

MANCUNION

THE UNISON NEWSLETTER

SEPT 2009

- * *Job Evaluation – UNISON Delivers Real Protection*
- * *Local Government Conference Review*
- * *Pay & Part 3 Green Book Update*

A man with dark hair, wearing a red shirt with a black and white pattern of faces, is speaking at a podium. He is wearing a purple lanyard with 'UNISON' and 'Mantle' visible. The podium has a white sign with the 'UNISON' logo in blue and green. The background is a solid green color.

UNISON

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 directly on the number below.

**UNISON Manchester, Sixth Floor,
Sunlight House, Manchester M3 3JZ
Tel: 0161 254 7500
Fax: 0161 274 7365**

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 Chairs: Kate Russell & Eddy Redmond

President: Mo Baines

Vice Presidents: Rodney Lund & Kate Russell

Branch Secretary: Tony Caffery

Assistant Branch Secretaries: Pete Banks, Cath Donnellan, Evelyn Doyle, David Hall, Pat McDonagh, Jane Slater, Brian Stangoe & Rena Wood.

Equality Officer: Sonia Stewart

Branch Treasurer: Bob Oram

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Proofreader: Mark Bowden

Education Officer: Steve Swift

Chair & Secretary of Health and Safety Committee: Geoff Archibald & David Allwood

International Officer: Isobel McVicar

UNISON/TUC Learner Representatives' Lead Officer: Peter Wilkinson

Welfare Officer: Helen Clarke

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.

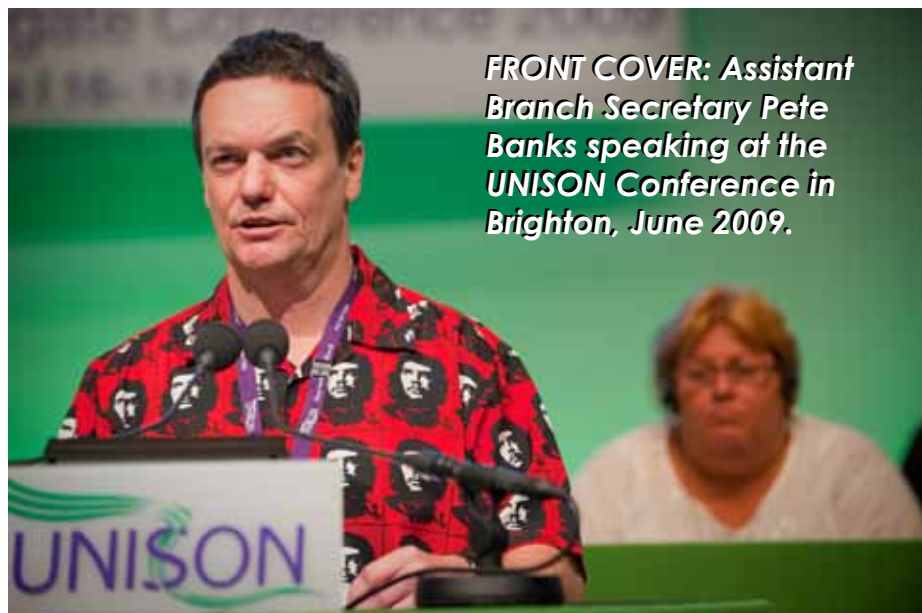
In my view...



The Branch recently balloted all City Council members on a package of changes to Green Book Part 3 terms and conditions. The result was overwhelmingly in favour of accepting the proposals. However, after the ballot closed it came to light that some members had seen an earlier version of the spreadsheet on Flexibility Payments which contained some inaccuracies. This was due to incorrect information which was initially supplied by the Council.

While this wouldn't have affected the overall ballot result, I believe it's crucial that all members should have received the correct information before casting their vote.

As a result, the Branch is re-running the ballot. While this is unfortunate, it's the right thing to do. As Branch Secretary, I want to be sure that all members can make a decision on how they vote based on the correct information. The ballot will be run again and we expect this will take place soon; I would urge all members to use their vote. *Tony Caffery*



FRONT COVER: Assistant Branch Secretary Pete Banks speaking at the UNISON Conference in Brighton, June 2009.

JE – UNISON Delivers Real Protection

It was regrettable that some staff were advised of Job Evaluation results via cascade meetings or verbally, by managers that the effect of new grades would be back-dated to April 2009. In some cases this lead to deduction of salary to recover honoraria and starting protection from that date.

UNISON immediately insisted that staff were individually advised in writing of any changes and no change should take place in their contractual terms until such notice had been given to individuals in writing.

To do otherwise would have been unfair, unreasonable, outside our procedures, and in our view it is also unlawful. Branch Officers made this plain to senior Council Officers when they met recently and they recognised that their position could not be defended. So the City Council agreed to step back and make every effort to repay staff in the following weeks in respect of any retrospective deductions prior to individuals receiving written notice of any changes. In addition, they also accepted our argument that the three-

year protection period cannot commence until members are individually sent written notice of their Job Evaluation outcome (should there be any need for protection).

The Council will give priority, initially, to refunding retrospective deductions and, thereafter, will amend personal files and issue letters confirming revised dates for the start of protection which will not be earlier than the date of personal letters notifying members of the need for protection to apply. UNISON accepts the Council's position that this was a breakdown of communication within the Authority and recognises that the Council will be moving to rectify matters as soon as possible. However it is regrettable that this situation occurred in the first place but our UNISON Branch will continue to work, through a positive dialogue with the Council, to resolve problems that emerge on the basis of joint working wherever possible.

UNISON is not shy about raising problems faced by our members but we recognise that communication problems can occur within any large employer such as the Council. That said, the manner in which our complaints have been heard and addressed

does highlight again the real advantages of union membership, collective representation and the serious nature in which our members concerns, which UNISON has constructively raised, have been listened to.

And if you think you have suffered similar problems with the JE process, do get in touch with your Steward immediately or contact the Branch Office.

Pay Update

Members will be aware from previous newsletters that the negotiations this year have been extremely difficult and influenced by a hardening of the Tory control of the Local Government Association, the recession, the worsening financial situation and the employers' unhappiness at the ACAS award in 2009. However, the joint trade union negotiators stuck to the task and got the employers to increase their initial offer from 0.5% to 1.0% (1.25% for those on SCP 4 – 10).

Our negotiators considered the very clear feedback they consistently received from branches up and down the country that while members wanted an increase to the initial 0.5% offer, they were not prepared to take strike action, so they are recommending that

The joint trade union negotiators stuck to the task and got the employers to increase their initial offer...

members accept the pay offer. The Branch has balloted members and the results will be fed back into the National office for as quick a resolution as possible.

Part 3 Green Book Update

The Branch balloted all City Council members back in June over whether to accept the Green Book Part 3 terms and conditions deal. This covered such things as annual leave entitlements, overtime rates and flexibility payments. The vast majority of members voted to accept the deal, by a proportion of four to one. However, it came to light after the ballot closed that some of the information provided by the City Council about the flexibility payments (notably a few lines within Excel spreadsheets used in a couple of briefing meetings) was incorrect. For a couple of job types, the flexibility payments were wrongly calculated. That said, the correct spreadsheet data was published online on the Branch website and the City Council's intranet.

The number of employees affected by the error would have been unlikely to have made a major difference to the ballot result. Many organisations would simply have regretted the mistake, apologised and moved on regardless.

Following discussion in the

Branch, it was decided that the correct and principled course of action was to re-run the ballot with the correct information provided. So that's what will happen in September, so we can all be absolutely clear that the result that emerges will be based on clear information, and truly represents the will of the membership. Voting matters, so make sure you cast yours... again.

Lord Mayor's Charade

Council employees who live in Manchester are being consulted on whether we should have an elected Mayor or not. Branch Officers suggest we oppose this idea; it places too much power in the hands of one individual, it reduces accountability and will cost an additional £100,000 in allowances alone.

There is a reason why only 11 Councils out of over 300 have gone down the elected Mayor route... it's a terrible idea!

International

Throughout their history, trade unions have always cast an eye to the plight of workers overseas, and lent a helping hand wherever possible. UNISON has been no exception. It campaigned with others to put an end to the racist, apartheid regime in South Africa and it has continued to support much

needed re-development efforts in that country.

The Manchester Branch still provides support for the Community HEART charity that works to overcome the awful legacy of apartheid South Africa. Together with its partners in South Africa it give priority to health, education and reconstruction training projects based on the principle of self-help. If you'd like to get involved phone Isobel McVicar at the Branch.

Knowledge is Power

UNISON produces a vast amount of information, from newsletters to briefings, campaign materials to advice for activists. So if you ever want more information on any subject, have a look at the national website at www.unison.org.uk or get in touch with the Branch. There's some stuff that you need to sign up for, such as the monthly *UNISON In Focus* magazine that is sent to activists (which always includes a poster to refresh union noticeboards) or the email news bulletin service, whilst other media such as the *U* magazine is sent to all members quarterly.

We do our bit at the Branch to get information out speedily to Stewards. If you don't have one at your workplace, volunteer and you'll get all the information you could possibly want first! Call Iris at the Branch on 0161 254 7500.

Steve Swift at Conference '09



I didn't want to go at first. It was a weekend, you see, and as my partner is touring in *The Big Friendly Giant* at the moment, I only get to see her at the weekends. So they're rather sacrosanct.

Still, it's nice to be asked: "Do you want to speak at Conference?" Instead of saying: What are you talking about? I'm a Conference virgin, I can't go all the way, I said: "Yeah, all right." And the worrying began.

This year's Conference was in Brighton. Yes, it was sunny. Yes, Brighton is lovely. Yes, the hotel was okay. But you don't get to see much of the sights, or sit on the beach. What you do get to do is sit in the conference hall passing motions (it's a bit too early in the article to do one of those jokes) and listening to speeches.

So every moment isn't a fun-filled, Chuckle Brothers-like extravaganza. Sometimes it gets a little wearing. After all, you're in the hall from 10 till 5, with an hour for lunch. It's occasionally the equivalent of aural Horlick's. But you do get to see the way the union works. You

get to see who the big hitters are, who sits at the top table, the Exec Group. You get to see what the big issues in the union for the coming year are - unsurprisingly, funding shortages, recruitment, equality as well as reports on pay, but also a very heavily-discussed debate on the role of the voluntary sector in social care and the funding crisis there. You also get to see how the different branches view those issues.

The Branch takes a view on each motion, whether to support, oppose or support with conditions/reservations. Delegates will chat about most of those motions, so you feel that you have a real link to the business in the hall. When you hold up your voting cards (something I've always wanted to do), it's not just an arm exercise, even though it does tone the triceps; no, you actually know why you're voting that way.

Equally as important is that business is done right there in front of you. It's as transparent as it could be, the business of UNISON being decided as you watch (or lightly doze); the mechanism is clear and

pretty effective.

On day one, we had some silly business about a motion which had been ruled out being put back in on a point of order. We voted, it was close, so we had to have a card vote. A card vote? On a point of order? No-one had seen the like since Roy Jenkins sent the Cabernet Sauvignon back twice in 1976. Seriously though, it caused a mild furore and held up business for about half an hour until votes were tallied. We didn't cover all the business that day.

Away from Conference, there are other obvious advantages to being there too; meeting other regional UNISON activists forges links to get the information and support which will make representing members easier - after all, the membership is the reason we are all there.

After the day's business, there are fringe meetings grabbing the attention. There's something for most interests - no basket weaving though. Yep, there's a bit of socialising and some pub time, but Conference isn't there for that and, possibly contrary to some members' beliefs (and I don't blame you), it's not just a dawn-to-dusk booze-up.

Anyway, I was too busy rehearsing my speech at every possible opportunity. I'd looked at the motions and found something that interested me; it was a

composite motion about recruiting, basically saying that we needed to recruit. How non-contentious can you get?

But it was the amendment I was interested in, an amendment which suggested that no recruiting tool was better than a strike. That's just not true, I thought. And so did the branch and the North West region. And

so, I was ready with a three-minute blockbuster. I got the chance to speak... To about a thousand people. Just like you see on the TV. I was a bit frightened, and I've played Stockport Plaza.

But I'd learned my speech and got all my points in. If I do say so myself, it went really well. Well, the branch delegates cheered. And you always get applause by

saying: "First time speaker, first time delegate." I played it down, but I was secretly delighted.

What Conference does is connect you with the union; you feel part of the process, part of deciding things, part of UNISON. It's part of the chain from the branch to stewards to members. It's important not to forget that.



Name Helen Clarke

Job Welfare Officer & Housing Convenor

How long have you been a member of the Branch? 20 years

Whereabouts do you live? I live in Denton, Tameside.

Where would you want to live? I would really like to live in Didsbury or Mellor in Stockport.

Who or what is your inspiration? My dad was my inspiration, and still is even though he sadly passed away this year.

Best thing about UNISON? Belonging to an

organisation that has your best interests at heart, and for me the best thing about Manchester UNISON is the deep, shared friendship and trust that I have with members of the Branch.

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

Change the cabinet to reflect the electorate. My cabinet would reflect the multi-cultural society that we live in.

What would your super-power be? To prevent cancer.

What's your ideal job?

My ideal job would be a successful singer with a string of number ones. They would have to air brush my photo though for the magazines!

Favourite holiday destination, film, drink, football club? Favourite

holiday destination is Bodrum in Turkey, favourite drink in Budweiser with lots of ice, and favourite football club is City - the only football club to come from Manchester!

What was your best day at work?

My best day at work was the 19 February, 2009 when I celebrated my 40th birthday and lots of colleagues old and new came to the office

And your worst? My worst day was the day I got the phone call in work to say that my dad had a terminal illness. Thankfully my colleagues are all fab and they rallied round and supported me.

Why do unions matter? You would not have a house without house insurance, so why be employed and not be in a union. Unions help people collectively stand up for each other; all together for the same cause.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

I deplore the fact that I worry about everything.

What is the trait you most deplore in others?

The trait I most deplore in others is rudeness and dismissive behaviour. Everyone has the right to be heard, even if you do not want to listen.

The Pensions Onslaught Begins

There's another pensions storm on the way, with the usual suspects such as the right wing pressure group Tax Payers Alliance, not wasting any media opportunity to gob off about our "gold plated pensions."

They bang on about public sector pensions, describing them as "unaffordable" and a "drain on the taxpayer". Inevitably, this is coupled with calls for those who provide our public services to share the "pain" of the private sector.

Some politicians and newspapers appear desperate to provoke pension envy and drive an artificial wedge between public and private sector workers. They want to drive down standards, pay and conditions in a race to the bottom.

.....
Sign O' The Times?



The nation prepares itself for a possible Tory government...

But the question shouldn't be: "why have public servants got a viable pension scheme?" It should be: "Why haven't all workers got access to a decent pension scheme?"

We should question why is it that those at the top in the private sector, the high earners, get great pensions? And then ask, don't the workers in those companies, who created the wealth, deserve a decent pension, too?

Even where the bosses perform badly, they still get to keep their pensions. Look no further than the former boss of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Fred Goodwin, whose actions led to the collapse of his bank, who walked away with a £700,000 a year pension, part of which he later refused following public pressure. That's still real gold-plate.

The truth is there is not an awful lot to envy in public sector pensions. Yes,

they do provide valuable benefits and there are a lot of people in the country who don't have access to an occupational pension scheme, let alone a decent one. But they are, by no means, "gold-plated." The average pension in local government is £3,800 a year, but for women, it's less than £2,000.

Paying into a public sector pension scheme is a sound way of saving for retirement. Local government employees pay between 5.5 and 8.5 per cent of their salaries into the scheme, which not only delivers benefits for members and councils but also helps fund massive regeneration schemes in Greater Manchester. And just a few years ago, there was a major review of public sector pensions. In all the schemes where UNISON has members, we sat down with employers and agreed terms that protected current employees' rights and contributions that were also affordable and sustainable for the future.

So it looks like we will again have to fight for decent pensions; and this time we will need to ensure that we campaign explicitly for sound pensions in both the public and the private sector, because we are all aiming for the same goal – a reasonable pension and dignity in old age – unlike the elite that own our newspapers and run our banks and their media spinners.

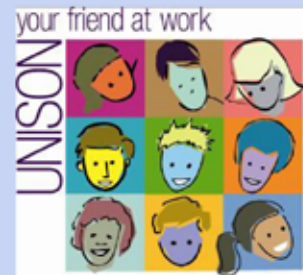


With more than 1.3 million members working across the public services, being part of UNISON means you have the full weight of the UK's biggest trade union behind you.

We have more workplace representatives than any other union in the country - backed up by experienced full-time regional and national experts. Together we can help ensure that your rights are protected at work and that you are in a safe environment.

UNISON members include staff working for the NHS, the Police Service, Colleges and Schools, the Electricity, Gas and Water Industries, Transport and the Voluntary Sector.

UNISON campaigns to keep services public and strengthen the voice of public sector workers. Join us and make sure your voice is heard.



Please fill in this application form form in BLOCK CAPITALS and send it to the address shown below.

1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

Mr/Ms/Miss/Mrs/Other	First Name	Other Initial
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Surname	Date of Birth / /
---------	-------------------

Home address
Postcode

National Insurance No. (from your payslip)
--

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

<input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Black African	<input type="checkbox"/> White UK
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish
<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/> White Other	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian UK	<input type="checkbox"/> Black UK	

Please tick this box if you require materials in a different format (e.g. large print or Braille) - be sure to supply contact details below

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you - indicate if work or home

2. YOUR EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Employers Name

Job Title/Occupation

Department/Section

Workplace Address

Postcode

Payroll No.

When completed please send to:-
UNISON Manchester,
Sixth Floor, Sunlight House,
Manchester M3 3JZ
Tel: 0161 254 7500 Fax: 0161 274 7365

3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY FROM 1 OCTOBER 2003

Please tick your earnings before stoppages

Weekly Pay	Annual Pay	Band	Per Week	Per Month
Up to £38.47	Up to £2,000	A	£0.30	£1.30
£38.48-£96.16	£2,001-£5,000	B	£0.81	£3.50
£96.17-£153.84	£5,001-£8,000	C	£1.22	£5.30
£153.85-£211.53	£8,001-£11,000	D	£1.52	£6.60
£211.54-£269.23	£11,001-£14,000	E	£1.81	£7.85
£269.24-£326.92	£14,001-£17,000	F	£2.24	£9.70
£326.93-£384.61	£17,001-£20,000	G	£2.65	£11.50
£384.62-£480.76	£20,001-£25,000	H	£3.23	£14.00
£480.77-£576.92	£25,000-£30,000	I	£3.98	£17.25
£576.93-£673.08	£30,001-£35,000	J	£4.68	£20.30
£673.08 +	Over £35,000	K	£5.19	£22.50

Please tick the appropriate box to indicate how often you are paid

Weekly
 Fortnightly
 Four Weekly
 Monthly

Please tick this box if you are a student member in full-time education (including student nurses or modern Apprentices). Your subscription is £10 per year.

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON'S **Affiliated Political Fund (APF)** is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON'S **General Political Fund (GPF)** is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below. Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide to UNISON information to keep my records up to date.
- I authorise deduction of the following political fund payment as part of my subscriptions: *Tick one box only*

Affiliated Political Fund

General Political Fund

Now please sign and date below.

Signature

Date

If you have been a member of a trade union before, please state which one below:

DATA PROTECTION
 UNISON will process your membership information together with other information for administration, statistical analysis, conducting ballots and other statutory requirement purposes. We may also send you newsletters, journals and surveys and let you know about educational and campaigning matters. We will disclose your information to our service providers and agents for these purposes.

If you do not want to receive any mailings from UNISON besides those required by statute as shown in bold above, please tick this box.

We may share your information with organisations with whom we have a business relationship for your benefit. We, or they may contact you by mail, telephone, SMS, fax or e-mail to let you know about goods, services or promotions which we think may be of interest to you.

If you do not wish to receive such information please tick this box.

If you tick either of these boxes then you will be removed from the appropriate mailing lists as quickly as possible but for administrative reasons this may take a couple of months.