

A BRIEF GUIDE TO TRADES COUNCILS

BY BLACKBURN AND DISTRICT TRADES UNION COUNCIL



WHAT IS A TRADES (UNION) COUNCIL?

- An umbrella organisation representing a number of different trade union branches and workplaces within a local region (typically a town)
- Trade Unions with members within the region can appoint representatives to the trades council (TC) – these members are known as 'delegates'
- Some of these 'delegates' have roles or positions within the TC (see later)
- Non-delegates (e.g. retired members) can still be involved in the TC's but on a limited basis (e.g. non voting)
- The trade unions must be 'affiliated' to the Trade Union Congress (most large TU's are)
- The Trade Union Congress are effectively the guardians of the TC's

WHAT DO WE DO?

- Hold meetings - typically monthly
 - Opportunity to discuss workplace/union issues
 - Discuss any correspondence
 - Discuss local/national activity
- Support events & industrial action – attend rallies, protests & picket lines
- Organise local events – guest speakers, film nights, book launches etc
- Circulate communications received from various sources
- Maintain TC webpage and social media platforms
- Support other local causes such as anti-racism

Generally bring together TU's from the local region linking them to the wider community



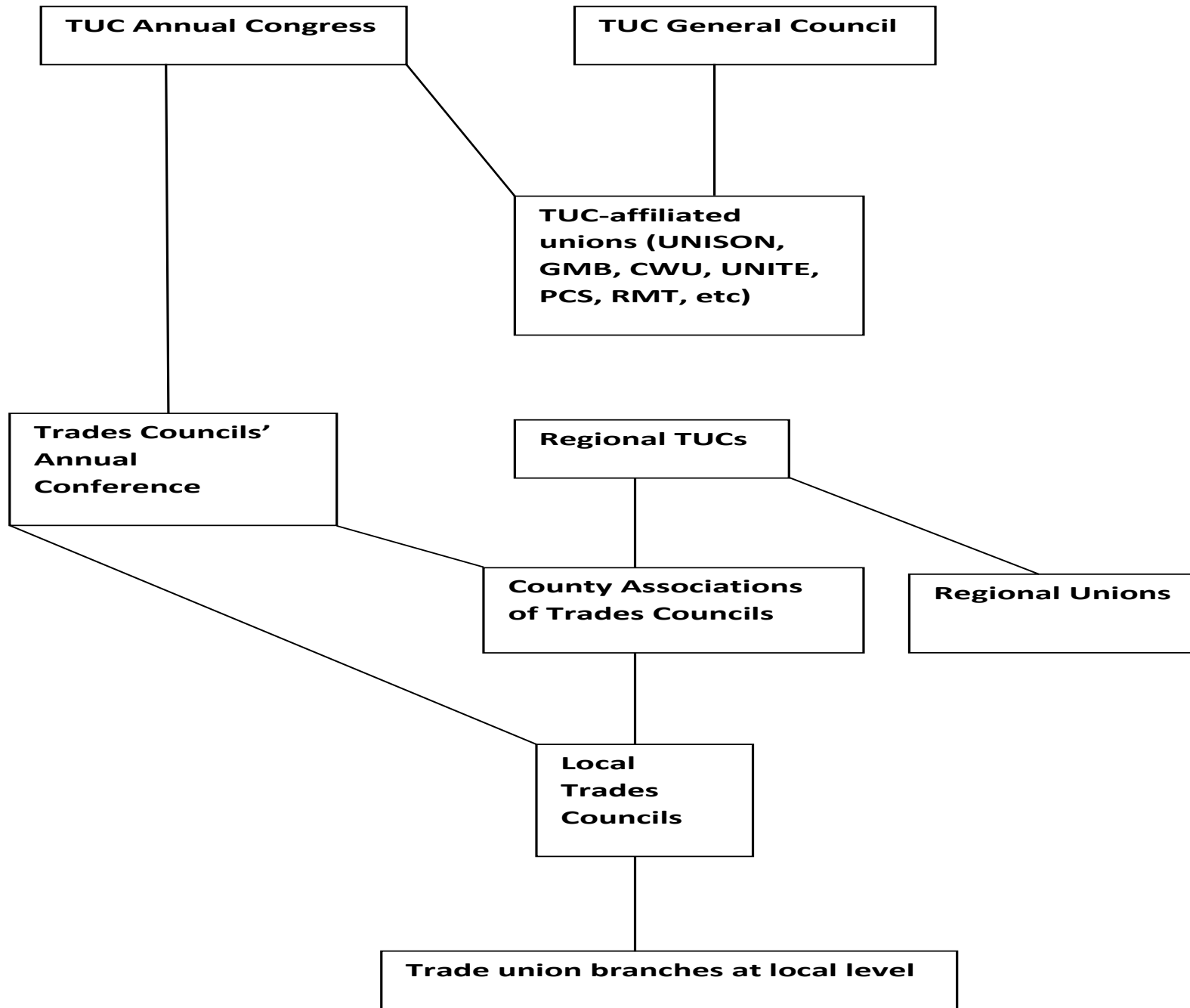
ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS

- PRESIDENT
Chairs meetings, public facing
- SECRETARY
Deals with comms, arranges meeting, general admin
- TREASURER
Records income & expenditure, reports finances
- VICE PRESIDENT
Stand in for president
- OPTIONAL ROLES
e.g. Communication – Equality – Womens Officers

BIGGER PICTURE

- Local TC's link to County Associations – e.g. Lancashire Association Trades Union Council
- County Associations also hold regular meetings with delegates from local TC's
- TC's are part of the Trade Union Congress structure (see next slide)
- Local TC's and county associations can send delegates to the Trades Council Annual Conference
- Annual conference determines target activities for TC's to focus on

Trades Union Councils - structure



FINANCES

- Trade Union branches which appoint delegates to TC's pay an affiliation fee (in our case 10p a member)
- Local TC treasurers will keep records of income and expenditure
- Local TC's pay an affiliation fee to the County Association
- TC funds are usually used to pay for events, activities, donations (strike funds & other causes)
- Non routine spending is generally voted upon at meetings

FURTHER INFORMATION

TUC webpage showing what TC's do -- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/trades-councils-who-we-are-and-what-we-do>

TUC webpage with pdf of 'Model Rules for TC's' -- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/revised-model-rules-trades-union-councils>

Blackburn and District Trades Council website -- <https://bdtuc.co.uk>

Another example of a trades council website -- <http://odtuc.org.uk/oxford-district-trades-union-council/>