind them. The Lancet says nearly half a million people are at risk of starvation, a predicament precipitated by the Israeli government's refusal to allow humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, for over 11 weeks and that's, that's old news. They've been doing that longer now, despite the destruction of most agricultural fishery and food systems. To add to this, the Israeli government has approved the formation of 22 new settlements in the occupied West Bank. These are in addition to the numerous settlements built without government authorisation, the Israeli government, it's good saying that. All these settlements are deemed to be illegal by international courts and even the Supreme Court of Israel. Israel has reportedly ruled that the Israeli presence in the West Bank is in violation of international law.

The Israeli actions in the West Bank are described by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine as follows: the forced displacement of Palestinians' communities in the northern West Bank is escalating at an alarming pace. They also said in February this year: forced displacement in the occupied West Bank is the result of an increasingly dangerous and coercive environment. The use of air strikes, armoured bulldozers, controlled detonations, advanced weaponry by the Israeli forces has become commonplace. I just don't need to carry on with all of that. I wish Duggie was here, from Region 3. He'd be a lot more authoritative in this than me. We've all seen it on the news. It's genocide, it's pure and simple, evil.

[APPLAUSE]

Our government is complicit in this and we should be, I don't want to go to Standing Orders, we should be yelling at those people to stop it. Please support the motion.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, to the vote. Those in favour? Those against? That's unanimous. Thank you very much, Conference, you've got through all of the Agenda. Well done.

[APPLAUSE]

So, we've got some, we normally do like a Young Member's spot, we do a Women's spot and we've going to do a BAME spot this year, it's great, first time ever, which is brilliant, but before we hand over to Rachel, are you shaking your head?

**Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529 (Women's EC Representative):** I just need to plug my laptop in, I'm going to go off, two seconds.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** So while Rachel's doing that, over the week, if you remember, we didn't give Mike, from the bin strikers, the pewter baker, we said we were donating £100. If you remember, we had the fantastic Chris Magill sing for us on Monday and gave a superb evening of, was it Sunday?, do you know, it could have been, I'm off the drink, yes, I know, I've forgotten what day, what day is it, is it Wednesday? Is it Wednesday? Tomorrow's Thursday, right? Yes, yes, it definitely was Sunday, but if you remember and he donated the money that we were intending to give to him, to the bin strike, which took it up to 200 quid, I believe, took it to 200 quid and then we got £180, oh right, okay, so from the bingo donation, apparently next year with the bingo, by the way, the proposal is it's fancy dress .....

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

**[unclear]** bingo, yes? So that's something to look forward to. Obviously Dawn can come in her dirty drawers.

[LAUGHTER]

So, that took it up to 400 quid and what the Executive have said is that we will raise that £400 so it goes to £1,000, so we will be donating £1,000 to the Birmingham bin strike .....

[APPLAUSE]

...which, I believe, Imran is going to take with a couple of Reps shortly, obviously not today. He's got to travel back first, which won't be at least until tomorrow. So, but yes, so thank you very much for all your kind donations, obviously Chris for doing Sunday evening for us and obviously for all of you for supporting our comrades in the workplace and that's for the food bank, isn't it?

So, obviously I've just been given another, which they've raised for badges, I mean, incredible here. So £200 will be winging its way as well to the food bank, so thank you very much for that .....

[APPLAUSE]

...and obviously, I've got a bag in my car for you as well, I've got a very full car. So thank you very much for your kind donations too and that will obviously help the community. Are you back now, Miss Hart, Mrs Hart, you're back and ready to rock? Okey cokey. Over to Mrs Hart, online.

**Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529 (Women's EC Representative):** Mrs Hart

[LAUGHTER].

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** It was just to remind you.

### **Rachel Hart, Women's Representative on the EC, addresses Conference**

**Sister Rachel Hart – Branch 529 (Women's EC Representative):** Oh, I don't know what day it is, or where I am. You know, normally we give a speech and give a talk about x, y and z, but I think during this Conference it's been great to see in depth debates about, you know, different issues are still affecting women and it's good to know that the members within this Union, both female and male, addressing them, so you know, the likes of your period poverty and I was especially pleased to see, you know, that the violence against women was a man moving it, because often we feel, women feel, you know, we raise issues and I think some of the time it just feels like we're repeating ourselves over and over again and nobody's either taking it seriously or listening to us properly and I think, you know, as Reps, being women, it's, I think it's, you know, it's hard to juggle things, because I think being a woman, there are barriers to being a Representative within, not just our Union, but whichever Union, you know, you're part of. I know particularly within our industry, you know, being a traditionally male-dominated workplaces and factories, obviously we have got an exception with Greggs because, you know, Greggs shops do make up a large portion of our membership and obviously people in the shops are predominantly women, so apart from that anomaly, factory working is traditionally male and I think if you go into a work setting, being one of a few female workers, it does make it hard, you know, to either have the confidence to put yourself forward for, you know, positions within the Union, whether that be a Shop Steward or a Health & Safety Representative.

And I think even if you maybe have the confidence to, you know, want to do something in the Union and make a difference, you might not always have people around you or members around you or maybe even the Reps around you, if male, they may not be, you know, as supportive or understanding, not their fault, they might just not understand fully, you know, the barriers that women face to put themselves forward for these positions and I think, you know, sometimes there might be a feeling of being undermined because, you know, traditionally women weren't in the workplace, we're always seen being at home, looking after children, you know, that is probably still the case in a lot, with a lot of women, but obviously nowadays a lot of women work as well as, you know, being the main caregiver to children or even to elderly relatives or, you know, there's quite a list of things, you know, fall on women still and I think obviously I've touched on children, is another barrier to, you know, being a Representative. I think, you know, I've been lucky, when I've become a parent, it's been sort of post-Covid, so we have got, you know, means of having wider participation from people that might not be able to get locations, hence why I'm online, otherwise I would probably not be participating in Conference. If I can join online, for the Executive Council, I probably wouldn't be able to sit on there, you know. I don't think that quite a lot of people or members probably still don't realise that we have got the capacity for participation in meetings online, which is very beneficial and a massive step forward in trying to remove the barriers for women being Reps. I think I've covered all my points about barriers for women .....

[APPLAUSE]

...because, you know, it does need addressing. Sorry, my head has gone totally blank and this is one of the problems since having children, my mind does not work the same way as it did pre-children, apologies. I had something in my head and it's completely gone. Oh yes, sorry, I do apologise, I am quite scatty since having children. Yes, so, you know, we do need to look at what barriers are facing women to becoming Reps, well not just Reps to, you know, generally participate in more within our Union, you know, coming to Branch meetings, you know, not being scared to put ideas to Representatives of the Branch if they don't want to participate as a Rep, because the membership of the Union, it is probably about half and half and we don't have the same number of representation from Reps to match what the gender balance in our Union is, so I think going forward and I think one of the things we should all be thinking about and looking at over the next year or so until the next Conference is, you know, thinking about, especially if you're a man, how can I help women participate more in my Branch, do we need to, is there any way of encouraging more women to be Reps and I think obviously within the Branches they are, you know, well aware of the issues and have probably versed them with members quite a bit. Maybe it takes some learning about, what they're doing to address the barriers for women in their Branches, so I'll leave it there because I'm scatty. So, thank you for listening, just please be mindful about .....

[APPLAUSE]

barriers to women being Representatives in our Union. Thank you.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Thank you very much, Rachel and you're not scatty and it's understandable when you're looking after kids, that obviously you have to pay attention to what they're doing, because they'll be in everything, that's obviously one of the things that we are very, very proud of the fact that we've been able to make Conference hybrid, because, you know, Rachel's absolutely right, she would have missed out on being able to come to Conference and contributing to Conference. I mean, so out of Covid, I mean, I think Zoom was a fantastic find, so I'm really pleased that Rachel has been able to come to Conference despite the restrictions of being a mother and still able to play a part in this Union, which we're very, very proud to have her as part of. So, thank you very much, Rachel. Who's coming next? Have I got Curtis, is it Curtis or Imran, which one have I got next? Imran, cool. So obviously we've, I can't think of a time when we've had a BAME report actually, so his debut, debut.

### **Imran Hussain of the BAME Networkl addresses Conference**

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**Brother Imran Hussain – Branch 303 (Greggs Distribution Centre):** So, I haven't done much research, so I'm not going to bore you with numbers. I'm trying not to go too much into reform, into, you know, racism, but there is something that the Bakers Union have put a statement out on and that's class discrimination, so I'll see if I can give you an insight into that. It's a very difficult topic to explain and hence why there's probably not many laws around it, why there's not many restrictions around it, but class discrimination can happen and it can happen easily without people noticing it or knowing, so class, it's quite rife in Asian communities. I couldn't say much about other communities, but I'm assuming we can have it. So in this room, we've probably got people from Scotland, Wales, England. Now, we've seen the slurs against Welsh people or English people, Scotland people, but when we come to Conference, we come under one banner, which is the Bakers Union banner and that's what we want to do with class discrimination, so there might be, if you have a trade, say in India or Pakistan, where you're a tailor, sometimes that sometimes defines your class, so people might look, oh, he's just a tailor, you know, they're just bakers and that's something we have to eliminate in the workplace.

We can't eliminate it unless we understand it and it's a very difficult term to understand but, you know, I would ask all of you to go back and maybe read on it or do some research about it, because if you don't know what you're dealing with, you will not be able to deal with it. The UNISON's Black Members' Conference passed a motion, it was the first one on class-based discrimination, you know, in just this May and, you know, it's been, it covers part of the legislation on equality under race, but it's very difficult to prove and this is something we have to tackle as, you know, as members, as Reps, we have to go back, but it is massive in communities and it might be big in your workplaces, in sections, you know, but you have to understand it and it's another way of dividing people, it's another way of, you know, making blocks or moving people away, you know, from a lower class.

The best way we look at it is, I think, in older England there was the lower class, the upper class, the middle class and we, you know, Unions have burst out by calling it the working class, you know, one class and, you know, we always say we're in a class war, but it's not against people amongst your own level, it's against the Capitalism. So that's something what, is something we're going to be fighting and I think it's, I do apologise, I haven't got the statistics, I haven't got the stats to give you more information, because this is relatively new to us as well and it's something you see here and, you know, I know, I just wanted to leave you with one quote.

It was a quote that was done from someone that, you know, a lot of Muslims will always mention and a lot of Muslims would always, you know, believe in and that's the Prophet Muhammad and this quote was made 623 AD, so it was made over 1200 years ago and in his last sermon he said: all mankind is from Adam and Eve and Adam has no superiority over the non-Arab, nor non-Arab has no superiority over an Arab. Also a White has no superiority over a Black, nor does a Black have superiority over a White, except by piety and good action and, you know, that's what I want you to take away. No-one's got a right over anyone other than the fact that you're either a good person or you're a bad person and you want to be on the good side. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Well done. Thank you very much, Imran and just to follow up on what Imran was talking about, there is a statement which we have here, which we are going to circulate and we will be following the statement up, will that be printed in the FoodWorker, or will there be other? Okay and so there'll be other information about the alliance around class too.

Okay, so in that case, I must have, I'm hoping, the opportunity to invite the young fella on the end. No, not you, I said young. A proper geezer like, you know. Definitely not shady, could be a little moody.

**Brother Curtis Tierney – Branch 258 (Young Member's Representative):** Not yet.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Not yet.

### **Curtis Tierney, Young Members Representative on the EC, addresses Conference**

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**Brother Curtis Tierney – Branch 258 (Young Member's Representative):** Just to clarify, I have gone to Standing Orders, because if anyone knows me, they'll know my language is very appalling, so in all fairness, I'm very shit at public speaking.

[APPLAUSE]

For almost two years I've sat on the Executive. I've tried to build a Young Member's Network in order to build a solid foundation for future **[unclear]** and to keep communication and organising flowing. I work tirelessly, so my successor has something to work upon when they take this position. When I first took this position, I had nothing to work with and no communication with our young members, but with the help of the GS and willing young members who want to be more active within our Union, I hope to revitalise the falling membership by communicating and educating with my generation and making them aware of not just the Union but the Labour movement and how we can make a change for the better. I have met some incredible activists throughout the training courses and Trade Union events I have attended and you know who you are at this Conference. However, the issue nowadays is the majority of the younger generation either don't care for collectivism or are completely unaware that Unions even exist.

My plan is to approach various academic institutions to promote the Labour movement and our Union, but this is a mission I cannot do alone and I ask Conference Delegates, such as Sarah yesterday, to utilise the availability to send a young member to Conference, to give them access to speak with their voice and understand how the Union works in the background. I attended a TUC Young Member's Conference back in March, with another Delegate from Suma Foods in Region 5, Buncey if you know them, very intelligent, very generous person, very compassionate and seeing some of the motions that were discussed and spoke on many other issues as young members, like the cost of living crisis, the housing crisis, climate crisis, wealth inequality and the current state of the political turmoil. Most of the motions were unanimously voted in favour and this gave me massive faith in my generation, because we are all on the same page. I'm not surprised my generation is pissed off and have had enough of how the world has been run. My generation feels more annoyed at the climate catastrophe, cost of living crisis and housing crisis than others, because we feel the end result a lot more than our older comrades, but this anger needs to be used for the right reasons.

The main issue, in my generation, is the lack of responsibility, because the state of the world now, yes, because of the state of the world now, but we have a lot longer to deal with these issues than our previous generations and having this anger towards them will not resolve anything. Another mission I have discussed with the General Secretary, in a few of our network meetings, is to utilise social media. The right-wing has been using it since 2008 and we've been lacking. We need to use this vital and easy-to-use tool to promote what we do, so we don't have a generation that has no idea what a Union is, because we are headed down that road. I don't speak for myself, but a large amount of my generation live on social media and this is airtime that we need to take advantage of. I ask you here now, obviously, to push for younger members to come to Conference, to get involved with our Union. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

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

So, I believe we've got a speaker coming at 1 o'clock, so we'll be back in the room at 1 o'clock. That suggests that maybe I'm letting you go for your lunch now and I'll see you all at one and yes, we'll do the formal closing of Conference then. Thank you very much.

[LUNCH]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay, if you can shut the doors, please and just to make Conference aware, we've just had a message through to say Mohinder is safely at home and he's with his family.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Okay, this is from Mike, who came and opened Conference for us.

He says: *"Hi, Sarah, how are you? I hope everyone's okay. Not good news, but to be honest, we've probably been expecting it often. They had predetermined and they were guided by the hierarchy, so the outcome was inevitable. I really appreciate all the Solidarity as well. I'm also allowed to carry on being a Rep, which was most important for me, so I can carry on with the strike. So again, I really appreciate your support. Thank you and Solidarity to everyone"*.

[APPLAUSE]

Are we? Great. General Secretary, roll call.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** For the final time this week. Region 1, yes, please do, speak up a little bit too, please. Thanks, Peter. Region 2. Region 3. Region 4. Region 5. Region 7 and nine online. Thank you and one online absent with permission.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay and Chris, we forgot to mention, lead the singing after for us, yes? Thank you very much. Appreciate that.

Obviously, Conference, you'll see that we've been joined on stage by our last and final guest speaker, Ken Penton, who's the UK Advisor to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. Ken's a political campaigner, with a successful track record and his particular interests are in commitment to social and environmental justice issues, which I'm sure he's going to cover, he's probably going to tell me now he's talking about something completely different, you know, but can we all please give him a warm, friendly Bakers Union welcome.

[APPLAUSE]

### **Ken Penton, UK Advisor to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, addresses Conference**

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**Ken Penton, UK Advisor to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative:** Hello, sorry, do you do the slides, or do I do them? Okay, I just use the arrow, do I? Okay, thanks, sorry.

Well, this is a first for me, the first time I've actually spoken at a Union Conference ever. I was a Union Officer .....

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

I was head of media and politics for the ISTC for seven years. I've written loads of other people's speeches and prepped them to go on stage to speak to you at Conference, but it's the first time I've ever done it, so thank you for inviting me and thank you as well for your Executive voting to endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is fantastic news. I'll go to my slides in a second, but you're the fourth Union in the UK to endorse the call for a treaty. UNISON were the first and so far the largest Union in the world to endorse the call for a treaty, the NEU did so earlier this year, the UCU, the University and College Union, did so at their Conference a couple of weeks' ago and your Executive, Sarah informed me, has voted to endorse it as well. You and the UCU aren't in the public domain yet, so it's fine for you to say something but we're going to put out a press release on Monday, so if you can just hold back about saying you've endorsed it, that'll be great, although as a wise man once told me, if two people know something, it's not a secret so, you know.

First of all, thanks very much for inviting me to speak. So, oh, right, there you go, I can see them in front of me, there you go. So what is it?, that's the first question. So the Fossil Fuel Treaty, it's a global diplomatic and campaign initiative. It's goal?, it's a legally binding treaty to help the world end the fossil fuel era. If you look around, as I said as soon as I came in, I cycled from Stone Station, very pleasant, a bit warm, but this is the driest start to a year we've had, you know, for 100 years and years like this are getting more and more common and I'll come back to that in a moment, but the treaty, the three pillars of the Fossil Fuel Treaty, is to end fossil fuel expansion, phase out existing production, starting with the richest company, sorry, richest countries.

We've got the ability to start to phase out some of the developing nations around the world that don't have that ability and therefore we've got a responsibility, particularly the UK, as the country that had the first industrial revolution, to actually, we think, be one of the first countries to lead the change for the next revolution that we need to face if we're going to protect our planet and the people that live on it. Lock in a fair, particularly important I think for Trade Unions, global transition based on justice that leaves no-one behind. So things are moving quickly on this, hallelujah.

So, the 16 governments already in discussion about the treaty, they've endorsed the call for a treaty and I understand there's going to be another one announced in the next few days, 130 cities and local governments in support of it around the world, including London, which is the biggest city in the world so far, I believe, to endorse the call for a treaty, Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, anyone here from Wales? Yes, we haven't got any cities or councils in Wales yet so, you know, I'll come back to what you can do later on, but that is a bit of a glaring omission from us at the moment and Trade Unions around the world so far, representing over 30 million workers, have endorsed the call for a treaty. So it's backed by 4,000 organisations, including the World Health Organization and the European Parliament, over 100 Nobel laureates, hundreds of MPs, climate scientists, indigenous leaders, influential artists and musicians. So this movement's got momentum and why do we need that momentum?, because the current system is failing us. The global diplomatic processes, the UN, they matter but they're not enough, you know, we need a dedicated global new plan to phase out fossil fuels, because the problem is, they go at the pace of the slowest and we don't have the time to waste.

Last year was, globally, the hottest year on record ever recorded. Last year was the first year when we reached what the climate scientists recommended in the Paris Climate Agreement in 2016 of 1.5° above the pre-industrial era, as the maximum temperature we could allow to have if we were going to suffer catastrophic climate change and last year was the first year we actually reached that, for a year. Now, we do have the possibility to pull it back down if we take some of the actions that we need to take, so it's not all doom and gloom first of all, but the certainty we have is that if we do nothing, then it will get worse, in fact at the moment we're heading for 3.7° of global warming, over three times what the climate scientists tell us, is going to lead to catastrophic climate change and so fossil fuel use since the Paris Agreement hasn't really dropped, in fact it's more than doubled in what the climate scientists say is safe for us to produce. The US is expanding production, particularly since Donald Trump has been re-elected, particularly forcing, encouraging countries to lock in long-term contracts with liquid and natural gas and that's a real challenge for us. Some of the natural countries that we've seen on the global stage lead are actually being blockers to what we need to do.

So the UN process, it is important and we back it, we want it to succeed, but it took 30 years for what they call the conference of the parties, the big UN Climate Conference, to even mention fossil fuels and in 2023 when they did mention it, it was weak and full of loopholes and there's still no plan to set science-based phase out dates for fossil fuels if we're going to avoid, which is what we need, if we're going to avoid catastrophic climate change and there's no agreement as to how we fund the transition, which is critically important for developing nations and for people who work in the sectors that are going to be impacted by this transition.

So, this year we've got another Climate Conference, COP30, we look to that with a bit more hope. It's being hosted in Brazil by President Lula, an ex-Trade Union leader, but it's not reasonable, I think, to believe that that will be enough and that's what the Treaty is about. It's a lifeline we would say, it's a political project, it's working alongside the UN diplomatic progress, it's turning vague goals into real co-ordinated action to phase out fossil fuels and fund a fair transition.

So what's the Treaty's strategy, where did it come from? It started in the Pacific, with small islands who sounded the alarm, countries that said they simply will not exist if we don't take the steps we need to tackle climate change. They're living with rising sea levels, collapsing economies and, as I said, an existential threat, they were the first people to call for a global Fossil Fuel Treaty and they've been developed and inspired built on looking at other treaties that we've done, the Land Line Treaties, the new day Non-Proliferation Treaty. These treaties are working by and large, they're not perfect, but they are working and they've helped to change the world.

So we're not naive about what we're trying to set out in. We do believe it's deliverable, but we know that it's bigger than banning bombs. Fossil fuels are woven into the global economy, but our strategy, we think, has power, because it brings governments together, that's what you need when you're going to have a treaty, a group of first leaders who say we will take action, built through cities, Unions and campaigns around the world, including in the UK and it lays the groundwork for the formal negotiations that we think will be necessary at some stage and it's already working, we think.

As I said, we've got 16 countries, 11 specific countries were the first to step up, then came Columbia, the world's first fossil fuel producer, that produce coal, oil and gas, but they recognise that we need to change and late last year, the most recent country, Pakistan, it's still recovering from catastrophic floods and so if you hear, know people of Pakistani heritage and have relatives there, the impact of them was catastrophic. Glaciers melting in the Himalayas, destroying towns, destroying homes, destroying schools, laying waste to large parts of the country.

So what's next for the Treaty? First, we want to grow the movement, we need to shift the political landscape and make and manage fossil fuel exit politically possible, especially now, as I said, with Trump threatening global climate action and pushing fossil fuels. We need to grow it more and we need to grow it faster. We need to launch negotiations so we want by 2026, next year, we want over 20 countries, we've got 16 so far, we hope we're going to have another in the next few days, but we want over 20 countries to agree to sit down in a room and start negotiations, a diverse group, from every continent, fossil fuel producers and non-fossil fuel producers, rich and vulnerable countries alike. This is how we shape an international corporation, creating a new kind of multi-, excuse me, a new kind of multi-, it's easy for me to say isn't it, a multilateralism, for a fairer fossil fuel phase out. That was a bit fast there, let me just take a sip of water.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** It's alright, we've had problems with our teeth all week.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Just bring it up here, mate.

**Ken Penton, UK Advisor to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative:** Thank you. Such organised company, thank you very much.

So how important to Trade Unions, is the question you might ask yourself? Well, we think Trade Unions are absolutely essential. The transition will only succeed if it's fair and right now it's not. Workers, especially in fossil fuel sectors, are rightly afraid, without a plan, they resist change, who wouldn't. That's why Trade Unions must lead this conversation, we think, on what a fair transition looks like. It needs policies to protect workers, re-training and job guarantees, pensions, unemployment support, healthcare, shared global standards for labour rights. I mean, you know, many of you and the people you represent, work in already hot workplaces, the extreme temperatures that pose a threat to people, the extreme weather we have, we're going to have more floods this year because of the drought, after the floods will come drought, they will affect you, globally they are affecting the agricultural supplies that many of you use to make the products that end up on our shop shelves. So that's why Trade Unions, you know the impact of climate change, you see it in your communities, but you also see it in your workplaces as well I suspect and our view is that, probably for your sector, it's going to be about adaption, but we know in some other sectors it is going to cost jobs, which is why we need the plan we're talking about and we don't just need new jobs though, we need good jobs, you know. A fair and just transition is not a luxury, it's the foundation of any real climate solution we believe. So as I said, Union support is over 30 million, and global federations, we've got one, Public Services International so far, but we've got federations, they represent 750 Unions across 154 countries.

So how can people get involved? As Union Reps, as I say, you have power, you can shape the future, you can speak out, you can join the debate, you can challenge the fossil fuel industry's narrative about why we need to stick on the path to global, to catastrophic climate change. You can help people see that it's not climate action we can't afford, it's the impact of fossil fuels are and will cause to our planet.

So what can you do? Well, first of all, I hope, you're the fourth Union, as I said, encourage other Unions, you'll know people in other Unions, to follow your lead. Do you call yourselves the Bakers Union or the BFAWU?

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Bakers, Food and Allied, that's us.

**Ken Penton, UK Advisor to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative:** That's a bit of a mouthful, I'd better take some more water.

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** The Bakers, mate.

**Ken Penton, UK Advisor to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative:** Okay, the Bakers, but you know, you're one of the first Unions to move on this, you should encourage other Unions to follow your lead. We hope that Justice Public Service International has recognised it, that the federations that you're members of, at European and global level, you can raise that as well. You can join a global alliance that's growing fast, you know and as I said, with Trump and his mega-oil agenda, this is the time, we think, to show bold and united leadership. This is a moment that you can step up to and know, we know you've got many other priorities that affect your workers on an everyday basis, some of them we've just heard, I read at the start, people losing their jobs, a whole host of, as I have worked for a Union, I know what it's like, but also I got involved in climate change over a dozen years ago, because I decided, or recognised that it was the biggest single threat and challenge facing people on the planet we live on and I come from a people focus, you know.

We will have tens of millions of people who will lose their jobs, who will lose their home, who will be forced to flee, to move to different regions of their own country or move to different countries, if we don't tackle climate change. This is going to impact everyone. It's already happening now, we can see it.

So the Trade Union movement has always stood up and anticipated change and worked for change and managed change and also looked and seen threats, not just in the workplace, but affect people around the world and how they live and their dignity and their ability to live life to the full.

So now is one of those moments for the Trade Union movement, I think and you've already, you've stepped up, but more people need to do so, more Unions need to do so. We think now is the time to start banning fossil fuels, that means we're going to have to do the transition we need to do. We've just seen in the last week or so a huge spike in oil and gas prices because of what's happening in Iran. We don't know what is going to happen as a result of that, but potentially it could lead to huge energy bill price rises like we saw when the Russians invaded Ukraine, yet that will impact on you and the people you work with, the people you represent.

So that's why we need to take action. We can see the impact of climate change, we can see the impact on people's everyday cost of living and also we don't want to be beholden to many of those states that control fossil fuel resources, aren't democratic, don't encourage or recognise Trade Unions, don't encourage or recognise democracy. Why would we want to be dependant on them, at their beck and call, as unfortunately we saw with Bush?, subject to them trying to blackmail and hold us to ransom.

So this is not going to be easy, it takes political courage but, as I say, I know as somebody who's worked for a Trade Union, who's worked with lots of Trade Union Reps, that in this room, there's no absence of political courage.

So thank you very much. Thanks for endorsing the call for a treaty. Happy to answer any questions or I know it's been the end of a long week, so if you haven't got any questions, I can share the slides and, you know, happy to answer any questions afterwards.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Ken, we weren't going to ask any questions because we know they're all baking and they want to get back out in the sun. Unless, there's anybody that's got a burning question? I didn't think so, but we really, really do appreciate you coming along and, General Secretary.

**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Thank you ever so much for coming along, Ken. As a thank you for coming and talking to us, we've gifted you a pewter baker, they're a limited edition, don't tell everybody you've got one and one of our brand new Bakers Union tote bags. Thank you so much for coming.

**Ken Penton, UK Advisor to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative:** Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Okay. Well, guess what we do now? No, we don't sing yet. We've got all the formalities to go through. We have to say thank you, obviously thank you to the Standing Orders Chair and Committee, who's going to come and speak to us shortly, so I hope he's ready.

Thank you to the Acting Vice President and the actual Vice President, for the work that they do throughout the year and also the Scrutineers that play the role at Conference, making sure that everything was above board, to Vicky, wherever she is, who obviously makes sure that everything is run perfectly from the Office and just obviously at Conference, but Vicky and her colleagues that run the Offices through the year and make sure that obviously all the documentation was put together and obviously, you know, all the motions that you sent in, were put together, which obviously a lot of it's done now by the General Secretary, but they still play a part and obviously our full-time Officials, who work in the Regions, supporting you in your Branches, for the work that they've done.

I know it sounds like a bit of a Christmas/New Year message now, doesn't it, but it's because it's Conference and we have it in the middle of the year, so we get an opportunity to say thank you to those people. Also, for the people who have been turning the lights on, keeping the lights on, the sound recording, the video recording, the people who have made sure that everything works and we're getting better at it, as you've seen. We've not had as many, I don't think we had any issues this year with the online, so obviously technology's improving and, you know, as we spoke about this morning, the fact that we're able to have a hybrid Conference now means that people with caring responsibilities that would miss out on being able to come to Conference, now can, so thank you very much for the technology that you bring to us. Obviously to the Conference staff, to all the bar staff that's been on during the week, the receptions, the cleaners, everybody that works here that's served us at lunchtimes and tea times.

To the stallholders, those who have facilitated our fringe meetings. Thompsons, Watkins and Gunn, the Credit Union, PayPlan, National Shop Stewards Network, Stand Up To Racism, Hazards, GFTU, The Morning Star, TC Branding, did I say the Credit Union before? Yes, so good, we named them twice. The Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, Neil, who has done an absolutely outstanding job for the pictures, the best pictures I've ever seen of me and also done the social media and made this Conference look really, really professional. Say again, oh, right, okay and obviously, like I said, Irwins for the tech and the filming. Obviously special thanks to Mike, who came from the bin strikers, Rebecca Long-Bailey, Janet, Gawain and Ken and yes, I suppose I better thank you really for your tolerance and obviously the people online, because obviously you have had to tolerate quite a bit.

So clearly, you know, as we start to wrap up you will have a number of items that you will have collected over the week, which hopefully you will use those fantastic tote bags for, to make sure everything goes in them and goes back to the Branches, so that you can talk about Conference, so people can see we actually work when we get here, because I think that's really important, because some people may believe the ideas that the manager slips into their head that this is just a jolly, but you've been here, you know it's not a jolly. When you come to Conference, you're coming to learn, you're coming to network and you're coming to, you know, learn about Trade Unionism, but learn about the roles that we perform and how to improve the lives of the people we represent in our workplaces, that's what Conference is about and that's the important part and yes, there's a social side too and that social side is important, because workers should always be able to socialise with each other and I think, you know, this week we've done a lot of socialising .....

[LAUGHTER]

...you know, we've done a lot of things where we've learnt new things too and we take back with us an idea and an understanding about other people's lives that we may not have considered before we got here and that's why we also need to make sure that you tidy up the tables when, I'm kidding, just make sure you take all of the information that you've been provided and now, and now, I get the opportunity to invite the Chair for Standing Orders .....

[APPLAUSE]

...to give his final address to Conference.

[APPLAUSE]

You can do it from here, yes, you're more than welcome. It's up to you.

### **Nick Mead, Chair of Standing Orders, addresses Conference**

**Brother Nick Mead – Branch 253 (Chair of Standing Orders):** I'll do it from here, that's fine. Mr President, Platform, Delegates. On behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, I would also like to offer the usual vote of thanks. We would like to thank the National President for the professional, professional, underscore, way he has conducted Conference. It can't have been an easy job to allocate the time for speakers, making sure we run on time and even stretching it out when we had to. Our thanks to the General Secretary for everything she has done in organising the Conference and the entertainment and the headaches when people have pulled out and having to recharge things. Also thanks for the leadership and passion that she always puts into everything she does. Our thanks to the Standing Orders Committee and my personal thanks go to Vicky, I was going to embarrass her, but she's not in the room, who has worked so efficiently behind the scenes, never really having a minute to call her own, doing her day job as well as running round after us and even running out to grab things when needed. I'd like to thank the Scrutineers for a job well done, there were no hiccups in the actual voting process. To the Delegates who had the occasion to visit me, for whatever reason, there wasn't any grumbling about fines, in fact some even paid in advance.

[LAUGHTER]

My thanks go to the rest of the Standing Orders Committee. We were kind of thrown together and have gelled well and made decisions that needed to be made.

All the new members in the room, we'd like to thank them for their participation and learning how Conference runs. Fines for lateness this year and any other misdemeanours came to £45 and it was the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee that the money be donated to the Birmingham strike fund.

[APPLAUSE]

I hope you've all enjoyed your Conference this year. I hope you've all learnt how to cook chicken, in 28 different ways.

[SQUEEKY CHICKEN in background]

As our National President has said, I hope you have learnt something to take back to your Branches, learnt how rules are changed, I've lost where I am and you've learnt how to use your powers well and keep our Union going from strength to strength.

We wish you a safe journey home.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Conference, can I please welcome, for her final address to this year's Conference, our General Secretary, Sarah Woolley.

[APPLAUSE]

### **Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, gives her Closing Address to Conference**

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**Sister Sarah Woolley, General Secretary:** Conference, as we come to the end of this year's Annual Conference, I just want to begin with something simple. Thank you. Thank you to everyone who's made this Conference what it has been, a space of action, honesty, courage and Solidarity, whether you spoke once, or twenty times, Zeal, I'm looking at you, whether you voted, observed, listened, challenged or supported, you showed up and that matters, because this wasn't just another Conference, it's a statement of intent. We've made decisions this week that will shape our Union for years to come and we've done it with our feet firmly planted in the realities that our members face every single day. We've passed motions that strengthen how we organise and how we represent, we agreed to push harder for equality and to protect those most often left behind. We remitted a motion that recognises and we're going to do some work on that, recognised the need for more accessible training, more representative leadership and more inclusive Branches and we recommitted ourselves to being a Union that doesn't just survive in the times that we're in, but changes them.

This week we've not just responded to challenges, we've laid the groundwork for solutions together, as a group and you could feel that shift in the room, couldn't you, this week, feel that change, because there's something really special happening in our Union right now. We've seen it this week, in the number of first-time Delegates. A fifth of our congregation this week have been first-time Delegates and hasn't it been fantastic just how many of them have got up and spoken for the first time, so I think they deserve a round of applause for that.

[APPLAUSE]

Because these are people who probably hadn't planned to get up and speak, but found their voice and used it and if it was you, know this, you made this Conference stronger. Your voice matters, your courage, getting up, matters and you belong here, you belong with us in our family. To our more experienced Delegates, thank you for encouraging and empowering those new voices, because that's how we build a movement that lasts, not by clinging onto power, but by sharing it and we're seeing, what we're seeing is not just participation, it's transformation. It's a Union that's growing, that's deepening and that's nurturing people, because where we are as movement, our food sector, the sector that we keep running day-in and day-out is under relentless pressure. We see that every day. We see our members being pushed to the limit by rising costs, stagnant wages, unsafe conditions and a management culture that too often treats people like numbers and not human beings. We've heard this week from Delegates from across our Union, that are facing unaffordable rents and rising food prices whilst still earning poverty wages, chronic understaffing and relentless workloads, bullying and discrimination in workplaces, aware of some with no recognition and no accountability and we know that that's the reality that many of our members are facing, but we also know that we're not powerless in the face of it, because for all the challenges, this Union, us, are fighting back.

We're standing up for dignity, for decent work, for safer workplaces, for a better deal and we're doing it together, not by waiting for other people to fix it, from all the conversations we've had this week, but by organising for it ourselves and I want us to keep asking, how do we support each other during these times, how do we build a Union that feels like a home for everyone, but also like a force for change? We do it by listening, we do it by showing up for each other, by making space for each other. We do it by strengthening our Branches, growing our Reps base and fighting every single injustice we come across, because Solidarity isn't just something we put on banners, it's how we survive and it's how we win and of course it wouldn't be Conference, would it, without a few giggles. We've had passionate speeches, we've had bold decisions and big visions, but we've also had bingo.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

We've had chickens and plenty of them.

[SQUEEKY CHICKEN in background]

We've had laughs, some of us more than others, I've still got icky ribs from bingo on Monday, but we've had moments and we've had moments that were pure Bakers, Food and Workers Union, unpolished, working class, but absolutely full of life. That's part of what makes us who we are. We take work seriously and we absolutely do, but we never forget our people and we know how to have a good time when we're together.

So what now, Conference? Now we go home, but we cannot go back to business as usual. We've got to go back re-energised, recommitted and ready, because this Conference has shown us we're turning a corner, we're growing, slowly, organically, but growing. The turn of membership is slowing. New members are joining and staying and that's because of the work that you're doing in your workplaces, because of the conversations you're having, with new starters, the people that didn't really know why they would need to join the Union. The Reps that you're supporting and we've seen fantastic new Reps here as well this year. They're excited and they're full of ideas and we want to nurture that and listen to that and build from that, because that is inspiring members too. But we've got to keep going, haven't we? We've got to organise relentlessly, creatively, you know, we don't have to just do what we've always done, persistently. I know that there's someone in this room that talks about trying to get somebody to join the Union for four years and he eventually did, that's persistence there.

[APPLAUSE]

But it also means telling our story. The wins that we've secured and they don't have to be huge wins, they can be anything. If you've had a win for a member, let us know, so that we can tell the world about it, because that's why members join our Union and they can see that people, you are making changes that'll improve their lives.

The injustices we've fought, we'll continue to talk about those and the change that we're building, bringing in people, not just for numbers, but for strength and Solidarity.

When you go back to your workplaces, engage with our networks, whether you're LGBT+, disabled, young, men, women, you have got a space in this Union, to connect, to lead and to absolutely thrive. Feed into our campaigns, bring in ideas from the ground, tell us what's working, but equally tell us what's not, so that we can change it, we can improve it and we can build on it, because let's never forget, the membership are our Union, not policies, not branding, people, people in all their brilliance and we've got some amazing people, brilliance and struggle. Bakers, packers, hospitality workers, farm labourers, food producers, care workers, from every background, every gender, every faith, every identity. Our job as elected Reps and leaders is to make sure that everybody feels that they belong, that Branches are inclusive, that our Union is a place of safety and Solidarity and that when racism, homophobia, ableism, sexism or transphobia show up, we challenge it every single time and that means being crystal clear. There is no place for the far right in our Union or in our sector, not in our meetings, not in our social feeds and absolutely not in our name. We are a Union built by migrants, by working class people of every kind, by communities that know what it means to be scapegoated and silenced and we will not let hate divide us ever.

Conference, we are not a Union of the past, we are a Union of now and we are a Union of what comes next. We are rebuilding, we are re-imagining and yes, we are rising. Got another pun in there.

So let's leave you, not just feeling inspired, but feeling organised. We've got to go back to our Branches and build. We've got to find new members, support new Reps and grow our Union, because this is our movement, this is our moment, but we've absolutely got to make it count.

Thank you ever so much for this week, for all the work that you do back in your Branches every single day. Travel safely home and let's get back to building power together. Solidarity.

[APPLAUSE]

**Brother John Owens – Branch 432, Region 4 – EC Member (AB, Liverpool):** Can you now please welcome the National President, for his closing speech.

[APPLAUSE]

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### **Bro Ian Hodson, National President, gives his Closing Address to Conference**

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Well, that was a week, wasn't it? It feels like you've just got here, doesn't it? I mean, you know, we all came as strangers at the beginning of the week, all going away as friends. Well, you might think I'm a bit strange, but obviously you're no longer strangers. You came here with some concerns and we've tried to address them, right? You might be happy with the way we addressed them, you might not, but at least we tried to address them and that's the most important thing, because that's what this Conference is about. It's about debates, it's about discussions, it's about the decisions that we make and sometimes we're on the right side, sometimes we're on the wrong side of the argument, not the opinion, but one thing we always are, is united when the decision is made.

That is the policy of the Union and that is the policy that we follow. We recognise the importance of one another and I think we recognise the inclusion of all. We are an open Trade Union that welcomes people that welcomes everybody else. That's who we are and that's who we've always been. One of the most fascinating things that I learnt, when I was doing the McStrike Campaign for example, was we were going down Oxford, we were just going to go and see like some of the, some of the workers in McDonald's and got met by all the managers instead from McDonald's, but we were joined by a Jewish family, a Jewish immigrant, whose father had come over in the 1930's. He'd left Europe because of the Fascism that was rising in Europe and when they got to the UK, a bit like we see today where migrants aren't welcome, unfortunately neither were they, not even in the Labour movement, apart from one Trade Union, us. The Bakers Union welcomed that Jewish migrant, because this Union has always been welcoming, because it doesn't matter where you've come from, it doesn't matter, you know, what religion you follow, it doesn't matter how you identify and we must make this point clear, we have always been a Trade Union that is so inclusive, that we probably have represented every, every nation and every religion that you could ever think, I think we once did have people who were Trekkies that did come to Conference, by the way and did say that they practised our Trekkieism, but I just can't remember the name of the religion, but that's the type of Trade Union we are.

We're welcoming, we're accepting and I think this week has been fascinating on some of the motions and I was really, really touched by the 7/11 from Northern Ireland, because if you remember last year, we moved one on sexual harassment and the question was asked, what happens when motions are moved at Conference, what do we do with them? Well, that motion that we moved here last year, which was done brilliantly by Vicky Bassett, on sexual harassment, went to the TUC and it's been adopted by the whole of the Trade Union movement and now it's being led by an organisation called Workers Policy Project and when you were coming in this morning, you would have received, you know, a copy of the Not Defend Campaign, which is about ending sexual harassment by recognising it's a health and safety issue. On 25th June, by the way, if you're not doing anything in the evening, there's a bit of an online event to celebrate the ILO convention 190, because you might not have realised this, but in 2019, when the Tories were in a little bit of trouble, because they weren't dealing with the issue of sexual harassment or sexual abuse, they signed it, the only thing was they never really enacted it, because sexual harassment, in Convention 190, is recognised as a health and safety issue and what's strange about it is, is though they wanted the good media and the good press coverage, is they never actually put it into legislation, strange, isn't it? Strange, we'll sign up, but there again that's 40 years of legislation that we've had on sexual harassment anyway. We're celebrating it this year, did you know that? We're celebrating 40 years of sexual harassment legislation, but we did, yes, but it's still going on, isn't it?

I mean, we exposed it last year, didn't we and this year, early this year? Over 1,000 workers in McDonald's, interviewed and talked to by Panorama, even though their company had signed an agreement with the HRC to deal with the issue of sexual harassment, but the confidence those workers have in the systems that are put in place, they'd rather speak to the BBC than to actually report it internally, because they know it won't be dealt with and that's why, when you come to Conference and you pass motions and then you say what do we do with them, it's really important that when you go back to your workplaces, you talk about them. You take the information with you and you discuss them on the shop floor and we always have those people, because what's really, really funny about the sexual harassment stuff, it's not really funny, because obviously we see how it's being used for racist purposes, but the same people who are using it for racist purposes are the same people that were opposing us in Westminster, in the House of Lords, from introducing legislation to tackle sexual harassment, because what they say is, it's banter, sexual harassment is banter and if we introduce this legislation, it'll put too much onus on employers and it'll stop us from being able to go to the pub and tell jokes to one another. I would imagine most women in this room will tell you sexual harassment is not banter and it's real, it's not a political football, it needs to be dealt with and it's unacceptable and it's unacceptable in a pub and it's unacceptable in a workplace too and we need to have sexual harassment no longer a tick box, but ended, once and for all and we don't want it as a political football, we want politicians and legislators to introduce legislation and when you want to know about resources, you can actually go on the website and you'll find resources including risk assessments that can be done in your workplace.

You will find resources on that website that tells you about why it's a Trade Union issue and how to get your members involved. You will find why an employer should be getting involved and you'll find a brief about how to take this up with your employer, different speech to what I normally give, I know, but I think it's really important, because sometimes we forget what the bread and butter issues are, well done, yes and it's really, really important we don't, because Conference is about making a difference. You imagine if we ended sexual harassment in the workplace, you imagine that. Now people say it's impossible to do and I would remind you of this.

When we took the Wetherspoons strikers, they were Wetherspoons workers that then became strikers, out, part of the reason for taking them out on strike was because when they were sexually abused or sexually harassed or insulted, you know, or swore at and they went to their manager, they were told, you work in a pub, it just goes with the territory, but do you know after we went on strike and that happened, if you were the perpetrator of it, the manager would come over and say to you, go and apologise and if you want to drink in this pub again, you'll make sure you don't abuse the staff, so I'm asking you to leave today and the next time you come in, we'll make sure you behave yourself or else you'll be banned for life. So culture can't change?, of course it can change.

It can change if we all work together to make it happen and employers take responsibility and they take their duty of responsibility for each and every one of us properly. They have a duty, they have a duty to protect staff from sexual harassment, sexual abuse, from discrimination of any kind, in our workplaces, there is a duty and this Trade Union passed a motion that said we will make sure that in our workplaces we will take this to every level of management and I think it's really important that we do, because that was down to you, just as it was down to those workers in Wetherspoons when they went on strike, to change how they were treated in their workplace, because it's important, isn't it? Anybody like to go to work to be harassed or abused? Does anybody think that's okay? Of course we don't, nobody wants to see it, do they? No more than we want to see it on the streets, no more than we want to see it in our communities, but unfortunately we're living in a society where this has become normalised. I look at some of my comrades that come and it must be awful at this moment in time if you don't look white, you know, if you don't speak English, it must be awful to be targeted and discriminated against, not because you're not making a contribution, but because somebody can make political capital out of it and we have to challenge it, we have to challenge it.

Sexual harassment, racial discrimination, religious discrimination, but it can't be helped that people see this and think it's normal, when they hear politicians on the telly and the media normalise it. We have a situation where the Israeli government has not been satisfied with committing genocide on the Gaza people and then started on people in the West Bank and the people in Lebanon and the people in Syria and all of the surrounding areas, then they launched a pre-emptive strike which all of the western democracies have decided was Israel's right of defence. How can a pre-emptive strike on a country and a country that says it's not got nuclear arms, not developing a nuclear bomb, that's actually, the IEA, whatever you pronounce it as, has said there is no proof that they are, how can that be justified as defence? It's not justified as defence, but does it stop at Iran, or is the next stop Pakistan? Where does it stop? And the expansion of Russia into Ukraine and we all have to take sides with Ukraine. Why is it we always have to take sides in war? Why can we never take sides against poverty and declare war on poverty? Why can't we do that?

[APPLAUSE]

Why can we find the investments to put into bombs, but we can't find the investments to end homelessness? Why is it we're collecting to take to a food bank, so people in our communities can eat, but yet we can build a bomb, we can build a navy, we can build an air force and we can send it to some other third world country, why is it we can do that, but we can't feed our own people, even when they go to work. How is that right? How is that fair? How is that just? What happened to politicians defending us, because I do think it's about defence. I think we have a right to eat. I think people have a right to live a life of decency, of dignity and of respect. I think we're entitled to it as people and I think politicians fail to represent our interests and that's why I often say when I come up here, why we shouldn't be in the Labour Party. You know, Nye Bevan once said, you know, no ethical or social seduction shall eradicate from my heart the burning hatred for a Tory Party, because they have condemned so many first class people into near poverty. They're about to do it to the disabled people, that's what the Labour Party is proposing to do by cuts to the benefits system. They're going to starve disabled people, a Labour Party. Labour by name, not by action or deed. That's why as a class, we have to form our own Party, our own alternative politics and stand up for our own issues, because when they won't, we must and you, as Trade Unionists, that is your duty in your workplaces, so when you go back, when you go back to your workplace and you hear all of those things about politics and how people are being sold out because we're giving too much money to this group or that group, when they divide us, that's how we lose. It's when united, that's when we win and that's when we must win.

[APPLAUSE]

Now sometimes, sometimes I obviously, I like to have a bit of a rant, you might have noticed, because I think it's really important, I think it's really important for us and I think we have to be angry, I think we have to be angry about the inequality and injustices that people are suffering. It might not hit us personally, we might be okay, but you know some of the motions that we've passed this week, I mean, who knows in France, obviously you probably do, but in 1937 they had a 35 hour week, in France, in 1937. The only reason it stopped was because it was invaded, but they had a 35 hour week, they did, I mean, incredible. That was politics about representing us, wasn't it? and you know if they wanted to raise the retirement age, they set the streets on fire.

Now, I realise that sometimes when I make statements, it gets misrepresented by the Daily Mail and that happens, but you know, the reality is, is we need to be angrier, we need to be angrier. We can't keep accepting less and less and less, we should be demanding more and more and more, because without us, it's always been true, nothing works, nothing. No production, no transport, nothing, it all shuts down and when we realise, they want us to believe that we're beaten, that we can't win, that we are the past, they think we're defeated, that we can't do anything about change, we can't come together, the longer we accept their division, it's right. The sooner we understand our unity, the sooner we will start to build back.

I come from Blackpool, so I have to look out and I see the tides of history are flowing in our direction, you know what I mean. We're not the past, we are the future and when we believe in it and when we say it enough and when we realise it and we act together, the future will be ours, it really, really will and we just have to have that confidence, the confidence and belief that brought you here to this Conference, that will take you back to your workplaces, that will make you want to negotiate better terms and conditions, will give you stronger arguments to defend people in the workplace, because Conference, we are the Bakers, Food and Workers Union, we will stand tall and we will stand proud and we will stand side-by-side with one another. Solidarity.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

Chris.

Okay, for those that didn't sing on the karaoke last night, here's your chance. You can dance, Mike.

Are we, has everybody got, for those that don't know the words, they're on the back of the book. If you don't know your tune, you will do very soon. Any time you're ready, Brother.

**Brother Chris Magill – Branch 503 (Warburtons, Bellshill):** I want you to join in, because I'll be singing all week, this.

[THE RED FLAG sung]

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE]

**Brother Ian Hodson, National President:** Thank you very much, Chris, really appreciated.

Conference, thank you very much. Class dismissed.

[CHEERS and APPLAUSE – also SQUEEKY CHICKEN sounds]

**[CONFERENCE ENDS]**



