

Unison Inverclyde Branch Newsletter February 2021

Bread & Roses

Solidarity is Our Strength

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



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UNISON
Inverclyde branch

**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.

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

Your workplace Steward will be able to answer any questions you may have or you can contact the Branch office on 01475 715900.



Branch Chair Pat Clark is pictured speaking at last years AGM with Branch secretary Robin Taggart and Area Organiser Joe Lynch.

Public Sector Pay 2021/22

Mike Kirby, UNISON, Scottish Secretary said “We welcome the recognition for those on the lowest pay but 3% for those under £25k and 1% for those over falls short of a decent pay rise for public sector workers.

The pandemic has shown the vital role of public sector workers across Scotland.

Whether in the NHS, local government, social care or our emergency services, their effort has been heroic. The workforce need a pay settlement that recognises the sacrifice so many have made over the pandemic and starts to restore some of the real terms pay cuts of the past decade and show how much the government values the role they play in Scotland. Public sector workers live in communities across Scotland. They spend their wages in local shops and businesses helping which will rebuild our economy after the pandemic. There will be some hard discussions in the various negotiating groups”

How to contact the Branch

If you have any concerns or issues please contact your workplace steward or the Branch office and we will respond to requests for advice and assistance.



01475 715900



unison@inverclyde.gov.uk

Facebook & Twitter

Don't forget the Branch has Facebook and Twitter pages where you can catch up with the local Branch news and updates as they happen.



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

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

UNISON Labour Link Update



Labour Link chair Gordon McKay said: “As the biggest trade union in Scotland, made up of 80% women members, UNISON Scotland Labour Link is delighted to nominate Monica Lennon for leader of Scottish Labour. “The effectiveness of Monica’s support of the NHS and public services, and her obvious commitment to those working in them at this critical time, show that she is the right person to take our party and our country forward.” Monica famously won her four-year campaign against period poverty that ended with Scotland being the first nation to provide free period products for all. Voting closes on 26 February.

UNISON welcomes Feeney Report

UNISON Scotland welcomes the recommendations from the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland (chaired by Derek Feeley) that was published this month.

The review calls for the creation of a National Care Service which UNISON has been championing for many years. A National Care Service will build a resilient care system similar to the NHS, will improve the quality of care and prevent deaths.

UNISON welcomes the report’s recognition of the importance of collective bargaining and that it should be integral to improving the care system.

The review highlights the structural challenges in the social care sector that inhibit workers ability to collectively bargain for improved pay and conditions. Improved training, standards, pay and fair working conditions not only improves the quality of care but also supports investment in the economy.

The report is critical of the market-based approach to commissioning and cites UNISON’s Ethical Care Charter as a route to driving out profit motive and delivering Fair Work standards across the various types of care.



UNISON Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby said: “We welcome the support for a National Care Service, however, the challenge now moves to the Scottish Government to deliver.

“The report carefully reflects the workforce issues to be addressed if we are to have a quality, rights based service, with universal applied standards of Fair Work.

“For too long the care system has been weighted towards price and profit. A National Care Service, with the NHS as its inspiration, would make quality of care and Fair Work its focus.

“The report is rightly critical of the function of Integrated Joint Boards and we welcome recommendations for reform, with the Social Services Council, under the direction of a National Care Service Board, incorporating all parties, together with the proposed sector wide body addressing specific workforce issues.”

No Going Back to Normal

The Covid-19 response by Inverclyde Council and the efforts in fellow public services has been immense. Councils have been flexible, creative, and responsive in continuing to deliver and adapt services to meet the needs of our community.

Councils have never shut down. For many it has been a case of changed working practices and for some occupation groups such as home carers, school support workers, early years workers, ASN's, to name a few, it has been business as usual. For other staff, their work has become digitalised, but they are delivering the same level of productivity from home. In all cases, Council staff are overcoming hurdles to ensure the community of Inverclyde receive as much service as possible within the restrictions placed on them.



NO GOING BACK TO NORMAL

UNISON launched its No Going Back To Normal Campaign in 2020 as the public suddenly began to realise that Key workers, who are normally on the lowest pay and with poor job security, are actually the people who hold up the economy up. Local Government delivers many 'key' services that the public have come to rely without very much appreciation of the costs and complex logistics required to deliver them.

The media may have a hand in this, UNISON Inverclyde was disappointed by the BBC documentary on Inverclyde 'Scotland's Covid Capital' which, in our view failed to recognise the key workers in public services that have been at the front line of addressing both the spread of Covid 19 and the poverty coinciding with it.

During the documentary the BBC talked up the spontaneous community/voluntary response, whilst forgetting to mention the

level of delivery Inverclyde Council and partners maintained to address these same issues. We believe this is part of a media narrative that under promotes the roles of councils and its partners to its detriment.

UNISON Inverclyde are planning on running a 'No Going Back To Normal Campaign' which will look into the key services and workers to show the scale of the service and the vital benefits the Council delivers.

The first service/workforce we will be promoting is Early Years. Inverclyde Council, despite the challenges of Covid-19, went ahead with its 1140hrs expansion which doubled the amount free early learning and childcare (ELC) available to parents from ages 3 to 5. In addition, there was an expansion of places for children 0 – 3 years which means that over 200 children aged 0 – 2 years now benefit from ELC. On top of this Inverclyde Council also delivered its expansion of Free School Meals to under 5s.

The logistical difficulties were huge and couldn't have been done without the significant commitment, enthusiasm and skill of the ELC workforce who have continued to provide the highest quality of ELC to children and families across Inverclyde. Inverclyde Council has approximately 1500 children in its EY services, funded providers including nurseries and childminders. The expansion involved a huge effort to recruit and train new staff, undertake the of building new centres, expanding others, and the introduction of an outdoor learning model. The free meals expansion has also been an enormous logistical effort, with up to 1300 meals being delivered to early years children per day.

This infrastructure plays a massive role in our local economy. Most parents and employers realise that without proper childcare infrastructure many parents simply can't make it work. Additional childcare has proven benefits, investment in children's early years has lifelong benefits to education, health and well being which prevents the need for more intensives services when they are older.

Council Poverty Fund Questionnaire

Branch Lifelong Learning Officer Calum McLellan is taking the opportunity to highlight Inverclyde Council's Poverty Fund Questionnaire.



Inverclyde Council are looking for communities to have their say with regards to services that will impact on improving the lives of people living in poverty and deprivation. Some of the actions, initiatives and programmes will be Inverclyde wide and others will focus on Inverclyde's most deprived localities.

The planned proposals are based on what we know already from various local research and consultation and national research. Services and support will be targeted to addressing unemployment and employability, support for people experiencing difficulties with alcohol and drugs and mental health and people who are facing financial insecurity because of the Covid pandemic.

Please take the time to have your say, the Branch website has the link for anyone that wishes to respond to the survey.

Remember to update your details

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.



Published by UNISON Inverclyde, Old Library, Bawhirley Road, Greenock, PA15 2BH