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**UNISON MANCHESTER**

**BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT**

**2012 / 2013**



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## FINAL AGENDA

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEDNESDAY 7TH MARCH 2012 AT 12.45PM FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE MOUNT STREET, MANCHESTER

1. To approve the minutes of the AGM held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010 (2011 AGM being inquorate)
2. To receive the Branch Annual Report
3. To approve the Branch Development Plan
4. To approve the audited Branch Financial Accounts
5. To receive the results of the Branch Nominations/Ballot for the election of the following Branch Officer posts:

**A. Branch Secretary**

Pat McDonagh                      Chief Executives

**B. Assistant Branch Secretaries (8)**

(1)	Cath Baggaley	Neighbourhood Services
(2)	Julie Connolly	Neighbourhood Services
(3)	Marion Doherty	Chief Executives
(4)	Evelyn Doyle	Directorate for Adults
(5)	Malcolm Jones	Directorate for Adults
(6)	Lesley Lancelott	Directorate for Adults
(7)	Declan Maguire	Directorate for Adults
(8)	Edward Redmond	Childrens Services
(9)	Claire Riley	Directorate for Adults
(10)	Jane Slater	Chief Executives
(11)	Steve Swift	Neighbourhood Services
(12)	Patrick Taylor	Chief Executives
(13)	Rena Wood	Childrens Services

A ballot paper is enclosed for this election.

6. The following nominations for Branch Officer posts have been received:

<b>(a) Branch President</b>	Mo Baines	APSE
<b>(b) Branch Vice Presidents (2)</b>	Ruth Carr	Neighbourhood Services
	Nixon Tod	The Manchester College
<b>(c) Branch Treasurer</b>	Julie Connolly	Neighbourhood Services
<b>(d) Equality Officer</b>	Sonia Stewart	Chief Executives
<b>(e) Communications Officer</b>	Rod Fawcett	Chief Executives

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<b>(f) Education Officer</b>	Steve Swift	Neighbourhood Services
<b>(g) International Officer</b>	Isobel McVicar	Community HEART
<b>(h) Health &amp; Safety Officer</b>	Geoff Archibald	Corporate Services
<b>(i) Learner Reps Co-ordinator</b>	Steve Lynch	Corporate Services
<b>(j) Honorary Auditors (2)</b>	Neelam Nayar	Corporate Services
	Paul Muir	Corporate Services

**7. Guest Speakers:**

Tony Lloyd MP (Manchester Central)  
Imogen Wetton (Thomsons Solicitors)

**8. Motions (see motions overleaf)**

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## **MOTION 1 - PUBLIC SECTOR PAY**

On 29th November, the day before three million workers took action against attacks on their pensions, George Osborne announced a further Tory / Lib Dem attack on public services.

Government proposed their intention to dictate there will be a one per cent cap on public sector pay rises for two years after the current freeze ends in July 2012.

Local Government will already by then have endured three full years of pay freezes.

During those three years, inflation has stood at around 5%.

This means those workers and their families will have already suffered a 15% cut in their real income.

But the cut to their disposable income has been even greater, given the hike in living costs, such as heating and fuel which have risen by 20% in some cases over the last year alone.

And there is no guarantee of workers even getting a 1% pay increase in either year as it is a cap not an offer.

This could well mean millions of workers having a continuous pay freeze for up to five years.

On current figures, they would suffer a massive 25% cut in their incomes.

This is additional to cuts to their pensions, their deferred pay, to which our members have contributed through their pension contributions and taxes.

And Government's assault on the public sector is going further, with their review into regional pay adjustments calling on all public sector pay bodies to deliver this by July 2012.

It is no accident that this is the date of the annual local government pay settlement.

As well as aiming to break national sector pay bargaining, the Tory / Lib Dem Government want to try and introduce lower wage settlements and are seeking actual wage cuts below existing levels in some Regions.

Government wants to make the level of public sector pay 'more responsive' to local labour markets.

What that means in practice is they want lower rates of pay in regions with higher levels of unemployment.

Our members and the public have seen the way the Government treated regions differently in the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Manchester suffered budget cuts of over 20% in just one year, whilst Tory areas in wealthier regions had cuts of approximately 3%.

Regional pay in national services will be part of a vicious race to the bottom.

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Imposed cuts in regional pay will further accelerate economic decline in poorer regions and local communities.

It will increase inequality within localities and across the country.

If this proposal is carried out it will also lead to regional pay cuts in national private companies who will see a green light to go down the same road, and who all too often also refuse to offer their workers access to decent pensions.

Unfairness is the core Government principle at work here.

Government is seeking to punish public sector workers, and those regions where electoral support for the coalition is weakest, yet they do nothing to restrain the financial sector.

For whom the Government has emptied the nation's coffers.

In attacking public sector workers, the Government is also attacking public services, which in an era of recession are needed more than ever to keep our society decent.

**This AGM pledges that the Branch will:**

Work with all trade unions in a campaign against any further pay freezes by Government as well as any attempts at the imposition of regional pay and to work with affiliated trade unions to ensure the Labour Party has a policy of vigorous opposition to any such proposals to -

Highlight the negative implications of the ending of national pay structures such as undermining collective bargaining and the worsening of inequality in the UK

Seek an increase in the Manchester Minimum wage

Call on the North West TUC to campaign for north west public authorities to pay a Living Wage and incorporate a Living Wage in all procurement processes

Proposed by Branch Officers

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## **MOTION 2 - CAMPAIGNING AGAINST AUSTERITY & IN DEFENCE OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

As the Con Dem Coalition Government approaches its second year, this AGM condemns the disastrous impact of its economic policies, the further privatisation and public spending cuts on working people within Manchester and the North West as a whole.

The Chancellor's 2011 Autumn Statement, published in November, confirmed the failure of austerity policies being promoted in the UK and elsewhere.

Belated and insufficient measures to increase spending on infrastructure and regional assistance programmes were dwarfed by the announcement that public sector job losses are expected to rise to 710,000 by 2017.

It has been estimated that the earlier Comprehensive Spending Review for 2010-15 will remove over £5 billion from the north west economy and lead to 140,000 FTE job losses in the region (in both the public and private sector) – equivalent to 5% of the regional workforce - representing the largest proportion of cuts suffered by any region.

Manchester Council have already felt the pain of a loss of 2,000 jobs and further job losses and redundancies in community and voluntary services such as Connexions careers advisers which depended on Council funding.

This AGM applauds the mass mobilisation in Manchester against the Tories on 2 October 2011 and in defence of pensions on 30 November 2011 and pledges to continue to be at the forefront of opposition to Con Dem austerity measures.

### **This Branch will work with other trade unions to:**

Highlight the severe impact of Government spending cuts on public services, the wider economy and social well being

Resist compulsory redundancies and attacks on terms and conditions

Promote alternative policies for the Manchester economy and the delivery of public services

This AGM resolves to step up our opposition to further cuts in public spending and privatisation and to campaign for public bodies to bring back in house those services externalised to private or voluntary sector contractors.

Proposed by Branch Officers

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## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO MOTION 2**

Campaigning against austerity and in defence of public services

After

‘This Branch will work with other trade unions to:’

Insert

‘This Branch reiterates its opposition to compulsory redundancies and pledges to fight them in line with national union policy’.

Insert

‘The Branch resolves to:

Show solidarity with other public sector unions taking action over pensions.’

Proposer  
Marion Doherty  
Housing Strategy

Seconder  
Lesley Lancelott  
Adults Commissioning

## **MOTION 3 – SPECIAL CONFERENCE**

This Branch requisitions a Special Conference of the Local Government Service Group to consider the policy of the Service Group in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Proposed by  
Malcolm Jones  
Emergency Duty Team  
Integrated Community Provision

Seconded by  
Claire Riley  
Emergency Duty Team  
Integrated Community Provision

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# MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010

Mo Baines, Branch President, in the Chair. The meeting was attended by approximately 270 members.

1. **Minutes** - The minutes of the previous AGM held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2008 (the AGM of 2009 being inquorate) were agreed as a correct record.
2. **Financial Accounts** - Bob Oram, Branch Treasurer, presented a financial report on the audited Branch accounts for the previous 2 years. The accounts were approved by the meeting.
3. **Annual Report** - Tony Caffery, Branch Secretary, introduced the Annual Report which detailed Branch activity over the previous year. The Annual Report was approved by the meeting.
4. **Branch Development Plan** - Evelyn Doyle, Assistant Branch Secretary, presented the Branch Development Plan for the forthcoming year. The Branch Development Plan contained clear objectives for the Branch around organising, recruitment and steward development and training. The Branch Development Plan was approved by the meeting.
5. **Branch Officer Elections** - The result of elections for various Branch Officer posts were approved by the meeting.

a) Branch Secretary: Tony Caffery Elected Unopposed

b) Assistant Branch Secretaries (elected by full member ballot)

Cath Baggaley	676	Elected
Jane Slater	671	Elected
Evelyn Doyle	657	Elected
Pat McDonagh	637	Elected
Rena Wood	622	Elected
Pete Banks	619	Elected
David Hall	596	Elected
Brian Stangoe	586	Elected
Cathy Eastham	397	Not Elected
Neil McAlister	354	Not Elected
Tony Moore	318	Not Elected

c) Branch Treasurer Bob Oram Elected Unopposed  
Branch President: Mo Baines Elected Unopposed  
Branch Vice President (2) Rodney Lund Elected Unopposed  
Kate Russell Elected Unopposed  
Equality Officer Sonia Stewart Elected Unopposed  
Communications Officer Rod Fawcett Elected Unopposed  
Education Officer Steve Swift Elected Unopposed  
International Officer Isobel McVicar Elected Unopposed  
Health & Safety Officer Geoff Archibald Elected Unopposed  
Learner Reps Co-ordinator Pete Wilkinson Elected Unopposed



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Honorary Auditors (2)

Neelam Nayar  
Paul Muir

Elected Unopposed  
Elected Unopposed

## 6. Guest Speaker

Dave Prentis, General Secretary of UNISON addressed the meeting and gave a comprehensive speech on all the issues facing the membership and our national union.

## 7. Rule Amendment

Delete all current branch rules and replace with proposed new branch rules (copy attached)

Proposed by the Branch Officers

**(Explanatory note** – The National Executive Council has developed a set of core model branch rules which all branches should follow. The proposed new Branch rules closely follow these proposed core rules).

On being put to the vote the amendment was **AGREED** unanimously.

## 8. Motions

### a) Motion 1 – Branch Premises Fund

This AGM agrees to close the Branch Premises Fund and transfer that money into the Branch current account, as a dedicated account heading for any further improvements or equipment necessary for Sunlight House.

Proposed by: The Branch Officers

On being put to the vote the motion was **AGREED** unanimously.

### b) Motion 2 – The Recession and Public Services

This AGM notes that the UK is in the midst of the worst recession since 1930s.

This AGM believes that the current crisis has been largely the result of irresponsibility and unbelievable greed in the banking and financial sector, with massive amounts of taxpayers money used to fund the bailout of banks and financial institutions.

Whilst the Tories and Liberal Democrats are on the record as proposing the deepest cuts in public services and attacking public sector pensions, it appears that all major political parties are now engaged in a debate as to who can cut public services deepest to deal with the deficit, rather than engaging in a debate on alternatives to cutting public spending.

However, UNISON believes that massive cuts in public spending will actually exacerbate and prolong the recession. Cuts in public spending will increase unemployment already over the 3M mark and will hit the poorest in society.

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We believe that sustaining public spending is vital to economic recovery. Public spending is not the cause of the national debt and if we are to build a strong, competitive and sustainable economic future then public services are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Unfortunately, some members of the Branch in outsourced services and in Manchester College are already facing compulsory redundancy as a result of cuts in funding, and the branch is currently working with these members to determine a response.

It is also clear that Manchester City Council, along with all other councils in the country, will face severe cuts in its funding from central government over the next few years which could lead to job losses.

This AGM further notes that in recent polling amongst UNISON members, the issue of job security ranked highest as the major concern for our members.

This AGM therefore agrees:

1. to campaign, in conjunction with the national and regional union against cuts in public spending.
2. to oppose compulsory redundancies and to campaign for alternatives to compulsory redundancy in line with UNISON national guidance, including:
  - natural wastage
  - redeployment and retraining
  - eliminating the use of consultants and agency staff
  - voluntary early retirement
3. to continue to work with the Council's Labour leadership to maintain the Labour Group's policy of 'no compulsory redundancies' which the Trade Unions and the Labour Group managed to maintain even during the Thatcher government.
4. That, should Manchester City Council propose compulsory redundancies, an Emergency General Meeting of members be called to consider the Branch's response up to and including strike action.

Proposed by: The Branch Officers

On being put to the vote the meeting the motion was **AGREED** unanimously.

At this point the meeting became inquorate and the remaining business was referred to the Branch Executive Committee.

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## **BRANCH DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2012/13**

The Branch Development Plan 2012/13 sets out a number of actions that the branch will undertake over the coming year to improve and develop the branch.

The Branch Development Plan is based on the 4 UNISON Objectives, which are:

1. Recruiting, organising, representing and retaining members
2. Negotiating and bargaining on behalf of members and promoting equality
3. Campaigning and promoting UNISON on behalf of members
4. Developing an efficient and effective union

The Branch Executive Committee will regularly monitor progress on achieving the improvements set out in the Branch Development Plan:

### **Objective 1 - Recruiting, organising, representing and retaining members**

Overall aim to increase Branch membership by 5% in 2012/13

Production of Recruitment Plans for each employment section within the branch

Ongoing delivery of programme of training for Stewards in recruitment techniques

Branch Executive Committee to monitor new arrangements for representation of all sections within branch onto Branch Executive Committee, and oversee stewards/convenor elections in all sections

Continue programme of regular training needs assessments for all stewards, with personalised training plan for all stewards

### **Objective 2 - Negotiating and bargaining on behalf of members and promoting equality**

Continue ongoing work on 'Challenging Racism in the Workplace'

Continue ongoing work to increase the number of black members becoming reps who are able to represent members at all levels within the Branch, up to and including Branch Officer level

Continue campaign for the adoption of the Manchester Minimum Wage by other public sector employers where the branch has members and also negotiate increasing it to the level of the TUC National Living Wage

### **Objective 3 - Campaigning and promoting UNISON on behalf of members**

Continue to organise to oppose the attacks on the Local Government Pension Scheme and ensure workplace meetings are held in every service and employer to discuss any proposals following negotiations

Production of regular email news bulletin to all stewards

Continue to improve the Branch website by updating it on at least a weekly basis, and use it as a key recruitment and communication tool

Improve our Labour Link activity within Constituency Labour Parties and wards, increase our delegations and increase our promotion of UNISON policies and priorities within the party

### **Objective 4 - Developing an efficient and effective union**

Utilising RMS and employer/workplace data and detail clear constituencies for stewards and officers to represent members

Continue to develop the electronic case management system for all case work within the Branch

Ensure RMS membership system is used to its full capacity, commissioning training for Branch staff/Officers if necessary

Use environmentally friendly practices in the Branch office where practical

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## **INTRODUCTION FROM BRANCH SECRETARY**

I am proud of all the work done on behalf of Branch members by our employed staff and committed, experienced and effective officers over the last year.

This last year has been one of, if not the most, difficult year this Branch has ever faced.

The Tory Con/Dem government cut the Council budget by £110m in one swoop creating massive pressures which have led to damage to the level and extent of services.

The Council decided £40m would have to be found in staffing costs with £70 for non-staffing budgets.

The Branch organised dozens of workplace meetings right across the Council to consult with as many members as possible face to face.

Our priorities were for no compulsory redundancies, to negotiate the best possible voluntary severance package and to protect our terms of conditions.

Our Branch in very difficult negotiations managed to achieve our Branch aims.

We achieved enhanced voluntary severance terms compared to other Councils, and we together addressed and delivered on our objective of no compulsory redundancies whilst retaining our three year protection arrangements and preventing cuts in terms and conditions.

However whilst many of members work for the City Council large numbers do not and we have tried to support members in all our employers.

The Branch has assisted members who work within Manchester College, the various housing associations, our Museums and our Voluntary and Community organisations.

All have all faced reduced funding with increased pressures on jobs and conditions.

Our Branch leadership has developed a new Branch Executive structure to ensure all those members outside the Council membership in future are fully represented which will strengthen the Branch overall.

Our Branch played a full part in the March TUC demonstration and in our strike against pension changes, with 89% of all Council staff taking strike action.

We face tough times ahead where members stewards and officers need to work together collectively to defend our members our families and community.

Finally I would like to thank Moira Stockton, Miriam Fanning and James Crowley for all their work and support for members activists and Officers in what has been a very challenging year.

Pat McDonagh

Branch Secretary

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## **CHIEF EXECUTIVES**

It has been an extreme busy 12 months in Chief Execs. We have experienced a reduction in staff due to the VER/VS process that took place early in 2011 due to the massive cuts that MCC suffered through the Tory/LibDem Government Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).

We have had several transformation programs in performance and regeneration. This has seen staff from other Directorates merging with the Corporate Core. Also equally some staff have moved out of the centre into delivery teams within other Directorates. This year will see the transfer of Legal Staff from Salford as part of a Shared Services project, the work has been ongoing from September 2011 to look at possible savings to both authorities and offering the best service for both areas. This will be concluded in April 2012. We look to welcome Salford staff to Manchester.

In Corporate IT there is to be a sharing of services again with Salford, this will be around technical equipment and procurement, not staff.

The Town Hall transformation program is ongoing and the return of staff from First Street will be happening in Summer 2013. The work is being completed floor by floor and there will be a model office/show house set up for staff to visit which should be later this year.

Stewards meet on a monthly basis; we have new stewards who have joined us from other Directorates. We are currently undertaking a mapping exercise so we can look to recruit none members to strengthen our position in the Directorate.

*Jane Slater*

## **CHILDRENS SERVICES**

This year has seen Unison work closely with the Directorate through the JCC Process that now takes place on a monthly basis. This has helped focus discussions regarding the changes brought about by the massive cuts imposed on the council by the Tory/LibDem coalition.

While focussing on a no redundancy policy Unison have been actively involved in the negotiations regarding the increase in social workers and the remodelling of the social work teams and the support staff to ensure a safe working environment.

The Government cuts have seen the decimation of the Youth Service as an entity. Unison has held meetings with the management team and have received a commitment to retain twenty full time staff and fifteen part time staff to work in the restructured Pupil Referral Unit service all of whom will remain on JNC conditions of service.

Alongside the cuts on the Youth Service the day care section of Sure Start face similar Tory decimation going from 500 staff to approximately 100. An active stewards committee is working together to ensure that all staff are able to engage with the M people process and use all the council facilities to move into other posts within the council that meet our Members needs and the aims of the City Council.

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The Residential service provides a service to some of the most vulnerable children of Manchester faces savings totalling over one and a half million pounds but we have ensured it will stay an in-house service for the foreseeable future.

While the service has increased the number of full time social workers and cut back on the lucrative practice of agency work. Issues still surround the excessive number of Individual cases that individual social workers are holding. These concerns have led to a group of Unison members to form a work party led by the branch to look at case load management.

*Eddy Redmond*

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

As well as representing members through a variety of individual casework UNISON has supported staff through service redesigns including the merger of Highways into Capital Programme and the Heads of Finance restructure.

We have improved industrial relations with the establishing of a corporate core JCC and monthly meetings with management in Revenues and Benefits The Corporate Services stewards' committee meets regularly and is well attended and we now have our first home working steward which will greatly assist the branch in it's understanding of the issues affecting it's the increasing number of members who work from home. We have also conducted surgeries for members to come and discuss their issues.

Members in Revenues and Benefits face many challenges with the proposed Government changes to benefit provision. We will continue to support our members there and maintain our commitment to no compulsory redundancies particularly given the threat of work transferring to the Department of Work and Pensions in the future.

*Patrick Taylor*

## **DIRECTORATE FOR ADULTS**

It has been an extremely difficult year for UNISON members in Adults as a result of the huge Tory\LibDem cuts from last year's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the impact that has had on services delivered to vulnerable people in Manchester via Adults Directorate. A reduced social care offer to vulnerable residents makes our members jobs more difficult on a daily basis, in addition to structural changes to the services they work within.

A major change this year has been the roll out of the Primary Assessment Teams across the City. This has involved a complete reorganisation and merger of the social care assessment functions to residents from MEAP, Care Management and Reablement management.

UNISON has been successful in ensuring that a comprehensive training plan was developed to support our members going through this change, but it has not been without problems and we have picked up a number of issues for our members as they have arisen. Concerns that remain and are subject to ongoing consultations with management are Health and Safety, career development, in particular for those from care management who are concerned that their skills

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working with complex cases will not be properly utilised, and contractual matters regarding flexible working etc.

The roll out is not due for completion until June 2012 as it is such a major change, so it has been rolled out on a staggered basis across the city. This makes it difficult at this stage, whilst MCC is effectively dual running two systems, to determine whether issues that have arisen are fully resolved, or will need to be addressed again. This is being closely monitored by the Branch.

This will also impact significantly upon the work of Adults Social Workers as moving forward they will be working within a model similar to Children's with Social Workers working solely on more complex cases and not as part of a team including care managers. The focus for the Branch going forward will be upon working with our Adults Social Workers around case load numbers and any redesign proposals.

There were proposals earlier this year to make changes to rotas within the Reablement Service that would have resulted in our Reablement Support staff losing part of their flexibility payment. After representations from UNISON these proposals were put on hold, whilst more detailed work was undertaken by management with regards to customer flow. It is expected that further proposals will be presented within the next few months.

Homelessness Services have seen the completion of the redesign for the Assessment Service which is a statutory function earlier in the financial year, but there still remain problems with recruitment and retention of staff in this area and the Branch has been involved in supporting members to try to resolve this. Other redesigns are now under way, the closure of one of the QAC's and the merger of the Single Persons and Families supported accommodation teams are currently underway. The service is also reviewing all 24\7 services, and we are awaiting proposals for consultation in April.

Day Services and MLPD\Physical Disability Services are currently operating under an interim joint management arrangement. This is whilst MLDP services are being reviewed. We are awaiting the outcome of this review and will keep members updated as and when information is available. There have been some issues raised with senior management about communication and consultation arrangements within Business Units and the Branch is hopeful that new arrangements to have regular monthly meetings between management and trade unions will improve matters.

The Public Health functions nationally are being transferred to Local Authorities and this function since March 2011 has transferred to Adults Directorate with the Directorate being redesignated as Directorate for Adults Health and Wellbeing. The Branch is currently in consultation on proposals by 2013 to TUPE transfer Health staff into MCC.

*Evelyn Doyle*

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

The last year has seen a total reorganisation of how the Councils provides and runs services in Neighbourhood Services. The catalyst for the new ways of delivery and reduction in services was the massive reduction in funding from the ConDem government.

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All members in Neighbourhood have seen change in the past year as the Council moves to delivering its services in a generic manner.

**Neighbourhood Delivery Teams** have been operating since November 2011 and have introduced generic working across the whole spectrum. There are five Neighbourhood Delivery Teams and our members are facing delivering the reduced services with new ways of working.

**Culture and Community Services** have also been totally reorganised and our members involved in this work area are also facing changes to working practices and arrangements. The Council has committed to building new libraries and swimming pools in the coming years and this will secure our members jobs.

**Business Units** are currently under review and we will represent our members during the process of reorganisation.

**Environmental Strategy** has seen reorganisation and the introduction of news ways of working.

**Art Gallery** is in the process of responding to changes to outside funding and we are currently awaiting management proposals on how this will affect the service.

In all the service redesigns that have happened or are to happen Unison members have been supported throughout the process and

Neighbourhood Service's move to generic working has meant that there is a wide range of working arrangements being operated and this is currently being reviewed. A management working group is currently reviewing all working arrangements and all members will be consulted on all proposals that come forward from this working group.

The branch has supported all members during service redesigns and will continue to do so.

*Julie Connolly*

## **SCHOOLS DEPARTMENT**

### **Schools**

This has been an interesting year with many challenges, but some good progress and successes.

I am very much enjoying working in my section of schools (primary schools in North Manchester) as each one is different and separate approaches are needed. I am working closely with Stewards and trying to increase my visibility and reputation as a rep who negotiates well and is robust in defending members.

In the past year I have had successes in preventing dismissals, organising payback of hours from harmonisation and supporting members through sickness reviews.

*Steve Swift*



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## **Academies**

The Con-Dem Government has set a course to fundamentally change the landscape for schools. It has rushed through legislation to enable all 'high achieving' Schools to become Academies. It is now trying to force all Schools into becoming Academies by changing floor targets.

Many schools do not wish to become an Academy but feel the pressure being exerted is so intense, with threats to funding if they do not, that they feel forced to comply.

Many High Schools have now converted to Academies in Manchester either as a stand-alone Academy or a Sponsored Academy.

Unfortunately from the pressure being exerted by Michael Gove we now have a couple of Primary Schools that have also become Academies.

UNISON has sought and gained National Recognition Agreements with many of the Academy chains e.g. Co-Op, E-Act, and Oasis.

Where there is not a National Recognition Agreement in place we strive to achieve national terms and conditions for our members, as well as a formal trade union recognition agreement and seek to ensure that TUPE procedures are followed.

We consulted with our members at every stage throughout any academy conversion process and where our members wish to challenge their community School becoming an Academy we have assisted members to make the community aware that their school would no longer be under the remit of the Local Authority and have organised public events so an informed decision can be made by staff, parents and the community on the advantages and disadvantages of their School converting to an Academy.

*Cath Baggaley*

## **Job Evaluation**

Teaching Assistants have now received their Job Evaluation letters explaining their evaluation with details of how to appeal the decision if they so wish.

We have organised a Job Evaluation Appeals training session to assist members with the appeals process and arranged future support sessions.

*Cath Baggaley*

## **VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY AND PRIVATE SECTOR**

### **The Manchester College**

For some time UNISON has been campaigning for harmonisation of pay between former MANCAT and City College staff. A budget of £300,000 has now been agreed for this to take place. We are holding regular meetings with HR management to address these disparities with an implementation date set for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012. This will happen in conjunction with the issuing of the finalised role profiles.

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UNISON, along with our colleagues in UCU, are also in negotiation on an addendum to the support staff contracts and the finalisation of a variety of policies and procedures. These meetings have been by and large positive and hopefully indicative of better industrial relations between The Manchester College and the Trade Unions. UNISON are also at the point of concluding negotiations on a new annualised hours contract for DAVIAS staff who have previously only been employed on a casual basis.

UNISON members at the College delivered an excellent day of action during the recent pensions dispute, with joint UNISON/UCU pickets at all sites. We have increased the number of UNISON workplace stewards and the stewards' committee is well attended and productive.

There will be challenges in the year ahead with the results of the current round of tendering for the Offender Learning contracts to be announced. In the event of any change in providers UNISON will support members through any TUPE transfer process and help establish links with the appropriate branches moving forward.

*Patrick Taylor*

## **Museums**

Manchester Branch represents members at both the People's History Museum and The Museum of Science and Industry.

The Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) has faced significant challenges in the past year, the announcement from Government that their funding would be withdrawn from 2014 caused widespread concern for staff. A solution has now been found with a merger into The National Museum of Science and Industry. (NMSI)

The first priority for UNISON was to maintain the ongoing employment and pensions rights of our members and that there should remain an open scheme for all staff. This has now been secured with NMSI gaining admitted body status to the Greater Manchester Local Government Pension Scheme.

Union recognition will still apply at MOSI however UNISON remains committed to the position that recognition should apply across the National Museum and that our members should have a voice at the national negotiating table. We have met with representatives from Prospect, PCS and FDA who do have this recognition and they are fully supportive of us and we will pursue this objective moving forward.

Thanks to all UNISON stewards in these areas for all their hard work over the past year, achieving great successes, often in very trying circumstances.

*Patrick Taylor*

## **Housing Associations**

The Housing Trusts remain varied in their approach to Trade Unions. I am proud that, working cross-union, I have secured regular Trade Union meetings in one Trust which did not have such a forum before and we are consequently able to support members at the outset of any issues. I work closely with some Trusts and, through a combination of disciplinary hearing success, regular meetings with management and engaging with staff, membership is growing. I am very pleased

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that I was able to lead a cross-union pay deal at one of the Trusts recently, which represented a good deal in the current climate for Unison members.

Some Trusts remain wary of Trade Unions and this may not change; I am ensuring that I provide a strong presence in casework there and also that I hold regular surgeries at Trusts wherever I can.

*Steve Swift*

## **Voluntary Sector**

The voluntary sector, particularly in the area of care, is reeling from cuts and much of my work is done in redesign consultation. I am happy that I have good relationships with the bigger companies, which has ensured that I am involved closely in consultation, leading to effective support for members.

I of course pick up casework regularly in this work area and other companies, which are on my worksheet and have had some recent successes for members in disciplinaries, discussions over transfers and working hours.

The immediate future for members is not going to get any easier. I know that you need someone who has the openness to negotiate on your behalf, the ability to defend you robustly when necessary and someone who is there when you call. I believe I have fulfilled that model this year and will continue to do so in the coming 12 months.

*Steve Swift*

## **OTHER EMPLOYERS**

The year saw a series of consultation meetings with members in Integrated Admissions on their re-structure.

A number of Ofsted members who were TUPE transferred to Prospect members were successful in obtaining agreed terms with Branch support.

Successful outcomes were obtained in disciplinary cases at the Museum of Science & Industry.

HATS members were supported through several meetings at the Orangery in Heaton Park & Wythenshawe Hall following the restructure of those services. Members were successfully supported at disciplinaries in HATS resulting in no dismissals. Issues affecting members were successfully resolved at Joint Consultative Committee meetings.

Meetings were arranged to involve members facing restructures in Libraries and in addition Hooper Street depot to ensure members were fully informed of the HATS Transformation proposals within Neighbourhood Services.

CONNEXION's commenced the first round of budget cuts affecting our members in Manchester, Rochdale, Salford and Tameside earlier in the year resulting in some compulsory redundancies. Members were supported in submitting Employment Tribunal applications through the CASE Unit and are being represented by Thompson's solicitors. There has been a second round of cuts in Tameside which concluded in 2 members being offered alternative employment. Salford are currently in the middle of the second round of redundancy consultation.

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Work Solutions have also had a budget cut from Salford City Council and the redundancy consultation is nearly concluded. The holding company for both Work Solutions and CONNEXION's is Manchester Solutions and throughout the process the branch have been seeking legal advice to assist us in challenging the cuts within the subsidiary companies.

The branch recently met with management of the RNCM to discuss their restructure proposals of the department.

Throughout the year members within the Voluntary & Community sector have been supported at Disciplinary & Grievance hearings including childcare employers, community support group employers and social care employers.

*Rena Wood*

## **BRANCH EDUCATION OFFICER REPORT**

Steward education and lifelong learning are of course an ongoing programme and the Education Officer has tried to meet as many members as possible to arrange the courses needed and to connect members with courses they want to do.

Organising Steward courses continue to run regularly at the branch, but the Branch will seek to run more representation skills courses, which give Stewards good understanding of hearings and casework and will work towards this.

One of the things UNISON is proud of this year is that, along with the ULR coordinator Steve Lynch, UNISON secured further TUC funding for the Town Hall learning centre. UNISON expects the ULR programme to be growing well in the next year.

UNISON will continue to offer Stewards and members the courses they need regionally and locally to help in their work with Unison and also the courses they need to extend their learning.

*Steve Swift*

## **LEARNER REPS COORDINATOR REPORT**

### **Introduction.**

When Steve Lynch took responsibility for this role on behalf of all signatory trade unions there were just 5 certificated ULR's that had undergone training, and this was the total coverage for the whole of Manchester City Council.

The strategy is to recruit a further 150 Learning Representatives across all sectors of the workforce in the next one to two years and to then develop them through a package of training specifically tailored for Manchester City Council. This will lead to an NVQ Level 2 qualification with the option to take extra credits to achieve an NVQ Level 3.

The aim is, as far as possible, to have a Learning Rep in every depot, building and workplace across the whole of the city and an area based Learning Rep network that can be called upon to provide advice and support to colleagues close to the training venues that will be available to prospective trainees.

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Learning Representatives will be able to give guidance and advice on what training is on offer for the prospective learners and to support them through the learning process.

### **Current ULR Training**

Since September our Learner Reps Coordinator has managed to recruit a further 43 ULR's who have embarked on a full package of training from January 2012. They will complete their Level 2 training by May 2012.

As recruitment increases even further, to at least 150, ongoing bespoke training packages will be commissioned for the newest recruits and further enhanced training will be organised for those ULR's at Level 2 to enhance their skills even higher to a teaching qualification if they require it.

### **Marketing**

Clearly many staff, particularly those that work outside of the city centre, have no idea that the Town Hall Learning Centre exists, or if they have heard of the THLC they do not know where it is situated. Marketing of the THLC and the resources and courses that are available has to be one of the main priorities. It wouldn't matter how many ULR's there are if no-one was able, or knew how to, access or attend the available courses.

Development of satellite venues for those that cannot access the THLC because of travel and time restraints and other important issues such as child-care and caring for infirm or elderly family and/or friends is already coming to fruition.

I intend to vigorously pursue the creation of an independent web page for the intranet and internet that will be exclusively used to advertise and market the Learning Centres and the role of the ULR's and how reps can mentor and support potential learners.

The role of the ULR's in supporting and encouraging training to enhance the skills of our members needs to be identified for what it is, a vital service given freely, independently and voluntarily without prejudice.

## **FUTURE PROJECTS**

### **Digital Inclusion – Knowledge is Power**

Sending out broadcasts and introducing an intranet/internet site is fine for those that can access the information. There are far too many members that cannot access the information as, even in this technologically advanced world we live in, they do not have their own MCC e-mail address.

They cannot, or find it difficult to, view the intranet/internet. This is woefully inadequate and inexcusable that staff who want to access the services do not have the opportunity to do so.

Whether this is due to logistical constraints or the lack of equipment is no longer justifiable as there is so much mobile technology available through Wi-Fi, android, i-pads etc.

It has been a long standing passion of UNISON to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access information on the intranet and via e-mail. Effectively this means they are no longer reliant on word of mouth information that is usually cascaded by their line manager but only if they deem it is suitable or practicable.

Several of the ULR's have signed up to become Digital Champions and we will be attending a conference and training session in this coming year.

### **ESOL**

Recent withdrawal of funding for ESOL will lead to some members and employees of MCC being disadvantaged in the workplace as their English language skills will become a barrier to career advancement and career pathway changes. To ensure that all our members are furnished with the

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opportunity to advance their careers UNISON believes ESOL is vital and important as some foreign workers that have poor English language skills tend to be employed in the lower paid positions as the language barrier really is a blockage for them to gain better qualifications, skills and opportunities.

### **Community Reach Out**

The future of the Trades Unions and the ability to survive will wholly rely on the recruitment of new members. Those members will come from, by and large, the local community. It is therefore important to show the community that we are available to help them into work by offering support through any learning/training that they require to become employed by the Local Authority. There are plans to utilise IT and learning suites in Sure Start Centres, Schools, Libraries and other community resources. Providing training and learning in basic literature, numeracy and IT to the staff of Manchester City Council with a defined percentage of the training places also being allocated to the community, parents and young unemployed with support from the ULR's located nearest each venue will help neighbourhoods.

These are just some of the developments that are now in the early stages.

**If this has sparked an interest in becoming a Learning Representative then why not get in touch for more information.**

**You don't have to be shop steward to become a ULR.**

If interested contact:

Steve Lynch  
Branch ULR Coordinator  
ULR Coordinator Manchester City Council

## **BRANCH WELFARE OFFICER REPORT**

Being a Welfare Officer is a very exciting challenge and involves some activists who believe in our Members and the very core of what our Union is about.

If a member needs to apply to Unison Welfare, they need to contact the Branch Office and ask for the Welfare Form to be sent out to them.

The form is then sent to the Branch Welfare Officer completed sometimes by the member, who will then telephone and go through the form together. The officer will also meet with members if required and help them by filling the form in with them. The purpose of the phone call / interview is to check anything that may have been missed and also to do a financial statement if debts have been indicated, and also help to maximise a person's income.

Quite often when a person is in debt, there is a tendency to pay the creditor who shouts the loudest or makes the most threats, but some debts are actually statute barred and no longer need to be paid, so by removing them from the outgoings, it frees up some income albeit perhaps not a lot, which alleviates some of the problem as least for the interim period until the member can see a Debt Advisor who will write to all the Creditors direct.

Filling in a Welfare form is on a par with filling in a Housing Benefit form, or a Tax Credits form in that the information required needs to be clear and concise, and the end product needs to be that

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the member gets the help they require without any un-necessary added drama's. Anyone involved in Welfare Rights or Debt advice will know that people are sometimes reluctant to admit that they are in financial difficulty or have debts, so the very thought of asking for help and then wrestling with a form that is in depth and wants to know everything about you is daunting.

This is why Welfare officers have been trained to assist members fill the form in, because it was apparent before the new "user friendly" form came in, that people were struggling with the questions and leaving important sections blank. This sometimes resulted in delays in claims which does not help the member and their situation.

Unison Welfare is unique because there is no other Union that provides this form of service to their members.

Unison Welfare works with PayPlan, which is a debt advice company, and their team work very closely with Unison and attends seminars, AGM's etc. Unison Welfare also provides a financial advice service for members, and can also arrange convalescence for members who have been unwell etc.

Unison Welfare also has it's very own lottery, which is called Octopus Lottery, numbers are a £1.00 each and individuals can purchase up to 10 numbers a month. Branches can purchase any amount per month they wish to, and 40% of the revenue goes to Unison Welfare. There are over 50 cash prizes every month, the first prize being £1,000.00, second prize £500.00, third prize £250.00 and 50 prizes of £50.00 each. The odds are better than the National Lottery, so if you wish to sign up for the lottery visit [www.unison.org.uk/octopus](http://www.unison.org.uk/octopus) for an application form, or call 0845 355 0845.

Unison Welfare is also known as There for You and it is there for you, and all of us.

*Helen Clarke*

## **BLACK MEMBERS GROUP REPORT**

### **RECRUITING, ORGANISING, REPRESENTING AND RETAINING MEMBERS**

#### **Membership Drive/Recruitment**

The group continues to assist in Unison's recruitment drive to increase representation of black members, with membership forms being distributed at meetings and on an individual basis.

#### **Members' Representation**

UBMG continues to represent members' rights and trying to identify black workplace stewards in order that they may be included on the UBMG database, in addition to being recommended to members who specifically request their support. The Group, through workplace stewards, will monitor the types of cases being presented by black members as well as outcomes and pursue with Branch where necessary.

#### **Service Conditions**

Members are regularly updated on matters relating to service conditions, such as issues relating to pay.

#### **Delegation to Conference**

UBMG has delegate representation at the National Black Members Conference taking place in Brighton in February 2012.

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## **Representation on Bodies**

UBMG has representation on several Bodies including Regional Black Members Committee and Branch Executive Committee, ensuring that members' issues within the Branch and region are addressed and feedback provided.

## **NEGOTIATING AND BARGAINING ON BEHALF OF MEMBERS AND PROMOTING EQUALITY**

### **Challenging Racism in the Workplace**

The group is fully committed to moving this project along positively to challenge and eradicate racism in the workplace and is working closely with Manchester Branch Office and Regional Office with a view to effecting meaningful change. The Group has previously assisted the Branch in the areas of:

- Equality targets/Ethnic grade monitoring
- Recruitment and selection/Exit management
- Equality questionnaire (to assist in mapping membership within the Union with regard to ethnicity)
- Dignity at Work/Appraisals/1:1's
- Disciplinary/grievances
- Promotion of the Challenging Racism in the Workplace initiative and the importance of support

## **CAMPAIGNING AND PROMOTING UNISON ON BEHALF OF MEMBERS**

UBMG members have continued to support UNISON campaigns, such as fighting for our pensions, including Marches in London, Manchester and other Regions. The work of UNISON has also been promoted within the community via Manchester Branch at various events eg The Caribbean Carnival of Manchester and Mega Mela, with information/advice stalls and promotional banner.

## **DEVELOPING AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE UNION**

### **Branch Development Plan**

Following requests for action by UBMG, work by the Branch is progressing around the following areas:

- Recruitment and retention of Black Branch Officers, due to lack of visibility and what could be perceived as lack of commitment to address fair representation of Black people within the formal Union structures
- Strategies to develop effective community engagement, which would raise awareness of UNISON being an outward as well as inward facing Union and demonstrating commitment to community cohesion

### **Development**

Development information eg workplace stewards training and other local and regionally organised courses, is circulated to members and support provided when required.

UBMG had previously been successful in securing approval from the Branch for targeted training eg awareness raising course, that included: Understanding Unions; Structure of Union and Influencing and Discrimination at Work



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Discussions are to be held with the Assistant Branch Secretary with responsibility for education and training, with a view to further targeted training for UBMG members being secured.

### **UNISON NATIONAL BLACK MEMBERS CONFERENCE 2011**

The 2011 conference was held in Glasgow, with over 400 delegates and visitors attending. Speakers included Dave Prentis, UNISON General Secretary and Diane Abbot, MP. A sample of the motions successful at conference were:

- Spending cuts and the disproportionate effects on the black community
- Pensions
- Recession and public service cutbacks
- Disabled black people in a Con-Dem government

Detailed feedback was submitted to the Branch Secretary, in addition to being circulated to Branch and Regional black members.

### **GENERAL**

UBMG continues to support black members and provide a supportive environment for them to discuss their concerns. The Group will also continue to work closely with Branch and make recommendations in order to push forward those issues that are at the forefront of black members' fight for equality.

*Sonia Stewart*

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