

The Coyne Campaign

Uniting the Union



KEVIN COYNE FOR GENERAL SECRETARY – WHAT I STAND FOR

Since we merged with the TGWU in May 2007 we have failed to build the Union members voted for. Petty squabbles, political jockeying and personality clashes have barred the way to a new Union. The merger has stagnated, and now the new Rule Book has been delayed by six months – a further blow to the delivery of Unite the Union.

I am standing as General Secretary for the Amicus Section of Unite because I believe we must sweep away the blockages and deliver the merger **now**. Members need Unite more than ever before – the finance sector is facing massive shockwaves, mass redundancies and the fall out from nationalisation. The public sector faces huge budget cuts and punitive pay restraint, manufacturing has been decimated by globalisation and rising unemployment threatens the whole UK economy. Now, more than ever, our members need a strong, united union fighting back for them and their families, wielding power and influence for ordinary working people.

Under my stewardship Unite's four key priorities will be:

1. Deliver the merger

Those in the T&G Section are our allies and partners, not our enemies. Members voted overwhelmingly for the merger, and for the new Union. There is a clear message to those at the top – deliver Unite! This must be the absolute priority and must be done with lightning speed. We have two finance systems, two membership systems, two legal systems, two websites... the list goes on. I will work with the T&G Section to deliver the merger and build an open and tolerant union. We will build on the strengths of both sections, agreeing on the best practice and adopting it: we must always be mindful of the most cost effective way of implementing Unite. The sum must be greater than the parts - there is no room for sentimentality or tribalism. The union is spinning out of financial control and heading for a serious deficit. We need cash to campaign on behalf of members to provide resources for workplace reps and to employ the most talented and capable workforce in the trade union movement. Properly integrating the union will eradicate duplication and waste and put us on a secure footing. We must divert money to where it's needed most - into building the union and supporting members. Wasteful and profligate spending on gravy train junkets hits members directly in their pockets through higher subs.

2. Strengthen the Union

For years we have seen numbers of workplace reps decline, and the strength of the union is sapped. It has to be a priority for Unite to rebuild a network of motivated, trained and dedicated workplace representatives to make them the strongest link in the chain. I will commit major financial resources and the time of officers and staff to ensure that this work is carried out in a planned, tactical way, using the union's finances to best effect to quickly strengthen the beating heart of the union – its activists. We need to create a collective structure to deal with the deluge of individual grievance and disciplinary hearings which are

bogging down officers instead of freeing them up to build the Union of the future. I will remove the obstacles which prevent workplace reps from operating and offer real power to our activists. We must ensure that the union is the right way up. Members and their workplace representatives *are* the union. I will ensure that workplace reps are trained and educated by the union in a strong, regionally based Unite education system. I believe that our Officer force should be drawn from the rich vein of our activists, promoting people based on ability and merit. I want a clean union, free from hypocrisy, cronyism and the abuse of power. We must ensure that equalities are central to our union. Our country has one of the most diverse populations on earth and women are over 50% of the workforce. These facts alone mean that we must speak on behalf of every member, fighting discrimination and disadvantage in all its forms. Our Union must support the structures which ensure that those who are faced with discrimination - black and ethnic minority workers, the young, disabled members, women and those who face sexual orientation or religious bigotry - have a strong voice.

3. **Building Influence**

We need a strong union because we are the only protection members have in the workplace. Our track record in defending members in every type of situation at work is unparalleled and this must continue. Influence will come from the strength of our members but we also need to build it in a strategic, planned way. I want us to maximise the number of local Councillors, MPs and MEPs who are Unite members. We need to put members on boards, trusts, management committees, Development Agencies – in short, wherever there is power, we must seek influence. The first task in this area will be to review our political work to ensure that we support MPs who, in return, support our members. As a life-long member of the Labour Party I believe in constructive criticism of the Government but I will never forget the years of destruction our people and the country endured under the Tories. Yet the role of the General Secretary is to deliver improved pay in our members' pockets rather than being in the pocket of the Prime Minister.

4. **Unity**

Unite is the biggest union in the UK and every other union in the country now looks to us to see what position we will take on any issue. We have to be responsible in the way in which we operate. There are many millions of unorganised workers in the UK, and the union movement needs to be united if we are to succeed. I will ensure that we work co-operatively with other UK unions, not arrogantly. Together we are stronger - the creation of Unite proves that. However unity in the UK is not our greatest challenge. The power of global multinational companies means that we have to build unity with workers and their unions across the world if we are to have strength and influence beyond our shores. I do not accept that the international federations of unions which we currently have are beyond repair. Whilst international merger sounds like a good idea, in practice it is beset with obstacles. There is no substitute for genuine dialogue, co-operation and relationship building with other independent trade unions from across the world. Our problems are here today and we have to act now to solve them - without forgetting that our members are in Birmingham, West Midlands not Birmingham, Alabama.

**Your vote in this election is crucial if these aims are to be achieved.
VOTE COYNE FOR GS!**

For latest news go to www.coyne4gs.net

Nominate Kevin Coyne for General Secretary:

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