

BRANCH LINES

Retired
Members
edition

UNISON West Sussex Branch newsletter • www.unisonwestsussex.org.uk

It's All Happening!

In this third edition of RM Branch Lines you will find a report back from the RM conference, information about the UNISON General Secretary Election and details of the Save Care Now Campaign, as well as links to interesting articles and campaigns run by partner organisations. There is plenty going on affecting retired members and plenty of opportunities to get involved so I hope you will find this edition interesting. Don't forget the UNISON West Sussex Retired Members' Group meets four times a year. Our next meeting is on 4 December in Chichester. Hope to see you there!

Retired Members' Conference

UNISON Retired Members' Conference took place this year at the Brighton Centre on 6 & 7 October. The first day format was taken up with discussions and meetings of various groups. The second dealt with the motions that were put to conference. West Sussex RM group sent three delegates, Ruby Cox, Kate Beach and David Milnes. On the first day we attended a panel debate on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP. This is the next step in establishing the supremacy of big business over government, a trade agreement dedicated to removing so-called "barriers to trade", i.e. the regulations nations put in place to protect their populations, doing away with the last vestiges of publicly-owned public services. UNISON has produced its own briefings available here: <https://www.unison.org.uk/our-campaigns/stop-ttip/> and here:

<http://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2014/05/On-line-Catalogue224102.pdf>.

You can get further information from organisations such as Global Justice Now, Friends of the Earth and War on Want.



A woman protests against TTIP outside the Houses of Parliament earlier this year.

There were 37 motions on the agenda, all of which were carried except for one for which no speaker was present. Also, numbers 28 to 37 were not reached by the end of conference. They covered such topics as Pensions, Healthcare, Universal Benefits and Communications. A motion put by

Wolverhampton General was of particular interest, pointing out that trade unions must get better at engaging older people as over 65s are a growing proportion of society and are also the sector most likely to vote and to shape election outcomes.

A number of speakers noted that communications with RM from national and the regions were far from satisfactory. There were virtually no resources for RM and what were available were out of date. The problem of how to communicate with those who did not have access to a computer was no nearer being solved. Motion 22 was passed and the NRMC will now set up a working party to take appropriate action.

Motion 24 similarly expressed dissatisfaction, this time with the lack of progress made between conferences on motions, which has been carried. In response, the NRMC will now prepare and distribute a quarterly report on progress against all motions and this will hopefully help to maintain a focus on those issues.

On the second day, conference was addressed by General Secretary Dave Prentis.



In case any of you are wondering whether RM can join UNISON's Affiliated Political Fund (APF: Labour Link) after you've retired, here is the answer.

A recent letter from South East UNISON states "RM in the branch wishing to join the APF can do so by sending a notification to the Regional Political Officer, including their name and membership number, accompanied by a £5 cheque payable to South East Labour Link".

The cheque should go to:

Ryan Slaughter, UNISON South East Political Officer, Ranger House, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4UL.

If you were paying in before retirement you can continue to participate in branch and regional Labour Link activities on payment of a £5 annual fee.

Regional Retired Members' Annual General Meeting

All retired members in the South East Region are invited to the Regional Retired Members' AGM which takes place at:

11am - 1pm, Thursday 3 December at the UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY.

Coffee, tea and lunch will be provided. The AGM is an opportunity to ensure your opinions and issues are taken account of and represented within UNISON. So if you are interested in attending please contact:

rubbycox86@yahoo.co.uk for an application form. Ruby Cox will be attending, but we have funding available for one other place.



UNISON General Secretary Elections

We now have the final list of candidates. They are Roger Bannister, John Burgess, Dave Prentis and Heather Wakefield. Should you wish, you can easily find out more about the candidates and their policies simply by doing an internet search on their names. West Sussex UNISON, and the South East region, has decided to support John Burgess. You can find out why here:

<http://unisonwestsussex.org.uk/news/general-secretary-nomination-2015/>.

You can also find out more about the election roadshows taking place across the county between 9th and 12th November. This is a critical time for UNISON. We need strong leadership in what is literally becoming a fight for survival, not only for the trade unions but for the welfare state, the NHS and so many other institutions that we thought we would always be there for us when we needed them, **so please use your vote!**



Capita Research: Not a Pretty Picture

The branch commissioned an independent survey into the state of outsourced services run by Capita. The results cause grave concern. Only 2% of those surveyed felt services had improved and 70% felt staff morale was poor. The report is very comprehensive. Both the full report and a summary can be viewed on the branch website here:

<http://unisonwestsussex.org.uk/news/capita-research/>. Although the report has given the branch additional leverage when dealing with issues around outsourcing, more evidence is still needed so if you or anyone you know has had any problems dealing with Capita or services run by Capita please let the branch office know.

National Pensioners' Convention – Campaign!

The NPC, to which our Retired Members' Group is affiliated, publishes a monthly bulletin, Campaign, for activists in the pensioners' movement. The October issue, which contains interesting news about Jeremy Corbyn's Older People's Commission, is available here <http://npcuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Campaign-Bulletin-101.pdf>. The November issue, which sadly features the front page of the Daily Express leading the charge - in what we knew would be the government's strategy of making pensioners appear to be too well off - can be seen here <http://npcuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Campaign-Bulletin-102.pdf>. Hope I'm not the only one to find it particularly offensive of the Daily Express to publish a headline about slashing pensions next to a photograph of a member of the Royal Family showing off her tiara.

New RM Membership form

After much grumbling and complaining about the lack of materials available for the purpose of recruiting RM, a new form has been produced which can be viewed by visiting this page: <http://unisonwestsussex.org.uk/get-involved/retired-members/>

Of course the tricky bit is getting the form to people when they are about to retire, so please if you know any UNISON members in this situation, print off a copy and give it to them. You can also pick up copies from the branch office, and if you have any bright ideas as to how we can get more UNISON members to join our retired members' group please let Ruby or the Branch Office know!

SENPeC

SENPeC, the South East Region of the National Pensioners' Convention, held its AGM in Maidstone on 27 October. Ruby Cox attended. Of particular interest was the Secretary's Annual Report, which highlighted four campaigning issues: the homecare, the State Pension, Senior Concessionary Travel and the NHS. It was pointed out that since our railways are largely owned by foreign governments such as France, Germany and Holland, millions of pounds of profits are taken out of the country and then used to subsidise those countries' own publicly-owned transport systems! More info here:

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/08/18/foreign-state-owned-railway-british-train-companies-revenue_n_8003970.html

The committee meets four times a year and Ruby will continue to report back on progress with any of those four campaigning issues.

Ruby's new email address

Please note the new email address for RM Secretary Ruby Cox is now:

rubicox86@yahoo.co.uk

5p
CHEAPER THAN THE DAILY MAIL
THE WORLD'S GREATEST NEWSPAPER
DAILY EXPRESS
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21, 2015 55p
WEATHER: DRIZZLE

WHY YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD TO LOOK LOVELY IN LEATHER
SEE PAGE 3

ONE MIGRANT EVERY MINUTE IS ALLOWED TO STAY IN BRITAIN
SEE PAGE 2

NEW CALL TO SLASH PENSION PAYOUTS
Millions face threat to retirement income

Lady in red Kate charms the Chinese in Queen Mum's tiara
EVEN CONRAD COBBY GOT DRESSED UP PAGES 4&5
TURN TO PAGE 9

South East Regional Retired Members' Network Day: Save Care Now!



Every year the region holds a networking day for retired members. This year the theme was the UNISON campaign Save Care Now! <http://www.savecarenow.org.uk>

Most of us know the main issues with homecare: low rates of carer pay, zero hours contracts, 15-minute visits and lack of training, but during the presentation some new and frankly terrifying facts came to light. These left you praying you never found yourself reliant on the so-called services this government sees fit to provide. The results of a survey conducted by UNISON revealed that 59% of workers had received no training in how to attach or change a catheter, 38% had not been shown how to carry out peg feeding (i.e. by a tube directly into the stomach), 24% had received no training on administering medication, despite handling drugs such as morphine, and 27% had received no training on how to care for people with dementia. Nearly everyone surveyed had asked for extra training, but less than 50% had received any. 75% of councils in England, Wales and Scotland now commission 15 minute visits to provide homecare. You can read about the effects of this in a UNISON publication, **'15 Minutes of Shame: Stories from Britain's Homecare Frontline'** here:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2015/06/23070.pdf>

It's a pretty grim picture so why not have a look at the campaign website and see how you can give support?

And Finally.....



Yet another NHS crisis!

**The new Junior Doctor Contract
Is it Safe? Is it Fair?**
Thursday 12th November 7pm - 9pm
St. Mary's Church, St. James's Street
(corner of Rock Gardens / St. James's Street)

All Welcome

These changes affect all of us and the future of our NHS. Expert speakers will explain the issues. You can ask questions and join the discussion. It's our NHS, patients and doctors and healthcare staff need to work together to save it. Speakers will include:
Junior Doctors
BSMS Student doctors
Dr. Rob Galloway, A&E Consultant
Health workers from Brighton & Hove

Sussex Defend the NHS is organising a meeting to debate the Junior Doctor Crisis on 12 November in Brighton. Their website is always worth checking and you can sign up for regular updates on their activities.

Don't Forget!

The next meeting of the UNISON West Sussex Retired Members' Group will be on 4 December in Chichester, details to follow. In the meantime, keep checking the branch website for news, activities and campaigns. Remember it's your branch too and we still have a valuable contribution to make. Hope to see you in December!

Ruby Cox

