

# UNISON Matters

Aberdeenshire

December 2015

WISHING ALL OUR MEMBERS A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

## BRANCH JOINS 100,000 MARCHERS TO SAY NO TO CUTS AND YES TO WORKERS' RIGHTS

Branch delegates travelled to Manchester on 4th October to join the TUC march and demonstration against austerity and against the Trade Union bill, on the first day of the Tory Party Conference.



Clockwise from top left: Branch Officers with branch banner in Manchester, Kate Ramsden with Jeremy Corbyn at Westminster, Kate with SNP MPs Dr Lisa Cameron and Chris Stephens and Branch banner on the march through the streets of Manchester

Tens of thousands of trade unionists joined other activists and protesters to give a loud and clear message to the Tories - *"We will not stand by and see the poor and vulnerable targetted with cuts whilst the richest in the UK double their wealth. We will not stand by and see workers' rights and human rights trod underfoot by a government of the rich, for the rich."*

The branch continued its fight against the Trade Union bill when Kate attended the lobby of the Westminster Parliament on 2nd November. She was able to speak to SNP MPs Dr Lisa Cameron, Chris Stephens and Eilidh Whiteford and to

the Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn. All were solid in their opposition to the bill and pledged to continue their best

efforts to defeat it or to mitigate its effects.

The political leadership of Aberdeenshire council have also pledged to oppose the bill.

Inez Teece, Branch Secretary added, *"We are delighted that Aberdeenshire Council and CoSLA are standing with us against this bill. Indeed the Scottish Government and all the political parties bar the Tories are opposing it in Scotland"*.

[www.aberdeenshireunison.com/campaigns/tubill.html](http://www.aberdeenshireunison.com/campaigns/tubill.html)

Morag & Kate with political leaders from Aberdeenshire Councils Labour, SNP, LibDem and Progressive Independent Groups.



# GLASGOW HOMELESSNESS CASEWORKERS' STRIKE ENDS IN VICTORY

The striking Glasgow homelessness caseworkers are celebrating victory, after they voted by a clear majority to accept a new offer from the employer.

After a 17-week, all-out strike, the new offer was recommended to a meeting yesterday by the branch and the shop stewards.

It secures the central demand of the dispute – parity on grade 6 with other frontline social care staff.

The offer creates 68 new grade six posts. The three temporary caseworkers whose

substantive posts are grade four will be given permanent grade five posts elsewhere in the homeless service.

There will be a reduction in management posts through voluntary early retirement.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT & NATIONAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE

15th-19th June 2015 in Glasgow

Our delegation included retired member, Bob Revie who has just been elected onto the Scottish Retired Members Committee and has now been elected as Scottish Retired Members' Delegate to National Delegate Conference. We know he'll do a great job representing the retired members of Scotland.



One of the issues on **Housing and Living Rents** gave treasurer Ann Gray the opportunity to make her first speech to conference: *Ann told conference that homes are for people, not profits.*

Ann said, *"We condemn the UK Government's housing and financial policies that have focused upon "Buy To Let" as the main source of rented housing in Scotland and across the UK."*

*"The result has been growing inequality and poverty across Scotland and the UK, as working people struggle with ever rising housing costs, poor quality housing and insecure tenancies."*

## END OF EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL FEES IN SCOTLAND

This announcement from the Scottish Government comes the week after UNISON vowed to go to the UK Supreme Court in its ongoing fight to appeal against the UK government's decision to introduce employment tribunal fees across the UK.

Mike Kirby, UNISON Scottish Secretary said: *"The announcement to end tribunal fees in Scotland is hugely welcome. There is clear evidence that people at work are being priced out of justice, with women, disabled people and the low-paid being disproportionately punished. This decision will ensure that people at work in Scotland will get a fair opportunity to have their case heard. This announcement goes a long way towards building more sensible industrial relations in Scotland and we welcome it."*



# SCOTTISH COUNCIL WORKERS VOTE FOR TWO-YEAR PAY DEAL

Ballot sees 88% of local government members in Scotland vote for 1.5% rise for 2015 and 1% in 2016.

Local government workers in Scotland have voted to accept a two-year pay offer from employers.

More than 88% of members voting in a ballot which ran over September said "yes" to an offer of a 1.5% rise from 1 April 2015 and 1% from April 2016 – with a link to the living wage

Importantly, the Scottish local government living wage of £7.85 per hour will be put in place

before the 1.5% rise, making it £7.97 an hour.

And in April 2016, the living wage will be increased to the recommended figure of the Living Wage Foundation, again before the 1% rise.

There will also be talks on removing the pay points below the living wage level.

Negotiators succeeded in getting the initial offer of two years at 1.25% front-loaded to 1.5% in 2015

This is above inflation and slightly increases the value of the 1% in 2016.

## RULE OF 85 – *what you need to know*

If you are an existing member covered by transitional protection following the removal of the Rule of 85 in 2020, retiring before your Normal Pension Age will entail a slightly more complicated calculation of benefits. To have Rule of 85 protection you must have been a member of the LGPS on 30 November 2006.

The 85 year rule is satisfied if your age at the date you draw your benefits and your scheme membership (each in whole years) add up to 85 or more.

If you satisfy the 85 year rule you can retire early with your pension being calculated at the date of leaving. If you do not satisfy the 85 year rule by the time you are 65, then all your benefits are reduced. The reduction will be based on how many years before 65 you draw your benefits:

If you are part-time, your membership counts towards the rule of 85 at its full calendar length. Not all membership may count towards working out whether you meet the 85 year rule. Working out how you are affected by the 85 year rule can be quite complex, but this should help you work out your general position.

If you will be age 60 or over by 31 March 2020 and choose to retire before age 65, then, provided you satisfy the 85 year rule when you start to draw your pension, the benefits you build up to 31 March 2020 will not be reduced.

If you will be under age 60 by 31 March 2020 and choose to retire before age 65, then, provided you satisfy the 85 year rule when you start to draw your pension, the benefits you've built up to 31 March 2008 will not be reduced.



# STARS IN OUR SCHOOLS



Stars in our schools is a celebration of school support staff. UNISON has organised the day to celebrate the wonderful work they do every day and to make sure the world knows just how vital they are to children's education.

It takes a whole team to make a school a safe and happy place for children to learn. But many of you are tucked away behind the scenes – the unsung heroes of our children's education.

On Friday 27 November 2015 schools across the UK held awards ceremonies, putting on special assemblies and even dressing up as super heroes. to say "thanks for all you do".

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[www.StarsInOurSchools.uk](http://www.StarsInOurSchools.uk)



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## Branch Successes

- Last month two members kept their jobs after the branch successfully argued that their dismissal would be unfair.

## Four Families worth more than the poorest 20%

- The four richest families in Scotland are worth £1bn more than the poorest 20 per cent of the country's population. It is time this government did more to tackle this vast inequality.

## A bit about this governments proposed Trade Union Bill

- The Trade Union Bill is unfair, unnecessary and undemocratic, it threatens to punish workers if they stand up for their jobs and services. It is the biggest attack on Trade Unions for over 30 years. UNISON is campaigning with the TUC and other unions to oppose this attack on the rights of working people.

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## UNISON: HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

Write to: UNISON Aberdeenshire, Grampian Resource Centre, 7 Alford Place, Aberdeen AB10 1YD Call: 01224 620 624 or email: [aberdeenshire@unison.co.uk](mailto:aberdeenshire@unison.co.uk) [www.aberdeenshireunison.com](http://www.aberdeenshireunison.com)