

TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION PRESS PACK

Our five key pledges

- **End cuts and austerity. For a democratic socialist society run in the interests of the millions not the billionaires.**
- **Trade union rights to fight low pay. £10 an hour minimum wage now, scrap zero hour contracts.**
- **A mass council home building programme and immediate introduction of rent controls.**
- **Scrap student fees. Free education as a right for all.**
- **For democratic public ownership of our NHS, railways, public services, utilities and banks.**



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TUSC2015.COM

INTRODUCTION



TUSC is fielding the fastest growing general election challenge, standing in over 130 parliamentary seats and over 600 council seats on May 7. It is the newest political party to have an election broadcast this year; and TUSC's rapid growth is down to its unique anti-austerity policies.

Anti-cuts

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition has the distinction of having never supported cuts or privatisation, and of all the other significant general election campaigns is the only one not to commit to support austerity in the next parliament. TUSC councillors, spread around the country in Southampton, Walsall, Leicester, Warrington and Hull, have moved no-cuts budgets and refused to back attacks on jobs and services at a local level, and this is a policy TUSC is committed to continuing at a parliamentary level. Internationally, it is an anti-austerity appeal that has seen Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain reach such prominence.

Standing up for workers

TUSC has the backing of one of Britain's most militant unions, the RMT (Rail, Maritime and Transport Union) and was co-founded by the late Bob Crow, that union's former general secretary. The RMT, with 80,000 members, has subsequently endorsed TUSC at three consecutive conferences. In total, 15 national trade union figures are standing as part of TUSC: from Unison, the National Union of Teachers (NUT), Usdaw (retail and distribution union), PCS (Public and Commercial Services Union), NAPO (National Association of Probation Officers) and Joe Simpson, the assistant general secretary of the Prison Officers Association (POA). This is the largest number of leading trade unionists to stand for any party – and three quarters of our general election candidates are trade union activists; and the rest are active housing campaigners, anti-fracking activists, student campaigners, anti-racist activists. TUSC is endorsing the NUT education manifesto, the Unite housing workers' manifesto, the Blacklist Support Group and the Trade Union Freedom bill, as well as actively supporting strikes and workers' struggles across Britain.

Mass support for TUSC policies

Whenever key TUSC policies are polled, there is huge support.

- 85% would support the implementation of the living wage (YouGov, 25/5/14). The TUC last year called for a £10 an hour minimum wage. TUSC campaigns to reach and surpass that, with an immediate raise to £10 an hour.
- 84% think that the National Health Service should be run in the public sector, and the renationalisation of energy companies, the Royal Mail and the railway companies reaches 68%, 67% and 66% respectively (YouGov 4/11/13). TUSC's election platform includes opposition to PFI and private companies in the NHS, and the renationalisation of these key industries.
- 80% said social housing should be available for people who can't afford the cost of private renting as well as providing a safety net (Ipsos Mori, 12/11/2014) and 56% would support rent controls for private housing (YouGov, 4/5/14). TUSC stands for a mass council house building programme to provide jobs and homes, and rent control.
- Ending all cuts was one of the top issues in a survey conducted for Manchester Evening News, with over 5,000 participants (30/03/15). TUSC has the distinction of voting consistently against cuts in local government, and it is a central policy in the TUSC manifesto.

MEET OUR CANDIDATES



* = personal capacity



Dave Nellist, Former Labour MP, TUSC Chair and Coventry North West candidate

“Our starting point is that TUSC is 100% against austerity. This is a rich country, the fifth richest on the planet. It’s just that the wealth is in the wrong hands – in the hands of a few millionaires and billionaires.

“Whilst we’ve had £80 billion worth of cuts in public services, in jobs and in living standards in the last five years, bankers and the top people in the finance industry have had £80 billion in bonuses. They’ve had recovery, we haven’t.

“The rich should pay to sort out the economic mess, not the ordinary people of England, Scotland and Wales. That’s what makes TUSC different.”



Joe Simpson, POA Assistant General Secretary* and Enfield North candidate

“I’m standing for TUSC because I’m sick and tired of the thieving rob-dogs running this country. We’re being robbed and yet the trade unions are still filling the coffers of a Labour Party that has done nothing to defend us. We need an alternative because Labour has totally forgotten about working class people.”



Mary Jackson, contesting Ed Miliband’s Doncaster North seat

“It was the miners’ strike in 1984/5 that made me a socialist. I couldn’t stand by any longer whilst Thatcher was destroying our communities. So I got involved in Women Against Pit Closures and was active in the anti-poll tax movement.

“When I stood as TUSC candidate for mayor, we organised against the vindictive bedroom tax. Instead of penalising people for being poor, TUSC demands that Doncaster council builds far more affordable social housing, creating jobs for construction workers and apprenticeships for our young people.”



Jenny Sutton, UCU branch chair* and Tottenham candidate

“The Tories plan a return to the 1930s and the end of the welfare state. Labour won’t challenge the lie that the deficit must be reduced by cutting public services. All the main parties falsely blame migrants for low pay, lack of housing and over-stretched schools & hospitals. This is racist divide and rule.

“We have to reject those arguments so that our side can unite against the real enemy – the bankers, corporate fat cats and tax-dodgers who caused the crisis in the first place.”



Kingsley Abrams, Unite activist* and Bermondsey & Old Southwark candidate

“At the end of January 2015 I resigned from the pro-austerity Labour Party after over 30 years of membership. I am now standing for TUSC as no other party countenances an alternative to austerity even though voters in other European countries are keen to give it a try. There is always an alternative.

“I was a Labour Councillor for 23 years. I was also suspended by Lambeth Labour Group for opposing cuts.

“I was Labour’s parliamentary candidate in North Southwark and Bermondsey in 2001 where I came second with 30.8% of the votes.”



Simon Hickman, FBU* and Manchester Gorton candidate

“A lot of people tell us they’ve given up on politics. They don’t see anyone who speaks to them. So they find it really refreshing when they see us.

“Our union disaffiliated from Labour after our pay dispute with a Labour government. But the workers’ movement needs its own political voice. If Labour isn’t it then we need something else.

“We successfully fought to keep the library and swimming baths open. There have been devastating cuts in Manchester. We want to bring the resistance together, and say we don’t want to cut any of them.”

MEET OUR CANDIDATES



* = personal capacity



Owen Herbert, RMT branch secretary* and Aberavon candidate standing against Neil Kinnock's son

TUSC candidate Owen Herbert has the sort of credentials, as a local trade unionist (Owen is branch secretary of the Swansea RMT), that they would once have expected of a Labour candidate in a working class constituency like Aberavon.

We had offers of help in the campaign - people who'll share the news that there is a local working class, trade unionist and socialist that you can vote for, people willing to put up posters and leaflet or canvass for Owen.



Dave Pitt, FBU regional chair* and Dudley North candidate

"All the establishment parties, Labour, Tories, Lib Dems, share a huge austerity agenda. As a firefighter, I can see that the service in the West Midlands is already very lean. It's been almost hacked to the bone. Any more cuts will result in job redundancies. So I'm standing for TUSC as it's anti-cuts.

"As a young person, I know what young people are feeling in terms of very high tuition fees if they go to university. If they don't go to university there's a higher chance they'll be offered a zero-hour contract if they've not got a degree."



Jacqui Berry, Nurse and Unison NEC member* and Gillingham & Rainham candidate

"Working in the front line of the NHS, I am sick to the back teeth of pro-cuts politicians saying they care about the service and they know what it needs.

"We need investment, not cuts. We need to bring services in-house, not further fragmentation and privatisation.

We need to bring the providers of social care into public ownership. We have an ageing population and we need to be able to plan care on the basis of human need, not people's ability to pay."



April Ashley, Unison NEC member* and Croydon Central candidate

"I have been a trade unionist in local government for 20 years fighting against the constant attacks on our living standards. The Tories onslaught of austerity has been the worst attack I can remember with everyone in fear of losing their jobs and those in work relying on benefits and payday loans just to get by. The most vulnerable in society are being ground in the dirt with welfare cuts, the bedroom tax and benefit sanctions.

"The only people that have benefitted under austerity are the millionaires. Food banks have trebled. I am really pleased to be standing as a TUSC candidate."



Megan Ollerhead, student and York Central candidate

"I'm standing for TUSC because there isn't another organisation that will stand up for students' rights running in this general election. I do a lot of work on my campus at the University of York, particularly around student housing. I and many others really struggle to get by in accommodation that's often pretty appalling. Not to mention debt. As a postgrad, I've incurred another £10,000 on top of the cost of my first degree - and I was 'lucky' to only pay £3,000 a year! TUSC supports free education, a full living grant for all students, rent controls for private landlords and tackling big companies."



Brian Smith, Unison branch secretary* and Glasgow South candidate

"There's a huge mood for change in Scotland after the referendum - it's an anti-austerity mood. It's shown in the mood to struggle among workers. The SNP are posing as anti-austerity but it's a myth. Even a glancing look at their figures shows that they aim to keep 90% of the cuts in place.

"With all the main parties supporting cuts it's clear that the priorities of the majority are in stark contrast to those pursued by establishment politicians. That's why TUSC is standing to offer a real alternative to austerity, for public ownership not privatisation, and a redistribution of wealth from the elite 1% to the working class majority of the 99%."

GENERAL ELECTION PLATFORM



The Con-Dem government has inflicted five years of savage austerity on working class people. Unfortunately there is no prospect of this changing beyond the general election, as the leadership of the Labour Party has made it clear that a Labour government would not mean an end to austerity.

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) argues that working class people should not pay for a crisis that we did not cause. That was why TUSC was set up in 2010, co-founded by the late Bob Crow, to show that there is a clear left-wing alternative to policies of public sector cuts, privatisation, militarism and environmental degradation.

TUSC has accepted from its start that there will be some Labour candidates who share our socialist aspirations and will be prepared to support measures that challenge the austerity consensus of the establishment politicians. But it is also committed to standing candidates or supporting others if that is the only way a working class anti-austerity socialist alternative can be articulated at election time.

Our coalition, of trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists, is 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:

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP, NOT PRIVATE PROFIT

- Stop all privatisation, including the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). Bring privatised public services, industries and utilities back into public ownership under democratic control, with compensation only on the basis of proven need.
- No to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and all secret austerity treaties.

NO CUTS – FOR QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

- Re-nationalise all rail, bus and ferry services to build an integrated, low-pollution public transport system. Take Royal Mail back into public ownership to guarantee our postal services. Bring prisons, probation, and all other parts of the justice system back into the public sector.
- For a high-quality, free National Health Service under democratic public ownership and control. Stop council estate sell-offs and build high-standard, eco-friendly, affordable council housing.

- No to academies and ‘free schools’. Good, free education for all, under democratic local authority control; student grants not fees.

JOB, NOT HANDOUTS TO THE BANKERS AND BILLIONAIRES

- Bring banks and finance institutions into genuine public ownership under democratic control, instead of giving huge handouts to the very capitalists who caused the crisis.
- Tax the rich. For progressive tax on rich corporations and individuals and an end to tax avoidance. For massive investment in environmental projects.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS

- Repeal the anti-trade union laws, reverse attacks on facility time and the right to collect subs by check-off for trade unions, particularly in the public-sector.
- Support the TUC’s demand to increase the minimum wage to £10 an hour, and for it then to rise in line with inflation or wages, whichever is higher.
- Scrap zero hour contracts. Guaranteed hours and full employment rights for all. Cut the working week to 35 hours with no loss of pay.
- Invest to create and protect jobs, including for young people.
- Solidarity with workers taking action to defend jobs, conditions, pensions, public services and trade unions. Reinstate full trade union rights to prison officers.

PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT – STOP GLOBAL WARMING

- Deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions – otherwise climate change, caused by capitalism, will destroy us.
- Invest in publicly-owned and controlled renewable energy. Oppose fracking.
- Move to sustainable, low-pollution industry and farming – stop the pollution that is destroying our environment. No to profit-driven GM technology.
- Produce for need, not profit, and design goods for reuse and recycling.

GENERAL ELECTION PLATFORM



DECENT PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

- Abolish the bedroom tax.
- Reverse cuts to benefits; for living benefits; end child poverty. Scrap benefit sanctions.
- Restore the pre-Thatcher real value of pensions. Reverse the increases imposed on the state retirement age, creating jobs for younger people.

STOP THE ATTACKS ON DISABLED PEOPLE

- Promote inclusive policies to enable disabled people to participate in, and have equal access to, education, employment, housing, transport and welfare provision.
- Support measures to ensure disabled people receive a level of income according to needs. Equal pay for equal work.

DEMOCRACY, DIVERSITY AND JUSTICE

- Welcome diversity and oppose racism, fascism and discrimination. Defend the right to asylum, repeal the 2014 Immigration Act and all racist immigration controls.
- Ensure women have genuinely equal rights and pay.
- Full equality for LGBT people.
- Defend our liberties and make police and security democratically accountable.
- For the right to vote at 16.

SOLIDARITY NOT WAR

- No to imperialist wars and occupations!
- Justice for the Palestinians, lift the siege of Gaza, recognise the state of Palestine.
- No more spending on a new generation of nuclear weapons, huge aircraft carriers or irrelevant eurofighters – convert arms spending into socially useful products and services.
- An independent foreign policy, based on international solidarity – no more being a US poodle, no moves towards a capitalist, militarist United States of Europe. No to austerity and anti-working class policies, whether from the EU or Britain.

SOCIALISM

- For a democratic socialist society run in the interests of people not millionaires. For bringing into democratic public ownership the major companies and banks that dominate the economy, so that production and services can be planned to meet the needs of all and to protect the environment.

LOCAL ELECTION PLATFORM



WHOEVER IS IN NUMBER TEN...

WE NEED COUNCILLORS WHO WILL REFUSE TO IMPLEMENT THE CUTS!

The May 2015 council elections are in many ways as important as the general election in deciding what will happen to the vital public services provided by local authorities.

With all the establishment parties – and UKIP too – committed to austerity, the best that will happen in the Westminster elections is that there will be a change of ‘management style’ at the top.

That’s why it is important to have local councillors who will refuse to vote for cuts in the council chamber. And why TUSC is appealing to trade union members, anti-cuts campaigners, young people – everyone in fact who opposes the austerity agenda – to themselves come forward as council candidates.

It is not true that councils have ‘no option’ but to pass on government cuts. If just a handful of councils used the powers they have to refuse to implement the cuts the Westminster politicians could be made to back down.

Individual councillors have a choice. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition has a policy platform for local council elections (below) which could make a difference. Even one councillor taking a stand, if they used their position in the council chamber to appeal to those outside, could give confidence to trade unionists and community campaigners to fight.

ALL TUSC COUNCILLORS WILL:

- Oppose all cuts to council jobs, services, pay and conditions. We reject the claim that ‘some cuts’ are necessary to our services or that the national debt is a reason for austerity.
- Refuse to implement the Bedroom Tax now. Councils should write off all bedroom tax-related arrears, withdraw all court proceedings and eviction orders where the bedroom tax has been a factor, and call on Housing Associations to do the same.
- Support all workers’ struggles against the cuts, privatisation and government policies making ordinary people pay for the crisis caused by the bankers and the bosses. Defend the national collective bargaining arrangements for council workers.
- Reject increases in council tax, rent and service charges to compensate for government cuts.
- Vote against the privatisation of council jobs and services, or the transfer of council services to ‘social enterprises’ or ‘arms-length’ management organisations, which are first steps to privatisation.
- Oppose racism and fascism and stand up for equality for all.
- Campaign for the introduction of a Living Wage above the minimum wage, including for council employees and those working for council contractors.
- Use all the legal powers available to councils to oppose both the cuts and government policies which centrally impose the transfer of public services to private bodies. This includes using councils’ powers to refer local NHS decisions, initiate referenda and organise public commissions and consultations in campaigns to defend public services.
- Vote for councils to refuse to implement the cuts. We will support councils which in the first instance use their reserves and prudential borrowing powers to avoid making cuts. But we argue that the best way to mobilise the mass campaign that is necessary to defeat the dismantling of council services is to set a budget that meets the needs of the local community and demands that government funding makes up the shortfall.
- Support action against climate change and for a future where sustainability comes before profit.

2015 CAMPAIGN PRESS CLIPPINGS



TUSC has so far been featured on...

BBC Daily Politics, RT, BBC Radio 5 Live as well as regional TV news coverage and local press - featured below are some regional examples

Kilburn Times

The austerity cuts being rained on Brent are not necessary at all and can be avoided believes the candidate standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC)...

His party, TUSC, is only five-years old, the youngest of the five political parties battling it out for the hotly contested seat of Brent Central.

He said: "We are the only party that is really anti-austerity and we are putting forward the idea that austerity should end now..."

He adds: "There is a lot of wealth in this society. One per cent of our society has lots of wealth... By taking banks and the finance sector into common ownership to be able to use those resources to meet needs. It would be that sort of approach."

Exeter Express and Echo

Edmund Potts promised he would campaign to defend and safeguard these essential 'local' services, including the NHS Walk-in Centre on Sidwell Street and care beds for the elderly.

Mr Potts said: "It's about giving people a genuine alternative. I will be one of over 100 socialist candidates nationally, standing on a platform which rejects austerity and calls for a society based on real democracy and common ownership. Locally we're paying through the nose for privatised public services such as transport and water. It's simple: we use it, we pay for it – we should own it!"

"The super-rich and big bosses have very deep pockets... We need to start serving people, not profit."

Docklands and East London Advertiser

Hugo Pierre said: "The mainstream parties declared war on working class areas like ours when they agreed to a £30billion package of cuts to our public services." "We need an MP who'll support workers; who'll support private tenants against rip-off landlords; who'll support housing association tenants against unaffordable rent."

He said he was against... tube ticket office closures.

He also backs the introduction of a £10 an hour minimum wage and pledged to take "the average wage of a skilled worker" if elected.

"His heart is with the working class," David Wallis said. "My cousin, Bob Crow, would be proud."

The Northern Echo

...Mr Docherty [Darlington TUSC candidate], a trade union member and environmental activist, is the former branch secretary of the Darlington local government branch of Unison, is the co-ordinator of Darlington Trades Union Council's Darlington Against Cuts group and secretary of the Teesside Socialist Party.

Mr Docherty said: "We consider that the Labour Party no longer represents the interests of ordinary people."

"It is publicly committed to economic policies, similar to those of the Lib Dems, Conservatives and UKIP, that will continue to reduce people's living standards and cut public services."

"It is our aim to reverse the false message that austerity and cuts are the only way to rebuild the economy. We can and will change the face of politics in Britain too."

Waltham Forest Guardian

[Len Hockey] A trade union activist has been selected to challenge Iain Duncan Smith in the general election.

The 53-year-old Unite union branch secretary said his campaign will focus on challenging government austerity.

He said: "There is enough wealth in this country. We do not need Iain Duncan Smith implementing brutal cuts."

"His changes to the welfare system are causing misery to millions of people and his policies need to be challenged."

Mr Hockey also said cuts are impacting on the quality of care at Whipps Cross.

He added: "I am proud to work at Whipps Cross but the destabilisation and fragmentation is sadly becoming more and more of an issue."

Grimsby Telegraph

...Vowing to be "an activist, not a politician", Val O'Flynn has pledged, if elected, to take only the average wage for North East Lincolnshire, and donate the rest of her MP's salary to good causes within the constituency.

A lifelong socialist and previous Labour voter, Ms O'Flynn was born in Cleethorpes and has lived for most of her life in Grimsby.

"We had a great response to our protest outside the town hall last week, even from some of the councillors. It's just a shame they voted to pass the budget, and the only opposition was from the Conservatives, which is quite ironic."

"People don't realise that there is an alternative to these cuts. So that's what we are here for and we are the only ones that are going to fight back."

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SOCIALIST COALITION
PRESS PACK**

**TUSC
AGAINST
CUTS**

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