

## Q&A List for use during Election

### **Q1. What is the role of a Rep?**

Answer: There are three main types of Rep Roles but 3 key areas of the representative which ever type of rep you become are communication and the ability to research and gather information in order to Build strength. Communications, because it is essential that you can listen to members, guide them and convey their issues to management and also feedback to members. Researching because it is also important to prepare for these meetings and ensure that you have the facts or know which questions to ask to ensure that issues are resolved as quickly as possible. TSSA needs to build its strength by growing membership through being good at the other 2 areas, there is a continuous loop and one feeds from the other, by being strong greater successes can be won.

- A) **Industrial Rep:** Deals with championing issues that deal with terms and conditions, equality, grievance & disciplinary representation and attend meetings with management to resolve these issues along with pay. Often working with Safety Reps when issues demand.
- B) **Safety Rep:** Deals with safety related matters. On issues that result from safety related problems the safety Rep takes the lead role. Also attends safety meetings, safety tours and independent accident investigations. Often working with Industrial Reps when issues demand.
- C) **Learning Rep:** This role is primarily to provide learning opportunities to members and non members alike. A learning Rep organises within their constituency with learning providers and management to arrange courses not strictly reserved for work interests. They also often can negotiate and achieve a variety of opportunities at the lowest or even no cost and release from work. (Learning reps aren't covered by this current election process as there is separate legislation to cover this, if you are interested in exploring this as a role then contact Alan Valentine on [valentinea@tssa.org.uk](mailto:valentinea@tssa.org.uk))

In Amey Consulting due to the way they wish to organise around hubs we also have the position of lead Rep. A lead Reps role is to organise, support and mentor the Reps. Suggest training needs and when needed step in to help resolve issues not possible to be resolved at a local level. A lead Rep also attends meetings at a Company and Rail level. Lead reps will be chosen by the other representatives within the particular Hub.

This arrangement allows those not ready or who have not had the correct training to evolve into the job of Rep and will provide continuity of a high level of Representation for years to come.

### **Q2: How do I stand for election as a rep?**

Using the nomination form provided get two signatures from your colleagues who are TSSA members within your Hub area covered by collective bargaining and post, email or fax this using the appropriate details on the back of the nomination form. This must arrive between the 26<sup>th</sup> November and the 14<sup>th</sup> December. We will then confirm receipt.

### **Q3: How do I nominate a colleague to stand as a Rep?**

You need to speak with them first to be sure that they want to carry out the role and also with others in your group explaining why you think the person you want to nominate is the right person. Getting this support for any prospective candidate will show your support and encourage the candidate to take on the role of representing your group.

#### **Q4: So I have filled in the nomination form. What happens next?**

Well done. We have made up packs for candidates with all the relevant information that will assist you. If the seat is uncontested you will be elected unopposed. Ideally there should be more candidates than positions vacant to ensure democratically elected Reps

- A) **Unopposed:** This means you will be identified as a newly appointed Rep. We don't expect you to be able to begin immediately as you will need guidance on the systems but we have a support system ready. Also we can tailor that support to suit your needs
- B) **Contested Election:** Where more candidates have stood than positions vacant. This means that a postal election must take place. At first glance this maybe off putting but it really is not. It gives you a chance to speak with and get the support of your colleagues and commits THEM to supporting you. There are materials in the candidate's pack that will help you run your campaign and Amey have agreed to give you the time and tools to do that canvassing.

The TSSA team will assist and guide you if you need it. There will be a meeting with your hub on 20<sup>th</sup> December for all candidates and Amey have agreed that we can use teleconferencing to link all of the meetings up together. Some Hubs may have representatives Elected Unopposed by the 20<sup>th</sup> December others may not either way the results of any elections will be announced after the closing date of 21<sup>st</sup> Jan 2013 and we would be hoping that representatives could take up post by Monday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

#### **Q5: So the election has finished and results announced. Now what?**

We will then need to hold a meeting at the various hubs. Due to the nature and geographical spread we will arrange to have ALL the newly elected Reps addressed by a TSSA Organiser welcoming you and giving a little background to the journey so far.

After this we will separate into our hub groups at which there will be members of the organising team to run through the setup and structure of the CB agreement. Then the group will discuss who they want to act as lead Rep and local reps both safety and industrial

#### **Q6. How does our Union function?**

Answer: We believe the function of a union is to empower its members. To give them a voice and the strength to ensure that voice is listened too. The issues that affect our members are taken up by the Reps with the full time officer's support and assist to achieve resolution. This system works best when the membership is actively supporting and informing its Reps. The Reps work best when trained and enough Reps are in place to share the load.

Q7. What is our union?

Our union is run from the bottom up. It is the members that identify the issues and report them to their Reps. The Reps attempt to resolve these issues and if not they contact the organising team to assist.

This means YOUR union will always be involved in YOUR issues and you do not have to rely on others to act on your behalf. You are organised in a way that you can demand it.

This is why your involvement, Rep training and a professional support team is so vital

**Q7. I Pay my Membership Subs. Why do I have to be active?**

**Answer:** A Good Rep can only be as good as the support they get from their members. They can only act on information given to them by their members. They will be encouraged and enthused by the support of members. Granted you can have bad Reps but they will find it very difficult to be a Rep for long with an active membership. You have a right to demand success but only if you take an active part in achieving that success.

**Q8. I don't have the time to commit to taking on the Role of Rep.**

**Answer:** This is why it is so vital we get in place the numbers of Reps that our Collective Agreement requires. The Reps work over the last few years have had a huge impact on protecting, enhancing and adding to your rights, wages and futures but as a small group they cannot achieve anything near their aspirations for you, aspirations you have told them you share. With a full team and supportive and active membership how much more could we, your union achieve?

If we don't achieve the numbers of Reps and just importantly motivate our members in this hostile environment, you will be working harder and longer for less. Then you really will have no time to be a Rep, no one will. We have fought too hard to rocket to this height only to run out of fuel and plummet back into despair.

Success is about making the correct choices at the correct time. Failure is about not grasping opportunity, or worse still delegating decisions to others that do not have your best interests at heart or simply accepting the status quo.

There is a world hidden from you by those that would rather you do not know the truth. That alone you are powerless but organised and in numbers you become an irresistible force that cannot be denied. This is a war no one can win but only with power can we broker an uneasy peace. Your union is offering you a chance for adventure, a campaign for justice and dignity. Why would you hesitate to take part?

**Q9. I don't feel that my particular group are represented in negotiations what can I do?**

**Answer:** We want members from ALL work disciplines, grades, geographical locations, racial and ethnic backgrounds, genders, sexual orientations to consider standing to be a representative, without a healthy mix of experience and backgrounds how can we be truly representative of your views? Please consider either standing to be a rep or alternatively encouraging others who you think would do a good job to do the same but please make sure you have their consent before nominating them.