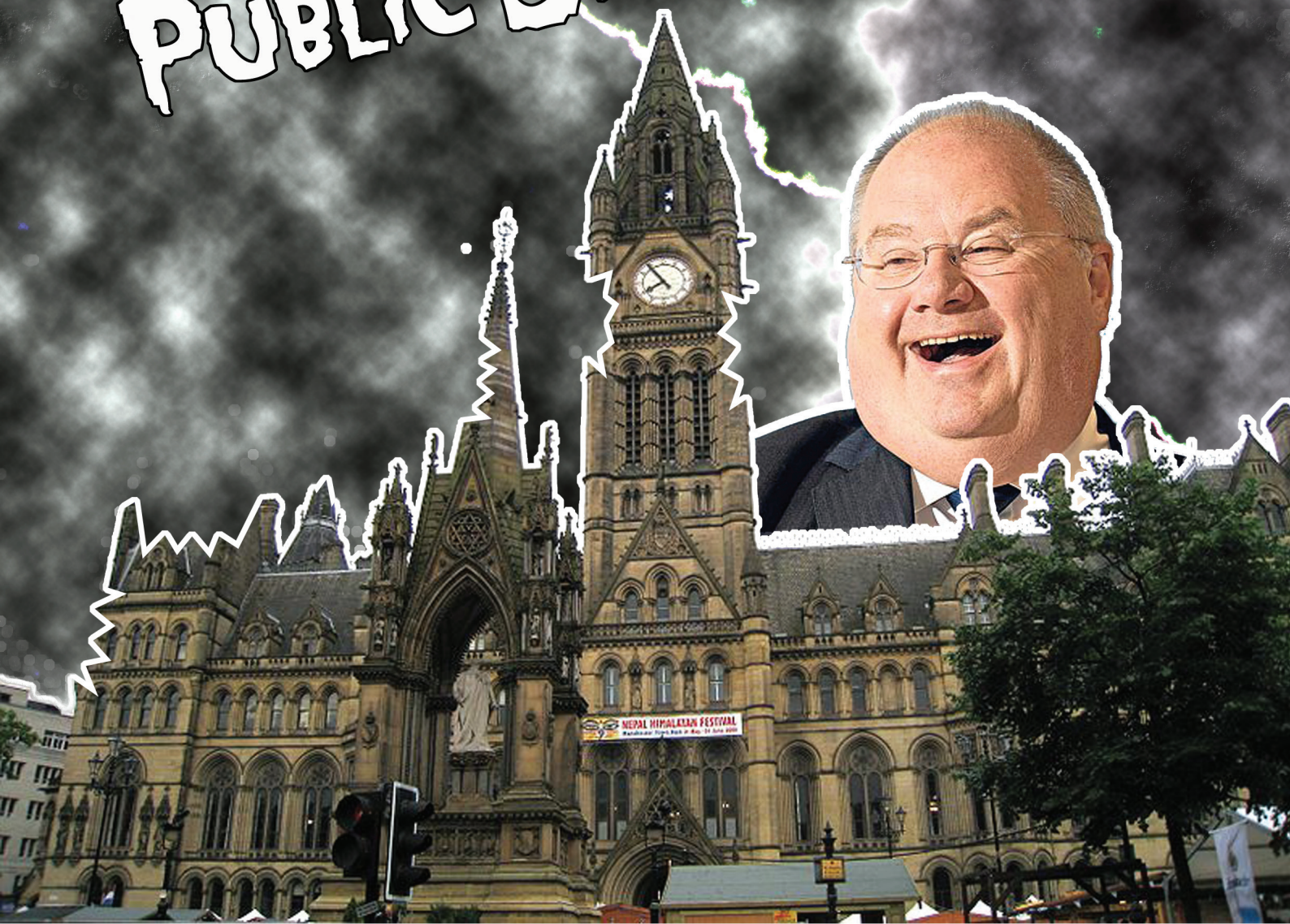


MANCUNION

THE UNISON NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2013

ERIC PICKLES IN...
THE CREATURE THAT
ATE
PUBLIC SERVICES!!!



In my view...



Following on from the destruction of services caused by the £110 million cuts by the Tories supported by the Lib Dems to services in Manchester we now face a further cut of £80m.

Whatever the detailed decisions to come we face a scenario which will result in a further slashing in services to the people of Manchester and the further loss of up to a thousand jobs.

The cuts reflect nationally a perverse political connection with the most deprived areas suffering the largest cuts.

Manchester received the highest level of cuts in the North West. Our region suffered a sixth of the national cuts in funding.

Given the scale of the cuts our Branch has agreed a further Voluntary Severance and Voluntary Retirement Scheme on the same enhanced terms.

We are hopeful that this will bridge the funding gap but have made it clear whatever the outcome our Branch will not accept the imposition of compulsory redundancies nor cuts in our terms and conditions.

In February UNISON expects a formal offer of the national employers for a 1% pay increase. This would mean in effect a 2% pay cut for the next year.

The last three years of the pay freeze has already seen members pay cut by up to 15% when set against inflation.

Our Branch is calling on the union nationally to campaign with members on the need to beat the pay freeze and to seriously consider a ballot for major strike action.

Research papers, postcard campaigns and lobbying of councillors all assist but are very unlikely to move the Government.

The Government does not listen

to reason which is demonstrated by their austerity agenda which is causing recession, increasing unemployment and hitting the vulnerable the hardest.

April will see thousands of our members hit by changes in tax credits and universal benefit changes.

I would urge members to make a note of our AGM and come along and have your say on all the major issues facing members.

It will be held in the Friends Meeting House on Mount St (opposite the rear of the Central Library) at 12.30 on Thursday 28th February.

I am pleased to say our guest speaker will be Owen Jones who is a columnist on the i newspaper, has been a panellist on Question Time and wrote 'Chavs ; The Demonization of the Working Class'

I am sure his speech and answers to questions will be interesting so I hope as many members as possible will try and attend.

*Pat McDonagh
Branch Secretary*

In This Month's Issue...

As you might imagine our cover and lead article "The Creature That Ate Public Services" focuses on the huge bite Tory Communities Secretary Eric Pickle took out of Manchester City Council's budget and how it will affect our members.

We explain a little about how the branch makes it's decisions by showing how the Branch Executive Committee is made up. (With an affectionate nod to Pete Frame's Rock Family Trees). We also shine a light on the results of the most recent meeting on the 23rd January.

Gloria Buckley reports back on her experience of this year's Black Members conference held 18th – 20th of January in Sheffield.

There's also some good news to report with a new deal on pay at two of our Housing Trusts Parkway Green and Willow Park and the long awaited conclusion to negotiations on pay harmonisation at The Manchester College. Finally in "Good To Meet You" this month we meet Contact Manchester Steward Gemma McIlwaine to discuss her views on UNISON, Football, Public Services and why she hates chickens.

Hope you enjoy it.

James Crowley and Patrick Taylor
Guest Editors



THE CREATURE THAT ATE PUBLIC SERVICES!!!

On 19th December Communities Secretary Eric Pickles delivered his settlement for council funding across the country. A settlement he described as a "bargain" for Local Authorities.

For Manchester this "bargain" meant an 8.2% reduction as Eric Pickles took a whopping 80 million pound bite out of City Council funding.

Of course Tory spin was that this was part of an average cut of 1.7%. When viewed across the country the level of cuts reflects a political map of Britain, with traditionally Labour areas losing out to Tory dominated authorities.

The prime example being West Oxfordshire, home to David Cameron, who will get a hike of 1.1%. Effectively money stolen from the most deprived areas of the country.

One sixth of all national cuts in council funding fell in the North West, a totally disproportionate and vindictive attack on our region.

The implications for Manchester are clear, another round of cuts to the valuable public services our communities rely on.

Along with the need to shed approx 830 jobs.

The City Council's budget proposals are out for public consultation and make for depressing reading.

For our members closures and changes to services will mean extensive restructuring throughout the council and all the uncertainty and worry that will come with it.

Some will call for opposition to any cuts and we do condemn the Tory / Lib Dem cuts which are forcing the Council to now make extremely painful decisions based on political priorities on how to best retain the most critical services within the extreme scale of the funding cuts.

Calling on the Council not to decide on any cuts, or to not set a budget or an illegal one is pointless. It was last tried in Liverpool and Camden in 1985 and nowhere since then, as it led to civil servants and local officers taking over and making chaotic cuts without any political accountability.

That said some members and local communities may well want to campaign to save a particular service as a priority.

But making no cuts given the massacre of the budget is not possible.

The Branch will do everything to assist those who wish to take the opportunity to leave and also those who will be staying to deliver services through an uncertain period with wholesale reorganisations.

The City Council has extended its deadline for Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) and Voluntary Severance (VS) applications until 15th February as currently the target of a reduction of staff and costs has not been met.

While we have worked in partnership to prevent compulsory redundancies, any proposal to introduce them will mean a fundamental shift in UNISON's working relationship with the City Council.

Our policy has always been clear. If compulsory redundancies are proposed we will ballot all our members to take industrial action.

This commitment has been a cornerstone of branch policy throughout the years and it will not change now.

At our AGM on 28th February a motion will be put forward reaffirming the position and we ask all members to attend and have their voice heard on this issue.

Together we must show our resolve and unity so make the effort to attend and show your opposition to any attempt to introduce compulsory redundancies.

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STEWART

BRANCH PRESIDENT

MO
BAINES

VICE-CHAIR

STEVE
LYNCH

VICE-PRESIDENTS

RUTH
CARR

NIXON
TOD

UNISON MANCHESTER BRANCH

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PAT
MCDONAGH

ASSISTANT BRANCH SECRETARY

CATH
BAGGALEY

JULIE
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PHIL
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EMMA
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MIKE
DOOLEY

CREATIVE SUPPORT

VACANT

BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

THE BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS THE BRANCH'S DECISION-MAKING BODY. IT IS COMPOSED OF Elected Officers, Elected Representatives, and Delegates from various sections. The Committee decides Branch Policy, considers nominations for Branch, Regional and National Officers, and views to the Branch via their elected representatives.

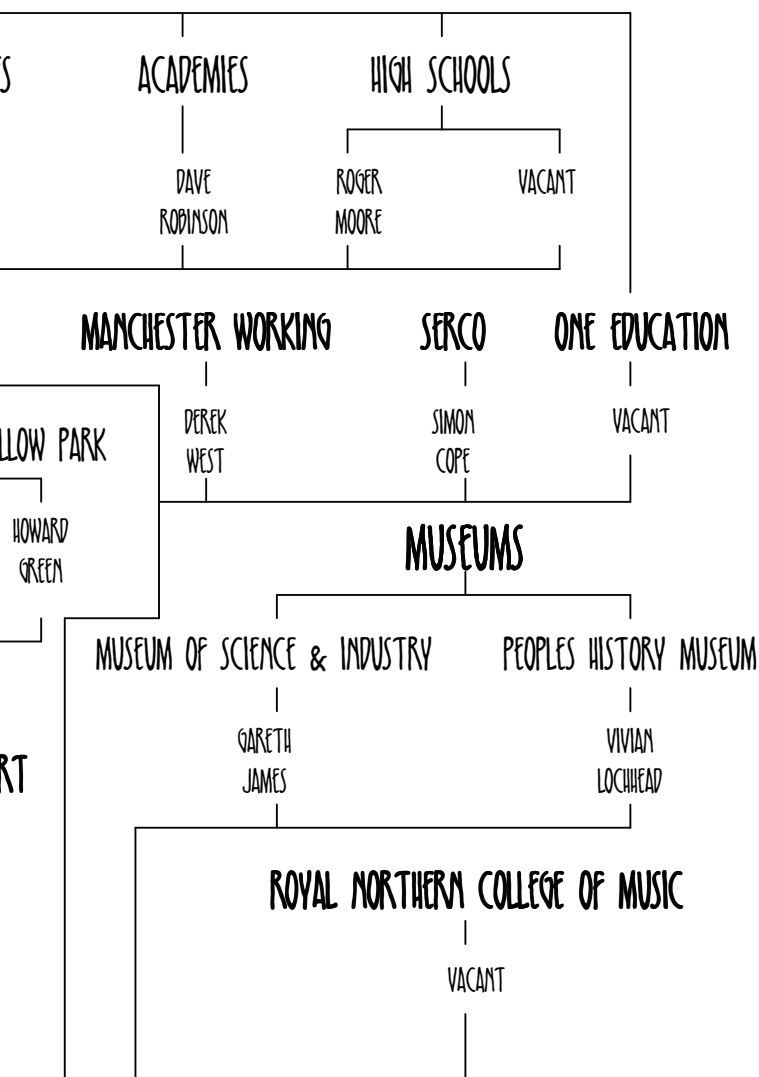
SECRETARY

BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

CH SECRETARIES

EDDY REDMOND	JANE SLATER	PATRICK TAYLOR	RENA WOOD
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SCHOOLS



IVE COMMITTEE

PRISED OF STEWARDS FROM ACROSS ALL THE WORKPLACES REPRESENTED BY THE BRANCH
ITS PROPORTIONALITY AND PROMOTES DEMOCRATIC INCLUSION ACROSS THE BRANCH. THE
NATIONAL POSITIONS, AND PROVIDES A FORUM FOR MEMBERS TO BRING THEIR CONCERNS

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

ROD
FAWCETT

EDUCATION OFFICER

STEVE
LYNCH

ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

BERNARD
SUDLOW

EQUALITIES OFFICER

SOMIA
STEWART

HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER

GEOFF
ARCHIBALD

PENSIONS CHAMPION

JOHN
MCHUGH

INTERNATIONAL OFFICER

ISOBEL
MCVICAR

JOINT TRADE UNION SECONDEE TO M PEOPLE

PETE BANKS

LABOUR LINK OFFICER

JULIE
CONNOLLY

JOINT TRADE UNION LEARNING COORDINATOR

STEVE LYNCH

TREASURER

JULIE
CONNOLLY

RETIRED MEMBERS

JOHN
TAYLOR

WELFARE OFFICER

HELEN
CLARKE

YOUNG MEMBERS

EMMA
RICHARDSON

SELF ORGANISED GROUPS

BLACK MEMBERS GROUP

SOMIA
STEWART

WOMENS GROUP

LESLEY
LANCELOT

*PLEASE NOTE WHERE VACANCIES EXIST WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING TO RECRUIT
NEW ACTIVISTS. GET IN TOUCH WITH THE BRANCH OFFICE!

Branch Executive Committee Report

The Branch Executive Committee met on Wednesday 23rd January.

As always there was a lively debate from delegates from across the branch attending.

The first item on the agenda was the funding cuts to Manchester City Council and the impact upon our members, including an update on the current position on the VER and VS scheme. As always the committee were steadfast in their opposition to compulsory redundancies and our commitment to ballot for industrial action should we need to.

The Committee was also updated on the current position on the National Local Government Pay Claim. The committee agreed that Manchester Branch would propose a motion to our regional representatives that any offer below the rate of inflation should be put to an all member ballot for industrial action, to make sure they get their say on the on-going Tory pay freeze.

There was news from outside Local Government as Rachel Preece informed the BEC of the proposed redundancies and shocking service cuts within Connexions. Patrick Taylor updated on the negotiations on harmonisation of pay at The Manchester College and Vimal Gadhur discussed the pay negotiations at the new Withington Community Housing Trust.

The Committee received a report from the National Black Members Conference.

The committee was also asked to consider nominations for the forthcoming NEC elections. The committee voted for the branch to nominate several candidates, including Manchester Branch members Eddy Redmond, Rena Wood and Isobel McVicar.

With so many members affected and facing real financial hardship it was agreed to allow an emergency motion to the upcoming AGM condemning the new Benefits Up-rating Bill. With a motion against the fascist EDL already on the agenda, a commitment was made to keep members informed of any counter protests being held when the EDL hold their march in Manchester on 2nd March.

For full details members can now view the BEC minutes on the Branch website.

Black Members Conference Report

On Friday, 18th January, 2013, I had the opportunity to attend my first Unison National Black Members Conference, in Sheffield, as a visitor for a day. I travelled by train without any problems, given the snowy weather conditions.

I really didn't know what to expect (or really what was expected of me) but felt happy to get involved. Luckily Georgina Sullivan from Manchester College and I attended with Sonia Stewart, an established member from Manchester, to guide us through.

I arrived at Sheffield City Hall where the conference was to start at 2pm. I was really impressed by the turnout of members from many differ-

ent cities in the UK and a variety of local authority employers and companies, ranging from Glasgow in Scotland, Birmingham in the Midlands and London in the South. I was introduced to members whom Sonia was familiar with and noticed that many other members, obviously long standing, greeted each other with hugs.

The conference was warmly and welcomingly opened by Bev Miller, The National Black Members Committee Chair. I was proud to witness a black woman command an occasion like this with such authority and professionalism. Next, was the guest speaker, Dave Prentis, General Secretary, who gave a very passionate speech on the need to encourage and recruit new members and how dramatically the current cuts will affect the lower paid and the destructive effect this could have on local communities.

Next, the motions were moved and debated by delegates. What impressed me though was the way first time speakers were given

extra support by members clapping on their introduction and at the end of presenting their motion. This was a real confidence boost for them and very uplifting.

I left the conference feeling pleased and proud and satisfied that I had attended and seen first hand how UNISON stands up for people when times are hard, and indeed there are hard times ahead. I look forward to taking further steps to being more involved.

Gloria Buckley
Manchester Branch Black Members Group



Delegates cast their votes at the BMC

New Pay Deal Struck For Housing Trust Members

UNISON Manchester are happy to report we are in the final stages of signing off on a new annual pay settlement at Parkway Green and Willow Park, who are amalgamating to form Wythenshawe Community Housing Trust.

Assistant Branch Secretary Vimal Gadher has been leading on cross-union negotiations. These have come to fruition with a two year deal for 4%.

This represents a significant improvement on the original offer and a good deal in the current economic climate. Consultation

with our members showed that they were overwhelmingly in favour. The deal is currently with the board for full agreement and we are looking forward to seeing it finalised in the next few weeks.

We have also secured an agreement that the payment will be made upfront, with members receiving the full 4% in this April's pay packet.

The branch would particularly like to thank the stewards, Eddie McLarnon and Neil Marsden for their all their hard work in securing the deal and consulting with UNISON members.

It goes to show that no matter what this Government say and no matter what damage they do to the economy there is always the scope for fairer deals on pay in the public sector.



Vimal raises a toast to the new deal....

Harmony At Manchester College...

To our members at The Manchester College harmonization is a word in very common usage at the moment. In fact it has been for several years now. The College was formed in 2008 through the amalgamation of City College and MANCAT. Staff transferred on their current rates of pay and since that time there has been an ongoing struggle to have salaries harmonized.

While academic staff and some sections of support staff have already been addressed we still have significant numbers of members being paid different rates for the same work.

Clearly this was unacceptable and UNISON has continued its campaign for clear, transparent grading for its members.

Perseverance has paid off and this month will see the conclusion of lengthy negotiations. A new pay scale has been established with clear bandings for support staff. From February our members will be paid on the new rates for their roles. This process has led to over a quarter of a million pounds in pay rises for staff. Just as importantly UNISON made a clear commitment to our members that we would not accept any pay cuts as part of harmonisation. We have honoured this pledge and not one member will receive a pay cut.

There is however still work to do. While the College working week is 37 hours we do still have some members working 39. Negotiations are ongoing to address this issue, the intention being to bring these staff down to 37 hours with no loss of pay. Many of these staff work as premises officers so the logistics of managing their rotas with site opening times are proving complicated. However negotiations are progressing well and we are hopeful that 37 hours for all can be delivered soon.



The UNISON office at Openshaw Campus

Good To Meet You: Gemma McIlwaine

Job: Customer Service Advisor at Contact Manchester for the Environmental Services.

How long have you been a member of the union? Almost 6 months.

What do you like about your role in UNISON?

Being able to have a voice that's heard and providing support to existing members as well as recruiting new ones.

Whereabouts do you live? I recently moved to Droylsden but I'm originally from Gorton.

Where would you want to live? Mexico or Australia.

Best thing about UNISON?

The support that I have received from the branch and my fellow members in the short time I have been a member has been amazing and I'm glad to be a part of such a strong union.

Who or what is your inspiration?

My family, and without sounding cheeky the older generations in society; they've lived and learned and have invaluable life experience and skills.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself? I can get irritable quite quickly and I've still not completely mastered hiding it.

What is the trait you most deplore in others? Laziness and arrogance.

If you were Prime Minister, what would you do first?

I'm not very good with politics and I don't think I'd like to be elected but if I was I would stop the privatisation of our public services, especially in the care industry.

What superpower would you like? Mind reading or granting wishes.

What's the worst job you've ever done? Gutting chickens.

What's your ideal job? That's a hard question! I think I've wanted to be just about everything up to this point in my life, but any role where I can make a difference and be successful would be ideal.

Favourite holiday destination: Mexico

Film? I don't have one as it changes all the time.

Drink? Vodka (absolute) Corona, pretty much anything!

Football club? Manchester United. We will make it to 20 this season!



What was your best day at work, and your worst?

I don't really have a best and worst day, my role is quite challenging as I work on the front line in a service which has been massively affected by the recent cuts. I like a challenge and regardless of whether days are good or bad, it's all experience.

Why do unions matter?

Unions matter as without them we wouldn't have the rights that we do now. They allow people to express their opinions and concerns and continually fight for a brighter future for everybody in the working world, not just their members. I have come to realise recently that not everybody realises just how much of an impact unions have on our working lives and I would encourage anybody who is not in a union to join one (UNISON of course).

Here when you need US...

There are many ways to get in touch with the branch. If you have a problem and need some help in the first instance we recommend you contact your local steward.

Should one not be available you can contact the branch office on 0161 254 7500 or email us at unison@manchester.gov.uk.

Help can also be obtained through our national helpline UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845

If what you are after is the latest news from across the branch we recommend you take a look at the branch website www.unisonmanchester.org. Unfortunately there isn't space to report on everything in The Mancunion so visit the site to check out our recent articles on Welfare reform, the crisis in legal aid and even a little bit of UNISON history with a profile of former NUPE General Secretary Bryn Roberts.

If you want to get the website

updates as they happen follow us on twitter at @unisonmcr.

Finally you can now download the UNISON app for smartphones which contains the latest national news and advice on some of the most common problems in the workplace.



Scan the QR code opposite to visit our website!