

Conference 2011



Well, Manchester turned out to be as wet and windy as Cardiff during conference week, and The Rover's Return was nowhere to be seen. It was great to meet up with annual colleagues and swap notes; nice to know you are not the only one with service area problems! It was good to network, making new friends. (little do they realise that we will be picking their brains over the coming year to see what solutions they have come up with!)



As always some interesting and occasionally heated debate. There was one thing we all had in common; fighting the cuts! Dave Prentis gave a rousing speech and we all came home with a renewed vigour, ready to carry on with our day to day activities including securing our members jobs and negotiating for better terms & conditions.



Our branch delegation worked hard as always. So felt we had earned our night out, joining up with Scotland and Northern Ireland for 'Celtic Night'.

Many good decisions were made by UNISON delegates which affect all our members. For more detail, take a look at the national website:

www.unison.org.uk

If anybody is interested in being part of next year's conference in June, ring the office for details.



A Message From The Branch Secretary

Dear UNISON Member.

Job Evaluation/Single Status

You will be aware that there is a lot going on for us as a Trade Union, within the Council. We have concluded the Job Evaluation negotiations and both the employer and Trade Unions will be holding Road Shows across the Council. If our Legal Representatives give us clearance, UNISON, GMB & UNITE will then ballot our respective membership, where members will have the opportunity to vote on whether to accept the package or not.

You will shortly be receiving a pack from the Council with relevant information about Job Evaluation/Single Status. In that pack will be dates for Council Road Shows, UNISON will also be holding meetings across the Council during October.

I cannot stress how important it is for you to make every effort to attend one of these meetings and also how important it is to be a member of a Trade Union.

No Trade Union membership = no vote.

If you know of anyone who is not in a Trade Union, I suggest you show them this newsletter.

Pensions

Coupled with this, we are also preparing ballot papers to vote for Industrial Action as a Union nationally. This is directly related to the Westminster Government attacking Public Sector workers pensions. Those of us, who work in the Public Sector, know better than anyone that our pensions are not gold plated.

To quote Dave Prentis, General Secretary UNISON.

“The average pension in Local Government is £4000, dropping to £2800 for Women, less than £56.00 per week. In Health, the average pension is £7500 – higher because it includes doctors and consultants, but for Women it is still around £3000. Hardly “Gold Plated”.

We will be joined by our sister unions, GMB & UNITE, in balloting and hope that there will be a resounding YES, to strike action. Strike action is not something we take lightly however, this is the fight of our lives, and we need to WIN. If we sit back and allow this Con-Dem Government to attack our pensions in this manner then there will be no hope for us. Public Sector workers deserve better. We do not have million pound bonus’, we do not have private incomes from hereditary wealth; what we do have is an expectation that, after working hard for many years, the meagre pension we do have will be protected.

We now have a facility on the website, for you to receive automatic updates via e-mail, please log onto www.cardiffunison.co.uk and sign up.

Angie Shiels

Job Evaluation/Single Status Meetings

OCT 3RD – 12.30 <i>Council Chambers County Hall</i>	OCT 12TH – 12.00 <i>Meeting Room 2 Star leisure Centre</i>	DATE TO BE ARRANGED <i>Council Chamber City Hall</i>
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School Support Staff

OCT 3RD – 6.30pm <i>Council Chamber County Hall</i>	OCT 6th - 6.30pm <i>Lecture Theatre Howardian Centre</i>	OCT 12TH – 6.30pm <i>Community Room Eastern Leisure Centre</i>
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PRIZE DRAW

Recruit a new member and win £50!
Every time you recruit a new member your name
will go into a prize draw.

The recruitment drive will run over 3 months,
with a £50 prize EACH month!

Request forms from the office (029 2087 2580)
or download:

www.cardiffunison.co.uk

Put your name at top of form & return to the
branch office. Winners will be announced in
February

IMPORTANT MESSAGE!

Should any of your details change (Name/Address
etc.) you **MUST** inform the branch office directly.

We do not get automatic updates from People
Services or Pay Roll.

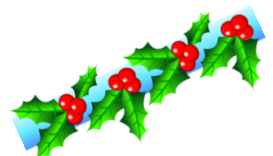
Contact the office on 029 2087 2580

LOTTERY BONUS!

This Christmas we are giving
away an extra £1000 on top
of the usual monthly
prizes!!!

To be included you must be
a member of the UNISON
Lottery. and of course a
UNISON member!
Just fill in the form
(enclosed)

Lines start at 40p, which can
be deducted along with
your subs.



CARDIFF COUNTY COUNCIL ACADEMY

The Cardiff Academy continues to go from strength to strength. The formal launch of the academy took place at County Hall on 6th June and was attended by Cardiff County employees, Council Leaders and trade unions.

Staff who attended the event participated in workshops showcasing how the academy will enable improvement and development of skills through coaching, the first steps programme, employability, money advice and leadership, with the support of and in line with Council wide service improvement.

Paul O'Shea, UNISON Cymru/Wales Secretary, who spoke on behalf at the event on behalf of the joint trade unions, said:

“Widening participation and improving access to learning has been a long-term aim for UNISON. We are pleased that, in this instance, we have been able to work together with the employer to create an innovative and responsive tool which will help support the workforce.

“The Academy, in our view, will produce a win-win result. In the face of tighter budgets and the need to deliver more for less, we are pleased that Cardiff Council is working with employees and unions to tackle this challenge.

“Through investing in the training and development of staff, employers can help protect against the financial storm, as well as ensuring that public services remain effective and responsive to the public's needs.”

The Cardiff Academy continues to develop with a project board being established. A process to identify staff learning partners across the Council to engage with the Board has also begun. An Academy web-site is currently being developed and is soon to be launched; it will be accessible to all Council employees.

Some great work is being done, but forming the Academy has not been without its' challenges, including managing expectation as business processes and development plans are established and put into place.

However, the vision for the Academy remains clear. The Academy is not just about providing learning but about providing opportunities for the workforce for the long term, and supporting the development of public services throughout Cardiff.



Vote yes for industrial action on pensions

I have taken the unusual step of e-mailing you again directly to let you know that today I announced that we will be balloting for industrial action over the threat to your pension.

If you're eligible for the local government pension scheme, NHS pension scheme or civil service pension scheme then in the next month you'll receive a ballot paper and I urge you to vote 'yes'.

You pay into your pension throughout your career so that you can have security and dignity in retirement. However, your pension may be under threat. In brief, ministers want you to pay more if you earn over £15,000 a year, to work much longer and at the end of your working life, to receive a worse pension.

Did you know that relevant government ministers, without agreement, have already changed for the worse the way in which those receiving a public sector pension get an increase each year to take account of inflation? They have stopped using the Retail Price Index which has been used for decades and, from this year, pensions will only increase in line with the Consumer Price Index - a much worse index. This change alone has reduced the overall value of the pensions by over 10%.

Now, they want to increase your pension contributions by an average of over 50% if you earn above £15,000. It's the equivalent on average of a 3% pay cut.

Not a penny of this major increase in your contributions will go towards improving your pension schemes. Instead it will go to the Treasury. This is an additional unfair tax on public sector workers and is deliberately disguised as money for the pension schemes, which they falsely claim to be unaffordable. The truth is public sector pension funds are cash rich and affordable.



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On top of this, they want you to work longer before you can take your pension in full. Even if you have a protected pensionable retirement age of 65, this will be torn up. You will be expected to work until 66, then to 67 and 68 as the state retirement age increases.

They then want us to agree to new pension schemes, but we have no idea what the value of any new scheme would be or the transitional arrangements to it.

UNISON working together with other TUC trade unions has opposed this attack on our pensions.

I want to assure you that we have negotiated with ministers in good faith. But we also know that public sector workers like you are already enduring pay freezes, the threat of privatisation, reorganisations and cuts in services. It's not fair to target you any further. You deserve the pension you are already entitled to.

And so we have decided to ballot for industrial action. We only take strike action as a last resort. We will do everything in our power to ensure no harm occurs to clients, patients and users of services but we need to send a message that we will stand up to protect our pensions.

We need your support and your help to send this message. When you receive your ballot paper I urge you to vote 'yes'.

Talk to your colleagues and get them to join UNISON to strengthen our voice.

Talk to your local branch and your local MP and for more information look at our website:

unison.org.uk/protectourpensions

Vote 'yes' and together we can send a powerful message to protect our pensions.

Yours,

Dave Prentis
General Secretary



HANDS OFF
OUR PENSIONS!

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



Cuba Solidarity Campaign

Since the Cuban Revolution in 1959 the island of Cuba has been suffering the effects of an economic trade embargo imposed by the USA. This has meant that urgent medical supplies and educational material has been denied to the population. For many years UNISON has supported the Cuba Solidarity Campaign as it strives to campaign against the blockade.

During this time UNISON members in Cymru/Wales have helped with donations of items that are impossible to obtain in that country due to the embargo. On a visit to Havana in 2006 I was shown around a nursery/crèche which had been kitted out/furnished by donations from Cymru/Wales UNISON members. UNISON Cymru/Wales also has a 'twinning' agreement with the Province of Guantanamo which has helped provide equipment such as dialysis machines for the local hospital which have proved to be a life saving addition to the service the state provides.

Steve Belcher – Regional Organiser



Child Labour

Over 115 million of the world's children and young teenagers, or more than 7 per cent of the total, are engaged in dangerous and life-threatening jobs, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has said. Overall, there are 215 million child labourers worldwide, says the global labour standards body. Studies from both industrialised and developing countries indicating that every minute of every day, a child labourer somewhere in the world suffers a work-related injury, illness or psychological trauma.

'Despite important progress over the last decade, the number of children in child labour worldwide - and particularly in hazardous work - remains high,' said ILO director-general Juan Somavia. 'Governments, employers and workers must act together to give strong leadership in shaping and implementing the policies and action that can end child labour.'

The ILO report concludes that while there is a need to strengthen workplace safety and health for all workers, specific safeguards for adolescents between the minimum age of employment and the age of 18 are needed. These measures need to be part of a comprehensive approach in which employer and worker organisations and the labour inspectorate have particularly critical parts to play, says ILO.



More International News
in next issue.....

Health & Safety Week
Starts Monday 24th October
Campaign on Safe Maintenance
National Inspection Day: Wednesday 26 October.

The theme concerns all UNISON members; those with jobs in repair and maintenance, those who enforce health and safety, and those who work in either poorly maintained buildings or in workplaces that are being repaired.

Workloads and work environments are unlikely to improve, but health and safety inspections and enforcement are set to decrease as the HSE and local authorities have less money to spend on protecting our health and safety.

Government cut backs in public spending mean less money for public authorities. As a result, public authorities are trying to save money on their staffing and maintenance budgets, or on their budgets for privatised services. This means that parts of the private sector will also have less money for repairs.

The HSE's (provisional) fatal accident statistics for 2010/11 show that 171 people were killed whilst at work over the period, an increase of 24 on the figure for 2009/2010, and amounting to an increase of 16%. Although these figures do fluctuate on an annual basis, they represent a significant increase and should be sounding an alarm.

These figures are just a small fraction of the human cost of poor work health and safety. It is estimated that work incidents cause up to 1,600 deaths each year; including deaths to members of the public, work-related suicide, and road traffic accidents whilst driving for work. On top of this, it is estimated that there are up to 50,000 deaths from work-related illnesses; including cancers, respiratory illnesses, and heart disease.



Immigration Advice

Immigration advice is available for free for UNISON members. If you know a UNISON member who needs advice or help on immigration issues they need to call UNISON on 0845 355 0845. Members asking for immigration advice should leave their daytime telephone number and a solicitor will contact them on a Tuesday between 10am and 3pm.

There is a free government advice helpline for vulnerable workers: 0800 917 23 68. Help and advice is available in over 100 different languages on the national minimum wage, the 48-hour working week, working for an employment agency or gang masters etc.

**NO REP IN YOUR
WORKPLACE?
GET INVOLVED !
JOIN US NOW!
CALL FOR MORE
INFORMATION
WITHOUT
ANY OBLIGATION!
029 2087 2580**