

Unison Inverclyde Branch Newsletter January 2021

# Bread & Roses

Solidarity is Our Strength

Old Library, 30 Bawhirley Road, Greenock, PA15 2BH



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**Standing up  
for public  
services**

## Branch AGM (Virtual)

Please note that the Branch Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 3rd March 2021.



The meeting will be held at 12.30 virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions. If you wish to attend the meeting then please email [joe.pearce@unison.co.uk](mailto:joe.pearce@unison.co.uk) by no later than Friday 12th February 2021.

Invites will be sent to members wishing to attend nearer the time of the meeting with a link to the meeting.

Nominations are sought for the following office bearers' positions which are to be elected at the meeting:

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Service Conditions Officer
- Assistant Service Conditions Officer
- Young Members Officer
- Publicity/Communications Officer
- Welfare Officer Health & Safety Officer
- Education Officer
- Lifelong Learning Officer
- Membership Officer
- Equalities Officer
- Labour Link Officer

If you wish to nominate a member for any of the above positions please do so by completing the form which is available on the Branch website and will be with the AGM correspondence that will be emailed to members.

Your workplace Steward will also be able to give you the relevant form. Please note that nominations must be returned to the Branch office by no later than noon on Friday 29th January.



Branch secretary Robin Taggart and Branch Chair Pat Clark are pictured above with Area Organiser Joe Lynch at last years AGM at Greenock Town Hall.

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Facebook: [unisoninverclydebranch](https://www.facebook.com/unisoninverclydebranch)

Twitter: [@unisoninver](https://twitter.com/unisoninver)

## Council Members Covid update

Inverclyde unfortunately now has one of the highest levels of covid-19 infections in Scotland.

Please see below important information for members.



### *Homeworking*

The SG announcements mean that it is effectively unlawful to attend your normal place of work if you can work from home.

As a consequence the council have reviewed all of their services, in particular where employees are at their place of work wholly or partially, with a view to maximising homeworking.

### *Child Care*

Before Christmas the Branch secretary, Robin Taggart circulated the council's guidance on managing child care in the expectation that the council was moving into tier 4 on boxing day.

At that time the school holidays were to be extended followed by a period of learning at home. We now know that schools and ELCs will be closed until at least the end of January with children being taught at home – the exception being vulnerable children and those of keyworkers.

We understand that the same guidance will apply moving forward. If you may have child care issues can you refer to this guidance that was made available on the Branch website on the 23rd December.

### *Shielding*

If you have been issued with a shielding letter then you should not be attending your normal place of work. If you have a member of your household who has been issued with a shielding letter and you cannot work from home then it is important that a risk assessment is completed in order to establish whether it is safe or not for you to attend work.

As ever if you have any queries or difficulties with any of these issues then please contact your workplace Steward or the Branch office by telephone on 715900 or by email to [unison@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:unison@inverclyde.gov.uk)

## UNISON elects new General Secretary



Christina McAnea has been elected as general secretary of UNISON, the UK's largest union.

Christina is the union's most senior negotiator, with a wide-ranging public services brief covering health, education, social care, local government and equalities.

She has held senior positions across the union, negotiating on behalf of members working in police forces, schools, universities and colleges, and the NHS.

Christina grew up in Drumchapel, in Glasgow. She left school at 16 and worked in the civil service, the NHS and retail before going to university at the age of 22.

Christina first worked as a housing officer for Glasgow City Council, where she began her trade union activism.

## UNISON Labour Link Update



Gordon McKay, chair of UNISON Scotland Labour Link said: “UNISON Scotland Labour Link want to pay tribute to Richard Leonard following his decision to stand down as Labour Leader in Scotland.

Richard has spent his working life supporting the issues that are at the heart of UNISON: public services, fair pay and social justice.

UNISON thank him for being a champion of public services and public service workers, the people who have held our country together in the last year.”

## UNISON Welfare—There for You

UNISON is able to support members with several different forms of financial assistance, ranging from COVID-19 specific grants, debt advice and support on writing off debts, benefits advice and winter fuel grants.

### COVID-19 response fund



Have you or your partner had your hours reduced or lost your job as a result of coronavirus? Have you been furloughed? Are you having to rely on statutory sick pay during isolation, shielding or COVID-related sickness?

Grants of up to £500 are available to help members struggling financially due to the pandemic.

### Debtline

If you're struggling under the weight of debts, including mortgage payment holidays, UNISON's Debtline service is available to help you manage money and stay in control of your debt. UNISON's Debtline can help you access a debt relief order, individual voluntary agreement or bankruptcy.

### Benefits calculator



UNISON has built a benefits calculator to help you find out what benefits you can claim.

If your finances have been affected by coronavirus – for example, if your or your partner's income has changed or you need to self-isolate – you may be entitled to benefits.

### Winter fuel grants

If you're worried about the cost of turning the heating on this winter, our winter fuel grants scheme will be launched on 25th January.

Grants of up to £200 will be available – a huge increase on the usual cap of £40.

Members on low incomes who are financially struggling will be eligible to apply. We welcome applications from members whose income has been affected by COVID-19.

Full details are available on the Branch website and also on the Unison There for You website and you can also contact the Branch Welfare Officer Carole Watt at the Branch office on 01475 715900.

Moved house, changed your name or started a new job?



# Remember to update your membership details

You can update your details online at:  
**[unison.org.uk/my-unison](https://unison.org.uk/my-unison)**



Now more than ever, is the time to ensure that we hold the correct and up to date details for you, particularly your email address.

The Branch is always looking to improve communication to our members and we're asking all members to register with myUNISON. This is a fairly easy process and only takes a few minutes.

All you need to do is visit <https://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison> and follow the steps for registration. You will require your UNISON membership number.

Once you register you can update your personal details, including adding an e-mail address if there isn't one already on your membership file. Alternatively you can contact the Branch Office on 715900.

Branch members who have an up to date email address on their membership file will receive emails with links to future editions of the Branch newsletter and also any important information which is emailed to members which is especially important given the current circumstances.