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OCTOBER 2010

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE!



**Speak up
for
public services**

On 6th May our whole world changed. Our public services are facing an attack, the like of which we've never seen. A dishonest coalition of vandals, bent on destruction. Using the financial crisis to plunder our welfare state - taking a chainsaw to our public services!

As the CONDEM alliance continue planning cuts on an unimaginable scale together we must show there is an alternative, we must work to protect services and communities with no support for those who privatise.

Warrington Borough Council has wasted £28 million on consultants and agency fees all spent under the control of the Liberal Democrats and Tories. Now they tell us through the MTFP (medium term financial plan) that savings of £30 million have to be made. It doesn't take a mathematician to explain how this deficit has been created.

To date approximately 100 jobs have been lost through restructures. So as the CONDEM alliance running Warrington Borough Council continue the culling of jobs that will see staffing levels further reduced and services stripped bare just so the books can be balanced. We must all stop and ask ourselves "where will they cut next if the government continue with the decimation of public services?" 100 jobs lost will pale in to insignificance once public sector spending cuts of between 25% & 40% kick in, 25% of spending cutbacks could equate to 2,000 jobs lost!

Jobs can only be cut so far before the local CONDEM alliance will find other ways to claw back the savings to be imposed by the coalition government. So what next? Terms & Conditions will definitely be on the agenda. Not only do the CONDEM alliance wish to impose a pay freeze but they will also consider reductions to your terms & conditions. Reduction of the working week that will see your pay reduced further, reduction of annual leave and even reductions to the sick pay scheme are just examples of attacks on terms & conditions that are being faced by UNISON members in other local authorities, so nothing is sacred as far as the CONDEM alliance is concerned.

The politicians who allegedly run the local council are not going to suffer if our public services shrink, nor are the bankers who are earning fat bonuses. But the most vulnerable in our society, who rely upon public services as a lifeline and those staff that provide the services, will bear the brunt of these savage cuts unless we do all we can to stop them.

We must ALL work to kick the Tories and Liberal Democrats out of councils next May.

WBC Job Evaluation Appeals

Stage1 appeals are slowly reaching the finish line. It is anticipated that all stage 1 appeals will be concluded by the end of October/early November with employees being advised of the outcome by mid November.

Once stage 1 outcome letters have been distributed arrangements will be made for employees who wish to proceed to a stage 2 appeal. Obviously due to the impact on employees who face being in a detrimental position next April red circled job holders will be given priority when stage 2 appeals are arranged. Members wishing to obtain support for a stage 2 appeal should contact the branch office.

Christmas Panto - Free Tickets!

Back by popular demand, oh yes it is!

The Branch has purchased a limited number of tickets for a performance of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs on Saturday 4th December at 2:00pm at The Theatre Royal, St Helens. The tickets are available to Warrington LG Branch members ONLY, so why not take your children/grandchildren to watch this festive performance. To reserve your tickets (maximum of 5 per member) call the Branch Office from 1st December on :

01925 637927.



Golden Gates Housing

All staff will be aware of the long and arduous process of the job evaluation exercise. Job Evaluation is faced with many challenges by ongoing changes to relevant case law. This is why the proposed Total Reward Package (TRP) must be scrutinised by UNISON's equal pay unit and our legal team before any consideration is given to balloting members.

However we are now entering the final stages and hope to be in a position very shortly to advise our members accordingly on the proposed package.

We are advised by management that craft workers terms & conditions will be looked at once the transfer to a housing trust has taken place.

Members will also be aware of the imminent change of Golden Gates in becoming a housing trust. UNISON will ensure that management liaise with staff during the transition period and keep you up to date with all the relevant details.



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

WBC Staff Morale Survey Update

The branch recently undertook a morale survey of Warrington Borough Council UNISON members. We would like to thank those members who took time to complete the survey and provide us with written comments on morale within the workplace.

The branch is now working to collate the results and will be publishing them in a final report. Once complete the report will be made available for all members to view and the branch will be raising the results with the chief executive and the political leaders of the council.

Please be assured that ALL results and comments will be raised by UNISON and will remain completely anonymous.

Members will be notified once the report is finalised.

SCHOOLS - SSSNB

Plans to Scrap School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB)

The UK's largest public sector union is outraged at the CONDEM coalition's proposed removal of the body (as at 30/9/10), which took years to set up. The body was designed to bring fairness and consistency to the pay of half a million workers in English schools, including teaching assistants, special needs staff, nursery nurses, school secretaries, caretakers, technicians and dinner ladies. The School Support Staff Negotiating Body was established under the ASCL ACT 2009 and is similar to the Pay Review Body for Teachers. The body has been developing a national pay framework of pay and conditions to cover around 500,000 school support staff in England. The employers on the body are the Local Government Employers, The Foundation and Aided Schools National Association (FASNA), the Catholic Education Service and The Church of England. UNISON is the main union for school support staff with more than 200,000 members, whose jobs include, teaching assistants, nursery staff, school secretaries, school business managers, school meals staff, technicians, librarians and special needs workers, and the Warrington Branch has had direct input, on behalf of these staff, into the work of the Body.

Christina McAnea, UNISON's Head of Education and lead negotiator, said: "This displays the utter contempt this coalition government has for low paid workers, trade unions and in particular for the staff in schools delivering essential education services. We have been asking them since May to talk to us about this. They say publicly they want to maintain an education partnership with all the unions representing school staff, yet we hear this news through the media. School support staff are predominantly low paid women who are committed and passionate about their job and this government demonstrates their utter contempt for them by refusing to even meet the unions to discuss this.

"UNISON will be consulting its members on industrial action over this and demanding the government carry out an Equality Impact Assessment.

"This news comes on top of a pay freeze this year, which the government wants to see imposed for a further 2 years. George Osborne and Danny Alexander make much of their pledge that those earning under £21,000 will get a flat rate increase of £250 for each year of the pay freeze, but this is nothing less than an outright lie as they will not guarantee this for school staff. If school staff aren't public sector workers I don't know who is.

"Local Authorities are facing equal pay claims of hundreds of million pounds from school staff and the SSSNB was set up to help bring fairness and consistency as well as local flexibility into pay in schools. Now they face years and huge expense battling this out in courts."

The Warrington LG Branch will keep all school support staff members informed of developments in relation to this disappointing news. Also, in a bid to ensure members are fully involved and aware of the work UNISON do on their behalf the Branch are working towards setting up a School Contacts Committee. If you would like further details of how you can influence the way we work and support our members please contact Pam Howard on 01925 637927.

BANK HOLIDAY CALCULATION

It has been brought to UNISON's attention that the pro rata calculation of Bank Holiday entitlement used by Warrington Borough Council may have a detrimental affect on employees working less than 37 hours or indeed a compressed working week.

Warrington Borough Council have made it perfectly clear that if an employee does not have enough Bank Holiday Hours to cover the statutory Bank Holidays then they will be expected to use there annual leave entitlement.

It will be dependant on when your contracted working days are or how your shift pattern falls on how you are affected by the pro rata calculation.

UNISON are now pursuing this issue through our case unit for a legal view. If you work less than 37 hours or a compressed working week and believe that you will be detrimentally affected by the pro rate calculation please contact the branch office on 01925 637927 for further advice.

Any employees not in a Trade Union who are affected by the Bank Holiday calculation and wish to have there case looked at should contact the UNISON Branch office (01925 637927) for more information.



Library numbers down



UNISON, is warning that falling footfall in libraries is a worrying trend, sparked off by service cuts and closures, that will hit students of tomorrow hard.

UNISON is calling on local people to get behind their libraries, or risk losing the service, which is not protected by ring-fenced funding, and is seen as a soft target for cuts.

Libraries are a fantastic local service. They give people free access to education and support, including the young and elderly, provide a hub for communities, and help millions of people to discover the joy of reading. Many young people getting their GCSE results today would have used their local library to study.

It is worrying to see library footfall going down, Warrington Borough Council has been under-investing in this vital service for years. Spending on new books, and the total book stock has fallen drastically over the last few years.

Libraries are set to be hit by massive cuts, following the Comprehensive Spending Review. Many councils are already drawing up plans to close libraries down, to replace trained staff with volunteers or to stop providing mobile library services altogether.

Running local libraries into the ground will have a devastating impact on local communities. UNISON is reiterating its call for local people to get behind their library service. The union is also calling on the government to put a statutory duty onto local councils, setting out the library service they have to provide. Well trained librarians, as well as investment in books, is crucial to making libraries attractive places for people to visit.