

## **Closed without warning: a statement on recent events from members and ex-members of ACORN Aberystwyth** (Friday, 12 August 2022)

ACORN UK closed ACORN Aberystwyth on Friday 29 July without any prior discussion or warning.

They posted in our steering group WhatsApp at 5pm, saying ACORN Aberystwyth would be 'paused' indefinitely and that they would redirect resources to help seed new ACORN groups in Wales.

Earlier that day, ACORN had locked us out of branch-specific online accounts, including social media and email. By the time our steering group learned what had happened, they could no longer publicise meetings, attend to ongoing member defence cases or handle any other typical day-to-day ACORN group activity.

ACORN UK emailed the wider Aberystwyth membership the next day to tell them what they had decided. At no point did they inform our members that this decision had happened without their knowledge, involvement or consent.

Two days later, on 1 August, Aberystwyth's group WhatsApp was comprehensively cleared out, as ACORN UK removed everyone except a few remaining admins.

We are angry at the treatment we have received, and other ACORN groups should be alarmed. There is no shared, commonly acknowledged process being followed here. Neither the steering group nor the wider Aberystwyth membership suspected anything amiss before late on Friday. In other words, you can be shuttered indefinitely, just like that, without warning.

ACORN UK claimed they lacked the resources to support us. At the same time, they said they would be helping set up new ACORN groups across Wales. Clearly, both cannot be true.

Aberystwyth already had a healthy, almost 60-strong membership (one of the highest per head among ACORN groups) and organising here has taken hard work. Officers and members have invested considerable time and effort resisting landlords and building ACORN's presence in this community. At a time when unions should be defending members, opposing second homes and fighting the growing cost-of-living crisis, we are distressed to find our work undercut by an organisation we trusted to have our back.

From ACORN UK we demand the following:

- The minutes and full set of attachments from the National Board meeting at which this decision was taken.
- Help and support so we can expedite ongoing member defence cases.
- That ACORN reforms its democratic structures and processes so this cannot happen again.

In solidarity and outrage,

**Members and ex-members of ACORN Aberystwyth**