

NOTTS UNISON NEWS

MAY/JUNE 2002

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



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3%? NO WAY!

VOTE 'YES' IN THE BALLOT...

...SHOW YOU MEAN BUSINESS

UNISON members and the other local government trade unions have overwhelmingly rejected the employers' insulting 3% pay offer. When asked to look at the facts union members have said, loudly and clearly, '3%—no way'. Despite the rejection, the employers are still refusing to budge on their offer. It falls well short of our claim. It's just 15 pence an hour for staff on scale point 4. And it's well behind the recent deal for health workers, which gives everyone a minimum of 3.6%, but the lowest paid get up to 6.5%.

The GMB and TGWU have also rejected the offer and will be balloting members on strike action. UNISON is discussing joint working and the co-ordination of ballots. We intend holding an initial one-day strike, followed by selective action. You knew we would need support for firm industrial action. Now we need to turn that into a massive 'yes' vote in this ballot. It's the only way the employers can be made to understand the strength of feeling of local government workers and increase their offer.

A meeting of UNISON's National Local Government Committee on 17th April made it clear that an improved offer will not be secured without action. The ballot will go ahead on 10 June and last for four weeks, ending on 5th July. If there is a 'yes' vote, industrial action will commence around 15th July.

UNISON asked for a meeting with the employers to seek to re-open negotiations, on the basis of the rejection of the offer. At that meeting on 30th April, the employers' position remains entrenched.

Commenting on the pay offer, National Local Government Secretary Malcolm Wing said:

"The employers' offer of 3% is the lowest offer in any part of the public sector. Local government already has the largest pocket of low paid women in the public sector. More than a quarter of a million workers earn less than £5 an hour. The situation is critical. If the employers are not interested in coming back to the negotiating table, then industrial action is certain."

UNISON has rejected the constant decline in local government pay, the massive gender pay gap and council services run on goodwill and under-investment in the workforce. We all know public services need re-building and that they need well-paid, well-treated staff. But so far local government has just fallen further and further behind.

Now it's time to turn the tide!

FOR MORE ABOUT THE 2002 PAY CLAIM, GO TO PAGE 4 >>>>



You can contact your Branch of UNISON at:

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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



HOT MEAL SERVICE UNDER THREAT

UNISON has been involved in County Council Working Group carrying out a Review of the Meals at Home service. It is our belief that the service is under very real threat as County Councillors discuss proposals to:

- raise the cost of meals by nearly 20%
- reduce range/quality of meals
- "sharpen up the eligibility criteria" which means ration access to the hot meal at home service.

We are concerned that these proposals to reduce costs by an unspecified amount could put the entire future of hot meal provision at home under threat. Yet the stated aim of the County Council is to support the elderly to live in their own homes. The meals service represents an essential link in the continuum of care.



The elderly of Nottinghamshire receive over 800,000 meals per year and with them the daily contact with the meal service drivers. The £1 million spent by the County Council is arguably the best £1 million they spend on any service.



The Branch is supporting a Campaign to protect the service and the jobs of drivers and food preparers. We'd like to hear from drivers, social workers and other staff who value the service and together with elderly peoples' organisations in Notts we can publicly shame the Council for their proposals.

The Assistant Director leading the Meals Review thinks that we have to be careful "not to increase dependency" by providing a hot meal. **What a world!**

Notts UNISON News Deadlines 2002

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

- 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

PPP LOBBY

Notts County Councillors vote to back their staff

County Councillors voted on 15th May to reject a massive privatisation of its IT, Personnel and Financial services. Instead, the Councillors have backed their staff to bring about improvements in the delivery of support services.

"Staff are very happy and very relieved" said Jill Turner, Chair of Notts UNISON. "There is nothing that the private sector can do that we cannot do better. Staff at the Council are proud to be public servants and that is what they wish to remain."



Branch Chair Jill Turner and International Officer Shaun Johns show the "back of a fag packet" calculations



Council Leader Mick Warner is shown the "fag packet figures"

The Branch recognises the hard work put in over the past few months by some senior managers and Councillors together with the trade unions in producing alternatives to the proposed Public Private Partnership.

UNISON, managers and Councillors will now work together to implement an ambitious programme of service improvements.

Ms Turner added *"We are all grateful to our Councillors for showing their confidence in our ability to deliver. It is a difficult road ahead but we are all committed to providing the best services."*

Making a Difference

On 15th May hundred's of UNISON members put paid to the theory that joining a Trade Union is a waste of time because *"there's no point you can't change anything."*

The decision of the Labour Group to commit to the in-house provision of central services and oppose privatisation was in part due to all those Trade Union members who gave up their lunchtime to stand together and show that their jobs were not for sale.



Hundreds of union members lobbied the meeting

This is a lesson for the future, it is never a 'waste of time' to be prepared to support each other and voice our feelings about our jobs, our futures and the services that we offer to the public – together we CAN make a difference.

Pay Claim 2002: Catch Up and Match Up

Our claim this year was based upon these key facts:

Over 20 per cent of local government workers earn less than £5 an hour.

The national average basic wage is £19,406, but two thirds of council staff earn less than £13,000! Shocking but true.

Pay settlements for other public sector groups in recent years have been bigger than for council staff. Some have received 'golden hellos' and other incentives!

The gender pay gap with other workers in the economy is glaring and growing—more a crater than a gap! Women manual workers within councils get only 40 per cent of the average wage packet of male manual workers across the economy—less than in 1992!

In non-manual jobs the gender gap is smaller but still shameful—women get 68 per cent of men's pay—down from 75 per cent in 1992

Why 'catch up and match up'?

If those statistics don't make it obvious to your council and the national employers why this year's claim is an ambitious one, then there are other points worth making...

Last year an NOP survey of 10,000 local government workers found that:

68 per cent had considered leaving in the previous year

76 per cent reported staff shortages

26 per cent regularly work extra hours without time off in lieu or overtime pay

63 per cent felt poorly paid

73 per cent said pressure had increased during the year

36 per cent reported reduced staffing levels from the previous year.

We all want to see improved and more responsive public services. But it can't be done without investing in the staff who provide them. Recruitment and retention problems bedevil every council—and they're increasing. Local government can't compete for skilled and dedicated staff with pay levels as they are—let alone keep them. Local government has the highest level of temporary workers in the economy—about 10 per cent. It's hard to deliver improved services with an insecure workforce.

Under-investment in staff is a stark reality in local government. The average council worker receives only 1.6 days training each year. Respecting and resourcing council staff to do a good job is essential. Cleaners, cooks, IT staff and many others are often paid better in the private sector. Wages in call centres and supermarkets are making many local government staff speak with their feet and go to jobs elsewhere. Meanwhile it's fine for some. Last year councillors' allowances went up by an average of 60 per cent, making an average allowance of £12,500.

What you can do

Make sure the branch has your correct membership details, including your up-to-date home address

Keep in touch. Attend meetings on the pay negotiations, keep an eye on notice boards and read the leaflets the branch sends you

Tell your workmates what's going on if they can't get to meetings themselves

Recruit non-members to UNISON

Join in lobbies of the council and other campaign activities organised by UNISON and the other unions

Lobby your own councillors and your MP. Use the details of the claim above

Get your friends and family AND service users to support our campaign—explain to them what the issues are, make it clear we only want what's fair

Watch out for your ballot paper. They will be sent out by post from 10 June. Your stewards will have details of the timetable and information about queries or concerns

When you get your ballot paper make sure you vote 'yes' and return it by post

Encourage your workmates, and those you know, to also vote 'yes' in the ballot



BRANCH AGMs REPORT

For those of you who missed out by not attending the branch's AGMs, the following is a brief summary of this year's highlights. The meetings took place at County Hall and Mansfield Civic Centre on successive nights.



Branch officer elections:

The posts to be contested were:

Post

Vice Chair (1 post)

Nominations

Ingrid Browne-Wallace
Mel Cowell

Assistant Secretary (1 post)

Assistant Treasurer (1 post)

Development officer (1 post)

Communication Officer (1 post)

Welfare Officers (2 posts)

Barbara Miller

Steve Carroll

No nominations received

Bob Watt

Bob Moody

Sylvia McCrum

Membership Services Officer (1 post) No nominations received

Youth Officer (1 post) No nominations received

Those named in bold are therefore confirmed in their posts, and those in italics are subject to an election at a Branch Committee meeting. If you are interested in any of the vacant posts then give me a ring on 0115 9810405 and we can discuss what each job involves.

The Branch unanimously supported the honoraria payments. These are small payments to Branch Officers to cover those small items that we never get around to claiming for such as calls on our mobile phones, short car journeys etc. These are set at £25, £50 or £750. The larger amount is for our Treasurer who works at least one day a week for the branch from home because the Council doesn't give any time off for this role.

We received an update on the local government pay claim (see the front page and opposite). We then had a very lively debate over two motions. The first was to oppose privatisation in all sectors represented by our Branch. This was passed unanimously.

The second was about the donations made to the Labour Party by those UNISON members who pay into the Affiliated Political Fund. The motion criticised New Labour for its privatisation agenda and sought the Branch's support for a commitment to ensure that in the future only those parties and candidates who supported UNISON's principles would receive financial support. Over the two meetings, this motion was passed but with as many abstentions as "no" votes at the Mansfield meeting.

We all enjoyed the buffet and a chance to meet other members of our Branch. And we would like to congratulate the winners of the prize draw. Thank you to everyone who attended, it was nice to meet so many new people.

Jill Turner
Branch Chair

£33,500

FOR INJURY AT WORK

Unison has successfully won a settlement of £33,500 for a school meals worker who slipped at work and sustained serious injuries as a result.

The amount may seem a large settlement but the member concerned has been unable to work since and cannot now walk without assistance.

Whilst the result emphasises the need to be in Unison and be fully supported by our legal department, it also brings home that work is a dangerous place that can have devastating effects on our lives if something does go wrong.

This member had remembered to fill in the accident book at work so it could be proven that the incident had taken place. If you have an accident and work for the County Council, make sure you follow the example of this member and fill in the SR3/5 Reporting Form, and don't forget to keep a copy for yourself.

Make sure your workplace is safe by insisting on a risk assessment.

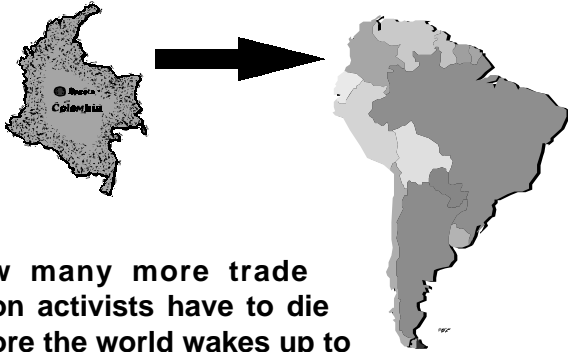
For further details you can contact your Health and Safety Officers

Reneen Hopewell or Jim Connolly at the Branch Office.



Chris Tansley
Branch Secretary

COLOMBIAN TRADE UNION ACTIVIST MURDERED



How many more trade union activists have to die before the world wakes up to what's going on in Colombia?

On the 14th April 2002 at 4.30 p.m. Tito Hernandez was gunned down by two masked men on a high speed motorcycle. Tito was standing at the main entrance of the University of Narino where he had worked for the last 28 years. The killers escaped into what has become all too common in Colombia, immunity. An immunity that has meant that nobody has been prosecuted in 99% of the cases of the 3500 thousand trade unionists that have been murdered in Colombia since 1986.

Tito worked at the university of Narino, in southwest Columbia, and had been a trade union member and activist for the National University Workers Union of Columbia for 28 years. He was just recently a member of the Social and Political Front, a political party that was born out of the trade union and social movement.

The National and International Press continue to ignore the facts and portray the conflict in Columbia today as being either about drugs or about guerrillas. With the post September 11th political climate in the United States, the US Congress are likely to approve \$2 billion of aid so the government in Columbia can fight the "drug war". This will not only be to fight the guerrilla movement, they will also find their way to the paramilitaries, and pay for more bullets that will be used to kill people like Tito Hernandez.

Shaun Johns

Branch International Officer

For more information about what's happening in Colombia, contact:

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

THE REAL REASON FOR PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVES



The Government loves PFI but for all the wrong reasons – it claims PFI transfers risk to the supplier, which means that the contractor has the most to lose if a school or hospital or IT system is not successfully delivered. But the main reason PFI suits the Government of the day - Labour or Tory – is because it is off balance sheet.

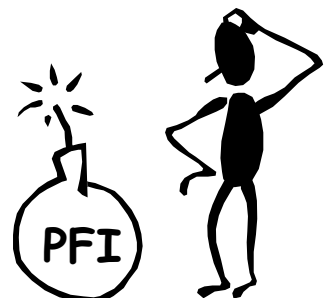
It provides an endless supply of credit that has almost no impact - currently - on the money available to the chancellor to spend, save or give away:

Like hire purchase, payments are spread over 10 or more years. In conventional contracts suppliers receive payments if they have met agreed milestones. Such payments collectively have an impact on the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR), which at its most basic level provides an indication of how much money is available to the chancellor. But because PFI deals are off-balance-sheet, they have a minimal impact on the PSBR, at least during the lifetime of that particular government.

In this way PFI allows the Treasury to place billions of pounds of debt off the accounts, which gives a rosier picture of the UK's finances than would be the case if the contracts were paid for conventionally. But this off-balance-sheet accounting is close to Enron-style bookkeeping practices.

Short term it may make the country's finances look better, which makes it easier for the UK to fit the criteria for joining the Euro, but in the long run, PFI costs the taxpayer more, much more, because the payments to suppliers are, eventually, much greater than in a conventional contract.

So the next time you are told by a politician that PFI is the best way to pay for public services, you'll know that they are wrong. It's wrong financially in both the long and short term. Governments may come and go but we'll end up paying for PFIs for years to come. They're financial time bombs with a very long fuse.



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**

CHILDCARE QUESTIONNAIRE

Notts County UNISON is doing this questionnaire as a pilot to see what possible demand there would be for some form of childcare on the West Bridgford Campus for NCC staff and visitors. Please take a few minutes to give us your responses by circling correct answers where relevant. If you wish to return the survey and you work elsewhere, please can you write your name and place of work here:_____ . We will publish the results in the next possible edition of NUN.

1 Are you responsible for a dependant child or grandchild/children? YES/NO

2 If yes how many and what ages are they? UNDER 5_____ 5-16_____

3 For Grandparents, how frequently do you care for your grandchild/children during business hours?
Hour / Hours / All mornings / All afternoons / All days / Some combination of these (please state)_____

4 Would you use crèche facilities if they were available near or at West Bridgford Campus? YES/NO

5 Would you use a day nursery facility on a regular basis if it were available near or at West Bridgford Campus? YES/NO

6 Do you currently need childcare facilities in order to come to work (regular hours or meetings)? YES/NO

7 If yes do you use (Tick any appropriate)

Friends/family
Registered childminder
Nursery
Crèche
Before / After schools club
Non-term time play-schemes etc
Other (please state)_____



8 What do you spend on average per month on childcare? (OPTIONAL) £_____

9 Would you be prepared to pay the normal rates for a nursery/crèche facility if it were available near to or at West Bridgford Campus? YES/NO

10 Would you prefer childcare facilities nearer to home or work? (Example scenario – your child is ill and you have to collect them) Near Home / Near Work / Not important

11 What about non-term time provision? YES/NO

12 What about Emergency cover? YES/NO

13 Do you think visitors to West Bridgford Campus would use a facility? YES/NO

14 Would you make use of a childcare facility for: Hour / Hours / All morning / All afternoon / All day ?

15 Would you mind being involved in a further focus group? YES/NO

If YES can you please give us your name and a contact number or email address.

Name:_____

Contact:_____

Thank you for your time. Please return your questionnaire to:
Linda Krelle, Nottinghamshire UNISON, Freepost, Nottingham, NG2 1BR