

# HELP US BUILD AN ELECTION ALTERNATIVE TO AUSTERITY



TRADE UNIONIST AND  
SOCIALIST COALITION

TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION [WWW.TUSC.ORG.UK](http://WWW.TUSC.ORG.UK)  
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**TUSC  
AGAINST  
CUTS**

**O**NE THING is clear about the outcome of the 2015 general election. Whichever establishment party or combination of parties wins, they will continue with policies favouring the rich and austerity for the rest of us.

That's why the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) was set up in 2010, co-founded by the late Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT transport workers' union. Its purpose is to enable trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to come together on a common platform to challenge the pro-austerity unity of the establishment parties at the ballot box.

As well as the general election, May 2015 will see elections in England in over 6,000 council wards in 279 local authorities. The biggest cuts have been made to local public services, with councillors of ALL parties - Labour and Green as much as the Tories, Liberal Democrats and UKIP - meekly

voting them through.

That's why TUSC will be standing in both the general election and the local council elections in May 2015. To make sure establishment politicians are not left unchallenged for their Westminster seats - and to campaign to have councillors in place who will refuse to implement the cuts that will be made by whoever is the new occupant of Number Ten.

Can you help? TUSC stood 560 candidates in the 2014 local elections, the biggest left-of-Labour working class election challenge since the end of world war two. Are you prepared to be a candidate next time? Can you help build support in your trade union or your local community for candidates who will fight back?

Inside is TUSC's ten-point core policy platform for local elections, an outline of our plans for the general election, and a brief introduction to TUSC. Why not come on board? If we don't fight to change things, nothing will change.

## ➡ WHAT DO LABOUR'S GENERAL ELECTION CANDIDATES STAND FOR?

Are you angry about cutbacks to public services? Fed-up with cutbacks and privatisation of our NHS? Frustrated about the lack of decent, affordable housing? Enraged over zero-hour contracts and low-paid jobs? Disgusted with politicians who line their own pockets and help the richest 1% while doing nothing for us?

TUSC has accepted from its start that there will be some Labour candidates who share our socialist aspirations and will be prepared to support measures that challenge the austerity consensus of the establishment politicians, but they are very thin on the ground. That's why TUSC is also committed to standing candidates or supporting others if that is the only way a working class anti-austerity socialist alternative can be put forward at election time.

Before the general election local TUSC groups will be meeting Labour prospective parliamentary candidates (PPCs). We will aim to find out what their position is on a number of key issues before a decision is made on whether to challenge them next May (see <http://www.tusc.org.uk/resources> for the text of a model letter to PPCs).

The TUC is stepping up its 'Britain needs a pay rise' campaign in the run up to the general election – so where do local Labour candidates stand, for example, on lifting the public sector pay cap? Would they support an incoming Labour government banning zero hour contracts and immediately introducing the 'Living Wage' (£7.65 an hour, £8.80 in London) as the minimum wage?

Would Labour candidates support the reversal of all the cuts in public services and benefits that have taken place under the Con-Dems, including the

➡ Is the money there? Since 2008 Britain's top companies have given away £399.3 billion in shareholder dividends.

➡ Labour's Treasury spokesperson Chris Leslie said in his speech to the Institute of Chartered Accountants (30th May 2014) that "we won't be able to undo the cuts that have been felt in recent years". Labour's Work and Pensions spokesperson Rachel Reeves says "we will be tougher than the Tories" on welfare.

restoration of central government funding of vital local council public services to at least the level that existed in 2010?

Would they support the reversal of the anti-trade union laws, summed up in a parliamentary bill introduced by the left-wing Labour MP John McDonnell MP in 2007, which was shamefully voted down by the then Labour government?

And what about the re-nationalisation of the railways, as the first step to building an integrated, low-pollution, and affordable public transport system? Or bringing Royal Mail back into public ownership to guarantee our postal services?

The founding core policies of TUSC agreed for the 2010 general election – to be updated for 2015 – were broader than just these demands (see <http://www.tusc.org.uk/policy>). TUSC was formed as a coalition committed to campaigning for a democratic socialist society run in the interests of the millions not the millionaires. It stands for bringing into democratic public ownership the major companies and banks that dominate the economy, so that production and services can be planned to meet the needs of all and to protect the environment.

But if Labour candidates are not willing to sign up to a basic anti-austerity stance, or even to explain their views to a delegation of local trade unionist and anti-austerity campaigners, what do they stand for? And why shouldn't there be a TUSC candidate in their constituency in May 2015?

To join the delegation to discuss with your local Labour candidate, or to add your signature to the letter to them, contact your local TUSC group via the national TUSC website (<http://www.tusc.org.uk/support.php>).

➡ RMT leader Bob Crow was a founding member of TUSC in 2010 and was a TUSC steering committee member from then until his untimely death in 2014

## Whoever is in Number Ten...

## ➡ WE NEED COUNCILLORS WHO WILL REFUSE TO IMPLEMENT THE CUTS!

The May 2015 council elections are in many ways as important as the general election in deciding what will happen to the vital public services provided by local authorities.

With all the establishment parties – and UKIP too – committed to austerity, the best that will happen in the Westminster elections is that there will be a change of 'management style' at the top.

That's why it is important to have local councillors who will refuse to vote for cuts in the council chamber. And why TUSC is appealing to trade union members, anti-cuts campaigners, young people – everyone in fact who opposes the austerity agenda – to themselves come forward as council candidates.

It is not true that councils have 'no option' but to pass on government cuts. If just a handful of councils used the powers they have to refuse to implement

➡ Is the money there? The 'wars of choice' in Afghanistan and Iraq cost Britain £30.2 billion, according to the Royal United Services Institute – far more than the cut in government funding of local council services since 2010.

the cuts the Westminster politicians could be made to back down.

Individual councillors have a choice. The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition has a policy platform for local council elections (below) which could make a difference. Even one councillor taking a stand, if they used their position in the council chamber to appeal to those outside, could give confidence to trade unionists and community campaigners to fight.

### All TUSC councillors will:

- Oppose all cuts to council jobs, services, pay and conditions. We reject the claim that 'some cuts' are necessary to our services or that the national debt is a reason for austerity.
- Refuse to implement the Bedroom Tax now. Councils should write off all bedroom tax-related arrears, withdraw all court proceedings and eviction orders where the bedroom tax has been a factor, and call on Housing Associations to do the same.
- Support all workers' struggles against the cuts, privatisation and govern-

➡ 'Fairer cuts'? Nearly half a million fewer people are receiving publicly-funded personal social services including elderly care since 2008 but the biggest cuts have been in Labour councils.

➡ 'Fairer cuts'? While Tory councils have cut sports and leisure budgets by 11%, Labour councils cut them by 6%. But since the abolition of full council tax benefit Labour councils have been taking people to court for council tax arrears earlier than Tory councils.

ment policies making ordinary people pay for the crisis caused by the bankers and the bosses. Defend the national collective bargaining arrangements for council workers.

- Reject increases in council tax, rent and service charges to compensate for government cuts.

- Vote against the privatisation of council jobs and services, or the transfer of council services to 'social enterprises' or 'arms-length' management organisations, which are first steps to privatisation.

- Oppose racism and fascism and stand up for equality for all.

- Campaign for the introduction of a Living Wage above the minimum wage, including for council employees and those working for council contractors.

- Use all the legal powers available to councils to oppose both the cuts and government policies which centrally impose the transfer of public services to private bodies. This includes using councils' powers to refer local NHS decisions, initiate referenda and organise public commissions and consultations in campaigns to defend public services.

➡ Is the money there? The annual Sunday Times 'Rich List' showed that the combined wealth of Britain's richest 1,000 individuals rose by 15.4% in 2014 to reach £519 billion.

- Vote for councils to refuse to implement the cuts. We will support councils which in the first instance use their reserves and prudential borrowing powers to avoid making cuts. But we argue that the best way to mobilise the mass campaign that is necessary to defeat the dismantling of council services is to set a budget that meets the needs of the local community and demands that government funding makes up the shortfall.

- Support action against climate change and for a future where sustainability comes before profit.

This platform is the basis on which any prospective council candidate can stand under the TUSC name in local council elections. We encourage every trade unionist, anti-cuts campaigner, community activist and all those who want to see an alternative to the establishment parties, to become a TUSC candidate.

For an application form go to <http://www.tusc.org.uk/candidate>



# ➔ WHAT IS THE TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION?

**T**USC was set-up in 2010 to enable trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to stand candidates against the pro-austerity establishment parties.

Under Britain's election laws if candidates are not endorsed by a registered political party they can only appear on the ballot paper as an 'Independent'. That doesn't make it easy for trade unionists or local anti-cuts campaigners to distinguish themselves as standing for something different to the mainstream. But linking up with others under the TUSC umbrella does.

Since 2010 around 1,200 candidates have stood in elections as part of TUSC. A few have won council seats - Southampton 'rebel councillor' and TUSC national steering committee member Keith Morrell was re-elected with a 43% share of the vote. The TUSC candidate for Liverpool mayor polled 4,792 votes, ahead of the Tories and double the UKIP vote. In total TUSC candidates have polled over 180,000 votes since we were formed.

Local community groups, trade unionists and anti-cuts candidates who want to stand under the TUSC banner have autonomy to run their own campaigns. The only provision is that candidates are expected to endorse the TUSC core policy platforms for the general election and local council elections.

TUSC is a coalition with a national steering committee which includes leading trade unionists from the RMT transport workers' union, the PCS civil servants' union, the National Union of Teachers, the Fire Brigades Union,

➔ **Is the money there?** The number of 'ultra-high net worth individuals' living in London with assets of more than £21 million on top of their main home reached 4,224 in 2014.

and the Prison Officers Association (see below). The RMT has been officially represented since its 2012 annual general meeting agreed that the union would become a constituent part of TUSC. The Socialist Party and the Socialist Workers Party also have committee places, and non-aligned individuals are represented through the Independent Socialist Network. Local groups are encouraged to be established on a similar basis, open to organisations and individuals who want to fight back.

This coalition structure is not a finished arrangement and discussions continue to take place on the best way to organise TUSC as it develops in the future, particularly after the general election when even more questions will be asked about Labour. But by providing a means for trade unionists, community campaigners and socialists to work together in an electoral coalition, TUSC is already playing an important part in building an alternative to the pro-market, pro-cuts establishment parties.

To contact TUSC or one of its constituent organisations check out the relevant website:

**TUSC** [www.tusc.org.uk](http://www.tusc.org.uk)

**RMT** [www.rmt.org.uk](http://www.rmt.org.uk)

**Socialist Party** [www.socialistparty.org.uk](http://www.socialistparty.org.uk)

**Socialist Workers Party** [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk)

**Independent Socialist Network** [www.independentsocialistnetwork.org](http://www.independentsocialistnetwork.org)

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## ➔ THE TUSC NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

**TUSC national steering committee (Summer 2014):**

Representatives from the Rail, Maritime and Transport workers' union (RMT), the Socialist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, and the TUSC Independent Socialist Network.

Plus, in a personal capacity: **Steve Gillan**, POA General Secretary; **Chris Baugh**, PCS Assistant General Secretary; **Joe Simpson**, POA Assistant General Secretary; **John McNally**, PCS Vice-President; **Ian Leahair**, FBU National Executive; **Nina Franklin**, ex-NUT President; **Brian Caton**, ex-POA General Secretary; Cllr **Keith Morrell** (Southampton); **Nick Wrack**.

Registered officers: Chairperson, **Dave Nellist**; National Nominating Officer, **Clive Heemsker**