

BRANCH UPDATE 2011/12

Following the AGM that was held in February the following Branch Officers have been confirmed in post:

Pauline Cripps	Chairperson
Pam Howard	Joint Branch Secretary
Jason Horan	Joint Branch Secretary
Julie Pickles	Treasurer
Albert Hartley	Retired Members
Craig Wyna	LGBT Officer
Craig Wyna	Vice Chairperson
Craig Wyna	Equalities Officer
Malcolm Groarke	Health & Safety Officer
Marian Kilkelly	Branch Auditor
Ann Skovgaard	Branch Auditor
Stephen Wright	Labour Link Officer

All officers work together to ensure that the branch is run effectively and to ensure that our members will be represented at all levels.

The Branch Executive also has vacancies for the following positions:

- Education Officer
- Welfare Officer
- Terms & Conditions Officer
- Black Members Officer
- Sports & Social Officer
- Disabled Members Officer
- Membership Services Officer
- International Relations Officer
- Communications Officer
- Young Members Officer (under age 27)
- Women's Officer

We also require Workplace Representatives, Union Learner Representatives and Workplace Contacts. If you would like further information on any of these roles or any of the positions above, please contact the Branch Office (01925 44-2186/2187) for more information and an informal discussion.

RECRUITMENT

Why is recruiting so important?

Organised workplaces with a high density of membership give UNISON greater influence with local management and employers.

This means the union will have greater influence locally and nationally, which helps UNISON campaign to improve public services, to stop discrimination, for equality of opportunity and for better pay and conditions of service.

UNISON's role as Britain's largest trade union ensures our place at the negotiating table. Whether backing you up at work or weighing in on a national policy issue, UNISON draws its strength from its numbers. Face-to-face recruiting has proven to be the most effective way to attract new members.

'Nobody asked me!' That's the single biggest reason people give for not having joined a trade union. And the best people to recruit new members are the UNISON members who work alongside them.

Become a recruiter - help keep us strong! So go on ask your work colleagues if they are a member of a Trade Union. Employees can join UNISON by calling 01925 637927 or email: unison@warrington.gov.uk



WARRINGTON BRANCH NEWS

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LIES, TRUTHS AND STATISTICS

THE ECONOMIC CON TRICK BEHIND DISMANTLING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Is there a crisis, and if so what is it? The Tory led government is playing on people's fear of the economic uncertainty to pursue its cuts agenda through a con trick built on endlessly repeating a big lie – which is “we have to do this because of the biggest mess in history we inherited from the last government”.

The “deficit” is simply a snapshot that shows the difference between government spending and government income from income tax receipts at a given time. The global recession created by the banking crisis caused job losses and reduced company profits, so the UK tax take fell dramatically in 2008/9 – £100 billion less than it would have been without the recession. The previous government had to borrow more to make up the difference, although the rate of spending increase remained the same, so the deficit and the public debt increased. That's what caused the deficit, not government overspending!

There is no alternative to cuts – A Big Lie! Measured, steady economic growth is the only sustainable way to reduce the deficit and the national debt. Rebalancing the economy away from an over reliance on finance in favour of increased manufacturing and production will increase tax take by maintaining and creating jobs. Public spending is a key component of growth to stimulate employment and responsible private sector growth, support the community and voluntary sector which in turn will assist with reducing the deficit and associated debts.

The CONDEM government have stated “ We are all in this together”

The institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) researched the combined effects of public service cuts, tax credit reform and welfare reform. They conclude that the 10% lowest income households will be hit **15 times greater** than the 10% highest income households which puts paid to **the biggest lie of all** “We are all in this together”.

The **Local Elections** are due to be held on **May 5th 2011**. Use your vote to defend Public services and lets send a clear message to the CONDEM government that enough is enough! Slash & Burn is not the correct way to balance the national debt.

You cannot cut your way out of a recession.

We need to grow our public services if we are to meet the challenges of the future. If you wish to have any influence on local issues then please use your vote on polling day.



Local Government Pension



PAY MORE, WORK LESS & GET LESS

On top of a pay freeze, rising inflation and the threat of redundancy, public sector workers now face a pensions raid. The Hutton Report is a Trojan horse to attack public sector pensions and make public sector workers pay the price for the excess of the bankers.

The report recommends that:

- **Staff contributions to increase by up to 50%** - This was announced by the CONDEM government last year before the report was released. Increased contributions will not go into your pension schemes, they will go to plug a funding gap caused by cuts. This is a direct tax on public sector workers to bail out the banks.
- **The retirement age to be increased** - For some people this could increase to 68!
- Pensions to be calculated on your **career average** salary rather than your final salary.
- There should be a **cap on employer contributions** - This means that any increase in pension costs will be put directly on staff in the scheme.
- **Workers who are outsourced should not be allowed to be members** of the scheme.
- **Increase in pensions should be linked to the lower CPI measure of inflation** rather than the RPI measure of inflation. - This means your pension goes up less each year.
- The report also makes some recommendations which UNISON would welcome such as greater transparency and access to information relating to pension schemes.

There is a lot of mis-information surrounding public sector pensions. **Public Sector pensions are not gold plated**, with the average in local government being £4000 a year and this falls to £2800 for women. Public sector pension schemes make more money than they pay out and they are **entirely sustainable**, having only been renegotiated in 2006. If we didn't save for a decent pension we would have to rely on benefits in retirement which would cost the taxpayer more in the long term. Its worth noting that over £100billion is invested by public sector pensions in the UK which supports the economy. **Pensions are your deferred wages! We need to defend our right to a decent retirement. We can only win if we are strong in the workplace. This means asking your colleagues who are not in a Trade Union to JOIN.**



<http://www.unison.co.uk/octopus/>

UNISON campaigning for a fairer society
Protect Our Pensions - www.unison.org.uk/pensions
Join UNISON - www.unisonwarrington.org.uk/Join.html

Community & Voluntary Sector

Funding and the recession in the voluntary sector

The CONDEM government's spending cuts are already having a devastating impact on UNISON members in the Community service group – workers in charities, voluntary organisations, housing associations, community groups social enterprises and co-operatives.

It is estimated that the cuts could cost the voluntary sector as much as £5 billion. And we're seeing the effects of this in your workplaces, with jobs lost, working hours increasing, pay being cut, and other terms and conditions under attack. At the same time, the government seems determined to transfer more services to the sector, asking our members to take on more and more, while removing the resources they need.

At a time when vulnerable Britons need charities more than ever, voluntary sector workers are reporting a huge range of problems, leading to sinking morale throughout the sector. Findings show many workers are turning their backs on their careers to stack shelves in supermarkets, forced out by poor pay, increased stress and falling standards.

Staff say "the charity sector is seen as a cut-price answer to larger economic problems". Due to the short-term nature of funding, insecurity is rife in the voluntary sector. De-skilling has led to a rise in unqualified staff or volunteers, and staff are expected to face cuts while working increasingly long hours. The huge focus on driving down cost is leading to burn out among workers, resulting in retention problems and extra expense for employers.

These services are needed now more than ever, to help vulnerable adults and children ride out the recession. But the Government doesn't translate that into proper funding or support for those hit severely by the recession.

It's not too late for them to intervene to fund the sector properly.



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