



AGM Booklet

29, 30 and 31 March 2022



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Branch Secretary: Dan Sartin

21 February 2022

Dear branch member,

UNISON West Sussex – Annual General Meeting

I would like to invite you to the UNISON West Sussex branch Annual General Meeting for 2022.

Tuesday 29 March	12.30-1.30pm	Teams
Wednesday 30 March	4.30-5.30pm	Zoom
Thursday 31 March	6.30-7.30pm	Zoom

We are holding our AGM over three separate meetings and I hope you will be able to make one of them. All meetings will be held virtually via the Teams or Zoom virtual meeting platform. You can attend by: PC/Laptop; Tablet; Smartphone; Landline telephone.

We will be holding a raffle at **each** of the three AGM meetings with the same great prizes at each event:

1. Star prize of £150 Amazon voucher or One4All voucher
2. Second runners up prize of £50 Amazon or One4All voucher
3. Third runners up prize of £25 Amazon voucher or One4All voucher

To register for your Teams or Zoom link and Electronic Raffle ticket we are using Eventbrite. Please register here: <https://unisonwestsussex.eventbrite.co.uk/>

It will only take two minutes. To win a raffle prize you will need to be present at the AGM you have registered for. Electronic ticket numbers generated by Eventbrite will be put in the draw. Only one prize can be won per member. The draw for three prizes will take place at the end of each meeting. You must be present when the draw is made to claim your prize. More information can be found at: <https://unisonwestsussex.org.uk/news/branch-agms-2022/>

Enclosed with this AGM mailing are the following:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of 2021 AGM
3. List of Branch Officers and Workplace Reps for 2022-23
4. Honoraria payments
5. West Sussex branch action plan
6. The branch Annual Report for 2021

I look forward to seeing you at our AGM.

Yours sincerely

Dan Sartin
Branch Secretary

UNISON West Sussex

2022 Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 29 March | 12.30-1.30pm
Wednesday 30 March | 4.30-5.30pm
Thursday 31 March | 6.30-7.30pm

AGENDA

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. To approve the minutes of the AGM held on 29, 30 and 31 March 2021 (ENCLOSED). **VOTE REQUIRED**
3. To approve branch officers and workplace representatives for 2022-23 (ENCLOSED). **VOTE REQUIRED**
4. Branch finance and accounts 2021:
 - 4.1 To approve the accounts (TO BE TABLED); **VOTE REQUIRED**
 - 4.2 To agree honoraria payments (ENCLOSED). **VOTE REQUIRED**
5. To approve the branch action plan (ENCLOSED). **VOTE REQUIRED**
6. To approve the branch annual report (ENCLOSED) and receive any questions from members. **VOTE REQUIRED**
7. Raffle draw: 3 prizes to be drawn at each AGM.
8. Close of meeting.

UNISON West Sussex

Minutes of the aggregate Annual General Meetings held on March 29th, 30th and 31st 2021 via Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

Present: Ian Harvey (Chair), Sarah Etherington (Vice Chair), Dan Sartin (Branch Secretary), Karen Daubney (Deputy Branch Secretary), Jennie Barrett (Branch Treasurer) and 114 other members.

In attendance: Ryan Slaughter (Regional Organiser, UNISON South East), Catherine Albon (Branch Administrator - minutes).

1. Welcome from Branch Chair

The Branch Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with a tribute to Vinit Solti, a member of the West Sussex branch who had recently passed away from complications relating to Covid-19.

2. To approve the minutes of the AGM held on 27, 28 and 29 March 2019

Resolved: The minutes of the AGMs 27, 28 and 29 March 2019 were approved unanimously as a correct record with no matters arising.

3. To approve branch officers and workplace representatives for 2021-22

The Chair presented the nominations for Branch Officers and Workplace Representatives for 2021-22.

Resolved: Nominations for Branch Officers and Representatives were approved unanimously.

4. Branch Finance and Accounts 2020:

4.1 To approve the accounts

The Branch Treasurer reported on the Branch Finance and Accounts for 2020. The accounts were audited and submitted and received by UNISON Head Office for the 15th March 2021 deadline.

At the end of the year the branch had a £29k surplus, increasing branch reserves back up to £78k, underspending caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, plus the branch saw an increase in funding in 2020 due to continued increase to membership.

Resolved: The accounts for 2020 were unanimously approved.

4.2 To agree honoraria payments

The Branch Secretary moved to support 5 honoraria payments and spoke of the significant contributions made by each of the individuals.

Resolved: Honoraria payments were approved with one abstention for:

- Jennie Barrett, Branch Treasurer, £3,988
- Sally Wrenwood, rep and JCC member, £200
- Anusree Biswas Sasidharan, rep and Committee member, £200
- Heather Andersson, Committee member, £150
- Wendy Wilson, rep, JCC and Committee member £250

5. To approve amendments to branch rules

The branch secretary talked through the branch rules changes and reported that some amendments were from last year's AGM which had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

Resolved: The proposed amendments to branch rules were unanimously approved.

6. To approve the branch action plan

The branch secretary talked through the branch action plan.

Resolved: The branch action plan was unanimously approved.

7. To approve the branch Annual Report and receive any questions from members

The Branch Secretary presented the annual report, highlighting key areas and particular developments, challenges and achievements for the branch during 2020.

A member enquired as to the outcome of negotiations surrounding managers' collective pay bargaining. The branch secretary updated the member on the progress of this issue and advised that this will be looked at again prior to the next pay award.

It was also noted that current pressures on WSCC, made worse by the Coronavirus pandemic, were likely to put pressure on the branch to respond quickly and keep up with tight WSCC timescales.

A member asked what UNISON was hoping to try and change about the proposals to close various children and family centres across the area. The Branch Secretary confirmed that UNISON has made its opposition to the closures known and recently promoted a petition opposing these. The Branch Secretary advised that members, particularly those in Early Help, are being encouraged to take part in the upcoming public consultation. The Branch Secretary also confirmed that the branch is currently organising for CYPL members to complete a detailed survey, off the back of which the branch will formally submit a response to the public consultation.

The Branch Secretary advised the branch will be looking to see what happens in the upcoming county elections in May and encouraging members to vote. It was confirmed the branch will oppose the closures whilst also supporting members with any staff consultations that result.

A member asked whether some of the budget savings due to Covid-19, as a result of remote meetings, reduced printing and distributing copies of Branch Lines and so on, will be continued. The Branch Secretary confirmed that the branch had invested some savings in posting the branch newsletter to members' homes and the branch would need to keep this under review.

A member queried whether the branch was able to stop the national newsletter being posted to members. The Branch Secretary advised that the branch is unable to stop this being distributed as this is a decision of the UNISON NEC. As the Branch Secretary is a member of the NEC, he advised that the issue could be raised via this forum. However, it was considered likely a newsletter would be considered important for members at this time. A new NEC may wish to review union communications when elected later this year in June 2021.

A member noted that in relation to West Sussex County Council, there seemed to be progress but still a way to go before relations will be satisfactory. The member asked whether the branch has a pathway for 2021 in terms of priorities for change. The Branch Secretary noted that there had been challenges along the way, however the branch feel overall things are moving in right direction in terms of engagement and tone. The Branch Secretary noted that there is still work to be done within Children's Services including issues with recruitment and retention of social workers. The Branch Secretary highlighted Term Time Only pay and New Ways of Working as significant items the branch must put a lot of work into in the year ahead.

A member enquired about the Capita contract and was advised by the Branch Secretary that discussions were ongoing. The Branch Secretary also confirmed there were some important meetings coming up which he hoped would see common sense used when the council decided on the renewal or otherwise of the Capita contract.

Resolved: The branch Annual Report was unanimously approved.

8. Close of meeting

The Chair thanked branch officers and staff for their hard work throughout the year in support of members.

Raffle winners were drawn and confirmed at all three aggregate AGM meetings.

The meeting was drawn to a close.

UNISON West Sussex 2022/23

Branch Officers

Position/Officer	Name and Employer/ Service	Telephone
Chair	Ian Harvey, Capita	01243 777636
Vice Chair	Sarah Etherington, WSCC CYPL	033022 27170
Branch Secretary	Daniel Sartin, WSCC Adults' Services	01243 777636
Deputy Branch Secretary	Karen Daubney, WSCC Adults' Services	01243 777636
Treasurer	Jennie Barrett, WSCC Resource Services	01243 777636
Communications	Vacant	
Education Co-ordinator	Briony Stilliard, Aspire Sussex	01243 850710
Environmental	Julie Bolton, WSCC Place Services	033022 26446
Equality, Disabled members	Sarah Etherington, WSCC CYPL	033022 27170
Equality, Black members	Olu Oyedele, WSCC CYPL	033022 23671
Equality, LGBT+ members	Karen Fenn, WSCC Adults' Services	033022 28772
Equality, Women's Officer	Carla Hardy, WSCC Place Services	033022 22002
Health and Safety	Carla Hardy, WSCC Place Services	033022 22002
Health and Safety	Karen Daubney, WSCC Adults' Services	01243 777636
International	Vacant	
Labour Link	Daniel Sartin, WSCC Adults' Services	01243 777636
Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator	Briony Stilliard, Aspire Sussex	01243 850710
Membership	Vacant	
Pensions	Vacant	
Retired Members Secretary	Jennie Gudgeon, Margaret Guest (job-share)	01243 777636
Welfare	Vacant	
Young Members	Kiera Hilder, WSCC CYPL	033022 22977
WSCC CYPL Convenor	Sarah Etherington, WSCC CYPL	033022 27170
WSCC Adults' Convenor	Gerard Robson, WSCC Adults' Services	033022 22665
WSCC Schools Convenor	Keith Manville, Oakgrove College	033022 24917
WSCC Other Depts Convenor	Vacant	

Branch Reps

WSCC Children's Services		
Christina Asphar	Choice Team, Centenary House	033022 27274
Leah Bagnall	Adoption & Special Guardianship, County Hall North	033022 23802
Sue Bennett	Adoption Support, County Hall North	033022 22648
Sarah Etherington	Children, Young People & Learning	033022 27170
Michaela Homewood	The Needles Children & Family Centre	07764 447362
Paula Knott	Broadfield Children & Family Centre	01293 651760
Debbie Lawes	Fostering Team, Durban House	033022 25494
Chloe Pascovitch	Contact Assessment & Intervention, Crawley Library	033022 22372
Louie Perren	Child Disability Team, County Hall North	033022 22635
Sara Pink	Adur & Worthing Early Help Hub	033022 29845
Sarah Powell	Bognor Regis Nursery School	01243 642925
Jacqueline Richards	Boundstone Nursery School, Lancing	01903 276850

Sandy Tester	Child Disability Team, Centenary House	033022 27349
Sherree Valliere	Fostering Team, Durban House	033022 27873
WSCC Adults' Services		
Karen Daubney	The Rowans, Worthing	01243 777636
Annie Flack	WAMH Northern Team, County Hall North	01293 652300
Paul Gibson	Proactive Care, Horsham Hospital	01403 227000
Alex Grindley	Stanhope Lodge, Worthing	033022 26787
Laura Hard	Lifelong Services, County Hall North	033022 22376
Tamsyn Hicks	Extra Care Team, County Hall	033022 28303
Chris Hughes	Oak Community Project, Rustington	01903 779739
Marina Humphrey	The Pines Day Centre, Worthing	01903 691001
Joe Lyndhurst	Bognor Community Team, Durban House	033022 25837
Helen Miles	Horsham Adult Team, County Hall North	033022 22049
Claire Munnery	Worthing Community Team, Centenary House	033022 24156
Gerard Robson	Worthing Community Team, Centenary House	033022 22665
Samuel Theodoridi	Stanhope Lodge, Worthing	01903 264560
WSCC Other		
Steven Bicknell	Highways & Transport	033022 23859
Julie Bolton	Environment and Heritage, Northleigh	033022 26446
Jo Cooke	Partnerships & Communities Team, County Hall	033022 23891
David Dutton	Trading Standards, County Hall North	033022 24010
Carla Hardy	Facilities Management, County Hall North	033022 22002
Paula Herbert	Legal Services, County Hall	033022 22719
Robert Mcleod	Caretaking and Premises Support	03302 222829
Lyndsay Pink	Fire & Rescue Service, Bognor Fire Station	033022 25005
Lynette Satti	Registration Service, Crawley Library	033022 29598
Clare Snoad	Collections Team, West Sussex Record Office	033022 24597
Tim Stanton	Library Services, Crawley Library	01293 651744
WSCC Schools		
David Alderton	Durrington Infant & Junior Schools, Worthing	01903 260138
Chris Armstead	St Anthony's School, Chichester	01243 785965
Sam Burge	St Wilfrid's Catholic School, Crawley	01293 421421
Clare Christian	West Sussex Alternative Provision College (Lancing)	01903 270460
Marilyn Cox	Field Place Infant School, Worthing	01444 873898
Michelle Craen	Holbrook Primary School, Horsham	01403 272500
Carole Doherty	Turners Hill Primary School, Crawley	01342 715412
Emma Farley	Bourne Community College, Southbourne	01243 375691
Karen Foster	The Angmering School, Angmering	01903 772351
Jane Hartley	Thomas A Becket Junior School, Worthing	01903 202268
Tracy Howard	Millais School, Horsham	01403 254932
Russ Hubner	Millais School, Horsham	01403 254932
Keith Manville	Oak Grove College, Worthing	033022 24917
Simon Pettiford	The Angmering School, Angmering	01903 772351
Tracey Sheehan	Boxgrove Primary School, Chichester	01243 773309
Amanda Shortiss	Manor Green College, Crawley	01293 520351
Clare Smith	Bishop Tufnell CE Primary School, Bognor Regis	01243 582400

Jenny Stead	Palatine Primary School, Worthing	01903 242835
Anthony Whiffin	Bersted Green Primary School, Bognor Regis	01243 822885
Academies		
Kevin Birch	Warden Park Academy, Haywards Heath	01444 457881
Debra Cannons	Greenway Academy, Horsham	01403 252013
Jill Cox	Sir Robert Woodard Academy, Lancing	01903 767434
Angela Elliott	Shoreham Academy, Shoreham-by-Sea	01273 274100
Debbie Gillies	The Bewbush Academy, Crawley	01293 534897
Wendy Haider	The Globe Primary Academy, Lancing	01903 854970
Juliet Healy	Bishop Luffa School, Chichester	01243 787741
Nicola Long	White Meadows Primary Academy, Littlehampton	01903 731774
Rebecca Nicholl	Ormiston Six Villages Academy, Westergate	01243 546800
Diane Paquette	Midhurst Rother College, Midhurst	01730 812451
David Potter	Bohunt School, Worthing	01903 601361
Chloe Powell	The Globe Primary Academy, Lancing	01903 854970
Paul Smith	Warden Park Academy, Haywards Heath	01444 457881
Lorraine Solti	The Regis School, Bognor Regis	01243 871010
Further Education		
Alan Cooper	Chichester College Group, Chichester Campus	01243 786321
Karen Fisher	Northbrook MET Broadwater Campus	01903 273456
Kevin Maunsell	Northbrook MET West Durrington Campus	01903 273060
Joanne Spear	The College of Richard Collyer, Horsham	01403 210822
Joanna Tarleton	Chichester College Group, Worthing Campus	01903 275755
Higher Education		
Chris Anderson	University of Chichester, Bishop Otter Campus	01243 816000
Roy Donaldson	University of Chichester, Bishop Otter Campus	01243 816000
Tracy May	University of Chichester, Bognor Regis Campus	01243 816000
Other Employers		
Sophie Brown	South Downs National Park Authority	01243 811533
Tom Conroy	Grace Eyre Foundation	01273 201900
Elizabeth Ewen	Aspire Sussex	0345 601 0161
Joe Farrell	Grace Eyre Foundation	01273 201900
Tim Halpin	Grace Eyre Foundation	01273 201900
Ian Harvey	Capita, Durban House	01243 642330
Abigail Holdsworth	Capita, Durban House	01243 642330
Jeremy Powell	BaxterStorey	01243 777636
Aimee Seabourne	Salutem LD Bidco Ltd, Ingfield Manor School	01403 782294
Oliver Seal	South Downs National Park Authority	01730 814810
Lester Speed	Farney Close School	01444 881811
Denise Stephens	Capita, Durban House	033022 24512
Briony Stilliard	Aspire Sussex	01243 850710

Honoraria Payments

UNISON's rules require branches to approve honoraria payments at their AGMs. The payments are then made direct to the individuals concerned by Head Office, with deductions made for National Insurance and tax. The first step is for any payments to be discussed at the Branch Committee meeting in January and those approved are then submitted to the AGM in March for final approval.

The Branch's practice has been to agree a maximum percentage of the branch's budget which is allocated by the Branch Committee to those Officers and Reps who have made a significant contribution to branch activity. The set ceiling amount of 2.25% is in the Branch rules which were agreed in 2011. This amount was not changed when the rules were amended in other respects in 2017 and 2021.

The maximum permissible sum for honoraria in 2022 is £4,837.

In the case of the Branch Treasurer it has been the practice to regularly pay an honorarium as this officer is not a paid member of Branch staff, cannot use the Branch's consolidated facility time from WSCC, and is not permitted lay rep facility time for the work involved, which is substantial. Therefore, all the associated work must be completed in the Treasurer's own time.

Other honoraria are more token sums to acknowledge particular efforts made by departing reps who have contributed to good outcomes for the branch. Last year payments were made to the Branch Treasurer (£3,988), Sally Wrenwood, rep and JCC member (£200), Anusree Biswas Sasidharan, rep and committee member (£200), Heather Andersson, committee member (£150), Wendy Wilson, rep, JCC and committee member (£250).

The AGM is asked to consider honoraria for 2022 and the following payments (which are less than the total permissible amount of expenditure under branch rules):

- Jennie Barrett, Branch Treasurer
Proposed at £3,988.
- Paul Woodcock, Branch LGBT+ Officer, workplace rep and committee member
Proposed at £250.
- Stuart Gibbons, Branch Welfare Officer and committee member
Proposed at £250.

Dan Sartin
Branch Secretary

21st February 2022, on behalf of the branch committee which met on 12th January 2022 to agree these recommendations to the AGM.

Action plan

West Sussex (L) (9312)

Requirements

Book activists on mandatory GDPR e-learning <https://e-learning.unison.org.uk/>

Targets, objectives and other information

Branch secretary will send all activists and branch staff the link to complete training. Some have completed but some may not have done so

Assigned to

Branch Secretary

To be completed by

31 Jan 2022

Status

Open

Activist Development

Book a Challenging Racism in the Workplace Course
<https://learning.unison.org.uk/regional-education-teams>

Targets, objectives and other information

regional education team or Area Organiser can deliver - contact branch to arrange

Assigned to

Branch Secretary

To be completed by

31 Dec 2022

Status

Open

UNISON West Sussex

Annual Report of the Branch Committee for 2021

Membership

Membership made a net loss in 2021 of 224 members (-3.7%).

Full members:	5,739
Unemployed members:	22
<u>Retired members:</u>	<u>674</u>
Total members:	6,435

The chart below shows our membership levels over the past ten years. Over the whole period the branch has gained 587 members, or +11.4%.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
5,152	5,244	5,348	5,336	5,324	5,332	5,440	5,563	5,963	5,739
+3.0%	+1.8%	+2.0%	-0.2%	-0.2%	+0.2%	+2.0%	+2.3%	+7.2%	-3.7%

This loss of membership in 2021 is disappointing. Several factors may be at play. We know there was a large influx of new members particularly in the first 12 months of the Covid-19 pandemic. These members were likely to feel insecure at work and in need of advice. They may well have received that advice from the branch (as our duty advice figures in 2020 and 2021 testify, see below), but then have subsequently left the union as their anxieties subsided. Anecdotally, the press is reporting a new phenomenon during the pandemic where workers are re-evaluating their work/life balance and reducing their work commitments wherever they can. Leaving union members are not always being replaced. Lastly, recruitment has been much harder during the pandemic as face-to-face contact with members has been minimised and has been non-existent in some teams. We hope this latter point will improve in 2022.

In the southeast region and the union as a whole, similar membership falls are being reported. The West Sussex branch is not out of kilter with the rest of the union.

We held no face-to-face recruitment events in 2021. We have offered voucher incentives to join UNISON but these have not been particularly effective without the face-to-face presence.

The more members we have, the more we can achieve for you. Please encourage non-members to [join us](#).

Communications

Our website unisonwestsussex.org.uk is a major driver for branch communications, receiving 36,525 visits during 2021 (compared with 43,752 visits during 2020). The reduction in website visits is likely a result of reduced anxiety about the pandemic when compared with the 2020 year, which was exceptional.

The branch has issued regular email communications to members. Only one edition of *Branch Lines*, our newsletter, was produced in 2021 – its January edition. This was

due to pressure of other priorities requiring us to focus our efforts elsewhere. We intend to return to three issues in 2022.

This is costing more to the branch as we are currently mailing out copies to circa 3,000 members, with the rest of the membership in schools receiving copies at their workplace. We will keep this under review to see as and when we can return to normal, full workplace distribution via reps.

Reps

We have [92 workplace reps](#) and they have done a vital job for members and the branch. We have seen a reduction in reps in 2021, with several retiring, leaving on grounds of ill health, leaving for other jobs, or being made redundant. The role of a rep may be harder to envisage during Covid-conditions for members not currently involved, but training, member representation and involvement in the democracy of the union has been carried out effectively using virtual meeting platforms. If you would like to get more involved, please contact another branch rep or the branch office. We would love to hear from you. More information is also on [our website](#).

16 new reps joined the branch in 2021, compared to 19 in 2020.

23 of our reps undertook training during 2021, across 10 different types of online courses: Organising Stewards; Dealing with reorganisation and redundancy; Employment Rights Act Refresher; Health & Safety Reps; Introduction to Local Government Finance; Long Covid activist workshop; Negotiating Skills; Race Discrimination Law; Reviewing Local Government Financial Reports; and Standing Orders Committee training.

7 reps achieved Employment Rights Act accreditation or re-accreditation and 2 became certified H&S Reps.

The branch also arranged a bespoke 'Dealing with Online Hearings' virtual workshop, only attended by West Sussex branch reps.

[Branch officers](#) also play an important role either through their stewardship of the Branch or by developing and utilising their expertise in particular areas. Thanks go to them for their hard work throughout 2021.

Collective work, negotiations and reorganisations

UNISON continues to work hard to support members during collective processes e.g. service restructures, and through its regular negotiations with employers. The figures below show the breadth of collective work undertaken for branch members last year.

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021
JCC negotiations (ongoing)	17	17	17	18
Pay claims	10	15	7	7
Terms & conditions	22	13	13	12
TUPE transfers	15	10	15	9
Restructures – non-schools	54	53	46	35
School restructures	35	29	13	21
Total	153	137	111	102

Individual casework and advice

The Branch dealt with 232 formal cases during 2021 where a rep or caseworker was assigned to represent a member in an individual case. Those cases break down thus:

Disciplinary	78	34%
Grievance	36	16%
Sickness	103	44%
Capability	15	6%

Of the 103 sickness cases, 6 were Long Covid related.

Of the 78 disciplinary cases, 6 were related to mandatory Covid vaccinations.

The branch also referred 8 Social Work England Fitness to Practise cases to the UNISON Professional Services Unit for support and representation during 2021.

17 branch members pursued Personal Injury claims with Thompsons during 2021. These are of course successful on an ongoing basis and in 2021 one West Sussex branch member received a substantial six-figure sum as compensation. This was received without deduction for legal fees as the union fully funds personal injury cases for existing members and their close familial relationships.

At time of writing there are 70 open formal cases the branch is supporting West Sussex members with.

Formal casework figures:

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
209	223	235	231	250	267	200	235	252	232
+31%	+7%	+5%	-2%	+8%	+7%	-25%	+18%	+7%	-8%

In addition to formal casework, in 2021 the Branch dealt with 842 requests for advice which were resolved over the phone and did not lead to formal cases.

Informal advice figures:

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
198	261	228	235	298	598	595	573	1,030	842
N/A	+32%	-13%	+3%	+27%	+101%	-1%	-4%	+80%	-18%

In total 1,074 members, 18.7% of the Branch membership, required formal or informal individual advice and support through the Chichester branch office during 2021.

The figures above exclude other non-casework 'once and done' enquiries (e.g. about membership or subscriptions), pieces of advice dispensed direct by workplace reps, branch officers and staff when members contact them directly, and all collective work undertaken on behalf of members. Many hundreds more members received support from the branch through collective re-organisations which are not recorded in the

'individual support' statistics, even though we are often helping to resolve very individual concerns.

The number of members contacting the branch office for informal advice (842) is still extremely high, albeit a drop on 2020. Undoubtedly this reflects the Covid-19 pandemic and members' concerns and need for timely advice. The branch is still meeting this challenge and acquitting itself well, which is a credit to all reps, branch officers and branch-employed staff.

The branch continues to receive regular positive feedback from our West Sussex members after both individual and collective support and we publish this in an anonymised form on our website's [what our members say about us](#) page.

Pay and pensions

The branch has supported local pay claims for members in 2021 in a number of employers where we are recognised for collective bargaining: Aspire; Grace Eyre Foundation; and so on.

The 2020-21 NJC pay award was agreed during 2020 and was implemented for September 2020. This provided a settlement of 2.75%. The claim for a 10 per cent rise and improvement in conditions lodged by UNISON for 2021-22 is still coming to a conclusion. Employers have rejected the conditions claim and only made an offer of 1.5%, increased to 1.75% after pressure from UNISON. Members were encouraged to vote for industrial action to see the offer improved upon. 70% of members were prepared to take industrial action but the turnout on the ballot fell well-short of the legally required thresholds.

Local pay for WSCC managers (a cohort of around 500 staff) was agreed during 2021 with WSCC to be matched to NJC pay awards for two years. When the NJC award is settled this will be applied to staff on other pay scales and back dated.

Judith Taylor, [branch pensions officer](#) has done great work on the West Sussex Pension Panel during 2021, representing the interests of all LGPS members (working, retired and deferred LGPS members) across over 150 West Sussex employers admitted to the scheme. The Pensions Advisory Board which holds the Panel to account now has three LGPS member reps and all of these are UNISON members: Tim Stretton, Rebecca Caney, and Chris Scanes. Thanks go to all of them for fulfilling this vital role, looking after what is a substantial amount of members' deferred wages.

Judith Taylor (a retired member of the branch) is stepping down from her role as branch pensions officer this year and with it her role on the Pension Panel. We are making arrangements to ensure UNISON continues to play a representative role on behalf of members.

Our main employer, West Sussex County Council

Relationships with WSCC have continued to be productive and indeed 'normalised' after more torrid years from 2013-2019. The interim Director of HR who came in to 'steady the ship' after the previous Director left in disgrace has ended up staying throughout both 2020 and 2021 and had a positive influence on industrial relations.

Significant change has continued apace, particularly in Children's services with its OFSTED inspection notice still needing to be addressed. Members have been supported through this change but it has not always been an easy or happy affair for some members who have exposed the processes as unfair or inconsistent. We are working with senior management in that directorate to get resolutions and long-term improvements to HR processes used. We also worked with WSCC to agree a reward and recognition scheme for social workers to replace the previous lump sum payments. This was implemented during 2021.

In Adults' Services in 2021 there have been fewer restructures. We have worked with the council on a reward and recognition scheme for social workers and Occupational Therapists in this department which should be rolled out in 2022. 2021 saw agreement to close Marjorie Cobby rehabilitation centre which is a source of major regret as another fine public service is closed due to chronic underfunding by central government. We are supporting members there with redeployment options.

The council has improved its redeployment service in 2021, working in partnership with UNISON to minimise redundancies wherever that is possible.

The Capita contract let in 2012 has been one of the worst and most costly decisions ever taken in the history of West Sussex local government. The contract should have been ended much earlier to avoid gross waste and inefficiency. It was allowed to limp on, most likely to avoid political embarrassment to those elected to steward the council, but WSCC is now insourcing the vast majority of what remains (after already agreeing to a number of 'service by service' insourcings over the previous few years). The branch will of course be involved supporting members in what will be a significant piece of work in 2022. In 2021 several Capita services were insourced and one aspect of IT support was further contracted out to a firm called XMA. Service quality is already highly questionable and redundancies of staff are on the cards.

The branch has supported members in the council's maintained schools with continued representation on the Schools' Joint Consultative Committee and Schools Forum. We have intervened a number of times with WSCC Schools HR where we believe schools are acting out of line with WSCC model policies and expectations.

The wider union

The branch continued to engage in the regional tier of our union and a number of branch officers were successfully elected to various regional committees in February 2021. The branch also continued to exert influence on the union's national agenda. The branch has three members on UNISON's National Executive Council (NEC – its governing body) – Dan Sartin, Abi Holdsworth and Kiera Hilder. Dan Sartin was elected Chair of UNISON's national Finance Committee in June 2021.

Dan Sartin
Branch Secretary

On behalf of the branch committee, 21st February 2022.

/ENDS