

March 2009

Newsletter

From the Learning & Organising Team


Film Workshop – at the end of January work began on the development of video material to use on team negotiations courses. Lucian Evans from our national video unit helped us put together body language shots and highlights of a mock multi-union staff side pre-meeting and he's coming back on May 1st to complete the filming of a Joint Negotiating and Consultative forum – if you want to take part – call Helen Titherington on 07904342203 for more info.

Local Government branches in Cheshire are undergoing a radical reshuffle and during the coming months two new branches will emerge from the existing seven – they are using the time wisely to encourage stewards to refresh their skills and in February and March two episodes of the Organising Steward Course ran in Northwich and Congleton ensuring 18 more stewards received ERA certification and very shortly plans will be announced to schedule dates for the One Step Ahead Programme for stewards who have more than 4 years in post without having taken refresher training.

UNISON's National celebration of Life Long Learning will again take place at the TUC congress house on 31 March. Len Quinn will be representing the North West's contribution with new and information about his ongoing project in Salford. We trust everyone who attends will have a great time.

This year we are running two episodes of the **UNISON tutor training** stage one course – split three and two days in March and a five day block in November. If you are interested in running local courses in your branch then this is the course for you – we have already put around thirty five people through this training in the North West and it may be of interest to note that we are currently in talks with our Partner the WEA to provide follow on training. Watch this space for PETAL news...

A programme which first began life in the North West is as we speak being readied for roll out to all regions in the union. **The Branch Secretary Development Programme** runs for 18 months and newly elected branch secretaries undergo 5 face to face modules and have 2 'development reviews' to help them cope with the stresses and strains of this pivotal post in the union. If your branch has a new branch secretary or assistant branch secretary they may be interested in the programme – ask them to get in touch with the region to find out more – May 18-19 are the dates for the initial module.



The regional ULF bids have been decided in the North West now and Cleve Tait lists the successful UNISON branches below:

New Heys school, Knowsley MBC, Sefton MBC, Aintree Hospital, New Charter Housing, Alder Hey Hospital, Liverpool PCT, Wirral Council, South Lakeland DC, Wigan Supported Living, Blackburn with Darwen council, Warrington and Halton Foundation Trust, Cheshire CC Tatton Park, Halton MBC, Tameside MBC, Salford CC, Trafford MBC and Warrington MBC.

Viv Procter our South Lakes Branch Secretary says

*'I am pleased to announce that we have been advised that **South Lakeland UNISON's bid for funding to the Learning Skills for All Fund has been approved.** We will be able to Second Karen Partington to the role of Senior Learning Advisor (Education Co-ordinator) for the UNISON Branch and as such Karen will be the Lead Officer for the unions in this project. Both Karen and myself are attending a Project Management Course in order we are prepared to implement this Project that we have striven to achieve for quite some time (3-years to be precise). The funding will allow Karen to be Seconded to the Role for the period 01/10/09 to 31/03/10.*

This funding will allow us to engage with all staff within the Organisation and for us to work in partnership with SLDC to deliver training to all staff and carry out surveys to determine what areas we should be concentrating on. After many weeks of deliberation I must have got something right with the array of forms that I had to complete and I really am so pleased with the end result. I hope you are all as pleased with this result as we are. ... You bet Viv – well done.

Oldham Local Government Branch hosted a course for stewards in their branch and in Rochdale branch to get up to speed with Job Evaluation progress within their authority. Great facilities Oldham ...thanks

Both branches also welcomed the arrival of their new Regional Organiser, Kevin Lucas.

The Learning Equality and Diversity in UNISON project is getting underway on the North West. We have had interest from four members in the secondments opportunities, Sharza Dethick from Stockport, Chris Taylor from Cheshire, Calvin Smeda from Liverpool and Matt Egan from Salford.

The briefing on the Living Library – March 6th sparked a deal of interest and the first introductory training for people willing to become books in our living library will take place in **Manchester 23rd and 24th April – an introduction to being a UNISON Living Book** – we had had around 15 libraries and one of our own branches interested in being involved in staging an event – call the region for more information.

Those of you who follow staffing matters in the union will know that we have recently appointed lots of **area organisers**. It has been a very enjoyable privilege for your Regional Education Officer to be involved in helping to deliver their basic training modules up and down the country – Organising, Case Work and Negotiating Skills.