

What a load of rubbish !

The weekly rubbish collection is now on the agenda. Up to 4 in 10 local authorities in England have decided to collect ordinary household waste once a fortnight rather than once a week in a bid to encourage recycling. With this in mind one has to seriously consider the logic of jumping on the bandwagon and the effects on customer service and satisfaction.

The change that has come about has effectively overturned the Public Health Act of 1875 which was instrumental in introducing the weekly collection of rubbish to combat filth and the spread of disease in Urban areas and towns. The weekly collection also played an important part in disrupting the life cycle of the blow fly which when conditions are right (i.e. a plentiful supply of filth on which to lay its eggs combined with warm temperatures) can go from egg to adult fly in 10 days. These days with the onset of Climate Change, Black plastic refuse sacks and enclosed plastic bins the temperate conditions for blow fly growth are ideal.

The Public Health Act gave Local Authorities responsibility to arrange the removal and disposal of waste and asked householders to keep their waste in a moveable 'receptacle' which local authorities had to empty every week. Since then, the size of the standard dustbin which many will remember as a round galvanized container with two handles and a lid has gradually increased to the plastic wheelie bin which comes in a variety of sizes but which even the smallest version is twice the size of the original standard dustbin. This larger bin is no longer capable of being manually lifted and consequently has to be fitted with wheels (wheelie bin) so that it can be moved to the hydraulic lifting fixture to the rear of the modern refuse collection vehicle.
(Cont. Page 2)

New local government pay offer

Local government employers upped their pay offer to trade unions in a last-ditch attempt to stave off industrial action.

The improved deal offers a 3.4% pay rise to the poorest paid council workers, taking them to £6 an hour for the first time. All other local government employees would see 2.475% added to their pay packets.

"This is a welcome breakthrough for the lowest paid and only came about as a result of very tough negotiations," said UNISON head of local government Heather Wakefield.
(Cont. Page2)

Welcome to the self preservation society

Colleagues this has been an extremely hard period for all Unison reps and officers who have had to deal with heavy case loads. I myself have undertaken many issues ranging from the transfer of staff (TUPE) to closure of premises and re-deployment of staff (members).

It seems that the motto at present has become **the self preservation society** in some quarters of the council.

There has been a decrease in the number of disciplinaries, mainly due to the amount of re-structure and changes
(Cont. Page2)

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- UNISON: out and about.
- Local government pay offer
- The self preservation society
- Nominations for vacant branch officer posts.
- National conference Brighton 2007.

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“ The infrastructure and arrangements for putting true ‘waste management’ into practice is sadly missing in many local authorities. ”

WWW.UNISON.ORG.UK



What a load of rubbish - Continued from the front page

The demise of the weekly rubbish collection has caused much dissent amongst householders and just recently a number of Urban Local Authorities who are having to contend with a continual stream of complaints regarding the stench and public health risk that 2 weeks old nappies and food waste present.

Why has this situation come about?

Simply, it is due to the fact that we are running out of landfill sites and as a result the cost of land fill is no longer cheap. Government Policy is therefore to move away from landfill and to concentrate ‘waste management’ which is all about minimization, re-use, recycling and recovery options. However, the infrastructure and arrangements for putting true ‘waste management’ into practice is sadly missing in many local authorities.

Ken Macdonald

(Unison Health and Safety Representative)

Welcome to the self preservation society — Continued from the front page

that are currently being undertaken. Unison has been fairly successful in securing employment for its members.

Some of the matters that the council has entered into, have been handled appallingly by this authority and these now result in challenges by this union.

You may be aware that the council’s in-house services are under review by capita, in what the union perceives to be an unfair process. They seem to have omitted the private sector providers from this review - yet these organizations are still in receipt of public funds. (Equality I think not).

This process is again under challenge by Unison with support growing from other areas, yet there are positives out of negatives in respect of membership growth that has incorporated a new and clearer way that unison is perceived (yes beyond popular belief this union and branch is completely independent and places its members views and interest’s first.)

Gary Martin (Assistant Branch Secretary)

New local government pay offer - Continued from the front page

"We recognise that local government bosses have surpassed the government's own stated pay limit of 2% and unions will now meet to consider this improvement..

"The meeting followed six months of negotiations. NJC unions will meet on the 4 September to consider the revised offer.

They welcomed the fact that an improved offer had been made, but said that it remains disappointing, with inflation running at 3.8% and councils having exceeded their efficiency targets this year.

More information regarding the local government pay offer can be found at Unison’s web site: WWW.UNISON.ORG.UK

*Nominations for vacant branch officer posts

Are on
Monday 1st October 2007 7pm
In Committee Room 1&2
 Followed by an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) to ratify the following
 Vacant Branch Officer Posts:

1. Chair
2. Vice Chair
3. Youth Officer
4. Affiliated Political Fund (APF) Officer

***Nomination Forms available from the Branch:**

Unison Office
 Central Depot
 Forward Drive
 Harrow, HA3 8NT
 Telephone: 020 8424 1795
 OR

Via E-mail: info@harrow-unison.org.uk

Closing Date for nomination forms to be returned to the Branch Office is 4pm Monday 24th September 2007.

Getting active in UNISON course for women

UNISON Greater London Region recently ran a successful "Participating in Unison course for Women" earlier this year. This course was an introduction to trade unionism, Unison and its structures for new women members. The next stage of activist courses for women is "Getting Active in Unison" course. This is a four day course – split into 2 x 2day blocks and will train women members to become accredited stewards. I would be grateful if you could forward this e-mail onto any women members within your branch / workplace.

Both courses should attract time off from your employer and you should notify your manager of the dates as soon as you have registered. Please note it is not a requirement that women attending the Getting Active Course, need to have attended the Participating in UNISON course.

The next dates for both courses are below. If you wish to register please go to www.unison.org.uk/london or e-mail G.Education@unison.co.uk or telephone 020 7535 6645 to request a registration form – please quote the course code and note the closing date deadline.

Getting active in Unison

A
 4 day course for Women Members who
 want to become activists
 on
 17th & 18th September
 and 1st & 2nd October 2007
 At
 ULU, Mallet street, London
 Course code: L103
 Closing date for registration: 5th Sep 2007

Participating in Unison

A
 1 day introductory course for Women
 members who want to find out more about
 UNISON
 on
 4th Octobers 2007
 At
 ULU, Mallet street, London
 Course code: L102
 Closing date for registration: 5th Sep 2007



WWW.UNISON.ORG.UK

"Both courses should attract time off from your employer and you should notify your manager of the dates as soon as you have registered."



National Delegate Conference Brighton 2007



I had the privilege to attend a conference in Brighton as a delegate. I was amazed at the number of members attending the conference; almost 3,000 delegates and visitors. It was an extremely interesting experience with lots of passionate debate. There was seven days of Motions and debate, I have included a few items of general interest here but if anyone would like to discuss any of the other subjects debated at conference please do not hesitate to contact me at the UNISON office.

Equal Pay

The NJC pay claim for 2007 was for 5% of £1,000 whichever is the greater. In response the employers made an offer of 2% in March 2007. This was immediately rejected by the TU side. Since then the NJC has continued to meet to keep the dialogue open between the trade unions and the employers.

Dave Prentis addressed conference with his assurance that the issue of Equal Pay issues would be tackled by joint working with other trade unions, “the way forward is to develop alliances with community groups and other unions, this way we will gain major strength”.

The Equal Pay issue affects over one million women. The single status agreement was ground breaking because it placed the principles of equal value at the heart of the issue. Unison will continue to negotiate and where necessary use litigation to win fairness and justice for women members who have been paid less purely because of their sex.

Academy Schools

Christine McAnea, raised UNISON'S concern about the existing and the Governments plans to open many more academy schools. Academies do not have to have agreements for

pay and conditions, and many activists in branches are having difficulty organising in these schools. Exclusions are also four times higher than other state schools. UNISON along with the other education unions will continue to campaign against academy schools, and will continue to fight to protect the terms and conditions of new employees taken on directly by academies.

Promoting the Gender Equality Duty

Conference applauded the introduction of the introduction of the Gender Equality Duty in April 2007; there is now a statutory duty on all public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality between men and women. National Executive Council and other relevant bodies within UNISON will keep all branches and service groups aware of the potential of Gender Duty change and to work closely with regions to share best practices, lobby government to ensure that the Equal Opportunities Commission and replacement body the Commission for Equality and Human Rights are funded to carry out the necessary work.

Child Anti Poverty Strategy

Conference acknowledged the fact that the number of children living in poverty has fallen since 1997, but noted that further steps are needed to reduce this figure. Conference called on the NEC to develop an anti poverty strategy, continue to campaign for living wage with communities organisations and NGO's, seek to provide sufficient staff resources for organising low paid, to research the impact on low pay and the well being of children.

Lynne Ahmad
(Children's
Services Convenor)
Email:
l.ahmad@harrow-unison.org.uk



“ I have included a few items of general interest here, but if anyone would like to discuss any of the other subjects debated at conference please do not hesitate to contact me ”





“Unison members
have been
prominent among
the winners in the
past.”

WWW.UNISON.ORG.UK

your friend at work



Part Time Office Administrator required



Part Time Office Administrator (25 HOURS)

Salary £16,995 rising to £17,500 (PA) 23 days annual leave plus Bank Holidays

We require an experienced office administrator to assist with organising and supporting the day to day activities of this busy office

The right person will need:

- Good experience of current office practice and procedures
- Good communication skills and an understanding of Trade Unions and their role within a Local Authority workforce.
- Previous experience of working with Trade Unions would be an advantage

They will have a key role in supporting the activities of the Branch:-

- Assisting with the organisation and administration of ballots:
- Desk Top Publishing and general information technology:
- Maintenance of records and recruitment systems:
- Maintenance of Branch financial records
- Preparation of agendas, reports and minutes:
- Responding to a wide range of correspondence, telephone calls and visitors to the office.

For further information or an **application pack** telephone the Unison office on 0208 424 1795

Closing date for applications: **5th October 2007**

Interviews will be held week commencing: **29th October 2007**

Is SAP disability friendly?

Do any of you struggle with accessibility when using SAP? What are the accessibility options?

When Harrow procured this system how much consultation was undertaken?

What is effective consultation? Just a phone call? Or does it need to be more?

Were the people involved actually the staff who would be using it?

Yes it may use a minimum acceptable font size, but at the high resolutions required for the screen setting is this OK?

Personally I find that the accessibility options very poor and I wonder if Harrow is building up a long-term health problem from staff continuously looking at such a small font.....

For web site design the browser screens are developed for 800x600 resolution.

Was this taken into account at the development stage/ non-consultation stage by

Capita?

I have tried a range of screen resolutions with SAP but find that this can make navigation difficult, but what about other disability issues, as an example I have been using other software products that have been designed with easily customisable options to support staff with dyslexia, has SAP been setup with these options?

Should Harrow be considering disability options for any software it procures in the future?

People tend to think of disability access in business in terms of wide doors, accessible lifts, ramps, etc. With so much of our business now computer based the concept of accessibility needs to be extended.

Bryan Shewry
(Health and Safety Representative)



“There is a creeping process of outsourcing of work and staff to charities”

WWW.UNISON.ORG.UK



Interim Branch Chair’s Report

Dear Members

It sounds like a curse of the ancients but it has been an interesting and challenging time for the Branch so far this year.

The Council are undertaking the most **draconian** cost cutting exercise in the history of this organisation. Going along with that is the misery of redundancy, the anxiety for those that are redeployed or doing extra work with no compensation.

Additionally there is a creeping process of outsourcing of work and staff to charities, private companies and associations or conglomerates that seem to prey like vultures due to the inabilities of our generals (*Gallipoli in mind). Similarly staff sometimes feel like lions led by donkeys.

On top of all the organisational changes the Council are making, the Branch is undertaking a review of our rules and procedures. This is so we can continue to represent our members effectively and to take into account the Council devolving the work to smaller organisations. Up to now the Council has privatised or devolved work and staff, **but refused to allow Branch Officers facility time to represent those outsourced staff**. The Council policy documents say that they wish to work with and support the Trade Unions – we will be taking them at their word when we negotiate.

There has never been a more important time to belong to a Trade Union as the individual is immensely vulnerable without the support we offer. Please let you colleagues know that they should join now and if anyone wants to become a Branch Representative they should contact us.

Please be patient with the Branch Officers as they have been inundated with the need to respond to a tide of changes and policy proposals plus all the personal cases that derive from the changes. This all being done with reduced facility time from the Council.

For membership enquiries phone 0208 424 1795

or e mail info@harrow-unison.org.uk.

For enquiries to the Chair – e mail: b.thomas@harrow-unison.org.uk

*(*The Gallipoli expedition of 1915, the brainchild of Winston Churchill, was designed to knock the Turkish Empire out of the First World War and open a supply route to Russia. The campaign is characterised by the military **incompetence of the higher commands, particularly the Allies**).*

UNISON Branch Officers 2007

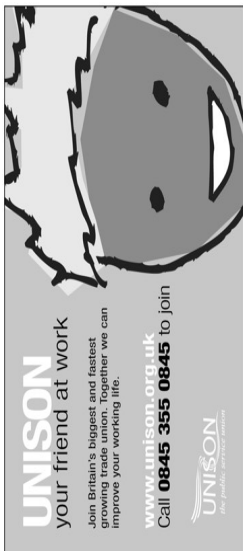
| | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Chair (interim): | Bob Thomas |
| Vice Chair (interim): | John Rattray |
| Branch Secretary: | Steve Compton |
| Asst Branch Secretary: | Gary Martin |
| Asst Branch Secretary: | Ron Gray |
| Treasurer: | Deborah Hattam |
| Welfare Officer: | Martin Nolan |
| A.P.F. Officer: | Vacant |

UNISON Branch Officers 2007

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Education Officer: | Ken McDonald |
| Health & Safety Officer: | Mary Cawley |
| Asst Health & Safety Officer: | Ron Gray |
| Equalities Officer: | Kerry Bubenzer |
| Social Secretary: | Pam Smith |
| Children's Services: | Lynne Ahmad |
| Communications Officer: | Richard George |



“To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”



Health and Safety Report

1) Access Harrow

We have been working now for nearly 2 years representing on the project at the Civic Centre called Access Harrow. This project was to combine the telephone operator service and various reception areas for the public. Extensive building work took place on the ground floor of the Civic One building. Firstly we raised issues about the poor design and construction of the building and engineering services. We still have an outstanding hazard notice with the Council over various deficiencies in the work which have not been resolved to our satisfaction.

There are also questions over working practices in the Centre and stress levels which may be affecting staff working in the centre.

The poor design of the front reception desk has been another issue. Our concern has been the impact on the health and well-being of the reception staff. Agreement has been sought via ECF (employees consultative forum) from management that a new and more suitable reception desk is to be provided. We are still waiting for them to honour their agreement to provide a new desk in July.

2) Job Descriptions

Our work load in scrutinizing job descriptions has increased in the last year due to the organizational changes. The reduction in our union's facility time has caused a backlog and after representation we now have additional time.

3) Schools

Unison continues to make headway in this area, which will produce future members and hopefully officers.

We have asked for the reports into the recent fire at a school.

4) Occupational Health Re-tender

The Occupational Health Department has been run in recent years by a contractor. The contract has now come up for re-tender and we are looking at the information provided by Capita Consultants on the process.

Statistics and information on accidents, health issues and sickness absence are provided by the service and we see it as important that they are impartial, independent and confidential especially when dealing with patient records.

5) Reporting of Accidents

We are working to ensure that correct reporting of accidents and incidents takes place and the statistics are properly compiled and reported. Nothing should be omitted when these are reported.

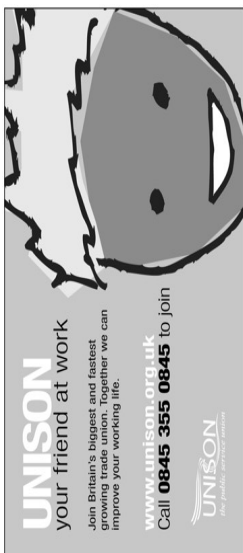
6) Well Being

The Branch had a stall at the Well Being Fair so we could consult with members of staff and the health professionals.

Well being has become more important to us and to the Council and we are pushing for a more proactive approach to ill health prevention. We are urging the Council to provide the resources for prevention rather than cure approach. Cont. Page 8.



“To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”



Health and Safety Report - Continued from page 7

This could mean some organization and funding for therapeutic exercise sessions or complementary health activities.

7) Health Statistics

The Council wish to change the way information on health and safety is presented. They are advocating a scorecard system where various positive indicators such as safety training can be presented to inform the bare accident and sickness figures.

Unfortunately there appear to be two major rising trends – Muscular / Skeletal (back and neck problems in the main) and stress which the management are calling social psychological problems. We have asked for the trend of these statistics but they have been unable to provide the information. Apparently the figures have not been compiled correctly for the trends to be shown so we will be pushing for provision of proper statistics.

Obviously we are worried that the lack of information masks serious health issues for Council staff due to organizational changes or insufficient support.

I continue to strive and make our employers and partners aware of the importance of health and safety and that the most valuable commodity the employer has is all of you.

Many Thanks

Mary Cawley

Harrow Unison Health and Safety Officer

(0208 8424 1795)

(mary.c@harrow-unison.org.uk)

Children's Services Convenor Report

I am organising two working groups to meet to discuss the related issues regarding the **Extended Schools** provision and the **New Sixth Form** programme in Harrow.

If you work in either of these areas in any capacity and would like to be involved please contact me at the Branch Office.

Education Health & Safety Forum

I have attended these meetings for some time and have been shocked by the lack of representation of many of the Boroughs Schools. Less than a third of all schools are represented. These are very important and informa-

tive meetings. Find out if your school sends a representative, if not why not! Dates and times of the meetings are available from the Branch Office or the Health & Safety Department.

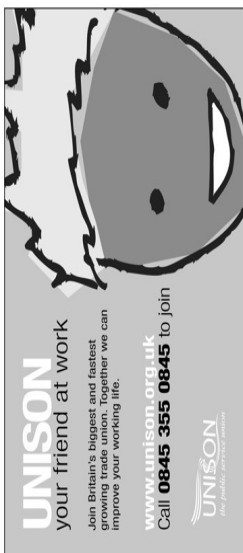
Site Supervisors

The next site supervisors meeting will be Wednesday 24th October. (Information will be sent to schools)





“The battle continues against the BNP, despite their poor election results we must not underestimate the fascists ability to re-invent themselves”



Interim Vice Chair's Report

The year post AGM has seen frenetic activity within the vanishing local education authority and particularly work in schools such as Belmont, Stag Lane and numerous individual cases. The Site Supervisors section has also received some attention particularly regarding Health and Safety issues

My ability to carry out this work unhindered has been severely affected by both a total lack of facility time and my own workplace issues.

On the issue of access my disdain for the removal of the facility time and the accompanying view that it was an act of churlishness on behalf of the employer was initially met with a confident shrug of the shoulders and a belief that I would survive without it.

In truth it has been challenging. Gaining access to some schools and their hard working committed support staff can be problematic. In these schools the union is just not welcome. This has to change and the schools management require guidance on allowing lawful access to our members without spurious obstacles being laid in the way.

Where UNISON has had access there has been real success and numerous advances for staff with re-gradings and improved conditions within the re-modelling process. This has enabled some of our forgotten support staff to flourish. Lynne Ahmad's intervention in these areas has really made a difference.

The branches plans to re-organise it's representational function and my post being placed in another directorate (with the demise of People First) is probably going to preclude me from seeking another term as a Co-Convenor later in September.

I have also attempted to support the Branch by acting as Vice Chair, seeking to support Bob Thomas the acting Branch Chair. Numerous branch officers and members have suggested that the branch rules should be updated and this will hopefully be achieved soon with the support of members and officers

The UNISON National and Local Government Conferences that I attended underlined the issue of marketisation in local government and the threats of privatisation to the terms and conditions of public sector employees.

We are in for a battle with the government and our employers over pay as we witness once again double standards and blame for rising inflation, these indictments should be judged alongside the facts; employer self awarded pay rises and City of London Billion £ bonuses.

Education also featured on the agenda with "SCHOOL STAFF NATIONAL FRAMEWORK" a prominent subject. UNISON argue that we need a national framework that will apply in all types of schools – community, foundation, voluntary aided and trusts. This will provide equity and consistency for support staff and a national pay and grading structure therefore benefits the schools themselves as well as the support staff.

The conferences underlined the fact that the battle continues against the BNP, despite their poor election results we must not underestimate the fascists ability to re-invent themselves, offering themselves as a so called credible force for change and seeking to fill the vacuum within the representation of the working class.

John Rattray- Vice Chair (Interim).



UNISON: Out and About



Pam Smith and John Rattray at the Under One Sky event - 8th July 2007

“UNISON had stands at the Under one sky event and the Health and Safety Fair”

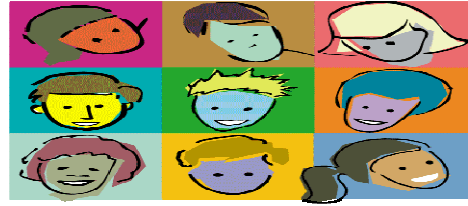


Mary Cawley with the Mayor at the Health and Safety Fair – 20th July 2007

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Call **0845 355 0845** to join



UNISON STEWARDS MEETING

On

**Friday 21st September 2007 at 12.30pm
In Committee Room 5
Civic 1**

All Stewards are invited to attend.

Contact Unison via:

**Unison Office
Central Depot
Forward Drive
Harrow, HA3 8NT
Telephone: 020 8424 1795**

OR

Via E-mail: info@harrow-unison.org.uk

“Meeting Friday
21 st
September
2007, all
stewards are
invited to
attend”

U_{nison} Say!

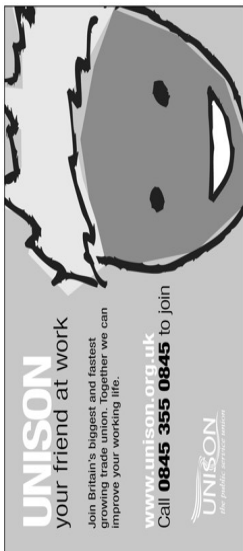
UNISON wants to hear from you.

Do you have any concerns or queries regarding local and national issues? We want your views. Do you have any articles that could be included in this news letter? Has UNISON helped you? If so please let us know the details so we can include your success stories.

Contact the UNISON office via email or letter

Email: info@harrow-unison.org.uk or k.halai@harrow-unison.org.uk

(Please note that UNISON reserve the right not to publish some articles and edit others prior to publishing.)



Branch Secretary's column

Dear colleagues,

As you can tell from the content of this latest newsletter, there is plenty going on. Progress at last from local government regarding increasing their derisive pay claim offer of 2%. The results of Capita's service review of Waste operations, Street Scene and Grounds Maintenance operations which Unison has now seen and will be challenging vigorously. Branch officers are still challenging what we perceive to be blatant and on-going breaches of health & safety. Myself and my colleagues also dealing with outsourcing/TUPE issues on several fronts and Housing is now looking to restructure.

Branch membership is now on the increase again and as stated in an earlier article, I also believe this is down to the Branches commitment to act solely in our members best interests on all issues and challenge any attempt at undermining member's terms and conditions.

Please note the vacant branch posts listed on page 3-note that the position of APF officer does require membership of the Labour Party. It is one of my wishes that this year will see the branch return to full strength again after a long period of uncertainty and we are nearly there. I look forward to meeting all our stewards at the Civic Centre on Friday 21st September at 12-30pm to meet and discuss current issues.

Again my thanks to fellow officers and reps who have again gone above and beyond dealing with members interests these last few weeks, your help has been invaluable. I would like to make a special mention to Kanti Halai for all his hard work and endeavours in putting this issue together.

Best wishes
Steve Compton
Branch Secretary

Please note there will be a Branch meeting on the 23rd of October 2007 at 7pm in the council chamber at civic 1.

The UNISON Office is Staffed by...
Admin Assistant Teresa Stanley (Part Time)
(Monday to Friday 08.30am– 11.30am)

Please remember to contact your Workplace Representative in the first instance and let them deal with any issues at the grass roots level.

Depot Office Tel: 020 8424 1795
email : info@harrow-unison.org.uk
www.harrow-unison.org.uk

This NETwork news letter was produced and edited by **Kanti Halai** with contributions from **UNISON members.**

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“Branch membership is now on the increase again and as stated in an earlier article”