

Unison Inverclyde Branch Newsletter April 2022

Bread & Roses

Solidarity is Our Strength

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

Recognise, Respect Reward

**Fair Pay Campaign for
Local Government Workers**



UNISON
Scotland

Update
your details
online today

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Local Government Pay

UNISON, Scotland's largest union, will consult local government members on taking industrial action over pay.

Recognise, Respect Reward

Fair Pay Campaign for Local Government Workers

The decision was made at UNISON's national local government conference after members rejected an initial pay offer from COSLA. UNISON informed COSLA of the decision by letter today.

In January UNISON – with Unite and GMB – submitted a pay claim calling for a £3,000 flat rate increase, a minimum hourly rate of £12 per hour and an agreement of home/hybrid working guidance. COSLA offered

In March COSLA offered 2% increase across the board and an increase in the Living Wage hourly rate to £9.98. This was rejected outright by UNISON members. UNISON will now start the industrial action process.



Johanna Baxter, UNISON Scotland's head of local government said: "We have been left with no choice but to consult our members on industrial action.

We had hoped that COSLA's leaders might have reflected on the strength of feeling and the significant financial pressures our members are facing and come back to the negotiating table.

It is extremely disappointing that they have chosen not to do so, particularly since the 2022 uplift is due today. The failure to put forward an acceptable offer does a disservice to every local government worker who has kept this country going during the period of this pandemic. COSLA's leaders will meet on 29 April and could agree to put forward an improved offer. UNISON will make themselves available to help facilitate a speedy resolution to this issue."

Full details are available on the UNISON Inverclyde and UNISON Scotland websites.

Branch wins best publication

UNISON Inverclyde were delighted to receive the Gold award for the best publication for the Branch newsletter "Bread & Roses" in the UNISON Scotland Communications and campaigns Committee Communications Awards at Scottish Council last weekend.



Branch Communications officer, Dougie Maclean said "We are delighted to receive this award especially with so many quality publications across UNISON Scotland. I hope that our members enjoy the newsletter and are kept up to date with the local and national UNISON news as it happens."

UNISON Scotland Ukraine statement



At the UNISON Scottish Council held on Saturday 2nd April the following statement on Ukraine was agreed.

“UNISON Scottish Council unreservedly condemn Putin’s invasion of Ukraine and stand in full solidarity with the millions of victims of the attack and call for an immediate cease-fire and a withdrawal of all Russian forces from Ukraine.

Since the night of 24th of February, Ukraine has been under a full-scale attack from the Russia state. Ukraine is bravely fighting the Russian occupiers, defending their homeland, and protecting the Ukrainian nation. Russian missiles and air strikes are targeted for civil zones. Russian Federation air forces uses cassette and non-controlling bombs. All this leads to destroying of homes, hospitals, and death of civilians. The invasion is ongoing from East, South, and North, with heavy battles continuing in Kyiv. The Ukrainian people urgently need medical supplies and we urge branches to lobby their health boards to support the call from Medical Aid Ukraine.

We can be in no doubt we are witnessing the worst conflict and the most serious refugee crisis on the continent of Europe since the Second World War. Harrowing pictures of desperate mothers, fathers and children that are all too familiar.

We call on all governments to provide safe-haven for all refugees fleeing the conflict –

Ukrainians and foreign workers and students. The UK government has a shameful record of

creating a hostile environment for refugees, which is now impacting those fleeing the conflict in the Ukraine and must do everything in its powers to welcome and support all refugees from Ukraine and elsewhere as determined under international law. UNISON Scotland condemns the widely documented racist treatment faced by Black refugees seeking to leave Ukraine.

We send solidarity to all workers and trade union members in Ukraine and in particular to those public sector workers who are trying under extreme circumstances, to provide vital public services.

Council supports sanctions against Russia in response to the invasion, particularly targeted against the Russian oligarchs and supporters of Putin.

This council welcomes the prompt actions by our General Secretary Christina McAnea and welcomes the immediate donation by the union to the ITUC Ukraine appeal and salutes the response by UNISON branches and members both in supporting the ITUC appeal but also the Ukrainian people, which represent the best traditions of international trade union solidarity.”



UNISON Young Members



I am Ryan Macsween (M/23) and I was elected, uncontested, the Young Members Officer for this branch. The very fact that this position was uncontested highlights the importance of why this role needs to be filled, and it also sheds light on the delicate relationship trade unions have with young people in 2022.

TUC research shows that 16- to 24-year-olds make up 14% of the workforce, but only account for 4.7% of union membership. For UNISON in Inverclyde, membership is just under 30% amongst the 318 young employees (Under 26s). The pitiful state of these statistics has me utterly confused when it is these very people who are on the most precarious contracts, the lowest wages and consistently treated unfairly in comparison to their older colleagues.

However, if I take a step back, I can see perfectly clear why. From conversations I've had that end with "they aren't what they use to be", to ones that begin with "they are useless" and "what's the point". This anti-trade union rhetoric has infested itself in society and has made the very notion of trade unionism seem obsolete. This rhetoric predates myself and other young members existence, yet it is this philosophy that we are, and will be, up against. Fighting these views will not be easy, especially with the laws and media that ingrain and normalise them.

However, combating these ideas is what we must do. We need to show that trade unions are not something that were useful 40 years ago, we need to show that they are useful today.

Showing young workers and future members the usefulness of trade unions is why I put myself forward as the young members officer, and this a task I intend to complete. Thankfully I am not alone in this task and both young and old comrades are aiding me. We have started drawing plans together on recruitment events as well as issues in workplaces that we can rally young people around. I plan on keeping this newsletter updated with all the news regarding this.

I have no illusions that this task will be easy, but there hasn't been a time in the last 20 years where we have needed trade unions and solidarity like we do now. And getting this message out there to young workers is what I plan to do.

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.

Get involved in UNISON

We are always looking for members to get more involved in the Branch and there are various roles that you could get involved with.



Your UNISON workplace rep is the most important link between the Branch and our members. There are different types of workplace representatives – please get involved to help protect local jobs and local services.

UNISON has these types of workplace representative :

1. STEWARD

A UNISON steward is a representative whose role includes organising, recruiting and representing members.

Stewards in workplaces where UNISON is recognised by the employer have rights to time off for training and to carry out their union duties. Stewards have a right to be involved in how their branch is run.

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

A health and safety representative has the right to training and to raise issues which affect the health and safety of members.

In some cases, the safety representative and steward are the same person but they have two separate roles.

Safety representatives have specific duties and responsibilities and also have important legal rights.

3. WORKPLACE CONTACTS

Workplace contacts help distribute Branch information. Workplace contacts do not have access to the same rights as stewards, but can and do play an important role in helping groups of members to organise effectively.

This is an ideal role for someone who is interested in becoming a steward or safety representative, but would like to find out more about what is involved.

4. SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Support is available for UNISON reps from your Branch and Region, locally we run training courses for our reps throughout the year.

If you are interested in becoming active within the Branch, please contact us.

Remembering the Radical War



The Branch remembers those who lost their lives in the Radical War on Bank Street, Greenock on 8th April 1820.

This is regarded by many as the start of trade unionism in Scotland.

We would urge members to visit the memorial on Bank Street where the names of those that sadly lost their lives are remembered