

Unison Inverclyde Branch Newsletter February 2020

Bread & Roses

Solidarity is Our Strength

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

Branch AGM, Wednesday 4th March 2020



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Branch AGM Information

Inverclyde Unison will hold their Branch Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 4th March 2020.

The meeting will be held at 12.30pm in the Greenock Town Hall Saloon and lunch will be provided from 12 noon.

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 submitting the relevant nomination forms.

Copies of the forms are available on the Branch website, from any workplace steward or from the Branch office. Nominations for workplace Stewards are also invited.

The forms must be returned to the Branch Office no later than noon on 14th February 2020.

Unison Scotland Supports Referendum

Scotland's largest union, UNISON, voted overwhelmingly at the Scottish Council meeting on Saturday 1st February to support the call for a second independence referendum, at a time to be determined by the Scottish Parliament.



Speaking at UNISON's Scottish Council meeting in Glasgow, the union's Scottish Convenor Lilian Macer said:

"This is no way pre-determines the views our members may take in the event of an independence referendum, but they should have the opportunity to express their views. UNISON Scotland will take this decision into the wider trade union movement and, together with the Jimmy Reid Foundation, we will promote the debate at the forthcoming STUC congress in April 2020.

UNISON Scotland defends public services and those who deliver them and it is imperative that we explore the full range of options available to the people of Scotland."

Full wording of the motion: "UNISON Scotland was party to the Scottish Constitutional Convention, Claim of Right and acknowledges the sovereign right of the Scottish people to determine the form of government best suited to their needs. UNISON Scotland supports the call for a second referendum, at a time to be determined by the Scottish Parliament, by means of either a section 30 order or an amendment to the Scotland Act as a satisfactory means of transferring the power over independence referendums."

Local Government Budget

The Scottish Government announced their draft budget on 6th February.

National Issues:

In straight cash terms Local Government Funding goes up by £495m. The real picture however is that the discretionary spending capacity of Councils almost unchanged – but councils are being given additional spending commitments by the Scottish Government which amount to an extra £590 million – so this amounts to a real terms cut of around £95m There is a £117m cut in the capital spending budget. Councils are to be allowed to raise Council Tax up to a maximum of 4.84%.

It is expected that the final budget will receive the parliamentary approval on the week commencing the 2nd March.

Further details regarding the draft budget are available on the branch website.

Local Issues:

As a result Inverclyde Council will set their council tax at a meeting on 20th February and approve its final budget on the 12th March.



UNISON and the other trade unions have met with all elected members and have put forward the case for a progressive budget that protects jobs and services. Taking account of many factors such as the estimated budget gap, options for raising council tax, reserves and charges – there is clearly scope for the council to approve a budget which protects jobs and services.

There is further scope to do so and at the same time for the council not to compromise on their own political priorities. The council have already agreed several million pounds worth of savings in areas that were regarded as ‘relatively painless’. These were approved at council meetings last September and November. The financial predicament which the council now faces is far less precarious than in many other councils.

We will be doing all we can to ensure there are no cuts to CLD and Library services, jobs that members carry out in schools, key services in social protection, frontline children’s services and assessment and care management services. We are also fully opposed to the crude privatisation of the respite unit at Hillend.

UNISON will also be campaigning at a national level as we fully recognise that these cuts would not be necessary if Local Government was responsibly and fairly funded. We are all becoming increasingly frustrated when listening to the Scottish Government’s rhetoric when they try to explain that council funding has not been cut.



Social Media Warning

Posting on social media is increasingly a pastime which many members are involved in. However, in certain circumstances, get you into serious bother.

There has been an increase in the discipline of members who have posted information or comments which other people have found offensive.

All members have a duty and responsibility to be aware of what information they post online, whether in an open forum or even in a closed group.

Please be aware of the following advice regarding the policies on the use of social media in the various employers the Branch covers.

The main principle is that conduct online should meet the high standards of behaviour which is expected of employees.

Employees should take care about what they post on the internet. Individual privacy settings do not always stop others seeing and distributing your content.

All employees are responsible for any information they make available on line. This applies whether posting during work hours, during breaks or when not at work.

If you identify your employer, make it clear when publishing your opinions that these are your own personal views.

Best Practice:

Do not post anything online you would find offensive - Do not identify your employment, be aware, when in group chats that others can take offence at your comments

If in doubt, don't post it !

Unison Welfare, There for You

UNISON is literally There for You. We have helped members over the years access debt and money advice, apply for small grants to pay for white goods, have their car serviced or go on a wellbeing break; all thanks to the donations and money raised by members and partners.



Remember there is also the winter fuel grant and look out for the school uniform grant coming in July.

There for You provides a confidential advice and support service for members and their dependants.

If you have financial problems because of:

- relationship breakdown;
- loss of income;
- suffering from a long illness;
- needing to buy equipment because of a disability;
- caring for someone with special needs or an illness.

You can contact the Branch Welfare Officer who can help you complete the application form.

It can often be tricky to figure out which benefits you are eligible for and how to claim.

Our Welfare Officer can help with a benefits check to ensure you get your rights to welfare benefits and maximise your income.