

Constitution - 3rd Edition - 12/08/2021

I - Introduction

1. The Welsh Underground Network (WUN) is an all-Wales Organization advocating for a Socialist Welsh Republic, led by the Working Class.
2. The Welsh Underground Network (WUN) believes that action within our communities is the best way to achieve our goal - that of a Welsh Socialist Republic
3. The WUN is a Marxist-Leninist organisation. We advocate for the mass-organisation of the working class under a vanguard party, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and for a coherent anti-imperialist outlook.
4. The WUN stand in full solidarity and support with marginalized and oppressed groups within and outside of Wales. Racism, Sexism, Queerphobia, Transphobia, Ableism, Ethnic and Religious persecution, and oppression at any level – all rot that needs to be stripped away for the Welsh Nation to prosper and succeed

II - Aims and Objectives

1. **We want an Independent, Socialist Republic of Wales – by and for the people of Wales**

Almost a quarter of Welsh people live in poverty. Wales is the poorest nation of the UK, and the one that has experienced the bitter reality of Westminster's class warfare the hardest over the centuries. From Imperial annexation, to the draining of our resources, the 'most entrenched class system' of any nation – that of England, continues to dominate in Wales.

From the biases of the British Media – already owned by just 5 Billionaires, to the limits of the UK electoral system (one election every four years, maybe two or three if you live in Wales – with Welsh votes represented by just 50 MPs to England's over 500), to the continued exodus of our young and skilled – all the while Wales is advertised as a playground for retirees, Independence is needed to preserve Wales as a Nation, and not let it become a vassal state of English Capital. However, we do not want Independence for the sake of it – and categorically do not support Independence for its own sake. As Marxists, our analysis concludes that to advocate Welsh Independence based on Socialism – as did James Conolly in Ireland, we would strike a hard blow not only at Capital in the UK, but at the Imperialist system the UK gleefully partakes in, weakening Global Imperialism.

But why Socialism?

Why is it that the Welsh Coalfield at one point produced up to 40% of British Coal Exports – totaling billions of pounds worth of revenue, yet our communities remained poor and underfunded? Why is it that the South Wales Valleys are demonized as a place filled with 'benefit scroungers', when Billionaires are able to avoid multi-millions in their taxes?

When we advocate Socialism, we advocate a radical change to the economy of Wales, and the political culture of Wales, with the economy re-orientated to serve the people, not line the pockets of the Ultra-rich.

If we were to get Independence without Socialism, it would mean the classes that lower wages, raise rents, remove benefits, defund our communities, and cut services would be Welsh, and would rule from Cardiff instead of Westminster. When we advocate Socialism, we advocate the truest sense of democracy – the right of workers to have their just say in their life, their society, their economy, and their country.

In contrast to other Socialist groups, we believe that Welsh Independence would not weaken working-class solidarity in the UK (as the exit of the EU did not weaken European working-class solidarity), and that due to a history of Internal Colonialism within Wales, our class struggle is historically different to that in England, and that in Scotland.

In order to fight for Socialism across the UK, we first need to get our own house in order – and return to the fight alongside Scotland and England as equal partners, not an underdeveloped nation dragged along by our English and Scottish comrades.

The unity of the British state and the unity of the working class are not the same thing. Unity between workers in Scotland, England, Ireland, and Wales, does not rest on the maintenance of the British state or the capitalist interests it represents. The necessity for Welsh workers to unite with their brothers and sisters in England or Scotland or Ireland will not evaporate in the face of a Welsh Socialist Republic. Workers from different countries can and do organise together across borders, in the same trade unions and in alliance against the same unscrupulous multinationals.

On the other hand, allying with the Tories, Lib Dems and Labour to preserve the bosses' state will damage workers' unity. Part of maintaining workers' unity is for English, Scottish and Irish workers to support a potential Welsh vote for Independence. However packaged, the no camp inevitably rallies forces to the Union Jack and the reactionary and backward ideas it stands for.

2. We want local community action, the creation of community centres, and the revival of our towns, villages, and cities.

For too long our communities have been discarded and left to the dogs. Wales has some of the poorest regions in the UK, even in Europe. We've been left as the playground of the rich, of the second-home owners, all the while our local communities are left to rot.

Community centres and services close, our historic buildings are turned into luxury flats that the average person cannot afford – or demolished to sell the land to developers, multi-national chains barge into our towns and villages – pricing out locals, and our land is left scarred by industrial waste.

We believe in the power and the agency of ordinary, working-class people to affect real material changes in their own lives. We believe the people have far more knowledge and ability to create positive change than an out of touch political elite that has never shown an interest in ordinary people.

Political action begins at home, directly. Successive governments (both in Wales and in London) haven't helped, so we'll take matters into our own hands. We believe that local, direct action to help improve our communities is what's needed.

'Community' was killed after Thatcher, so through community clean-ups, soup kitchens, educational events in the community, and workshops, we want to dig it back up and dust it back off.

3. We want workers to have a democratic say in both their workplace, and in their society, to ensure their rights.

Under the current system in Wales, workers are subject to temporary contracts, poor wages, terrible

hours, limited right to strike, and an increasingly undemocratic and demanding work-culture. While the wages of the top bosses have increased by tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands in Wales, the average wage for people in Wales has remained the same for over a decade. The profits you make are funnelled off to the ultra-rich, while you remain on the same wage you had in 2005 .

We believe that our mainstream political parties have no interest in solving these problems, as they benefit from this exploitation. We believe that the only solution is grassroots movements of working class people.

We want workplace democracy under public ownership, where everyone has a say in how the business/organization is run, and where the profits go. With so much of our day/week/year spent at work, we'll only have democracy when we achieve a democracy of working-people in Wales.

We also want true democracy, outside of the corrupt liberal parliamentary system. We want real democracy, from the national level down to individual neighbourhood councils. People in Wales know what's best for them, and are worth more than one or two votes every four years.

4. We want free, accessible, and honest education for all.

Education is the key to success. We don't just mean University, but Apprenticeships, and Adult Learning. Access to education consistently remains one of the biggest dividers of the quality of life of our children, and the lives they will grow into. The education sector in the UK – including Wales, is designed by, and ran for the benefit of, the ruling classes. How many of our political elite have been to the same few schools and the same two universities? We believe the education system should serve the people, not the establishment.

With the current Education Sector in Wales run for profit, the options for people in Wales are to enter a life of permanent student-debt – rising every year with interest with no guarantee of a job afterwards, apply for an internship (often unpaid, acting as a lackey for a multi-million pound company with no guarantee of a job), or apply for one of Wales' fast-dwindling Apprenticeships.

We do not believe that it should be this way. We want the best opportunities for all people of Wales, especially our children, and do not believe that our children should suffer simply because they were not privileged enough to be born to a life of excess wealth.

We want free education for all in Wales – from the cradle, to the grave. Free tuition, Paid internships, accessible courses.

5. We want an end to children growing up in poverty.

Wales has the highest level of child poverty in the UK. This is a failure of the Welsh Government, and of the Westminster Government. Both have the power to end this in a day, but chose not to due to 'costs'. We believe that the wellbeing of our children is of utmost importance, and that no child should suffer for economic circumstances beyond their control.

We know that things do not need to be this way. There is no reason that any child should go hungry, unhoused, or scared for their future simply because they were born to the 'wrong' background. No child is invalid, and we believe that the protection of our children is fundamental to the betterment of Wales, and to the world as a whole.

We demand free Government-provided childcare, as evident in so many countries around the world, as just the start of rectifying this. We demand free, extensive school meals, to provide for all children. We demand a refunding of youth centres and social clubs, decimated by a decade of austerity, to provide children with social groups, and places of refuge from troubled families. We

demand an end to the introduction of an entrenched class system before children even learn the fundamentals of maths by abolishing the private school system, ending the division of children along class lines.

6. We want deprived areas in Wales to be re-invigorated, and not discarded and treated as commuter belts.

For too long, our deprived communities in Wales have been treated as a cheap source of housing, and cheap land for property developers. Our villages, towns, and cities are suffering a drain of working-people – with jobs relocating to the big cities, leaving our communities without work and without workers.

We want the reinvigoration and restoration of our communities, for the people in these communities themselves. Our homes and streets are not there for people to get on the property ladder, and our regions aren't there just for the commuters. We want real investment in these areas, and sustainable jobs in these communities – and to not be discarded as a commuter belt.

7. We want an end to homelessness.

Homelessness is something that can be fought. There are enough houses in Wales, and there is enough money. Too often in Wales, Landlords buy up cheap property to charge extortionate rents to those in desperate need.

We do not believe that people should be denied a safe place to live just because they cannot provide an adequate amount of money to be sucked dry from them. We do not believe anybody should fear losing their jobs and losing their home. We do not believe anybody should be driven to suicide over economic circumstances beyond their control simply because the housing market cares more about money than it does about human lives.

We believe that if the Welsh landlords will not give decent, and cheap housing to our communities, then the housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that our communities can build and make decent housing for its people.

8. We want a Wales that stands in solidarity with all oppressed and exploited peoples around the world.

When hundreds of men and women risked life and limb to fight against Franco's Fascists in Spain, they did so out of a genuine belief in Socialist internationalism – and the solidarity of man.

We cannot, and will never forget this ethos. We want a Wales that stands in solidarity with the oppressed and exploited across the world in their fight against capitalism, discrimination, and exploitation.

We cannot fight for all of this without starting at home.

Classism, Racism, Sexism, Transphobia, Religious persecution, etc – all rot that needs to be cast out for the Welsh Nation to prosper and succeed.

9. We want to abolish police, prisons and the white supremacist structures they uphold

Taking the understanding - backed by scientific consensus - that the overwhelming majority of crime is motivated by poverty, and is not deterred in any capacity by police nor prisons, we see no reason for their being, and see the goals laid out before as a real solution to crime.

The police is not capable of undoing a crime, and indeed is seldom capable of solving one. Prisons do not rehabilitate convicts, and indeed many go on to reoffend.

What prisons and police are doing is disproportionately attacking and killing people of colour in this

country, whilst increasingly making a profit off of it with an increasing rate of private prisons in the UK.

There isn't true justice in Wales. Working-class people are most likely to receive harsher sentences in Wales for minor-crimes, while the richest in Wales get off with a slap on the wrist.

When you need to feed a young family, when your community is derelict and decaying, when there are no jobs for miles, and when employers are hiring for zero-hours contracts with little pay, when there are cuts to your benefits, to your social services, while rent is increasing and increasing, is it any wonder people turn to petty crime to get by? The economic ills and burdens that capitalism puts on us - especially onto communities of colour - needs to be solved if we want to tackle crime.

Destroying prisons demands destroying White supremacy, patriarchy, cis-normativity - it demands destroying all oppressive structures, and destroying the police that enforce them.

10. We want the working people of all creeds, colours, and nations to unite, for the betterment of all.

Only through the working-class combining it's might as equals, are we able to change the world for the better. The real battle isn't between 'Welsh people' and 'foreigners', or between Labour and Tory, but the battle between the Upper Classes who have oppressed working-people in Wales for centuries, who built their wealth on our hunched-over backs, and us.

We can win a new world. This is possible, and this can be achieved in our lifetime.

III - Organisation and Structure

1. The WUN are a broad church Marxist Organization, and welcome all who are enthusiastic about bringing revolutionary change in Wales.
2. In practice, the WUN organises on a Marxist-Leninist principle, particularly Democratic Centralism.
3. In regards to the WUN, the concrete organisational method of democratic centralism entails:
 - Maximum participation, input and involvement of the membership
 - Freedom of criticism of the movement without fear of reprisal
 - Diversity of thought wherein comrades debate freely and openly prior to coming to definitive and concrete solutions
 - Unity of action wherein comrades must carry out majority decisions agreed upon by the relevant elected body, irrespective of personal disagreements with said decision.
4. Through standing behind a program and uniting together through the principles of democratic centralism, we will show maximum efficiency and discipline in the development of a legitimate vehicle committed to the overthrow of capitalism in Wales.
5. The WUN is made up of Local chapters, which are the body and soul of the organisation. They represent a local consciousness – constantly up to date and active on local struggles; working with the community to develop a local class consciousness.
6. Local chapter members are able to elect a chapter central committee (CC), and all members elect a national CC.
7. Should a national CC member, or chapter CC member show problematic behaviour, or a significant drop in working standards, there shall be an investigation by the Member's Officer and Care Officer,

to ensure the Member is okay.

8. Should the Member continue for a period of five weeks to neglect duties, Members are able to hold a Vote of No Confidence (VONC), with the said individual also having the right of appeal.
9. Shall the CC/chapter CC Member experiencing the VONC have 40% of votes cast against them, there shall be an urgent election called for their post, where the said person is able to stand again.
10. Should said person have 50% of votes against them, an urgent election for the post shall be called, however the said person is unable to stand again.

IV - Chapters

1. When you become a member, you will be assigned to the nearest local chapter.
2. Shall there be no nearest chapter for you, you will be assigned to the nearest chapter to your region, with the aim to establish a local chapter in your region.
3. The creation of a chapter requires that chapter committee positions be filled by inducted members, and that the chapter has projects that are ongoing. The committee must be active in their recruitment and organisational efforts
4. The Six Week Induction Period entails attendance to at least four of our six meetings in the given period - in particular, two national Meetings, and two chapter Meetings.
5. The Induction Period also entails attendance of one physical WUN Event (should one be held in those six weeks, as well as with reasonable adjustments for disability and individual mitigating circumstances), and a review with the CC after the six weeks are up.
6. Chapters will convene bi-monthly to review their efficacy.

V - Committees

1. The CC of the WUN is made up currently of seven directly elected roles, alongside the automatic entry of every chapter Chair, as well as representatives from each of our Working Groups.
2. Should the chair be unable to carry out their duties, an intermediate chair will take place based on organisational hierarchy, and the preparation for a new election will immediately take place within the next fortnight.
3. Central Committee Roles

- o **Chair**

The role of Chair is to oversee the smooth running of the WUN. The Chair hosts national Meetings, and directs action from those meetings. The Chair also works alongside the CC in aiding their work.

The Chair oversees the new Member's interviews, and messages/replies to Organisations alongside the General Secretary on behalf of the Organisation.

- o **General Secretary**

The role of the General Secretary is to ensure decisions made in the national meetings are followed through, both at a national and chapter level - acting as a manager.

The General Secretary is also in charge of keeping national meeting minutes, and responding to emails on behalf of the organization (and forwarding the information to the CC).

- o **Members Officer**

The role of the Members Officer is to ensure members abide by the WUN Code of Conduct, work alongside the Care Officer in dealing with members disputes and incidents, and to work alongside members to help better their experience within the WUN.

- o **Treasurer**

The role of Treasurer is to keep note of our national finances, to provide regular quarterly updates in national meetings as to the state of our finances, to organize the reimbursement of funds for chapters and members for various costs, and to aid in securing grants/additional funding.

- o **Social Media Officer**

The role of Social Media Officer is to oversee our social media accounts as the WUN. They are in charge of posting/sharing content (in conjunction with the Design Team and Social Media Team), responding to messages and passing over the information to the CC, and ensuring a consistent presence on our various social media profiles.

- o **Union Officer**

The role of Union Officer is to coordinate the WUN's national policy in regards to unions, to boost union membership amongst our members, and to work alongside chapters in coordinating union activity in chapter areas.

- o **Care Officer**

The role of Care Officer is to provide support for our members should they need it - be that due to internal or external reasons. They are the first port of call in relation to members complaints - be that from within or outside the organisation.

The Care Officer oversees the work of the Care Officers across WUN chapters, and works alongside them in solving members disputes.

The Care Officer works closely with the Members Officer in regards to members disciplinarys, investigating the incident, and overseeing an independent conduct panel to deliberate on the matter.

4. All central committee members without a chapter equivalent role may elect themselves a deputy to assist with their workload. This deputy is *not* a committee member.

5. Chapter Committee Roles

- o **Chair**

The Chairperson's role will be to provide the members with dedicated and passionate leadership. The Chairperson will provide support to members and oversee the organisation and general running of their chapter. They will liaison with external organisations to extend lines of communication, solidarity and support. As well as simultaneously work within the chapter to make sure members feel supported and motivated.

The Chairperson is responsible for making sure that each meeting is planned effectively, conducted accordingly and that matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner. They will also interview new recruits and make sure they are settled into the group. This person will

support members' ideas, roles and projects from planning to fruition.

The Chairperson will be an active member of the group – a person that will/has set up events and is vocal in the group.

The Chairperson will know the members of the chapter well. They should be approachable and friendly towards comrades and hold knowledge about the organisation as well as theory around what our organisation is based on.

- **Co-Chair**

Identical responsibilities to the chair. Should the chair be unable to carry out their duties, the cochair will assume the role of chair.

- **General Secretary**

The General Secretary will oversee the secretarial work of the chapter. This level holds a high level of responsibility within the chapter and would work alongside the chapter CC in writing emails and following up on tasks. This person will also be in contact with external organisations and be able to do this with confidence. This person will ensure chapter minutes are taken adequately.

- **Social Media Officer**

The role of a Social Media Communications officer will be to regulate and update our social media. They will be the main user of the social media accounts (With the Chair and Co-Chair also using the platforms). Liaising with other members of the chapter CC – the Social Media Officer will write statements for our social media platforms, produce social media content, interact with users and respond to social media messages, inquiries, and comments.

- **Care Officer**

The role of a Care Officer within the chapter will be to safeguard the members. They will be an approachable and empathetic individual with the utmost respect for confidentiality. They should know the members well as they will be someone who the members can come to for support. If the time arises they may be needed to help resolve issues within the chapter.

The role will also entail becoming a part of the WUN Care Team which will resolve issues/complaints/care plans/safeguarding/policy on an organisation level.

- **Events Coordinator**

The role of the Events Coordinator will be to strategise events and protests.

The duties of the Events Coordinator will include - Determining the type of action, Determining the time and location of action, estimating the cost of action, advertising action, and preparing the chapter for action.

As well as this the Events coordinator would work alongside the chapter CC to ensure all parties are present e.g. Frontline organisers, Speakers, First Aiders, Scouts (to watch for law enforcement) Press contacts, etc.

The person putting themselves forward for this role should be highly dedicated and have a good level of organising skill. They will need to be passionate for events and have the confidence to be able to speak in public when the time arises.

The members elected to central and chapter committees should be highly motivated individuals committed to a socialist republic, and committed to working together and sharing responsibility.

6. The WUN will hold an annual election of central and chapter committees, following the annual congress.
 - Chapter elections will always precede national elections, and the WUN will prioritise the chapter level; working to fill chapter committees over the central committee.
7. In the event that an individual shares a central and chapter committee role, that individual will prioritise their efforts at the chapter level.
8. All members of the WUN are able to cast votes in national CC Elections, and all members of the WUN are able to stand in national CC Elections - should they have completed their six week induction period.

VI - Groups

1. Outside of committees and chapters, there are two groups which comprise organisational work:
 - *Working Groups*: A team which works together in a specific area of interest
 - *Representative Groups*: A team which represents marginalized communities in Wales.
 - *All members can join both group types - with the emphasis that the final decisions in representative groups are ratified by those that comprise that group only.*
2. The purpose of these groups are to help to craft WUN Policy based on their respective area.
3. Representative groups can elect an Officer to the national CC.
4. Any policy that the WUN undertakes, when related to an area covered by a group, needs to be entirely signed off by said group(s).

VII - Membership

1. Member's Rules
 - Must be 18+ to join.
 - **No collaboration with the Police.** Should they approach at WUN events, do not engage with them and refer to the most senior chapter officer present. (or designated police liaison officer)
 - **Do not** use the organisation in an unsolicited romantic or sexual nature. We are specifically not an organisation to be used to facilitate dating.
 - No **public advocacy** of any Welsh / British Liberal Parliamentary Parties. No Labour, No Greens, No Plaid etc.
 - No **participation or assisting** socialist parties that further oppression towards marginalised communities (e.g. SWP, CPB).
 - Members must be respectful, comradely, and courteous to other members.
 - Members must not engage in any abusive behaviours to others. In particular, we have a no tolerance policy when it comes to any discriminatory behaviour in relation to Minority Groups **inside and outside** the group.

- If **publicly presenting** yourself as a WUN Member on Social Media, you must make every effort to avoid unnecessary arguments with individuals from the General Public that could bring the WUN into Disrepute.
- Members are encouraged to attend as many meetings/events as possible (both chapter and national), and to engage with other Members in our various chats. Absence of a month will be flagged up with your chapter CC, and will entail a welfare check up with your chapters care officer where, they'll work to bring you back into the fold. 8 weeks would be removed from the WUN, until the Member is able to volunteer to the CC they are able to commit time and effort to the WUN.
- No drinks/drugs at WUN Events (only exception to the drinks rule is if it's explicitly specified - like a drink's social etc, or medicinal..., though no drinks at any events with the public).
- Don't attend internal WUN meetings intoxicated.

2. The WUN Currently has Three tiers of affiliation with the Organization:

- Full Membership - Subject to the completion of the Six Week Induction Period, the individual is able to vote on WUN Matters, take part in Congress, and assume the responsibilities of full membership of the WUN.
- Associate Membership – This tier is for organisationally valuable individuals who are ideologically aligned with the organisation, but are not able to contribute based on their circumstances. Direct communications will be established between the CC / chapters and associates based on individual circumstances.
- Supporters – Members of the general public who wish to support the organisation in general. Does not demand ideological alignment nor that they are in proximity to Wales geographically. General communications with supporters and wider membership will be established – access to newsletter, redreads, etc.

VIII - Finances

1. Members are required to pay dues, with the minimum standard being £1 per month. Those with the wherewithal are encouraged to donate accordingly based on monthly income after tax:

- < £230 = £1 a month
- £231 - £777 = £2 a month
- £778 - £1343 = £5 a month
- £1344 - £1910 = £10 a month
- £1911 - £2477 = £20 a month
- more than £2477 = 1% of income a month.

Note: This is financial guidance. The mandatory payment of £1 a month is all that will be enforced by the Welsh Underground Network through the Treasurer and Members Officer. Your financial situation is not up for investigation.

2. Financial reports are presented by the Treasurer to the General WUN Membership on a quarterly basis.
3. A Financial spreadsheet will be publicly available to all WUN Members, in order to assure full financial transparency.
4. To be reviewed at the next congress, finances are to be controlled by the CC. This will be reviewed at the next congress based on growth.
5. To be reviewed at the next congress, the internal affairs officer is deemed the backup should the treasurer be unable to carry out their duties.

IX - Discipline

1. Enforcement of Members Rules

- The enforcement of rules will be a role adopted by the Member's Officer. Should an investigation be needed, it will be the joint role of the Member's Officer and Care Officer to investigate, prior to setting up an Independent Panel to decide how the Organization proceeds with the Complaint.
- The independent panel will be a weighted selection of the general membership - meaning that whilst the panel is randomly selected in principle, certain individuals may be deselected (e.g. A partner or family member of the accused), and those whom the case may pertain to due to a protected characteristic would be preferred for panel selection (e.g. In a case of racist abuse, PoC would be weighted for panel selection). Panel members will be completely anonymous throughout the process.
- After an investigation is concluded, a report will be given to the general membership, giving the details of the case regarding : accusation given, methodology of investigation, and conclusion/actions taken - with the report being given the go-ahead by the complainant. That same panel will then decide on the punishment.

2. Penalties for Breaking Rules

- Temporary Voting rights loss
- Temporary Suspension from the Group, and a letter of wrong-doing to both the person affected, and the CC (all subject to the panels approval that the person may indeed re-join after their suspension)
- Indefinite Suspension, with final say being the Complainant (Note: Should the person be unsuspended after investigation, a letter to clear the air from the CC will be written)
- Permanent Expulsion

X - Congress and Extraordinary Meetings

1. All members will convene each summer for the annual congress of the WUN, prepare for the following year, review the constitution, prepare long term savings goals, and debate motions and amendments.
2. Should 40% of the members decide upon it, extraordinary congresses may be held.

3. Should 40% of the members decide upon it, extraordinary meetings may be held.
 - Extraordinary meetings are specific sessions to discuss a single specific topic.
4. Any amendment to the constitution must be passed at a congress. Amendments to our ten point program must be passed at either a congress or an extraordinary meeting.
 - These amendments will be reviewed and ratified at the annual congress.
5. Amendments to any central committee role must be made and voted upon at a congress, including the removal of a role. The creation of non-committee role can be done at any time as decided by the membership.
6. Congress Officer:
 - 3 months preceding the annual congress, a non central committee member will be elected to organise accommodation, a venue, and clarify phrasing and intent on each submitted motion.
7. Preceding a congress, motions are submitted to the chapter. Following majority approval from the chapter membership, that motion is submitted to the congress officer as an official motion.
8. Motion amendments can be made by any inducted member. They must be seconded by another inducted member to become official.