

Unison Inverclyde Branch Newsletter March 2022

Bread & Roses

Solidarity is Our Strength

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

Local government unions reject insulting pay offer



Food	5%
Transport	9%
Energy	!!!!

Pay offer to council staff 2%

2022 year of
disabled workers



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online today

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Branch AGM Review

The Branch held its Annual General Meeting on Monday 28th February 2022 virtually and was formally opened by the Branch Chairperson Pat Clark.

The previous years Minutes were then approved with no matters arising.

The Branch Accounts for 2021 as audited by the external auditor were approved.

Election of the Branch Office Bearers for 2022 followed and the following Branch Officers elected.

Branch Chairperson : Pat Clark
Branch Vice-Chairperson : Janice Boyd
Branch Treasurer : Marian Taggart
Branch Health & Safety Officer : George Steele
Branch Lifelong Learning Officer : Callum McLellan
Branch Labour Link Officer : Francesca Brennan
Branch Equalities Officer : Janice Boyd
Branch Communication/Publicity Officer : Dougie Maclean
Branch Membership Officer : Diane Drysdale
Branch Secretary : Robin Taggart
Branch Welfare Officer : Kathleen McLean
Branch Retired Members Officer : Billy Matthews
Branch Young Members Officer : Ryan McSween



Branch Secretary Robin Taggart then gave a summary on the Branch activities in the last year within the various employers.

Joe Lynch, UNISON Regional Organiser then outlined UNISON Scotland's position with regards to the proposed National Care Service.

The meeting was then brought to a close when Pat Clark thanked everyone for their attendance.

Webinar, Removing the Barriers



This online webinar on 16th March 2022 is co-sponsored by UNISON Scotland's Disabled Members Committee and UNISON Lothian Health branch as part of UNISON's Year of Disabled Workers.

Disabled people face challenges gaining and maintaining employment and achieving career progression through avoidable workplace challenges and barriers caused by attitudes, assumptions, and workplace structures and policies.

The unemployment rate for people with a disability is twice that of the general population and that's shameful. The Disability Union decided it is time to educate and raise awareness of this issue and change perceptions of what employees with disabilities can achieve.

The event will hear from Kirsty Smillie of the Disability Union, a UK-wide community group that works to improve disability rights, who is asking employers to remove the invisible barriers that disabled people face finding and remaining in work.

Full BSL and Captioning Services are provided and details of how to attend the event are on the UNISON Scotland website.

Council Hybrid Working Pilot



Branch Communications Officer Dougie Maclean outlines the Branch position on the new Council Hybrid Working Pilot.

This month has seen the start of the rollout of the 12 month Hybrid Working Pilot across many areas of the Council replacing the Flexitime system that had previously been in operation.

Our understanding is that affected staff will have received confirmation from their Line Managers with regards to the new system and how they will record their worked times.

With this being a new process there will be times where Management will be also be adapting to the changes. However this should not deter members from querying any decisions made that they believe are not within the spirit of the new Scheme.

We would ask that members in the first instance raise any issues with their relevant Line Manager and if they require any further guidance to contact their Workplace Steward or the Branch Office.

As this is an ongoing review process the Branch would also welcome any feedback from Members that we can raise when the system is reviewed at the 3 and 6 monthly review periods.

We would also advise members affected by the scheme to keep a record of their worked times to ensure that they are working the relevant hours and also to avoid any issues should any dispute arise.

UNISON Young Members



The Branch Young Members Officer is Ryan McSween and he introduces himself here

My name is Ryan, I'm 23, and I am the new Young Members Officer at the Inverclyde Branch. UNISON Young Members Section is for any young member under the age of 27.

Unison is the biggest Trade Union in the council and we have 86 members under the age of 27. In total the council has over 300 staff members under the age of 27 - so there are lots of us.

We are thinking up some ideas that might help younger workers in the council meet and socialise together.

This way we can share the issues that we face in the workplace and collaborate on how to solve them - a problem shared is a problem solved.

If you can do me a favour and fill in the survey that's on the Branch website I'd really appreciate it. You can fill it in whether you're a UNISON member or not!

Council Budget update

Branch Secretary Robin Taggart gives an update on the recent Council budget



Inverclyde Council agreed it's budget last month and closed the budget gap using 4 specific interventions:

- 1) Limited cuts to services
- 2) A proposed council tax increase of 1.95%
- 3) A contribution from the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) to fund pay and NI increases for all HSCP staff
- 4) The use of £4m of reserves.

The main concern for members will be point 1 – cuts to services. There were a small number of service cuts and none that significantly impacted on jobs. However the use of £4m of reserves will simply add to the budget gap next year which means the estimated budget gap for the two year period 2023/25 is £13.4m before any council tax increases. This also assumes that the IJB will continue to fund pay increases for HSCP employees. This was achievable this year due to the additional funds the IJB received from the Scottish Government. IJBs across Scotland are receiving extra money for covid and adult social care. It is intended that moving forward the IJB and not the council will develop any future cuts, savings and pressures affecting HSCP services.

Across the council most if not all of our members will be unaffected by the budget decisions for 2022/23. The trade unions put in a lot of effort through discussions with the corporate management team and elected

members to achieve this. This becomes increasingly difficult every year. Flat cash settlements from the Scottish Government can only go so far and don't take account of inflationary increases and other pressures. To say nothing of pay awards and (for this year anyway) increases to national insurance contributions.

It is never easy or sensible to predict what the budget gap might be when we get nearer to the start of the next financial year in April 2023.

We will also know more about the shape of the proposed new national care service and how that might impact on not just adult social care but all HSCP services. We will also have a new council in May and it remains to be seen if that proves to be a positive change in direction.

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.

Local Government Pay

Local government trade unions have rejected outright a pay offer from COSLA which would have seen a percentage increase that fell far short of both the trade union claim and the current rates of inflation.

Describing the offer as an insult to their members the trade unions stated that it was so derisory as to warrant an outright rejection and have called on COSLA to seriously consider the strength of feeling expressed in negotiations and comeback with a significant improved offer.



Johanna Baxter, UNISON Scotland's head of local government, said: "This offer is an insult to these key workers. The lowest paid workers would still not reach a £10 per hour rate of pay under this proposal never mind the £12 per hour called for in our claim. Indeed the offer is, unbelievably, weighted towards those on the highest pay and will further exacerbate the issue of endemic low pay which plagues this sector. It would mean those earning above £40k per annum (12% of the local government workforce) would receive an increase of £800 plus, with some receiving an uplift of £2,000, whilst those on the lowest pay (51% of the local government workforce) would only receive an uplift of £500.

How anyone could describe this offer as fair and equitable is beyond us. It is in fact so derisory and insulting to our members' significant contribution that we are not prepared to waste time consulting them on it."

Full details are available on the UNISON Scotland website

How to contact the Branch



If any Members have any concerns or issues please contact your workplace steward or the Branch by telephone on 01475 715900 or by email to unison@inverclyde.gov.uk and we will respond to requests for advice and assistance.

Retired? Stay in UNISON

Did you know that you can qualify to become a retired member if you were a UNISON member continuously for at least two years on the day that you retired? A one off payment of £15 is all that is required.

The Branch Retired Members Officer is Billy Matthews. He has emphasised to the Branch Committee the link between the employed and retired and that solidarity between generations is so important to everyone.

Retired members have invaluable experience which can be used to help mentor new Branch Officials and reps. UNISON works with other pensioner organisations in the UK and across the world which gives plenty of opportunities to campaign on issues that are important to retired members.

For more details on how to become involved contact Billy at the Branch Office on 01475 715900.

National Care Service

UNISON Local Organiser Joseph Lynch gave an insight to the proposed National Care Service at the Branch AGM and explains more below.



What is being proposed as a national care service is essentially the broken system we have now with some new ministerial oversight, some national standard setting, some more collective bargaining for care workers in the private and voluntary sector (possibly) ... and the transfer of social work out of local government.

The basic set up will be that like just now responsibility for social care will be with Integrated Joint Boards. Renamed as Community Health and Social Care Boards (CHSCBs) and with a revamped membership (details on that aren't clear yet). Legal responsibility for the provision of these services will transfer from

councils to the new boards. The Scottish Government also intends to transfer responsibility for all of children's services, criminal justice social work, drug and alcohol services to the new NCS.

The CHCSB's won't have staff who deliver services but will only commission and procure services from public, third and private sector providers. (NB unlike the

current boards there will be some directly employed staff, they will be employed in planning services managing contracts and arrangements). These will be funded directly by Scottish Government rather than as the IJB's are via Councils and Health Boards.

The system overall will come under the responsibility of a Scottish Government Minister who will have responsibility for setting national standards and regulating the system. In the short term this might not have too much impact. Indeed national regulation of contracts could bring about positive changes in some areas. There is the prospect – but not certainty of extending sectoral collective bargaining to unrepresented staff.

In the longer term though this expansion of areas into the sphere of contracts and procurement might well mean the possibility of work transferring out of the public sector into the voluntary or private sector, or vice versa. The financial context will be critical here.

These are the proposals the Scottish Government consulted on. They are currently looking at the results of the consultation that have been prepared for them by international business consultancy Price Waterhouse Coopers.

UNISON's response to the proposals is to welcome some elements, reject others and ask the Scottish government to go further in some areas. The transfer of services out of local government is unequivocally rejected.

UNISON's view is that social care is a community service, that should be delivered in the community with the aim of supporting people to continue living independently in the community, linking with, and integrating with several community based services such as housing, education, leisure, culture, community organisations, families, and neighbours is reiterated. The danger that centralising this care under a national structure risks weakening

UNISON Scottish Secretary

Scotland's largest public sector trade union has announced on International Women's Day – the appointment of its first female Scottish Secretary.



Tracey Dalling takes over from her predecessor Mike Kirby, who retired after decades of service to UNISON. She took up the post this week.

Tracey was most recently Regional Secretary for UNISON's Greater London region however she has been active in UNISON Scotland since UNISON started in 1993 and in NALGO before that. This follows the recent appointment of UNISON UK's first female general secretary, Christina McAnea.

Tracey says she is incredibly proud to be heading up Scotland's largest public services union. UNISON Scotland represents over 150,000 members, over three quarters of whom are women.

Tracey Dalling, UNISON's Scottish secretary, said: "I have represented UNISON members in Scotland for many years and I look forward to continuing to do so in my new role. We may be emerging from the pandemic, but it is the start of another huge period of change as our members are further pressed by pay and pension squeezes with bleak choices on managing household bills.

"UNISON has clear priorities: the crisis in social care and new national care service; investment for local government; the staffing crisis in NHS; fair pay settlements for all public service workers; protecting all our pensions; equal pay; climate change; and a strong voice for all our public services and those that deliver them. I look forward to the challenge ahead."



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

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 which is especially important given the current circumstances.

