

# UNISON Matters

Aberdeenshire

December 2014

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We hope to see you all at the AGM on 18th February 7pm at the Kintore Arms Inverurie.

## AUSTERITY ISN'T WORKING

'Austerity' policies are harming the economy, have created a cost of living crisis and are putting our public services under intense pressure.

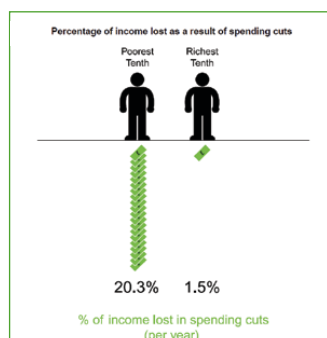
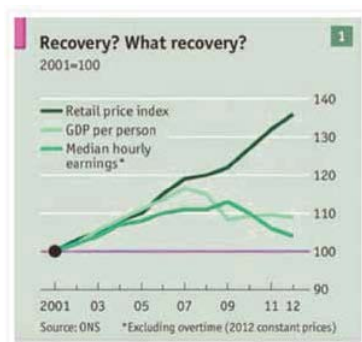


The UK Con Dem Coalition Government says austerity is necessary to cut public sector debt. But their cuts killed off an emerging recovery in 2010, their policies have increased the debt and the economy has taken much longer than after previous recessions to climb into the current very weak recovery.

Chancellor George Osborne wants us to believe the recovery is robust and happened thanks to his cuts. But people can see that's not true in the way everyone easily sees through Tory claims that 'we're all in this together' or that the NHS is safe in their hands.

Austerity was introduced for ideological reasons – to justify brutal public spending cuts. And the results are very clear. The assault on pay and conditions is harming families, particularly the most vulnerable. The cost of living squeeze while the price of essentials soars and welfare benefits are slashed, has seen the value of average workers' pay fall by more than £2,000 a year since 2010.

Full report can be seen here: [www.unison-scotland.org.uk/publicworks/AusterityEconomics\\_Oct2014.pdf](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/publicworks/AusterityEconomics_Oct2014.pdf)



## BRANCH NEWS



Branch Equalities Officer Kathleen Kennedy recently attended the 'SCOTTISH DISABILITY COMMITTEE' AGM, and has now been elected to represent the SDC on the Scottish International Committee.

First date in Kathleen's diary is Scottish Disability Members policy weekend in February.



Branch Assistant Secretary Susan Kennedy has been elected by UNISON's Scottish Education Issues Group

to represent UNISON on the government's Scottish Advisory Group on Behaviour in Schools (SAGBIS). Susan's experience with challenging and dynamic behaviours in our schools will be an asset for UNISON, our School Support Staff members and the advisory group. "This is a great opportunity to engage with this growing problem, as we see many of our members being affected daily by the behaviours of some of our pupils across Scotland including verbal and physical abuse. UNISON represents the largest group of School Support Staff members in Scotland so we are delighted that we have been given the chance to represent our members on SAGBIS".

# Foodbanks in Aberdeenshire?

Yes there are foodbanks in Aberdeenshire at Ellon, Inverurie Huntly and Banchory. The UK Foodbank network supported by the Trussel Trust has over 400 Foodbanks that provided food parcels to 913,138 people in the March 2013 to April 2014 period.

The branch has highlighted that the rise of in work poverty has created the problem that ordinary working people are not earning enough to provide the basic necessities of life like food. People can only use a Foodbank if they get a referral from their Doctor, Social Work, Housing Support Services or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Steve Gray, Branch Development Officer said, "It is a disgrace in our wealthy society that people in work don't earn enough to feed their families.

"According to the UK Government's own figures there are 13.5 million people living below the poverty line. Around 90% of the people who need the help of their local Foodbank are working but because of low pay need this help to feed themselves and their families.

"Our branch recognises and supports the valuable work that Foodbanks do but condemns the UK Government which has allowed the 1000 richest people in increase their wealth by £519 billion whilst so many children have to grow up dependent on charity, while their parents work long hours for poor pay. That's just obscene," slammed Steve.

The Aberdeenshire North Foodbank at Inverurie has fed 581 people (404 adults and 177 children) since it opened in October 2013. Around 33% of these people live in North Marr and 20% live in Inverurie. The Ellon Foodbank opened in May so information on who needs its help is still being compiled. The Aberdeenshire North Foodbank at Inverurie is based at the Harlaw Centre in Inverurie and has its own website

[www.aberdeenshirenorth.foodbank.org.uk/](http://www.aberdeenshirenorth.foodbank.org.uk/)



'90% of the people who need help are working'

Since its launch in June 2013, Aberdeenshire South Foodbank has helped feed 801 people (442 adults and 359 children). To meet the particular challenges of serving a remote and scattered area, the Aberdeenshire South Foodbank is establishing a network of satellite distribution centres from Braemar and Aboyne in the west to Stonehaven and Laurencekirk in the east to enable folk to access help locally without having to travel to Banchory

Located in an annex to Banchory West Church, storage facilities are grossly inadequate, in terms of size, facilities and heating, and are so cramped that half the stock is held in a vacant office on the other side of town. However, options are being explored to remediate the situation, (ie replace broken window glass; install heating and insulation etc) if sufficient funds (ie approx £10k) can be found. The Aberdeenshire South Foodbank has its own website [www.aberdeenshiresouth.foodbank.org.uk/](http://www.aberdeenshiresouth.foodbank.org.uk/)

The Huntly Foodbank was launched on 2 December 2014 to meet the needs of people living in North Marr who had to travel to Inverurie for help. The Foodbank will operate initially on Tuesdays and Fridays. Volunteers to help with the Huntly Foodbank are still needed. For further information

contact the Huntly Foodbank on 07479 954 746 or email them on: [Huntly@aberdeenshirenorth.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:Huntly@aberdeenshirenorth.foodbank.org.uk).

## How Do Foodbanks Work?

Foodbanks depend upon non perishable food donations from the public 90% of their stock comes from ordinary people. Donation points can be at supermarkets like Tescos in Inverurie, Banchory and Ellon opposite (the check outs on the way to the door), in churches or even in Council offices like Edinburgh City Council. Volunteers sort the food into boxes to provide 3 days food to a single person or to a family for distribution at a centre or from a van in remoter rural areas.

The people who use the Foodbank are given a referral by their doctor, Council Social Work Service or Housing Support Service. You cannot just walk in off the street.

## How Can We Help?

**"UNISON will continue to fight for decent pay, a living wage for all and an end to zero hours contracts, and for a fairer more just society for all, where the rich pay their fair share."**

"Meantime, as individuals we can donate non perishable food at collection points in stores such as Tescos that support Aberdeenshire North, Aberdeenshire South and the Huntly Foodbank.

"You can also volunteer to help at one of the

Foodbanks. The websites and Facebook sites provide their contact details.

[www.aberdeenshirenorth.foodbank.org.uk/](http://www.aberdeenshirenorth.foodbank.org.uk/)

[www.aberdeenshiresouth.foodbank.org.uk/](http://www.aberdeenshiresouth.foodbank.org.uk/)

Steven Gray  
UNISON  
Aberdeenshire



## Still think the council tax freeze is fair?

### 'Savings' per year

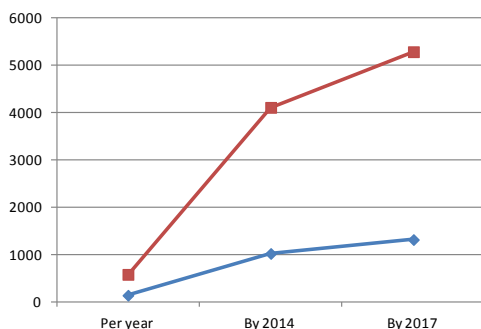


↑ This house 'saved'  
**£441**



↓ This house 'saved'  
**£147**

### 'Savings' by 2017



For further information contact UNISON Scotland's Bargaining and Campaigns team on 0141 342 2811. Further information is available on our website [www.unison-scotland.org.uk](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk) and our blog [publicworksscotland.blogspot.co.uk](http://publicworksscotland.blogspot.co.uk)



## UNISON: HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

Write to: UNISON  
Aberdeenshire,  
Grampian Resource  
Centre, 7 Alford  
Place, Aberdeen

Call: 01224 620  
624 or email:  
[Aberdeenshire@unison.co.uk](mailto:Aberdeenshire@unison.co.uk)

## UNISON Retired Members

UNISON works to raise awareness of issues which concern older people and to influence decision makers. Our priorities include:

- Pensioner poverty
- Health care and age discrimination
- Isolation and mobility issues

Retired and working members have a shared interest in obtaining decent incomes in older age, a universal health service and the creation of a civilised society. Today's workers are tomorrow's pensioners and UNISON's members work in public services on which many older people rely.

UNISON retired members enjoy all the benefits of UNISON membership including:

- Legal advice
- Welfare support
- Special discounts and offers on a wide range of financial and other services

If you've been a UNISON member for at least two years on the day you retire and have either reached state pension age or get a pension, you can become a retired member.

You will be contacted by the Branch Office with details after you retire.

## NEPAL TREKKING CHALLENGE FOR TWO FAB LADIES

UNISON member, Sheila Waterhouse would like to thank UNISON for their generous donation of £100 to support her in an ongoing challenge to raise £7000 as part of a major fundraising event in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

In May this year, the charity launched their fundraising challenge for Spring 2015 which will see 30 people from all over the UK travelling to Nepal for an intensive 8 day trek in the Annapurna region of the Himalayas.

Sheila and a friend, both from Kennethmont in Aberdeenshire, are passionate about the importance of the



services which Macmillan Cancer Support offer, and, despite the many challenges

ahead of fundraising, training and keeping their jobs and families going, joined forces under the name of "Two Fab Ladies" to support this worthy cause.

Two Fab Ladies have so far raised half their target through organizing a number of events, bag packing, sponsorship and donations, but are determined to surpass the target of £7000 in order to ensure that any expenses the charity incurs in organizing the trek are also covered.

If you would like to support Sheila and the Two Fab Ladies in reaching their target please donate to: [www.justgiving.com/Two-Fab-Ladies](http://www.justgiving.com/Two-Fab-Ladies).

## SCOTLAND PAY NEWS

UNISON members over Scotland voted to take strike action on 21 October. The threat resulted in a improved offer being put forward by the Scottish employers (CoSLA).

The new offer concentrates on three areas of our dispute: the future participation in the agreed bargaining machinery; consolidation of the living wage; and the deletion of spinal column point below the level of the living wage.

UNISON members voted to accept these proposals as they represent a significant change.