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Trades Union Councils' Joint Consultative Committee  
**Minutes of the first meeting held on 19 October 2009**

- Item 1            Apologies for absence
- Item 2            Election of Chair
- Item 3            Minutes of the last meeting held on 6 July 2009
- Item 4            Matters arising
- Item 5            Trades union councils development grant
- Item 6            Trades union councils registration
- Item 7            Trade Union Councils' Conference 2009 resolution to Congress – TUCJCC role
- Item 8            Annual Conference 2010
- Item 9            Motion from Norwich District TUC
- Item 10           Resolutions passed at 2009 Congress
- Item 11           Any other business – please inform the Chair of any matters you wish to raise under this item at the beginning of the meeting

**Present**

For the General Council: Jeremy Dear (Chair), David Harvey

For the Trades Union Councils: Linda Kietz, Alec McFadden, Robert West, Brian Ellis, Ian McDonald, John McCormack, Andy Robertson

Kevin Flynn, Chair NCMUWC

TUC: Tom Mellish (Secretary to the Committee), Paul Nowak, Susanna Ward.

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**Item 1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Dorothy Heath and Matt Wrack. The Committee noted Bernard Roome's absence and asked that the office pass on their best wishes. The Committee also wished Dorothy a speedy recovery.

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**Item 2 Election of Chair**

Nominations were sought from the General Council members present. Jeremy Dear was nominated and elected unopposed.

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**Item 3 Minutes of the last meeting**

**Item 38** Alec McFadden stated that Clara Paillard is from the Merseyside Trades Union Council, not North West Trades Union Council as in the Minutes of the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2009. This was **NOTED**.

**Action** Aside from the above, the Minutes of the 6 July 2009 meeting were **AGREED** as an accurate record.

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**Item 4 Matters arising**

**Item (36) Sponsorship**

Tom Mellish said that only one request for sponsorship had been submitted (from Merseyside). The meeting was informed that Bedfordshire had also put a request in, but had not yet received anything.

**Action** This point was **NOTED** for Tom Mellish to follow up.

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**Item 5 Trades union councils development grant**

**Points made in discussion**

Robert West said that the Committee at its last meeting had agreed £2,000 for website development. This needed to be included in the schedule thus reducing the amount available for distribution as grants.

Alec McFadden high-lighted how far small sums of money can go and gave the example of a local community campaign which by spending £300 on flyers for distribution in the community led to more people becoming involved in the campaign and achieved the desired result.

The Chair said that it was important that more emphasis is put on our successes as a movement and asked the Committee to be more proactive in providing examples of success.

Tom Mellish said that success stories could be put up on the TUC website, blogs, etc.

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## **Item 6 Trades union councils registration**

Brian Ellis informed the meeting that this year Watford and Stevenage had not re-affiliated despite a long history of an active trades union council in that area. He suggested getting feedback as to why they haven't re-registered and chase other previously registered councils to find out why they hadn't.

Dave Harvey pointed out that a large number of London boroughs were without a trades council. He recommended that unions and regional secretaries are contacted with a view to them identifying, borough by borough, volunteers to help start trades councils.

Tom Mellish asked members of the Committee to inform the office of changes they are aware of to trades council officers, for instance where the office holder has died, so that records can be updated and avoid further distress to those families who continue to receive correspondence long after their relative is deceased.

The meeting discussed the need to about successful trades union councils campaigns. Oxford and District were highlighted as an example of just such a trades council which kept in regular contact with the Chair to talk about campaigns.

Alec McFadden said that it would be good to contact all councils next year to remind them to register.

Linda Kietz emphasised the need to regularly remind trades councils to register.

The meeting was reminded that registration would be required by the end of January in future, as agreed at the last meeting of the Committee. Late registrations are still coming in for this year. Two amended versions of the Directory had been circulated to trades councils already since August. Further hard copies will not be circulated though changes will be added to the on-line version.

Robert West asked the office to put a new explanation of the reasons for the changes and how changes of officers are to be returned to the TUC on the registration form for next year.

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**Item 7 Trades Union Councils' conference 2009 resolution to Congress – TUCJCC role**

Paul Nowak introduced the item by informing the meeting of the work the TUC was doing in relation to proposed Government welfare reforms, the Conference on tackling poverty and how Richard Exell (TUC's Economic and Social Affairs Department) was taking the welfare reform forwards. ESAD were dealing with the economy and pre-budget report, etc.

Access to redundancy counselling and related services were being developed as part of the TUC/unionlearn recession recovery project.

He highlighted the importance of signposting issues such as welfare rights, tax and education through unemployed workers' centres. The TUC will be looking at strategies to support existing centres and where unions wish to take forward this work support new centres by developing funding streams at national and regional level. The TUC will be investigating whether it would be beneficial to seek charitable status for the national appeal or just put the time into promoting existing schemes and encouraging more development of other schemes.

Kevin Flynn said that funds linked to regional centres need to be boosted. We need to look at what types of organisations we want to involve. We need to set up new ways of recruiting people being made redundant from non-unionised places. 52% of people in work are living in poverty and regional TUCs need to pick-up on these issues. Unions needed to keep close links with centres and have talks where there are tensions in order to keep lots of potential activity and fight back going.

Brian Ellis raised the issue of what happens to funds from centres which no longer exist and which could be recouped. The office will investigate this matter. Brian felt that the focus should be shifted from funding centres to funding campaigns and have the One Fund For All scheme coming into local TUCs.

The meeting discussed the role of trade unions in recruiting unemployed workers and those not working.

The meeting also discussed the need for an equitable funding scheme for UWCs and whether charitable status was an option. There will be a report back on this to the next meeting of the Committee.

Andy Robertson was concerned about the present funding for UWCs and the implications of changes in the political control of local authorities. There have been problems with Tory controlled authorities trying to shut down centres in the past so this could obviously become a problem again. He also raised the issue of centres relationships with other campaigning groups and the need to clarify the geographical areas UWCs covered.

John McCormack urged that while we did not want to get bound up with the bureaucracy when it comes to the TUC regional committees, the Committee should be urging regional TUCs to up the ante and develop mechanisms to bring TCs and unemployed workers' centres closer together. As there is no longer the same level of support from local authorities, trades councils and UWCs needed to look at how they can change their relationships and the ways they work together.

The Chair stated that were too few successful local initiatives and gaps in delivery and that we needed a national framework to try and secure other funding.

Robert West suggested an audit that looked at looked at business plans, terms of reference, status, constitution, charitable companies or community interest companies. Are the people running the fund capable? There should be an assessment of relationships between unemployed workers' centres and TCs.

Brian Ellis raised the idea of super centres, i.e. law centres, C.A.B.'s and unemployed workers centres working together as a tripartite model for the future.

John McCormack highlighted the need to look at local priorities.

Jeremy Dear suggested the Committee should develop general guidelines of good practice to roll out for local areas to implement how they find appropriate.

Alec McFadden reminded the meeting about TUC Holding Sections for unemployed workers centres. (1983 Congress motion - remitted) He said they keep people active during periods of unemployment and when they are re-employed they can have their status transferred back to the relevant union.

John McCormack reminded the Committee that with some union members can still be an active member of a union for a minimum payment per week for the period they are unemployed. They may be limited in the roles they can participate within the union.

Paul Nowak asked about new centres and are we focussing on funding the buildings or the activities? He highlighted the need to look at recession and recovery projects and see what already exists in regions. He suggested talking to regional secretaries and Unionlearn managers about this and that incorporating a mix of local and national campaigning is the best way forward.

He stressed the need not to spend too long discussing all of this, but to get straight on with implementing activities and support as soon as possible, so that our campaigns are timely and relevant.

We need to look at resources at the local level in order to tap into these.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would receive an action programme ready for implementation

Members were asked to feed as much information back to Tom Mellish as quickly as possible.

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**Item 8 Annual Conference 2010**

After some discussion about the possible date of the 2010 general election, the meeting agreed that a suitable date should be found for conference within the constraints set at the last meeting of the TUCJCC, with a preference for one of the last three weekends in May. The TUCJCC will consider what action to take in the event of an election being declared for a date around that set for the conference.

Alec McFadden suggested making a decision for the next two years about timings and location for the annual conference.

The meeting agreed that the next trades union councils conference should be held in Peterborough in 2010 and Blackpool in 2011.

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**Item 9 Motion from Norwich District TUC**

The meeting discussed how a lack of insurance was preventing TUCs from performing some of the functions within the communities. There must be a way for trades union councils to get cover under limited liability insurance.

Public liability insurance is needed to allow them to continue to work in the community.

The office will investigate the options for providing public liability insurance.

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**Item 10 Resolutions passed at 2009 Congress**

The Chair will liaise with the officers as to which resolutions would be included in future agendas. The Committee does need to prioritise which issues it should consider in future meetings said that we need to decide which issues to prioritise to raise for further discussion at each meeting (2 or 3 per agenda).

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**Item 11 Any other business**

Alec McFadden wished for changes to the Programme of Work. Jeremy Dear reiterated that the PoW had been printed but it was a live document and that changes to the PoW, subject to TUCJCC agreement, could be incorporated on-line.

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**Item 12 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the TUCJCC will be on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010