



A MESSAGE FROM STEVE TURNER



YOUR UNITED LEFT CANDIDATE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

Reflecting on the few weeks since being selected as our United Left candidate in the up and coming election to replace Len McCluskey as Unite General Secretary, **I am deeply humbled and of course, very proud to have received your support in what was a very closely run contest.** I also want to thank Howard Beckett for the campaign he ran and his role in making the hustings both a challenge for us both on the day and for the record 737 members who voted online following it.

This has been the most inclusive, open and participative hustings I've been involved in during my thirty-eight years in our union, thirty-seven as a left activist. Far from the typical hustings in a central location that offered a vote only to those who could physically make it on the day, COVID forced us to think differently and use technology to open up our democracy, allowing everyone who wanted to vote the opportunity to do so. And you did - whether from your living room or workplace, on your computer or phone, in the UK or overseas.

I want to say a huge thank you for your leadership, participation and engagement in your hustings and your ballot. Whoever you voted for, we now come together to win our union, and the confidence you've placed in my abilities to build on our union's position as the leading left force in our movement will not be forgotten.

We have many challenges and opportunities ahead of us. The immediacy of the **fight for thousands of jobs and the protection of long-fought for terms and conditions** is rightly concentrating the minds of us all, a fight that may become a lot harder as we approach 2021 and the conclusion of **trade talks with the European Union** that could see us walking away with a bad deal or no deal at all, while proposed **new deals with the US and Japan** could see further deregulation, job losses and the undermining of our NHS.

In addition, the challenges of the climate emergency remain very much with us, as does our need to recover and rebuild our economy, ensuring that any transition to meet our carbon objectives is a **just transition with workers and our communities firmly at its heart.**

While corporate investment in **automation, artificial intelligence and the digitalisation of work provide both challenges and opportunities** for us, so does the fight for dignity and justice in work for those employed in **the gig economy and on precarious contracts with little union organisation**, on **low pay** and subjected to a **hire and fire** culture that must end.

I said at our hustings:

- ❑ **I want to refocus our union industrially, decentralise authority and responsibility** to our regions and sectors and rebuild confidence and power in our shop stewards movement
- ❑ **I will ensure our union answers the phone;** we have to 'own' your call for help, support or assistance – not pass you on, and to use technology and resources to support our officers, branches and shop stewards committees in the workplace fights that are the bread and butter of our union.
- ❑ **I will ensure that Unite is a tolerant, inclusive and welcoming union for all**, one that delivers on our equalities agenda with practical steps and actions to remove barriers and open up opportunities at every level of our union to our hugely diverse range of voices, accents and faces; our women, LGBT+ and BAEM members, our young, retired and community activists, alongside those disabled by society.
- ❑ **I am a socialist in a very proud left union**, the largest affiliate to our party, my party, Labour. We have to use our influence, ideas and a deep passion for justice, equality and dignity that's rooted in our experiences of work and working-class communities to shape our party and win the battle of ideas both in our union and wider society for that fairer, better society for all.
- ❑ **I am proud of our organisers and the work we do on leverage** and in securing ground breaking victories in sometimes hard to reach areas. We can and must do more of this as our union faces up to the challenges of job and membership losses as we come through the COVID lockdown. I will better integrate this fantastic resource into the mainstream work of our union, our regions and sectors.
- ❑ **How proud I was of our role as a leading international union**, proud of our political, industrial and community work done in solidarity with our sisters and brothers across the globe. From formal alliances like Workers Uniting to practical industrial solidarity with those who need it and our political activity in support of those wider campaigns for trade union freedoms, justice, dignity and self-determination around the world. I will expand this work, allocate resources to develop our understanding of the impact organised, confident, powerful unions can have in a

globalised world and across integrated supply chains. We will build real meaningful solidarity at every level of our union.

Over the coming weeks and months as we develop our manifesto of ideas and actions for the general secretary election; I will be meeting with you, our shop stewards, officers and staff, visiting your workplaces, arranging open zoom calls, talking with our organisers, regions and sectors – I will be listening to you.

TOGETHER WE WILL DEVELOP AND DELIVER OUR PROGRAMME FOR CHANGE.

In all of our work it is our values and beliefs as socialists that drive our passion for and pride in, our union and our wider role in our movement. I am so proud of the work we have done to position Unite as the leading voice for the left in our Labour movement here, but also overseas as unions look to us for examples of innovative thinking, practical action and powerful solidarity.

We will not allow outside forces or those who seek to divide, destabilise or undermine us to succeed. We are on a journey and I want you all to be part of it. You put your faith in me and now I am putting mine in you, your ideas and your passion to build a better, stronger union.

OUR FUTURE UNITES US!



United Left Contacts

London & Eastern

Joanne Harris
joanne26021958@gmail.com

South West

Jayne Taylor
jaytay01@yahoo.co.uk

South East

Richard Neville
unitedleftse@gmail.com

Scotland

John Gillespie
eadie77@btinternet.com

North West

John Cooper
johncooper1878@gmail.com

East Midlands

Carol Starr
carolstarrunite@yahoo.co.uk

Ireland

Therese Maloney
tmaloney@tcd.ie

West Midlands

George Hickman
georget.hickman@yahoo.co.uk

North East, Yorks and Humberside

John Garvani
jgarvani@gmail.com

Wales

Ivan Monckton
imonckton@googlemail.com

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