

Secretary's Report

Ravi Subramanian, West Midlands Labour Link Secretary

This year the work of the Labour Link was dominated by the General Election. The Labour Link worked hard to support trade union friendly candidates to get selected in winnable seats.

Every region in the country had a role to play in getting a Labour government elected and it is fair to say that the West Midlands played an important part.

Of the 13 Labour held seats, only one of them was lost – Birmingham Perry Barr to an Independent – and obviously this loss was disappointing. But Labour won an astonishing 26 seats from the Tories now giving Labour 38 MPs in the region.

What is even more pleasing to note is that nine of the 38 Labour MPs have been trade union activists or trade union staff, with four of the nine being “UNISON people”. Those nine MPs with strong trade union backgrounds are:

- Julia Buckley – former UNISON activist in the West Midlands region
- Gareth Snell – former member

- of staff at the UNISON West Midlands regional office
- Sarah Coombes – former UNISON activist in London region
- Jacob Collier – former UNISON activist in the East Midlands region
- Sarah Edwards – former Unite member of regional office staff
- Tahir Ali – former CWU activist
- Laurence Turner – former GMB national official
- Dave Robertson – former NASUWT regional official

- Antonia Bance – former TUC member of staff
- Warinder Juss – former Thompsons solicitor and GMB activist and EC member.

And there are another nine MPs who may not have been elected trade union activists or trade union staff but do have a track record of working closely with trade unions.

This gives us a great platform to build on to develop our political relationships over the coming year.



Campaigning for Cat Eccles in Stourbridge

Chair's Report

Steve Jones, Chair, Labour Link Committee

It's been a busy year in the party and regionally with the general election being called.

We had a fantastic result with a massive win in the region taking back the seats we

lost and gaining new seats playing our part in a national majority of 402 MPs.

This doesn't mean we can be lazy or complacent – with the rise of Reform we need to be more active than ever.

Lastly a massive thanks to all for the hard work, campaigning and attendance which led to us securing a better future for our members though political gains.

Vice-Chair's Report

Amelia Rout, Vice-Chair, Labour Link Committee

This is my first year as Vice-Chair for the Regional Labour Link Committee, and it has been a brilliant opportunity for me to get more involved with this side of the work that UNISON does.

Labour Link is a great way for activists to get more involved and we are always keen for new people to join us.

It is an opportunity to learn more about the relationship between our union and the new Labour government and help influence policy.

Over this year we have had a number of MPs as keynote speakers and we have been able to have robust and useful debates about issues

related to workers.

Committee members have attended Labour Link events locally, regionally and nationally. I was lucky

enough to be sent as a delegate to the Labour Party Conference in 2024 which was another opportunity to have a positive impact on dialogue between us and the party.

For me, there is also an opportunity

to grow my skills and this year I chaired a hybrid meeting which felt a bit daunting at first but was a brilliant experience in the end!



West Bromwich campaign group

National Labour Party Women's Conference and National Labour Party Conference Report

Conference Report – Katrina Gilman, Delegate

Labour Party Conference this year was held in Liverpool with Labour Women's Conference starting off the week on the Saturday.

Labour Women's Conference was well attended, but as has been the criticism before, one day before conference does not leave a great deal of time for debate or participation from delegates.

UNISON women were well represented at conference, there were a large number of panel debates allowing very little time for questions from the floor and as always everything ran a little behind time.

Motions were submitted and debated at conference and the motion on Women's Health was elected to be submitted to Labour's main conference.

Labour Party annual conference then took place between the Sunday – Wednesday.

This was the largest ever

conference and so much so that staff struggled to get passes out to all delegates prior to their arrival in Liverpool with many of our delegates having to pick these up when they arrived in Liverpool.

Also, this being the first conference in government since 2009 (and my first conference with Labour in government) meant that security was much tighter and there was an even greater media interest and presence at the conference.

During the week we heard from Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Prime Minister and about the New Deal for Working People, the outgoing General Secretary David Evans and about the party's election win and heard from new General Secretary Hollie Ridley.

We also received Valerii Zaluzhnyi, Ambassador for Ukraine who addressed the conference. We obviously had speeches from Rachel Reeves MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lammy

MP, Foreign Secretary, Yvette Cooper MP, Home Secretary, Wes Streeting MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Liz Kendall MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and many others.

Debate on motions seemed quite disjointed and slow to move at times and at other times not enough time allowed for speakers in the debate. However, despite some of the challenges of conference so soon after a general election, we looked and sounded like a party in government.

The Leader's Speech from Keir Starmer MP, Prime Minister, introduced nothing we had not heard of during the general election and after only months in office this wasn't a great surprise. Conference had a different feeling and in the main a feel of unity about it.

UNISON delegates were well represented at conference in debates and fringe events about the issues affecting our members.

Labour Unions Report

Jim Price – Secretary, West Midlands Labour Unions

What a year 2024 has been!

Clearly, the major highlight for all of us was the landslide General Election win in July – we now have 38 Labour MPs across the West Midlands, and many of them come from within our own Trade Union part of the Labour Movement.

We can all be so proud that our Labour Government is moving ahead with the Employment Rights Bill, as promised by UNISON's very own Angela Rayner. This is something we in Labour Unions are especially glad of – a huge amount of work has gone into ensuring trade

union voices have been central to ensuring that many of the bad employment practices of the past fourteen years can finally be addressed.

There was also huge success in May with Richard Parker being elected as the Labour Mayor of the West Midlands, as well as sweeping gains in council elections across the Region. Our main frustration was a series of near misses in Police & Crime Commissioner elections, where some excellent candidates pushed their Tory opponents very close.

Within Labour Unions,

Labour Unions

we have held a good set of meetings across the Region this year, and have also worked closely with both the national Labour Unions organisation and the Regional Labour Party. We have also shown solidarity with trade union members taking action across the West Midlands.

As always, if you want to know more about the work of Labour Unions (the eleven trade unions who are affiliated to the Labour Party), please do get in touch with me!

Further information

The current Chair and Vice Chair of Regional Labour Link Committee are:

Steve Jones
Amelia Rout

Chair
Vice Chair

To find out how you can get involved with UNISON Labour Link activities, please contact:

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