

In this newsletter

1. September branch meeting
2. Russ Escritt, UCU FE Union Official
3. Updating on pensions
4. Next attack on pensions?
5. TUC rally: Saturday 20th October
6. Pensioners should do free work
7. Age discrimination regulations
8. Dignity code for older people, Care conference
9. Public Debate: The future care of older people
10. Women: activists united
11. Pension updates: USS and TPS
12. UCU retired members branch
13. Nottingham Trades (Union) Council

1. Next branch meeting

11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.
Tuesday 12th March 2013

‘Where are we on benefits?’

Speaker: Colin Hampton,

Coordinator of Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centres
one of the best campaigners in the E Mids

Lecture room ARK108 in the Arkwright Building, Nottingham Trent University and accessed from Shakespeare Street. Join us for lunch in a friendly local pub afterwards.

2. Russ Escritt

UCU FE East Midlands Regional Official

We are very sad to report that Russ died peacefully on 11th November, aged 56, with his wife Jenny and son Sean alongside him. Although he had only been off work since April, he had been struggling with pain and discomfort for over four years. Most members would not have known this as he bore his illness with dignity and remained as committed as ever to serving them through casework and advice and support to branch officers.

Tributes have come in from across the region and nationally. These typically repeat the same things about his patience and respect, his unswerving loyalty to the membership, his support for members' struggles. At national level he

Email addresses please!

*** Inform us changes to your email address**

*** If you receive this newsletter by post, please inform us of your email address.**

We encourage retired members to use their home email for when you give up your work email address. We send out a quarterly newsletter by email but only an annual newsletter by post. This is to save money on post and the effort of stuffing over 500 envelopes. The increase in the price of postage is exorbitant.

**Please inform us of
change of address or email**

displayed sharp analyses and high aspirations for what the union could achieve.

He was also a well known photographer of jazz musicians. People from the Birmingham jazz scene have expressed how he will be missed for his support for the music and for upcoming talents. One said that when Russ turned up at a gig, you knew it was going to be a good night!

He has been a good comrade, colleague and friend to many in the Retired Members Branch and will always be remembered, although Paul Mackney, ex-NATFHE General Secretary is surely right to point out that Russ would probably say, "Don't Mourn, Organise!"



3. Updating on pensions

Increase in RPI and CPI. In the year to September 2012 the RPI had risen by 2.6% and the CPI had risen by 2.2%. In the year to July 2012 total pay (including bonuses) had risen by 1.5% and regular pay (excluding bonuses) had risen 1.9%. Public sector pensions and the Second State Pension are to rise by 2.2% from April 2013. Under the Government's "triple lock" we can expect the basic state pension to rise by 2.5% from April 2013.

Fiddling the formula. The indexation of benefits and pensions is intended to at least moderate the impact of inflation upon their value. It is also a political hot potato. This is indicated by the dizzying series of changes and their accompanying apologies and arcane statistical assertions. But these variations in indices reveal a common and easily understood thread: the reduction of the social wage.

There has been some kite flying about relating the indexation of benefits to the rise in average wages. Mr Cameron speculated: "It might be better to link benefits to prices unless wages have slowed – in which case they could be linked to wages. Benefits were linked to earnings until 1980, at which the point the Thatcher government changed the link to prices in order to save money And money was saved. In 1980, unemployment benefits were a fifth of average earnings; today they are a tenth." (Oxfam UK Poverty Post 9th November 2011). Such a change back to an average wage indexation is indeed highly speculative and would only be attempted if there were clear evidence that price inflation would be higher than wage rises over a significant foreseeable period. And that would buck the clear trend since the Second World War. Perhaps the PM knows something that we do not, but in any case the reasons for such a putative indexation change are clear.

We are well aware of the implication for our occupational pensions of the change of indexation from **Retail Price Index (RPI)** to the lower **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**. Pensions Minister Steve Webb argued that the **CPI** was more appropriate for pensioners which is a nonsense in that any of the specifically constructed pensioners' indices emerge with a far higher value even than the **RPI**. The Government's own Office of Budget Responsibility has estimated **CPI** being 1.4% less than **RPI** on average over the next period. Smaller estimations still indicate a cut in public sector pensions of over 20%. Legal challenge to this change failed, but an appeal Judge did accept that the motivation for the change was to reduce the pensions being paid. However, a majority of private sector pensions, albeit sometimes small schemes, had **RPI** specifically inscribed as their mode of indexation. They could not be touched.

The hunt is now on to change the **RPI**. The Office for National Statistics has launched a consultation on changes to the Retail Prices Index formulae, following an investigation by the statistical body's Consumer Prices Advisory Committee into the "formula effect gap". The consultation is likely to be watched closely by the pensions industry, as even a small change to the way **RPI** is measured is likely to have a significant impact on scheme funding.

There is now concern that the way **RPI** is calculated keeps it higher than **CPI**. The national statistician Jill Matheson launched a consultation on 8th October with four reform options on the table. These range from keeping the formula effect in place, reducing its effect, removing it to a minimum, or removing it entirely. Any of the three latter options would bring **RPI** more in line with **CPI**, meaning it would be lower. The consultation will close on 30 November, with any changes to be announced in January and come into effect in March 2013.

For most pension schemes the decrease in their inflation-linked liabilities would far exceed the decrease in their assets. If **RPI** were to converge with **CPI** it could reduce pension liabilities by up to £80bn. One pension fund

executive (Professional Pensions 27th September 2012) summed up the likely changes: "For the members it's bad news because if you drop **RPI** and your pension is linked to **RPI** you're going to get less money and the things you want to spend your money on food and electricity and all that kind of stuff are not affected by this change. So you could say that if the change goes through it will be bad for the pensioners but it will be quite good for the pension funds and their financial health." This will not come as a total surprise to UCU members.

Julian Atkinson

4. Next attack on pensions?

A major piece of work from the prestigious **Centre of Policy Studies (CPS)** backs up our worst calculations: the impact of the coalition changes to public sector pensions is to reduce them by more than a third. Those unions who have recommended the deals are awkwardly placed.

The CPS report by research fellow Michael Johnson found the funding shortfall for schemes is projected to reach £15.4bn by 2016-17. Public sector pensions need further reform before 2020 to avoid an annual £32bn liability for UK taxpayers. When added to the £17.2bn employers' contribution this amounts to an annual taxpayer liability of more than £32bn - or £1,230 for every UK household. By this point, £4 of every £5 paid to pension members will be funded by the public purse.

Johnson argued further significant reforms are needed before 2020 as those included in the Public Sector Pensions Bill will not produce significant savings for between 20 and 30 years. He called on the coalition government to publish its modelling assumptions for the reduction of liability of public sector pensions, as well as moving to a cash-balance structure in preparation for a fully defined contribution framework.

CPS director Tim Knox said: "Why should future generations pick up the bill for the pensions of public sector workers, people who on average are likely to be far better off in their retirement than their wealth-creating private sector peers?"

Public sector unions and government representatives have rejected the proposals made in the report, with the TUC dismissing it as "scaremongering". A TUC spokesman said: "This is yet more meaningless scaremongering from a right-wing think-tank committed to slashing the pensions of dinner ladies and nurses whatever the evidence. "Studies from independent experts like the Office for Budget Responsibility show that the cost of public sector pensions is set to fall as a share of GDP in the coming decades."

A spokesman for HM Treasury said government reforms would almost halve public service pensions' cost, saving £430bn and delivering long-term sustainability. He added: "Fairness is also at the centre of our reforms, for instance increased member contributions will save around £3bn a year by 2015. At the same time we have been able to protect the accrued rights of those who have dedicated their careers to public service."

The Public Sector Pensions Bill passed its second reading in the Commons last week and will be debated by the Public Bill Committee from Tuesday 6 November.

from Centre of Policy Studies (Nov 2012)

5. TUC rally: Saturday 20th October

Our branch banner had a high profile on the TUC-organised march and rally in London that took place on 20th October and our members who were there took away very positive views of the event. The TUC estimated some 250,000 people attended from all ages and sections of civil society alongside the trade unions.

The banner was carried amongst the other UCU contingents from FE & HE branches across the country. This section stretched for at least 100m in the march and was made very visible by the balloons which Head Office had provided. Not only could we see people interested in our presence and taking photographs, there was the added encouragement of discussing the role of retired members' branches with several university and college older UCU members who were interested in how they could participate.

We began the march from the Embankment at around 1200 but it was after 3pm before we reached the crowds in Hyde Park. We therefore missed some of the leading speeches, but on the way were heartened by the range of organisations that had come behind the united demands for a different, credible way of tackling the economic crisis – one which puts our health & welfare services, pensions, education, housing and employment at the heart of the recovery.

All who joined the march and rally came away heartened by the potential breadth of support for a better way of doing things, but in no doubt that this needs much more work in the way of active work and campaigning nearer home. It is perhaps not for us as retired trade unionists to ask others to join the call for a general strike, as was a common theme of the day, but we should continue to ask ourselves in our branch, “what is to be done”.

With the exception of the Daily Mirror and the Morning Star, the silence in the media was deafening - that's what happens when it's peaceful and there are no battles with cops or shops being bashed in. Even the Guardian and Observer declined to report at all. After all, what's the news in 250, 000+ in London and more in Glasgow and Belfast calling for a change to government policies of making the working class pay for the crisis in capitalism?



UCU General Secretary Sally Hunt and Barry Donlan

Mirror report –very good with lots of nice photos.
<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/a-future-that-works-march-this-was-the-march-of-the-people-1391718>

Angus McLardy



Angus McLardy, Barry Donlan and Pat McLardy

6. Pensioners should do free work!

You may have missed this gem in the media. It shows just how out of touch many government figures are.

The former head of the benefits agency provoked uproar by suggesting the retired should be encouraged to undertake community service – or have their pensions docked. Lord Bichard said older people had to make “a more positive contribution” to reduce the burden they place on the state. He made the comments during a session of committee investigating the impact on public services of an ageing population. Lord Bichard, 65, asked fellow members: “Are there ways in which we could use incentives to encourage older people, if not to be in full time work, to be making a contribution?” He argued that the pension system should incentivise recipients to do more to help look after the “very old”. He said: “It is quite possible, for example, to envisage a world where civil society is making a greater contribution to the care of the very old. And older people who are not very old could be making a useful contribution to civil society in that respect, if they were given some incentive or some recognition for doing so.”

Dot Gibson, general secretary of the [National Pensioners Convention \(NPC\)](#), said: “This amounts to little more than national service for the over-60s and is absolutely outrageous. Those who have paid their NI contributions for 30 or more years are entitled to receive their state pension and there should be no attempt to put further barriers in their way.”

Ros Altmann, the director-general of Saga, said: “This is a very strange idea indeed. Those who have retired have already made huge contributions to our society and are already the largest group of charity and community volunteers.”

Lord Bichard retired from the civil service in 2001 (54 years old), when he stepped down as the Permanent Secretary of the Education Department. A study four years ago concluded the average retirement income of former permanent secretaries was around £100,000 a year. He also gets £300 a day for sitting in the House of Lords – **hypocrisy** comes to mind. He has not offered to do free charity work himself!

Russ Bowman

7. Age Discrimination Regulations

On the 1st Oct 2012 protection from harmful discrimination on the basis of age was extended from employment and training to cover services. There will be exceptions allowed.

Useful exceptions include the following:

- * **Concessions:** The regulations allow any service provider in the public or private sector to use age as a criterion to determine the eligibility for concessions or benefits. This applies where the purpose of the concession is to benefit a specific age group such as a discount for over 65s. This also applies to age based concessions in private clubs or associations.
- * **Age specialist holidays:** An exception allows specialist holiday providers to continue to provide holidays for people in particular age groups, provided that the eligible age range for the holiday is clearly stated in the promotional material. Age 'challenges' or verification: applies to shops when selling age restricted goods (e.g. alcohol)
- * **Residential park homes:** applies to owners of sites where static caravans and the like are used as permanent places of residence. The exception covers the arrangements for deciding who should become a resident.
- * **Sport:** This exception allows continued use of age limits and age bands which are necessary for fair competition, the safety of competitors or to comply with rules.

Positive action for an age band (young or old) will be allowed to prevent or compensate for disadvantages experienced by an age group or meets special needs. It will also be legally justified to treat age groups differently if this can be "objectively justified" i.e. is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. This will qualify both direct and indirect discrimination, but **not** harassment or victimisation.

The **unjustified** exception is the financial services industry. This shows the influence of this sector. Despite massive evidence to the contrary, the Government chooses not to believe that there is significant discrimination in this area. Financial service providers will be given wide exceptions to discriminate on the basis of age. The industry has given, in return, a "concession": insurance providers will put in place a **voluntary** signposting scheme. When a provider refuses to give insurance cover it will refer the failed person to another provider who **might** be able to offer coverage. The generosity is humbling. However, according to the Mystery shopping survey conducted by GfK Mystery Shopping on behalf of Age UK, 21% of people aged 80 or above are not given phone or online quotes for motor insurance because of their age. A further 85% of those are not directed on.

We also have to remember that, like much comprehensive legislation, there can be problems as well as gains. For example, the coverage of employment by Age Discrimination Law produced problems for the unions in that automatic progression up extended salary scales (over eight points) was found to be unlawful since it discriminated against younger people. Sadly this along with Sex Discrimination Legislation gave an excuse for bad employers to move away from scales towards spot point salaries.

Some advances have been made but we need to keep up the pressure.

Julian Atkinson

8. Dignity Code for Older People

There have been a number of shocking scandals recently relating to the treatment of older people, in residential care homes, in hospitals and in their own homes. Each of us will have our own experiences in this area. These experiences may relate to a relative or a friend or to ourselves. At some time in all our futures we may find ourselves increasingly less able to care for ourselves or to properly conduct our own affairs independently.

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) is aware of this and has produced a **Dignity Code** which identifies practices and actions that are unacceptable to older people AND sets out standards of behaviour, care and support which every older person should be entitled to receive.

For the full Dignity code look at the NPC website at: <http://npcuk.org/publications>. Look under 'Publications' and 'Health and Social Care'

The UCU Retired Members Branch Committee has decided to ask our members to help with promoting the adoption of the Dignity Code by contacting:

1. all NHS Primary Care Trusts and Clinical Commission Groups that have been established in our East Midlands Area, which covers, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.
2. local Councils and MPs

We intend to publish the responses our members receive in our newsletter and would ask our members to tell their MPs, local Councils, PCTs and CCGs that we will do this. This may apply extra pressure and encourage a response. I live in Bassetlaw, North Notts and I emailed my local PCT and CCG on the 2nd Oct and asked them to advise me of the following:

- * Which health and social care services for the elderly the Bassetlaw Clinical Commissioning Group commissions for elderly people, within the Bassetlaw Constituency
- * What standards and/or measures of both quality and quantity of service, the BCCG sets for the providers from whom it commissions services (be they at home, in residential care or in hospital)
- * What standards and/or measures BCCG requires from its providers for the auditing procedures / quality assessment processes they implement for elder care
- * The details of any recent audits undertaken either by the PCT or the BCCG into elder care
- * How the BCCG intends to ensure that its providers meet the requirements of the National Pensioners' Convention Dignity Code

I am sure our members will be able to think of other questions they can ask. I have to date received an acknowledgement that the matter has been referred to the appropriate person who will be replying to me "shortly".

The NPC has issued an example letter which can be sent to local Councils. Please see the NPC website details above

Please take part in our survey and contact your local MP, Council, PCG and CGG let us know your results. These should be sent to me at ann@donlan.myzen.co.uk

Ann Donlan

9. Public Debate: The Future Care of Older People

Who pays and Why? You or I? Saturday 29th Sept 2012

This meeting/debate was convened by “Nottingham Pensioners Action Group” with “Nottingham Speaker’s Corner” and intended to consider how society should care for people in old age. Introduced by Louise Third of the Speaker’s corner, she emphasised the history of ‘rebelliousness’ in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and the tradition of a ‘Speaker’s Corner’ in Nottingham, as well as the more well known one in London. Apparently a plaque marks the spot.

Speakers included:

David Liverage: (Labour member of Nottingham City Council with responsibility for Adult services. He expressed disappointment at the lack of action following the Dilnott report and concern about benefit cuts. He made some good points about ways in which he says the city council are trying to cope with reduced funding while maintaining and setting responsible standards of care for those in need and good employment practice for care workers (fair pay). He feels the issues are not short term but about the next 30 years rather than the next eight.

John Wheeldon: (Age UK Nottingham and Notts) spoke of care systems in crisis and also asked ‘where is the progress on the Dilnott report?’ He stressed the difficulties faced as the need for care increases while funding is reduced and gave examples of ways in which petty cuts in help and support could lead to much greater costs later. E.g. old people having serious accidents while trying to carry out small tasks around the home without help.

Dot Gibson: (NPC) thought this was a very timely event on a ‘big issue being dodged by political parties’. She explained how the NPC was founded on the importance of the principles of the welfare state and how sadly this has been destroyed and undermined by successive governments over many years. She stressed the need for specialist ‘geriatric’ care specialisms (although we may not like the word), for the support and understanding of elderly peoples’ needs. Medical and Social Care should be much more closely linked together she suggested and that Dilnott does not go far enough.

All the speakers seemed to feel that care should be free at the point of delivery, paid for by all out of a national pot or more, fair taxation throughout life. The debate was quite wide ranging, speakers from the floor including UNITE and UNISON members, a private health care provider and a young person asking for advice. Others reiterated the need for a national fair health system for all, and for the generations to be united and work together towards this aim.

In conclusion an interesting and lively session and we were all urged to contact our MPs on the issues raised and not give them the excuse to say their constituents are not concerned and haven’t approached them.

Rowena Dawson

10. Women: activists united

UCU National Women Member’s Conference 2012: *“Getting our activism together”*

This year two members from our branch, attended the conference where the agenda included keynote speakers, workshops, the election of standing committee members and debates on motions. The chair was Pauline Collins (OU and Chair of the Women’s’ Standing Committee) and we were welcomed by Kathy Taylor (President of UCU).

Her thoughts on being president as a woman, reminded us of where we come from and how much progress has been made towards equality of opportunity for women. She warned us not to be complacent *“...as we all know, we have a long way to go”* including the need to convince younger women they should challenge unfairness and injustice. Women are currently being attacked disproportionately with unions being at the forefront of the fight. *“Sisters, the price of progress is being vigilant”* she concluded.

Keynote speaker Cath Elliot, writes in the Guardian and is a stalwart UNISON activist in her area. She declared herself an unapologetic feminist, asserted that the face of trade unionism is no longer male (e.g. NUJ and UNISON) and stressed that women have to be seen in powerful roles to know that *‘you too can do it’*. She talked about the need for proportionality, for the number of women representatives to be related to the number of women members and the value of “self organised” groups participating in specialist training such as Women’s History, assertiveness and women’s groups etc. She suggested that UNISON is now officially a feminist union taking a feminist perspective in all activities.

We were both also very impressed by the second contributor, Clara Osagiede, a very strong woman who modestly and quietly explained the background of her life. This was a moving, salutary and brave story leading from her childhood struggles to gain access to equal secondary and university educational opportunities with boys, to her involvement in ‘radical’ student political movements in Nigeria where she was born. Her disappointment in moving to England (for safety) and finding the situation for migrants so difficult, was a huge shock with the only work available being very poorly paid. She is a cleaner on the London Underground, but a fierce activist who spoke of the great hardships faced by her fellow workers and the need to motivate them to take action. She reminded us that they are an unseen and largely unacknowledged workforce but with great determination, she has managed to mobilise them and make some gains in recognition and improved working conditions.

She elicited a powerful reminder that not only do women still lag behind men in terms of gender equality in the workplace, but that immigrant women workers are likely to find themselves a most exploited group of the working class. That she had fought for gender equality from an early age in Nigeria, gaining professional qualifications in a male-dominated culture is highly commendable. As Lucretia says, we and all the delegates, at the conference, must be proud to be in the company of a woman who had clearly fought her own corner and that of fellow women workers by becoming active in her union, in a ‘strange’ land.

At the workshop on “Practical Activism”, I found the focus was mainly on how to get things done within the union or an organisation, to bring women’s issues to the surface. The workshop Lucretia attended was entitled ‘Journeys to

activism'. Two UCU women members related how they had become active in their union branches. As a retired member, with a long personal journey, she was interested to learn of the journeys of fellow women UCU members. The first activist's journey, which took place in Northern Ireland, discussed at length how she had decided to fight alongside her union colleagues at her college, the bullying managers who were inflicting a climate of anxiety and intimidation there. This interesting journey was started by a union member who had no previous history of taking on management, or indeed challenging bullying in the workplace. It was an intriguing story of the development of personal and group confidence through facing up to disciplinaries and various forms of intimidation and eventually achieving cultural changes at the college which improved the working terms and conditions of all the teaching staff.

The second activist's journey targeted racism in her workplace. Again, at first this was a union member with little experience of activism, but by sticking to her guns courageously and with the support of her union branch, she was able to demonstrate clearly to management that discrimination was indeed taking place and to eventually identify ways of combating this and gaining promotion which had previously been denied.

A third visiting speaker, Janet Newsham is a project worker doing research into gender inequalities both in the union and the workplace. She is based in HE/FE in the NW region and presented an interesting report concluding that "*women continue to be disadvantaged and underrepresented in positions of power, in terms of job security, in terms of training and promotion opportunities, academic or skill recognition and remuneration*". A fringe meeting was held at UCU 2012 Congress, where these themes were raised.

We enjoyed hearing the positive views and concerns expressed and meeting the interesting women who attended, but as we and others wondered and asked, what happens to these motions that have been passed so enthusiastically? Progress through several other committees before possibly being incorporated into more general motions for a full UCU Conference, is not very clear or easy to follow and neither is any resulting action. More transparency is needed to enable us to track the issues raised, on the UCU website, through agendas and minutes of relevant meetings and at the very least through clear feedback at the next conference.

We were both able to network usefully with members from other areas and again as she says 'the conference inspired me as a retired member; it reminded me that there is a lot of work for us to do together, being active and supporting activists in and out of the work place.'

Rowena Dawson (Women's Officer) and Lucretia Packham

11. Pension updates:

TPS In early 2012, the government imposed new, detrimental arrangements on members of the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS). As part of the package of public sector pension scheme reform, the government is now consulting on an increase in contributions next year. This represents the second of the three year increases imposed by the government on all public sector pension schemes with the aim of increasing the overall contribution made by members.

What this will mean for TPS members still working

Following limited consultation (which close on 21st Dec) with the trade unions the Department for Education (DfE) is proposing the following revised arrangements for 2013:

- * Staff earning under £26,000 or full time equivalent will pay no more than currently.
- * Staff earning £26,000 but under £32000 will pay 0.6% extra a month
- * Staff earning £32000 but under £45000 will pay 1.2% extra a month
- * Staff earning more than £45,000 will pay between 2.1% and 2.4% extra per month

For an up to date briefing on TPS see the UCU website at: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/tps-underattack>

USS: A national meeting of branch delegates is due for 5th Dec in order to decide on the way forward.

12. UCU Retired Members Branch

The branch is now fully underway with over 450 members. The aims are diverse, but include bringing together retired members of UCU in the East Midlands, giving advice to branches on pension and retired members' matters, campaigning on issues relating to retired members and representation to the UCU national congress, National Pensioners Convention, Local TUCs. If you previously worked outside the East Midlands, but lived or now live in the East Midlands please join our branch.

Meetings: We hold meetings three times a year, in places of interest to make part of a day and lunch out. The meetings centre round important issues for UCU pensioners and give a chance to chat to other retired members.

Newsletter: A termly newsletter with useful articles for retired UCU members is sent to all branch members for whom we have email addresses and to UCU branch secretaries in the East Midlands. Because of the cost of postage other members will be contacted less often.

Email addresses: We encourage retired members to use their home email for when you give up your work email address. Please let us have your email address and also changes to your email address

**For more information
please contact Julian Atkinson
e-mail jdatkinson34@btinternet.com
telephone: 01773 532105**

East Midlands Branch officers and committee

Chair: Angus McLardy apmclardy@btinternet.com

Vice Chair: Ann Donlan ann@donlan.myzen.co.uk

Secretary: Julian Atkinson jdatkinson34@btinternet.com

Assistant Secretary: Rob Kirkwood

Treasurer: Brian Hambidge brianhambidge@ntlworld.com

Women's officer: Rowena Dawson

jeanrowena@hotmail.co.uk

Membership: Greg Cejer greggthebuilder@tiscali.co.uk

Newsletter: Russ Bowman

dorothy.russ.bowman@ntlworld.com

East Midlands regional UCU committee representatives:

Brian Hambidge, Russ Bowman

13. Nottingham, Mansfield & Notts Trades Union Council

Oct meeting: The Council has focused on a number of events. It made preparations for the TUC, Oct 20th demonstration. The Council also received a report from Youth Fight for Jobs arising from their July Jarrow March. The Trades Council pledged to continue its support for the restoration of the Educational Maintenance Grant and to oppose Workfare with a donation of £200.00.

There was an update on the Target Seat Campaign, funded by the Midlands Region TUC. The Broxtowe MP, Anna Soubry, is now the Health Minister. Public campaigning and leafleting has now commenced in Beeston as part of this Campaign. A Public Meeting was agreed for Nov 2nd, focussing on NHS issues. Broxtowe Constituency Labour Party had agreed to supply a speaker. The campaign is to continue until the County Council elections in May. An International Women's Day event was planned for Mar 8th next year. The Trades Council continues to produce an occasional bulletin called Trades Union News.

November meeting: There was a positive discussion of the better than anticipated support for the Oct 20th TUC demonstration. The Council agreed to a continued monitoring of the 'Schools' situation'. NUT delegates reporting that the move to Academy status in some schools has resulted in a markedly stronger Union organisation. The NUT also pointed out the danger of two free schools being proposed in the City, with dishonest websites, extolling rigorous teaching, and photo-graphs of children, in schools which did not actually exist.

The Council was aiming to rally support for the 38 Degrees NHS Meeting in Nottingham on Nov 26th. A report was received on Notts County Council's moves to sell off the Gilstrap Museum/Information Centre. Officers reported the success of the Broxtowe 'Save our NHS' Nov 2nd Meeting. The attendance was over 100 including many NHS employees and local people. The audience were asked how many of those present were members of 38 Degrees and some 30 people indicated that they were. There was an excellent question and answer session and over 50 names and addresses taken for future contacts. Further meetings are planned, possibly including a debate between Anna Soubry and Andy Burnham, prior to the County Council elections.

The Trades Council played a vital role in publicising a "secret EMAS" (East Midlands Ambulance Service) meeting in Worksop. With only 3 days notice some 80 people turned out. The EMAS Management was shocked at the anger of local people over the proposals made and the way that the meeting had not been publicised. In Retford on Thurs 18th of Oct, 150 people took part in a local march against the Ambulance Station closure/reorganisation. Many signatures were collected on petitions in the market place and the paramedics and John Mann MP spoke, thanking both UNISON and the GMB for their organisation and support. Again, on Wed 24th Oct in Worksop, with UNISON and GMB again to the fore, there was a fantastic response from the public. These events featured five times on local and national TV with excellent coverage from the Worksop Guardian and the Retford Times.

[Barry Donlan, delegate from East Midlands UCU Retired Members branch](#)

More information

A lot more information and news can be obtained from these websites. We recommend that you have a browse.

UCU National Website: <http://www.ucu.org.uk>

AgeUK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

68 is too late: www.68istoolate.org.uk

National Pensioners Convention: <http://npcuk.org>
