

Branch champions development of Manchester Minimum Wage

Manchester City Council's lowest paid employees will see their hourly pay rise to £1 more than the national minimum wage, thanks to Branch campaigning.

In the first move of its kind by a local authority outside London, Manchester City Council has approved plans, developed jointly with the Branch and other trade unions, to introduce a 'Manchester Minimum Wage' of £6.74 per hour. This move effectively deletes the two lowest Spinal Column Points.

This will have an immediate positive effect as more than 850 employees will benefit from the pay increase, which has now been agreed by the City Council's personnel committee. As well as supporting lower paid workers, the pay increase will be a significant step towards supporting recruitment and retention issues.

Now the Branch will be working with other employers where it represents UNISON member to get them to sign up to the Manchester Minimum Wage, to transform the minimum wage into a living wage.

Tony Caffery, UNISON Manchester Branch Secretary, said, "This proposal has

been developed jointly with Manchester's Labour council and the joint trade unions and is a significant and historic agreement. It is vital that we look after and value lower paid workers and realise the impact and importance of their contributions to the city as a whole.

"This proposal is the result of genuine partnership between the Labour Party in Manchester and the trade unions and we look forward to working together to promote the benefits of a 'Manchester Minimum Wage' to other employers in our city."

City Council Job Evaluation update

The City Council have responded to our call for the recruitment of more job analysts to speed up the woeful delay in progressing the roll out of Job Evaluation and the processing of appeals against evaluation.

Some people have been waiting months to hear the outcome of their appeal, even though they were given just two weeks to prepare the appeal. There is currently an unacceptable delay in hearing appeals mainly

because there are only two people working on them and the Branch have insisted this be addressed urgently.

A revised detailed appeals procedure is being finalised which will then be considered by the trade unions, but already a lot of amendments to an earlier draft have been agreed so the new procedure will shortly be circulated and sent to all staff who have yet to receive notice of the outcome of their job evaluation.

Approximately two thirds of posts have been evaluated, but there is still a massive amount of work to be done if the Council is to meet its revised deadline of March next year to complete the process.

Training is available via the Branch for any stewards on both the JE process and how to go about preparing appeals. Members in workplaces without stewards will be disadvantaged in not being represented in JE hearings and not having expert local knowledge to help draft appeals. It is vital that as many workplaces elect a steward who can then access the training to assist their colleagues. It's never too late to help out, so if you want to get involved, help yourself and your colleagues, please get in touch with the Branch.

In the first instance, if you have a work problem or query then get in touch with your local UNISON steward or workplace representative. Otherwise, telephone the Branch Office direct on the number below.

UNISON Manchester, Sixth Floor,
Sunlight House, Manchester M3 3JZ
Tel: 0161 254 7500
Fax: 254 7515

If you have a membership query, please contact the Branch on the number above or you can email at this address:

branch@unisonmanchester.org

UNISON Manchester is organised by the Branch Executive Committee and is supported by skilled staff - locally, regionally and nationally. The UNISON Manchester Branch Officers are listed below.

Branch Chair: Noel Bayley

Vice Chairs: Hartley Hanley & Kate Russell

Branch Secretary: Tony Caffery

Assistant Branch Secretaries: Pete Banks, Cath Donnellan, Evelyn Doyle, Jim Mackrell, Pat McDonagh, Jane Slater, Brian Stangoe & Rena Wood.

Black Members' Group Secretary: Sonia Stewart

Branch Treasurer: Bob Oram

Communications Officer: Rod Fawcett

Mancunions Editor: Noel Bayley

Health and Safety Officer: Geoff Archibald

International Officer: Isobel McVicar

UNISON/TUC Learner Representative's Lead Officer: Peter Wilkinson

The Branch Executive Committee, the Branch's decision-making body, comprises of stewards from across all the workplaces represented by the Branch plus elected Officers. All members of UNISON Manchester are encouraged to attend meetings, vote in Branch elections and get involved in our campaigns and activities.

We are always looking for people who feel they can contribute to the work of the Branch and help other members. This could be a regular commitment or you could be a 'mailbox' steward and help pass on UNISON information to members in your workplace. The Branch provides training courses, advice and support for all our stewards and officers.

Contact the Branch if you'd like to get more involved.

In my view...



There is no doubt that the introduction of a Manchester Minimum

Wage is a major success for the Branch. UNISON has long campaigned for our low paid members and I'm delighted that we have been able to work in partnership with the Council to bring about a significant increase in pay for our lowest paid members. It is an achievement we should be proud of.

Getting a positive result in the forthcoming referendum on the TIF proposals will give the City a massive boost. It will bring a massive amount of investment, more jobs, reduce congestion that will otherwise choke growth, and it will help the environment. We all have issues about some of the detail of the TIF proposals, but only by saying YES now can we get the £3 billion invested in transport and get the details sorted in due course. A NO can only mean more congestion for drivers and second class public transport for the rest of us.

I've been working hard with the other trade unions to make the JE process as fair as possible, but we are getting very concerned that the process itself is taking far longer than staff were promised. It causes members undue concern and is entirely unacceptable. UNISON will continue to press senior officers and, where necessary, politicians to get the process sorted.

Tony Caffery

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Gwen Colgan, Branch Vice President and Welfare Officer, who was much respected and loved by all who worked with her. Her friendly, disarming style won her many cases on behalf of members. The opposite of the stereotypical trade union militant, Gwen was nonetheless a committed trade unionist and a socialist. She believed very strongly that unions were crucial in helping working people work together to get a fair deal for all. She also inspired many to get involved in the union, and in her role as Welfare Officer, she personally assisted many members suffering hardship with her customary sensitivity and care. More recently Gwen worked in the Learning Centre in the Town Hall. It's typical of Gwen that she also wanted her thanks to be given to Manchester City Council, in her words an outstanding organisation, for all the help and support she received during her illness. She will be much missed by all.



Gwen Colgan
1950 - 2008

**VOTE
YES**

Vote Yes for investment in transport and jobs...



UNISON's Isobel McVicar (right) supporting the Yes Campaign.

It's the big issue in Greater Manchester and whatever the result of the referendum, the outcome will have profound consequences for our city and for Greater Manchester as a whole.

Under the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) proposals, almost £3 billion will be invested into transport improvements across the region. Part of this investment will be paid for through a limited congestion charge, but at least 80% of the improvements will be made before this charge comes into operation in 2013.

The Branch Executive Committee debated the TIF proposals earlier this month, and support for the proposals from members was

overwhelming. When put to the vote, there was just one dissenting view. Given the worsening traffic congestion on our roads, and a frankly second-rate public transport system compared to that in London or other major cities in Europe, it was agreed that doing nothing is not an option.

The Branch Executive Council believes that major investment is needed in our public transport infrastructure.

The Branch also welcomes the fact that significant

numbers of new jobs will be created at a time when many other jobs are being lost in the region as a result of the global economic downturn.

The Branch had already received indications from the City Council that any staff required to use their cars as part of their work would not personally have to pay any congestion charge. However, members were concerned about a number of issues, notably:-

- That bus services are properly regulated, to ensure that private bus companies do not exploit their monopoly position
- That employers introduce more flexible work arrangements to allow staff

greater freedom in when they travel to and from work

- The promised Greater Manchester travelcard, allowing efficient, economical and affordable travel on every form of public transport must be introduced well before any congestion charge is introduced

- Following the example of the City Council, all employers should provide and publicise discounted public transport season ticket schemes for staff

Subject to the TIF proposals being given the go ahead in the forthcoming postal referendum, the Branch will continue to lobby for these improvements.

KEY FACTS:

- **Traffic has increased by 12% in the last ten years**
- **Congestion is a growing economic and environmental cost**
- **Nearly 50% of all households in Manchester do not have access to a car.**
- **Nearly 5,000 new jobs a year will be created**
- **TIF will give 50 years worth of public transport funding in just five years, radically improving public transport before any charging starts in 2013**

- **A no vote means no investment and no improvements. There is no plan B**

Vote YES



New UNISON HQ opens at last!

It's been a long time coming but finally we can all breathe a sigh of relief because it's here. Or rather, it's there! I am, of course, referring to the UNISON Manchester Branch's new home: 6TH FLOOR, SUNLIGHT HOUSE, QUAY STREET, MANCHESTER M3 3JZ. (Please note that our Telephone Number and E-mails will remain the same.)

In all the time I've been involved with the Branch, I've been aware that the previous HQ at St John's Street wasn't... Well let's just say that it wasn't all that it could have been. While the building wasn't exactly falling down, there were always problems with the boiler every winter and despite the best efforts of the staff, the building's interior itself was too big, too cold and too dull.

Not now though. The move to Sunlight House has been a fraught time for all concerned. What move isn't? Now, the architect's bold drawings have come to life, with the judicious use of glass and light wood, combined with gallons of white paint and the odd potted plant. Combined with desperately needed new IT equipment to replace the ageing computers staff somehow made the most of, the Branch now has an office to be proud of, which will reflect the sometimes remarkable and always professional work that goes on within the Branch.

I'm sure members and staff alike will find all aspects of this brave new world inspiring and uplifting rather than insipid and dull. But now, as Branch officers and support staff are settling into their 21st century surroundings, I think it is fair to say

that this really is home, but more importantly it is a Branch office that meets the requirements of the Branch; it is fit for purpose, with better facilities for members. These include a larger meeting room for stewards' meetings and better IT facilities, meaning that we'll be able to expand and update the website more often, and produce more newsletters and information for members.

There was a small gathering in October when Dave Prentis, General Secretary of UNISON, was in attendance to officially open the new office. He was joined by City Council Leader, Sir Richard Leese and a cast of UNISON stalwarts past and present.

Noel Bayley

Left: Pat McDonagh minds the shop. Below: Sir Richard Leese (City Council Leader), Tony Caffery (Branch Secretary) and Dave Prentis (UNISON General Secretary).

