

UNISON Social Care Seminar

The seminar covered a range of issues and challenges affecting our members. These challenges are many and varied: privatisation, integration, individualised care, and more workforce regulations, to name but a few.

Ivan Lewis MP, Parliamentary under Secretary of State for the Department of Health, addressed the seminar. **The MP stressed that there was a direct link in treating your staff well and the quality of the service that is provided**, and he looked forward to working with UNISON in the reforms to Adult Social Care. He spoke about an 'agenda for change', 'but not in the next 3 years. He admitted that, 'there does not seem to be the joined up services that are talked about and we do not make best use of resources. He also confessed that Government have an expectation of the quality of care provided but will not direct or interfere with Local Authority policy regarding **outsourcing** service providers; but went on to say 'I would like to see the bad providers closed down and the good providers rewarded'. Big-hearted sentiments that mean nothing if Government will not put their money where their mouth is!

The **privatisation** agenda in care services has had a devastating effect on workers' **terms and conditions** and the quality of care provision for vulnerable people. Harrow has already progressed a long way down this road of no return.

In children's services the new children's trust approach is likely to mean that more staff will be indirectly employed or could move to work for partner organisations. 'In Adult Social Care, workforce numbers are likely to increase because of the increasing numbers of service users. However a high proportion of the workforce has already been outsourced; and authorities will not directly employ the majority of the workforce. (Source Deputy Prime Ministers Office). Homecare services are under threat from chronic under funding and privatisation. The Homecare (Contin

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No visible impact

Michael Lockwood has now been in post for approx 9mths, yet this council has yet to see any major impact or fundamental change, our not so new CEO has conducted many staff forums across all areas of the authority, and spoken openly about valuing our staff, (work life balance) **yet we still see moves towards removing terms/condition of the workforce front-line upwards**. UNISON cannot believe the amount of issues raised by our members on how selective enhancement of employment has become, any progression through this authority has become harder if the position you hold is at a lower level. We at the branch move forward to promote partnership working and equity of treatment, UNISON as we are (contin page 2)

GMB Branch Secretary resigns (again)

Sanjay Karia, Harrow GMB Branch Secretary has unexpectedly re-resigned.

UNISON congratulates his elected successor John Dunbar. UNISON hope the GMB recognise the **Bridlington agreement** * (see page 13) and the need to stand and unite on issues that will have a larger impact on this authority. We ask them to remember these words "Together We Stand, Divided We Fall."

GMB stewards receive remuneration for recruiting members. **UNISON** stewards receive **no remuneration** for recruiting new members, they receive satisfaction in knowing that have introduced people to a stable and secure Union and hence receive the benefits that that Union provides..





“ Staff who are not members of a trade union are vulnerable to further exploitation ”

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The Unison Social Care Seminar - Continued from the front page

page 2) provision has been **outsourced** five years ago to Nestor Care; and now is due to be transferred again to two other companies Care UK and Support Care. There are many staff working in this sector who have no contracts ('as and when staff'). **Staff who are not members of a trade union are vulnerable** to further exploitation of their terms and conditions. UNISON has only one workplace representative in this area **David McHugh** who is working tirelessly to support the members of this work group. There is an emergence of a new and uniquely vulnerable workforce of personal assistants employed directly by individual services users.

There are implications for members who will be subject to professional registration, with the new vetting and barring system which will replace the current lists of people unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults. The system will be introduced from next year. UNISON is committed to working with you and your representatives to advise and assist members who are reported to their registration body under fitness to practice rules.

Lynne Ahmad

No visible impact— Continued from the front page

informed are a major partner. Yet, senior personnel (yes, employee's of the council) want to conduct the Councils affairs outside of this Union partnership. This is also mirrored across our other partners in the private sector, who seem to forget the meaning of TUPE, (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment). **May we remind them if they are reading this article, PROTECTION means what it says.** We also are involved with Capita and the service 'reviews' they are conducting (savings made off the backs of the employee) this will cover the majority of council run services. Michael if you happen to receive a copy of this network then UNISON asks you to put words into practice as we have seen no positive steps in any of the above.

UNISON Harrow Local Government Branch

UNISON's response to the public realm services review

The Branch has concerns right at the outset of this review in regards to off-setting the 'boom and bust' culture of Harrow's Public Realm Services against the terms and conditions of the blue collar workforce. **This review has failed to capture the service in its entirety and seems to have refrained from benchmarking all main components of the service, i.e. any management/senior position participation in the review.**

It is of grave concern that the security and stability of this vital service has not been encapsulated in the review. Rather the opposite has been incorporated, with a failure to progress the service in a more effective manner.

UNISON have been instrumental in the provision of the much increased recycling figures in waste, recognition for the need to progress these services (to allow for Value For Money) and the reduction of this Council's carbon footprint. At the forefront of all of this is the retention of in-house services, fairness and the need to retain and remunerate the staff that supply these services. This review falls way short of the councils strategy for people document in that it totally disregards these fundamental principles. **UNISON believe that the review in its current format will be adopted and progressed in an arbitrary fashion.** This is easy to see from the lack of safety measures within the review and the omission of safe working practices in order to provide savings. **UNISON ask what is the human cost of these perceived savings?** Prior to the review being commissioned both the street and grounds departments have lain stagnant with little or no strategic direction. There is still no clear strategic plan. Without any plan at all, the cost once again is to be borne by the perceived reduction of

UNISON's response to the public realm services review— continued

the blue collar workers sectors terms and conditions.

We have received a management response to this review that is selective and places the onus of responsibility and extra workload solely on the workforce.

Efficiencies can be made without the need to concentrate and target the front line service suppliers. "i.e. the workforce". There are many other options to consider. Do we in fact have cost effective contractors vehicles equipment etc?, is there effective reduction of the dead time travelled?, is there any sort of an Environmental Management System in place to reduce this authorities carbon footprint? The need for leaders and senior managers to have foresight in the requirements of these services and to adopt and embrace all of the environmental issues that are paramount is absolutely critical.

The data supporting this process has to fair and unbiased and be a on like for like basis if it is to be taken seriously. **To incorporate data from another authority (Sutton), that provides a sub standard service (bench marked, which made Harrows service appear expensive) which has then had to be addressed to move it to align with Harrows service (not benchmarked) is laughable if it were not so serious.** The data supporting the review process has time and again been requested by the branch but has not been received. Throughout the documented review there are clear contradictions to the benchmarking data. **All reference to outsourcing services seems to omit any reference to TUPE (protection of employment).**

There has been no reference to percentage population growth in Harrow and how this is to be incorporated into services that are requested to make savings and reductions. These, UNISON perceive to be under the heading 'vapour savings unachievable'. Once again there is a vacuum of ideas and strategy as to how the service is to be progressed to match this expansion. Instead we return to the boom and bust syndrome that Harrow management seems to consistently align itself. UNISON is well aware of the reasons as to how and why this borough is millions of pounds in the red. It is due to financial mismanagement. To ask the workforce to bear the brunt of this is adding insult to injury. Michael Lockwood has stated that he wants Harrow Council to be a place where its employees enjoy coming to work and to be a place they are proud of. To put forward a review of this nature totally contradicts these ideals.

The Council use to set the standards for the community they serve but this seems to have been outsourced like many of their other services. A vast majority of the workforce are residents of the Borough thus giving strength and input back into the infrastructure of Harrow; UNISON have again raised issues of the workforce mirroring the community to which they serve. This has not been achieved by outsourcing these services in other boroughs; this issue has not been covered by the review. It is UNISON'S obligation to do its utmost to provide stability of employment and to promote the terms and conditions of its members. We also have an obligation to our partners, in this case the local authority in order that both sides of the coin are covered prior to this review being taken as implemented.

UNISON also recognises 'positives out of negatives' within the report but most of UNISON'S positives have and are being raised at local meetings that suggest that in house knowledge and expertise should be encouraged rather than discouraged and suppressed in favour of this external review.

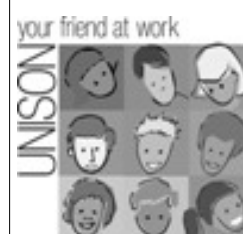
UNISON is still waiting for all of the data that has been used in support of this review. Once we receive this we will respond in more depth.

This is an edited version of our response, to obtain the full version, please contact the UNISON office (see page 12).



" It is of grave concern that the security and stability of this vital service has not been encapsulated in the review "

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“ Six men from a Dorset village founded the society to protest against the gradual lowering of wages in the 1830s. ”



A brief history of British trade unionism

What is a trade union? Why do we exist? What do we do? Questions, questions...Hopefully over the next few issues we can answer these questions for you, by introducing you to:- A brief history of trade unionism. Let us begin with.....

The Tolpuddle martyrs



James Loveless John Standfield James Brine
James Hammett George Loveless Thomas Standfield

Every July, trade unionists from around the world meet in a small Dorset village called Tolpuddle. In fact the meeting or Tolpuddle festival as it has become known centres around the grounds of a group of cottages built for retired agricultural workers and maintained by the Trades Union Congress (TUC). The Tolpuddle festival commemorates the events of 1833-34 when a group of Agricultural labourers met and formed a union.

Six men from Tolpuddle founded the society to protest against the gradual lowering of wages in the 1830s. They refused to work for less than 10 shillings a week. Soon after this, the wages were reduced to seven shillings a week and were due to be reduced again to six shillings. The society, led by Methodist local preacher, George Loveless, met in the house of Thomas Standfield.

Opposing them was James Frampton. He was born in 1769 at Moreton House, near Tolpuddle, into a long established family of country “gentlemen”, and hence was a local

land owner. He passionately believed in Church, Constitution, King and Country - and maintenance of the status quo.

In 1834, James Frampton wrote to the then Home Secretary, Lord Melbourne to complain about the society. Lord Melbourne thus provided unspoken approval for James Frampton's next ploy. He subsequently framed the Martyrs on a trumped up charge of administering an unlawful oath using an act from 1797. The society had sworn an oath but the act applicable to the Navy and NOT workers' rights.

James Frampton feared trade unionism threatened the power base and wealth of the landed upper classes.

James Brine, James Hammett, George Loveless, George's brother James Loveless, George's brother in-law Thomas Standfield, and Thomas's son, John Standfield were arrested, found guilty, and given the maximum sentence. They were given seven years incarceration and transported to Australia.

The ruling classes were at that time still conscious of the French Revolution at the tail end of the 18th Century. They had experienced some unrest from the working class early in the 19th Century and had met these displays of so called subversion and sedition with brute force such as in Manchester with the Peterloo Massacre in 1820. There had also been the “Captain Swing” Riots in 1830 which had seen discontented farm workers from the South and East of England uprising against poor conditions. (Contin page5)



A brief history of British trade unionism

The Tolpuddle martyrs

The powers that be, were determined, therefore to put the upstarts in their place. This was done with the collusion of the constables and the magistrates. Being a member of a union was legal, the land owners could not imprison the men for that, but they were desperate to set an example and to end the prospect of farm workers organising against poverty pay and wretched conditions.

Trial and Transportation.

The trial was by any definition a travesty of justice. The jury comprised of wealthy land owners and establishment figures who certainly did not judge the evidence impartially. The men were tried under the Mutiny Act which had its origins in the Napoleonic Wars banning people for swearing illegal oaths. Inevitably the men were found guilty and sentenced to be transported to Australia and Tasmania for seven years. The acknowledged leader of the men George Loveless made a statement from the dock at the conclusion of the summing up;

"My Lord, if we have violated any law, it was not done intentionally; we have injured no mans reputation, character, person or property: we were uniting together to preserve ourselves, our wives and our children, from utter degradation and starvation. We challenge any man, or number of men, to prove that we have acted, or intended to act, different from the above statement."

The men became popular heroes. A massive campaign to free them took place, in which tens of thousands of people protested up and down the country. Petitions were sent to the government of the day and thousands of pounds were raised to support the work. The mass agitation succeeded

and the men were released in 1836 and eventually pardoned.

Tolpuddle today is a very pleasant part of rural England with thatched cottages and the quaint charm of an English village. It is hard to believe that for a handful of years in the early part of the 19th Century it was the centre of one of English history's most notorious labour struggles. This struggle is commemorated annually at the Tolpuddle Festival. Notable figures from the trade union movement such as our own Dave Prentis and political figures such as Tony Benn often attend and speak inspirationally on the continuing battle for fairness and justice in the workplace. You can visit the Tolpuddle museum throughout the year and it is a very worthwhile experience, witnessing the sacrifice that these brave men made for progress in our movement.

John Rattray (UNISON shop steward)

Further information:

Tolpuddle Martyrs Museum
Tolpuddle, Dorchester,
Dorset, England
UK, DT2 7EH
Phone +44 (0) 1305 848 237
E-mail jpickering@tuc.org.uk

Bibliography:

TUC Commemorative History of the Martyrs of Tolpuddle 1934

History of British Trade Unionism - H Pelling



We invite Stewards interested in attending ANY Trade Union conferences to contact the UNISON office (contact Teresa Stanley or Varsha Patel - see page 12 for contact details)



"The trial was by any definition a travesty of justice."





“ Jargon Buster—
your guide to
workplace
language ”

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Jargon buster—Your guide to workplace language

- **Business Partner** – Someone who tells you what you could have found out, had you asked your staff. Also a euphemism for tender services out to our partner companies, affectionately known as not being able to deliver the goods.
- **Consult** – To ignore your employee’s recommendations and outsource anyway.
- **Equal Pay** – To have two different pay schemes, the GLPC scheme (H10 and below) – which has Union involvement and the Hay scheme (H11 and above) – which is not allowed Union involvement. The writer George Orwell (1903- 1950) extrapolated this ideology in his book; Animal Farm. Whereby one character creates a law which states that ‘all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.’
- **Equal Opportunities** – The act of advertising a vacant post (internally and externally) that can clearly only suit one face who is already part of the workforce.
- **Economise** – Charge staff for car parking, amalgamate children’s services, change meals on wheels to frozen meals, badger staff about unpaid parking fines, council tax and delve into their personal details. Euphemisms for - spend £200,000 on a new web site and decorate the mayor’s parlour.
- **Performance Indicator (PI)** – The act of a growing a large moustache, living on an isolated island with a strange Englishman and two dogs. Occasionally flying a helicopter and on at least one occasion changing your name to Tom Selleck. (Euphemism)
- **Partnership** – Those who ‘consult’ your staff” in the pretence to provide better services and charge them a great deal for it. See earlier definition of ‘consult’ and ‘business partner’ for a fuller understanding.
- **Public Private Partnership (PPP)** – To publicly maintain that all is going well, to privately know nothing is going well and concede that partnership is non-existent.
- **Re-structure** – To reprint all your stationary and achieve nothing but that. Then do the same thing the following year. Do that for 5 years, and then claim to have no money (see economise, for a fuller understanding).
- **SAP** – A person who lacks good judgement.
- **Senior Management Structure** – Synonymous to being economical with the truth.

Vision of the future



Skeleton staff?

UNISON
Harrow L.G.
Branch

UNISON
Harrow L.G.
Branch

Branch education and training officers report

A number of new in house training courses were undertaken this year at the UNISON training facility located at the depot. The courses have all been well attended to date and covered topics such as: -

- Accident investigation for representatives and stewards.
- Report & letter writing skills.
- Introduction to health & safety law.
- Negotiating skills for representatives and stewards.
- Train the trainer workshop (still to be organised).
- Carrying out workplace inspections.

With the festive period rapidly approaching UNISON recently ran a general food hygiene awareness course which introduced the concept of HACCP (hazard analysis and critical control point) which underlines the principles behind the food safety management systems that all food businesses are required to have by law. The course was open to all UNISON members and the Council's catering staff and provided many tips on how to ensure the Christmas dinner turns out both safe and tasty on the day! Also discussed was the new 'Scores on doors' system, which is used to monitor the food safety performance of all of the borough's catering businesses including those that are run at Council premises. **Additionally, please note mince pies are available at the UNISON offices on Friday 21st December-1100am-1.00pm-all are welcome.....**

Ken McDonald

Children's Services Conveners Report

Continued Professional Development: opportunities for school support staff.

I attended the half-day event in November at the Teachers Centre. Unfortunately publicity for the event was poor and hence only a few support staff attended.

There were a range of stands and speakers from the National Association of Professional Teaching Assistants (NAPTA)*, Harrow Council, and a local school manager. *(NAPTA are an advisory body not a trade union)

Ofstead's report 'Reforming and Developing the school workforce 2007', recommends that schools provide relevant training, performance management, and professional and career development for the wider workforce'. Is this happening?

Carolyn Rogers (Harrow education) stressed that "staff CPD must be justified by the school development plan" and "funds are limited and it is not known how long they will be available". There was no discussion from the speak-

ers about pay and grading, should support staff attain qualifications. The recommendation is that it is decided locally! There are only 60 High Level Teaching Assistants (HLTA)'s currently working in Harrow schools. There is no guarantee that increased professional qualifications will lead to a pay enhancement to reward staff for gaining job related skills. **Hence Schools are benefiting from a better-trained workforce without having to pay for them.**

UNISON, the UK's largest public sector union, wants head teachers to **end the exploitation of school support staff** after official government figures reveal low pay and unpaid overtime is becoming the norm.

The second wave of the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff in Schools (DISS) survey has highlighted:

- More than half are working up to 3 hours unpaid overtime each week

(continued on page 8)



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**" UNISON
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of exploitation
of school
support staff by
head teachers "**





“ Lamentable standards of building and engineering work overseen by Capita ”

Children's Services Conveners Report—continued

- They work an average of 22 hours a week with about one-third working less than 15 hours a week

42% of all support staff earn less than £7.50 an hour, but there is huge variation in hourly rates

Work is to begin developing a national pay and grading structure for support staff in schools in England **UNISON**, the UK's largest school staff union welcomes this development. **This is a major step forward in UNISON's campaign for a fair and consistent pay structure for school staff that recognises and rewards their vital role in education.** Jim Knight Minister for schools announced that a new negotiating body would be in place by September 2008.

Other news:

Age of Transfer to High Schools

At the Education Consultative Forum it was stated that age of transfer was not linked to amalgamation of schools and that school governors would decide on amalgamation. However it would result in some smaller schools moving to amalgamation, as

they would not be sustainable with smaller numbers. It was decided at Cabinet to implement a change in the age of transfer from 12 to 11. This has implications for the level of staffing currently working in year 7, in middle schools and to the capacity issues for High schools who have already absorbed the new sixth form provision.

Extended Schools

By 2010 all schools will be expected to provide or allow access to extended services. Extended school activities include breakfast, after school study support and holiday clubs in addition many schools will have children's centres attached. All this has major implications for the staffing of these services. Head teachers cannot expect staff to automatically take on enhanced or extended roles or additional hours. This also affects premises, office, and cleaning staff. Schools can choose to use external providers to run their extended schools services, and staff currently employed by Harrow may find that they are asked to transfer to other employers.

What's happening in your school? Please keep the branch informed.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Lynne Ahmad

Health and Safety Report

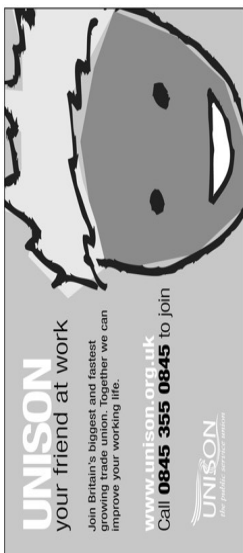
Access Harrow / One stop shop

This department houses the telephone operators and the various receptions dealing with the public. They are run under the “guidance” of **capita** a company involved in ‘running’ parts of the public administration.

We first got involved in safety issues there due to the lamentable standards of the building and engineering work overseen by the capita consultancy. **Some 2 years since the completion of the building work** we are still in discussions with a reluctant management about resolving the issues.

During the same period we have been representing people who feel that the inability of management to resolve the organisational problems in running the department and the resultant stress has damaged their health.

Another issue within the same department has been the **main civic centre reception desks** and again we have been battling in the highest forums of the authority for a proper resolution of the health and safety risks. Management in people first (an ironic title for the staff if ever there was one) rather than redesign and improving the ergonomics of the desks, have chosen to restrict the time spent on (Contin page 2)



Health and Safety Report - Continued from page 8

the desks. This has resulted in temporary staff being drafted in to man the reception while the professional reception staff do more menial tasks such as photocopying for long periods. The safety hazards of standing over a photocopier for long periods have been highlighted in recent safety publications.

Fragmentation of Council services

Council services being are **outsourced** to private companies or organisations. We expect the health and safety statistics to follow the staff that work for these organisations on Harrow business. Otherwise with a constantly changing goalpost the figures will be increasingly meaningless. **We have reminded the Council that their contracts with outside organisations should be changed to require proper statistics on health and safety and sufficient resources applied to the health and safety of staff and public.**

Finally I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
Mary Cawley
(UNISON branch health & safety officer)
(0208 424 1795)
(m.cawley@harrow-unison.org.uk)



Branch Chair's Report

What a workforce needs this Christmas is a professional management that can lead, motivate, and inspire, I won't tell you what we have instead.

It is ever more important that we have those with merit running our Departments and Directorates. The Middle Management Review (MMR) increased the management numbers without achieving any obvious improvement. We are now in a major budget crisis and an increase in the management pay bill that has contributed to the situation along with other pointless measures such as re-branding the Council.

We have a major interest in this because we are suffering the pick pocket syndrome through a raid on our pay and allowances, job losses, privatisation (or outsourcing as they call it now) plus increases in workloads.

Their cunning ploy of privatising anything that fails, due to sheer incompetence at higher levels, is not working either, as there has been no general improvement in services or their cost. In some cases the overall effect on services and costs has been negative. Some of the same managers who preside over failure are in charge of issuing the contracts to privatise the service and are no match for the contractor in the negotiations.

It is not worth recording all the failures here, as I am sure you all know of horror stories within your own departments.

The workforce are feeling like Christmas Turkeys with the cull approaching and stuffing imminent. We also have certain seniors who resemble Christmas puddings - nice to look at but heavy to digest (like a lead weight on the stomach.)

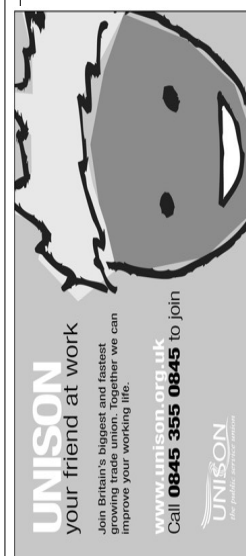
The Christmas gift our employees would like is to have protection of employment guaranteed.

We wish you a merry Christmas even if you have been made redundant, are off sick, TUPED (Transferred to an outside organisation), voluntarily retired or are awaiting another post in the organisation.

Bob Thomas Branch Chair.

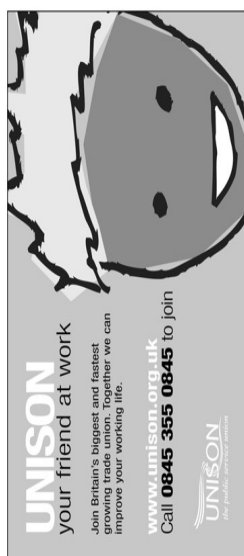


**“ Their cunning
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“ One of the most popular activities during the campaign was UNISON’s “guess the weight” competition. ”



Vice Chair's Report

Seasonal greetings to all of you. As you are well aware the Council's financial position is still on a downward trend. This seems to be being addressed by senior staff in the **reduction of our members terms and conditions**, it is now imperative to become involved with UNISON. We need more member and stewards. I as vice chair will be providing a forum of stewards meetings (six per year). These will address every department's concerns in order that this branch and the officers become more effective and efficient. We are concerned that UNISON does not provide facilities for a (Black Minority Ethnic) BME workers group. We are now hoping to rectify this matter by providing this facility.

Please contact Anna Jackson or Varsha Patel at the branch for information or by email: a.jackson@harrow-unison.org.uk. Or info@harrow-unison.org.uk.

European Health and Safety week—Lighten the load

This year's European safety week was a great success. It was opened by the Mayor and organised by Jayesh Pabari, one of the Council's health & safety advisors. A number of organisations including UNISON had promotional stands at the event, which was held in the members lounge.

The UNISON stand was organised by branch health and safety officer Mary Cawley with assistance from fellow branch officers Bob Thomas and Ken McDonald. A wide range of activities including training sessions were undertaken by the Council and UNISON to promote the important message behind the campaign which was about reducing injury as a result of poor manual handling, together with other factors such as musculo-skeletal disorders. This term is used to describe a number of conditions such as tenosynovitis, epicondylitis, bursitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, and tendonitis. Many of these conditions are known as repetitive strain injury (RSI). RSI is used as an umbrella term to refer to various kinds of work-related musculoskeletal injuries.

One of the most popular activities during the campaign was UNISON's "guess the weight" competition. We are pleased to announce the winner and runner up candidates, which were:

- 1st place - Simon Reed (GMB) - 13.2 Kg
- 2nd place - John Huntling - 13.0 kg
- 3rd place - Councillor Camilla Bath - 12.5 kg

Many people who attended the campaign took part in the competition including the Chief Executive Michael Lockwood, Leader of the Council Chris Mote and Councillor Camilla Bath. The correct weight was in fact 13.2kg. The winners and runners up will all receive gift vouchers in recognition of their participation and successful guesswork.

UNISON also ran a Manual Handling training course at the end of the week for UNISON representatives and stewards to further support this important campaign. Training Certificates are available from the branch for all attendees.

Ken McDonald



UNISON: Out and about - European health and safety week



Michael Lockwood, Camilla Bath, Chris Mote, Mary Cawley and Ken McDonald - 15th October

No smoking on the premises

National legal requirements as from July this year make it an offence for individuals to 'smoke on the premises'. The previous "smoking room" situation, which allowed an area or a room within enclosed premises to be used by smokers, is now illegal.

Smokers are now only permitted to smoke in a designated area outside of the work premises. If an employer allows smoking to continue within enclosed premises both the smoker and the employer are likely to be taken to task.

For further advice UNISON would advise any members to contact the Councils community safety enforcement team (environmental health officers) who are based at aspect gate.

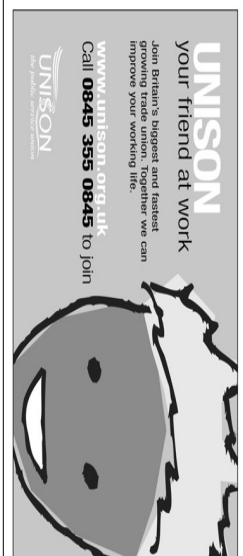
Once the new law was introduced UNISON were quick off the mark in implementing its requirements. The UNISON Branch Offices were one of the **first premises** in the Council to display the required signs some 4 weeks in advance of the introduction of the new law.

Ken McDonald

Branch officer and artificer Martin Nolan having a final cigarette whilst fixing the required signs outside of the UNISON office at the depot.

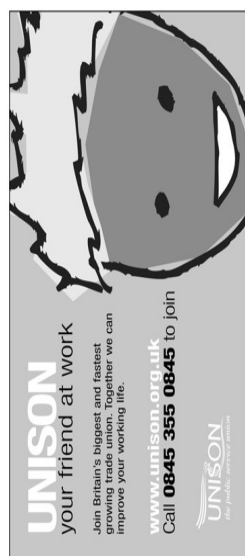


**" UNISON stand
at the European
health and safety
week event "**





**“ UNISON wants
to hear from
you... ”**



UNISON Branch Officers 2007

Branch Secretary:	Steve Compton
Asst Branch Secretary:	Gary Martin
Asst Branch Secretary:	Ron Gray
Health & Safety Officer:	Mary Cawley
Asst Health & Safety Officer:	Ron Gray
Chair :	Bob Thomas
Vice Chair :	Anna Jackson
Treasurer:	Deborah Hattam
Education Officer:	Ken McDonald
Equalities Officer:	Vacant
Social Secretary:	Pam Smith
Children's Services Convenor:	Lynne Ahmad
Welfare Officer:	Martin Nolan
Communications Officer:	Kanti Halai
A.P.F Officer	Vacant

The UNISON Office

The **UNISON** Office is Staffed by:-

Office administrator: Varsha Patel (Part time)
Admin assistant: Teresa Stanley (Part time)

Please remember to contact your work-place representative in the first instance and let them deal with any issues at the grass roots level.

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

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

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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 a letter to the above address.

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

The festive season is nearly upon us and may I take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you an enjoyable festive break and a happy and peaceful new year.

With regard to current issues affecting members, the Public Realm Services Review carried out by **Capita** has now been presented to **UNISON** for comment. Knowing that further reviews are planned for other services the branch has spent many hours studying the report. Our response is printed in part in this issue (the full response can be obtained from the branch, see page 12 for contact details). As branch secretary, and bearing in mind Capita's track record, I would suggest it extremely foolhardy to act, in blind faith, on this report **without verifying or questioning all the data Capita used to come to its recommendations** (would be very much like an episode of the Simpson's: farcical). As this Council has indicated that additional funding will be made available to enhance the depleted Street Scene operation we would look for input from all aspects of this service and the Unions as to the best way forward in managing this process so that it is not only fit for purpose, but financially sustainable creating stability and continuity in the service (no more knee jerk reactions).

At last some good news; I.C.E.S. the service that provides equipment to resident service users with physical ability needs has finally moved into new premises at the depot in Forward Drive. This was a service that UNISON fought strongly to keep in house after being informed it was going to be privatised due to a myopic perception of a government recommendation and operated from outside the borough. Due, I suspect, to the drive for outsourcing to preferred suppliers by Capita and the incompetence of certain individuals at the Council with the responsibility for the transfer, and an opportunistic private company, over 50% of employees' concerned very nearly lost their jobs. This was only prevented by the timely intervention of our Assistant Branch Secretary who put many hours into retrieving the situation. The branch is still awaiting the results and recommendations of an investigation into this near calamity.

On a final note, you should all be looking forward to receiving your backdated annual pay increase in December. Next year I hope that our fellow trade unions won't give in so easily and fight along with us to secure a fairer settlement.

Best wishes

Steve Compton

*The Bridlington agreement

On the 1st of September 1939 the seaside town of Bridlington was the site for the Trades Union Congress (TUC) conference of that year.

The venue turned out to be significant - the town gave the name to an agreement arrived at by congress. The **Bridlington Agreement** forbade the transferring of union members from one union to another - **known in TUC circles as poaching**. This was to prevent unions, which had agreements with employers, to represent their workers, being supplanted by other unions who wanted to spirit away some of their disenchanted members.

This sort of competition was to be firmly outlawed, and a special TUC disputes committee setup to act as a tribunal where conflicts arise. A clear signal was sent to the member unions: growth could only take place by assimilation of smaller unions, not elimination.

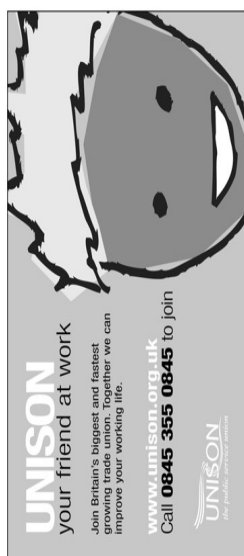


“ bearing in mind Capita's track record, I would suggest it extremely foolhardy to act, in blind faith...”





“ The general perception from the Council staff issuing the work is that there is now a greater delay in completion of repairs and that the costs have risen. ”



Too much KIER is not good, no matter what the doctor says

Kier is our ‘partnering’ contractor for building services. The contract is for maintenance of buildings and electrical and mechanical services. This is for Housing and Corporate buildings plus large projects work. The contract has been up and running since 1st July 07 and it would be true to say that it has been a rocky ride.

We firstly attended seminars where the contract was explained and we asked questions about how the service would work in practice. The information was patchy and we had some foreboding about how it would work in practice.

The general perception from the Council staff issuing the work is that there is now a greater delay in completion of repairs and that the costs have risen. We also understand that there is disquiet about the service from our customers. This is a worry as all our jobs are at risk if the customer base is eroded.

We will be asking the question about the qualification level of the sub contract staff as we all have a responsibility to ensure competence under the Health and Safety at Work Act. On the bright side Kier have inherited competent staff transferred from the Council Depot. There needs to be a fine balance between builders and engineers within the Kier supervisory staff and we would like to think that their managers and supervisors are working within their competence.

There has been cultural shift for the ex Council Engineering and Building staff and although we understand that they are now working in a commercial environment we do not want them compromised.

Our Architects, Surveyors and Design Engineers are also concerned about the proposed change in their work from design and tendering of projects to becoming “Client Representatives”. They are not happy that there is no clear understanding from management what the roles entail or what their professional status is.

We all need to do our utmost to make the contract work but this should be a genuine partnership providing a cost effective, safe and professional service.
Bob Thomas

Greening the workplace: The role of trade unions

Climate change is most definitely upon us and is most definitely a UNISON issue. There is not a day that passes without there being some programme on the TV or radio that makes reference to the state that our planet now finds itself in. Workplaces burn or consume resources and generate waste. Harrow Council is no different to any large organisation and is and will be leaving its own unique carbon footprint on the borough. Industry alone (including service industries-like the council) accounts for half of Carbon dioxide emissions increasing the greenhouse effect.

Among trade unionists, the strength of support for Unions and Government action on environmental issues in the workplace is overwhelming, according to a national online trade union survey. And unions are now asking for environmental audits in the workplace including a central role for ‘green’ reps.

At national level the trade union sustainable development advisory committee (TUSDAC) was set up in 1998 to bring unions and government together as part of a forum for consultation on sustainable development and environmental protection. TUSDAC has advised the government that the issue of climate change does not only



Greening the workplace - continued from page 14

involve energy and industrial policy initiatives, but employee involvement in the workplace, regionally and nationally.

“Changing our workplace and individual patterns of behaviour at the grassroots is the only sure-fire way we can substantially cut our carbon footprint,” says general secretary Dave Prentis. “We need to shift the mindset of environmental campaigning from just one off events to sustainable progress.

Greening the workplace is not just about adopting the easier options of providing ‘office waste paper sacks’ to recycle the mountain of waste paper the council produces each day – it is more about a strategic approach and implementing green policies and procedures that eliminate the need for paper in the first place and putting in place an environmental management system (EMS) to protect our vital resources. The Harrow Council corporate plan for 2007-2010 whilst mentioning that the borough’s waste recycling targets are well on the way to meeting government targets says little of the Council’s own environmental performance.

UNISON will be exploring this and other options with the Council’s Chief Executive Michael Lockwood in the forthcoming months. Our planet, and the future of our children and their children are absolutely critical. Harrow Council must lead by example and encourage all other businesses in the borough to follow their example. Many other responsible organisations in the borough such as Kodak have corporate environmental management statements, procedures and arrangements in place to monitor their performance and to demonstrate CSR (corporate social responsibility). Harrow council needs to seriously consider its position. Not doing anything or not doing enough is no longer an option.

Headlines in the Harrow observer 4th October “Recycling is dumped in landfill” do not help the council’s image. Whilst Harrow residents are recycling more and doing ‘their bit’ they will obviously feel let down by the council. It was reported that the council’s contractor only had limited space at its depot and this is why the excess recyclable waste had to go to landfill. However it must be asked why the council did not know this, why there is no environmental impact assessment to address such issues and who if anybody is responsible for monitoring the council’s contractor? A documented EMS would no doubt have addressed many of these issues.

Ken McDonald



“
UNISON will be exploring this and other options with the Council’s Chief Executive Michael Lockwood in the forthcoming months.
”



Women in UNISON

**BE SEEN!
BE HEARD!
BE A REP!**

Contact us to find out more. (see page 12)

National Women’s Conference 2008

The National Women’s Conference 2008 is being held at the Harrogate International Centre from 14 – 16 February 2008.

If you are interested in attending as a visitor or a delegate please contact the Branch .



Join UNISON – your friend at work



Please fill in this form in BLOCK CAPITALS using black ink and give it to your UNISON rep or steward or post to the address below

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS Please tick or fill in the boxes below

Mrs Ms Miss Mr Other

First name Other initial(s)

Surname/Family name Date of birth

Home address Postcode

National Insurance number (from your payslip) Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (eg large print or Braille) – be sure to supply contact details below. Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you – indicate if work or home

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

- ☐ Bangladeshi ☐ Asian ☐ Black UK ☐ Chinese ☐ Black other ☐ Indian ☐ Black ☐ White UK ☐ Pakistani ☐ African ☐ Irish ☐ Asian UK ☐ Black ☐ White other

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employer's name

Your job title/occupation

Department/section

Workplace name and address

Postcode Payroll number (from your payslip)

3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY – FROM 1 October 2003

Please tick the appropriate box for your earnings before deductions. YOUR SUBSCRIPTION—WHAT YOU PAY

Weekly pay	Annual pay	per week	per month	Band	Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	£0.30	£1.30	A	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£38.48–£96.16	£2,001–£5,000	£0.81	£3.50	B	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£96.17–£153.84	£5,001–£8,000	£1.22	£5.30	C	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£153.85–£211.53	£8,001–£11,000	£1.52	£6.60	D	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£211.54–£269.23	£11,001–£14,000	£1.81	£7.85	E	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£269.24–£326.92	£14,001–£17,000	£2.24	£9.70	F	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£326.93–£384.61	£17,001–£20,000	£2.65	£11.50	G	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£384.62–£480.76	£20,001–£25,000	£3.23	£14.00	H	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£480.77–£576.82	£25,001–£30,000	£3.98	£17.25	I	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£576.83–£673.08	£30,001–£35,000	£4.68	£20.30	J	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
£673.09+	over £35,000	£5.19	£22.50	K	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Fortnightly <input type="checkbox"/> Four Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON's Affiliated Political Fund (APF) is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below. Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide information to UNISON to keep my records up to date
- I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription. Tick one box only

- ☐ Affiliated Political Fund ☐ General Political Fund

Now please sign and date below

Signature

OTHER WAYS TO PAY ☐ direct debit ☐ cheque

Date

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO: UNISON, FREEPOST (WCS852) London WC1H 9BR

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one:

DATA PROTECTION

UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes.

We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

☐ If you do not want any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they, may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

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