#  WIRRAL UNISON

#  ANNUAL REPORT

**To be presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Branch on Wednesday,**

**24 February 2016 in the Civic Hall,**

**Wallasey Town Hall at 12.15 p.m.**

**And**

**4748, Hamilton Square at 5.15 p.m.**

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 **I**

**BRANCH SECRETARY’S REPORT**

**1. GENERAL**

The public sector finds itself under continued attack from a Conservative Government. A Conservative Government hell-bent on eroding the public service provision in this country.

Those in Local Government are only too aware of the savage attack on our funding and the phasing out of the revenue support grant will put even more pressure on our members. This government is looking at other areas of the public sector to make further cuts, as our members in Magenta Living have found out.

This branch has robustly tried to mitigate any compulsory redundancies at the same time as protecting the terms and conditions of ALL our members. Terms & conditions that have been fought for, negotiated and protected by those who have gone before us.

Make no mistake, we cannot bury our heads in the sand, we will face challenging times with the horrific cuts coming our way. We will need to be strong, effective, open, honest and accountable to our members with a determined, educated and united team going forward.

## Trade Union Bill

The Trade Union Bill, which is currently going through The House of Lords, is the biggest crackdown on Trade Union Rights in over 30 years. Lynne Morris, Regional Manager, gave a presentation to Branch Committee in September about the draconian bill. One significant element of the bill is the removal of ‘check-off’ or DOCAS (Deduction of Contributions at Source) which would see members unable to have trade union deductions made via organisations payroll.

Our branch alongside Wirral Health, Bolton Local Government and Bolton Health entered a regional pilot to ‘Switch’ members to direct debit subscriptions. We entered the pilot as our regional office provided us with the support and resources that have seen us make significant inroads in switching our members.

## Communications

The branch now has a fully working website; a website that, although in its infancy, is a vital communication tool for members in all organisations. Each area has a dedicated section and stewards are encouraged to send in news items.

We have increased our media profile and have developed a good working relationship with the local press.

We now have two AGM’s and some Branch Committee meetings will be held outside standard office hours. This is enable more members to attend and make us more open.

We will shortly be rolling out a mobile ‘app’ that will bring the branch into modern times. It will enable push notifications to members on the move and keep them up to date with developments in their workplaces. The ‘app’ will be the first for any North West Branch and the licence for the build will belong to your branch.

# Wirral Council – Budget Options

Yet again our members in Wirral Council have been faced with more cuts and the prospect going forward under this government will no doubt mean more uncertain times for all concerned.

We have made strong representations to the leader and I have addressed cabinet on, what I consider, to be yet more optimistic saving targets. Targets that make a lot of assumptions. Assumptions that have seen us use over £9m in reserves to balance the books this year alone !

It was paramount in any negotiations that we defended our members the best we could.

## Terms & Conditions

We have a collective agreement that ends on 31 March 2016, the Chief Executive had proposed changes to terms & conditions in a letter to Trade Unions on 18 December 2015 that would take effect from 01 April 2016.

Following a period of consultation, those proposals have been withdrawn. The authority had been looking to severely attack terms & conditions of our members with £2.4m of savings from this area. Through constructive and at times heated meetings, we have had some concessions and the figure for 2016-17 with be close to £1m should members take the branch committee recommendation and vote to accept the proposals.

These are

* Council will meet full cost of employees’ pension contributions arising from unpaid leave each year so there will be no impact on pensionable pay.
* Proposals to remove enhancements for evening and weekend working and removal of essential car user allowance have been withdrawn.
* There will be no further proposals to change these conditions for 2 years. Before the end of the 2nd year, the Council will review its position and may after consultation with the trade unions end the agreement for the 3rd year and seek to negotiate a new agreement with the trade unions. If it does not do so, the agreement will continue but the Council will carry out further annual reviews which may lead to the termination of the agreement before the 4th or 5th year and negotiations for a new or amended agreement to take effect during those years.
* Given the ongoing budget constraints, the Council will explore and may implement, at some future point, revised terms and conditions of employment relating to allowances and enhancements in respect of newly appointed employees only. The business case for the use of alternative contracts will be discussed with the trade unions on a case by case basis prior to implementation.

The proposal to change the terms of the Council’s severance scheme as set out in the Chief Executive letter to Trade Unions on 18 December 2015 will not be implemented and the Council will retain the current scheme based on a 1.4 multiplier and uncapped weekly pay.

We held 5 member meetings in order to establish the strength of feeling of our council membership, we then also held a special branch committee to vote on the proposals. The committee voted to reject the proposals, unless we had a guarantee and clarification those elements in agreement where tied in. The third bullet point above is that guarantee.

With the very real prospect of some services being provided by alternate deliver models in the future, as has been the case with members in Wirral Evolutions and Edsential, it was vital that this clarification and guarantee was obtained.

It was clearly felt that this would be the best deal possible through consultation and would need some form of concerted action in order for any further movement from council.

## Other Council Budget Proposals

The Branch has taken a more co-ordinated approach to negotiations which have seen stewards expertise utilised alongside the experienced branch officers. This will help mentor, develop, educate and increase the knowledge base for our stewards in future negotiations.

A wide ranging campaign has been led by your branch to keep Girtrell Court open. Public meetings have taken place, we have used the local media to highlight the issues our members are faced with and the knock on effect to the provision they provide. We have had stewards outside local supermarkets encouraging the public to sign petitions and organised a very well attended combined lobby of cabinet.

Your branch team walked away from Library consultations as, in our opinion, it was not meaningful. Information was vague, if available at all. Until the authority have some concrete proposals with firm expressions of interest and a detailed, dedicated plan then we cannot sit around the table with them.

No current Care Navigation staff will be made redundant, the savings will be made primarily through vacant post. We will continue to monitor workloads in this area.

Welfare Rights Unit and Community Patrol have had stewards advice on alternate proposals, which also include elements of the Dog Fouling proposal.

School Crossing Patrol savings can be made through natural wastage, the steward’s knowledge in this area has been more than beneficial.

# Magenta Living

Magenta Living presented proposals in how the organisation intends to meet the shortfall of approximately £25m over the next 4 years and baseline savings of over £9m going forward. This is mainly due to the governments planned reduction in rental income. Management have looked at work streams across all areas and at every expenditure line.

Whilst the board and management used some reserves, a large shortfall still needed to be met. They also gave an assurance to minimise the loss of staff through redundancy and are now going through the process of restructuring the company.

Your branch delegation requested that the volunteer scheme was opened to all staff and each application would be taken on its own merits. Admittedly, costs associated with pension strain meant that some staff simple could not be allowed to leave.

Management had wanted to impose a pay freeze for 4 years and also reduce the sickness entitlement from 6 months full pay, 6 months half pay, to 3 months full pay, 3 months half pay BUT over 2 years as opposed to 1 year.

Several members meetings where held and the general consensuses from these was that if management could review pay freeze year on year and look at sickness again this would be acceptable.

As Magenta Living had only implemented a new sickness policy in June 2015, your branch made representations that this had yet to ‘bed in’. Management needed to implement the policy consistently and then review why it had not reduced levels at a later date.

Despite management refusal to change this, we wrote to all board members and a review will now take place after sickness policy has been in for 12 months.

We do not underestimate the task faced by Magenta Living and our team is willing to work alongside management in these difficult times, but proposals need to be fair for our members.

**2. STANDING COMMITTEES**

The following Standing Committees have met during the course of the year:-

 **Chairperson Secretary**

 Finance & General Purposes Sue Kellett Phil Goodwin/Paddy Cleary

Health and Safety Sue Mathie Nick Bower

**3. ANNUAL CONFERENCE/SERVICE GROUP CONFERENCE**

The Branch was represented at Annual Conference in Glasgow by the following delegates:-

Angie Redgrift, Brenda Hall, Steve Bennett, Nick Bower, Rebecca Call, Lisa Atherton.

**4. REPRESENTATION ON OTHER COMMITTEES**

During the past year the Branch has been represented by the following members on Committees:-

**National Local Government Service Group Executive**

B Hall

**North West Regional Council**

S Bennett, A Redgrift, B Hall, P Goodwin, N Bower, I Upton, I Ward, A Oldrid, D Jones,

S Henry, H Plimley, R Call, S Kennedy, K Noonan, P Cleary

**North West Regional Local Government Committee**

B Hall, S Bennett, N Bower, A Redgrift, P Cleary, G Whitfield

**North West Regional Committee**

B Hall

**Regional Health and Safety Committee**

N Bower

**Pensions Forum**

P Goodwin

**International Relations Committee**

R Call

**Learning and Organising Committee**

N Bower

# 5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the work that my predecessor, Phil Goodwin, did for the branch before my appointment in July. I would also like to thank Branch Officers, Stewards, Representatives and members for their continued support, advice and help during the year. My thanks also need to go to the Branch office staff, Maureen and Jayne for the work they do and finally to Tony Caffery our Regional Officer.

 **II**

 **BRANCH OFFICERS REPORTS**

**6. SUE MATHIE**

During my time in work this year, I have been giving advice to members regarding sickness, grievances and disciplinaries. I have also visited members in their workplace and attended meetings to talk about the unacceptable attack on their terms and conditions of service. These are mainly low paid workers who will loose their homes if this attack continues.

Unfortunately, this year I have had health problems and have been off sick, however, I am always available to give advice and help whenever I can. I have been a steward for 24 years and a branch officer for 16. I would like to pass on that experience to other stewards and branch officers.

The fight against injustice goes non today, the same as it has in the past, it appears that consultants are higher paid members of this authority, are given preferential treatment and our member at the bottom of the ladder are once again picking up the slack. The effects of this are high levels of stress and a demoralised staff. Moral is at the lowest level that I can remember, members are afraid to stand up for themselves as the fear that their job will be next to go. We must stand together and roar like a lion and say enough is enough and support each other for as long as it takes. I would urge all our members to use political means such as local MPs and councillors to voice your concerns as they rely on your for your vote. This is a Labour Council and should be telling David Cameron what he can do with his cuts.

Thanks for reading this report.

**SUE MATHIE – ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY**

**7. SUE KELLETT**

Since the last Annual General Meeting in March 2015 the year has been a very busy and a very difficult one.

BUDGET

Once again Wirral Council received huge, disproportionate and unfair cuts in funding from the Tory government, which resulted in a further attack on our members’ jobs in almost all areas of the Council. As Branch Chair, alongside the Branch Secretary, I have vigorously challenged and entered into very difficult negotiations with the Chief Executive, Council Leader, and Senior Managers of the Council to minimise the impact on our members. UNISON continues to fight for all our members not a select few, regardless of their job title or the size of their salary.

REDEPLOYMENT

I have continued to meet on a fortnightly basis with HR to ensure that those members on the redeployment list are found suitable alternative employment which is acceptable to the individuals concerned. This has resulted in more than 90 members being successfully redeployed in the last two years, avoiding compulsory redundancy.

COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

In the Autumn the branch launched its new website www.wirralunison.co.uk and I have been busy putting news items and articles on here to keep members up-to-date with news as it happens. I have also put articles on the Wirral UNISON facebook page and, prior to the Communication Officer post being filled, I produced several newsletters.

GENERAL

In June our Branch Secretary, Phil Goodwin, announced that he had been appointed as a board member on the new Merseyside Pensions Board, and due to the significant amount of time this position would take up he would be stepping down as Branch Secretary. Phil remained in post until the new Branch Secretary, Paddy Cleary, was appointed in July. The Branch thanked Phil for all his hard work and dedication in fighting tirelessly on behalf of the members, and also for the leadership he had shown at what had been, and continues to be, the most challenging time that this Branch has ever faced.

I would like to convey my thanks to all the Branch Officers and Stewards for the contribution they have made when representing and supporting members during this difficult year. This has ensured that Wirral UNISON remains a strong and united branch with a proven record of defending jobs, terms and conditions, and of successfully representing members in all areas.

**SUE KELLETT - CHAIRPERSON**

**8. STEVE BENNETT**

Every year seems more challenging than the last and 2015 was no exception. There have been several departmental restructures, and also savings packages announced by the council that had to be dealt with.

I have had to deal with issues from outside organisations which include firms going into liquidation, and members turning up to work to find that they no longer have a job.

The restructures that I dealt with were in planning, parks, leisure services, and DASS. These were very demanding restructures and some members faced possible redundancy or pay cuts which I fought hard to resist and we did get some wins.

Some members in **Leisure Services** were told that their posts would be deleted. After several meetings with management in which strong views were exchanged, that proposal changed and there were no redundancies and all contracted hours were protected.

In **Parks** we proposed an alternative structure which was accepted and resulted in no compulsory redundancies and a more workable structure.

In **DASS** a proposal to retitle and down grade Care Navigator posts was overturned and these staff got the grade that they deserved.

We had a TUPE transfer of **Day Services** to Wirral Evolutions which went ahead in November but was delayed from April as we challenged decisions on the business plan. We also managed to get the staff Tupe’d over on a council pension scheme and signed a Recognition Agreement with the new company.

After several meetings with **BAM Nuttall** management we managed to successfully agree a Recognition Agreement which helps us to fully represent our members in that workforce.

As I type this we are entering a new round of consultations and I am under no illusion that this year will be just as difficult as the last. I would like to thank all the stewards, across all of the departments that I represent, and my colleagues from Branch Office for all the support that they have given me over the last year.

**STEVE BENNETT – VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

**9. BRENDA HALL**

**Wirral Council - Children’s and Young Peoples**

**Targeted Services - Children’s Centres**

The review is now complete and staff have been consulted and now ring fenced interviews are going to be held for the newly created and existing posts. Staff that are unsuccessful will be placed on the redeployment list whilst serving their notice.The intention is for the new service delivery model to be live from April 2016

Family Intervention Service (IFIP previously). This service underwent a review and new structure is now in place. The original staffing implications were a reduction of staff from 69.5 FTE to 52FTE.

At the end of the review after staffing opting to leave on EVR/ Severance all other staff were offered roles within the new service.

**Edsentials Schools Traded Services**

This is a joint partnership venture between Wirral, Cheshire West & Chester Councils. Staff from Metro, Music Services and Oaklands were transferred acrossto the new company on 1st December 2015 to jointly provide these services.Prior to transfer members in Metro Catering were having issues regarding the new menus being implemented. Issues arose over workloads, ordering and capacity for storing and serving food. I held several meetings with the staff and management to resolve these issues.

**Wirral Schools**

This coming year Schools across Wirral are still facing a fall in pupil numbers to the extent that we will see a high percentage of schools having to make budget cuts, with the issuing of 1st notice letters asking for any volunteers for redundancy.

If the saving is not met it will most probably result in staffing cuts. Support is and will be given to all our members facing these issues in schools.

The ongoing Schools Job Evaluation Appeals took place in January and February 2015 which have resulted in some of the appeals being successful and our members receiving back pay and their posts regarded.

I raised through JCC that there should be a new grade that would apply across all schools with the same challenges in supporting their pupils. This now means for members in schools who never appealed especially in TA3 roles within the special schools, that there is now disparity between grades. The Council responded saying there would not be a set grade and each school would be looked regarding the pupils who attend. I have already started this process and have met with TA’s giving supporting evidence for a regrade. Further meetings will be held to support our members in new regrading cases in other schools.

**Ganneys Meadows and Leasowe Early Years**

The Early Years Review impacts on these 2 schools as the provided services for CYPD. This has had a devastating impact on our members, due to the amount of money reduced to provide the service level agreement, resulting in Ganneys Meadow not taking on the contract this year and Leasowe restructuring on how they will provide the new agreement.

**Wirral Metropolitan College**

The College is in a national dispute over 0% pay award. Members were balloted and voted to take industrial action over the insulting offer on 24th February 2016. Please show any support of solidarity from members in other areas on the day.

There was a Restructuring of the Cleaning Provision due to the opening of the Wirral Waters Building, The original proposal was the loss of both FT supervisory cleaners but this was reversed, some members had to change their hours of work.

**Autism Together (formerly Wirral Autistic Society)**

As I reported, the year before a collective grievance was lodged in respect of paying the minimum wage for working sleep ins, an offer was made to members which lead us to ballot our members who accepted the offer in September.

A new recognition agreement has been drawn up and separate JNCC’s are now taking place instead of joint with the non UNISON staff representatives.

I can’t finish my report without thanking all the stewards and contacts who have supported me this year.

**BRENDA HALL – BRANCH NEGOTIATOR**

**10. DAVID JONES**

I was elected as Branch Communications Officer this Autumn. Since then I have sought to improve aspects of our Communications. The number of our Facebook users has increased substantially from approx. 100 to over 230; however this number could be increased substantially – we have over 4,000 members of the Branch. This allows us to communicate rapidly with members. I have also compiled a number of branch newsletters since assuming the role.

Alongside this role, and as a steward within DASS, I have led the campaign to keep Girtrell Court Open (at the time of writing this is still a proposal).

# DAVID JONES – COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

**11. GILL WHITFIELD**

Dave Hardcastle and I share the officer role, and I feel we’ve had an active year, expanding the learning opportunities for members, and have recruited 2 new ULR’s.

We started by organising a sign language online course for members, which was well received.

In the Autumn we linked up with Wirral libraries for the Reading Ahead Challenge. We were lucky to attract Andy Mcnab to launch the event at Birkenhead Library, it was a real success.

In January we ran a computer course at the Millenium Centre for members, along with a troubleshooting Ipad/tablet session.

We have just run a very popular Mindfulness Course at Birkenhead library, as part of the Stress busting event to celebrate National Library Day. As part of this we have now have a collection of Mindfulness books that members can borrow.

We secured funding from the Kickstart fund, for refreshments etc. at the events.

Dave has run a very successful sewing course since the summer.

Throughout the year, Dave and I have done regular newsletters, keeping members informed of learning opportunities, and useful websites. We are already planning more courses for later in the year.

I attended a number of ULR Conferences, meeting up with other ULR’s is great for pinching ideas.

Tom Jenkins from North West Region has been a great help, in advising us of course availability and funding.

I have had a very busy year in my role a library rep, with last year’s consultation, to drastically reduce library opening hours, professional staff, and downgrade staff, taking till July to conclude. I feel we achieved the best result possible. I’m now heavily involved in the next round of savage cuts to libraries, with staff yet again facing redundancy.

I feel that the Lifelong Learning Officer role gives the opportunity to show a different side to being a UNISON member and hopefully, if word spreads what you can access as a member, more people will join.

**GILL WHITFIELD – LIFELONG LEARNING CO-ORDINATOR (JOB SHARE)**

**12. DAVE HARDCASTLE**

This year is the first year that the branch has had Lifelong Learning Coordinators, Gill and I have really put the effort into getting learning back into the branch as a whole. We have worked closely with Tom Jenkins (Regional Learning Coordinator) who has been a terrific help, also with National who have assisted with authorising funding and mailshots for the short sessions we have put on for the benefit of members and the community. We asked for and were given support and cooperation from Curriculum Leaders at Lifelong Learning and the Senior Librarians.

During the six months we have been in post we have successfully run courses on Sewing, Mindfulness, Ipad/tablet, Internet and a Reading Awareness day at Birkenhead Library with guest speaker Andy Mcnab.

In order to keep up with the latest funding and trends I have attended local forums with Unionlearn and the WEA and the final Regional ULR Conference in Southport. The reason this is the final one is because yet again more cuts by this government (the friend of the people) to FE and Adult Learning, this has a knock on effect to the amount Unionlearn receive, i.e. 50% cut this year alone.

Other news is that we have recruited 3 new ULR's this year and we met for the first time just recently to discuss, with region present, how we can move forward to engage more members back to learning. All 3 Learner Reps are attending their Stage 1 course in Manchester this Month.

As for the year to come, I would like to see a closer link and occasional meeting of officers from Welfare, Education, Social Services and Retired Member Sections as I can see how they can all complement each other on some aspects of Branch activities. I will be pushing more information onto members via email and our new website. UNISON offers some really good courses and the take up is often very low. We should all take advantage of this learning while the funding remains.

Politically, as I write this report, Branch Officers are meeting regularly to discuss and evaluate the Employers' final offer. I will always make every effort to support and protect member’s hard fought conditions, especially enhanced pay and any attack on pensions. Realistically, our negotiators have done a brilliant job in saving what they have. Whatever the final outcome we must all stay united and show that if it comes to a fight, then we are ready for one.

**DAVE HARDCASTLE - LIFELONG LEARNING CO-ORDINATOR (JOB SHARE)**

**13. NICK BOWER**

This year has been another busy year both locally and nationally for Health & Safety issues.

**Nationally**

We sadly saw Labour fall short of ousting the ConDem Government and worse still a solely Conservative Government was elected. Since then they have wasted no time in attacking Trade Unions and H&S Reps. The Trade Union is the most controversial and the most dangerous proposal is to allow ministers to restrict the rights to time off given to union health and safety representatives by amending the Health and Safety at Work Act. All they have to do is introduce new regulations. This is a really vindictive proposal, and of course an underhand one- sneaking in the right to make changes by Statutory Instrument into a much wider Bill. This totally flies in the face of research such as The TUC’s Trade Union Effect which shows that workplaces with Safety Reps are safer.

**International Workers Memorial Day**

Last year we requested that Wirral Council recognised International Workers Memorial Day and planned a minutes silence on that day. This was agreed to and went ahead with a gathering of staff outside Wallasey Town Hall. Myself and the Leader of the Council (Phil Davies) made short speeches and the flag being raised to half-mast before the minutes silence.

**National Delegates Conference**

In early summer I was a delegate at National Delegates and attended rallies and fringe meetings on subjects such as Cancer in the Workplace, Cuba and Venezuela, Collective Bargaining and Learning and Organising.

I was also asked by our Regional Convenor to speak on a motion entitled “The Bhopal Disaster 30 Years Later”. This motion was about putting pressure on Dow, The Indian Government and our own government to get justice for the people of Bhopal.

**Hazards Conference 2015**

September saw myself and Colin O’Brien representing Wirral UNISON at the National Hazards Conference at Keele University. This was a well-attended event with Safety Reps attending from UNISON and other unions such as ATL, FBU, NASWT, PCS and Prospect.

There were a range of excellent speakers including: John McClean, GMB’s National H&S Officer; Peggy Trompf , Industrial Health Matters (Australia); Joanne Hill, Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK) and John Byrne, Unite Hotel Workers Branch.

There was also a range of workshops and keynote meetings on subjects such as Recapturing the SRSC Reg’s, Working to 67 and beyond, Fire Risk Assessment and Inspecting and incident or injury. I was joint Facilitator for two Workshops based around Risk Assessments and Safety Reps. This workshop dealt with what is the Employers responsibility and the Safety Reps role in regards to Risk Assessment,. These were well attended and thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding to be involved in.

**Workplace Temperatures**

In response to the complaints we have decided to commission some temperature cards. These cards are basically a simple thermometer that can be used to keep a record of the temperature in your workplace. Initially we have distributed these in the Transaction Centre in Cheshire Lines were members have raised many concerns over temperatures. I have written a short brief to explain this and hope that it will be either put in a newsletter and/or on our website.

**Locally**

I have been involved on advising members on a range of issues, including Equality & Disability Rights, Asset Related Issues and Risk Assessments.

For example, last year we intervened to speed up the move for members, from their unsatisfactory accommodation in New Ferry. Members contacted UNISON over the conditions they were having to work in. Poor heating, damp issues and foul smell from a previous flood. We then raised these concerns with senior management and pointed out the authority was breaching the Welfare regulations by continuing to expect our members to work in these conditions. Management swiftly arranged temporary accommodation for the group while there permanent move is finalised.

I am currently looking at the Corporate H&S structure as I have concerns that it is not presently effective and will be asking the Branch Secretary to raise this corporately and ask for a review to take place as soon as possible.

Anyone interested in taking on the role of a Safety Rep can contact me through Branch or via email. The training, which in my opinion is second to none, is provided by Liverpool TU’ed and paid time off to attend this training is provided under the SRSC Regulations 1977. So why not give something back to UNISON and become a H&S Rep.

**NICK BOWER – HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER**

**14. ANGIE REDGRIFT**

I have been a Steward for over 10 years and have been the Welfare Branch Officer for the past 2 years.

It has been another busy year with the further changes within the Authority and I have been involved in the consultation meetings for the Budget Options which has resulted in attending One to Ones with members.

There has also been an increase in ‘There for You’ applications for people who are struggling with debt, and I have found that my experience with working within the Revenues and Benefits has helped me with my role as Welfare Branch Officer as I have been able to use my experience to help members including helping to complete forms to be able to get further assistance.

**15. KAREN NOONAN**

Hi everyone

Hope your all well. I have been busy since returning back to work on the 4th January following the bereavement of my Mum.

I have received three calls from members in a space of three weeks all relating to bullying and harassment, discrimination and lack of reasonable adjustments for people's ill health conditions and disabilities in the workplace. All three cases are bullying behaviours from managers to workers leaving the worker once again no option but to go off on sick leave with depression and anxiety.  I can't believe in 2016 this behaviour is still very dominant in the work place more importantly in Health and Social Care environments. Holding a Mental Health Rehabilitation officer/support workers position plus my skills and knowledge relating to this I am able to recognise early warning signs from members symptoms and promptly advise them to seek medical attention straight away before they're symptoms overwhelm them making become really ill.

If you or you know someone who is experiencing bullying and or discrimination or harassment in any form please talk to your union for advice and if appropriate ask to speak to me. Please do not suffer in silence; these outdated and unacceptable behaviours must be stamped out and if we all stick together and make people aware and what’s more important support our friends and work colleagues who it’s happening too, we can achieve this. Let’s all stand together and keep fighting the fight.

**KAREN NOONAN – EQUALITIES OFFICER**

**16. REBECCA CALL**

Well this year has been extremely busy and has been a rollercoaster ride of highs and lows.  I have represented numerous UNISON Women Members from little things like providing advice and guidance to the final stages of the Grievance Procedure.  Sometimes I have simply been a smiling face and a listening ear which I believe is a big part of the role of a Steward but can make such a difference to someone.

In Regeneration and Environment we went through a major re-structure, especially in the Parks Department.  After much negotiation a proposal was finally accepted which meant the fewest amount of job losses with many employees opting for EVR or redeployment.

This year I have also been very involved with UNISON both Regionally and Nationally.  I attended Local Government and National Conference in Glasgow where I spoke in support of a motion against TTIP.  I also attended The Manchester TUC May Day Festival and the North West Women’s Conference.  In January I went as part of a delegation from the North West on an anti-fascist education tour of Poland which involved visiting, amongst other places, Auschwitz 1 and Birkenau.  It was a truly emotional experience that I will never forget.

**REBECCA CALL – WOMENS OFFICER**

**17. PHIL HAMILTON**

“**A Night For The Children Of The Rainbow Nation**” **South African High Commission London**

The President of The Charity Professor Denis Goldberg gave a talk about the charity and hopes to raise funds to continue supporting a rape crisis project, a centre for orphans who have been affected by HIV/AIDS and a project to collect 3 million books for children in the townships.

Great meeting other International Relations Officers from across the North West.

**International Zone Mayday Festival**

**Palestinian Solidarity Campaign**

PSC gave a moving talk of the plight of Palestinians still fighting for the right of self-determination and against Israeli occupation. The incredible work of the women in the communities and the struggle of Palestinian workers in the labour and trade union movement.

**War on Want/No to TTIP (transatlantic trade and investment partnership)**

An alarming talk about secret trade agreements that will undermine public services, food standards, labour laws, threaten the environment and could lead corporations being able to sue governments in secret special courts. An official study commissioned at the start of (TTIP) calculated that at least 1 million jobs will go in the U.S. and E.U.

**Cuban Solidarity Campaign with special guest the Cuban Ambassador Teresita Vicente**

An inspirational talk about Cuba and its people in the face of adversity. Cuba has the highest levels of health education and social protection in Latin America.

Cuba is still under a U.S. trade embargo in spite of the fact that 187 to 2 countries voted against it. The U.S. administration has no plans to lift these sanctions**.**

**Visit from Wajih Ahmed El-Ayassa to Branch**

Branch have had the pleasure of meeting Wajih Ahmed El-Ayassa, Project Director of the Knowledge & Socialist Thought Institute (KSTI) in Ramallah. Wajih spoke to branch officers and members about his work and partnership with UNISON in educating trade unionists in Palestine. He spoke about the partnership with UNISON and particularly in North West Region in setting up the institute.

**Knowledge and Socialist Thought Institute**

This is a new training establishment founded by a group of trade union leaders, academics and political leaders in Palestine. Its purpose is to develop workers representatives, especially women, in developing and shaping their future in workplaces and communities. Support for the initiative is now the policy of the union nationally, following motion 66 being carried at NDC 2015

As it is now the policy of the union we have been asked to support the appeal suggesting that larger branches could contribute in the region of £5000, smaller branches around £1000

**Anti Austerity March London**

I travelled to London with a few of our members to what was a good natured and well attended rally in London with over a 150,000 people. The rally was called by ‘the people’s assembly’ in Response to The Tories winning the general election

**Durham Miners Gala**

I had the opportunity to attend the Durham Miner Gala over the summer and it was privilege to attend such an important event in the Trade Union year. There were over 150,000 trade unionists and their families. It was great to meet up with members from our region and to have been part of the day made me feel proud to be part Wirral UNISON, the trade union movement and all that we’ve fought for.

**National Demonstration**

There was a good turnout from Wirral UNISON branch when we travelled up to Manchester for the ‘March Against Austerity, March For Workers Rights’ demonstration outside the Tory Conference on the 4 October.  There were a huge number of demonstrators present, in excess of 90,000, with flags, banners, hand-painted slogans and placards declaring “I’m proud to be in UNISON”, they made their feelings known.  There were lot of speakers including Dave Prentis and I had the pleasure of meeting Heather Wakefield our nominee for General Secretary

**Calais, MerseyAid**

A big thank you to the officers and members who supported our trip to Calais. Further involvement supporting refugees. gathering aid for Lesvos, Calais and Dunkirk, collecting donations, separating into boxes and sending them to shipping containers based in Huyton, Wirral, Wakefield, and Warrington.

**Show Racism The Red Card**

Show Racism the Red Card event promoting a new resource, a dvd titled Immigration What’s the Story. The resource was developed to help expose some of the myths about the plight of immigrants coming to the UK.

**Holocaust Study Tour**

The tour was organised as a reminder of where fascism, racism, prejudice, violence and intolerance can lead. The tour is also about commemorating the millions of Jewish, Polish, Lesbian, Gay, Gypsy travellers, Jehovah's witnesses, those with disabilities, and trade unionists who perished under the Nazi regime. It was a moving and inspirational tour that was very difficult at times. It was made a little easier having such supportive colleagues around. Following this tour I made a pledge that we will commemorate World Holocaust Day and stand up to fascism in our communities and hopefully try and organise a tour ourselves in the future.

**Actions for the coming year**

**Knowledge and Socialist Thought Institute**

Wajih El Ayassa the director of Knowledge and Socialist Thought Institute came along to branch to talk to officers and members about the institute being set up in Ramallah with the support of UNISON and other trade unions.

This is a new training establishment founded by a group of trade union leaders, academics and political leaders in Palestine. Its purpose is to develop workers representatives, especially women, in developing and shaping their future in workplaces and communities. Support for the initiative is now the policy of the union nationally, following motion 66 being carried at NDC 2015.

As it is now the policy of the union we have been asked to support the appeal suggesting that larger branches could contribute in the region of £5000, smaller branches around £1000.

 A letter was sent to branch secretaries detailing the appeal and sums suggested.

I’d just like to take this opportunity to move this through.

In my role as BIRO and Steward, over the next 12 months I’d like to be working towards the following objectives.

* Organise a delegation from branch to Durham Miners Gala
* Standing up to racism in our communities
* Bigger involvement as Branch International officer regionally
* Branch/regional role regarding refugee’s
* To Commemorate World Holocaust Day
* Planning towards a study tour to Auschwitz
* Building a stronger branch

**18. PAUL WIGGINS**

The Section is only into its second year since it was re-established, following a large numbers of requests from more recently retired embers who wished to remain active within the membership.

The Section meets on a bi-monthly basis at during the day at Bebington Civic Centre and although at present the numbers attending are small, it is intended that the Section will grow once more once the entire retired membership has been informed that the Section is once again up and running.

To this aim the Section is to hold its first AGM on the morning of the Wirral Branch AGM at Wallasey Town and all the retired members that Branch Office holds either an email or postal address for have been written and invited to attend. These members have also been given the dates for the 2016 Section meeting.

Since it was re-established the Section has been very active and guest speakers are invited to attend the Section meetings.

The Section has been represented at the North West Retired Members AGMs and the Acting Secretary has been elected onto the NW Retired Members Committee for the last two years, as well as having represented the Section at the last two National Retired Members Conferences.

Members of the Section also represent the retired members on both the Wirral Pensions Committee and the newly set up Local Pension Board.

**PAUL WIGGINS – WIRRAL UNISON RETIRED MEMBERS SECRETARY ACTING SECRETARY** – **email address:** **paul.wiggins@sky.com**

**III**

**MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETINGS**

**18. MINUTES OF EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH 2015 FROM 12.15 PM – 1.15 PM IN THE CIVIC HALL, WALLASEY TOWN HALL** (There are no minutes as the meeting was inquorate).

**19. MINUTES OF SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH 2014 FROM 12.15 PM – 1.15 PM IN THE CIVIC HALL, WALLASEY TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** Sue Kellett - Chairperson

 Phil Goodwin - Secretary

 Paddy Cleary - Branch Treasurer

 and 125 members who signed the attendance sheets

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Tony Caffery, Regional Officer

* **SUE KELLETT IN THE CHAIR** –
1. **CHAIRPERSON’S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting. She asked that a minutes silence be observed for Bob Crow, NUT Leader who died yesterday and for those members who have passed away during the last twelve months. The Chairperson asked for an Emergency Motion to be accepted for debate – this was **AGREED.** She then introduced the guest speaker.

1. **GUEST SPEAKER – GLEN WILLIAMS, CHAIR LOCAL**

**GOVERNMENT SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH WEST REGION**

Glen paid tribute to Joe Taylor and Diane Kelly who were a tremendous asset to the Branch over the years and wished them good luck in their retirement. These are difficult times for the Branch regionally and nationally. It’s a myth that not getting a pay rise will save jobs and your diluted terms and conditions are no different from the rest of the country. We need to begin to get angry. We are 18% worse off in our pay than in 2010. Our Region continues to take the lead, we have to fight back and get local councillors to get involved.

Join the March and Rally in Liverpool – “Fair Funding for Public Services” on Saturday 15 March 2014 assembling at the Pier Head at 10 am.

Thanks for the invite and I wish the branch every success for the challenges ahead.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Nissa Coull, Alison Jones, Nicky Long, Sandy Thomas, Eileen Bennett.

**4.0 TO RECEIVE THE TREASURER`S FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2013**

Having answered questions from members it was duly **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**

“That the Financial Statement for 2012 be accepted including the honoraria payments.”

On being put to the vote was **CARRIED with 1 AGAINST AND 15 ABSTENTIONS.**

**5.0 TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT**

Having answered questions from members it was duly **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**

“That the Annual Report be accepted and that the minutes of the AGM dated 13 March 2013 be agreed.

On being put to the vote was **CARRIED**.

1. **TO ELECT THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS FOR THE ENSUING**

**YEAR** (nominated by Branch Committee and not opposed):-

 Branch Chair - Sue Kellett

 Branch Vice-Chairperson - Steve Bennett

 Branch Negotiator - Brenda Hall

 Branch Treasurer - Paddy Cleary

 Communications Officer - Sheila Henry

 Education Co-ordinator - Ian Upton

 Health and Safety Officer - Nick Bower

 Membership Services Officer- Ian Ward

 Sports and Social Officer - Steve Randles

 International Relations Officer – Rebecca Call

 Branch Auditors (2) - Les Kelly/Paul Byrne

**7.0 TO ELECT THE FOLLOWING BRANCH OFFICER POSTS**

In line with Branch Rule 14(h) a postal ballot was held.

Tony Caffery Returning Officer confirmed the result of the ballot as follows:-

 The following nominations were received:

**(1) BRANCH SECRETARY**

 Phil Goodwin 420 votes

 David Jones 316 votes

 **Phil Goodwin was therefore elected as Branch Secretary.**

**(2) ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY**

 Mathew Behan 273

 Sue Mathie 456

 **Sue Mathie was therefore elected as Assistant Branch Secretary.**

**(3) EQUALITIES OFFICER**

Mandy Gorman 436

 Gill Parry 287

 **Mandy Gorman was therefore elected as Equalities Officer.**

1. **WELFARE OFFICER**

Lisa Founds 299

Angela Redgrift 425

**Angela Redgrift was therefore elected as Welfare Officer.**

1. **WOMENS OFFICER**

Danielle Kerr 283

 Adele Oldrid 432

**Adele Oldrid was therefore elected as Womens Officer.**

1. **YOUNG MEMBERS OFFICER**

Lois Founds 285

Hannah Plimley 443

**Hannah Plimley was therefore elected as Young Members Officer.**

**8.0 RATIFICATION OF WORKPLACE STEWARDS**

 **FAMILIES & WELLBEING (1)**

 Michael Connor, Phil Hamilton, David Hardcastle, Glynn Morgan,

 Lisa McShane, Adele Oldrid, Gill Parry, Sandy Thomas.

 **FAMILIES & WELLBEING (2)**

Jane Barclay,Peter Ferguson,Daniel Hitchell**,** David Jones,

 Lisa Lilliott, Susan Mathie,Matthew Moores, Karen Noonan,

 Stephen Randles, Judith Townend.

 **REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENT**

 Mathew Behan, Rebecca Call, Lisa Founds, Carl Fryer, Jon Hardwick,

 Paul Sinclair, Mark Traynor, Nick Bower, Brenda White, Ian White.

 **TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES**

 John Atherton, Michelle Bartley, Stephanie Caldwell, Patrick Cleary,

 Mark Delap, David Griffiths, Sarah Kennedy, Hannah Plimley,

 Angela Redgrift, Ian Upton, Karl Wakeham, Ian Ward, Gill Whitfield,

 Carl Williams.

 **SCHOOLS**

 Stephen Cotgrave, Nissa Coull, Susan Draper, Gill Harris,

 Barrie Hibbert, Lyn Kelly, Elizabeth Waring.

 **WIRRAL MET COLLEGE**

 David Brooks, Stephen Easdown, Barbara Sculthorpe, Dianne Kelly.

 **BIRKENHEAD 6TH FORM COLLEGE**

 Margaret Hulse.

 **BAM NUTTALL**

 Christopher Clare.

 **MAGENTA LIVING**

 Sean Evans**,** Sheila Taylor.

 **WIRRAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY**

 Stephen Feeney, Alison Jones, Thomas Kelly, Joseph McGowan,

 Stephen Price, Catherine Titherington.

 Anyone still wanting to be a steward see me at the end of the meeting

 or contact the Branch Office.

**9.0 MOTIONS**

 **9.1 EMERGENCY MOTION – FUTURE COUNCIL PROPOSALS**

 This AGM notes with concern the proposals entitled “Future Council”

 due to be decided upon at the Cabinet meeting of Wirral Council on

 the 13 March 2014. This was previously presented to Council

 employees under the Budget Option ‘Transforming Wirral Council’. As

 previously detailed in the Wirral UNISON newsletter of 1 November

 2013, “It proposes to re-evaluate, redesign and restructure the whole

 organisation. It will remodel the Council from top to bottom. The

 primary objective of this option is a reduction in our workforce.”

 This AGM notes after receiving a report commissioned from the

 consultants Ernst Young, the Council proposes to:

* Conduct a series of service reviews that will decide the services it will continue to directly provide, the services it will commission via shared or third party provider, and the services it will no longer continue to provide or support.
* Undertake a Job Evaluation exercise of all Council employees using the Hay method. That this will place all employees into a job family framework with a series of pay ranges in each of the job families. It will set a new payline for all Council employees.
* Optimise spans of control for management roles by setting defined Team Leader to employee ratios and Manager to Team Leader ratio. This will reduce the numbers of supervisors, Team Leaders and Managers within the Council workforce.
* Rationalise Business Support which will reduce the workforce in this area.

This AGM believes that these proposals

* will cause a major reduction in the Council workforce
* have the potential to cut members pay by the Job Evaluation exercise and the new payline
* are “provider neutral” in that they do not express any preference for in-house services and that this has the potential to lead to large scale commissioning of services from external providers
* are based on a timetable for implementation that is not realistic if proper negotiation and consultation with the trade unions is to take place
* escalate the already high levels of stress and worry in the workforce

This AGM therefore instructs the Branch Officers:

1. to demand that a proper framework for trade union consultation, engagement and negotiation be established covering all aspects of the Future Council project including an adequate timescale for such discussion.
2. to seek assurances from the political leadership of the Council regarding the provider neutral focus of the Ernst Young proposals and to consistently make the case for in-house services
3. to initiate a programme of communication and consultation with all affected members to include regular stewards meetings, membership meetings, newsletters and branch website updates
4. to reconvene a General Meeting of all affected members to report back on the progress of negotiations at an appropriate time, but no later than 31 July, to enable members to determine the appropriate course of action prior to any final decision by the council on the future of individual services and/or the setting of a payline.

 **PROPOSED BY PHIL GOODWIN (BRANCH SECRETARY)**

 **SECONDED BY NICK BOWER (HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER)**

On being put to the vote was **CARRIED.**

 **9.2 NATIONAL PAY DEALS**

“That this AGM notes that following negotiations with the Council, and a vote of its membership, Wirral Unison agreed to defer the nationally agreed pay rise for 2013/14. This was deferred pending the identification of mutually agreed cuts of £1million that could be delivered by 31 March 2014. This exercise was to be conducted in association with APSE.

This AGM notes that, to date, no relevant savings have been identified and agreed with the Council. Under the terms of the agreement, if the savings were not agreed and implemented by 31 March 2014 the pay rise will be lost. This follows a national pay freeze of three years, meaning the Wirral employees have face a four year pay freeze. It is also noted that Local Government Pay is the lowest in the public sector – from the top to the bottom of the pay rise.

This AGM notes that Unison’s national Conference in 2013 re-affirmed its commitment to national pay bargaining and recognised the dangers of local pay bargaining.

This AGM therefore agrees that Wirral Unison will oppose and actively campaign against any attempt to defer or refuse to implement and future nationally agreed pay rise.”

**PROPOSED BY DAVID JONES (DASS)**

 **SECONDED BY GILL PARRY (CYPD)**

On being put to the vote was **CARRIED.**

**9.3 AMENDMENT TO BRANCH CONSTITUTION, RULES AND STANDING ORDERS**

In accordance with the UNISON Code of Good Branch Practice the following amendments be made to Wirral UNISON’s Constitution, Rules and Standing Orders:

**OLD** 3. CHANGES TO RULE

Branch rules must be agreed by two thirds of members present and voting at a quorate branch meeting. Branch rules must be approved in accordance with UNISON’s procedures. Any changes to branch rules must be agreed and approved in the same way.

**NEW** 3. CHANGES TO RULE

Branch rules must be agreed by two thirds of members present and voting at a quorate branch meeting. Branch rules must be approved in accordance with UNISON’s procedures. Any changes to branch rules must be approved by the Annual General Meeting and then by the Regional Office

**OLD** 5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the branch shall be to achieve the aims and targets set annually through the branch assessment.

**NEW** 5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the branch shall be to support and pursue the aims and objectives contained in the UNISON Rule Book and the objectives agreed by UNISON’s National Executive Committee annually and to achieve the aims and targets set annually through the branch assessment.

**OLD** 13. QUORUM

 The quorum shall be:

 (1) The Branch AGM: 125 members.

 (2) The Branch Committee: 25 members.

 **NEW** 13. QUORUM

 The quorum shall be:

 (1) The Branch AGM: 100 members

 (2) The Branch Committee: 22 members.

**OLD** 14. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

 The following officers of the branch shall be elected at the AGM:-

 (a) Branch Chair

 Branch Vice-Chair

 Branch Secretary

 Assistant Branch Secretary

 Branch Treasurer

 Branch Negotiators

 Communications Officer

 Education Co-ordinator

 Welfare Officer

 Equalities Officer

 Women’s Officer

 Health & Safety Officer

 Membership Services Officer

##  Sports and Social Officer

 International Relations Officer

 Young Members Officer

 Branch Auditors (2)”

 **NEW** 14. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

 The following officers of the branch shall be elected at the AGM:-

 (a) Branch Chair

 Branch Vice-Chair

 Branch Secretary

 Assistant Branch Secretary

 Branch Treasurer

 Branch Negotiator

 Communications Officer

 Education Co-ordinator

 Welfare Officer

 Equalities Officer

 Women’s Officer

 Health & Safety Officer

 Membership Services Officer

##  Sports and Social Officer

 International Relations Officer

 Young Members Officer

 Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator

 Branch Auditors (2)”.

**PROPOSED AND SECONDED BY BRANCH COMMITTEE**

On being put to the vote was **CARRIED.**

**10.0 PRIZE DRAW**

 £10 in high street vouchers was won by Sandra Whittaker (Magenta

 Living

 £25 cash was won by Judith Townend (DASS)

 £25 cash was won by Sheila Henry (Universal & Infrastructre)

 £50 cash was won by Carol Mussa (DASS)

 There being no more business the meeting closed at 1.40 pm.