Annual General Meeting

Commencing at 5.30 on Thursday 31st January 2008
At the White Eagle Club, Riverway Stafford

A light buffet and soft drinks will be available from 5.00pm

Everyone who attends will be entered into a free prize draw sponsored by Britannia Building Society and UIA

24 Lichfield Road
Stafford
ST17 4LL
Phone: 01785 245000
Fax: 01785 228162
E-mail: UNISON@staffordshire.gov.uk
We are moving office to ....

Ground Floor
Tipping Street
Stafford
ST16 2DH

The move will take place during the first week of January 2008. The staff and Officers will do their very best to ensure that any disruption to our service will be brief. However, it is very likely that the move will have some effects on work, particularly for a day or two before and after, so please bear with us.

Please keep checking our Website for further details

www.staffordshireUNISON.org.uk

Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible.
Workplace Representative Nomination Form

Stewards and Health & Safety Reps Authorisation is for ONE YEAR ONLY. For authorisation as an Accredited Representative of the Branch in 2008 EXISTING & NEW APPLICANTS must complete this form & return it to the Branch Office NO LATER THAN Friday 25th January 2008

BRANCH NAME: Staffordshire Branch of UNISON
BRANCH CODE: 12361

Please tick or complete the appropriate box(es)

STEWARD
☐ I am a new steward
☐ I am a re-elected steward
☐ I am Standing down

HEALTH & SAFETY REP
☐ I am a new H&S Rep
☐ I am an existing H&S Rep
☐ I am Standing down

WORKPLACE CONTACT
☐ I am a new workplace contact
☐ I am Standing down

LEARNING REPRESENTATIVE
☐ I am a new Learning Rep
☐ I am Standing down

PERSONAL DETAILS Please tick or fill in the boxes below.

UNISON membership number: [ ] Mrs  [ ] Ms  [ ] Miss  [ ] Mr  [ ] Other  First name

Other initial(s)  Surname/Family name  Date of birth

Workplace(s) and/or workgroups covered:  National insurance number (from payslip)

Name of Employer:

Workplace name and address  Home Address

Email:

After your appointment you will receive the following mail – please indicate where you wish to receive it:

Activists mailing from Branch ………………………………………….home  work  [ ]
Activists mailing from Region ………………………………………….home  work  [ ]
UNISONFocus……………………………………………………….home  work  [ ]

☐ Please tick if you require materials in different format (eg large print or Braille be sure to supply contact details below)

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you – indicate if work or home

Contact tel/voice/text/email:  Home  [ ] Work  ☐

PROPOSED BY:…………………………………………  SECONDED BY…………………………………………….

I certify that I am willing to serve as a Workplace Representative for the year 2008, I am a current member of the Branch and eligible for election. I also agree to undertake suitable training as a Steward within two years of my election.

SIGNED…………………………………………………….  DATE ……………………………………….

PLEASE ENSURE YOUR NOMINATION IS PROPOSED AND SECONDED BY YOUR COLLEAGUES AND THEN RETURN YOUR COMPLETED NOMINATION FORM TO:

Staffordshire Branch of UNISON
24 Lichfield Road
Stafford  ST17 4LL
WHAT IS A UNISON REPRESENTATIVE?

The UNISON workplace representative is the most important link between the union and its members. Workplace Representatives play a number of roles. They are organisers who talk to, recruit and organise members around workplace issues, hold meetings, give members information about union issues by publicising UNISON campaigns, distributing leaflets and keeping members informed.

They are advisers and soundboards, talking to members about workplace problems and – if they feel confident – giving advice on how to deal with these.

Types of Representatives

STEWARD

A UNISON steward is an elected representative whose role includes organising, recruiting and representing members. Stewards in workplaces where UNISON is recognised by the employer have rights to time off for training and to carry out their work. Stewards have a right to be involved in how their branch is run and are the most important link between the members and the union.

Stewards are elected each year by the group of members that they represent and the post is open to job share. A UNISON Steward should seek to be the first and main point of contact with the union for members. They will recruit and organise new members and work with members to establish an organised workplace. They represent members within the Branch Committee and will also be answerable to the members they represent.

Being an elected Steward gives access to training by UNISON, regular UNISON mailings and access to UNISON advice and information.

HEALTH & SAFETY REP

A health and safety representative has the right to training and to raise issues which affect the health & safety of members. In some cases the safety representative and the steward are the same person but they have two separate roles. Safety representatives have specific duties and responsibilities and also have important legal rights. Safety representatives and Safety Committee Regulations of 1977 spell out in detail the rights and functions of safety reps. These include making representations to the employer on behalf of members on any health, safety and welfare matter. Health & Safety Reps can inspect designated workplace areas at least every three months, investigate potential hazards, complaints by members and causes of accidents, dangerous occurrences and diseases.

They have facilities and support from the employer to carry out inspections and receive legal and technical information, and paid time off to carry out the role and undergo either TUC or union-approved training.

WORKPLACE CONTACTS

Workplace Contacts play a number of different roles. They may distribute information, support a steward or carry out some tasks normally undertaken by a steward. Workplace Contacts do not have access to the same rights as stewards but can and do play an important role in enabling groups of members to organise effectively. This is an ideal role for those groups of members who can find no one willing to be a steward. The role is more informal than stewards or safety reps. They can operate as part of a network supporting an elected steward.

Workplace contacts have access to a range of benefits from UNISON, but these are more limited than elected stewards. They include regular UNISON information, involvement with branch work and advice on dealing with workplace problems.

LEARNING REPRESENTATIVE

People in this role are likely to be members who have recently completed a learning programme and are enthusiasts and advocates for learning in their own workplaces.

Their precise role will vary according to their own circumstances but will probably centre on raising awareness of lifelong learning among the members and helping to identify and articulate the learning needs of particular members, as well as negotiating with employers on learning issues. They have some rights to time off for training and carrying out their duties.

All Workplace Representatives are an essential part of a large and powerful national organisation. If you are interested in any of these roles, please complete the Form overleaf and return it to the Branch Office. If you require any further information telephone the Branch on 01785 245000 or visit our website at www.staffordshireUNISON.org.uk
BRANCH OFFICER NOMINATION FORM

This form must be completed by all nominees for Branch Officer Posts and returned to the Branch Office NO LATER THAN FRIDAY 11TH JANUARY 2008

If more than one Nomination is received for an Officer Post, members will be notified and a vote will take place at the Annual General Meeting

NOMINATION FOR THE POST OF ……………………………………………………………………………………………

(Please complete from the list overleaf)

SURNAME: MR/MRS/MS/MISS ……………………………………………………………

FORENAMES ……………………………………………………………

WORKPLACE ADDRESS (including Postcode) ……………………………………………………………

………………………………………………

………………………………………………

TEL NO. (WORK) + EXT NO. ……………………………………………………………

DEPT/WORKGROUP ……………………………………………………………

TITLE OF CURRENT JOB ……………………………………………………………

UNISON MEMBERSHIP NO. ……………………………………………………………

Please give a telephone number/voice/text/email address for UNISON to contact you – indicate if work or home

Contact tel / voice / text / email: Home □ Work □

PROPOSED BY: ……………………………………… SECONDED BY: …………………………………………………

Signed ……………………………………… Date ………………………………………
A number of functions are defined within the rule book as the responsibility of specific branch officers. However these tend to be general statements, covering overall responsibility for the proper running of the branch, each of which entails a large number of tasks.

All branch officers are bound by the collective responsibility of national, regional and branch policy and decisions taken by the branch committee.

Outlines of all the Branch Officer Roles are available from the Branch Office.

Chairperson
Vice Chairperson
Branch Secretary
Assistant Branch Secretary (4 Posts based covering across the County)
Assistant Branch Secretary (FRS – must be from this employer)
Assistant Branch Secretary (Ofsted – must be from this employer)
Branch Treasurer
Health & Safety Officer
Welfare Officer
Education Co-Ordinator
Equality Officer
Women’s Officer
Black Members Officer
Communications Officer
International Officer
Young Members Officer
Auditor
NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY 31st JANUARY 2008

To: All members of the Staffordshire Branch of UNISON

The Annual General Meeting of the Branch will be held at the White Eagle Club, Riverway, Stafford on Thursday 31st January 2008 commencing at 5.30pm.

Remember that this provides an opportunity for the general membership of the Branch to participate in Branch affairs and to influence policy. If you wish to change existing UNISON policies, or to initiate new policies, this is your chance!

MEMBERS SHOULD BRING THEIR CURRENT MEMBERSHIP CARD OR PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP (a current payslip showing UNISON deductions will be acceptable). BRANCH OFFICE STAFF WILL MAKE A MEMBERSHIP CHECK.

A Buffet Tea will be served from 5.00pm.

JANE HEATH
BRANCH SECRETARY

AGENDA

1. GUEST SPEAKER Tony Rabaiotti, UNISON Regional Head of Local Government
2. MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 8th March 2007
3. ANNUAL REPORT: to receive the Annual Report of the Branch Executive
4. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS: to receive the Branch Treasurers Statements of Accounts for the twelve months to 31st December 2007
5. CONSIDERATION OF HONORARIA PAYMENTS FOR 2007
6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
7. ELECTION OF THE BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
8. MOTIONS: must be submitted in writing and received at least 7 days before the meeting.
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 8TH MARCH 2007

76 Members were present and 4 apologies were received.

1. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 28TH FEBRUARY 2006

The minutes of the 2006 AGM were agreed to be a true record.

2. ANNUAL REPORT

The Reports in the AGM Booklet were received and agreed by the meeting.

3. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Treasurer presented the Statement of Accounts for 2006 to the meeting. The accounts were accepted.

4. HONORARIA PAYMENTS 2007

Honoraria payments for 2007 will be agreed at the 2008 Annual General Meeting

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Tony Thompson-Edwards withdrew his nominations for Branch Secretary and Assistant Branch Secretary posts.

The following nominations for Branch Officer posts were received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch Secretary</th>
<th>Jane Heath</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>David Baldwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst Branch Secretary</td>
<td>Tonia Atherdan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst Branch Secretary</td>
<td>Carol Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst Branch Secretary</td>
<td>David Marsden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asst Branch Secretary</td>
<td>Steve Elsey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asst Branch Secretary</td>
<td>Steve Knight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst Branch Secretary</td>
<td>Carolyn Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Treasurer</td>
<td>Malcolm Kidd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Safety Officer</td>
<td>David Baldwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare Officer</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Officer</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality Officer</td>
<td>Tonia Atherdan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Officer</td>
<td>Carol Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Services Officer</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Members Officer</td>
<td>Jobshare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ora Yearwood/ Eider Jacobs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESOLVED: All of the above nominations were accepted by the meeting.
6. **ELECTION OF BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

53 nominations for Departmental Stewards were received. All nominations were accepted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Appleby</td>
<td>Belvedere County Junior School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>Archbold</td>
<td>Great Wyrley County High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Baldwin</td>
<td>Scientific Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>Ball</td>
<td>Hanley Connexions Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>Brewster</td>
<td>Clough Hall Technology School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Nigel</td>
<td>Brindley</td>
<td>Tamworth Day Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>Brooks</td>
<td>Chase Terrace Technology College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Wightwick Hall Special School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>Knutton Youth &amp; Community Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Butler</td>
<td>Development Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Avril</td>
<td>Clowes</td>
<td>Clayton Hall Business &amp; Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>Corby</td>
<td>Hawthorne House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Colin</td>
<td>Dempsey</td>
<td>Development Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Dodgson</td>
<td>Merryfields Special School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>Elkes</td>
<td>Stafford Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss</td>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>Fagan</td>
<td>Chesterton Community High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
<td>55 Scotch Orchard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>Tamworth Community Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>Wenger House Probation Hostel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Marlene</td>
<td>Greene</td>
<td>Lichfield Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>Heath</td>
<td>Newcastle under Lyme College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Ivans</td>
<td>Tamworth &amp; Lichfield College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Eider</td>
<td>Jacobs</td>
<td>Resources Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>Brewood Area Youth &amp; Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>Lightfoot</td>
<td>Hanley Fire Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Lintern</td>
<td>Chase Day Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Lorraine</td>
<td>Lynch</td>
<td>Abbot Beyne Endowed (C) School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Spencer</td>
<td>Mabley</td>
<td>Lichfield Education Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Jacqueline</td>
<td>MacPhail</td>
<td>The Birches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>Marchant</td>
<td>Burton Connexions Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>Newcastle Day Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Hilary</td>
<td>Mellor</td>
<td>216-218 Stone Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Leanne</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Rawlett County High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Alison</td>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>Newcastle under Lyme College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Morris</td>
<td>Stafford College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Murphy</td>
<td>Legal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Jayne</td>
<td>O'Reilly</td>
<td>St Peter &amp; St Paul RC(A) School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Stephanie</td>
<td>Poulter</td>
<td>Hanley Connexions Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Reynolds</td>
<td>Lichfield Day Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Sanders</td>
<td>Marshlands Special School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. **HEALTH & SAFETY REP NOMINATIONS**

21 nominations for Health & Safety Representatives were received and accepted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Baldwin</td>
<td>Scientific Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>Elkes</td>
<td>Stafford Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Heath</td>
<td>Secondment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Carolyn</td>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>Use Home Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Reynolds</td>
<td>Lichfield Day Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Marlene</td>
<td>Greene</td>
<td>Lichfield Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Graham</td>
<td>Tinsley</td>
<td>Lea House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>Corby</td>
<td>Hawthorne House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms</td>
<td>Alison</td>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>Newcastle under Lyme College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>Knight</td>
<td>Hanley Fire Station</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>Lightfoot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>Tamworth Community Care</td>
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<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Mary</td>
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<td>Mr</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>Wenger House Probation Hostel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Weaver</td>
<td>Stafford Day Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Keith</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Newcastle under Lyme College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Roger</td>
<td>Appleby</td>
<td>Tamworth &amp; Lichfield College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
<td>55 Scotch Orchard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Bell</td>
<td>County Property Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Staples</td>
<td>Children &amp; Lifelong Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Morris</td>
<td>Stafford College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **MOTIONS**

No motions had been submitted.

The Branch Treasurer offered thanks to Tony Thompson-Edwards be recorded and a letter sent.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.00 p.m
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE BRANCH OF UNISON FOR THE PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2007 TO 31 DECEMBER 2007

Report of the Branch Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Branch met on 10 occasions in 2007, 8 of these meetings were quorate. We are seeing an increase in attendance at Branch Executive meetings which is a reflection of the high number of issues the Branch is currently involved in.

During 2007 the Branch Executive agreed to donations to a value of £2,238 and authorised welfare payments to members to the value of £3,055. The welfare payment included £600 in total that the Branch gives as a Christmas gift to the orphaned children of UNISON members. If you know of any children who may qualify for this annual payment, please let the Branch know.

As of 1st November 2007 the Branch has welcomed some 672 new members to UNISON. Previously membership turnover for the Branch has been relatively low but with all the changes that have taken place within Staffordshire County Council which is where the majority of our membership comes from; there has been a substantial movement of staff leaving the Authority which is reflected in our membership figures for this year. This together with a number of redundancies within the last few months has meant that effectively the Branch has stood still over the last 12 months in terms of recruitment.

The Branch organised 2 protests against the closure of the Social Care and Health Older Peoples Homes, Disability Homes, Day Centres, Day Services and the in-house Home Care Service. These protests were held on 7th February (Cabinet meeting) and 15th February 2007 (Full Council meeting) the decisions for closure formed part of the Council’s Medium Term Budget Strategy document. UNISON and the other 2 green book terms and conditions trade unions presented a joint trade union resolution on 15th February 2007 to the Chair of the Council for presentation to the full Council. The presentation was made on the steps of County Buildings which received full media coverage including going out live on the Central Television morning news.

The “Who will Care?” campaign against the proposals was formally launched with a postcard campaign and press releases resulting in a number of radio interviews for the local news. The Branch has also been active politically including developing a working relationship with other organisations.

It is the intention of the Branch together with the other 2 green book terms and conditions trade unions to present the case in support of retaining services when the reports go to Cabinet for the decision on their continued future. This will be part of this Branch’s sustained campaign against the closures.

Nationally UNISON together with the other 2 green book trade unions arranged for a Lobby of MPs at Parliament regarding the funding of JE. The Branch funded a coach and sent a small delegation of Branch Officers and Stewards to Westminster on 10th July 2007 to lobby the Staffordshire MP’s.

Given the high volume of work the Branch has had to facilitate this year, together with the number and speed in which the changes are coming, we have started the process of looking at more
efficient ways of delivering and communicating with our members. This will be through the development of more IT systems.

Two other future changes will be that the Branch has to relocate from 24 Lichfield Road. The new location will be in Tipping Street, Stafford and the move should have taken place at the time of our AGM. The other change is that a number of amendments are now required to be made to the Branch rules but it will probably be the next AGM when these are submitted given the time scale involved in the process.

Jane Heath      Branch Secretary
David Baldwin   Branch Chairperson

Report of Branch Secretary – Jane Heath

If you could put together a whole range of areas of change which have had implications to varying degrees for the Branch members – that would probably best describe the last 12 months. Add to this mixture the speed of those changes and you have the ingredients for an “eventful” year.

Given the speed of change it has been difficult to write this report. There could be other changes by the time our AGM takes place so this report needs to be taken as a snap shot of the position at the end of October 2007 when it was written.

So by “eventful” what do I mean? The main change has to be job evaluation through the pure scale of the number of people who will be affected. When it comes to terms and conditions – pay has to be one of, if not the main concern for many members.

At the time of writing this report the Branch has not made any recommendations to its membership either to support or reject the Employer’s proposed pay grade, back pay offer or salary protection proposals. I have had requests asking the Branch’s views but quite simply I have not been in a position to respond until I have received National Advice.

So why the delay? UNISON National Office has requested clarification on a number of areas and continues to look in detail at the proposals and the impact. This has taken time but the potential impact is such that it can not be rushed and I strongly believe that our membership deserves nothing less.

The proposals also have to address the issue of equality. Given the time the job evaluation process has taken to get to this stage I felt it was important to reiterate certain points which may have got lost over this time frame and to ensure members are aware of some changes that have occurred since the commencement of the process.

The Single Status National Agreement was signed in 1997, following a national ballot of members. In addition to harmonising the terms and conditions from the old purple and blue book into a new one (the green book) it was also to address through the collective bargaining process the issue of equal pay. It is a sad fact that despite having equal pay legislation which has been enforced in this country since 1975 – equality issues continue to exist.

Since the beginning of the process there have been a number of factors which have further complicated matters. Generally there continues to be a move towards a litigation society where collective bargaining has and continues to be challenged. In addition a number of EAT’s (Employment Appeal Tribunals) have had a knock on effect with regards to equal pay comparators.
There is no legislation that addresses fair pay, only equal pay. The Equal Pay Act gives women (or men) a right to equal pay for equal work.

The maximum entitlement of back pay for an equality pay claim is currently 6 years. Back pay entitlement through collective bargaining is based on the outcome of negotiation.

Salary protection is also another potential complex area. Protecting the individual rather than the post together with the number of years that protection will be in place for, can lead to equality issues. Therefore for the reasons I have already stated what may have gone before in other Authorities could have changed and in some examples it already has.

A new pay grading proposal, back pay proposal and salary protection proposal has to be negotiated separately to demonstrate that one has not influenced the other.

The JE process in Staffordshire has been a major undertaking and a high drain of resources for the Branch throughout the process so far and is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

This together with other major undertakings such as Workforce Remodelling in Schools and the relentless push of constant restructuring continues to set the Branch the challenge on how to resource. We have continued to meet this challenge but this has only been possible because of the sheer hard work, long hours, enthusiasm and continued dedication from the Branch’s Officers and Stewards.

Workforce Remodelling in Schools which is linked to job evaluation will be a big undertaking when Schools commence the implementation next year which will be from April and will run through until September 2008. Effectively you are looking at a restructure in a school with a range of posts that form part of the National Workforce Remodelling Agreement. A template approach has been adopted with posts being job evaluated. There will be an appeal process. Generally Schools within Staffordshire have embraced the National Workforce Remodelling Agreement (which provides a Career Structure for School Support Staff). However, job descriptions, titles and importantly the grade of the post have not changed with schools waiting for job evaluation to address this. Therefore when you pick up case work it can take some considerable time to drill down to the actual issue because of all the factors involved.

Social Care and Health and “Changing Lives” has been another major area of work. This started with a ‘bang’ in February with the Council’s Medium Term Strategy Budget Report. The Branch has and continues to run the “Who will Care?” Campaign against the closures and we have been particularly active on the political front. Recommendations on Older Peoples Homes and Disability Homes are due to go to Cabinet on 14th November 2007.

The trade unions have agreement to present their case on behalf of its membership to Cabinet. This will be a joint representation on behalf of this Branch and the other 2 green book trade unions (GMB and T&G Section of UNITE).

This seems an appropriate point in which to thank all the stewards who have worked tirelessly on the campaign and who have represented members at the Consultation Meetings – to which there have been many.

Developing working relationships within the Political arena and with other trade unions has been key to the activities of the Branch this year. With the threatened cuts in the Youth Service five
trade unions came together in a joint submission to the Council Leader suggesting alternatives to job cuts (UNISON, GMB, T&G SECTION OF UNITE, NUT AND NASUWT) which again I think is a first for this Branch.

If I was writing a novel I could probably refer to everything I have been involved in this year, but this is a report. In summary the majority of my time has been spent on JE, Workforce Remodelling, the Changing Lives Campaign and consultation process. I have lead on the majority of restructures and had a seat on the associated steering groups. This year I have attended 3 Conferences – UNISON Local Government Conference (where I was a first time speaker), UNISON National Conference and the Disability Conference.

This year has also seen the consultation process of the new Superannuation Scheme and at the time of writing my report UNISON is in the process of balloting its members over industrial action regarding this year’s pay award.

The next pay award will be for 3 years, early indications are that the Government want to continue with public sector settlements under 2%. So the issue on pay is not going away.

I would not have been able to take up the baton of the Challenges this Branch has faced (as this is my first year as Branch Secretary) without the support, commitment and much needed sense of humour from – Claire Breeze (Regional Officer), Tonia, Carol, Dave, Steve, Malcolm and Dave. Special Thanks also to Marlene, Pat, Bob, Michael and Linda and to all the Stewards who have supported the Branch on restructuring and case work. Thanks also to our Branch employed support staff particularly Sharon for all their help over the last year.

I look forward to the forthcoming year – fortunately I enjoy a challenge. Somehow I don’t think I am going to be disappointed.

Report of Chairperson - David Baldwin

2007 has been a year of change for Staffordshire UNISON. At the end of 2006 Andy Stanton, who had been Branch Secretary for seven years, decided to retire. During this period of time whilst Andy was in office there had been a shift with staff terms and condition negotiations being moved from mostly national level to local negotiations coming within a national framework. Andy had overseen the expansion of member support from two officers on full time release to five because of the greater workload on branch officers. After a couple of months when Tony Thompson-Edwards acted as Branch Secretary, Jane Heath was elected Branch Secretary at the 2007 AGM. She has initiated some changes in the way the branch works so that Stewards can use their training to resolve those matters which are best sorted out within the workplace.

The Pensions Scheme dispute was settled following a ballot. Some activists at region thought that an opportunity to gain significant improvements through industrial action was lost but the majority felt the proposals were as good as could be achieved. We are awaiting a decision following statutory consultation on extending protection for existing members from 2016 to 2020, as in Scotland. The conditions for ill-health retirement are still under discussion with two or three levels of qualification and provision possible but provision for those deemed capable of working in some capacity before retirement age being subject to local employer discretion.

The Single Status / Job Evaluation process is ongoing with the current County Council proposals under review by UNISON headquarters legal team. When a decision is reached the proposals will
go to a ballot of those branch members to whom the scheme will apply.

The latest national pay negotiations have concluded with a national ballot in which the offer was rejected but the majority in favour of industrial action was small and given the low percentage of ballot papers returned, it was felt that industrial action could not be sustained. The dispute is to be settled as soon as possible and campaigning started for the 2008 pay settlement, due next April. It is understood that the employers offer is likely to be for a three-year deal. Since Local Government Conference in 2006 voted for no more multi-year deals this is likely to be rejected.

I would like to thank the staff in the Branch office who make life much easier for all the lay officers by their friendly attitude and helpful approach to requests for assistance in many tasks.

**Report of Assistant Branch Secretary – Tonia Atherdan**

At the start of the year one of the main areas of work for me was the ongoing changing lives agenda. As you will already know the County council had made the decision to go ahead with the re-provision of in house services provided by the authority, and this process was started in relation to our elderly residential care homes. You will recall the massive campaign we did at Staffordshire branch in protest to the potential closure of all the care homes of which I was actively involved in and I would like to thank all of our members that turned out to the protest outside the Council Chambers in February.

In relation to changing lives I have worked as a lead officer on the consultation meetings with both senior management and the membership. In these meetings I have actively taken part on asking the necessary questions relevant to the future proposals that are being put forward for the future of this authority, proposals that UNISON firmly believe will not only be detrimental to our members but to the community and the family’s who rely on these services.

Changing lives is still ongoing and will be for a good while yet and I’m dedicated to negotiating the best way forward for our members and worked tirelessly to reflect our member’s views and opinions at the consultation meetings. As I write this report the re-provision moves on and I’m currently looking at the proposals put forward for our Disability Care Homes.

Throughout this year I have also led on some very big re-structures and I have endeavoured to achieve a positive outcome at every opportunity. Social Care and Health have made some big changes and continue to do so much to the objection of UNISON. I have just completed the Joint finance restructure and currently I am working on the Joint commissioning unit re-structure which involves some integration with health.

I’m currently working hard in supporting our members within the county grounds section, as with the highways JNC which is an area I haven’t been involved in before, as I have stated in previous reports to the AGM I am still a lead officer on Social Care and Health’s works committee, and I am also the lead officer at our Social Care and health’s stewards group and thank-you to all the stewards that have been attending those groups and for the input you’ve had I have enjoyed the debates.

I have been attending WAMG meetings throughout 2007 and will continue to negotiate for the future benefit for our members in education.
This year I have been welcomed onto the Youth Offending Service works committee which I have attended with our 2 stewards Wade and Simon, thank you for your support and commitment, I look forward to having some interesting discussions on the future of your service.

Throughout the year I have attended National disabled member’s conference in Harrogate. My attending this conference has further raised my awareness of areas of disability discrimination and how I can identify and support our members in my capacity as an Assistant Branch Secretary. I have also attended National Local Government and delegate’s conference in Brighton also a number of one day seminars.

Along with the above I have represented and advised members on a day-to-day basis on grievance, disciplinary, harassment, welfare and many legal cases as to which I have worked closely with Thompson Solicitors.

There has been a number of difficult Section 188 redundancy notices issued this last year which I have worked on. Myself and Steve Elsey (ABS) have also had input on the RISE document which was issued by Children and Lifelong learning in October, these are guidelines used by schools when issuing a Section 188. UNISON strongly opposes any redundancies and strives to protect our member’s pay, terms and conditions.

I have attended and had input on UNISON regional council and local government meetings held across the region. This has proved to be beneficial in that this gave me the opportunity to network with other branches suffering similar detrimental government led initiatives and employer targets.

Everyone at the branch has worked brilliantly in relation to the demands that currently face us on a day-to-day basis. The role of an Assistant Branch Secretary has changed massively over the years and this has been the most challenging one for me yet given all the restructures that I’ve mentioned in this report, on many occasions working to very tight timescales set by the employer. So I say well done team! I look forward to the next year and the demands that we face together!

A very big thank-you to the Admin team, as always their support has been great; I look forward to working with you all in the year ahead.

Claire Breeze our Regional officer, as usual has been a massive support to me and I thank you for all your hard work and time.

This is the end of my report for 2007 and I’m sure that by the time you read this report even more changes will have happened, Well done to Jane, Branch Secretary, in her first year, you’ve done a brilliant job and I thank you for your support. Finally I would like to thank all the branch officers for their support and teamwork, it’s got us through a very difficult and demanding year, our joint commitment and hard work will again pay off for the year ahead.

I would urge our members to become actively involved in everything UNISON promotes, we are a membership led union which I am proud to be part of.

Report of Assistant Branch Secretary – Steve Elsey

As many of you will know this has been my first year as an A.B.S and what a steep learning curve it’s been! I have to say that as a previous steward, I now realise the immense levels of hard work that are carried out by all those involved in the day to day running of the branch. I wish to
sincerely thank the other branch officers, Jane, Tonia, Carol, David, Carolyn and Steve, our admin staff and our regional officer Claire Breeze, for their help, advice and support over the past year and for never tiring of the questions asked, your advice has been invaluable.

Although I was elected at the previous AGM in March last year, my employer agreed to my full time release in mid May. During the year I have been dealing with many issues of behalf of members including Grievances at all 3 stages, Bradford Scores, disciplinaries, welfare visits, personal injuries and harassment & bullying complaints, I have also dealt with a number of issues on an unofficial basis which have resulted in a large number of issues being resolved to my members satisfaction.

I have been heavily involved in a number of restructures including the Youth Service which resulted in no compulsory redundancies, following representation to the leader of the council and meetings with members. I have also been involved in a number of other restructures including Social Care & Health New Locality Working, Social Care & Health Business Management and Resources ICT.

In my position as lead officer for the C&LL directorate I have represented the branch and its members with the authority on a number of occasions throughout the year including C&LL’s staff forum, and WAMG – (Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group), which looks at staffing issues in schools. I have also been involved with drafting policies with the authority relating to Cyber Bullying, RISE 2008 (Redundancies in Schools) which resulted in a specific appendix item relating to support staff.

I have attended a number of regional meetings including UNISON’s Regional Council, which meets four times a year at varying locations. I have also attended regional feedback and organisational seminars.

I have met with Staffordshire MP’s on a number of occasions to try and bring the needs of our members to their attention.

Well that’s about it for my first year, all that remains is for me to re-iterate my thanks to all those who have been there to help me through it.

**Report of Assistant Branch Secretary – David Marsden**

If I’d known, this time last year, that the life of an Assistant Branch Secretary would be so full and busy, or that the ongoing learning process would be so intense, would I still have put my name forward? I can honestly say – YES!

I hit the ground running at an historic time for this Branch, which has never before had to deal with such wide-ranging - and potentially life-changing - issues on behalf of its members, many of whom I have represented in individual cases with the great majority enjoying advantageous outcomes.

As a steward, I was actively involved in the rally to protect members’ pension rights and the successful protests against the initial JE proposals which saw hundreds of dedicated public service workers fill Stafford’s Market Square to make their views crystal-clear. I have been able to transfer this organising experience and enthusiasm into my work as an Assistant Branch Secretary, to the benefit of the members I have represented.
The effectiveness of such events made clear the political influence that union members can have when organised *en masse* and working together toward a common goal. This ability to influence elected politicians was brought home to me even further when I attended a mass lobby of Parliament in July and met with Dr. Tony Wright, Dennis Skinner and other Midlands MPs to press the case for central government funding of JE. I was also able to make useful contacts with activists from other Branches, strengthening solidarity.

UNISON is an organising and campaigning union, and I continue to strive to get out to as many members and workplaces as possible, to help develop an organising culture. We are stronger together, and we all need to empower ourselves and our colleagues to become actively involved in the work of our union as stewards or workplace representatives, with all relevant training being made available.

I have learned so much already about the democratic structures within UNISON. This was reinforced further through attendance at such events as National Delegate Conference in June and National Disabled Members’ Conference in October, where it became clear that UNISON members really do make the decisions about how their union is run.

This Branch remains committed to the welfare of its members and, with colleagues, I am contributing to a new strategy which will further improve communications - both ways - between the Branch and its members. Traditional postal methods will continue to be used, but this Branch sees an enormous benefit in the increased use of email and its website to update information more quickly, efficiently and cost-effectively.

As with any organisation, there’s always scope for development and change. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please share them; call or write, or email me at david.marsden@staffordshire.gov.uk

Get involved – I did!

**Report of Assistant Branch Secretary – Carol Thompson**

Well every year I say how busy the year has been, this year is no exception. There have been changes of Officers within the team. I would like to welcome and congratulate Jane Heath becoming Branch Secretary, so far Jane has delivered this year, her strategic expertise, vision and wisdom for the Branch and most important the Members and Stewards. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Dave & Steve as Assistant Branch Secretary’s into the Branch. After quite an unsettling time at the beginning of the year with the change of Officer Roles, I feel the Branch has moved onto become a much stronger Branch.

**Job Evaluation** has again this year been a big issue in Staffordshire. At the time of writing this report Staffordshire County Council is going through consultation period and everyone would have had their pay and grading. If this is accepted in December by Cabinet it would go live April 1st 2008.

**Connexions**
I have taken on Connexions after Andy Stanton’s retirement; this work was solely done by Andy, so a new challenge for myself. I met with the Stewards in January 2007 and have worked closely alongside them throughout the year. Connexions also have regular meetings with UNISON; this is
four times a year to discuss issues relating to members. I also negotiated the annual pay award. I am sorry to say we have lost Stephanie Poulter one of our Stewards through the redundancy process. I would like to thank Stephanie for all her help this year and wish her all the best in her future employment. I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome Catherine Fox as a new steward in Connections for Lichfield Area.

I would also like to say a big thank you to Ian, Roy and Trevor for their support throughout this year their knowledge of Connexions has greatly been appreciated. Without these Stewards UNISON and myself would be far less affective.

If there is any member in Connexions who would like to become a Workplace Steward please contact me at the Branch or speak to the three appointed Stewards for advice and how to go about signing up. I would like if possible a Steward in each geographical area.

**Colleges**

At the time this report was written, I was trying to get allocated, facility time off for Stewards in Colleges in my area. This will hopefully help take some of the pressures off the Branch.

**Changing Lives**

This is a huge restructure across the County affecting all the Services provided by Social Care & Health. Throughout the process so far I have picked up issues relating to Elderly, Learning Disability Homes, Social Workers, Home Care and Community Living Team.

Managers arranged meetings through June and July to speak to members in the Residential Homes; I attended these meetings to support the membership. From my experience with members, this has had a massive impact on their morale at all levels within the authority.

**Policies & Procedures**

In the 11 years I have worked at UNISON I have never experienced such a high volume of Disciplinary cases in one month, which was July. I had thirteen, all high priority cases across the county and in the private sector, all time consuming. I also represented members in redeployment, redundancy, whistle blowing, capability, harassment, disabilities, welfare and the sickness absence policy, ‘Bradford System’.

The committees I have a seat on and represent the Branch through UNISON are Provincial Council, Regional Council, and Local Government. Within the County Council I attend the Children & Lifelong Learning Works Committee (forum). Sadly due to work commitments I have not been able to attend as often as I would have liked this year.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all my Stewards old and new for all the valid support, for without you I would not have been able to do my job. I would also like to say a big thank you to Pat, Marlene and Bob for all their support in the Branch.

Finally I would like to thank Jane, Tonia, Dave Steve and Claire, Regional Officer for all their support and team work.

I cannot forget the admin staff, as always for their support has been great and without them I would not have been able to do my role.
Report of Assistant Branch Secretary FRS – Steve Knight

What a year it has been. We started with UNISON Fire forum. These are meetings of UNISON officers from the fire services in our region, any issues from these meetings are taken to a national level by Judy Foster from West Midlands Fire Service, as she is the representative for our region. Unfortunately, I have not been able attend as many of these meetings as I would have liked due to other commitments. I spent several days working with the Job Evaluation Team on evaluations and appeals, and recently have started a review of the evaluation process and recruitment of further members to train and enter the team, to provide a more robust and objective group.

We then have the integrated Asset Development Strategy – P.F.I. This is for the replacement of several stations and three new ones in new locations around the county. Work on the new stations is due to start, hopefully, mid 2008. The new stations to be opened mid 2009. There is also a refurbishment part to this where most, if not all will receive some form of refurbishment. This is a massive project that will take place over a three to five year time span.

The results of the best value review of the workshops of which we came out best in class and are currently waiting on a decision where our new workshop is going to be situated in the county.

I am involved with the Futures group, which looks at how Staffordshire Fire and rescue will be funded and run over the next 25 years by forming and expanding partnerships with other agencies.

A Health and Safety works committee has been formed, for which I am also involved with.

Finally, a big thank you to Tonia and all at branch office for their support over the last twelve months.

Report of Assistant Branch Secretary Ofsted – Caroline Thompson

Yet again this has been another year of change in the now ‘new’ Ofsted. In April 2007 colleagues from the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) the children’s services in Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) the inspectors of CAFCASS in Her Majesties Inspection of Court Administration (HMICA) joined the new Ofsted. Although change can be beneficial and challenging constant change can be wearing particularly when conducted against a background of pressure to meet inspection targets. UNISON continues to raise with both regional and national management the issues still outstanding from the 2001 transfer many of which are impacting, along with others, on new colleagues who joined the organisation in 2007.

The staff survey conduced in the ‘old’ Ofsted in the autumn of 2006 indicated that staff morale was extremely low with results showing an unacceptable level of bullying and harassment. Many staff indicated that they were considering leaving Ofsted. UNISON continues to pursue the issues raised by members in the survey which Ofsted is trying to address. It still remains to be seen if the new organisation is an improvement on the old. One of the key indicators of this could be the current review of all the HR policies currently being undertaken by management. The Attendance, Disciplinary, Grievance and Bullying and Harassment policies being amongst the first to be under reviewed. The changes made I believe will be a key indicator on whether the ‘new’ Ofsted is going to be an improvement on the old organisation. UNISON as part of the TUS is being consulted on the changes so it is a case of watch this space.

At the time of writing formal pay negotiations for this year are yet to begin. Management have announced a proposal for a ‘spot salary’ scheme and want to introduce performance related pay.
UNISON have a number of concerns regarding this not in the least because management are intending to build the new pay system on the already discredited system having failed to undertake either a pay and grading review or any job evaluation. There are other issues including the possibility of some members having frozen salaries for a considerable period of time and concerns about the impact on pensions. Once formal negotiations are completed then members will be balloted, the results I am sure will prove to be very interesting.

An external consultant has been appointed by Ofsted to conduct an equal pay audit but as yet no results have been made available. Currently there are a number of equal pay claims being pursued in Ofsted. The main one of course being the one UNISON are undertaking on behalf of over 500 members which is currently at tribunal with an outcome hopefully expected in the spring of 2008. Of course there are no guarantees of success but it is important that we take this forward on behalf of members.

From April 2007 in consultation with UNISON management introduced a Workload Management System (WMS). This is a way of measuring the work undertaken by inspectors of early years’ provision. UNISON conducted two surveys of members, the first to find out members expectations of what they would expect of such a system, the second to feed into the 6 month review of their system. No system is ever going to be perfect but it is important that we strive to address the issues raised by members and make the system better.

Consultation and negotiations with Ofsted management, as I am sure Ofsted UNISON members will appreciate, are often difficult and lengthy and in the ‘new’ Ofsted there is no evidence as yet that this will change. A variety of other issues remain on the negotiating on the table with management some have been there longer than others but UNISON continues to fight to get members issues addressed.

Along side the above matters I continued to represent members regionally and on occasion nationally at sick absence reviews, grievance and disciplinary hearings. Also giving help, advice and support to members on variety of concerns and issues with their employment with Ofsted.

Finally I would like to thank the Branch and Claire Breeze for their ongoing help and support.

**Report of Health & Safety Officer – David Baldwin**

Regional Council elects a Health and Safety Officer and a Forum to which all branches in the Region could send a representative. I was again elected as Regional Health and Safety Officer and National Representative in April. So far we have had meetings of the Forum in April, June, September and December. I will be standing down as Regional H&S Officer next April.

The Hazards Conference was this year back in Manchester and at its opening session the following information was given. The Minister responsible at the moment for Health and Safety is Lord McKenzie of Luton but he did not attend. The Government wants a light touch and a limited touch leading to deregulation by stealth. The current Government approach on Health and Safety is not satisfactory.

- The Health and Safety Executive is cutting 300 staff and closing its London Headquarters
- The Corporate Manslaughter Bill passed but its provisions are limited
- Deaths in construction are up by 31%
- Fatalities at work are the highest for 5 years
Professor Andy Watterson of the GB occupational cancer campaign told us
The approach from the Government is to keep everyone calm and “sensible” following the Daily Mail line. This is an ideological package. Health, Work and Wellbeing published in 2005 makes no reference to occupational health. Disease and cancer are mentioned only once. The Public Health view is “There is no work and cancer problem” therefore no need for action. This is based on a ludicrous under-estimate of work related cancer of 4% based on figures from Doll and Peto in the 1950s. The ILO estimate in 2006 is that 8 to 16% of all cancers are work related. At 8% there are 18,000 work related cancer deaths each year with 32,000 cases.

The National Health and Safety Committee met three times this year and a National Health and Safety seminar was held in March. I attended the workshop on Absence Management schemes as a facilitator. The new negotiating pack was launched at Conference in June.

This year for Workers’ Memorial Day we laid a wreath at the bench in Victoria Park, Stafford on 27th April, the nearest working day to 28th April.

If your workplace has Health or Safety problems I would be glad to hear from you to advise on the best way of improving the situation. Those Stewards who become involved in Health and Safety advice should consider whether to register as Safety Representatives to gain access to information to which the Safety Representative Regulations entitles those registered by the Trades Union.

Report of Black Members Officer – Ora Yearwood/Eda Jacobs

Another year almost at an end and on the whole it can be said that it has been one of reflection and consideration.

This year’s National Black Members Conference was aptly named “Breaking the Chains” in this the Bicentennial year of the abolition of the Slave Trade in the British Empire and being held in Liverpool with its historic link to the slave trade, was a fitting reminder of times past and present.

Trade Unions had an active role in helping to bring about the abolition, right there in Liverpool, as the Dockers and the seamen from Hull who, although they had no vote, joined together to petition the Government at that time. Let us also not forget the contribution from the women with such petitions, as this provided them with good opportunities to be involved in politics.

We would like to believe that UNISON has the same convictions today “..... to help humanity and be a voice for those who may otherwise not be heard…” but all too often, year after year we hear of areas where our Branches have a presence, that are failing the very people they set out to help. Modern day practices of unfair treatment for groups of people in the workplace on the grounds of race still exists today. It is all too easy to say it was not racial; it is also easy to say it was down to race, but the only way to find out is, if, as a body, we as members of this Union are prepared to take the time to explore these allegations. It was also stated repeatedly that the legal body of UNISON are not representing the black members of this Union; that the only way they will take cases forward is if the member drops the “race” allegations” How can this be? This belief that UNISON is failing black members was borne out by the motions taken to conference. The strength of feeling that our own Union is racist was overwhelming and there was a call for UNISON to put its own house in order instead of dwelling on the recent developments on ‘Celebrity Big Brother’. A pledge was given by the General Secretary Dave Prentis, that he would listen carefully to all that was said relating to this issue and act upon the concerns of Conference. (A full report on the Conference is available on request).
Closer to home our black members have on many occasions felt let down by the Branch and also UNISON as a body. We have been involved in a number of grievance cases where the outcomes have been not been exactly what the members would have hoped for. Nevertheless by highlighting unacceptable practices within the workplace we have been able to bring about some changes within the Authority which hopefully will benefit the Black and Ethnic minorities employed by Staffordshire County Council.

Behind the scenes we remain Core Group members of the County Black Workers Support Group and have succeeded in recruiting new members to UNISON together with persuading the unsettled members that there is strength in numbers and together we can make a difference, but we would urge any black members out there who have issues in the workplace that need to be addressed, we are always available for consultation and advice.

By the time this report is read, ‘Black History Month’ 2007 would have taken place. This year the exhibitions which look at different cultures within the County took place at Oddfellows Hall on 20th November. This annual event is organised by the County Black Workers Support Group and is usually well attended, so look out for the next one due in October 2008.

We mentioned earlier it has been a year for reflection and consideration. Over the coming months we plan to re-evaluate the role of Black Members Officer to consider the ongoing effectiveness within this Authority in providing a service for our Black and Ethnic Minorities.

So finally, to quote Dave Prentis, when he concluded his speech at Conference:-

“We must be judged not by the colour of our skin but by the content of our character”.

Report of Women’s Officer –Carol Thompson

I attended a 2 ½ day women’s conference on my own in Bournemouth of February this year. I found this conference more interesting than the year before. Malcolm Cantello, UNISON President opened the conference talking about UNISON membership of 1.3 million. One million of these are female members. There were huge discussions on Domestic Violence. Lucia Matibenga – Zimbabwe Trade Union Congress was the Guest Speaker. She told the floor how she had been beaten and raped while in prison due to her union duties. Second Guest Speaker was Frances O’Grady, General Secretary, TUC she discussed how unions could become more effective. Third Speaker was Laura Williams, Senior Researcher, The Work Foundation. Laura talked about work life balance and a survey that has been published on the website in December 06.

I also have more insight into South Africa and how women are treated there due to the lack of Health Care.

It was also discussed that millions of workers throughout the UK suffer low pay, unsafe workplaces, job insecurity and even abuse of their basic human rights.

This year’s conference in 2008 is in Harrogate. I will still be the lead officer with Marlene Green and Pat Corby, I hope Marlene & Pat enjoy this conference as much as I have.

Throughout this year I have helped female members with issues relating to their employment and health.
I would just like to thank Sharon for organising the transport and accommodation for us.

**Report of Equality Officer – Tonia Atherdan**

Throughout the year I have sent out the Equality news updates to the workplace stewards that have been produced by UNISON. These updates have included some major issues that range from diversity shortfall in the workplace to closing the gender pay gap.

Whilst we have travelled a long way in terms of equalities legislation over recent years, the complexity of discrimination still makes it very difficult to tackle the deep-set issues of inequality in the workplace.

Over the past 10 years there have been upgrades on maternity and paternity leave, seen regulations on sexual orientation, age and religion beliefs. Also we have focused on gender equality and race equality duties, and of course within this authority we are currently waiting for Job Evaluation to be implemented to ensure there is equal pay for all.

I have enjoyed my role as equality officer and if you would like more information on equality issues that we face in the workplace then please feel free to contact me at the branch.
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*For quality and protection your call will be recorded. We exchange information with other insurance companies and the police to prevent fraud.**Compared to the standard price you would be quoted if you called us. This only applies to home (buildings and contents) and travel insurance. UNISON is an Introducer Appointed Representative of UIA (Insurance Services) Ltd and UIA (Insurance) Ltd, which are both authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Fortis Insurance Ltd. Pet Insurance is arranged by Thomside Plc and is underwritten by Allianz Cornhill Insurance plc. All these companies are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

USNC/07
26

01 October 2007

**Tax free savings from Britannia**

Britannia Building Society has this month launched an instant access Mini Cash ISA for Unison Members with an annual interest rate of 5.35% **AER** / **tax free**.

The Unison ISA is the latest addition to the product range that Britannia currently offers Unison Members.

The partnership between Unison and Britannia was formed in 1960. Unison is Britannia’s largest Affinity Partner. Unison has regional and branch offices in workplaces throughout the country and members are employees in the public sector or in private and voluntary organisations that provide services to the public. Retired employees and student nurses can also be members.

The new Unison Mini Cash ISA requires a minimum investment of just £1.

Neville Richardson, Group Chief Executive of Britannia, said ‘Our recent research showed that almost half of the population have never opened an ISA and are missing out on the benefits of tax free savings.’

‘This Mini Cash ISA will enable savers to make the most of their tax free allowance and save with Britain’s best mutual. What’s more, because we’re fair, customers who open our new ISA will also qualify for Britannia’s Membership Reward and receive a share of our profits.’

Britannia’s Mini Cash ISA is not linked to any other accounts and customers can also transfer existing Mini Cash ISAs from other organisations into this account.

For more information please contact Michelle Searle Area Affinity Developer on 07766658349* or email michelle.searle@britannia.co.uk

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*Call charges to mobile phones will vary, depending on your telecom provider’s call rates

**AER stands for Annual Equivalent Rate and illustrates what the interest rate would be if interest was paid and added each year, and has been rounded to two decimal places.

**Free of UK income tax.

*Britannia’s Membership Reward returns a share of the Society’s profits to its members. Scheme rules apply
1. YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

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3. WHAT YOU WILL PAY

Please Tick the Appropriate Box For Your Earnings...

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Tick this box if you are a Student Member. Your subscription is £10 per year

4. POLITICAL FUND

UNISON’s Affiliated Political Fund (APF) is used to campaign for and promote UNISON policy and the need for quality public services within the Labour Party, locally and nationally, in Parliament and Europe. UNISON APF affiliates to the Labour Party.

UNISON’s General Political Fund (GPF) is used to pay for campaigning at branch, regional and national levels of the union and for research and lobbying in Parliament and Europe. It is independent of support for any political party.

It is important that you indicate a choice of fund by ticking one of the boxes below. Your subscription shown above includes a political fund payment so you do not pay any more by being in one of the funds.

5. DATA PROTECTION

The information provided by you shall be recorded by UNISON for statistical purposes and used for sending you UNISON publications, ballot forms and otherwise communicating with you.

If you do NOT want any mailings from UNISON, besides those required by statute, please tick this box.

To keep you fully informed of the services we arrange for members we want you to receive details of benefits offered by or in conjunction with UNISON’s affinity partners. The affinity partners are organisations with close links to UNISON that share our ambition to provide you with the best possible range of benefits. Under the Data Protection legislation we can only disclose your details to our affinity partners with your explicit consent. Therefore if you WANT to receive details of the full range of benefits you MUST tick this box.

6. YOUR AUTHORISATION

- I wish to join UNISON and accept its rules and constitution.
- I authorise deduction of UNISON subscriptions from my salary/wages at the rate determined by UNISON in accordance with its rules to be paid over to them on my behalf and I authorise my employer to provide information to UNISON to keep my records up to date.
- I authorise deduction of the following Political Fund payment as part of my subscription (tick one box only):
  - APF
  - GPF

Please Return to:
Staffordshire Branch of UNISON,
24 Lichfield Road, Stafford, ST17 4LL