

# YOUR VOICE



Wirral UNISON Branch Newsletter  
January 2019

## BRANCH SECRETARY UPDATE



David Jones

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!** I have now been in post for 3 months, a very busy 3 months. Regardless of what the government tells us, austerity continues to bite and has a real impact upon our standard of living.

Here are some brief updates;

**UNISON Membership** - I am pleased to report that the last 3 months has seen the membership of the branch grow for the first time in a number of years.

**Consultations** - There are a number of consultations taking place with the council, these include *Early Years and Educational Social Workers*, with a significant number due to start in the new year. UNISON will be fully engaged in all these processes to ensure the best outcome for you.

**Ballots** - Our members at Wirral Met College and schools will be involved in national consultative ballots in the new year. This will be to consider industrial action in light of funding cuts (schools) and pay freezes (college).

**Pantomime** - CONGRATULATIONS to some of our lucky members who recently won a competition for family pantomime tickets, simply by calling our office to confirm their details were correct!

**Magenta** - We have recently negotiated a harmonisation of enhancements for call centre staff that ensures all members are lifted on to the higher level.

### Axing £millions from youth work puts futures at risk!

£13.3m gone in just three years

A Unison Report – Youth Services at Breaking Point – reveals that between 2016 and 2019\*, nearly 900 youth worker jobs have been cut and at least 160 youth centres have closed their doors.

Since 2012 a total of 4,500 youth workers jobs have been lost.

Wirral has not been exempt from these pressures, and we will be liaising with our members, and the Council to address the problems that Youth Services now face.

### Standing Up for Housing Workers & Social Housing

Unison nationally, and locally are campaigning to protect your profession and to change the Governments housing policy:

- More genuinely affordable housing
- Appropriate funding
- Professionals to be trained and equipped to do their job

# FLORAL PAVILION & GOLF COURSES

## STOP THE OUTSOURCING!



Floral Pavilion, New Brighton.

In the budget proposals from Wirral Council this year, there are plans to sell off the Warrens and Arrowe Park Golf Courses and also the Floral Pavilion in New Brighton.

Wirral UNISON opposes this further privatisation of Council assets, especially when these are assets that could be generating money for Wirral Council rather than the private sector.

- The Floral was (excellently) redeveloped 10 years ago and at the time, a commitment was made that it would remain accessible to the local community. We believe this commitment should stand.
- At a time when the Council is pouring so much money into Hoylake Golf Resort, why cant other courses be viable?

If they are outsourced, we will not let profits be generated from our members pockets! We will demand that they remain on Council pay & conditions.

## WINTER FUEL GRANTS

Members living on a low income constantly struggle to make ends meet – particularly in the winter when the cost of heating homes rises as the outside temperature falls. **But it's not all bad news – help is available.**

UNISON's welfare charity *There for You* has once more set up a limited fund to help members on low incomes towards the cost of their winter fuel bill through **a one-off payment of £60.**

The process is similar to previous years - an amount of money has been ring-fenced to support this initiative. However, once it's gone it's gone!

So don't miss out. Apply early and send your form and supporting paperwork in as soon as possible. All the information you need can be found on the UNISON website. Alternatively, contact UNISON Direct on **0800 0 857 857** for a form to be sent to you.

## Are you an Apprentice? Take advantage of reduced fees!

UNISON recognises the important part that apprentices play in our workforce, however in the current economic climate, many employers are coming under pressure to find ways of cutting costs. This can make apprentices an easy target for exploitation.

Apprentices can become a member of UNISON for just **£10 per year** which gives you the support of our union, including access to our reps, legal team, a helpline and much much more!

To find out more, contact Young Members Officer, Joel Mansell on [joelmansell@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:joelmansell@wirral.gov.uk)

# GROWING BIGGER GETTING STRONGER



UNISON is now the largest union in the country and how grown significantly in the last year with 18,000 new members in November alone.

It's not about size for the sake of it though, as the higher our membership levels become; the stronger our negotiating position gets, meaning better deals for our members.

Since the election of our new branch secretary, we are now starting to see UNISON grow in Wirral. After a falling membership in recent years, we have grown significantly in the last three months. We are confident that will continue to grow and we will reach our target of 500 new members.

**This can only mean good news for you, our members.**

## WOMEN AND ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

UNISON is always wary of any overly enthusiastic application of sickness procedures against all our members.

We are becoming increasingly concerned that the use of sickness procedures may be unfairly detrimental to women, due to a number of women specific medical conditions.

We have recently held a training session for stewards and will be issuing a wider briefing. In addition, we will also be seeking negotiations with employers to ensure women are not penalised unfairly.

## Do YOU need help or advice? GET IN TOUCH

**If you want to talk to one of our reps regarding any of the content contained in this newsletter, or any other issues of concern, please do not hesitate to get in touch.**

**E: [unison@wirralunison.co.uk](mailto:unison@wirralunison.co.uk)**

**T: 0151 666 3040**



# Not a member yet? JOIN NOW

Joining is so easy, with membership fees from as little as **£1.30** per month!

**Join online at: [www.joinunison.org](http://www.joinunison.org)**

**or ring us on: 0800 171 3193**

**WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER.**



# AGM

YOUR UNION YOUR SAY



Wirral UNISON AGM 7 February 2019, 12.30pm  
Assembly Room, Birkenhead Town Hall



Hugo Pierre

## Guest Speaker Hugo Pierre

Hugo is a member of UNISON's National Executive Committee (NEC). Hugo works in special educational needs in Camden and is a dedicated trade unionist.

On becoming involved in the trade union movement, Hugo said;

*"I'd always been a union member and believed in unions. I never got a chance to be involved in the workplace I was in before."*

*"There was a lot of activity in the Greater London Council (GLC) because they were closing it down and I wanted to get involved in the campaign and influence it."*

*"My proudest moments? Three campaigns that raised mainly women out of poverty pay – nursery nurses, teaching assistants and dinner ladies, all in Camden."*

**HOT Buffet served from 12pm**

# ALL ARE WELCOME