



MANCUNION

THE UNISON NEWSLETTER

APRIL 09



In the first instance, if you have a work problem or query then get in touch with your local UNISON steward or workplace representative. Otherwise, telephone the Branch Office direct on the number below.

**UNISON Manchester, Sixth Floor,
Sunlight House, Manchester M3 3JZ
Tel: 0161 254 7500
Fax: 0161 254 7515**

If you have a membership query, please contact the Branch on the number above or you can email at this address:

branch@unisonmanchester.org

UNISON Manchester is organised by the Branch Executive Committee and is supported by skilled staff - locally, regionally and nationally. The UNISON Manchester Branch Officers are listed below.

Branch Chair: Noel Bayley

Vice Presidents: Hartley Hanley and Kate Russell

Branch Secretary: Tony Caffery

Assistant Branch Secretaries: Pete Banks, Cath Donnellan, Evelyn Doyle, Jim Mackrell, Pat McDonagh, Brian Stangoe and Rena Wood.

Black Members' Group Chair: Sonia Stewart

Branch Treasurer: Bob Oram

Communications Officer: Rod Fawcett

Mancunian Editor: Noel Bayley

Education Officer: Heather Fairbanks

Health and Safety Officer: Geoff Archibald

International Officer: Isobel McVicar

**UNISON/TUC Learner Representatives'
Lead Officer:** Peter Wilkinson

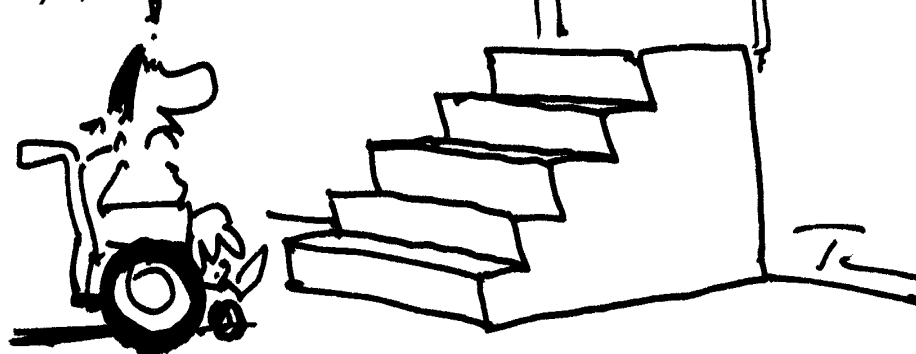
The Branch Executive Committee, the Branch's decision-making body, comprises of stewards from across all the workplaces represented by the Branch plus elected Officers. All members of UNISON Manchester are encouraged to attend meetings, vote in Branch elections and get involved in our campaigns and activities. We are always looking for people who feel they can contribute to the work of the Branch and help other members. This could be a regular commitment or you could be a 'mailbox' steward and help pass on UNISON information to members in your workplace. The Branch provides training courses, advice and support for all our stewards and officers.

Contact the Branch if you'd like to get more involved.

In my view...



.....
Front cover (from top row, left to right): Tony Caffery, Iris Short, Pat McDonagh, Rena Wood, Cath Donnellan, Pete Banks, Helen Clarke, David Hall, Geoff Archibald, Jane Slater, Rod Fawcett, Kate Russell, Ruth Carr, Noel Bayley, Evelyn Doyle, Bob Oram.



.....
🍏 We might not know where you live! Have you changed your address? Don't forget to let the Branch know, as employers - including Manchester City Council - do not advise us of changes of workplace or home address. You can notify the Branch by email, phone or by post of any changes to make sure we can keep you informed...

Many happy returns... The National Minimum Wage is 10 years old!

The 10th anniversary of the introduction of the National Minimum Wage fell on 1 April this year. Employees in more than one million jobs have benefited, two-thirds of them women. Despite the fears of critics who predicted that a minimum wage would cause catastrophe, it has in fact been positively beneficial by helping to balance the economy and by providing a floor for wage rates, ensuring that many low paid workers have indirectly felt its value push their wages up too. It's also raised the living standards of the lowest paid, and helped close the gap between men and women's pay.

UNISON was a prime mover behind the introduction of the national minimum wage, and is still at the forefront of campaigns to strengthen it. Calling recently for the minimum wage to be raised to £7.45 an hour by October 2010, UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis commented: "Fairness should be fundamental as the impact of the recession hits home. The government has stepped in and bailed out the bankers who got us into this mess. But people at the bottom of the ladder – those working on the minimum wage – also need a helping hand to cope."

The Branch will be writing to Manchester MPs to get them behind this campaign, but you can help by lending your support. Check out <http://www.minimumwage.org.uk/> for more...

What UNISON is calling for:

- 🍏 Defend and improve the national minimum wage
- 🍏 Improve it – support the uprating of the national minimum wage.
- 🍏 Extend it – to cover apprentices.
- 🍏 Make it fair – scrap the age bands that discriminate against young workers.
- 🍏 Enforce it – make sure workers know about it and employers pay it.

Use your vote in the UNISON NEC elections

As very possibly one of the most democratic unions around, rarely a month seems to go by without us urging members to use their vote. This month is no exception, as elections are being held for the National Executive Committee, which along with national conference sets the union's policy and decides what issues it should focus on. Effectively, they decide on matters that could affect your job, your terms and conditions and your community by deciding how your subscriptions are spent, which campaigns and issues we should fight on and what the union says nationally about our public services.

The NEC leads our trade union of 1.3 million members, so it's clearly important who serves on this committee. Ballot papers and candidate information will be sent to all members from mid April, with the ballot closing on 15 May, so please take a minute to read the information and to cast your vote.

The Manchester Branch nominated the following candidates:

Bob Oram - General seat North West
Angela Bowen - Female seat North West
Elaine Cotterell - Female seat North West
Jimmy Fallon - Male seat North West
Glen Williams - Male seat Local Government
Carol Lukey - General seat Local Government
Lynn Poulton - Female seat Local Government
Julie Robinson - Female seat Local Government
Mark Clifford - Male seat Black members
Liz Cameron - Female seat Black members
June Nelson - Female seat Black members
Lisa Waldock - Young members seat

Campaigning to keep the LGPS

UNISON will be launching a major campaign shortly to counter the hostile propaganda coming from David Cameron and Eric Pickles on behalf of the Conservative Party. Both insist that the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is unsustainable in the long-term and should become a defined contribution scheme – not a defined benefit scheme as at present. Their view is that there is "pensions apartheid" between private and public sector pensions and that the taxpayer should not be asked to fund the LGPS and other public sector schemes.

UNISON will be telling them that the LGPS is a public good, not a drain on public finances. And wouldn't it be a nobler thing for politicians to work to level pensions up and improve private sector pensions, rather than eroding standards down?

Good to meet you...



Name David Hall.

Job Assistant Branch Secretary.

How long have you been a member of the Branch? Seven Years.

What do you like about your role in UNISON Manchester?

I became active in UNISON because of a workplace incident which threatened to jeopardise my position within the Council. I was represented by a fantastic steward and to repay the favour I decided to volunteer as a workplace steward. Since then, I have developed skills that I never knew were there; the new job is a challenge, but I wouldn't really want it any other way.

Where do you live? I live in Gorton.

Where would you want to live?

Gorton; it's true to itself and feels like home; it has the same feel as my home town: Barrow.

The best thing about UNISON?

Transparent union led by its members with enough clout to make a real difference in peoples working lives and politics, whilst not pandering to political extremism and alienating its membership.

What would your superpower be?

I would be that character from X-Men who can control the weather; it seems to me that this is now the greatest common challenge facing us all – and will probably need a superhero to remedy this.

What's the worst job you've done?

Bean sprout/stir-fry packer at a nasty warehouse somewhere in deepest, darkest Walkden; it's difficult to say precisely where as it was five in the morning when the mini-bus came to get us

and it was pitch black. It was soul-destroying stuff, that meant I lasted until the first morning break.

Your football club?

It just seemed like a natural thing to support City given that I live

in east Manchester. Secondly, I never had any chance of going to see the other lot and at least I can get to CoMS pretty much whenever I feel like it. Further to this, City fans are welcoming. Not coming from Manchester may have meant me turning to the dark side! Thankfully, I have true Mancunian friends who kept me on the straight and narrow and let me in on the trials and tribulations of supporting what is clearly the world's unluckiest but loveliest team: City 'til I die!

Why do unions matter? It is simple, where would the world be without collective organising, bargaining, demonstrating, campaigning and lobbying? Everyone has to have a voice at work, and the union helps you find that voice.

What should Fred Goodwin do with his pension? If he had any self-respect, he would think about what he needs and donate the rest to good causes. Let's hope he sees the light – I ain't hopeful!



**Low cost insurance...
...it's a matter of principle.**

Home insurance

Travel insurance

Pet insurance

UNISON members and their families get the best of both worlds with Uia. Solid principles together with insurance premiums that will really suit your pocket.



For immediate cover, further information or your no-obligation quotation call **FREE** now on the number below quoting reference SBN

0800 66 88 55*

or save 15%** online at www.unisoninsurance.co.uk

Lines are open Mon-Fri 8.30am - 8.00pm
and Sat 9.00am - 1.00pm

What is Workers' Memorial Day?

Each year on 28 April, Workers' Memorial Day is marked around the world to 'Remember the dead, Fight for the living'. We remember those killed, made ill, or injured by their own or someone else's work. Their pain and suffering and that of their families deserve not to be forgotten. We also renew our commitment to, and demand once more, safe and healthy work for all. For more information on all Health and Safety matters, contact your local rep or Geoff Archibald at the Branch Office.

*For quality and protection your call will be recorded. We exchange information with other insurance companies and the police to prevent fraud. **Compared to the standard price you would be quoted if you called us. This only applies to home (building and contents) and travel insurance. UNISON is an Introducing Approved Representative of Uia (Insurance Services) Ltd and Uia (Insurance) Ltd, which are both authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Fortis Insurance Ltd. Pet Insurance is arranged by Thornside Plc and is underwritten by Allianz Cornhill Insurance plc. All these companies are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

UNIF 007