

THE NATIONAL UNION OF CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST ASSOCIATIONS

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday 15th January 1981

The Committee met at 32 Smith Square, Westminster on Thursday 15th January 1981 under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Johnston, TD. The names of the 111 members present are recorded.

1. Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman wished members a happy New Year in which we should look forward to increasing good news on the economic front, and congratulated all present and past members of the Executive Committee who had received New Year's Honours, as follows:-

Knights: Sir Russell Sanderson
Sir James Scott-Hopkins, MEP
Lieut-Col. Sir Dennis Titchener-Barrett, TD

DBE: Dame Mary Bridges
Dame Shelagh Roberts, GLC, MEP

CBE: Mr Michael Holt, CBE
Lieut-Col. Basil Rhodes, CBE
Mr Neil Westbrook, CBE

OBE: Mr John Bowis, OBE
Mr Peter Brown, OBE
Mrs Pamela Fawke, OBE
Cllr Mrs Jean Gill, OBE
Mrs Joy Harris, OBE
Mrs Fay Norris, OBE
Mrs Gertrude Pawson, OBE
Cllr Bob Wall, OBE

MBE: Mr Norman Slipper, MBE

He referred to changes at Central Office in which Lord Boardman became a Joint Treasurer of the Party and Mr Alan Howarth a Vice-Chairman of the Party Organisation. The Secretary had written on behalf of the National Union to welcome Lord Boardman, who replied giving his apologies for this meeting as he would not properly assume his new responsibilities until after Mr McAlpine returned from abroad on 20th January. The Chairman welcomed Mr Tony Durant, MP as the new Chairman of the National Local Government Advisory Committee and the Committee recorded its gratitude to his predecessor, the Hon. Charles Morrison, MP for his past services. Also welcomed were Miss Angie Hills, the new Northern Area YC Chairman and Mr David Hunt, the new National CPC Advisory Committee Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman gave advance notice that the Prime Minister hoped to invite all members of the Executive Committee to a cocktail party at No. 10 on Wednesday 29th April at 6.30 p.m. following the meeting of the Committee on that date.

Members were informed that, owing to a forecast deficit of £750,000 in 1981/82, Central Office was having to cut expenditure by 10% and the National Union's cash limit had consequently been reduced to £31,000 to save £3,000. The Secretary had prepared a budget accordingly, and it was proposed to reduce Conference costs, particularly on the handbook. To achieve further reductions, members decided to refer to the GP Committee

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for detailed review of future meetings a suggestion to discontinue the January NUEC meeting and, in view of the 33% reduction in ordinary return train fares now available for meetings at Central Office, it was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Mr Michael Craig-Cooper, TD and carried unanimously that members who claim reimbursement of travelling expenses should do so at the cheapest rate available.

The Chairman referred to the death of Lord St Helens, MC and members stood in silent tribute.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies from 29 members were noted and recorded.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 1980, which had been circulated with the agenda, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Discussion on the Social Services

The Chairman invited the Rt Hon. Patrick Jenkin, MP, Secretary of State for Social Services, to lead this discussion. Mr Jenkin reviewed the steps taken by his Department in fulfilment of the General Election manifesto and said that, while a very great reduction in all expenditure had been achieved over a full year by steps to reduce duplication, over-manning and fraud, the election pledges and the maintenance of the "safety net" for those in greatest need, e.g. children, the aged and the disabled, had been kept. The Health Service was the only programme in public expenditure which had maintained its growth, and better use of funds was accelerated by adjustments and increases in contributions, reduction of paperwork and bureaucracy, encouragement of private health insurance provisions and lifting the ban on fund-raising. In local authority services headquarters staff had been cut by 8% and further cuts would have to be made, and the importance of the voluntary side was being stressed as a means of humanising the social services.

Mr Jenkin dealt with questions on family planning for the under 16s, the monthly payment of child benefits, the possible supply to the CTU of consultative documents regarding the infiltration of Marxists, the burden on small businessmen caused by the payment of employees' sick benefits, preventive medicine and the problems of alcoholism and pre-natal care. The Chairman warmly thanked Mr Jenkin, whose other engagements had necessitated advancing the time of this discussion, for his comprehensive and interesting talk on the important subjects of his portfolio.

5. Business arising from the Minutes

Members were informed that the Prime Minister would attend the Central Council Meeting in Cardiff on 27/28th March. The Rt Hon. Sir Keith Joseph, Bt, MP, Rt Hon. John Biffen, MP and Rt Hon. Nicholas Edwards, MP had agreed to participate in the Open Forum on Industry and Trade on the Saturday afternoon, to which it was hoped to attract as representatives and additional representatives those particularly involved in industry and commerce, e.g. members of industrial councils. Areas were urged to help in the submission of motions for the agenda which were due by 12th February, and the Committee were informed that Rt Hon. Edward du Cann, MP had accepted nomination as President of the National Union.

6. Disputes within the Bournemouth East and Thurrock Associations

Members were told that the Officers had had a long session on 11th December last to consider these two disputes and to see the parties concerned, and their conclusions and recommendations were given in copy "B" circulated and appended to these Minutes. The Secretary gave a brief report on the background to these disputes. The Officers' recommendations on the Bournemouth East dispute were then unanimously

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approved on a motion by Mr Roy Niles, TD, seconded by Mr Brian Edwards, and the recommendations on the Thurrock dispute were unanimously approved on a motion by Mr Peter Alder, seconded by Lieut-Col. Sir Dennis Titchener-Barrett, TD.

7. Report from the Standing Review Committee

On the Chairman's invitation Sir David Davenport-Handley, OBE, JP, DL, Chairman of the Standing Review Committee, reported on the Committee's meeting that morning and members unanimously approved for submission to the Central Council the SRC's two recommendations that the National Union Rules should be amended so that (a) both the immediate past Chairman of the National Union and the immediate past Chairman of the Executive Committee should become ex-officio members of the General Purposes Committee and (b) each of the three Local Government Association Conservative Groups should have six representatives to the Central Council and Party Conference in addition to their Leader. The SRC also recommended that there should be no major changes in the Conference handbook, although some minor savings can be made in the cost of printing, but that a registration fee per representative of £1.50 including VAT (if chargeable) should be collected from Constituency Associations when the representation form A1 was submitted and direct from other representatives, as a contribution to help offset the cost of administration and the handbook. This was in line with the present practice for the Young Conservative National Conference and would help in the budget reduction of 10%. This recommendation was approved unanimously on a motion by Cllr H. D. Moore, CBE, seconded by Mr Peter Alder, for implementation this year, without reference to the Central Council.

It was noted that a recommendation would be made to the SAC on Candidates regarding the maximum subscription which an MP is permitted to make to his Constituency Association and that the SRC was inviting Mr Stephen Moon, Chairman of the National Association of Conservative Graduates, to its next meeting on 19th February to enable him to expand in greater detail on a paper he had submitted, and would report to this Committee in due course.

The Chairman thanked Sir David for his report.

8. Alterations to Rules of the National Local Government Advisory Committee

Mr Tony Durrant, MP, Chairman of the NLGAC, moved the alterations to its Rules as shown on copy "C" appended to these Minutes. This was seconded by Cllr R. W. Wall, OBE and approved unanimously, subject to the reference in rule 5.5 being amended to "the Chairman of the National Union Executive Committee."

9. Consideration of resolutions received from Area, Constituency and other organisations

The Committee approved the action taken on the 24 resolutions shown on copy "D", replies having been received to 14 of these.

10. Area Chairman's report

Mr Roy Niles, TD, Chairman of the Western Area, reviewed the results of the 1979 General Election in which 2 seats each were won from the Socialists and Liberals, with a swing of 6½% compared with the national average of 5½%. We now held 24 of the 29 constituencies and all 4 European seats. The Parliamentary Boundary Commission's proposals would probably result in 2 additional Conservative seats. As regards local government, Avon, Somerset and Devon were Conservative-controlled and, despite tensions in Avon which contained Bristol (the only Socialist-controlled district in the Area) our control would probably be retained with reduced majorities this year. The situation was completely different in Cornwall, where the bulk of the seats were held by Independents and where, to be successful, we must show positive evidence of the advantages of Party politics. The Area's problems were mainly unemployment, particularly in Cornwall, transport and the pattern of activities during June/September because of the intensive holiday industry, but voluntary efforts in fund-raising and Party organisation were very great and Central Office had assisted in the appointment of a City Agent in Bristol and in attempts to set up joint headquarters and staff in Plymouth. Mr Niles' report was received with applause.

10a. The Rt Hon. Lord Thorneycroft, CH, Chairman of the Party Organisation, referred to the Boundary Commission's re-distribution proposals which would be before Parliament in 1982 and said that active consideration was now being given to the organisational set-up in the interim to meet the Party's twin needs of a better presentation of where we stand and branch organisation to increase membership and make it more effective. To this end he proposed that after the Local Government elections a campaign should be launched which might be entitled "the Year of the Branch".

11. Business for the next meeting

The Chairman informed members that Sir James Scott-Hopkins, MEP now hoped he would be available in this country to speak at the next meeting and that Mr John Peake wished to present a paper on mutual aid at that meeting.

12. Any other business

(a) Dr Alistair Smith expressed concern at the activities of the Conservative Europe Reform Group and felt that its real motives should be pointed out to those involved. Mr Jim Spicer, MP, MEP supported this and said that action was being taken to concentrate the efforts of the Conservative Group for Europe in the House of Commons itself.

(b) The Chairman asked members who were interested in a CDU Conference in Berlin from 22nd to 28th March (which unfortunately clashed with the Central Council Meeting) to contact the Secretary for full details.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.

THE NATIONAL UNION OF CONSERVATIVE AND UNIONIST ASSOCIATIONS

Executive Committee Meeting - 15th January 1981

(Resolutions received from
Constituency, Area and other organisations)

1. Information Processing and Telecommunications (Telematics)
Industries

"Conference deplores the lack of an explicit and effective national policy to foster Britain's indigenous information processing and telecommunications (telematics) industries. Conference calls upon this Conservative Government to conduct an urgent review of its position on this subject."

Passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' Annual Conference on 1st November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph, Bt., M.P.

2. Conservative Trade Union Organisation

"This Conference calls upon the Conservative Party to re-iterate unequivocally its commitment to a Conservative presence, policy, and purpose in Trade Unionism, by restating as a first and essential step its support of and commitment to the Conservative Trade Union Organisation."

Passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' Annual Conference on 1st November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Lord Thorneycroft, C.H.

3. Immigration

"In view of the unemployment situation, the economic state of the country, the shortage of housing, and the strain placed upon the National Health Service, this Association urges the Government to stop all immigration."

Passed by 13 votes to 2 by the Hemsworth Executive Committee on 11th November when 18 members were present.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. William Whitelaw, C.H., M.C., M.P.

4. Support for the Prime Minister

"This Association affirms its unflinching support for the Prime Minister in her attempts to resuscitate the economy of this country."

Passed by the Ruislip-Northwood Executive Committee on 12th November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.

5. 1947 Town and Country Planning Act

"That this Council supports the Government's efforts to hold down rate rises, but believes that meaningful expenditure restraint can only be achieved if the Government removes some of the statutory functions required to be performed by local authorities and recommends removing requirements for "detailed" planning approvals under the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, so enabling large staff cuts to be made in the planning departments of all authorities with minimal adverse effects."

Passed by 71 votes to 38 by the West Midlands Area Council at its half-yearly meeting on 15th November when 182 members were present.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Tom King, M.P.

6. Pop Festivals

"That this Constituency recommends the Government to give Local Authorities complete authority with regard to the siting and control of pop festivals within its area."

Submitted by Rossendale and considered by the North Western Area Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Tom King, M.P.

7. Council House Sales

"That this meeting of the Tottenham Conservative Association, whilst wholeheartedly welcoming the Housing Act of 1980, deplores the inefficiency and incompetence, indeed real indifference, of the Government's Information Service and the Conservative Central Office which is resulting in a far smaller take up of Council House sales than should be the case and allows ordinary decent Council tenants to be frightened from exercising their legal rights."

Passed unanimously by the Tottenham Executive Committee on 21st November.

Forwarded to: Mr. John Stanley, M.P.

Copy to: Rt. Hon. Lord Thorneycroft, C.H.

8. Denigration of National and Local Government

"This Group deplores the denigration of National and Local Government by certain Government Ministers and would warn those Ministers that cutting certain services, particularly highway maintenance, will result in a far greater cost in the not too distant future. It would also remind those Ministers that National and Local Government Officers provide a valuable service to the public."

Proposed by the Local Government National Group and passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine, M.P.

Copy to: Rt. Hon. Angus Maude, T.D., M.P.

9. Road Construction Sub-Units

"This Group condemns the indecent haste with which Ministers have attempted to wind up the affairs of the Road Construction Sub-Units without adequate investigation into the wider implications of their decision."

Proposed by the Local Government National Group and passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Tom King, M.P.

10. Superannuation of part-time staff in Local Government

"This Group hopes that the Secretary of State for the Environment will quickly approve and publish the regulations for the superannuation of part-time staff in Local Government, to which the United Kingdom Steering Committee and all parties have long been committed."

Proposed by the Local Government National Group and passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine, M.P.

11. Employee Share Ownership and Profit Sharing Schemes

"This meeting urges the C.T.U. National Committee to encourage the more rapid development of employee share ownership and profit sharing schemes. Such a development should be accompanied by more radical tax concessions than are at present granted to workers who pay tax at the standard rate. We believe that a tax free performance element in pay would help accelerate a change in attitudes and develop the whole participative process."

Proposed by the A.S.T.M.S. C.T.U. Group and passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Mr. Peter Rees, Q.C., M.P.

12. Industrial Tribunals

"Bearing in mind the way the Labour Party ensures full representation on industrial tribunals, this C.T.U.N.C. deplores the statement made by Patrick Mayhew, M.P., Under Secretary of State for Employment, at the C.T.U. National Conference regarding the Government's invitation to M.P.S.L.G. to make nominations for industrial tribunals. The Committee believes that the C.T.U. is far more representative of trade unionists and calls on the Party to press the Government to review this decision without further delay."

Proposed by the Northern Area C.T.U. and passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. James Prior, M.P.

13. Health Service

"This meeting deploras the suggested relinquishing of the long established pay links between the Civil Servants and the administrative and clerical staff of the Health Service. This represents a serious backward step and is likely to make a previously conscientious and peaceable group of workers into militants."

Proposed by the Local Government and Health Service Group and passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Dr. Gerard Vaughan, M.P.

14. Youth Employment (Training) Scheme

"This Group believes that a Youth Employment (Training) Scheme should be organised within the Health Service."

Proposed by the Local Government and Health Service Group and passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Dr. Gerard Vaughan, M.P.

15. Local Government A.P.T.C. Staffs - Pay Claim

"That in order to avoid any embarrassment to the Government by the distortion of the facts regarding the impending settlement of the 1979/80 pay claim due on the 1st July 1980 to the Local Government A.P.T.C. staffs, immediate steps should be taken to inform and educate the general public that this settlement has no relation to or bearing on the proposed 6% cash limits for the 1980/81 pay claims."

Passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Tom King, M.P.

16. High Technology Industries

"The recent announcement of redundancies and closures at I.C.L. emphasises the need for urgent and immediate Government action to foster the high technology industries on which Britain's future prosperity depends."

Passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph, Bt., M.P.

17. Firemen's Pay

"This C.T.U. National Committee urges H.M. Government to encourage Local Authorities to ensure that the agreement, negotiated in the lifetime of the last Government between them and the Fire Brigades Union so as to avoid the need for subsequent industrial action in this vital sector, is fully honoured."

Passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. William Whitelaw, C.H., M.C., M.P.
Copy to: Rt. Hon. Tom King, M.P.

18. Firemen's Pay

"Bearing in mind the public promises made in the House of Commons and elsewhere by Mrs. Thatcher and other leading members of the then Opposition at the time of the last firemen's strike in 1977, to countenance the breaking of such an agreement now would bring into doubt the integrity of the Cabinet and the Conservative Party who not only acknowledge that the uniformed services are special cases in wage negotiations, but who are also committed to the upholding of all trade union agreements."

Passed by the Conservative Trade Unionists' National Committee on 22nd November.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. William Whitelaw, C.H., M.C., M.P.
Copy to: Rt. Hon. Tom King, M.P.

19. National Enterprise Board

"This Association recommends that the workings of the National Enterprise Board now be speedily wound up."

Carried unanimously by the Normanton, Rothwell and Stanley Executive Committee on 2nd December when 17 members were present.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph, Bt., M.P.

20. Party Political Broadcasts

"That this Association recognises that the present high level of unemployment has been brought about not by the necessary financial and economic policies of H.M. Government but chiefly by a general international trade recession which is causing substantial unemployment throughout the Western World. The Aldershot and North Hants Conservative Association wholeheartedly supports the measures which are being taken by the Prime Minister and her colleagues to alleviate the effects of unemployment in the United Kingdom, particularly in regard to school leavers. However, it urges the Central Office of the Conservative Party firstly to bring more actively to the notice of the public the international nature of the problem by devoting an early Party Political Broadcast

solely to unemployment and quoting in such broadcast the percentages of unemployed in the European countries, Canada and the United States of America. Secondly to detail the actions which are being taken by the Government."

Carried unanimously by the Aldershot and North Hants Management Committee on 2nd December.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Lord Thorneycroft, C.H.

21. Development and Industrial Growth in the North East

"This Council draws H.M. Government's attention to the high level of unemployment in the North East of England and urges it to take a more positive approach to abolish the restraints to development and industrial growth which would aid this area while not putting at risk the policy of reducing the rate of inflation."

Submitted by Teesside Middlesbrough, and carried with an overwhelming majority by the Northern Area Council half-yearly meeting on 6th December.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Michael Heseltine, M.P.

22. Restoring the British Economy

"This meeting recognises and supports the present Government's determination to restore the British economy, which was undermined by Labour Governments between 1974 and 1979, and urges all Ministers concerned to be very mindful of the social implications of their decisions."

Submitted by Jarrow, and carried with an overwhelming majority by the Northern Area Council half-yearly meeting on 6th December.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, Q.C., M.P.

23. Cuts in Public Spending

"While urging further cuts in public spending, this Council looks forward to these cuts being made by reducing bureaucracy, waste and overstaffing in all aspects of Government activity rather than in reductions in services to industry or the general public."

Submitted by South Shields, and carried unanimously by the Northern Area Council half-yearly meeting on 6th December.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. John Biffen, M.P.

24. Cuts in Defence Expenditure

"That this Council, in the knowledge that it is Great Britain's duty to play its full part in establishing and maintaining peace in the world, views with alarm the leak which indicates further possible cuts in defence expenditure."

Submitted by Morpeth, and carried unanimously by the Northern Area Council half-yearly meeting on 6th December.

Forwarded to: Rt. Hon. Francis Pym, M.C., M.P.