

# NOTTS UNISON NEWS

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



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# STRIKE ON 17th JULY



Over 5000 UNISON members around the County stayed away from work from 17<sup>th</sup> July in support of a decent pay rise. The oft forgotten and invisible army of cleaners, caretakers, and school meals staff were not at work so about 180 County schools were closed. Libraries were not opened, and admin workers joined surveyors on picket lines.

The dawn rose over pickets at County Hall who were there from 5 a.m. to turn away deliveries. Trent Bridge House saw picketing start at 6 a.m. and other buildings around the County saw picket lines outside entrances well before the start of the working day.

At lunchtime, strikers from UNISON, GMB and TGWU joined the march from the Forest, down the Mansfield Road via Nottingham Market Square to a rally in the Royal Concert Hall. The march stretched from the Victoria Clock Tower back to the junction with The Forest Road and included strikers and supporters from all over the county. Busses delivered marchers from Ashfield, Mansfield, and Newark.

The rally in a packed Royal Concert Hall heard rousing speeches by Owen Davies from UNISON HQ, Branch Secretary and national negotiator Chris Tansley, and Branch Chair Jill Turner as well as GMB and TGWU representatives. Messages of support came from NATFHE, NUT and the FBU.

We have collated photos from different picket lines, the marchers and the rally for the newsletter and the branch web site at [http://pages.unisonfree.net/nottscounty/strike\\_photos.htm](http://pages.unisonfree.net/nottscounty/strike_photos.htm)



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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.

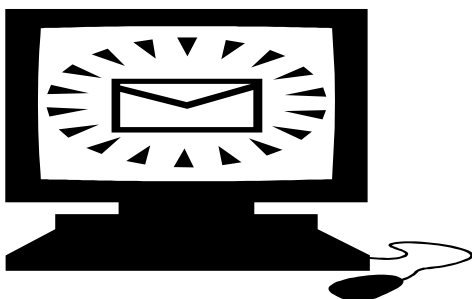
## MOVED HOUSE OR WORKPLACE?

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**



## 17th July Photo gallery



Pickets outside County Hall front door



7 a.m. picket line at Trent Bridge House



Marching down the Mansfield Road

Marchers packed into the Market Square before heading off to the rally in Royal Concert Hall



So, what do you think of the employers' offer?



Hillocks School closed for the day, their teachers joined Classroom Assistants, the Head and over a thousand others on the March and at the Rally



Branch Chair Jill Turner thanked all the strikers for their efforts on the picket lines and for joining the march



Owen Davies brought a message of support from UNISON HQ

## UNISON Calls For Inquiry Into Conflict of Interest by the "Big Five" Over PFI and PPPs

In the wake of the downfall of accountants Arthur Andersen, UNISON is calling for an inquiry into the propriety of arrangements by the "Big Five" accounting firms involved in more than £54 billion worth of PFI projects.

A new UNISON study, "A Web of Private Interest: How the Big Five Accountancy Firms Influence and Profit from Privatisation Policy", highlights the apparent conflict of interest which sees the same firm acting as financial adviser on a public sector project and auditor of at least one consortium member bidding for the project.

The report finds that the Big Five have been driving government policy developments on privatisation as secondees to government departments; developing the value for money tests used for PFI projects; and producing key reports which the government has relied on to defend PFI and PPPs.

When they have acted as financial advisers, in at least 45 cases, the same firm has been the adviser to the public sector and auditor to at least one of the consortium members bidding for the project.

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said: "These companies are running the government's privatisation agenda and charge massive fees as advisers and auditors - there must be a huge question mark over the independence and impartiality of the advice these firms are giving on PFI and PPP.

"You need look no further than Arthur Andersen to see the dangers of an accounting firm acting as both auditors and management consultants.

"We must never lose sight of the fact that public funds are involved in PFI and PPP deals and that the public are not getting value for money."

UK Regulators are becoming increasingly concerned about the

headlong rush into PFI deals and the way those deals are being structured. PPP and PFI involve off-balance sheet accounting, a process heavily promoted by Arthur Andersen in the UK. Audit Scotland, in a recent report on PFI in schools, warned that the benefits available from PFI are not necessarily unique to PFI.

"Other forms of procurement could potentially secure many of the benefits identified, although there has been limited opportunity for councils to test this in practice in recent years under conventional funding," the report said. "The recent emphasis on PFI means that evidence of the outcome and effectiveness of large-scale schools procured by traditional methods is rare. The danger is that decisions in favour of PFI procurement may be driven by stereotypes of poorly performing alternatives rather than good evidence of demonstrable benefit."

The report noted that managing the PFI schools procurement process was expensive for both the public and private sectors - in the six cases examined, the set up and advisers' costs were between £1 million and £12 million or between 5% and 15% of core construction costs.

The National Audit Office also recently warned that the process of devising PFI bids, particularly the use of public sector comparators, has led to the manipulation of figures to secure PFI deals.

Deputy Controller and Auditor-General, Jeremy Colman, said that government departments and local authorities rely too much on "spurious" or "utterly irrelevant" figures to show that private finance initiative projects are good value for money.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE GROUP ELECTIONS 2002 RESULTS

In a previous edition of NUN you might remember that we reminded members that there would be an election for seats on the Service Group Executive.



We want to thank those members that voted for taking part in the democratic process. As you can see from the results below, congratulations are due to our Branch Secretary Chris Tansley who has been reelected and to newly elected Vicky Ingram.

### East Midlands Region

#### Female Seat

Vicky Ingram 2952 (Elected)  
Moz Greenshields 2617

#### General Seat

Lindsay Stuart 408  
Stephen Keane 1546  
Chris Tansley 3836 (Elected)

### Notts UNISON News Deadlines 2002

The deadlines for getting articles in to your newsletter is 12 noon on the following Fridays:

30<sup>th</sup> August (September/October edition)

25<sup>th</sup> October (November/December edition)

20<sup>th</sup> December (January/February 2003 edition)

Each newsletter takes about a week to typeset (providing everyone who promises an article actually gets it in on time) and then about 2 weeks to print and distribute. So please allow for this if, say, you want to put a notice of a meeting in your newsletter.

*Bob Watt*

Communications Officer

# CONFERENCE DELEGATES REPORTS

UNISON held its Local Government and National Delegate Conferences in Bournemouth this year. The Local Government Conference was held on Sunday 16th and Monday 17th June. The National Delegate Conference ran from Tuesday 18th to Friday 21st June. Notts UNISON sent a delegation to both Conferences and what follows are their reports of the week.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

The first debate was about fair wages and the two-tier workforce. Conference certainly got off to a loud start when a vote on an amendment was deemed to be lost by the chair of conference. The Local Government Service Group Executive (LGSGE, the national leadership) were opposing it but with obviously most of the delegates supporting it the decision was met by lots of boos, hisses and frantic card waving until a card vote was agreed. The result proved to be interesting with 348,883 in support and 274,255 against. This decision went against LGSGE advice and goes to show that members are not willing to go for compromises on important issues.

Throughout the day it was good to see delegates asking that the question be put on obviously non-contentious points. This allowed for us to get through the day's agenda and nobody felt that being last on the agenda meant not getting heard.

The debate on Privatisation saw two of the amendments to motions go the opposite way to Notts County's view but obviously we will support the decision of conference.

Motion 29 on Privatisation in Local Government gave the opportunity for a very good speaker from Kirklees branch. It was met with a huge round of applause and a resounding supporting vote despite the concerns of LGSGE who were opposed, due to the legalities of a one-day stoppage.

Motion 35: "Human rights and disabled people" was a hard one to call. Although the message behind the motion was good it was felt we couldn't support it as it called for the closing down of sheltered workshops where many of our members work. The speaker did go on to explain that they didn't mean it so literally and would want to look at it being phased in but this was not explained properly in the motion and people were left with no choice but vote against it.

The message here is to make sure the wording of the motion is absolutely specific and correct about your intentions. A good intentioned motion was lost due to lack of explanation.

*Vicki Corden*

### First Impressions

Monday morning, second day of my first conference, and what luck. Sitting in front of me was Reneen, presenting her first motion to Conference, seeing stewards from different regions milling around her, supporting her motion.

The warmth of the UNISON family was there. The motion about a campaign for home care was carried, but I didn't expect any less from Reneen.

*Martin Francis*

Monday afternoon commenced with a speech from Roger Ronnie, General Secretary of SAMWU (South African Municipal Workers Union). His speech was very well supported and outlined the problems of public services being privatised. He sent greetings from South Africa and was listening to our debates; he felt the problems in South Africa are the same as ours.

The conference then returned to the programme and debated motions on Single Status, Pensions, and London pay weightings.

Emergency motions were then brought forward for debate. The Pay Claim, which had been agreed on Sunday, was put forward to be negotiated on a four year plan including flat rates and percentages, this was on the grounds that pay rises would be in our members pockets immediately from April each year. This motion was not supported.

The next emergency motion was to have the main protest of all members in London on 17<sup>th</sup> July (the proposed strike day). The debate asked "How would we get members from all over the country down to London and the costs involved". This would use resources needed to pay those key workers who would go on all out strike, and no one would be there to be on picket lines and take part in local protests. The motion was rejected.

The next motion was about the victimisation of Wandsworth UNISON Branch Secretary, Sarbani Mazunder, who works in the home care service for Wandsworth Council in London. Sarbani has been an outspoken representative, opposing privatisation of the service by the Tory run Council. She has been victimised and dismissed on petty grounds. Sarbani left the stage to a standing ovation of support. Her appeal will be held in the summer.

Other motions were then debated for young people to receive training for local government posts and to stop unpaid overtime. 29% of our members do unpaid overtime and are exploited for their goodwill.

Unfortunately the conference did not complete the motions and amendments on its agenda, however it did feel as if we had covered some major issues in local government.

Well done to Reneen for her successful motion for the Home Care workers which was indeed the highlight of the conference for this Nottinghamshire delegate.

*Tina Carnachan*

## What's it like to take a Community Home Care Motion to Conference (and win)?

Well it was here - Monday 17th June, a day I had waited all year for, to bring the Home Care Motion to Conference. How did I feel? Very, very nervous, knees knocking, stomach churning, head pounding, mouth dry. Speaking in front of 2,000 people, all staring at you, is pretty scary. Before you speak you have to sit on the front row with all the people who oppose you. The supporters sit on the opposite side to you.

The Service Group Executive (SGE) (top union officers to you and me) wanted me to take out of my Motion important issues that I had raised about Home Care Workers nationally. They had an amendment which included Social Workers and the independent sector. I was against the amendment which I felt diluted the issues relating to Home Care Workers. No disrespect to Social Workers, but this Motion was about Community Home Care Workers.

The speech went well – to say I had re-written it on Sunday night at 11 pm and practised in front of the mirror in my hotel bedroom. I am passionate about Home Care Workers, locally and nationally. Notts County had great support from the Rochdale Home Care Workers who have been on strike this year. Support also came from Newcastle, Wakefield and Derbyshire County Branches. It was great to talk to Home Care Workers from around the country on their work related issues. We're all going to keep in touch.



Notts UNISON's Local Government Conference delegates

It was touch and go whether we would win the Motion but after my Right to Reply speech, we won unanimously. HURRAY!! One of the Liverpool workers who supported the amendment chatted to me afterwards and we got on really well. I'll keep in touch with them. The other delegates from our Branch were very supportive and encouraged me. I would like to thank them for that. You all know who you are, thanks.

So will I go back to Conference with a Motion next year? Yes I will. It's very humbling and also elating to be able to make a difference. The SGE will now have to do the things in the Motion that had been brought forward.

*Reneen Hopewell*

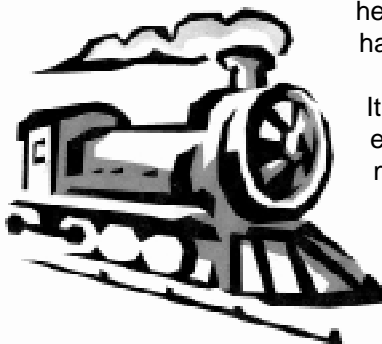
## First time nerves?

As a first time delegate to UNISON's National Conference, I must confess to some feelings of apprehension prior to 18<sup>th</sup> June. For a start, I was travelling all the way to Bournemouth by train on a Sunday...enough to make anyone apprehensive. Would I actually make it as far as Bournemouth? And once there and safely in the Conference Hall would I have the faintest idea what was going on?

I had a number of doubts. Would I understand all the policies on motions? Not to mention the application of Standing Orders? And then there was the amendments to UNISON's rules (tell me...is there anyone out there who actually understands the amendments to rules? If so please make yourself known, as I for one would like to meet you).

Most worrying of all, would I accidentally hold up my green voting card at exactly the wrong moment and find myself in opposition to my own delegation or maybe even everyone else on the conference floor?

As it turned out, my attempted train journey on a Sunday was worse than I could possibly have anticipated but Conference itself was very much better. It was confusing initially but with the help of the other Notts County delegates (my thanks to you all) I soon got the hang of it and I think I only voted the wrong way once.



It has to be said that the days were long and tiring, and some of the debates even more so. However, there were many brilliant speakers and many moving and inspiring speeches and although we worked hard we also had a good time. In the end I left Bournemouth feeling proud to be a member of UNISON and a member of the Notts County delegation, but above all proud to be an active member of the trade union movement.

*Jackie Johnson*

## NATIONAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE

This is my third UNISON National Delegate Conference, and this year's conference was open with music from the Winton school youth band. The mayor then addressed conference and welcome UNISON to Bournemouth.

The president of UNISON, Veronica Dunn, then gave her address. She promoted the positively public campaign, saying that "We demand high quality public services accessible to all that need them, responsive to all and delivered in partnership with public service workers."

One of Veronica's first duties was to represent UNISON in South Africa at the world conference on Racism. She stated that our solidarity and defence of trade union and human rights, especially with oppressed trade unionists, has yielded results. Other campaigns mentioned were the lessons learnt surrounding Stephen Lawrence's death

Conference then paid tribute to the comrades who had passed away over the last year.

Cletus Williams (Chair of the Standing Orders Committee who organise Conference) presented the first of Standing Orders reports. This was carried by Conference

Nancy Coll, vice president of UNISON, then presented the Annual Report. The report was presented with a lot of supplementary questions. These were answered by members of the National Executive Committee (NEC). And then that part of the report was agreed by conference.

John Flint from the NEC then gave conference a report of the annual accounts. He said that UNISON was looking very good and had around £53.7million in the war chest. This worked out to around £41 per member. His report was put to the vote and accepted by conference.

This took us up to 12.15pm and we broke till 2.00pm for lunch.

*Shaun Johns*

Tuesday afternoon's business commenced with Composite A Motion entitled "Third Comprehensive Spending Review". The Motion asked for more spending on public services, investment without using PFI & PPP, thus reducing poverty and inequality. The Motion was carried unanimously.

The next Motion was Motion 79. "Care of the Elderly". This Motion highlighted the move to closing Council provision and moving to private provision. Particular attention was given to standards of care and rates of pay for our members working in this sector. Standards high and pay low in the public ethos, the private both low and unacceptable. Again carried unanimously.

Motion 78 came next, again entitled "Care of the Elderly". This Motion depicted the means testing of clients. Speakers gave insights into the ambiguous position people found themselves in, forced to sell their homes in order to receive long-term care. Unison's "Right to Care" Campaign was highlighted, this lobbying the Government to fully fund the introduction of free care for the elderly, recognising the need for long-term care. Motion carried overwhelmingly.

Motion 77, "Positively Public Campaign & Public Residential Care Homes for Vulnerable Older People". Interesting one this, because of the debate. The mover of the Motion began, and I quote, "The only thing people faced in old age was life in a Council Home", then transpired to rubbish Council provision. To say the least I was annoyed at the negative content of the speech. Nevertheless, the Branch was supporting the Motion in principle. It did point to this crisis described in the Kings Fund Enquiry in 2001. Also that huge public investment was needed. The Motion also called for a donation to a national demonstration to campaign with RAGE. (Residents' Action Group for the Elderly) The National Executive opposed the Motion in its entirety but supported an amendment just to continue working alongside the Residents' Group.

I felt I had heard enough negative content to both the Motion and the amendment and decided to speak myself. I informed the Conference of the five new homes built for Notts County Council (three completed, two progressing), of the Branch's lobby in the media resulting in negotiations between Unison and the Employers and that it was far more responsible to respond than react to proposals. I gave a brief description of what had been achieved and also highlighted the training and development of staff. Pleased to report that the amendment I spoke against was lost and surprise, surprise, the NEC rescinded its opposition to the Motion, which meant the Motion was carried unamended. For my part, complete job satisfaction!



General Secretary Dave Prentis

Then came the highlight of the afternoon, the General Secretary's presentation. Dave Prentis, looking much fitter, gave a strong speech, excellent in content, with a touch of humour. Particular reference was made to Government influence, September 11<sup>th</sup>, Asylum Seekers, BNP, far right politicians, Unison's campaign against racism and the benefits of return to learn and partnerships with employers. Dave Prentis, to my mind, is growing both in presence and stature.

The last Motion of day was Motion 135, "Chhoker Family Justice Campaign. A very moving Motion relating to a Pakistani teenager who was battered and stabbed to death in Glasgow. Two separate internal Inquiries were held, both inconclusive. His family are campaigning for a Public Inquiry with Unison's assistance. It is a blight on society that institutionalised racism exists in this day and age! Motion was carried unanimously. Thus ended my afternoon, full of debate, none of it dull.

*Barbara Miller*

## Protect Our Future

Wednesday morning began with Composite E, Pensions, not the most riveting of subjects but one made more bearable by the speaker.

Sasha Strike of Unison's young members' forum (right) delivered a passionate speech warning delegates that many people especially the young did not realise that there was a pension crisis. She said, "Why should we work until our 70s just to have a half decent pension? What have we got to look forward to if we cannot look forward to a decent retirement?"

Two important proposals were embodied in the motion. To put pressure on the government to strengthen regulations governing transferred employees and the other to restore the earnings link protecting the value of the basic state pension. The motion also called on UNISON to consolidate the campaign for good pensions and campaign across the labour movement to protect what are after all our future earnings. The motion was passed unanimously.

Motion 7 Public Services with its 10 amendments proved an interesting debate. UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis addressed conference telling delegates that privatisation would be a "tragedy for communities ...our members and the Labour government."

The main motion which was passed calls on the government to halt the PFI programme, openly confront the government with evidence of private sector failures and step up campaign activities against privatisation in all its forms. Amendments calling for a national demonstration against privatisation fell as speakers expressed anxiety over the workloads involved in delivering both this and industrial action. Other amendments concerning political funds were delayed until a full review has been carried out.

The conference proved to be enjoyable as well as informative of issues and debates. Many thanks to the branch for giving me the opportunity to attend.

*Jocelyn Cooper*



## Young Members Have Their Say

Wednesday afternoon kicked off with a new promotional video put together with the Young Members Forum.

The idea behind the video is to help Young Members' officers and Branches to promote UNISON to our younger workers and to encourage their participation within the union structures for the benefit of the future union movement.

Sasha Strike, Chair of the Young Member's Forum from the Newcastle City Branch, presented the video. She also gave an update on the work that was being done.

Demonstrations are being held against tuition fees jointly with the N.U.S. between 14<sup>th</sup> June and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2002. The distribution of 1.3 million postcards promoting this is being circulated to cafes and cinemas.

There is a summer festival to promote the fair wage campaign along with a handbook for young members.

Sasha urged Regions and Branches to support the Young Members Network and Forums. Some of the stars of the video were active in the conference arena too, putting forward motions.

### **Motion 120 'Developing a Young Members Organising Culture'**

Sasha and Ross McGiven spoke to this motion. It was calling on Conference to promote the working with young members within Branches, to be more creative in helping young people to learn the ropes and to develop mechanisms to help young members to rise through the structures. For example operating shadowing to Branch positions and ultimately to have at least one young member on the National Executive Committee. This is based on the statistics that the average Unison member is aged 47 and over. 1% of those attending conference last year were under the age of 26, whereas 25% were over 50 years old.

**The call was for young members to reflect the youth of our organisation and Unions should be seen as part of the solution, showing that the Union is for them.**

*Linda Krelle*



Your branch National Conference Delegates meet Dave Prentis, UNISON's General Secretary

## Thursday's speakers

The main highlights of Thursday morning were two excellent speakers.

Dennis Goldberg was an inspiration to listen to and received a standing ovation. A co-defendant of Nelson Mandela's in 1964, Dennis was sentenced by the apartheid state to serve 4 life sentences for treason. He was in prison for 22 years before being exiled to Britain. He is planning to return home in the near future.

Dennis made it clear that South Africa needs our support and solidarity now more than ever. He talked about the effects of privatisation, poverty and lack of education that are perpetuating a greater divide in South Africa.

Although not able to return home, Dennis set up Community Heart with the help of UNISON which has sent more than a million books to South Africa and supported many development projects. For more info:

[www.community-heart.org.uk](http://www.community-heart.org.uk)

Simon Wooley from Operation Black Vote focused on the lack of Black representation in the UK, and the need for a strong political voice for African, Asian, Caribbean and other ethnic minorities.

He welcomed the recent appointment of Paul Boateng to the Cabinet but pointed out how long this has taken and is only the beginning.

To enable and encourage the Black community to claim its place in British democracy Simon spoke of a scheme where a Black person shadows an MP for a period of time. Through Operation Black Vote 23 candidates have already done this. For more info [www.obv.org.uk](http://www.obv.org.uk)

*Mel Cowell*

## Anorak's at the ready...

Thursday afternoon was debates on amendments to Unison rules. I put on my favourite anorak and prepared for an exciting afternoon. In the end there were some exciting (it's all relative) moments and some funny moments including a nervous first-time speaker who started by saying that he could confirm that adrenaline really was brown!

The main amendment was from the National Executive Council (NEC) which sought to prevent members of the NEC from speaking at conference against NEC policy. Arguments for were of collective responsibility and those against saw this as 'gagging' NEC members. In the end the amendment was lost. We voted against.

We also debated an amendment for Suffolk Branch which proposed that when a member becomes unemployed they immediately lose any position of office they hold in UNISON. This was rejected as dangerous especially if a branch officer had been sacked because of their trade union activities. We voted against.

We agreed to amendments giving an extra shared delegate to conference and to low paid members continuing to hold office in UNISON until the end of their elected period even if their pay increases above the low paid qualifying amount.

I was glad of my anorak by now as it came in useful for a debate on whether we should be able to debate amendments to amendments to rule (we voted against it and it was not passed) and to be able to ask even more questions to the annual report (we agreed not to). All too soon it was time to put the anorak away and leave the unreal atmosphere of the conference hall and enter, blinking into the sunshine outside.

*Chris Tansley*

## Friday morning's round up

Friday morning started with young member Laura Stewart moved Motion 48: "Age Discrimination and Citizenship". Young people are discriminated against with Job Seekers Allowance, housing and Council Tax benefits, eligibility to vote and the National Minimum Wage. Single people can only claim housing benefit for a bed-sit if they are under 25. From April 2003 people without children can get a new tax credit and student nurses can get an extra £38 per week but in both cases you have to be over 25. An NEC speaker told how her own daughter was exploited working 8 ½ hours non stop for £15 cash in hand.

Motion 8: "Dignity and respect at work" called for a fair days pay in safe working conditions and that no one should be put in the position of risking their health for their job. Public Service workers are understaffed, overworked and underpaid but blamed if anything goes wrong.

The NEC speaker moving motion 65: "Combating racism in Local Communities" stated that racism had to be tackled from the grass roots. There was concern that Self Organised Groups are not allowed time off and that the Race Relations Act takes in the public sector but not the private sector.

A speaker in support of motion 66: "Stop the Nazis" raised concerns that the present BNP is far more sophisticated and they are infiltrating unions and workplaces, exploiting and dividing working class areas.

Composite motion J: "Globalisation and International trade" was carried unanimously. There are 250,000,000 child labourers and many countries suffer because of debt. Globalisation should bring equal benefit to all. If developing





Delegates show their hands

countries can increase exports by 5% they would get 7 times what they receive in aid at present.

We then heard the guest speaker. She was Janice Carandang, a Philippino nurse and UNISON member. She told of how she had paid £1000 to a nursing agency in June 2000 to secure work in the UK with the promise of UK nursing registration within 6 months.

Agencies are recruiting skilled and qualified nurses in the Philippines and many other countries including South Africa, Ghana and India and charge up to £5000. Once in the UK they are dispersed into the private sector all over the country and made to work long hours of 60 plus a week to carry out cleaning and catering work as well as nursing duties in nursing homes etc. They are often kept in appalling accommodation, in one case 22 nurses slept in one room and in another they were forced to sleep in the dining room after the residents had gone to bed.

Some nurses have left babies with their husbands so they can send money back home. They have to hand over their passports and other personal documents, are forced to sign contracts not to join a union, and held to ransom if they try to leave. UNISON has so far "rescued" 300 nurses and has secured Janice a job at a NHS hospital. She was "rescued" on the morning of the TUC conference and whisked away to the afternoon press meeting where she received a standing ovation. She is proud to be working in a National Health hospital and a UNISON member.

*Jenny Hogg*

## FRIDAY AFTERNOON

On Friday afternoon delegates have the opportunity to debate those motions which they think are most pressing. Top of the priority list was the issue of asylum seekers, conference backed the move to ensure that we welcome those fleeing from persecution and end the discrimination they currently face.

Next were two motions about pensions, the first looking to end the discrimination against unmarried partners and the second about the criteria for ill-health retirement, both were carried.

We also debated the issue of the war on Terrorism and how this is being used to remove civil liberties. Conference condemned the attacks on the USA on September 11<sup>th</sup> but felt the US and UK government's response has been ineffective as it does not go to the causes of terrorism and promotes racism especially against Islamic people.

We then moved on to how the UK Governments response to Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> has allowed for people to be locked up without charge. This is completely unacceptable in a democracy and UNISON will now actively campaign for the repeal of these laws.

Conference also agreed to set up a trial counselling service for UNISON activists to help reduce the stress levels that stewards often face. Lastly we debated about whether members of the National Executive Council need to be more accountable to the regions who elect them, apparently some NEC members, once elected, completely ignore those members who they are supposedly representing! Conference agreed that NEC members must maintain proper links through to ordinary members.

*Jill Turner*

## ***Oh, I do like to be beside the seaside...***



Branch delegates relaxed on the beach at the end of a day in the Conference Hall



## **PENSIONS REPORTS: *NOT AS BORING AS YOU MIGHT THINK***

### **Pensions blow for unmarried couples**

**There was a whiff of hypocrisy in Whitehall as hundreds of thousands of council workers have been refused pensions for their unmarried partners, just months after MPs awarded themselves the same benefit.**

The bad news came after a year of negotiations between UNISON and Whitehall officials who rejected our request for equal pensions treatment.

A spokesman for Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, who is now responsible for local government, insisted: 'if a man and a woman marry and that marriage is still in place when one dies, they can identify immediately who the partner is. With unmarried couples it's more difficult. Therefore there is a premium to be paid by unmarried couples.'

'We're deeply disappointed,' said an official at Unison. 'We thought that sufficient arguments had been put forward to win the case. All members of a pension scheme should receive the benefits they pay for.' In the negotiations, we have insisted that the costs of 'fair pensions' are lower than the Government believes, and should be borne by employers. We believe that it is unfair to require some low-paid public workers to pay higher contributions.

MPs voted last year to review their own pensions, and it was decided last February that they would be able to claim a widow or widower's pension from this autumn regardless of married status. MPs were warned they faced slightly higher pension contributions to fund new benefits. So in July last year, they voted themselves an 11 % pay rise (taking their salaries to £55,000) to offset any cost. It should also be noted that Whitehall civil servants will be able to receive pensions for unmarried partners from October, and Barclays, the Bank of Scotland and Lloyds TSB are among private employers who have already done so.

**Denying council workers what you have awarded yourselves sounds like hypocrisy to me. Why not write to your MP and tell them what you think?**

### **Calls From Pensioners Flood UNISON Offices**

**Calls from pensioners across the UK have been flooding in to UNISON following a recent victory in the European Court of Justice. The far-reaching decision will benefit workers in the NHS, local government and the civil service, over the age of 50, made redundant after being contracted out to the private sector. Private contractors, who withheld pensions benefits from ex-NHS staff, will be forced to pay back millions of pounds in pension benefits.**

Dave Prentis, General Secretary for UNISON said: "This is good news for pensioners at a time when pensions are under attack from all sides. From employers opting out of final benefit schemes and from falling values on the stock market. This decision will help secure future pension rights of thousands of workers. Private contractors will have to think again about putting in rock bottom bids for services and then making workers redundant to cut costs and boost profits. It is a sad fact that after giving years of service to the NHS many are earmarked for redundancy when their work is contracted out. To be forced out of work when you are over 50 is a devastating blow"

In common with many arrangements in the public sector, the NHS Pension Scheme provides for an immediate payout of an enhanced pension when a worker is made redundant aged over 50, but private contractors taking over NHS services were refusing to pay up under the terms of the pension scheme. Katia Beckmann worked for 13 years from 1982 for the North West Regional Health Authority as a Principal Architect when she was transferred to Dynamco Whicheloe MacFarlane and 2 years later in 1997 she was made redundant. Despite being over 50, the company refused to pay her pension benefits, claiming that they were really "old age" benefits and those rights did not transfer with her. UNISON argued that she should receive the same benefits she would have received had she been employed by the NHS – that is immediate payment of an enhanced pension.

Katia said: "It has been a long hard battle but I am delighted with this decision. If someone had told me 5 years ago it would take this long to come to a decision I would still have gone ahead, because I knew that our arguments were justified and I would not to be put off. Asking for our pension rights is not a favour and the decision by the Court is proof that we were right all along. It will make a real difference not only to me and my family, but to my colleagues and thousands of others like me, who have been made redundant by private contractors."

The UNISON case, Katia Beckmann v Dynamco, Whicheloe and MacFarlane, was referred to the European Court of Justice in March 2000. The hearing was held in Luxembourg in November 2001 and was backed by the UK government. It hinged on the EU Acquired Rights Directive, which protects workers' rights in the event of transfer or contracting out. The Directive safeguards redundancy payments, but not "old age, invalidity or survivors' benefits under occupational pension schemes". The judgement (4 June 2002), ruled that the benefits which Mrs Beckmann was claiming were really redundancy benefits not "old age" benefits and therefore she was entitled to be paid by Dynamco.

**If you think you might be affected by this ruling please contact your local steward or the Branch Office.**

## 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 :

	<b>Subscriptions</b>				
	<b>ANNUAL PAY</b>	<b>Weekly/Monthly</b>	<b>SUBS</b>	<b>Tick box</b>	
Home address :	up to £2000	£0.42	£1.81	BAND A1	[ ]
Home Post Code:	£2000-£5000	£0.90	£3.90	BAND A2	[ ]
Home Tel :	£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
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\*CAR ALLOWANCE:

\*DISABILITY

Essential	Casual	None	Yes	No
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\*ETHNIC ORIGIN:

Afro-carib	African	Indian	Pakistani	OtherAsian	White Euro	Other
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\* 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**

## DEBT ADVICE REFERRAL SERVICE LAUNCHED

**UNISON nationally has long been aware that debt and the problems associated with it have 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, who 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 on 0115 981 0405.

## NATIONAL DISABLED MEMBERS' CONFERENCE



Are you interested in representing the Branch at the conference that will run from 26th to 28th October? It will be held at the Moat House Hotel, Glasgow. If you are please contact the Branch Disabled Members' Officer.

The Disabled Members' Self Organised Group (SOG) meets to discuss items relevant to Disabled Members. Come and join us, you will be made very welcome. Should you require any more information please phone Mick Worrall, Disabled Members' Officer, on: (0115) 977 4932

### MEETINGS 2002

**21st August @ County Hall**  
**25th September @ Mansfield**  
**11th December @ County Hall**

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



## NATIONAL BLACK MEMBERS' CONFERENCE

Are you interested in attending the National Black Members' Conference that runs from 8th to 10th November? It will be held at Moat House Hotel, Glasgow. If so, please contact the

Black Members' Officers via the Branch Office before the meeting on 4th September.

The next meeting of the Branch Black Members' Self Organised group will be:

**Wednesday 4th September 2002 @ 12.30 pm**  
**County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham**

The role of Black Members' Officer is shared by Ingrid Brown-Wallace and Bob Wallace. If you are a black member who wants to get involved in the Black Members' Self Organised Group you can contact Ingrid or Bob via the Branch Office.

## NATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY MEMBERS' CONFERENCE

Are you interested in representing the Branch at the conference that will run from 22nd to 24th November in Plymouth? If you are, please contact the Branch Office for details.

Delegates need to register by 27th September 2002. Deadline for submission of motions is 2nd August and amendments by 27th September.

