

No. 307/24

12th September 2024

TO: ALL BRANCHES

Dear Colleagues,

POLITICAL FUND BALLOT- INFORMATION FOR REPS AND BRANCHES

All branches have been advised that the CWU'S Political Fund Ballot opens on 24th September and closes on the 15th of October, with counting taking place on the 16th of October.

The purpose of this LTB is to follow up on the Zoom briefing held with branches earlier this week, where we committed to sending out an advance copy of the mailing to all individual members, which details how the ballot works and how the political fund allows us to campaign, as well as recapping some of our political work from the past few years. This is attached.

We have also attached an advance copy of the leaflet that will be included in the ballot paper envelope. This leaflet sets out ten reasons why members should vote **yes** to retain our political fund.

It is essential that branches forward these materials to all representatives and that engagement takes place with our members before and during the ballot process.

It has never been more important for us to retain our political fund, given the challenges facing our members both in and outside the workplace.

A key point to make when engaging members is that, whatever their personal political views are, we cannot allow businesses and major institutions to be the only organisations to have a voice in politics. We must also make clear that our political fund is frequently used beyond the Labour Party and supports regional and local community initiatives, campaigns and projects.

Furthermore, we must make the point that members already have the individual right to opt in or out of the political fund and voting to continue having a political fund will not change this. Having to ballot to hold a political fund is part of a wide range of Tory anti-union laws that are designed to restrict the trade union movement from having any political voice.

Finally, we will be writing to our retired members and sending an LTB to branches setting out the union's position on the Winter Fuel Allowance issue. The union has made clear, we do not support Labour's decision, and we will be submitting a motion to the forthcoming Labour Party Conference which addresses this, as well as a motion on the future of Royal Mail.

Any enquiries on the above should be addressed to the General Secretary's department jdunn@cwu.org.

Yours Sincerely,



Dave Ward
General Secretary



cwu.org/politicalballot

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POLITICAL FUND BALLOT

VOTE YES

TO RETAIN YOUR VOICE



CWU POLITICAL FUND BALLOT – VOTE YES TO RETAIN YOUR VOICE

Anti-union laws introduced by the Tories require all trade unions in the UK to ballot their members every 10 years on whether they are allowed to maintain a political and campaigning voice via a designated political fund. This is despite the fact that members are free to choose whether they 'opt in' to the political fund and there is no obligation to pay into this fund. These laws will hopefully be repealed by the new Labour government in the future, but the CWU ballot is due this year.

The ballot will open on **Tuesday the 24th of September** and close on **Tuesday the 15th of October**. You will be voting on whether the CWU will be allowed to continue to maintain our political fund. Ballot papers will be arriving in the post shortly and we urge all members to use your vote and to overwhelmingly vote **YES** in this ballot, as you did in 2014.

Let me be clear - the political fund is not just about supporting the Labour Party. It is about fundamentally strengthening rights in the workplace for all workers, about supporting grassroots community groups, improving our public services and most importantly, making our society better for our members.

Without a political fund, the CWU can do no political work and have no influence over our political system. The importance of trade unions having a leading voice in our political system, as well as in the workplace, has never been so clear. That is why all major trade unions, Labour-affiliated or not, continue to have a political fund.

Our influence as a union is clearly visible at the heart of Labour's 2024 General Election manifesto - whether it is ensuring the Royal Mail takeover is scrutinised properly, strengthening the Post Office network, improving regulation and cross-training opportunities in the Telecommunications sector or ensuring trade unions are at the forefront of decisions to introduce new technology, including surveillance and AI tech. We have a long history of successfully campaigning for legislation that benefits our members, including amending the Dangerous Dogs Act in 2014 and we will continue to do so under a Labour government.

The CWU were the founders of the New Deal for Workers campaign over eight years ago and fought for it to be adopted as one of Labour's key policies. Now, we are weeks away from the first stage of the New Deal becoming law with new protections for workers to follow, including bringing in new rights from the first day of employment, ending fire and rehire and banning exploitative zero hours contracts. Every single member can be very proud of this achievement. With our political fund and your support in our campaign, millions of people across the UK will benefit.

The new Labour government is also in the process of drawing up legislation that will get rid of the restrictive anti-trade union laws, including the 'conscriptio' laws, which would sack workers in some industries for going on strike. New laws will also allow greater trade union access to unorganised workplaces and make the recognition process simpler, meaning we will be able to organise in new companies across the country. These policies were fought for by the CWU and other trade unions- which was only made possible by our political fund.

The New Deal for Workers represents a huge shift in the balance of power within the world of work, in favour of working people and it was only made possible by the union's work, facilitated by the political fund. We know that there is still a long way to go with this Labour government but we can only push them to introduce transformative policies if we continue to have a political fund.

The political fund also allows us to support CWU members and trade unionists to get involved in politics, from the local level all the way up to Parliament. The introduction of the CWU Candidates Programme has seen many of our members access world-class political education opportunities and helped them to take up political office. We have supported our members in becoming councillors across the UK, as well as supporting several CWU members at the last General Election, which saw both fantastic results for Labour nationally and a new cohort of CWU MPs elected.

The CWU maintains political influence in Scotland and Wales, in both the devolved administrations and the wider political sphere. The CWU is supportive of devolution and we campaign on both a devolved and national level across a number of issues. Our political fund has allowed us to work with experts in Community Wealth Building in Scotland to develop specific industrial and political campaigns and has connected us with politicians in Holyrood and the Senedd to help push the CWU's objectives at every level of government. Working with Metro Mayors also continues to be a key part of our political strategy.

It is also crucial to recognise that a voice in politics can also be used to lobby government against decisions they make, something we are doing for our retired members over Labour's decision to cease winter fuel payments.

But working with the Labour Party is only one part of our union's wide-ranging political strategy. We work with many organisations, expert think-tanks and campaigns to influence the world of politics beyond Westminster. From supporting international workers in their causes abroad to fighting against racism and the far-right to working with football fans through organisations like Fans Supporting Foodbanks, the CWU will continue to support grassroots political initiatives that support our trade union values.

Our political fund spending is monitored by our Political Fund Management Committee and ratified by the NEC to ensure the fund is being used effectively and appropriately, as well as being heavily scrutinised by the Certification Officer - making trade union money the most transparent in politics. The General Secretary's Office also works closely with our Regional Secretaries to ensure that we support local and regional level political projects and support branches in their political work.

It is vital that the CWU continues to be a leading political voice and that we support trade unionists and trade union values at every level of government. We cannot let big business be the only ones with an influence in our political system. Vote **YES** in this political fund ballot to ensure the CWU can keep holding politicians to account and keep fighting for a better deal for working people.

If you need more information on this ballot please visit cwu.org/politicalballot

Yours Sincerely,
Dave Ward.
Dave Ward
General Secretary



10 REASONS TO VOTE YES IN THE POLITICAL FUND BALLOT

1. POLICY IN OUR CORE INDUSTRIES

Our influence as a union is clearly visible in the new Labour government's policy - whether it is ensuring the Royal Mail takeover is scrutinised properly, strengthening the Post Office network, improving regulation and cross-training opportunities in the Telecommunications sector or ensuring trade unions are at the forefront of decisions to introduce new technology in the workplace, including surveillance and AI tech.

2. SMASHING ANTI-TRADE UNION LAWS

Labour's commitment to repealing many anti-trade union laws will allow greater trade union access to unorganised workplaces and make the recognition process simpler. These policies were fought for by the CWU and other trade unions, which was only made possible by our Political Fund.

3. SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS GETTING INVOLVED IN POLITICS

Our political fund allows us to support our members in taking up political office at every level of government. We use our fund to support members who run to be councillors and MPs, as well as providing opportunities for political education funding. Politics needs more working class representation – our fund helps to deliver that.

4. LOBBYING POLITICIANS

Lobbying politicians is a core part of our political work. We work with politicians across the political spectrum to advocate for better policies for our members and their workplaces. Big businesses are constantly lobbying the government and it is vital that we stand up to their anti-worker agenda.

5. WORKING OUTSIDE WESTMINSTER

In Scotland, we have worked with experts in Community Wealth Building to develop specific industrial and political campaigns and in Wales, we work with politicians in the Senedd to help push the CWU's objectives in every community. Working with Metro Mayors also continues to be a key part of our political strategy.



6. GETTING INVOLVED IN THE GRASSROOTS

Working with the Labour Party is only one part of our union's wide-ranging political strategy. From supporting international workers in their causes abroad to working with football fans through organisations like Fans Supporting Foodbanks, the CWU will continue to support grassroots political initiatives, outside of Parliament, that support our trade union values.

7. OPPOSING CUTS, FIGHTING FOR PUBLIC SERVICES AND AGAINST PRIVATISATION

We will continue to campaign against austerity, for the full restoration of our public services and pay for those workers. Most importantly, we will continue to campaign for the renationalisation of our core industries, regardless of who is in government.

8. ACHIEVING EQUALITY

Tackling racism, campaigning against the far-right and working with antiracist organisations to encourage solidarity with all working people is a key part of our political strategy and having a political fund supports this work.

9. SUPPORTING BRANCHES AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Having a political fund also allows branches to spend a proportion of their rebate on local political work and initiatives, as well as connecting with local politicians and funding political events and meetings.

10. SECTORAL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

We want to see the expansion of sectoral collective bargaining to our industries, to introduce minimum levels of pay, terms and conditions for entire sectors. This is key to ending the race-to-the-bottom and undercutting of terms and conditions, something which is prevalent in our core industries.

REMEMBER:

NO POLITICAL FUND = NO POLITICAL VOICE

VOTE YES

Dave Ward.

Dave Ward General Secretary

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