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1. Branch meetings.

The branch committee has re-visited the guidance.

Democratic continuity: advice for branches, regions/devolved nations HO advice received 30.4.20.

https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10879/Democratic-continuity-advice-for-branches-regionsdevolved-nations/pdf/ucu_covid19-democratic-continuity.pdf

Though we are not considering scheduling any face-to-face branch meetings at present, the committee has met on-line in November 2020.

A branch meeting is planned for 3rd February 2021. The on-line meeting is open to branch members; and the zoom link will be sent to you by email.

The branch AGM is planned for April 13th 2021.

If you wish to stand for a position in the branch please email the branch recording officer, Alan Cousins, a.cousins345@btinternet.com or ucu.swest@gmail.com or by post c/o the UCU Exeter offices 1st floor, Brittany House, New North Road. Exeter, EX4 4EP

We will continue with the minimum requirements in the guidelines by keeping in regular contact with our members by email.

All branch members can contact officers and reps by the emails listed in this newsletter; the general branch email address is ucu.swest@gmail.com and members are welcome to contact us anytime.

Tony Staunton chair SWRMB

2. Welcome to all members new to this branch since the previous newsletter.

Many of us know John Hodgson from UWE.

Only those wishing to appear in the list are included. If you have any suggestions for the newsletter we are happy to hear from you.

Newsletter: A termly newsletter for retired UCU members is sent to all branch members for whom we have email addresses.

Email addresses: UCU encourages us to use our home email when we retire.

For more information please contact:

ucu.swest@gmail.com
or contact the officers below:

Chair: Tony Staunton tony.staunton@blueyonder.co.uk

Vice Chair: John Daniell john.daniell@btinternet.com

Secretary: Mike Farmer mikefarmer84@hotmail.com

Treasurer: John Daniell john.daniell@btinternet.com

Regional reps: Margaret George mmargaretg@gmail.com

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Returning Officer Alan Cousins a.cousins345@btinternet.com

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TC Gloucester: Ruth Amias ruthamias2000@yahoo.co.uk

TC Bristol: Barbara Segal barbara.segal@phonecoop.coop

TC Taunton & W. Somerset: Charles Henderson

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TC Plymouth: Tony Staunton: tony.staunton@blueyonder.co.uk

SW NPC GAS Ruth Amias, ruthamias2000@yahoo.co.uk

and Barbara Segal barbara.segal@phonecoop.coop

SW NPC D/C Liza Sentance lizasentance@hotmail.com

3. National Pensioners Convention

Some of you will already be individual members of the NPC.

<https://www.npcuk.org/join-us-and-get-involved>

Are you getting all the info?

If UCU HO has your email you should also receive regular updates on campaigns from UCU head office as well as occasional branch emails.

If this is not the case let us know and we can check with the H.O on your behalf.

In this branch we are affiliated with Western NPC and Devon and Cornwall branches.

The NPC website is <https://www.npcuk.org/>



4. TUC Pensioners Committee Jan 2021

Covid-19 Update and Priorities for the Year:

TUC is currently refreshing its strategic plan. There are overriding goals every year including improving lives at work and representing members. However, the TUC is more driven at present by the events of this and last year.

This is because of the need to respond to the Covid pandemic. There are complex issues surrounding sick pay, identifying key workers, protection of staff, furloughed staff, redundancies and the long term impact of the pandemic including its effect on the economy and any threat of a return to austerity. We could be facing a severe recession and unemployment on a large

scale. There are also implications from the loss of trade union members, despite NEU and UNISON having positive recruitment figures.



Rosie's own picture with permission

This isn't helped by the impact of Brexit on workers' rights and the need to maintain standards that are under threat by the current government. The TUC needs to develop good counter narratives to those of the far right. Need to protect jobs, workers' rights and public services.

There is a need to recognise that there will be an impact on carbon intensive industries as a result of initiatives relating to climate change.

Housing too is a massive issue, as is the gender pay and pension gap and changes to the state pension.

Reports from the Trade Unions:

UNISON: Congratulations to Christina McAnea following result of General Secretary election. It was a landmark decision for a woman to be elected as General Secretary of the largest union in the country with a majority of

women in membership. All present agreed that she is a much respected figure in the labour and trade union movement.

Virtual meetings are taking place. Uncertainty about when/whether conferences can be held during the year. I reported that the important topics as part of our workplan in 2021 would be:

Social care including implications of Brexit on staffing

TV Licences

Review of Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) procedures

Public transport funding post pandemic

Threat to Triple Lock and pensioner benefits

Revisit Motions carried in 2019 NRM Conference

UNITE: Massive redundancies and issues surrounding representation of members during a pandemic.

PCS: Virtual AGM being proposed.

BALPA: Widespread compulsory redundancies and airlines in financial difficulties.

RMT: Abuse of staff and travellers refusing to wear masks. From 25 January it will not be possible to top up Oyster Cards at underground stations.

UCU: Universities and colleges closed so the mass movement of students which clearly increased Covid cases won't be repeated.

NPC: Difficulties created by the pandemic. Talking to BBC on a number of issues. Concern over threat to Triple Lock, state pension and benefits. Some Labour led councils in North East are imposing Blue Badge parking charges,

may well spread to other local authority areas and is condemned.

Midlands TUC Pensioners: Issues - State pension age and gender pension gap. Transport and buses.



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Rosie MacGregor Chair UNISON National Retired Members

5. UCU Equality conference.



UCU's Equality Groups Conference 2020 was held online from Thursday 3 - Saturday 5 December 2020. This is an annual event that includes individual conferences for each equality strand (i.e. women, black and minority ethnic, disabled and LGBT members) and a plenary session for all those attending.

Members attend as individuals; I attended the Women's Conference. Here is part of one of the presentations.

Insecure Labour Report Kate Morgan, Maternity Action.

<https://maternityaction.org.uk/our-people/>

Kate Morgan presented her report produced with support of UCU, UNISON and Trust for London, on interviews with 10 women

Their major problems arose from Zero hours, Short term/fixed term contracts of Agency, casual & seasonal workers and being a low paid so called "self-employed" worker.

"Most people have plans for the future. They know where they want to live, they know when they want to have kids, they know if it's worth buying a house. But we haven't been able to plan any of that...Making those big life decisions both maternity and buying has been unsatisfying and really difficult to navigate and unstable and hard...it's the uncertainty of everything that really grinds you down." Claire, university teaching associate.

"I found it very difficult to work out whether I was entitled to anything. Even the government website I found very difficult...trying to navigate as a casual worker to find out what I was entitled to. I remember thinking if I am getting baffled by this there will be people out there who don't have the same educational privileges and who will find this even more baffling and won't know where to go or what to do." Hayley, Graduate Teaching Associate/Lecturer

Jo Corke SWRMB

6. Racism is a Trade Union Issue.

Racism and inequality have been at the centre of the COVID-19 crisis. Frontline workers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities have disproportionately suffered during the pandemic yet despite the crisis the

Tories have continued with the racist hostile environment.



Attribution: [Alisdare Hickson from Canterbury, United Kingdom, CC BY-SA 2.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons

Refugees, migrants and the Muslim community have been scapegoated throughout the crisis while deportation flights continue despite the Windrush scandal.

In the wake of George Floyd's death in the US hundreds of thousands were involved in the Black Lives Matter protests in Britain. Whether it's the disproportionate use of stop and search against black communities or the ongoing disparities on safety, pay and conditions for BAME workers racism is a trade union issue.

In Britain the trade unions have been at the forefront of opposing attempts by the Far Right to re-organise and build support. In these difficult times we need to make a stand against the growth of racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism and any attempt to divide working people.

That's why I'll be attending the trade union national conference event organised by Stand Up To Racism & the TUC on Saturday 27th February to discuss how we can build the fight against racism and inequality in our workplaces, decolonise our education

system and strengthen links between the trade unions and the wider anti-racist movement.

Please join me by going to the Stand Up to Racism website www.standuptoracism.org.uk or signing-up here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/fighting-for-anti-racist-workplaces-stand-up-to-racism-tuc-conference-tickets-132110840079>

On Saturday 20th March, the weekend of the United Nations annual international action against racism, more than 50 countries across the world will see protest action against institutional racism.

In Britain, socially distanced protests will take place across the country, **including Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth**, and a national online rally will take place with speakers representing the broad alliance of communities and organisations that make up the anti-racist movement. You can read more about this event at <https://www.standuptoracism.org.uk/category/events/>

On March 20 2021 we will come together united against racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism and fascism.

We'll stand in solidarity with refugees and migrants to send a powerful message to those in power that racism will be defeated.

Why not sign-up for the SUTR Newsletter and keep in touch with what's happening in your local area: www.standuptoracism.org.uk

Tony Staunton SW RMB

7. Trade Union history celebrated in stamps.



Trade Unions have featured on the stamps of many countries, and the Royal Mail featured the anniversary of TUC Congress in 1968 which was featured in an earlier newsletter. There was a commemorative sheet in 2018 for 150 years; I do not currently have those stamps.

The stamp is from Australia. The Australian Council of Trade Unions began in 1927 and convened to “consider the possibility of creating a representative body for the whole trade union movement in Australia”.

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/33>

The Australian Council of trade unions is still going strong as you can see here. <https://www.actu.org.au/>

The design shows images representing different Trades Unions. A shearer (rural), aircraft worker (transport), female lab assistant (scientific), a welder (metal), a dogman (building). Issued 9 May 1997 (with perforation 13½. Stamp collectors like this info)

Jo Corke SWRMB

8. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

This month includes a very special occasion for me, writes Tony Staunton, UCU SWRMB Chair. As a very long-standing elected member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament’s National Council, I recognise the huge effort and dedication by thousands of Peace activists to finally achieve the banning of nuclear weapons!

On 22nd January 2021 the new United Nations treaty will enter into force which will make nuclear weapons illegal in the countries that sign it. 51 countries have ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) with a further 86 signing it.



Public Domain-Merket 1.0

The 2017 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to ICAN – of which CND is a partner – for its tireless work in campaigning for this momentous achievement.

The terms of the TPNW only apply to the countries that have signed and ratified the agreement. And although the nine nuclear-armed states currently state they will not support it, the treaty is a significant pointer towards changing international attitudes to nuclear weapons. Previous treaties prohibiting chemical and biological weapons helped to stigmatise them in the minds of the

public. This is now taking place with nuclear weapons.

You can read more about this and other campaigns at <https://cnduk.org/tpnw/>

CND is calling a period of action in the run-up to the treaty entering into force.

Working with our partners in Parliament, CND is lobbying the British government to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and work towards the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

You can put pressure on your MP. Use our lobby tool to ask your MP to sign EDM1072

<https://cnd.eaction.org.uk/EDM1072> and go to <https://cnduk.org/nuclear-ban-week-of-action-contact-your-mp-about-the-treaty/>

The government is replacing its current nuclear weapons system, Trident, at a cost of at least £205 billion. This money should be spent on homes, education and health; improving people's lives without threatening the lives of others. CND campaigns for Britain to get rid of Trident and join the global majority of countries, who don't have and don't want nuclear weapons.

Please join us in CND now, <https://cnduk.org/> and campaign for Peace and prosperity.

Tony Staunton SWRMB

9. On-line interim UCU Congress 2020

The on-line interim Congress meeting scheduled for 28-30 October 2020 was cancelled.

Rescheduled: On-line interim Congress Saturday 13th and Tuesday 16th February 2021.

The UCU circular with details is at <https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/11284/UCU1057/pdf/UCU1057.pdf>

Jo Corke SW RMB

10. Teachers' Pensions | For Members

My Pension Online is the Teachers' Pension online portal designed to help you manage your pension more efficiently.

<https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/members/faq/my-pension-online/my-pension-online.aspx>

11. Editor's Note.

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome.

Jo Corke SW RMB

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