



Agenda items for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition steering committee meeting

Wednesday 17th June 2015

Developing TUSC's structures

- a) Position paper from the Independent Socialist Network – page three
- b) Comments and proposals from the Socialist Party – page nine
- c) Resolution agreed at the RMT Annual General Meeting, June 2012 – page thirteen
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What next for TUSC? – Proposals from the Independent Socialist Network

We present this paper in the spirit of comradely participation with our comrades in TUSC. We believe that TUSC is a significant achievement that should be maintained and developed. We present the ideas in this paper to assist that aim.

This document proposes that the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition should establish individual membership, so that supporters of TUSC can join it.

I begin with a restatement of the position of the Independent Socialist Network.

1. The Independent Socialist Network stands for and argues for a mass united socialist party.
2. By that we mean a party that openly states that its aim is to bring about the abolition of the capitalist profit system and its replacement with socialism, that is, a system in which the exploitation of labour is abolished and the means of production – transport, factories, technology, science, land and the minerals and water – are owned in common so that they can be planned democratically in the interests of all.
3. We believe that the task of abolishing capitalism and establishing socialism is the task of the working class, that is, the majority class in society that survives by selling its labour power.
4. The act of fundamentally changing the way our society is run from one based on exploitation and profit to one based on common ownership, solidarity and production for need rather than profit will only be achieved by the majority working class acting for itself to bring about this change. It will be the most democratic act ever in history.
5. We believe that a mass party is necessary to persuade the working class of the need for this change and to help carry it out.
6. It would have to be internationalist.
7. To build such a party it would need to be engaged actively in all the struggles of the working class. It would also need to present its programme at elections with a view to winning councillors and Members of Parliament, Assemblies etc.
8. The party would have to be completely democratic, with membership and a branch structure. Its leadership would have to be democratically elected and accountable.
9. It is self-evident that we are a long way from achieving such a party.
10. The ISN is committed to working with all those who share the goal of creating a new party, and all those who take even small steps towards that goal.
11. We favour a simple structure based on membership, with each member having an equal vote on each issue or election. We saw the establishment of Left Unity as an advance in this respect. In fact, there is a very strong case to argue that had TUSC allowed individual membership, there would have been no need for LU to have been formed.
12. We are not in favour of a federal structure that allows a minority group or individual to override the wishes of the majority.

13. We favour a party that allows groups (it doesn't matter whether we call them factions, tendencies, platforms or parties) who accept the party's aims and objectives to organise openly within the party to promote support for their political ideas and actions. Stated very simply, the aims and objectives of the party would be the socialist transformation of society. [The ISN would argue for the adoption of its own Aims and Principles¹ as the defining boundaries.]
14. The ISN recognises that working-class political representation is in a severe crisis. The ideas of socialism are not advanced by any major party. We share a belief with others in TUSC and elsewhere that there is a need for a socialist alternative to be presented to the electorate. We welcomed, therefore, the establishment of TUSC in 2010 to bring together socialists from different parties and none, and the RMT union, to present an alternative programme at the General Election that year. We have continued to support its interventions in council elections and in this year's General Election. The continued existence of TUSC is an achievement and must be sustained and developed.
15. We saw it as a significant step forward that rival and sometimes antagonistic socialist parties - the SWP and SP - were prepared to unite in the coalition, even if it is only for a temporary period at election times. We hope that working together will lead to more permanent unity in a single party. That ought to be the aim of all socialists.
16. We do not believe that the differences between the various socialist groups (both in and outside TUSC), serious though some of those differences may be, justify the separation of those socialist forces into competing parties. We are much weakened by these divisions and would be much strengthened by uniting in a single party with a shared common goal.
17. Unity in a single party would not mean the end of differences or disputes, but it would put them into a different context – differences between comrades who share the same ultimate goal of socialism. A healthy party would encourage debate and discussion. That is what can lead to greater clarity and understanding.
18. However, others in TUSC may not share our approach on all or even any of the points set out above.
19. We know that at the moment the SP at least is committed to maintaining the current federal structure of TUSC. Possibly others in the Coalition share that view.

1. Background:

- 1.1 TUSC has been in existence since 2010 – five years. It is an electoral coalition comprising of the RMT transport union, the Socialist Party, the Socialist Workers Party and the Independent Socialist Network. All of these four component parts are represented on the Steering Committee, which meets monthly. In addition, there are named individual members of the SC², who do not represent others.

¹ <http://www.socialistproject.org/statement-of-aims-and-principles/>

² TUSC national steering committee (May 2015):

Representatives from the Rail, Maritime and Transport workers' union (RMT), the Socialist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, and the TUSC Independent Socialist Network.

Plus, in a personal capacity: Steve Gillan, POA General Secretary; Chris Baugh, PCS Assistant General Secretary; Joe Simpson, POA Assistant General Secretary; John McNally, PCS Vice-President; Ian Leahair, FBU National Executive; Nina Franklin, ex-NUT President; Martin Powell-Davies, NUT National Executive, Anne Lemon, NUT National Executive, Brian Caton, ex-POA General Secretary; Cllr Keith Morrell (Southampton); Nick Wrack.

- 1.2 At present, the Steering Committee acts on the basis of consensus. Each member group represented on the SC and each individual member of the SC has the right to veto any proposal.
- 1.3 TUSC has just run 135 Parliamentary candidates in the 2015 General Election. Notwithstanding the low votes this was a positive step.
- 1.4 TUSC also ran 613 TUSC local election candidates, contesting seats in 111 councils, at the same time. In general these candidates performed better than the parliamentary ones.
- 1.5 Quite a large number of people contacted TUSC during the election period and since to express an interest and to 'join'. I believe that some 1,500 people (at least) have given their details. I do not know if this is everyone, or only those who got in touch via the national website. In any event, it shows a potential for TUSC to attract people to it.
- 1.6 The main issue arising from this is how we ensure that these supporters (and others who get in touch) can become active campaigners for TUSC.
- 1.7 The electoral campaigns will only remain positive steps if they are built on. If TUSC rolls up its banner, or lowers it, then the recent election campaign will have been little more than a very expensive eight-week foray into the electoral arena.

2. Problem A – Lack of consistent work in name of TUSC

- 2.1 In modern Britain a party can only grow to a significant size and presence in society by contesting elections. The fact that TUSC stands in elections is a necessary and essential requirement.
- 2.2 A party that seeks to win working-class support to socialist ideas can only increase its vote if it is visible, known and actively participates in working-class struggles on a regular basis, throughout the year.
- 2.3 This means participating in those struggles as they arise *in the name of the party that will present itself at election time.*
- 2.4 If TUSC does not operate all the year round in between elections but simply reverts to its component parts (in terms of presence on the ground, this means primarily the SP and SWP), then it will never achieve the sort of vote that would otherwise be achievable.

3. Problem B - You can't join TUSC

- 3.1 Due to the fact that TUSC stands in elections most people who know of it see it as a political party.
- 3.2 People expect to be able to join a political party. Many of them want to get involved in TUSC. Not unreasonably they think it is a political party – it stood in elections; it had a party political broadcast; it is registered with the Electoral Commission; it has a website that talks about joining TUSC etc.
- 3.3 The interest expressed by the 1,500 who contacted TUSC during the election campaign is indicative, we suggest, of a larger body of potential supporters who would be prepared to join TUSC.

- 3.4 Because people cannot join TUSC, they cannot participate in any meaningful way in its development. Most importantly, they have no democratic say over what TUSC does or says or how it develops. In contrast, members of the SP or SWP or ISN or RMT do have some say on the direction and development of TUSC via those respective affiliated organisations.
- 3.5 It is not good enough to say that people can get involved in the campaigns; help to deliver leaflets or make a donation. People expect to have a say in something that they are helping to build. At a branch level individuals who are not part of the SP or SWP will expect to have an equal role in decision making about local campaigns – this is an elementary aspect of working class democracy.
- 3.6 By not allowing membership TUSC is depriving itself of potential growth and of significant sums of money (membership fees).
- 3.7 At present there is no way to increase the size of the Coalition significantly. It can currently grow only in two ways:
- (a) The Coalition can gain new adherents, i.e. new organisations can apply to join the Steering Committee.
 - (b) The current groups who are members of the Coalition and who are represented on the SC can recruit new members who would then be affiliated through the group to the Coalition.
- 3.8 Neither (a) nor (b) offers much comfort for anyone who wants to see the Coalition grow in size and influence. In respect of (a) there is no serious prospect of any other union applying to join TUSC. In respect of (b) any recruitment of members to the SP or SWP is hardly likely to make much difference in terms of numbers being active in TUSC.
- 3.9 There is a real danger that TUSC stagnates, even as it contests further elections. Instead, we need to ensure that there is a real dynamic to TUSC: we start recruiting members, building branches and go into the next election campaign with some enthusiastic, lively campaigning activity under our belt, involving the new members.
- 3.10 The issue of membership is linked to the question of permanent campaigning activity in the name of TUSC and to the issue of TUSC branches.

4. Problem C – lack of an effective national centre

- 4.1 Currently, we have the TUSC Steering Committee, which meets once per month. However, this is not efficient for the day to day running of TUSC. The bulk of the work of running TUSC falls on individual full-time workers of the SP. They are to be thanked and congratulated for this. But we need a TUSC centre.
- 4.2 We need to involve representatives from each of the component parts in the running and administration of TUSC.
- 4.3 We lack a party press, press officer, social media, membership and finance. Consideration should be given to electing officers to undertake these responsibilities.

5. Proposals:

- 5.1 People must be allowed to join TUSC. We must have TUSC membership.

- 5.2 We can assume that people who apply to join TUSC or to get involved in TUSC are doing exactly that. They are not applying to join either the SWP or SP; otherwise they would do that. Of course they might eventually join one or the other as well.
- 5.3 We can assume that those who apply to join TUSC will expect to have some democratic involvement in TUSC.
- 5.4 The only way for that to happen in the present federal structure would be to have a membership section for all those who are independents, i.e. not members of the SP or SWP. Every member must have a voice through representation on the national Steering Committee.
- 5.5 At present the Independent Socialist Network organises TUSC supporters who are not members of democratic centralist parties such as the SWP or SP but it does not organise them all. One of the main reasons for the ISN not organising all the independent supporters of TUSC is because there is no formal way of joining TUSC. The ISN does not know who the independent supporters of TUSC are. They are not integrated into any formal TUSC structures. They are not on any central list.
- 5.6 Everyone who currently supports TUSC should be asked to join TUSC and should be given a membership card.
- 5.7 Membership cards give a sense of ownership, participation and belonging. They convey a democratic right to the owner of the card.
- 5.8 All members will be given a card that will contain wording along the following lines: "TUSC member 2015 – SWP/SP/Independent Socialist Network/RMT (choose appropriate one)". The cards should be attractively designed and have some suitable phrase about the aim of socialism.
- 5.9 There should be a membership fee. This is complicated because members of the SP, SWP, RMT and even the ISN all pay membership fees to their respective organisation.
- 5.10 We propose that every current member of the ISN, SP and SWP pays £10 to become a formal member of TUSC.
- 5.11 Members of the RMT who support TUSC should pay £10 to join it.
- 5.12 Membership of the ISN is currently £10 per year.
- 5.13 We propose that every person who contacts TUSC with a view to supporting it or joining it receives a letter/brochure setting out what TUSC is and pointing to its constituent parts.
- 5.14 All applicants who are not members of the SP or SWP (or any other democratic centralist organisation³) will be automatically joined up to the ISN and told that the annual fee is £20 (10 goes to the ISN and £10 goes to TUSC). This would be reduced to £10 (split 50/50) for the unemployed and students.

³ There needs to be more discussion about how to incorporate members of other existing socialist groups into TUSC. The ISN is in favour of groups such as Socialist Resistance, the CPGB and Workers Power being allowed to participate in TUSC but does not believe that they should be in an 'independents' section.

- 5.15 The ISN would guarantee to hold an annual conference for all these independent members. That conference would decide policy and elect ISN representatives on to the TUSC steering committee.

6. Branches

- 6.1 Branches will play a central role in developing TUSC at both a local and national level. They are the building blocks of a national organisation. They will be responsible for keeping TUSC alive, active and visible in the periods between elections.
- 6.2 At present, it is unclear how local branches of TUSC function. There is no formal structure or set of rules that local branches are expected to follow.
- 6.3 Although the national steering committee is run on a federal basis with a veto available to each of the affiliated organisations and individual members of the SC, there is no need for this to be replicated at local level.
- 6.4 A local branch of TUSC should be run on the basis of individual membership, with each member – whether SP, SWP, RMT or independent – having an equal say, and an equal vote on all matters.
- 6.5 Each local branch of TUSC should have an AGM at which branch officers are elected. Standing Orders for local branches should be drafted by the national steering committee.

7. National TUSC

- 7.1 The ISN believes that the national Steering Committee should abolish the veto and that decisions should be taken on the basis of a simple majority. The national SC should be elected by the members. We recognise, however, that other component affiliates are not prepared to move in this direction at this stage. We are not sure if they are ever prepared to move in such a direction.
- 7.2 We believe that it is essential for the Coalition to continue in existence to be able to contest elections and to actively campaign in between.
- 7.3 We reluctantly recognise that to enable this to happen there will have to be some constitutional arrangement that maintains the present federal structure and the right to veto *alongside* individual membership.
- 7.4 We therefore propose that votes at national conference are taken on the basis of individual membership (similar to the present situation) but that the national steering committee, while taking note of the votes at the national conference, would retain the right of veto. Of course, any organisation that were to use the veto against a decisions of conference taken by a majority of individual members present would have to take the consequences in terms of its reputation and authority.
- 7.5 We present this document for discussion.

Nick Wrack

TUSC National Steering Committee and national secretary of the ISN

14 June 2015

Reviewing TUSC's structures – comments, questions and proposals from the Socialist Party

AT THE post-election steering committee meeting it was agreed to begin a major discussion on developing TUSC's structures, starting at the June meeting. Below are some comments on from the Socialist Party and questions we believe need to be addressed in this discussion. There are also some proposals for immediate changes to be considered by the steering committee.

The current structure of TUSC

TUSC was formally established in January 2010 but the basic framework of how TUSC operates remains very similar to the 'Proposals for a general election coalition' paper agreed at the 2010 founding meeting. The last substantial update was made in 2012, titled 'How TUSC functions', (appended) which is the current agreed structure of TUSC. The Socialist Party feels that, having got TUSC to where we are with this structure, it should be the starting point for a discussion on developing TUSC and the basis upon which any structure changes would be made.

Trade union involvement in TUSC

In its five years of existence TUSC has experienced a greater level of trade union leadership and involvement than any other 'comparator' organisation. But the RMT is the only national trade union that is formally represented in TUSC at this stage, following a decision made at its 2012 AGM and subsequently re-affirmed. Moreover, there are some unions where there is clear support for TUSC but which have political funds that can not be constitutionally used to finance parties – or where the union is affiliated to Labour – where formal participation in TUSC by official union bodies is just not possible at this point.

The present structure of TUSC tries to overcome this problem by enshrining the participation of leading national trade union officials and national executive members on the TUSC national steering committee in a personal capacity, with decisions taken only on a consensus basis, and with a general provision for this to be replicated locally. This structure has worked well to date, with no organisation or leading trade unionist involved feeling that they have been 'bounced' into lending their name to an action taking place under the banner of TUSC.

A more recent innovation was the admission onto the national steering committee in 2014 of two members of the NUT national executive formally representing – and accountable to – the TUSC supporters on that body. NUT is one of those unions with a political fund but which is currently proscribed under its rules from officially supporting any political party.

The present arrangements are not, of course, ideal, especially as TUSC develops in the future. But, given the actual position in the unions, the Socialist Party believes a discussion on increasing trade union involvement in TUSC must address the following questions:

Question One: Is it an acceptable basis for union representation on the TUSC steering committee for TUSC supporters on union NECs to elect representatives, as TUSC supporters on the NUT NEC have done? And, if so, what are the next unions in which this should be attempted?

Question Two: Is it better to have majority voting on the steering committee, rather than consensus, even if that means that the RMT, and leading individual trade unionists, withdraw from TUSC?

Question Three: Should there be a minimum membership criteria for socialist organisations seeking representation on the steering committee, given that they would have the same 'right to veto' as trade unions and leading trade unionists representing thousands of workers?

TUSC at a local level

The current structure has a general provision for local TUSC steering committees or branches to "be established, where possible, for local government areas and parliamentary constituencies where it is planned to contest seats on whatever broadly similar basis [to the national steering

committee] is appropriate for each”. The practice at local level is mixed, including on how branch or workplace trade union representatives are involved, frequency of meetings, local constitutions, how the national consensus model applies locally, etc. The Socialist Party believes this is acceptable at this stage but is proposing two specific amendments (see below) to begin to formalise local arrangements.

Question Four: Is the current practice right that local branches or steering committees can be established, with their own procedures and criteria for involvement, without approval from the national steering committee?

Individual members of TUSC

There is a widely-recognised dilemma, at a local level and nationally, of how to represent within TUSC individual members who are not leading trade unionists, or who are not members of the Socialist Party, the SWP, or the Independent Socialist Network (all with representation on the steering committee), while not diluting the role of the trade unions as currently enshrined. This applies both nationally and locally.

This has not prevented the participation of independents in TUSC – more non-party individuals have stood as TUSC candidates in all elections since 2011 than the total number of candidates fielded in these elections by left organisations that have refused to join TUSC. TUSC is a home for independents. But the Socialist Party recognises that membership should be more formalised and is proposing amendments to that end, as well as codifying existing practice regarding the role of TUSC policy forming conferences.

Question Five: How should individual members be represented on the national steering committee? If a national membership card was made available for local groups with two categories specified – an affiliated member (a member of the RMT, Socialist Party, SWP or ISN) or a non-affiliated member – would it be sufficiently representative to allow the non-affiliated members present at TUSC conferences to elect steering committee representatives there?

TUSC’s status as a ‘registered party’

TUSC is registered with the Electoral Commission as a ‘national party with a central accounting unit’. This has had the big advantage of minimising the amount of organisational effort needed to be spent on complying with the legal accounting requirements for the registered party’s expenditure and donations. The threshold for a ‘reportable donation’, for example, is £7,500 for a national party, far higher than the threshold that would operate if TUSC had numerous ‘local accounting units’.

While this ‘legal structure’ will not be able to be sustained indefinitely as TUSC develops, the legal aspect must be part of the discussion on TUSC’s structures.

Question Six: Is it a priority for TUSC to appoint a full-time treasurer, which would be necessary if it had to comply with the requirements of ‘a registered party with local accounting units’?

Draft amendments to the current TUSC rules

Appended below are the current TUSC rules, with six amendments proposed by the Socialist Party for agreement by the steering committee, as motivated above, inserted in bold italic text.



How TUSC functions

Introduction

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) was set up with the initial aim of enabling trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to resist electorally the pro-austerity consensus of the establishment parties in the 2010 general election. After that election, however, a conference was held of candidates and campaign organisers which agreed to continue with TUSC for future electoral campaigns.

The position that was outlined in the TUSC founding policy statement remains. “The working class and peoples of Britain are facing a ruling class offensive against public services, incomes, living standards and trade union rights”, we wrote, and it is “an offensive which has support across all the establishment parties”. The constant mantra of Labour spokespeople since then, not of clear opposition to the austerity agenda but merely that it goes ‘too far and too fast’, only confirms this.

That was why, our founding statement went on, “the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition will contest elections, to show that there is a clear left-wing alternative to policies of public sector cuts, privatisation, militarism and environmental degradation”.

TUSC recognised, and still does, that there can be “Labour and non-Labour candidates who agree with our policies, who share our socialist aspirations, and who will be supported by left and labour movement organisations participating in our coalition”.

It was also recognised in the founding statement “that there are different strategic views about the way forward for the left in Britain, whether the Labour Party can be reclaimed by the labour movement, or whether a new workers' party needs to be established”. But TUSC was and remains “united on the need for mass resistance to the ruling class offensive, and for an alternative programme of left-wing policies to help inspire and direct such resistance”.

The arguments which motivated the formation of our coalition still need to be expressed. In the age of austerity, workers still lack a political voice.

1. Elections and policy:

- (i) The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition should remain registered with the Electoral Commission and maintain and develop a structure that enables it to fulfil its core task. This still is, essentially, to provide an opportunity for local groups of trade unionists, community campaigners and socialist organisations who want to stand candidates in elections to appear on the ballot paper, if they so wish, as part of a wider challenge – as TUSC candidates rather than as ‘Independents’.
- (ii) To this end, TUSC will endeavour to co-ordinate challenges in local and parliamentary elections. We will organise conferences open to local TUSC steering committees or branches, delegates from trade union branches, political organisations and independents supportive of TUSC, other local groups who are planning to stand candidates in such elections, **and any other member of TUSC**, and will back any efforts by TUSC **members and** supporters in Scotland to organise similar events to prepare for elections there.
- (iii) TUSC will also consider, on a case-by-case basis, endorsing candidates to stand under its banner at parliamentary and local council by-elections.
- (iv) The founding TUSC statement developed for the 2010 general election remains in place, with subsequent updating revisions, as a summary of TUSC’s core policies. In addition supplementary policy statements shall be developed for local elections and other future election campaigns, to be **agreed** at the relevant conferences, **subject to the final approval of the national steering committee**.

- (v) We also confirm that, as a federal ‘umbrella’ organisation, participating organisations will continue to be able to produce their own supporting material, subject to electoral law, as has been the practise successfully adopted in our election campaigns to date, which allow different organisations and local campaigns to collaborate under a common banner.

2. Structure and election organisation:

- (i) TUSC shall continue to have a Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of the RMT, the Socialist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, the TUSC Independent Socialist Network **and the TUSC supporters group on the NUT national executive**, plus in a personal capacity, **leading trade unionists and anti-cuts councillors**. The steering committee will operate by consensus.
- (ii) The adherence of further organisations will be subject to the approval of the steering committee. The steering committee can also agree to expand its membership to other leading trade unionists as it decides.
- (iii) TUSC supporters in Scotland shall continue to organise autonomously, with their own Scottish TUSC Steering Committee.
- (iv) Local TUSC steering committees or branches will be established, where possible, for local government areas and parliamentary constituencies where it is planned to contest seats on whatever broadly similar basis is appropriate for each.
- (v) **Local groups should also operate by consensus and with provisions made for the representative involvement of trade unionists – including for TUSC supporters groups in unions where formal affiliation is not possible – and the local branches of the TUSC constituent organisations.**
- (vi) **Membership of TUSC should be administered locally through TUSC groups, including the setting and collection of membership fees, but with provision for national membership at a nominal £1 fee for individuals unable to join a local group or establish one themselves.**
- (vii) The participants in TUSC recognise that this structure remains only an interim arrangement and that discussions must continue to take place on the best way to organise the coalition as it develops in the future. Future conferences of TUSC shall make provisions to include debates on this issue.

3. Candidates:

- (i) Candidate **applications** from **members of** organisations participating in the Steering Committee and the Scottish TUSC Steering Committee, **and those endorsed by local TUSC groups**, can expect to have their nomination papers for elections authorised by the coalition nominating officer as TUSC candidates. **Candidates** can also stand, if they wish, under the existing registered electoral name of **the constituent organisation they are a member of**.
- (ii) Other prospective candidates, from local trade union organisations or other organisations, can also request to stand as TUSC candidates. All such requests shall be referred to the Steering Committee for decision.
- (iii) Prospective candidates will be asked to endorse the coalition’s founding core policy statement – and the relevant supplementary policy statement for the election they are contesting – but, with that provision, candidates will be responsible for their own campaign.
- (iv) The Steering Committee will have the final say on all coalition seats and candidates.
- (v) The Steering Committee will seek to raise funds for national campaigning. For local challenges, the normal expectation will be that local deposits and campaigns will be financed locally.



Resolution agreed at the RMT Annual General Meeting, June 2012: Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC)

THIS ANNUAL General Meeting applauds the decisions of the Council of Executives to allow RMT branches and regional councils to use their Political Funds to support all candidates standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) in local elections in England and Wales, which took place on Thursday 3rd May 2012. This AGM congratulates all RMT members who stood as TUSC candidates, or whose branches or regional councils supported TUSC candidates, for contributing to the hard, long-term task of rebuilding political representation for working class people and communities in the most difficult period for our movement since the 1930s.

It is now possible to draw some political conclusions from the results of the local elections. TUSC candidates were able to obtain some very creditable results and to build on previous election campaigns in the 2010 general election and the 2011 local elections. We look forward to further development of TUSC in the future. We note that the average TUSC vote in the local elections was 6%, while Tony Mulhearn, standing as TUSC candidate in the Liverpool Mayoral contest, won over 4,700 votes.

The AGM believes that:

- All the main political parties in Britain advocate austerity policies, differing only over what timescale and with what severity cuts should be made to force workers and our communities to pay for a crisis caused by the banks. Leaders of both the ConDem government and the Labour Party opposition promote the false idea that there is no political alternative to austerity measures and echo international capitalist institutions (the European Union, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund) in demanding cuts to pensions, attacks on employment rights and privatisation of the welfare state.
- The development of a new political force that advances the ideas of trade unionism and socialism would give confidence to workers and help to create a viable political alternative to austerity.
- TUSC provides a nucleus of such a new political force.
- At this stage in its development TUSC should remain a coalition with a federal structure. RMT members should be encouraged to participate in area TUSC committees where they can be established. RMT should continue to be represented on the TUSC national steering committee.
- RMT should continue to support TUSC candidates in local and parliamentary elections under rule, subject to the authority of the Council of Executives.

The AGM instructs the Council of Executives to:

- Circulate TUSC newsletters and other material to RMT branches and regional councils;
- Promote activities of TUSC to RMT branches and regional councils;
- Put forward contemporary resolutions as appropriate to the 2012 TUSC conference to be held on 22 September 2012.



Resolution agreed at the RMT Annual General Meeting, June 2014:

The following resolution was agreed unanimously by the conference delegates:

“This AGM congratulates all those RMT members who stood in the May 2014 local elections as Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates.

“Thirty-five RMT members stood for TUSC in the London Transport Region with 53 RMT members standing as TUSC candidates overall.

“TUSC stood a total of 554 candidates in 507 wards in 86 councils, in the elections on May 22 2014. In addition, TUSC stood candidates in the directly-elected mayoral contests in Lewisham, Newham and Tower Hamlets, and in five by-elections in three councils without scheduled elections this year, that were held on the same day. In total 68,152 votes were cast for these candidates.

“As well as the RMT candidates there were 19 Communication Workers' Union members who were candidates, 18 members of the National Union of Teachers, 16 PCS members, and 20 members of the University and College Union. From the big Labour-affiliated unions, there were 74 Unison members standing for TUSC and 130 members of Unite.

“RMT congratulates Southampton councillor Keith Morrell who outpolled Labour and UKIP combined to retain his seat. TUSC candidates achieved other notable votes including Dave Nellist in Coventry (974 votes – 30%) and over 5,000 votes cast for TUSC in the London Borough of Waltham Forrest. In five authorities TUSC candidates averaged over 5%.

Media Blackout

“The AGM condemns the refusal of the BBC, commercial broadcasters and print media to cover TUSC's challenge in the May local elections. This was the biggest left of Labour challenge in UK electoral history. While UKIP enjoys blanket publicity trade unionists fighting against austerity are ignored.

“RMT will distribute regular material provided by TUSC to members, branches and regional councils. RMT news will carry a feature on TUSC's campaign for the May elections.

Countering UKIP

“This AGM believes the rise in support for UKIP shows why it is essential for trade unionists and socialists to build a workers' alternative to the three main parties of austerity. The trade union movement must not leave the ground clear for the Tories and stockbrokers of UKIP to pose as a radical alternative.

“TUSC is not in a position at this time to challenge UKIP on a national basis but the development of TUSC and growth in support for the project in different unions and communities shows that TUSC is an important start to that process which this AGM supports.

Fighting Austerity is an Industrial and Political Battle

“This AGM notes that our union is fighting, in the best militant traditions of RMT, to defend members from the impact of the government's austerity policies. Austerity affects our members in work through the implementation of McNulty and London Underground's Fit for the Future cuts programme. It also impacts on members as local services and benefits are cut.

“We will defend our members industrially but we also recognise that without political change we will be forever fighting defensive battles

“RMT will continue to participate as a founding element of TUSC with representation on the TUSC national steering committee, which provides a safeguard to ensure that no decisions can be made by TUSC without the authorisation of the RMT representatives.

“The AGM calls on branches and regional councils to organise events with local TUSC groups and supporters to promote the coalition.

Future Electoral Support

“This AGM notes the position of the 2012 AGM which is that RMT will continue to support TUSC candidates in local and national elections under rule. This AGM endorses that position.

“This AGM encourages RMT branches to consider standing members as candidates in the forthcoming general election”.