

NOTTS UNISON NEWS

JAN/FEB 2002

Web Site: <http://pages.unisonfree.net/nottscounty/>

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SANTA SAYS NO TO PPP



Christmas Eve saw Santa Claus come to County Hall to deliver cards to the Councillors from UNISON members in support of the anti-PPP campaign.

Over 2000 cards filled his sack, which he hauled in to Council Leader Cllr Mick Warner. Cllr Warner "thanked" UNISON for the cards, saying that he had personally received many cards in his office. Santa understood that other Councillors had also received cards at County Hall and their homes.

Santa's elves on the day included Shaun Johns, Jackie Johnson, Bob Moody, and Chris Tansley.



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RETIRING SOON?

If so, you can join UNISON's Retired Members Section for a one off lifetime payment of just £15. Retired Membership is open to all who have at least 2 years continuous membership of UNISON at the date of retirement. But you must sign up within 3 months of retiring. Unfortunately we do not get provided with details of our members retiring or approaching retirement age. So the onus is on the retired member to let us know. So if you are about to retire and would like to join our Retired Members Section, please contact the Branch Office for further details.

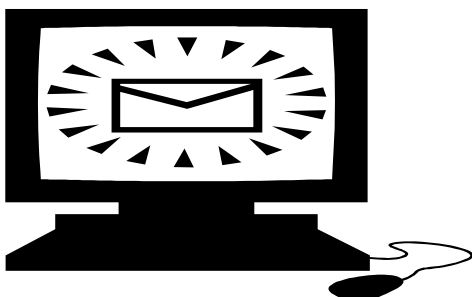
MOVED HOUSE OR WORKPLACE?

It is important that we have an accurate record of members' home and work addresses. This is so we can send you UNISON information and to comply with legal restrictions should we ever need to ballot members for industrial action. If you have recently changed address, please don't forget to inform us at the Branch Office.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

We have set up an e-mail news service for the branch.

If there is a press release, some urgent news or changes to the branch web site, we can send you an e-mail. If you are interested could you please send your name, department/ employer, and e-mail address to the Branch Communications Officer, Bob Watt, at the following e-mail address:
nottscounty@unisonfree.net



"CATCH UP AND MATCH UP" PAY CLAIM 2002/2003

6% or a flat rate of £1750 (whichever is the greater)

That's the claim lodged by UNISON and the other trade unions. The claim aims to bridge the gap between local government pay and that in the private sector and others in the public sector to give a minimum wage of £11,017. It also calls for urgent action to close the gender pay gap - between men and women within local government and women in local government compared to men across the economy.

We are arguing that local government will not be able to deliver on the Government's improvement agenda and Best Value while councils across the country are facing recruitment and retention problems and growing numbers of staff are voting with their feet and going to work in better paid, less stressful jobs in the private sector and elsewhere in the public sector.

What the employers need to recognise is that:

- Women are three quarters of the workforce in local government
- 277,000 workers are on the bottom 2 pay points, earning less than £5 an hour. 90% are part-time women workers. They make 21% of the workforce.
- Two thirds of staff - 855,000 - earn less than £13,500 basic pay, compared to a national average of £19,406.
- Almost 75% of women staff fall below this level.
- The Low Pay Unit's threshold for low pay is £13,439. The Council of Europe's is £14,559.
- The gender pay gap narrowed only slightly between 1992 and 2000 in local government despite the Single Status Agreement.
- A full-time woman manual worker in local government earned only 40% of the average male manual wage in 2000. In 1992 it was 44%.
- White collar women in local government saw their pay decline from 75% of men's in 1992 to 68% in 2000.

In submitting the claim, the unions have described these as "the watershed years" for our members and we said that "renewal is mission impossible without a better deal for staff". The employers' initial reaction, you won't be surprised to hear, was to dismiss the claim as unrealistic, unaffordable and "well beyond what is imaginable". Their formal response should come at the next scheduled meeting on 6th February 2002.

Our claim is "unashamedly ambitious". To reverse the decline we need drastic action and more Government cash. It must recognise the vital role our members play, serving local communities around the clock, every day of the week.

BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY 20th MARCH

6 p.m. Council Chamber, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham

THURSDAY 21st MARCH

6 p.m. Council Chamber, Mansfield Civic Centre, Chesterfield Road South, Mansfield

Members of Nottinghamshire UNISON are invited to attend one of the two meetings. Crèche and Signers can be available. Please contact the Branch Office by 6th March should you require them as we need to book them.

At each meeting there will be a free buffet and soft drinks as well as a prize draw. The prizes include:

- Combination TV/Video
- Portable CD player

The meetings will be preceded by Members' Surgery from 5.15 to 6 p.m.

At the meetings you will have the chance to:

Vote in the election of the "non-core" Branch Officers (see below)

Vote on any motions that are submitted

Vote on any proposed changes to the Branch constitution and Rules

The deadline for submitting motions or Branch officer nominations is 12 noon on Friday 22nd February 2002

The non-core Branch Officer posts up for election are:

Vice Chair (1 post)

Assistant Secretary (1 post)

Assistant Treasurer (1 post)

Development Officer (1 post)

Communications Officer (1 post)

Welfare Officers (2 posts)

Membership Services Officer (1 post)

Youth Officer (1 post)

Voluntary Sector Officer (1 post)

NOMINATION FOR BRANCH OFFICER POST

Name: _____

Department/Employer: _____

Work Address: _____

UNISON Membership Number: _____

I wish to be nominated for the post of: _____

Proposed by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Please return to: NOTTS UNISON, FREEPOST, NOTTINGHAM, NG2 1BR

The national event on the second National Holocaust Day will be held in Manchester.

This decision was made in response to the very positive response of Manchester's communities to the first Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration. It also reflects both the city's unique multicultural characteristics - there are over 80 different recognised communities in Manchester - and the chosen theme of the second commemoration 'Britain and the Holocaust'.

The national event will draw on the strengths of Manchester and its many different communities, but will have a focus and relevance that extends to the whole nation. The national event will play an important role in promoting the key messages of inclusiveness, tolerance and contemporary relevance - and will set the tone for a range of school and community activities throughout the UK.

The national event will be highly visual, focus on the chosen theme of 'Britain and the Holocaust' and involve the participation of survivors from both the Holocaust and other subsequent atrocities, youth and a range of community representatives - as well as a number of high quality artistic presentations.

The national event will be delivered together by the Home Office and Manchester City Council working closely with key local representatives including the Manchester Council for Community Relations, the Shoah Centre and the Greater Manchester Jewish Representative Committee. An experienced producer, director and designer have been employed to produce a high quality event.

The national event will take place during the evening of Sunday 27 January 2002 in Bridgewater Hall - a modern conference and concert venue in the heart of the city - in front of an audience of around 1800 people including both national and local political leaders, faith representatives, Survivors, young people and 'celebrities'.

You can check the national web site <http://www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk/> or your local papers for details of local events that will take place around Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.



The creation of a National Holocaust Memorial Day aims to:

- Recognise that the Holocaust was a tragically defining episode of the 20th Century, a crisis for European civilisation and a universal catastrophe for humanity.
- Provide a national mark of respect for all victims of Nazi persecution and demonstrate understanding with all those who still suffer its consequences.
- Raise awareness and understanding of the events of the Holocaust as a continuing issue of fundamental importance for all humanity.
- Ensure that the horrendous crimes, racism and victimisation committed during the Holocaust are neither forgotten nor repeated, whether in Europe or elsewhere in the world.
- Restate the continuing need for vigilance in light of the troubling repetition of human tragedies in the world today.
- Reflect on recent atrocities that raise similar issues.
- Provide a national focus for educating subsequent generations about the Holocaust and the continued relevance of the lessons that are learnt from it.
- Provide an opportunity to examine our nation's past and learn for the future.
- Promote a democratic and tolerant society, free of the evils of prejudice, racism and other forms of bigotry.
- Support the Government's commitment that all citizens - without distinction - should participate freely and fully in the economic, social and public life of the nation.
- Highlight the values of a tolerant and diverse society based upon the notions of universal dignity and equal rights and responsibilities for all its citizens.
- Assert a continuing commitment to oppose racism, anti-Semitism, victimisation and genocide.
- Support our shared aspirations with both our European partners and the wider international community centred on the ideals of peace, justice and community for all.

BRANCH OFFICER ELECTIONS

As reported in the last edition of Notts UNISON News, some of the core Branch Officer post nominations did not arrive in time and some posts received no nominations. The matter was discussed at the Branch Committee who agreed to seek further nominations for election at a Branch Committee meeting.

At the Branch Committee meeting on 17th January 2002, there were two nominations for the post of Equalities Officer and the winner was Mel Cowell. At the same meeting the incumbents were the only nominees so Jim Connolly and Reneen Hopewell continue as the Branch Health & Safety Officers and Jed Talty remains Treasurer.

NEW DEBT ADVICE SERVICE FOR UNISON MEMBERS

UNISON nationally have long been aware that debt and the problems associated with it has been increasing at an alarming rate in recent years.

The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux estimate that the numbers of people coming to them with debt related problems has increased by over a third in the last two years.

The Office of Fair Trading state that the UK population is in debt to the tune of £700 billion, equivalent to £5,300 for every household. Inevitably, many UNISON members are caught up in the resulting money misery.

The stress and worry of debt affects relationships, work performance and health. Many people with debts do not know where to go for help. The problem is compounded because the huge demand has made it difficult to obtain free and impartial advice, especially for those in work. Traditional sources of help have had to restrict their services to people on benefits and the opening times are difficult to make. Self-help advice is not sufficient for many and the alternatives provided by the fee-charging Debt Management Companies that advertise on TV and the back pages are inadequate to say the least. Their fees mean they become yet another creditor and there are many serious problems with what they offer:

There is evidence that money doesn't always end up with creditors

Many don't work out which debts are a priority

Few bother about maximising income like applying for state benefits

Now UNISON Welfare has a new Debt Advice Referral Service where Branches can refer members for free and speedy advice and other forms of help.

The service is provided by Federated Credit Limited. They are a free National Debt Advice Company with links with the voluntary money advice sector. They are not like the fee-charging Debt Management Companies. Their service is free because it is paid for by creditors. They have a not-for-profit arm that can offer members an innovative service called Payplan. With Payplan, members get:

Reduction of multiple debts to a single payment

Choice of payment methods including PayPoint cash option

An assigned case officer to call for advice throughout the repayment programme

Supported self-help if they prefer

A completely free service with no hidden charges.

This new initiative will complement and support UNISON's campaigning work to combat poverty, debt and financial exclusion in the UK. If anyone needs any further information, please contact Bob Moody at the Branch Office.

HEALTH AND SAFETY NEWS

MOBILE PHONES



After recent Police warnings about mobile phones stolen while people are using them, I thought it would be helpful to remind members who use mobile phones for work and leisure to be careful when using phones and make sure they are out of view when not used.

The Police say all mobile phone users should take a record of the IMEI number, model and type of phone just in case it is stolen. If your phone is stolen or lost, you must contact your Manager and Supervisor to get the calls stopped immediately if it is your work phone and use the same practice for your own personal phones. UNISON advises you to be safe and record your IMEI number.

ACCIDENTS AT WORK

In October 2001, European Health and Safety Week was about accident prevention. We need to carry this same message over to this year 2002.

Please remember to report all accidents large and small and fill in the SR3/5 form. Accidents must be reported to your Supervisor and Manager the day it happens, not at the end of the week. Serious accidents and near misses are recorded under the RIDDOR regulations (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995).

In 1998-1999, more than 1 million workers were injured at work according to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). They also state that they are concerned as are the TUC on under-reported injuries.

People may think their injury is only minor or don't wish to make a fuss. Injuries where an employee is off work 3 days or more is reportable under RIDDOR. Injuries – major ones may include broken bones, loss of limbs, metal burns, electric shocks, chemical burns, unconsciousness or resuscitation and death. Accidents also include acts of violence done to a person at work. All accident books must be kept for 3 years. If you have had an accident at work PLEASE report it. Something small could turn out to be a problem later.

If you have a Health and Safety Problem at work, contact your Health and Safety Rep or Steward, Supervisor, Manager, Health and Safety Adviser for your Department, or the Union Office.

UNISON's Health and Safety Website gives more information on how to report an accident.

Reneen Hopewell

H&S Officer

CORPORATE CORNER



As in previous editions of Notts UNISON News, we bring you the latest news of how “well” the private sector performs compared to us supposed inefficient public servants.

SODEXHO

Sodexo is set to win the contract to build and run two new jails for women at Peterborough and Ashford. The Sodexo subsidiary, UK Detention Services (UKDS), has no experience of working with women prisoners and The Prison Reform Trust said the contracts go against the Government's strategy for women prisoners. Sodexo could earn more than £500m by providing cells for 800 women, increasing capacity by 20%. Sodexo was criticised earlier this year when its plan to pay asylum-seekers 34p an hour for cooking, cleaning and doing odd jobs at a Sodexo detention centre near Heathrow were made public. The plan was dropped after criticism by MPs. In Australia, a women's prison owned by Sodexo, was returned to the public sector after security flaws were discovered and its management of 'at risk' prisoners, health care and the control of hard drugs were severely criticised.

RENTOKIL

Rentokil is among the growing number of large companies reviewing its pension arrangements. Companies are moving into cheaper money purchase or stakeholder schemes because employees are retiring earlier and living longer. Final-salary schemes generally guarantee a retirement income of up to two thirds of salary, but final-salary pensions are a long-term liability because the employer guarantees the level of pension, usually making up shortfalls in the pension fund. With a stock market pension it is the employee rather than the company who takes the risk. Most employers make additional savings by contributing far less to stock market-based pensions.

JARVIS

Liverpool city council has awarded its £300m schools PFI contract to Jarvis. Under the contract 14 primary and one secondary school will be built, while three more will be modernised. Teachers and governors are concerned, however, that because the contract includes services such as building and grounds maintenance, caretaking, cleaning and catering, no matter how low enrolment falls, schools will not be able to close until the 30 year contract expires.

Jarvis Workspace FM has the PFI contract for a number of schools in Bridlington. The cleaning services are sub-contracted to MITIE Cleaning (North) Ltd. MITIE has recently given notice to Jarvis that they wish to terminate the contract. The reasons given by MITIE for its decision are that they have not been paid by Jarvis since the start of the contract, Jarvis has demanded a reduction in the number of staff and number of hours worked per week which MITIE feel makes the effective cleaning of the school impossible. In addition, the cleaning equipment supplied by Jarvis is faulty and in some cases dangerous.

CARILLION

Carillion Services Ltd, which provides all the non-clinical services to Darent Valley Hospital, has been awarded the

prize for best PFI service provider by the British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM). However, only one month ago the head of the Trust was told to improve services or be sacked. Within days of the award, vital parts of the hospital were reduced to battery-powered lighting and equipment after a major electricity failure. Nevertheless, judges said the company was “head-and-shoulders” above the 60 other competitors. Since opening in autumn 2000, the hospital has been criticised by the public for low levels of hygiene and cleanliness and the poor quality and shortage of food. John McDonough, chief executive of Carillion plc, has doubled his stake in the company by buying 100,000 shares at £1.30 per share. This is still less than 1% of the total share value.

GROUP 4

Arguments have broken out in Manchester over the city council's plans to privatise its security services. It has been revealed that Group 4, one of the potential bidders for the contract, already has an employee seconded to the council to assess its current system. Councillors have halted the decision to tender the contract following claims that Group 4 will have an unfair advantage over its competitors.

BALFOUR BEATTY

Balfour Beatty is reported to be shifting its business towards high value-added margin work such as rail infrastructure maintenance, facilities management and PFI and PPP work. Its order book now stands at about £4bn. Balfour Beatty has recently pulled out of the controversial Ilisu Dam project in Turkey. Balfour Beatty has been fined a number of times since 1994 for safety infringements. In 1994 it was fined a record of £1.2m following the collapse of the Heathrow Express tunnel. In 1997 two rail firms owned by Balfour were fined £200,000 after four people were seriously injured in a freight train derailment. Later in the same year and following another derailment they were fined £500,000. The company was found to be partially responsible for the Hatfield disaster in October 2000.

AMEY

Amey Highways has been issued with 14 government warnings since it took over maintenance of Scotland's highways seven months ago. Eight of the notices are for failures on highways in Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire, where the company is liable for the M8, M73, M74 and the A80. The warnings include Amey's failure to use the right software programmes to organise repair crews. The company could be fined. The company said the errors had been put right. When Amey bid for the contract it undercut local councils by 50%. The consortium of local councils, which previously tended the roads, was issued with 24 warnings over two years.

JOHN LAING

The first PFI School in the UK, Highlands School in Enfield, has had to spend thousands of pounds replacing

its inadequate computer system after less than a year. According to the headteacher, the builders had put in the cheapest machines to stay within the cost of the contract. The school was built by John Laing and services are run by its subsidiary, Equion.

SS MEDICLEAN

SS Mediclean has lost its contract at The Oxford Radcliffe Hospital NHS Trust. The Trust has given Mediclean six months' notice after a catalogue of complaints. From May 2002, the 230 domestic staff will transfer back to the NHS and continue to work in-house.

CAR PARK SERVICES

Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital may have to pay up to £10m to buy a car park that cost £1.5m to build. The hospital is paying almost £500,000 a year in subsidies to Car Park Services (CPS). The car park was built at the RVH in 1997 under a PFI contract, which allowed CPS to develop the space owned by the hospital for an estimated £1.5m. Although the car park was expected to cover its own running costs, the hospital is subsidising it by more than £470,000. The full opening of the new hospital building itself was delayed last month to save £2m following cut-back calls from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Although no one is implying that CPS has acted improperly, an internal report reveals that the hospital executive is considering buying the car park back in order to stem costs over the estimated 15 years remaining on the contract.

APCOA

Apcoa, the parking company, has issued 50 parking tickets to a Westminster resident who has a resident's permit. Despite Mr Morris' permit the company continuously issues tickets to him and have recently clamped his car. Mr Morris has been threatened with being liable for storage charges if his car is towed away. Only after the intervention of Mr Morris' solicitor has the council and Apcoa admitted their mistake and unclamped his car. Apcoa, which also holds the contract with the University Hospital of Wales Trust, has given a consultant £750 worth of parking tickets. The live-in doctor, who has a resident's permit, claims she was not aware she had to pay parking fees as well. Apcoa has also been criticised for charging excessive rates for parking. A full day's parking at the University Hospital of Wales costs £17.70 compared with £2.50, £2, and no charge at three other local hospitals.

BIFFA

Around 180 households are involved in a Group Litigation Order against Biffa Waste Services, the operators of the Trecatti site near Dowlais Top in Merthyr Tydfil. The residents are claiming damages for the foul odours and other environmental nuisance they claim to have suffered since Biffa took over the running of the tip from Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in 1993.

SERCO

Complaints to the local press of repeated lift failure in a Kingston, Surrey block of flats have brought an almost instant response from Serco, the contractor responsible. The elderly residents who were stranded in their six-storey building claim that essential repair work has not been done. Following enquiries by the local press, an apologetic council spokesman said: "The council is responding as quickly as its contractors can get there."

Keighley head teachers are preparing for an admissions crisis next year when there will be 60 pupils too many for the available places in local secondary schools. Poor planning by the LEA, taken over this year by private company Serco QAA under the new name of Education Bradford, is said to be the cause.

Money in brown envelopes?

I came upon this email the other day from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) which is sponsored by, among others, BT. SOLACE is a National Group of chief officers/chief executives who used to count amongst their number our own departed Peter Housden and Ted Cattle from the City. SOLACE has a commercial wing called appropriately SEDIS (I think the 'S' is silent!) and I quote the E-Mail:

"It may be a good time to remind Associates of the SEDIS scheme. If you hear of some potential business we could be interested in, get in touch to give us the details, with a name in the Authority / body who will be dealing with it. When we've established that we are not already on to it, we'll confirm that you're being credited with the lead."

"If we subsequently win that piece of work, we'll pay you 10% of our margin up to a maximum of £5000 - and that's a good return on just one phone call (0845 601 0649) or E-Mail hope.house@solace.org.uk SEDIS applies to everyone in the company below executive level (outside their own field) and to all Associates."

"Two other angles to this, if you are deployed on the job yourself, SEDIS still applies - so you can get your fees plus 10% of our margin. And if you're approached privately to do a job direct, doing it through the company instead could give you your fees our support system (and professional indemnity cover), and a SEDIS payment!"

I know it's all a long way back but the Nationalisation of industries like rail and coal and the introduction of Local Government were brought in to be publicly accountable and not corruptible by private finance. The growth of privatisation is obviously bringing with it payouts backhanders and all the hallmarks of corruption. I don't know whether the above is corrupt - perhaps someone can advise me - but I am certainly going to get UNISON to refer the matter onto the Standards Commission.

Meanwhile perhaps staff would like to let SOLACE know exactly what they think of their exciting seasonal offers!

Chris Tansley

Branch Secretary

UNISON WINS FOR MEMBER

Notts UNISON member Trevor Parr has been awarded £21,244 for an accident at work after a claim was successfully fought by UNISON.

Trevor suffered injuries to his pelvis and left and right thighs when a vehicle reversed into him at work. UNISON solicitors took the case up and succeeded in winning the award. Trevor said, "It was good to know that through UNISON I was able to get the legal support I needed at the time".



Branch Secretary Chris Tansley commented "We get hundreds of claims every year in the branch for injuries at work. I'm pleased with the outcome in Trevor's case and that because he was a UNISON member he keeps all the money he has been awarded and does not have to pay a large part back to a solicitor".

A New Steward's View

I took up my position as a steward for the Social Services Department (representing administrative staff) in March of this year and would like to take this opportunity to thank the Branch for making me feel so welcome and for all the encouragement I have received. A particularly big thank you to Social Services Convenors Doug Walker and Lorraine Poundall who have been very supportive and who have always been patient with my numerous questions despite all the pressures on their time.

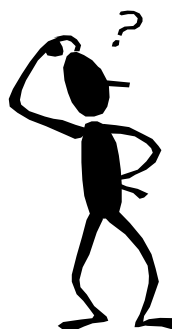
I think it needs to be said that in the 9 months I've been operating as a steward, I have been offered more interesting and varied opportunities for training and development than in more years than I care to remember in Local Government, and without having to jump through numerous hoops.

Although it can be a little daunting at times and obviously does demand a degree of personal commitment I would certainly recommend being a steward. An effective Trade Union relies on enthusiastic and proactive members so go on give it a go, providing you're prepared to put a bit of effort in you won't regret it.

A Happy New Year to all in UNISON.

Jackie Johnson
Social Services Steward.

JARGON CHAMPIONSHIP: IS THIS THE END?



Woe is me. And possibly you as well. After several years of gradual decline, 2001 was the worst in living memory for sheer, incomprehensible rubbish. What is the world coming to? How will I stay awake in meetings?

So, come on managers and personnel persons - prove me wrong in 2002. After all, there's a first time for everything, so they say.

Anyway, here are the meagre highlights of 2001 (with my own comments), although quantity is down, quality remains good!

"Employee Relations is ultimately a 'state of being'" (?)

"We need to enhance the functionality of the HR system" (give Personnel a kick up the bum?)

"There is scope to explore the synergies between Community Services and the Regeneration Division" (New Year's Resolution: don't forget to explore synergies)

"You know what the affordability envelope is" (actually, no, I haven't got the faintest idea)

And, to cheat a bit (why not, it's my article?), a piece of non-jargon to stir the imagination:

"My language has really deteriorated since I started working in Libraries!"

That's all for now, so see you next year.

Mike Scott
Branch organiser

DISABLED MEMBERS' MEETINGS 2002

All the meetings start at 4 p.m. The Mansfield Unemployed Workers Centre is found at 3-7 Beech Avenue, Mansfield and is an accessible venue.



13th February: Mansfield UWC

10th April: County Hall

12th June: Mansfield UWC

21st Augus: County Hall

25th September: Mansfield UWC

11th December: County Hall

Women's Self Organised Group Meetings 2002

January 30th

6.00-7.00pm

Branch Office

Please bring ideas for events/stalls etc for International Women's Day

February 20th

6.30-7.30pm

Branch Office

A chance to finalise ideas for events/stalls etc for International Women's Day and link into Region/other Branch events

March 7th

International Women's Day

6.00pm rendezvous for evening events at Branch Office

Probable link corridor stall: women's health issues and safety at work, promotion of County Council's new Domestic Violence policy.

April 17th

6.30-8.00pm

Venue to be decided

Annual election for Women's Officer



HEALTH & SAFETY REPS MEETINGS 2002

The Branch Health & Safety officers have arranged five meetings throughout the year for Health & Safety reps. All the meetings have been arranged to start at 2 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Meeting room of the branch office. If you are planning to attend and have difficulties climbing stairs please let the branch office know in advance so that the meeting can be relocated in the office building.

Thursday 31st January 2002
Meeting and UNISON Video on H&S

Thursday 4th April 2002
Violence Video

Thursday 4th July 2002
Meeting and 2 Risk Assessment videos plus Ideas on European H&S Week

Thursday 3rd October 2002
European Health & Safety Week

Thursday 5th December 2002
HSE video on Signposts



TEACHING ASSISTANTS OR CHEAP TEACHERS?

Here we go again -no sooner have we agreed decent pay scales for Teaching Assistants for the first time in living memory, than the Government is loading on yet more responsibility!

Estelle Morris, the Minister of Education, is worried that the teacher shortage will soon hit 4,000 nationally but, rather than do something to recruit and retain people who do want to be teachers, she'd rather force people who don't to cover on the cheap.

"An extra 20,000 Teaching Assistants will help transform the classroom," she says, but I didn't hear anything about extra pay; did you? There is absolutely no doubt that many UNISON members could do an excellent job teaching, but equally little doubt that most don't want to. UNISON will not stand by while members are forced to accept even more responsibility for little or no reward, other than a pitched battle with the Teaching Unions.

Some UNISON members may ask what the harm is, to take on a bit more responsibility for a bit more cash (maybe). My answer is that this is exploitation, pure and simple: if people teach, they should be paid the rate for the job and for the responsibility it involves. It does Teaching Assistants no favours to return once more to the bad old days of under-grading and low status. One of the main aims of the new Grading Structure was to transform the status of classroom support workers - this could perhaps offer a few more pounds at the end of the month, but it would be a huge step in the wrong direction.

REGRADING: SO FAR SO GOOD...

It is, as yet, too soon to be confident that all will be well with the Nursery Nurse/Teaching Assistant regrading, but early signs are reasonably good.

During this term, most schools have got down to implementing the new structure with more (or less) enthusiasm and, despite various rumours, we have no evidence of any flat refusal to consider it. The Branch Office has had a massive number of calls from members - and Heads - asking for clarification or advice but, in most cases, one phone conversation has sorted the problem.

Queries to date include:

"We can't put anyone on Grade 3, because no-one has supervisory responsibility at present." (!)

"We've got 10TAs, so it'll be two on Grade1, seven on Grade 2 and one on Grade 3, in line with the instructions from County Hall..."

"We've had this guidance about Teaching Assistants, but it doesn't mention Nursery Nurses!"

"I can't understand all this, just tell me what Grade to put people on!"

Don't forget, the Agreement is for backdating to 1st September 2001 and if there are any individual or general problems at your school, please contact Vicki Corden (Joint Education Convenor) or me at the Branch Office.

Mike Scott
Branch Organiser

SECRETARIES SAY "IT'S OUR TURN NOW!"

The recent success in regrading Nursery Nurses and Classroom Assistants has reawakened the long-standing grievances of School Admin staff.

Despite the UNISON-negotiated regradings a few years ago, there is a widespread feeling that pay has not kept pace with increasing responsibilities. This has been made worse by the Government decision to stop Term Time Only (TTO) workers from claiming Job Seekers Allowance during school holidays when they aren't paid.

UNISON has been pursuing a test case on this but eventually lost out in front of the Law Lords.

Admin staff ask why they should be TTO when most other school staff are paid 52 weeks of the year - and we have asked as well! The answer is that this is the "traditional arrangement" and the LEA does not want to disturb it for obvious reasons.

Admin Senior Steward, Tina Carnachan, is currently assessing the strength of feeling around the issue, with a view to starting a new campaign: the reality is that unless members are prepared to threaten (and take if necessary) Industrial Action, there will be no movement. So please let Tina know your views -the ball is in your court.

Application for Membership - Notts UNISON

I apply to join UNISON and agree to pay the appropriate subscription, to comply with the rules and constitution, as in the UNISON rule book.

BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

Title (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss): _____ **Surname:** _____ **Forename:** _____

Payroll No.: _____ **ES(establishment code):** _____ **N.I. No.:** _____ **Scale/Grade** _____ :

Home address	:	Subscriptions				
	:	ANNUAL PAY	Weekly/Monthly	SUBS	Tick box	
Home Post Code:		up to £2000	£0.42	£1.81	BAND A1	[]
Home Tel	:	£2000-£5000	£0.90	£3.90	BAND A2	[]
		£5001-£7000	£1.23	£5.34	BAND B	[]
Department	:	£7001-£10000	£1.52	£6.59	BAND C	[]
Employer	:	£10001-£15000	£1.80	£7.78	BAND D	[]
Work address	:	£15001-£20000	£2.21	£9.57	BAND E	[]
	:	£20001-£25000	£3.13	£13.57	BAND F	[]
	:	£25000+	£3.88	£16.81	BAND G	[]
Work Post Code :		Retired Members £15(Life) Students £10pa Unemployed £4pa				
Work Tel	:	Job Title:				

Conditions of Service:(Tick all those boxes that are appropriate to you and your post.)

Full Time Part Time Term Time Only Job Share Permanent Temporary

***CAR ALLOWANCE:**

***DISABILITY**

Essential Casual None Yes No

***ETHNIC ORIGIN:**

Afro-carib African Indian Pakistani OtherAsian White Euro Other

* This information is entirely voluntary, however it will help the branch ensure that minority groups are kept informed of any National or Local events that might effect them. Any information provided will be completely confidential.

POLITICAL FUND

I authorise the deduction of the following Political Fund payments part of my subscription.

Delete where appropriate.

Affiliated Fund / General Fund

Affiliated Political Fund (your subscription includes 6.5% contribution to this fund) campaigns for members through affiliation to the Labour Party both locally and nationally. Those paying the affiliated levy can take part in the APF activities and make their contribution on policy issues, including Labour Party policy.

General Political Fund (your subscription includes 5p a week or 22p per month contribution to this fund) is independent of support for any Political Party but liases with MP's from all Party's to pursue UNISON's interests. It is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the

YOU MUST INDICATE AT LEAST ONE OPTION as the NEC will automatically allocate you to the APF if this section is left blank.

AUTHORISATION FOR DEDUCTION OF SUBSCRIPTION

I hereby authorise the deduction from my salary, for payment to UNISON on my behalf, of the subscription appropriate to my annual earnings.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

OFFICE USE ONLY

Actioned by Branch Office: LAF 02305

Allocated to Branch: NOTTS COUNTY

Please return your completed application form to:
**NOTTS UNISON, FREEPOST,
NOTTINGHAM, NG2 1BR**



2002

January

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February

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November

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Nottinghamshire

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