

NOTTS UNISON NEWS

MAR/APR 2002

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

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PAY 2002

3% OFFER IS

"A KICK IN THE TEETH"

At a meeting on Thursday 28th February the National Employers made an offer of 3% on all scale points from April 1st. This was in response to the Trade Union claim of £1750 or 6% - whichever is the greater - giving a minimum wage of £11000. The Employers had previously offered 2.5%

The Employers had originally said that they would only offer 3% if the trade unions agreed to recommend acceptance to their members. When it became clear that the trade unions were not prepared to do this, the offer was made on the joint understanding that this was the best achievable by negotiation.

Malcolm Wing, UNISON's National Local Government officer, told the Employers that the offer was *"a kick in the teeth for Local Government workers who had been working under intense pressure to implement all the huge changes in Local Government"*. He pointed out that auxiliary workers and nurses in the Health Service had just been offered over 3.5%, that teachers had also been offered over 3.5% as well as civil servants. The offer also did nothing to improve the position of the lowest paid in Local Government.

All three trade unions (UNISON, the GMB, and the TGWU) agreed that they would consult their members with a recommendation to reject the offer and to move to being balloted for industrial action should the Employers not improve their offer. The ballot is due to take place immediately with a close date nationally of 15th April. UNISON is now writing to all Branches and asking that a full individual ballot be held on the offer. This Branch will be looking at conducting an individual ballot by workplace except for those members with poor or no access to a workplace

Look out for more details and vote to reject this insulting offer.

Chris Tansley
Branch Secretary



You can contact your Branch of UNISON at:

**Nottinghamshire County
UNISON
39-41 Loughborough Road
West Bridgford
Nottingham
NG2 7LJ**

Tel: 0115 981 0405

Fax: 0115 981 5697

E-mail: nottunison@aol.com

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**



Nominations for UNISON elections announced

The nominations for elections to represent UNISON's seven service groups have been finalised.

Any UNISON member can stand for election and help oversee pay negotiations, advice and support for their service group.

All 1.3 million UNISON members will vote via ballot papers included with the April edition of U magazine

UNISON's service group structure brings together members working in seven different service areas:

Local Government,
Health care,
Higher Education,
Water,
Transport,
Energy, and
Police Support staff.

The service group executive members are elected from the regions and meet around five times a year. They oversee national negotiations on pay and service conditions, and ensure advice and support goes to branches bargaining locally on these areas. They also develop and lead industry level campaigns such as those over privatisation, cuts, equality issues and a host of professional concerns.

In the words of one SGE member: *"It's very rewarding, because it's bringing the experience of representing and organising members in our own branches and regions and applying that to national problems."*

The nominations for Local Government Seats in the East Midlands are listed below. You'll see that our Branch Secretary, Chris Tansley, has been nominated to continue serving, so please remember to use your vote when you get your ballot paper with U magazine.

Local Government: East Midlands Region

General Seat (Election Required):

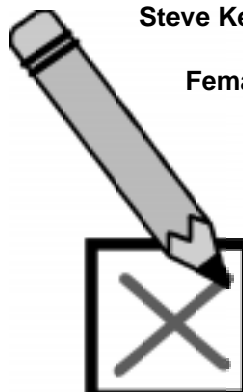
Chris Tansley - Notts County
Lindsay Stuart - Lincolnshire County
Steve Keane - Derbyshire County

Female Seat (Election Required):

Vicky Ingram - Derbyshire County
Moz Greenshields - Derby City

Reserved Seat (No Election Required):

Ann Macmillan Wood - Derbyshire County



Sickness Absence Policy...What's happening?

I am sure that members working for the County Council are wondering what is happening about the Sickness Absence Policy. You will probably recall that UNISON refused to agree to the policy because it included:

- Making sickness a disciplinary issue, outside of the existing disciplinary procedure
- Corporate trigger levels, which take no account of personal circumstances or the nature of different work and strains it puts on us as employees.

The Council refused to compromise on any of these issues and knowing how strongly we all felt the Branch began the procedure to start industrial action. In spring of last year you will remember we sent out an indicative ballot for industrial action. You were asked whether you would support action short of striking to oppose the introduction of this policy. You overwhelmingly voted to take such action, such as non-compliance with the policy. The branch carefully timed the poll so that any action would coincide with the elections held last year. We hoped that this would put more pressure on the Councillors to negotiate.

As I stated before the straw poll is the first thing we needed to do as a Branch to take industrial action. At this point the Council offered a further period of negotiation of three months, which we accepted. However, the Council had no intention of making any concessions, they merely wished to avoid negative publicity before the election. In September, at the end of three months, they immediately implemented the policy. This coincided (by accident?) with the

announcement of the massive privatisation of central services leaving us with some hard choices.

As the Sickness Policy was up and running it would be very difficult to successfully run a campaign based on non-compliance without leaving our members very vulnerable. To oppose the policy meant starting a new campaign just as we needed to begin another **a n t i -** privatisation offensive. The Branch decided that we would concentrate on the privatisation issue, but continue to oppose the sickness policy at every opportunity.

So where are we now? Well, the campaign against privatisation is going well. We still have a lot of fighting to do, but at least the Council is looking seriously at keeping services in house, a proposition that just last September "wasn't

feasible"!

With regards to the Sickness policy, we are pressing for a review of it to begin immediately, where again we will demonstrate to the Council how destructive the policy is both for individuals who are too scared to stay home when they are ill and for industrial relations as the policy drives wedge between managers and staff.

I hope that you will agree with the priorities we have set, we will keep you better informed in the future about the progress of our opposition to the Sickness Policy. If you feel that we should take a more militant stand and maybe revisit industrial action, then you need to tell your steward. We also need to know about your experiences with the Sickness Policy, again speak to your local steward or contact the Branch Office.



Jill Turner
Branch Chair

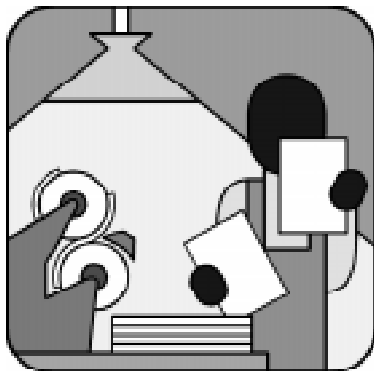
BRANCH OFFICER ELECTION RESULTS

At the close of the nomination period on 22nd February 2002, there had only been nominations for 3 of the 10 posts available. So congratulations are due to: Shaun Johns, International Officer; Bob Moody, Welfare Officer; Bob Watt, Communications Officer. All three retain their existing posts. We still have vacancies for the following posts:

Vice Chair
Assistant Secretary
Assistant Treasurer
Development Officer
Membership Services Officer
Youth Officer
Other Welfare Officer

Given that the branch has appointed a part-time employee to deal with the voluntary and private sector, it was agreed at the Branch Committee on 28th February that we would not need to fill the voluntary sector lay officer post. If you are interested in standing for any of the vacant posts, please contact the Branch Office.

Notts UNISON News Deadlines 2002



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

26th April
(May/June edition)

28th June
(July/August edition)

30th August
(September/October edition)

25th October
(November/December edition)

20th 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

BRANCH CONFERENCE DELEGATES ELECTED

Competition for places as delegates to UNISON's National Local Government and National Delegate Conferences meant that elections had to be held at the Branch Committee on 28th February.

The National Local Government Conference deals with matters that are specific to Local Government such as housing and Social Services and only delegates from local government branches attend this. The National Delegate Conference is where delegates from branches all parts of the union come together to debate and vote on policies. Local Government Conference is held on 16th & 17th June and is followed by the National Delegates Conference that runs from 18th to 21st June. These are both held in the same conference centre in Bournemouth this year. This means that our delegates will be in representing our branch's views from 10 a.m. on Sunday morning to 4.30 p.m. on Friday afternoon for a long week in June.

Delegations from branches are decided on the principles of fair representation and proportionality, and the number of members in the branch. Normally, we elect the same delegation for both conferences to save on hotel bills, transport costs etc. For the National Delegates Conference, Nottinghamshire UNISON is entitled to 11 delegates. However 8 of the delegates must be women, 3 must be men plus we must have at least 2 low paid (on less than £5.58/hour, or up to scp 9) and one young member (under 26) in our delegation of 11. For some reason the Local Government Conference allows us an extra delegate. As you can see, this makes electing a delegation a complicated process, especially as some branch officers hold other positions in the union which means that they would be going to the Local Government Conference in that capacity anyway. Branch Chair Jill Turner had the unenviable task of explaining all this and sorting out the voting process. At the end of the process the following were elected:

National Delegate Conference:

Young Member:
David King (Environment)

Low Paid:
Jenny Hogg (Environment)
Shaun Johns (P&R International Officer)

Women:
Reneen Hopewell (Social Services, H&S Officer)
Gail Squires (P&R, Service Conditions Officer)
Jackie Johnson (Education)
Linda Krelle (Environment, Women's Officer)
Jocelyn Cooper (FE, Peoples College)
Barbara Miller (Social Services, Service Conditions Officer)
Jill Turner (Environment, Chair)

Men:
Chris Tansley (Branch Secretary)

Local Government Conference:

Young Member:
David King (Environment)

Low Paid:
Jenny Hogg (Environment)
Shaun Johns (P&R International Officer)

Women:
Reneen Hopewell (Social Services, H&S Officer)
Gail Squires (P&R, Service Conditions Officer)
Linda Krelle (Environment, Women's Officer)
Jocelyn Cooper (FE, Peoples College)
Jill Turner (Environment, Chair)
Vicky Corden (Education)
Tina Carnachan (Education)
Mel Cowell (Social Services, Equalities Officer)

Men:
Martin Francis (P & R)

We should have reports from the delegates in the July/August Edition of Notts UNISON News.

UNISON's WOMEN'S CONFERENCE REPORTS

Women members from Branches from around the union met in Cardiff from 7th to 9th February. They placed privatisation high on the agenda as well as debating the two tier workforce, reduced pensions, equal pay, term time working and other issues of particular relevance to women workers. Our branch sent 3 delegates: Linda Krelle, Jenny Hogg, and Vicky Corden. Below are written reports from 2 of the delegates. You can contact the third delegate via the branch office should you want a report.

Facing up to Domestic Violence and Abuse

Making a supporting speech on my first attendance at Women's Conference was my main achievement. Within our delegation Vicki Corden and myself were first timers *andspeakers*. East Midlands Region had a lot of first time attendees who made their first speeches. There were about 500 women present in the conference hall.

My speech was supporting the motions put to conference for the continued awareness raising and development of Domestic Violence and Abuse Policies for the workplace. I wanted to emphasise the need for the training of managers and Union stewards around the policies and awareness raising itself to dispel some of the myths as:

"...a policy does not come alive unless it used."

We are about to have the new NCC workplace policy come into use, this will be followed by the policies developed by different service users to manage domestic violence and abuse issues for their service users i.e. the public.

Watch out for the new posters and leaflets. The different departments will be putting it into internal magazines, the website etc.

We will put an article into our newsletter once the central services have begun their promotion.

If you are a steward within NCC and wish to join in our training event May 16th and 17th please contact me as soon as possible on: (0115) 9774389

Linda Krelle

Branch Women's Officer



Health & Safety Seminar Report

As a delegate to UNISON's Women's Conference, I attended the Women's Health & Safety Seminar that was chaired by Hope Daley (UNISON H&S Officer). She stated that despite women making up 40% of the workforce (in fact 72% of UNISON's members are women), Health & safety laws have been framed by men and do not take gender into account. Tools and equipment are designed by men for men - but women use them, e.g. heavy buffing machines. Even the TUC Health & Safety courses are geared towards the male orientated manufacturing industry rather than call centres, health care and other frontline services.

Despite so-called equality, women still tend to do the caring jobs and the jobs that involve contact with people. They can be the victims of physical and verbal abuse at work and suffer from back pain from lifting e.g. health and home care. Repetitive Strain Injury is common because of fast pace working. Women are more prone to allergies because they deal with detergents and chemicals in the home and at work e.g. catering and cleaning staff (they are also more prone to slips, trips and falls). A video highlighted the different forms of workplace bullying and the effect it can have on people's lives. Work related stress is increasing at an alarming rate and when you are stressed you are also more prone to accidents and other illnesses.

Lone working can be a major problem for women. As one delegate who spoke mentioned, her job involved home visits and one night she found a client dead. She waited alone for the various services. The male doctor arrived - complete with driver (too risky to be on his own at night), followed by two policemen, followed by two ambulance men. Some equality!

Work can and does make you sick but in many instances can be prevented. There is a need for more women Health & Safety Reps (and stewards) in all departments. Only you know what your problems are. Make a difference in your workplace.

Jenny Hogg

Joint Environment Convenor

PRIVATISATION: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

While workers around the world were settling down with their families on Christmas Eve, those in Cali (Colombia's second city) were meeting to plan the defence of their jobs and public services. Members of SINTRAEMCALI were reacting to that day's announcement by the authorities of the militarisation of the water, electric and telecommunications services as a way of replacing managers and forcing through the privatisation of Empresas Municipales de Cali (EMCALI).

The next day, Christmas Day, SINTRAEMCALI members and their supporters occupied the 17 storey HQ office block. They went out onto the roof and called for the support of the local population. 15,000 people marched on the offices and created a human shield to prevent military action. This show of solidarity was due in no small part to the community support work carried out by the union members over the years. For example, in the previous seven months 60,000 hours of work had been provided by the workers going into areas without water, electric and telecommunication services to set them up in their own free time.

After 36 days, the occupation ended peacefully with an agreement between the Colombian Labour & Social Security Ministry, the Public Utilities Superintendency, the Cali Town Hall, and SINTRAEMCALI. The agreement meant that EMCALI could remain viable as a state enterprise, the "white elephant" organisations (set up to siphon off funds) would be shut down and followed by a high level inquiry into corruption, and guarantees of the safety of the occupiers (a key element in Colombia where paramilitary death squads operate).

The victory of the occupation was also due to international solidarity, particularly from UNISON & the TUC in the UK, with demonstrations outside the Colombian Embassy in London, video conferences across the Atlantic with the occupiers, letters being faxed and e-mailed etc.



Three of those involved in the occupation were at a public meeting in County Hall on the evening of 4th March as part of a speaking tour to thank the international trade union movement for its support and to explain what else is happening in Colombia. Nottinghamshire UNISON branch officers had written letters to the President and Ambassador. We were told that the negotiations to end the occupation were held up as the government side received faxes, e-mails and reports from the Ambassador about the letters, demonstrations and discussions with John Monks, General Secretary of the TUC who had let the Ambassador know that the world was watching.

Nottinghamshire UNISON were originally due to play host to three Colombians and their translator (who had been part of the occupation) from the Colombia Solidarity Campaign. However Luis Hernandez, president of SINTRAEMCALI, was not present because of an assassination attempt on his life and threats to his family in the week before he was due to visit the UK. He was not willing to leave Colombia as he did not want to be seen to be running away. Berenice Celeyta and Hector Vaca (with Branch Secretary Chris Tansley, below on left) spoke in his place.

Berenice (right) is Director of SINTRAEMCALI's Human Rights department. She has been an activist since she was 16. She has suffered many threats to her life but persists as a social communicator of great energy and creativity, as was seen in her work linking the community with the occupation. Hector is on the National Committee of the oil and gas workers union USO, which has borne the brunt of state and paramilitary repression. Hector is Secretary for Energy Affairs and has a deep knowledge of the history and economics of oil multinationals in Colombia.



Berenice gave details of the occupation (reported above) as well as background information about SINTREMCAI, telling a rapt audience that the union had been active for 64 years and had 3,200 members in the energy, communications and water organisations. Hector spoke about the wider picture in Colombia; threats to trade unionists by paramilitary death squads, a guerrilla war being fought in oil production areas, and the US funded "Plan Colombia". We will be covering these issues in the next edition of Notts UNISON News.

You can get involved in supporting people like Berenice, Hector and Luis by joining the Colombia Solidarity Campaign, for example writing letters and e-mails for emergency requests when trade unionists are "disappeared". Please contact:

Colombia Solidarity Campaign
PO Box 8446, London, N17 6NZ
Tel: 07950 923 448 e-mail:
colombia_sc@hotmail.com

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 :

	Subscriptions				
	ANNUAL PAY	Weekly/Monthly	SUBS	Tick box	
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**



Do you know someone who...

...is a good role model for others?

...has made a meaningful contribution to their community?

...deserves recognition for their efforts?



If so, why not consider nominating them for the 2002 Bob Cotton Citizenship Award? The award is run by UNISON, the UK's largest trade union.

The award is in its second year and was created to commemorate Bob Cotton (pictured above), a member of UNISON's governing body, the National Executive Committee, who was killed in the Ladbroke Grove rail crash on 5 October 1999.

Bob was an extremely active member of his community – as a trade unionist, councillor, school governor, and active Labour Party member. It is only fitting then that any prize in his name should go to other, generous individuals who have made a meaningful contribution to their community.

Anyone can make nominations, and anyone can be nominated. This award is not restricted to UNISON members. Individuals or teams can be nominated. The winner receives £5,000 to be donated to the charity or organisation of their choice, plus an actual award for the winner to keep. The presentation takes place at UNISON's annual conference in Bournemouth, which runs from 18-22 June, and will include a short video presentation about the winner.

Last year's entries and winner

Last year nominations were received from across the country. All sorts of people were nominated: local councillors, school governors, community volunteers, charity workers, trade unionists, scout leaders, health volunteers, rescue workers and religious volunteers.

The judging panel faced a difficult challenge in choosing just one winner.

The eventual winner was Pam Warren (pictured right receiving her award at conference), herself a survivor of the Ladbroke Grove rail crash that killed 31 people and left 400 injured. She was chosen because of her work for the Paddington Survivors' Group. At the time the group had 73 members, who provided support and comfort for one another. Pam has also been at the forefront of the campaign for improvements in rail safety.



Her prize money was split between two organisations: one was a burns research organisation; the other was the India Friendship Club at Rednock School, where Bob was caretaker.

You can nominate either on line:

<http://www.unison.org.uk/bobcotton/nomination.htm>

Or by ringing UNISONdirect for a nomination form on 0800 5 95 95 90