

12 June 2023

## **A weekend of hope**

Matthew recently attended the Young Workers' Development Weekend run by the GFTU and came away with a sense of hope that young people in trade unions can organise for a better future for everyone.

The Quorn Grange Hotel lies in the heart of rural Leicestershire and is owned by the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU). This was the setting for the GFTU's inaugural Young Workers' Development Weekend.

The weekend was aimed at delegates already established in their unions and somewhat familiar with the trade union movement. I attended as a PCS delegate alongside nine other young members representing the CWU, TSSA, Society of Union Employees (SUE), and Community. The course facilitators also came from a wide range of different unions.

The weekend included sessions on rights at work, negotiating to win, organising, media training, equalities, trade unions and the environment and politics and media.

The agenda was designed to deepen our knowledge of trade unionism and develop the skills needed for it to succeed. This ranged from diving deeper into the myriad of rights at work won by trade union activism and learning about union activity abroad, to role-playing a pay negotiation and a grassroots political campaign.

There was also a chance to get creative: during the weekend I helped draw up an organising plan for a fictitious restaurant, I starred in a video critiquing the redistribution (or rather the lack thereof) of wealth in the UK, and I also wrote a scathing poem about the Daily Mail - we certainly covered a lot of ground in a short space of time!

We also had many impassioned discussions in the evenings, putting the world to rights and lamenting the plight of the working class in our country and the additional hurdles the young workers of today face.

As I got into my car to depart Quorn following this packed 48 hours of development, I was left feeling buoyed by it all. It was a weekend of comradeship and hope. Speaking with fellow delegates from all over the country in various industries, I couldn't help feeling inspired by the fact, and forgive the coining of phrase, that we were all more or less singing from the same hymn sheet. And this leads me to hope.

Young people today have it tough: access to housing, lower wages, frightening levels of student debt for many, and of course the climate crisis. However, I remain hopeful in my generation's fight for a better future, for everyone. A battle that can only be won with solidarity and shared conviction, something we trade unionists do very well.

Follow the GFTU on Twitter @GFTU1 and keep your eyes peeled for any future development opportunities.

If you are a PCS member aged 26 or below, contact [Equalities@pcs.org.uk](mailto:Equalities@pcs.org.uk) to find out about the young members' network in your region.