



## Setting our priorities for 2020 - Report of the GJA AGM

35 people attended our AGM on Monday, February 24<sup>th</sup> 2020. A wide range of trades unions and environment groups were represented. The meeting combined looking back over the successes of 2019 and planning our activities for the year ahead. A new steering group was appointed and the organisation recommitted to our central objective of promoting the positive benefits of bringing together trade unions, student organisations and environmental groups.

The 2020 work plan that was agreed identified 3 main priorities.

- Support Green New Deal (GND) bargaining by working with unions to provide resources to incorporate in local regional and national bargaining
- Build the Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN) campaign and continue to raise awareness of the link between air pollution and occupational health
- Identify opportunities for regional projects that support cross-union activity around green skills and related just transition work

**Green New Deal bargaining** – GJA will strengthen the work it has been doing with UCU, SOS-UK and UNITE on this issue. This has included providing speakers at local, regional and national meetings. We will explore other opportunities to work with specific unions and on a joint basis. This will include the production of introductory and follow-on training materials and courses.

**TUCAN** - The GJA will continue to work closely with the Hazards Campaign and those organisations supporting the TUCAN charter. We will step up the monitoring of workplaces following the acquisition of a 25% share in a Particulate Matter air monitor. We will work with the Healthy Air Campaign to lobby for better legal standards, including in the new Environment Bill.

**Green Skills** – GJA will lobby for a skills system capable of delivering a rapid decarbonisation of the economy. This will involve interrogating national, regional and local policies to highlight strengths and weaknesses. We will identify regional authorities that currently have a Labour administration to assess progress and opportunities for projects that will support a trade union voice on skills development.

### Climate justice and preparations for COP26

In the 'open' section of the meeting we had a presentation from **Asad Rehman, Executive Director of War on Want**. Asad stressed that discussions about climate change need to also be a debate about political economy. We need a movement that is intersectional and can build power behind the political demands. The current arrangements for delivering the nationally determined contributions are based on neo-liberal solutions. The UK is the 5<sup>th</sup> most powerful economy and historically 5<sup>th</sup> largest emitter and we need to tell a story that is internationalist. This will be particularly important after COP as the UK is hosting G7 meeting in 2021. Asad emphasised the social justice component of this by referring to the Gilets Jaune phrase '*The elites worry about the end of the world but we worry about the end of the month*'.

This was followed by responses from a trade union panel. **Sam Mason, Policy Officer at PCS**

referred to the Importance of vision. PCS NEC had declared a climate emergency. Embedding climate justice in to the GND and making it central to pay and pension discussions was crucial.

**Jim Mowat, Director of Climate Change at Unite** pointed out the union has 21 different sectors. Health sector biggest followed by Finance. Difficulty of awkward alliances. The union must address questions like 'can market mechanisms deliver a Just Transition? Do we go for Green Reps or just convert H+S reps? Unite's 1<sup>st</sup> environmental quarterly newsletter will be produced in March.

**Matt Lay, Head of Energy, UNISON** - Hydrogen and energy efficiency are key priorities for the sector. Climate actions must not be framed as sacrifices. Unions need to engage in a positive way. The importance of skills and training needs to be emphasised

**Marianne Quick, Sustainability Officer, UCU** – The union has over 350 Green Reps. Plan is to increase branch capacity through green claims. In the education sector there is a problem of awards and box ticking. EAUC Climate Commission has no worker voice. Opportunity to build intersectional movement. Climate education and staying relevant to young people must be a vital part of union campaigns.

There was a lively discussion following these contributions. **Quinn Runkle, GJA Chair and SOS-UK**, closed the meeting and thanked the UCU for their support in holding the AGM.

We would like to welcome Tahir Latif (PCS), Carl Jerromes (UNITE) and Ken Thompson (UCU) as new members of the Steering Group plus extending thanks to the current members who are continuing in 2020.

February 26<sup>th</sup> 2020