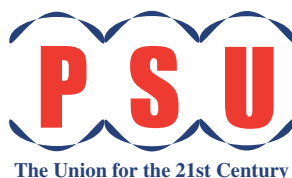


NEWS BULLETIN

Public & Private Sector Edition




Onwards & Upwards

We are sure that many of you will perhaps be surprised to learn of a quite dramatic development in the life of the PSU. The Union has been in discussion with another, highly respected trade union and, following those detailed discussions, where it quickly became apparent that we share similar values and aspirations, we have decided to consider entering into a "Transfer of Engagements" with that Union (Transfer of Engagements is something akin to an amalgamation where we would become a section of the umbrella union). The Union concerned is **COMMUNITY**.

So who are COMMUNITY? Like the PSU, they are a relatively new trade union, formed in 2004. However, the roots of *Community* stretch back over a hundred years. Community was formed by the merger of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) and the National Union of Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel (KFAT). A number of other trade unions - Carpet Weavers and Textile Workers, The National League for Blind and Disabled Workers, the National Union of Domestic Appliance and General Operatives and the British Union of Social Work Employees all now add to the growth and influence of *Community*. These amalgamations allow the smaller unions to retain their identity and provide their members with a higher level of service whilst providing the larger union that they have created with a stronger voice with which to influence both government and employers. The other similarity with ourselves is the fact that *Community* already have a number of members employed in our private sectors.

So what would be the benefits to our members? Those enhanced benefits would be enormous - better legal services and protection, better training facilities, more full-time officials and fantastic helplines and support for our members. There really is just too much for us to put in a bulletin. We are therefore planning a series of Roadshows throughout January 2012 where members can obtain all the information they need before a ballot occurs next Spring.

Why do we need to consider doing this? Simply that we cannot sit on our collective hands and hope that things will remain the same for ever. During the past twenty-five years or so, dozens of independent trade unions have pooled their resources and amalgamated to form more effective bodies and they have done it for a variety of reasons. Many unions find themselves financially stretched and unable to properly manage. It certainly isn't finance with the PSU, but we are not isolated from that threat. It could happen. However, we find this offer of amalgamation attractive insofar as it is a great prospect for our members and, we hope, for existing members of *Community*. As part of that organisation, the PSU will retain its respect and benefit also from the respected reputation of *Community*.

At its most recent meeting, the PSU Executive Council unanimously decided to support such a transfer, satisfied that the identity of the PSU will be preserved and the benefits for members will be immeasurably better. Watch out for news of our explanatory roadshows. 

Alec Leathwood retires

Deputy General Secretary, Alec Leathwood, finally retired from the PSU, aged 115, on the last day of October 2011.

Alec, a founder member of the PSU, was employed for eleven years and served our members brilliantly throughout that time. An infamous wrecker of golf trolleys, Alec nevertheless managed to carry his 86-stone weight around a full 18 holes in as little as two weeks. His cycling achievements were even more remarkable; he started a 26 mile charity cycle ride in 2001 and is expected to complete the distance soon (hopefully to coincide with the opening of the 2012 Olympics). No one could ever accuse the man of lacking tenacity. And it was that very quality that made him such a highly valued servant of the PSU. One of Jim's great problems however was that he often confused names. Leaving that regrettable, mental aberration aside, he never forgot where the teapot was. Forty cups an hour was his going rate. He spent so long crossing his legs that they took-on the appearance of a corkscrew.

Now, in his dotage, Alec has agreed to continue to serve his PSU colleagues in an unpaid capacity as Executive Council Chair. Apart from that, we understand that Alec may be indulging in "Extreme Sports" such as rock climbing and polar bear tickling.

Alec's Union career has been smattered with a variety of quite incredible incidents. Whilst investigating the advantages or otherwise of prison privatisation in the USA, Alec visited Washington DC. Passing the White House one morning, Alec was so overcome with emotion (knowing he was only yards from President Reagan) he threw himself to his knees in homage to the great one. This resulted in Alec sustaining serious injury to both knees (now long-gone and replaced with plastic hinges). Alec was of course embarrassed and subsequently claimed that he had slipped in snow.

Whatever the case, Alec's great contribution to this Union is appreciated and unparalleled.

Thank you Alec!



*We wish all members,
their families & friends,
a very happy Christmas
and a prosperous New
Year*