

UNISON LABOUR LINK

ANNUAL REPORT

2009/2010



INTRODUCTION

Steve Warwick,

Chair of the UNISON Labour Link National Committee

Sadly of course this year has seen the end of thirteen years of a Labour Government; they have to be credited with many achievements such as devolution and the minimum wage. However their adherence to policies of privatisation and outsourcing the public sector has caused many to question the direction of New Labour and many like me believe we have to move on from New Labour to maintain our electability. This is not a belief born out of the self interests of UNISON members, but comes from listening to the people to whom our members provide services for; the public. It is the belief of many both inside and outside the party that we need to follow a more traditional path to make sure that Labour is a distinctive political party that can present a manifesto that the majority can sign up to, and win the next general election by producing policies that protect public services and the rights of workers in contrast to the slash and burn policies of the present con/dem government

So the Labour Link has to take up the challenges as laid down in the Review of the Political Funds, engage in the Labour Party Leadership Election, and whoever wins we need to continue to put our stamp on the policies of the Labour Party.

There are General Elections in both Scotland and Wales next year 2011. These elections will not only be important for our members living and working in Scotland and Wales it will also be a major indication of any progress made by the Labour Party and its prospects for the next general election whenever that will be. There were some swings in the recent general election towards Labour especially in Scotland and London and in the local council elections so there is plenty to play for.

The next twelve months will be some of the hardest for UNISON and public sector workers generally. Already the Tories and their new friends and converts to the cuts agenda the Liberal Democrats have announced huge cuts in public spending. The Labour Link will be needed now more than ever and we have to prove our effectiveness to meet the challenges both inside UNISON and the Labour Party

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UNISON LABOUR LINK NATIONAL COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

1. MEMBERSHIP OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Members of the Committee from July 2009 elected for two years are:

Steve Warwick	NEC (Chair)
Rachel Voller	Greater London (Vice Chair)
Wendy Nichols	NEC (Vice Chair)
Sue Forster	NEC
Lynn Poulton	NEC
Gill Malik	NEC
Irene Stacey	NEC
Mike Hayes	NEC
James Anthony	NEC
Eleanor Smith	NEC
Gordon McKay	NEC
Carole Maleham	NEC
Jean Butcher	NEC

Christina Beddows	Eastern (part year)
Gary Ransford	East Midlands
Mervyn Butler	Northern
Raymond McHale	North West
Alan Cowan	Scotland
Ann Black	South East
Andrew Dowland	South West
Mark Turner	Wales (part year)
Barry Russell	West Midlands
Ken Curran	Yorkshire & Humberside

2. LABOUR LINK NATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT 2009/10

This annual report is written as we live through the first weeks of the new coalition government and Labour now in opposition with the leadership contest underway.

At our Forum last July we knew that an election would take place before we met again and that it would be difficult for Labour – a world economic crisis, public outrage at the expenses scandal and anger at some of the policies being pursued by Labour in Government.

For UNISON members this was particularly the case with the continued emphasis on privatisation highlighted by the NHS guidance on competition policy for community health services. This led to the strong reaction at UNISON NDC and the agreement of last year's Forum to campaign in the party to ensure that Labour's manifesto contained no policies to privatise services and for regions to suspend CDP payments to constituencies.

The National Committee took these matters forward as their priorities for the year in addition to continuing work on the political fund effectiveness review for NDC 2010, influencing the passage of legislation especially the Equalities Bill and building our election campaign work.

Taking UNISON policies into the Labour Party

The UNISON Labour Link delegation to Labour Conference consists of forty members from national and regional level together with SOG representatives. Delegation members spoke in each of the major debates and fringe meetings were held to highlight UNISON priorities and engage with Ministers and Party members.

UNISON's contemporary issue was on the economic crisis and the need to protect public services and this was accepted by Conference as a priority. The themes identified in our contemporary issue went forward to the Policy Commissions and formed the basis of discussions with Ministers and the party in building up to the manifesto. The full report on Labour Conference is in Chapter 3.

Following Labour Conference, UNISON pushed the key elements contained in our contemporary issue through the party policy process, in discussions with Government and in the manifesto dialogue.

UNISON achieved a major turn-around on the proposed privatisation of NHS primary care services. The earlier NHS guidance was withdrawn and new guidance issued and this together with the NHS as first choice provider was reflected in the manifesto.

The manifesto did not propose any further push to privatise public services and had in place various commitments to public services such as NHS first. It also included commitment to the public service pension agreements we had negotiated.

While tackling the deficit became the major theme of the election, the manifesto, as we had argued, stressed the part tax increases and economic growth should play in reducing the deficit and the importance of public services.

UNISON Labour Link has two representatives, Norma Stephenson and Keith Birch, on the Labour NEC as part of the trade union section of 12. Regular reports on the NEC meetings are given to the national committee and key issues agreed that the representatives take forward in the Party. At the NEC our representatives have raised issues concerning public sector pay, the important role of the public services in the economic crisis, the need for strong equalities legislation and campaigning against the BNP. Norma was elected at Conference as vice chair of the party for the year and chairs the Women, Race and Equalities sub-committee and the Health Policy Commission and our reps are also on the Organisation, Local Government and Audit Committees and the Education and Skills Policy Commission. Together with our Chair who is a member of the Sustainable Communities Policy Commission it enables UNISON to promote our positions on a wide range of policy areas that concern our members and pursue our aims for Labour's manifesto.

Similarly in Scotland and Wales the Labour Link Committees and representatives play important roles in the party structure and policy making as described in later chapters and all Labour Link regions are likewise involved in their regional parties, promoting UNISON's interests and policies there. In the regions UNISON is involved in Labour's Regional Boards and at conferences and forums pushing union policies and lobbying Ministers and MPs locally. Throughout the year regions have been active in promoting UNISON's Million Voices campaign within the Party and won widespread support.

Promoting UNISON policies in Parliament and with Government

UNISON Labour Link promotes UNISON interests in Parliament through our work with Labour MPs and Peers, providing them with information and briefings on the wider policy priorities of UNISON and detailed analysis of legislation as it progresses. The group is a voluntary one of almost 70 MPs up to the election. Many were former members or staff and others have joined because of their particular interests in public service issues or because of good links in their constituencies.

The UNISON group of Labour MPs was chaired by Judy Mallaber and Kelvin Hopkins up until the election. A number of the most active members of the group retired as MPs and others lost their seats. Among those who stood down were Paddy Tipping, Laura Moffat, Paul Truswell, Anne Moffat, Stephen Byers and Keith Hill. Members losing their seats included Judy Mallaber, Charlotte Atkins, Gilly Merron, David Borrow, Jonathan Shaw and David Drew. Also we would like to pay tribute to David Taylor who died in December.

Our special thanks go to Judy Mallaber who has done so much work for UNISON over the years as an MP and as co-chair of the group. Also to Kelvin Hopkins who will step down as co-chair after 12 years but will remain an active member of the group.

We are now in the process of inviting new MPs to the group who have UNISON connections or interests in the public services. Among the new MPs are Lilian Greenwood and Chris Williamson who were members of our panel.

The group facilitate regular meetings and help organise events with us in Parliament. We hold regular meetings of the UNISON group at Westminster to highlight current issues and discuss how to take them forward in legislation and with Government. We work closely with service groups and other departments of the union to provide the briefings and advice for MPs and Peers and seek support for amendments to Bills in both Houses.

Members of the group have tabled amendments to Bills, raised issues in the House and in the various Committees, put down EDMs and organised debates. The group have also written to and had meetings with Ministers to discuss concerns in more depth.

We have provided the group with regular information on all the union priorities including equal pay and equalities, public sector pay and pensions, issues around the two tier workforce, outsourcing and privatisation of services and developments across social care.

Among the legislation on which we have lobbied for improvements and changes have been:

the Equality Bill both in the run up to its publication to ensure that current equality duties were strengthened rather than watered down and now as it passes through Parliament to support amendments to strengthen measures to promote equal pay;

the Apprenticeships, Children and Learning Bill with particular emphasis on ensuring that the new education workforce negotiating body meets the union requirements;

and the Health Bill with concerns about direct payments and the powers of Trusts.

Because of the nature of UNISON's membership across the public services and the wider citizenship matters that the union has policy on there are very few Bills where we do not make some form of representation or highlight issues during the Parliamentary session.

We also lobby around a wide range of issues that concern particular sectors of our membership and our SOGs. During the past year this has included problems faced by our members in the Meat Hygiene service; the role of police support staff; proposals to outsource school inspection staff; issues for social workers and social care staff; the need to build more social housing; concerns about the new Independent Safeguarding Authority; how the funding for free bus travel was impacting unfairly on some authorities causing serious financial problems; the capital funding crisis facing further education and changes that many library services are facing.

We have supported a wide range of EDMs that MPs have put down during the year that help to focus attention on issues and show Government the strength of feeling among MPs. These have included EDMs about local government pay, the Royal Mail proposals, the two tier workforce, blacklisting of trade union members and Columbia.

In addition to the close work we do with members of the UNISON group, they help us take issues out to the wider Labour trade union group of MPs which holds regular meetings which have discussed our concerns around equal pay and wider public service matters.

Working with Labour MEPs

Labour Link works together with our International and Policy Departments in liaising with Labour MEPs on legislative developments in the EU which have very important consequences for our members at work and as citizens whether it is directly on employment rights, on equality and environmental matters or as consumers. UNISON MEPs continued to work to ensure that proposed EU Directives do not have a detrimental effect on public service provision or undermine the NHS.

Trade Union Liaison Organisation – TULO

The unions affiliated to the Labour Party meet together regularly to co-ordinate our work both on policy issues and on organisation and campaigning. TULO representatives also meet with the Party officers and leaders to discuss and lobby on key matters.

TULO continued to pay close attention to the party funding issue and to defend and promote understanding of the affiliated membership structure of the Party. The danger to affiliation and party organisation by proposals around donation caps was especially highlighted by TULO. The Tories remain committed to introducing donation caps that would take in union members' collective affiliation and so threaten to break up the basis of the union link and the Labour Party's structure and finance. The Liberal Democrats also want to do away with union affiliation to the Labour Party and see the introduction of state funding.

TULO both nationally and in the regions brings the unions together to campaign both for our policies within the party but also for the party at election time. TULO campaigns highlighted both the threat posed by the BNP and the dangers that the Tory Party pose to employment rights and public services with an agenda that would see immediate huge cuts to public services, opting out of rights at work under the Social Chapter and weakening equality legislation.

Labour Link Communications

The key elements of Labour Link information to members are:

the monthly edition of Labour Link News which is mailed to all UNISON activists with FOCUS magazine;

the Labour Link magazine which is mailed with YOU to all members;

the Labour Link E-News which is produced monthly and covering three or four major issues and is sent to both UNISON and Labour Party contacts;

and the Labour Link website which includes links to the regions, policy and campaigns information, links to recent publications, the MPs voting record site and key committee decisions.

We are currently working to extend the reach of the e-news into the Labour Party so that CLPs have more information on UNISON policy and campaigns such as Million Voices. The range of publications is being looked at as part of the review of the political fund and how improvements in communications with members can be made.

Review of Political Fund Effectiveness

Following the motion at NDC 2008 asking for a review of the effectiveness of UNISON's political fund a NEC review group has been established to oversee the review process. The review is looking at UNISON's political campaigning and the role of both the Labour Link and GPF in taking forward UNISON's interests. The report on the work is going to NDC. The National Committee is doing ongoing work to look at best practice and ways to improve and extend the operations of Labour Link.

3. LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE 2009

The delegation to Labour Party Conference successfully promoted UNISON's key policy goals with the Million Voices campaign and our contemporary issue on the importance of public services in the economic crisis.

The delegation promoted Million Voices throughout conference getting delegates and many ministers to sign up to our campaign. The publicity around conference with the melting statue to illustrate the danger of disappearing public service workers was very effective. The stand was central to arguing our case and getting people to sign up.

Our contemporary issue on public services was top of the CLP section vote as well as in the affiliate section.

Dave Prentis spoke to the motion – to a standing ovation and we will follow the issues through with Ministers at the Policy Commission.

Other UNISON speakers took our campaign issues forward in the debates:

Eleanor Smith – pensions
Wendy Nichols – equalities
Irene Stacey – local government
Ann Price – health
Carole Maleham – police staff
Steve Warwick – finance on concessionary fares.

Other delegates made contributions and asked questions in the conference sessions, at seminars with ministers and at fringes.

Norma Stephenson spoke for the Labour NEC on health and Keith Birch on local government. Both were re-elected to the NEC in the trade union section. Norma was elected by the NEC as vice chair and Ann Black as Chair.

Other contemporary issues we supported were:

Employment rights (USDAW)
Manufacturing (UNITE)
School Meals (GMB)
Housing (CLPs)

We supported emergency motions:

East Coast line (ASLEF)
Royal Mail pensions (CWU)

Sri Lanka, internment and trade (GMB)

We held fringe meetings on Equalities and organised the joint union meeting with UNITE, GMB and CWU.

We supported the rule change for constituency representatives to Labour's National Policy Forum to be held by OMOV on a regional basis.

Conference agreed that next year there will be a vote at the beginning of conference on a return to resolutions rather than issues and that the result will take immediate effect for that conference.

UNISON LABOUR LINK Contemporary Issue

Rebuilding the public finances and protecting public services

On 15 September the Prime Minister confirmed that the UK faces tough choices if it is to rebuild its fiscal position over the years ahead.

The past decade has seen increased investment in key public services, improving health and educational outcomes, making our economy stronger and our society fairer. Recently government borrowing has risen, not because of excessive public spending, but because of action taken to limit the social and economic damage of the crisis in our financial system.

There is now pressure for spending cuts that risk undermining the achievements of recent years. Efficiency drives and service reorganizations must be founded on a sound evidence-base with full engagement and involvement of staff and their unions.

The Conservative Party is pushing for service reductions and more privatisation. For Labour to win back the support of core voters it needs to demonstrate that, by contrast, it will protect public services that are fundamental to advancing economic recovery and a fairer society.

The transaction costs and waste generated by the marketisation of public services must be urgently reviewed. The current drive to privatise NHS primary care services must be rethought. Further privatisation of our public services would be unpopular with voters as well as multiplying costs to the taxpayer and should not be part of Labour's next manifesto.

If necessary additional taxation should be raised from those best able to pay, such as the richest 1%, and from those financial institutions that have been bailed out with public money.

4. BAME LABOUR LINK REPORT 2009 – 2010

BAME Labour shares the huge sense of disappointment that the Labour Party failed to secure a fourth term of government. We recognise the success of the Labour Government over the last thirteen years in improving the lives of the people in the UK and abroad; and in bringing about transformational change during its three terms in office. However, despite Labour's successful record it lost the General Election with less than thirty per cent of the popular vote.

BAME members worked extensively with partner organisations to secure a fourth term for Labour. BAME worked with Operation Black Vote to improve voter registration prior to the general and local elections. BAME organised several events to galvanise support and increase voter turn out for Labour in local communities and targeted many constituencies and wards. The BAME Labour bus was visible and prominent during the election period in marginal constituencies and particularly in areas with BAME communities for example, London, Leicester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Yorkshire and Humberside.

The BAME bus made several visits to Barking and Dagenham to oppose the BNP and win support Labour's candidates. BAME candidates were successful in many local councils winning seats as councillors, for example in Brent, where Labour regained control of the Council and in Barking and Dagenham where Labour won all fifty one seats and drove the BNP out of the Council.

We are pleased that Labour votes held up in many key areas and that BAME members were elected as Members of Parliament and as Labour councillors and that, June Nelson UNISON's BAME Executive Committee member was elected as a councillor.

On the issue of diverse representation in Parliament we recognise that there is still a long way to go and more concerted action need to be taken for the next election.

However, BAME welcomes the net increase in number of women MPs elected at this election up by 13 to 139 and that there is now more ethnic diversity with the number of MPs from ethnic minority backgrounds increasing from 15 in the last Parliament to 27 in the current Parliament.

BAME was successful in winning support at the Warwick II National Policy Forum to extend the Equality Bill to include positive action by political parties to cover the equality strands. This is a key legacy from the last Labour

Government enacted in the new Equality Act 2010 to allow political parties to take positive action to redress under-representation.

We would like to place on record our huge appreciation to the Labour Link for its excellent work and support.

5. LGBT MEMBERS IN LABOUR LINK

The past year has seen continued involvement from UNISON's LGBT members in Labour Link, LGBT Labour and the Labour Party as a whole.

The General Election campaign obviously dominated our activities this year, with many of our UNISON Labour Link LGBT members actively campaigning in the general election and the local elections.

LGBT Labour has also continued to be active in its campaigning amongst LGBT members and within the Labour Party and has been a useful focus for our work on seeking to promote and strengthen the provisions of the Equality Bill as it went through Parliament ahead of the election.

During the year Louise Ashworth, as International Officer, and Deirdre Costigan, as Trade Union Officer, continued as members of the LGBT Labour National Committee which has helped to raise the profile of UNISON.

Louise Ashworth was elected to the Committee of Rainbow Rose, the LGBT network of PES. She led a delegation to meet with Joseph Muscat, the Leader of the Labour Party in Malta in October to talk about the agenda for progressing LGBT rights in Malta, a conservative country where divorce and abortion is still illegal. Her work with Rainbow Rose has involved liaising with the European Parliament LGBT Inter-Rights Group and building up links with sister LGBT socialist groups across Europe.

At the 2010 LGBT Labour AGM we again had a high profile with three members of the NLGBTC (Louise Ashworth, Deirdre Costigan and Craig Nelson) elected to the LGBT Labour National Committee, and two further UNISON activists also elected.

We presented three motions to the AGM – on gender neutral marriage and civil partnerships, continuing our international work, and anti-racism, as agreed by our levy payers' meeting at our policy weekend. All three motions were carried, though regrettably, continued affiliation to Unite Against Fascism and affiliation to the National Assembly Against Racism were unfortunately not agreed by the AGM in spite of strong arguments in favour from the floor, including by a number of UNISON and other trade union members attending in a personal capacity. In spite of this setback the AGM was broadly successful with a good attendance and a wide variety of policy motions carried. There was a social afterwards which attracted controversy because of a refusal to serve LGBT members which led to some media coverage.

During the year we also sent delegates to Labour Party Conference and to Labour Link Forum and we held a meeting for levy payers at our own conference. We provided a detailed response to the review of the political fund and our two Labour Link Liaison Officers continue to produce regular reports for all national committee meetings.

We thank the Labour Link Committee for its ongoing support and look forwards to developing closer ties in the future. This will be all the more important given the election of the new Con Dem 'Coalition' government which is attempting to 'look' progressive but lacks much of the substance. We will need to do more in coming years to make sure Labour is the voice in favour of equality.

6. LABOUR LINK SCOTLAND REPORT 2010

The Committee met on four occasions this year. The Chair is Gordon McKay and the Vice-Chair is Pat Rowland. Dave Watson, Scottish Organiser is Secretary to the Committee. Liz-Anne Handibode and Dave Watson are members of the Labour Party Scottish Executive Committee.

Organisation

The Committee adopted a set of objectives in line with the UNISON Scotland objectives for 2009/10 at the annual policy seminar. Coverage of Labour Link Officers at branch level is 54% although the gaps are mostly with smaller branches. Some progress has been made in extending the activist database, but there is still more to be done. The policy seminar considered a detailed survey of Labour Link members in Scotland based on some 600 responses to an email survey. That survey reflected a high degree of disappointment with Labour in power that has undermined morale. It also highlighted limited communication and activity at local level. More positively it indicated a significant degree of interest and a willingness to receive relevant communications.

Communication

We have maintained a range of communication initiatives in order to highlight the work of Labour Link in Scotland. These include a web page on the UNISON Scotland web site, a Scottish Labour Link newsletter and Scottish articles in the UK publications. Externally we have circulated UNISON Labour Link newsletters to CLPs and provided speakers to a number of CLP and branch meetings.

Constituency Development Plans

Following the decision of the UK Labour Link Committee to suspend CDP's no grant payments have been made. The committee had previously reallocated grant payments to other campaign initiatives when adequate CDP reports had not been received from CLPs. We have affiliated our branches to all of the 59 CLPs and maintained the number of delegates.

Policy Promotion and Campaigns

The Committee receives reports on current UNISON parliamentary work and considers how UNISON Labour Link can better promote UNISON policy. Meetings are held with the UNISON Scotland parliamentary group and individual MPs and MSPs. Karen Gillon MSP is the Convenor. We also use our representatives on the Scottish Executive Committee and Scottish Policy Forum to promote UNISON positions at every opportunity.

The Scottish Government legislative programme has a number of challenges for UNISON members and we support relevant member's bills that form part of Scottish Labour's parliamentary strategy. A particular campaign success was forcing the SNP Government to drop its Local Income Tax Bill. Labour Link played a key role in that campaign including research and campaign materials. We also played an important role in the party's submission to the Calman Commission on devolution. Positive legislative success included the Climate Change Act which was significantly improved following a campaign involving UNISON and the work of UNISON Labour MSP's Cathy Peattie and Sarah Boyack. The Health Boards Act introduced direct elections for the first time and MSPs in parliament acknowledged that this would not have been enacted had UNISON not promoted this policy in the Scottish Labour manifesto.

The policy process for the 2011 Scottish election manifesto started this year with the publication of the first stage consultation papers. We produced a special edition of the Labour Link newsletter to promote discussion. UNISON's Scottish Committee has adopted a manifesto strategy 'Scotland 2011' with a number of core policy objectives that UNISON Labour Link will take forward. Our first stage submission reflected those policy objectives. The second stage consultation documents have been published and we are currently working on a response. We also work closely with other unions through STULP on policy development and plan to publish a Workplace Agenda 2011 setting out our joint positions. Katrina Murray, Pat Rowland and Dave Watson represent UNISON on the Scottish Policy Forum.

Policy development is of course dominated by the economic recession and the growing impact on public finances. The precise impact on Scotland is at this stage unclear, but the range of predictions is all bad. UNISON Scotland has a major campaign to promote public services in 'Public Works' as part of the UK 'Million Voices' campaign. The Labour Link Committee also takes forward other elements of UNISON Scotland's political strategy agreed by the Scottish Committee last year.

Scottish Labour Party Conference 2009/10

The 2009 Scottish Labour Party Conference was held in Dundee in March. The Conference was chaired by UNISON's Dave Watson. UNISON Labour Link used the Conference to promote a number of UNISON issues including a contemporary motion on public service pensions and an emergency motion on local government cuts. Fringe meetings were organised on health inequalities, economic crisis, climate change and Venezuela.

The full 2010 Scottish Labour Party conference has been moved to October 2010 in order to finalise the policy programme for the 2011 elections. A one

day conference was held in March 2010 as a launch pad for the UK General Election.

Elections

Scottish Labour retained two MEPs in the European elections despite a reduced share of the vote. As usual this was a low key election but we were able to promote a number of positive achievements by Labour MEPs on agency workers, working time, public services and equal pay. Regrettably some of these achievements were undermined by the actions of the UK Labour government.

Scotland bucked the trend in the UK General Election with a 2.5% increase in the share of the vote. This enabled Scottish Labour to retain all 39 seats and regain two seats lost in by-elections taking the total to 41. Other parties hold 18 seats between them, including only one for the Tories. STULP appointed Key Seat Co-ordinators and published an election special newsletter. UNISON supported the key seats and others with a strong UNISON connection. The UK manifesto was adapted in Scotland to reflect devolved issues and is closer to UNISON's positions, particularly on public services.

The selection process for candidates for the 2011 Scottish elections is underway with the re-selection of sitting candidates following boundary changes. UNISON has established a panel process to support potential UNISON candidates for constituency and list seats.

7. LABOUR LINK CYMRU/WALES REPORT 2010

The Cymru/Wales Labour Link committee has met regularly; Margaret Wilkinson continues as Chairperson and Malcolm Harrington as Vice Chairperson.

The Labour Link and PDC Committees have continued to work jointly with the Wales Regional Committee to ensure that the policies of UNISON Cymru/Wales were presented with “One Voice”. This has included work with the National Assembly and with the Assembly Government on a variety of UNISON policy issues.

The Committee has continued to develop their primary work around Objective 3 in particular developing UNISON’s influence both within Welsh Labour and the Welsh Assembly Government.

This Report highlights some of the key issues addressed during the year as well as outlining the priorities for 2010.

Cymru /Wales UNISON Labour Link Forum

The Cymru /Wales Labour Link Forum took place in Newport, South Wales between 29th - 30th January 2010.

As well as the normal business, workshops were held on the following subjects: Welsh Labour Vision, Values Local Government and Local Democracy, Initial Report of the Economy Commission and the General Election.

Derek Vaughan, Member European Parliament and Carwyn Jones, First Minister for Wales, were guest speakers

Constituency Labour Parties

We have continued to adopt a positive approach to Branch Labour Link sections affiliating to Constituency Labour Parties. We have in previous years, maintained a 90% plus of our Branches affiliating to appropriate CLP’s.

Whilst we have an excellent record of Branch affiliation to CLP’s much more can be done in increasing the number of delegates and their attendance. Additionally, we need to co-ordinate the activity of CLP delegates to ensure an effective approach to our political work. The Committee would wish to support the national project under Objective 3 in improving our effectiveness in political organisation.

The Cymru/Wales Labour Link Committee suspended support in 2009 for constituencies through Constituency Development Plans in accordance with national policy.

The Committee, however, utilised what monies were available to support TULO and UNISON key constituencies during the General Election campaign.

Wales Labour Party

The 2010 Welsh Labour Party Conference was held on 26th to 28th February 2010 in Swansea. The UNISON delegation once again made a significant contribution to the Conference. The Region's delegation was one of the largest, whilst the involvement by so many is encouraging, this will have to be reviewed so as to not detract monies away from priority campaigning issues.

Cymru/Wales Labour Link Committee continues to contribute to the policy making process which shaped the manifesto for the last Assembly Elections. The Labour Link Forum agreed its manifesto at the 2006 Forum and re-enforced this at its 2010 Forum. However, it has been agreed that this needs revising and each of the Cymru/Wales UNISON Service Groups, self-organised groups and policy making Committees, have been requested to submit its own manifesto to the Region's Labour Link Committee for consideration into its own manifesto. This is an ongoing process as new issues arise.

Education and Training

The Cymru/Wales Labour Link Committee has continued to support training at a Welsh level. We hope to work in partnership with the Wales Labour Party in providing appropriate training for those seeking public office.

The Committee wish to support the development of the role of the Labour Link officer at Branch and Constituency level. We did plan to hold a Labour Link Branch Officers' course, however because of the General Election and other factors, this is in abeyance.

Our involvement and influence within the party partially at CLP level is a regional priority. We will continue to work with the Wales Labour Party in supporting our members and activists at Constituency, County and Regional level.

National Assembly for Wales

The Welsh Assembly has 26 Labour members elected out of the 60 seats.

The following form the UNISON group:-

Christine Chapman	Cynon Valley
Jane Davidson	Pontypridd
Carwyn Jones	Bridgend
Karen Sinclair	Clwyd South
Jane Hutt	Vale of Glamorgan
Ann Jones	Vale of Clwyd
Val Lloyd	Swansea East
Alun Davies	Mid and West Wales

Following the announcement of Rhodri Morgan, Wales' Labour Party Leader and Welsh Assembly First Minister, to stand down ,UNISON Cymru/Wales Labour Link Committee nominated Carwyn Jones AM , who is a UNISON member, to stand for Leader of the Wales Labour Party. Following a ballot of all UNISON Cymru/Wales Labour Link Affiliated members, Carwyn Jones topped the poll of the three candidates and the UNISON vote was cast in the Wales Labour Party leadership election in proportion to the number of votes received for each candidate.

The result of the election was Carwyn Jones was elected and subsequently elected to First Minister of the Welsh Assembly.

UNISON AMs Group

The UNISON AM's group has previously discussed a number of issues which are a major concern to UNISON members, including Positively Public, Two Tier Workforce, Service Group issues, Making the Connections, Citizenship and Community issues, as well as Housing Stock Transfer. The group has been particularly helpful around the Pensions and Living Wage campaigns and it is hoped a source of assistance in our work around Making the Connections and in the continued resistance to privatisation.

We are keen to work with the UNISON AM's Group and therefore they meet with representatives of the Labour Link Committee and, Service Groups, NEC members etc to promote UNISON policy.

UNISON AM's have continued to work hard within the Labour Group and Cabinet to pursue policies which are supported by UNISON. We have been grateful for this support and the ongoing positive working relationship.

Our relationship with the Welsh Assembly Government and individual Ministers has been productive, bringing real benefits to our members. Whilst we may not agree with every policy position from Welsh Assembly Government, we have a mature and constructive framework for dialogue. This robust relationship will be required through 2010 with the challenges that lie ahead in relation to "Making the Connections". The Labour Assembly Group coalition with Plaid Cymru has managed to make progress on many of its policies. Our influence through partnership and a shared agenda has brought real benefits to our members both in work and in the community. We hope to continue to exert a positive influence across the Party and Assembly Government.

The process of devolution continues to develop and evolve with new powers on the political horizon, if not hindered by the Conservative/Liberal Coalition.

UNISON Assembly Member Candidate Nominations

It has been recognised that UNISON support for potential candidates seeking nominations to stand as Labour candidates as AMs and MPs should not be carried out on the sole basis that they are UNISON members, but that they also support UNISON's policies and therefore the current arrangement is informal and a panel has been formed from the Cymru Wales Labour Link Committee to ensure Assembly candidates seeking the support of UNISON is consistent with their support of UNISON's aims and values.

General Election

The results of the General election, whilst disappointing for Labour, were not as bad in Wales as some feared. UNISON gave a great deal of support in key seats and indeed has had many messages of appreciation from successful candidates and those who were not so successful. Labour retains 26 seats in Wales with the conservatives on eight and Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru three each.

BNP

UNISON have assisted the anti-BNP campaign. The BNP, whilst contesting more seats than previously, failed to make any gains in Wales.

CONCLUSION

Cymru/Wales Labour Link continues to have an important role at Regional and Branch level. The process of development and improvement will continue through 2010/11.

We hope to encourage more UNISON Labour Link members to stand for civic and public office.

The Labour Link Committee will continue to encourage the role of the Labour Link Officer at Branch Level. It is recognised that this will need to be part of Branch Development Plans and possibly future Branch Assessments thus ensuring an integrated approach to the work of the union and the delivery of our objectives and priorities.

ACTION ON FORUM 2009 MOTIONS

Equalities Bill

UNISON Labour Link worked closely with senior UNISON officers to maintain our lobbying throughout the discussions around Labour's Equality Bill, including the wash-up period when final decisions had to be made. UNISON campaigned for some elements to be stronger, particularly on equal pay, but this does represent a significant step forwards for equality. It extends rights and protections on age and gender reassignment and introduces an extended duty on public bodies to promote equality for all equality groups. The main provisions of the Equality Act come into force in October 2010. The integrated public sector equality duty, the socio-economic duty and dual discrimination protection come into force in April 2011. Discrimination in goods and services because of age is banned from 2012 and private and voluntary sector gender pay transparency regulations start in 2013.

Financial System

Reform to the financial system has been a key element in UNISON's Million Voices campaign, which has been running for the past year with a particular emphasis on influencing the Labour Government. Labour Conference 2009 was a particularly key moment in the campaign, as well as a very successful Parliamentary lobby attended by many Labour MPs. Alongside Million Voices, UNISON Labour Link worked hard to influence the Labour Party manifesto, which included a number of financial measures sought by UNISON including proposals for a Post Office Bank, as well as tighter restrictions on loan agreements.

Public Services

The entire thrust of the Million Voices campaign has been to point out the benefits of public services to the wider economy. UNISON's concerns about the continuing threat of privatisation were consistently made to Labour ministers in the manifesto process. UNISON were particularly successful in persuading Andy Burnham to adopt the 'preferred provider' status for NHS services, in the face of strong pressure from some in the health department. UNISON Labour Link highlighted this as a key difference during the General Election campaign, with both Conservatives and Liberal Democrats promising to overturn the policy.

Public Sector and Contractor Pensions

UNISON Labour Link made the future of public sector pensions the key message in our election literature. In a direct mailing to almost 200,000 UNISON members, a special leaflet was enclosed featuring UNISON President Eleanor Smith. She highlighted the threat to pensions posed by both the Tories and Liberal Democrats. A similar piece featured in the magazine sent to 1.3 million UNISON members at the start of the election campaign. UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis, working with the TUC, secured a promise from the then Chief Secretary to the Treasury Liam Byrne that the deals negotiated between Labour and the trade unions would be respected.

Two Tier Workforce

UNISON Labour Link delegates to Labour Party Conference raised the two-tier workforce with then Labour Ministers, as they have done at a succession of Labour events. Practical success was achieved with the help of UNISON member Joan Walley MP, who enlisted the help of then Health Minister Ann Keen to resolve a two-tier dispute involving ambulance workers transferred from Parkwood Healthcare to West Midlands Ambulance Service.

Apprenticeships

UNISON have long campaigned for the National Minimum wage to apply to apprenticeships, and this has been consistently promoted by UNISON Labour Link. The Labour Government accepted such a recommendation from the Low Pay Commission this year and so from October, there will be a minimum wage for apprentices – albeit on a lower rate at this stage. This means that apprentices will be able to seek redress against employers who fail to pay the appropriate rate. The new apprentice minimum wage rate of £2.50 per hour will apply to apprentices under 19 and apprentices aged 19 and over, but in the first year of their apprenticeship.

General Election – Tory threat

UNISON Labour Link mounted a powerful campaign to warn members against the dangers posed by both Tory and Lib Dem policies. Working with the GPF, thousands of members were encouraged to register to vote and/or apply for postal votes. Almost 200,000 members received direct mail shots, while every UNISON member received a copy of UNISON Labour Link News outlining the dangers. Many thousands were contacted by telephone. UNISON Labour Link

also provided materials and support to Labour campaigns in many key constituencies.

Outsourcing in Essex

UNISON Labour Link have worked closely with colleagues in Local Government and key Labour councillors to campaign against the out-sourcing being promoted by the Conservatives in Essex. A flagship deal with IBM to outsource most key services has been strongly opposed, while national commentators have seen it as a possible model for the new Conservative led coalition government to apply elsewhere.

Council Housing

UNISON Labour Link have been at the heart of the campaign to restore council housing as a key plank of Labour policy, and welcomed the change in direction under the Brown government. UNISON worked closely with then Labour Housing Minister John Healey on the review of the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system and welcomed additional funding for new council house building for which we had long argued. In the election campaign, UNISON Labour Link made hundreds of thousands of leaflets available to Labour campaigners, highlighting the Tory threat on rent levels and security of tenure.

Recession and Disabled People

Labour's formal internal policy-making process for the last parliamentary cycle concluded at the 2008 Labour Party Conference. Support for, and expansion of the 'Access to Work' scheme was one of UNISON Labour Link's key achievements within that cycle. In the manifesto discussions, this remained a key element in UNISON Labour Link's work, as we pressed for key UNISON concerns to be included.

Increasing LGBT Participation in Public Life

UNISON welcomed the Speaker's Conference and argued the need for action to address under-representation. UNISON Labour Link continues to support UNISON members wishing to stand for election and has given positive support to LGBT Labour. During the General Election campaign, there was close co-operation, including support for publications aimed specifically at LGBT members. With a new round of candidate selections likely to start soon, and possibly new systems in place, UNISON Labour Link will give careful consideration to the best ways of ensuring proper representation.

Votes at 16

UNISON Labour Link's lengthy campaign in favour of lowering the voting age to 16 was successful at the 2008 National Policy Forum when the proposal was finally approved. Continued lobbying secured inclusion in the 2010 Labour manifesto, and it would have been enacted had Labour won the election.

Discrimination against women

UNISON Labour Link briefed Labour Party Conference delegates on a range of key issues designed to tackle discrimination against women, focusing in particular on equal pay, maternity pay, domestic violence, funding for rape crisis centres and action to improve rape conviction rates. Work continued throughout the year on strengthening and improving Labour's Equality Act (see first item above).

Labour Government and the Black Community

UNISON Labour Link placed a high priority on tackling the BNP during the General Election, with particular attention paid to areas targeted by the BNP. Working with the GPF and anti-fascist groups, UNISON Labour Link helped to ensure that the BNP failed to make progress in areas like Barking and Dagenham and Stoke, and suffered major reverses in council elections. UNISON Labour Link has also worked closely with BAME Labour to pursue issues of concern. UNISON Labour Link has worked with others within the union to address equality impact and pay issues, particularly in lobbying on Labour's Equality Act.

Trident

In the run-up to the manifesto, UNISON Labour Link joined a number of senior Labour figures in challenging the benefit of renewing Trident. Thanks to long-term campaigning by UNISON and others, there is now widespread support for this position.

UNISON Labour Link Role in General Election Campaign 2010

UNISON Labour Link played a major role in the 2010 election campaigns which included significant local elections as well as the General Election. In both, the BNP had been considered to pose a more substantial threat than in previous elections.

This report details the national activities undertaken. Regions provided direct support to a number of constituencies. We know that many UNISON members also played a significant part through their personal voluntary efforts in their own constituencies.

The General Political Fund intervened in the General Election campaign, with a powerful poster campaign highlighting the threat posed by future cuts. The Million Voices campaign which ran prior to the election had made a strong case for public services.

Postal Vote and Voter Registration Campaign

Building on pilots tested in previous years, UNISON ran a comprehensive voter registration and postal vote campaign in key constituencies. Using automated telephone calling, members were offered help in making their applications. Letters were sent to members responding to the phone call with forms already part-completed, and stamped envelopes addressed to the relevant local council. This replaced our previous system, where applications were received by a central clearing house and forwarded to the appropriate council. Response rates were much higher this year.

Automated Telephone Calling

Calls were made to members in key areas for the General Election, local elections and in areas where the BNP posed a substantial threat. The calls were made in the opening days of the campaign and followed up with a reminder call in the closing days. Members were asked about their voting intentions, and past voting patterns.

Direct Mail

In key constituencies, a direct mail package was sent containing a personalised letter and an A5 leaflet. In most constituencies, this was a letter from Chair of UNISON Labour Link Steve Warwick explaining the danger from Tory cuts, with variations in Scotland and Wales. The leaflet featured UNISON Vice

President Eleanor Smith and focused on the threat to public sector pensions. In areas where the BNP posed a particular danger, a specific anti-BNP leaflet was enclosed, with an appropriate covering letter. In London, specific text relating to the council elections was accompanied by a London focused leaflet. In total, some 200,000 packages were sent, arriving in the first week of the campaign before postal votes were received by voters

Local Key-seat Co-ordinators through TULO

In each region, affiliated unions were asked to seek volunteer Trade Union co-ordinators in key seats. In some areas, they effectively ran the election campaign, although in most cases they played a supporting role, encouraging local trade unionists to participate. Under tight new electoral rules, all such activities were clearly voluntary, with UNISON officers working in their own time.

Communication with all members – magazine

UNISON's main direct form of communication with members is through U magazine and the Labour Link magazine which is sent out in the same package.

The Labour Link colour magazine was entirely devoted to the election campaign, highlighting in particular the threat to public sector pensions and to public services. Variations were produced for members in Scotland and Wales, highlighting key issues in those countries. U magazine contained a detailed analysis of the Labour Government's record from the perspective of UNISON's service groups.

Communication with activists – UNISON Labour Link News

The monthly magazine to UNISON activists, UNISON Labour Link News, is sent with InFocus. The editions in the run-up to the election highlighted key dividing lines including pensions, public services, police funding and health policy.

Election Materials

Materials were supplied to a number of constituencies, including thousands of red car flags and thousands of UNISON branded clip-boards. A laminated A4 reminder of Labour's 50 top achievements proved very popular and was reproduced in leaflet form in some areas. UNISON Labour Link also worked closely with John Healey MP to produce over 200,000 leaflets warning tenants in social housing about the Tory threat on rents and security of tenure.

Policy input

UNISON Labour Link played a full part in the policy development process, through Labour's Partnership in Power and relevant Policy Commissions.

There was close involvement in the final discussions around the manifesto, and a clear restatement of Labour's support for the pensions agreements reached with UNISON.

Candidates

UNISON Labour Link supported a number of UNISON members who were part of UNISON's Parliamentary Panel of candidates. Other UNISON members and officers also stood as candidates. UNISON Regional officer Lilian Greenwood was elected in Nottingham South, and Chris Williamson won Derby South.

APPENDIX 3

LABOUR LINK Finance Draft Financial Statement for the Year ended 31 December 2009

<u>Expenditure Items</u>	<u>Actual 2009</u> £
National Expenditure	
Publicity, Adverts & Campaigns	5,047
Affiliations	1,506,500
	<u>1,511,547</u>
National Administration	
National Political Forum	89,264
Labour Link Committee	36,949
Administration including print, post	463,945
Labour Party Conference	153,222
	<u>743,381</u>
Labour Link Committee Ballot	48,301
Regional Expenditure	201,300
	<u>2,504,528</u>
Income	
Subscriptions	2,900,000
Bank Interest	7,660
	<u>2,907,660</u>
	<u>403,132</u>
Less Corporation Tax Payable	
Prior Year Reversal - Corporation tax	
Current Year Tax Provision	
Surplus	403,132

