

BRANCH LINES

West Sussex County Branch of UNISON Newsletter

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Pensions under threat

Think that your pension will transfer with you if you're outsourced? Think again! That's not always the case as Branch members working in three nurseries for West Sussex County Council have found out.

Because of the particular circumstances of their outsourcing, the Council argues that these staff cannot take their LGPS pensions with them, but will instead have to take the pension their new employer offers—likely to be a far inferior stakeholder scheme.

The Branch is seeking urgent legal advice for members and will meet to discuss their options once this is available. All members will want to take note of these worrying developments.

Local government staff are the lowest paid in the public sector. A modest pension is the least you deserve for your dedication, but even this is under threat. The branch will need its members to work with us to resist such flagrant attacks on core terms and conditions.

New website

The Branch has commissioned local firm Rocket Mill to produce its new website. The new site will use 'responsive technology' so it looks great and is usable on any device, be it a smartphone, tablet or PC. The website address will stay the same, and the new site will launch on 10th February.

West Sussex's Valentine's Day Massacre?

West Sussex County Council will discuss slashing £141million from essential local public services at its Full Council meeting on February 14th. The budget was first presented at Full Council on December 13th but will come back for more detailed discussion and decision on Valentine's Day.

There is little transparency prior to the budget being agreed about the implications of cutting £141million, leaving the public in the dark about what its elected representatives are planning. UNISON has gone on record in the local press to challenge this lack of debate with residents, service users and staff. However, the 60 separate budget lines must signal a bonfire of services through closures, reductions or outsourcing.

That the Council is in this position after already cutting £79million is testimony to the economic incompetence of central Government. However, the signs are that the Council administration does not believe in public services and indeed welcomes the 'smaller state'. The Council has it within its power to raise Council Tax after all. A rise of just 2% (45p a week for Band D payers) over the period would raise £29million and go a long way to offsetting some of the awful decisions that will need to be made if the Council straightjackets itself. But the indications are that even 2% is too much for the group currently running County Hall.

As well as shrinking public service provision for its own sake, there is a flat refusal by some Councillors to accept that £141million will be delivered by cuts. In regular liaison meetings, your Branch Reps have been told by Conservative Councillors that £141million will instead be delivered entirely through 'efficiencies'. There is a complete denial that, to take just one recent example, sacking 118 youth workers represents a loss of service. When evidence is presented that vulnerable people have been harmed through local cuts already, some Councillors refuse to look this in the face and accept that their actions can have devastating consequences.

Meanwhile the Council has been rocked by the shock departure of respected Chief Executive Kieran Stigant. The longest-serving Councillor James Walsh has made clear his view that it is "hard to accept that he [Kieran] was not pushed. Besides this the leader of WSCC has form, as she sacked his predecessor without following due process." Whether the Chief Executive jumped or pushed, this unwelcome development has cost the local taxpayer over £200,000.

The Branch is calling on members to attend the Full Council meeting on **Friday 14th February** to show there is opposition and anger at their agenda. Let's play our part to stop the Valentine's Day Massacre planned for our public services. Assemble outside County Hall at **9.30am**. Full Council begins at **10.30am**. You must agree time off from work with your manager before attending if this is a working day for you.

NJC Pay campaign—dates to find out more

The UNISON NJC pay claim for 2014/15 is for £1 per hour on all spinal points. The West Sussex branch is running four briefing sessions on the pay claim and campaign on 24th, 27th, 30th and 31st January (full details below). These briefings will also be an opportunity to discuss WSCC's proposed budget cuts of £141million. Please come along and encourage colleagues who have not yet joined the union to join and attend too.

We are also making Reps and Officers available for informal 'surgeries' on 28th and 29th January. If you have an issue at work you'd like to run by us, drop by or call the office on 01243 777636 and we will book you an appointment.

Date	Time	Session	Location
24/01/2014	12.30-1.30	Members Briefing: Pay and Cuts	Richmond Room, Edes House, County Hall, Chichester
27/01/2014	12.30-1.30	Members Briefing: Pay and Cuts	Goodwood Room, County Hall North, Horsham
27/01/2014	10.00-4.00	Recruitment Stall	Costa Coffee, County Hall North, Horsham
28/01/2014	10.00-4.00	Stall & Surgery*	Costa Coffee, County Hall North, Horsham
29/01/2014	10.00-4.00	Stall & Surgery*	Canteen, Centenary House, Worthing
30/01/2014	12.30-1.30	Members Briefing: Pay and Cuts	Conference Room 4, Centenary House, Worthing
30/01/2014	10.00-4.00	Recruitment Stall	Canteen, Centenary House, Worthing
31/01/2014	12.30-1.30	Members Briefing: Pay and Cuts	Conference Room 4, Durban House, Bognor Regis
31/01/2014	10.00-4.00	Recruitment Stall	Canteen, Durban House, Bognor Regis

Adult's Transformation

As a precursor to ever-closer working with Health, some 300 staff in Adults' Services will shortly commence consultation on the reallocation of work to a new staffing model. The model cuts £1.2million from the baseline staffing budget, though outsourcing does not feature in the proposals, and there is no overall reduction in current staffing FTE. UNISON has been involved in discussions with management throughout and will be in touch with our members when consultation begins on 28th January.

University of Chichester—Living Wage won but pay campaign continues

Over at the University of Chichester, UNISON West Sussex and the UCU have won an agreement for staff with its contracted firms to be paid the Living Wage. This is a significant achievement which will benefit the lowest paid workers in the University's cleaning, catering and security contracts, and demonstrates a welcome and progressive approach on the part of Chichester university management.



News in brief

Youth Services

In the Youth Service, interviews are now complete. Members will move to the new the structure in April. We have been supporting members throughout since the process began in September.

Business Change

UNISON will continue to support members in Business Change in an upcoming reorganisation, which is likely to result in redundancies. UNISON representative Judith Taylor along with Branch Officers will support members.

Age of transfer, Worthing

In schools, following our attendance at the recent staff briefings about the proposed changes to the age of transfer in Worthing, we submitted a report with the NUT outlining our concerns. We will continue to ensure our members best interests are represented in the development of any staff protocol.

Sir Robert Woodard Academy

We welcome our new Rep in Sir Robert Woodard Academy, Sara Redford. Sara began life as a UNISON rep elected in the midst of a reorganisation. Supported by Branch Officers, Sara has succeeded in ensuring a fair and transparent process, and minimised job losses.

Central Sussex College

2013 was not a happy year at the College, with a major programme of redundancies and other cuts to balance the books following a financial black hole of several million pounds. There were some successes however. One UNISON member, faced with an impossible choice between changed working arrangements and caring for family members, sought our help. Following meetings with College management and Human Resources, suitable changes were made which allowed our member to keep working whilst looking after family.

Meanwhile, the University's own staff have had to take industrial action in pursuit of their own pay claim.

The national employers' organisation (UCEA) has offered just 1%, causing staff at the University to walk out in well-supported strike action. The next date for industrial action is likely to be 6th February but is still subject to discussion with other trade unions.

Young members required

UNISON's Young Members' Officer Tom Dewing left the Branch in 2013 as he found a new job. This has created a vacancy for the Young Members' Officer post. If you are under 27 years old and would like to find out more about the role please call Dan Sartin on 01243 777636.

The Branch would also like to hear from any young members who are interested in attending the UNISON National Delegate Conference in Brighton in June. All expenses are paid and it is a great opportunity to find out more about our union.

Thank you my UNISON

A selection of comments the Branch office has received from members since our November newsletter:

"Further to a meeting with my manager today, he confirmed that I would be put on a Grade 5 for September and that I would receive backpay from 2012. A result which I wanted. Thank you for all your help."

"Thankyou so much for your support and advice. It has all been resolved at school, thank goodness. It was so difficult as I had been there for such a long time and my colleagues are my friends as well. I still enjoy my job and will do for a long while."

"I would just like to express my gratitude to X and X for handling my case with such patience, humour and understanding. My heartfelt thanks."

"As always X, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for all your help and support throughout this very difficult time, I don't know what I would have done without you and appreciate your advice and kindness."

"Thank you X, [the consultation response] is really good, you got it 100%! I admire your skills and wish I could express myself like that."

"This has been a very stressful time for me and will be glad when it comes to an end. Many thanks for your help, as you gave me the confidence to stand up for my rights which were and would have continued to be denied."

Vote of no confidence at new 'mutual'

Aspire Sussex, the outsourced Adult Education service, has been going through something of a crisis during the first 18 months of its existence. It seems as though the organisation was ill-prepared for its launch and failed to understand how to manage its finances. The last straw was reached in December 2013 when Aspire could not guarantee that salaries would be paid for January 2014. This followed a reorganisation and redundancies, intended to contain costs, and UNISON members were understandably very angry.

Following UNISON meetings attended by three quarters of the staff, a unanimous Vote of No Confidence in the leadership of the fledgling mutual was passed. Further discussions will now take place between UNISON and Aspire.

This development is very worrying as Aspire was outsourced as a 'staff mutual', with staff intended to have a significant say in the running of the organisation. The Council has promoted this type of organisation as a model for the future and have held up Aspire as a good example of how to do it. Yet the real experience of staff has been very different to the picture painted by promoters of the mutual model.

The Branch office has a UNISON guide to Staff Mutuals and would encourage members interested in the Aspire experience or mutuals in general to get in touch to find out more.

Branch vacancy

Could you work for a Branch of Britain's largest public service trade union? Our busy Branch office in Chichester has a vacancy for a vital role supporting our 6,000 members.

Branch Negotiations Officer

35-37 hours per week, by agreement with the postholder.
NJC Grade 9: £26,539-£28,922 (based on a 37-hour week)
Attractive annual leave and final salary pension

You will assist collective negotiations with a range of employers, as well as supporting individual members with issues at work. You will also plan and run campaigns to recruit new members and defend public services.

Closing date for applications: Monday 27th January.

Interview date: Monday 3rd February.

To apply, visit www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk/jobs

Lancastrian Infants School

One of UNISON's key roles is supporting members working in schools when redundancies and other changes loom. In Chichester, when a 'Free School' was set up (with public money) existing schools were faced with the loss of a number of pupils and the consequent reduction in teaching and support hours – potential redundancies, to be paid for with yet more public money!

Following UNISON's intervention, meetings with staff and the Head teacher, and a formal written response from the branch, all compulsory redundancies were avoided and the school was able to accommodate staff to acceptable patterns of work whilst ensuring the learning needs of the pupils were met.

Branch Officers—2014/15 Elections

Following its January meeting, the Branch Committee has nominated the following members to serve as Branch Officers for the following year.

Chair	<u>Graham Anderson</u>	Vice-Chair	<u>Ian Harvey</u>
Branch Secretary	<u>Dan Sartin</u>	Deputy Branch Secretary	<u>Karen Daubney</u>
Treasurer	<u>Jennie Barrett</u>	Environmental Officer	<u>Julie Bolton</u>
Welfare Officer	<u>David O'Connor</u>	Equalities Officer, BME	<u>Jules Wilson</u>
Equalities Officer, Disabled	<u>Robert Hayes</u>	Equalities Officer LGBT	No nomination
Equalities Officer, Women	No nomination	Communications Officer	<u>Mervyn Sams</u>
Health & Safety Officer (1)	<u>Karen Daubney</u>	Health & Safety Officer (2)	<u>Clive Coleman</u>
Health & Safety Officer (3)	<u>Chris Barrett</u>	Labour Link Officer	<u>Sarah Cawston</u>
International Officer	<u>David Hammond</u>	Education Coordinator	No nomination
Membership Officer	No nomination	Young Members' Officer	No nomination
Lifelong Learning Coordinator	No nomination		

As part of the union's democratic process, nomination forms for any of the above positions are available from the Branch Office. The annual election process for Workplace Representatives is also underway. The nomination period for all positions ends at 12noon on Friday 31st January. A nomination form for Workplace Representatives can be found below. If you would like more information about what is entailed please contact the UNISON Office on 01243 777636 or via email at office.unison@westsussex.gov.uk

Branch AGMs—dates announced

UNISON West Sussex is holding its Annual General Meeting across three venues this year:

Monday 10th March
Centenary House
Worthing, BN13 2QB

Monday 17th March
County Hall North
Horsham, RH12 1XH

Monday 24th March
County Hall
Chichester, PO19 1RQ

All three meetings are held from 12.30pm until 2.00pm, and are open to any member. Refreshments and a sandwich buffet will be available. Please let the Branch office know which venue you will attend at.

Nomination Form - Workplace Representatives

Workplace Representatives play a vital role in the Branch. They invite new colleagues to join, represent members' views, distribute information about UNISON and get involved in local issues and negotiations. A workplace may be a large team, a location (a day centre for example), a section within a directorate, or an employer. Full training is provided and Reps receive paid time off to undertake the role. Can you help? If you are interested please complete the form below (which can be photocopied) and return it to:

UNISON West Sussex, County Hall, West Street, Chichester PO19 1RQ by 12noon on 31st January 2014.

Please note that current Workplace Reps need to be re-nominated in order to continue in the role.



I would like to become/continue (delete as appropriate) as the Workplace Representative for:

_____ (team/location/directorate/employer)

Full Name: _____ (please print) **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Proposed by: _____ (please print) **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Seconded by: _____ (please print) **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

NB - Proposers and Seconders should be members working in the same workplace.