



Laurence Faircloth

Candidate for General Secretary, Amicus section, Unite

Why am I standing?

The most important issue facing our union is how we face up to the worst economic

recession for decades. Many members face job cuts, short-time working or attacks on pay and conditions. Defending our members **must** be the top priority for every union officer and activist.

Instead we have an election for General Secretary of the Amicus section. This is a complete distraction. So why is this election taking place? Because if Derek Simpson is to defer his retirement for a year, until he is 66, under law he must face an election.

Back in 2002, I supported Derek Simpson when he stood against Ken Jackson and won the General Secretary election in the old AEEU. He was then committed to an activist union where lay members came first. Derek challenged Ken Jackson for wanting to go on beyond retirement age.

Faced with a similar legal challenge, Derek Simpson has put his own personal ambition before the interests of the union membership and forced this election.

Unite can be a great union. Members from Amicus and TGWU sections have been inspired by victories like the Shell tanker drivers, and by Unite flags and banners on protests and picket lines. It's urgent that we complete the merger of Amicus and TGWU to build a strong union that delivers for all its members.

It's a tragedy that Derek Simpson has over the last year obstructed the integration process time and again. The integration of union structures, officer assignments, education, and organising have all been

obstructed. It's a tragedy that he's continuing this by insisting on the election – delaying the launch of a single united union by at least six months.

I believe passionately in the merger. We cannot afford to have Derek re-elected if it is only to strengthen his personal ambition and further hinder integration. We need to move forward with building a strong union **now**.

As Regional Secretary for the South West Region, and for the North West Region before that, I have a track record on building strong union organisation. I've made sure the resources are there when members need them. A strong union also means an integrated union, where Amicus and TGWU members work together. Our interests are exactly the same. I've worked hard with activists from both sections to progress the merger and build a union we can be proud of.

I make the same commitment, to drive forward to build a strong united union, if elected as Amicus General Secretary.

I am proud to have the support of Amicus Unity Gazette.

Nomination details

Address:

36 Burnham Road, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 3JH

Branch: **Plymouth 0738**

Membership number: **30835343**

Support my nomination

- *Shop stewards and workplace reps can nominate if their nomination is endorsed by their members. Nomination forms are available from Regional Offices. Please nominate me and ask other reps to do the same.*
- *Branches can nominate at their November or December meetings. Please attend and support my nomination.*
- *Make a donation to my campaign – cheques should be payable to "Laurence Faircloth 4 GenSec".*
- *Invite me to your branch or workplace meetings.*

Please feel free to contact me on 07790 006 260 or email Laurence.faircloth@gmail.com

What I stand for

- **A single united merger, bringing together the Amicus and TGWU sections on a tight timescale.** The union will be far stronger when our members can work together in every industrial sector. All officers must be able to support members, without artificial barriers about members belonging to the 'wrong' predecessor union. We urgently need a single membership system and a single well-managed financial system.
- **Lay democracy and accountability at every level of the union,** taking the best practices from the TGWU and Amicus and their predecessor unions. Officers *must* be accountable to lay members through the union structures. Agreements with employers should never be made behind the backs of members. Democracy and accountability require information. I'll ensure that branches and lay committees receive the information from the union they need, ending the current veil of secrecy.
- **An end to centralised control in the union.** We need more regional autonomy to make decisions and control the resources to carry them out. This is a necessity for Scotland, Wales and Ireland with their different government structures. The TGWU model of Regional delivery of education has worked well, and should be implemented across the union. I strongly support an 'organising model' of trade unionism but this is best implemented where priorities are determined by lay members at national and regional levels.
- **The election of full-time officers** is something I have always supported. Election makes officers accountable to members rather than the Union hierarchy. I will initiate a debate on this across the Union so that proposals can be brought forward to the first Rules Conference for the election of *future* officers.
- **Political funds should be directed to candidates who support our policies.** I am a long standing Labour Party member – and I believe the Labour Government has not met the aspirations of trade unionists. On too many issues Labour has ignored our members and been too close to the interests of big business. Why is it that a nationalised Northern Rock leads the way in repossessing homes, and now threatens thousands of our members with redundancy? We need to look at how we fund the Labour Party. We should use our political funds at regional level, supporting the candidates who back our policies. It's time to end the practice of giving the national Labour Party millions of pounds every year with no strings attached.
- **The union must be a campaigning union.** We must end the anti-trade union legislation that prevents us adequately supporting our members in dispute with their employers. We want Government resources diverted from bailouts for the rich towards funding education, health, and housing instead. We must oppose privatisation and the idea that 'the market' is the best way to run things. Defending jobs means just that – not having the negotiation of voluntary redundancy terms as the starting point every time.
- **Equality for all has to be at the cornerstone of Unite.** Hundreds of thousands of our members face discrimination – at work or in wider society - because of their race, gender, sexuality, age, disability, or religion. The *whole* union must fight to reverse that discrimination. I will ensure that all minorities have the structures available to them in the union to enable their voices to be heard.
- **International trade unionism** – real internationalism that's about fighting for our members in an age of globalisation. Internationalism isn't about round the world jaunts for those at the top of the union – it's at its best when union members in one country can provide real solidarity to fellow union members in dispute in another. We will not be able to do that until we have won the political fight in this country to allow secondary action in industrial disputes.
- **No intimidation, bullying, or harassment within our union.** Debate and disagreement are part of trade unionism. Our members, activists and officers must be able to express their views freely.
- **Unite: a fighting union.** I want every member to know that their union will always be there to defend them at work and outside work. I want a union with a Unite culture not an Amicus or TGWU one. Together we can make this pledge a reality.

Laurence Faircloth