

STAYING ACTIVE UNISON

GREATER LONDON REGION RETIRED MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

Issue 16 September 2012

March for a better future Join the TUC Mass Demonstration Saturday 20th October

The Governments Economic Strategy isn't working ! The latest figures show that their cuts and austerity agenda—slashing hundreds of thousands of public sector jobs, an ongoing public sector pay freeze and attacking the welfare state are making things worse not better with the Bank of England cutting its growth forecast to zero and the double dip recession intensifying. Three years on and the working class are still paying for the bankers blatant irresponsibility.

We need all members together with their friends, families and neighbours on the streets of London on Saturday 20th October marching for a future that works for us.

Even the experts think the government has got it wrong

It's becoming clear that Britain's unnecessary turn to premature austerity is becoming a historic policy and political disaster that will haunt the country for years"

Paul Krugman, US Economist and Nobel Prize winner ,19th May 2012

What is clear from UK History is that growth is a necessary condition for successful management of public debt. The huge spending cuts of the early 1920's failed to lower the ratio of debt to GDP, for example because the economy then collapsed.

Martin Wolf, Chief Economics Commentator,
Financial Times 16th Feb 2012

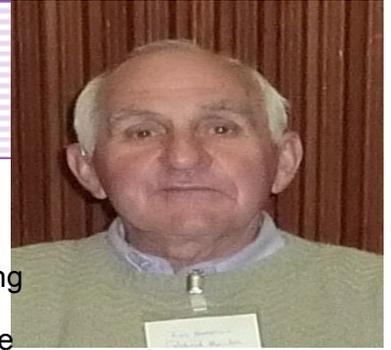
There is a draft route for the March, forming up at Embankment. Marchers are asked to head towards Blackfriars to join the rear of the March , as the numbers expected mean it will be hard to join further up towards Westminster. Details are still subject to change , but as it is currently planned, it will pass Parliament and Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus, before entering Hyde Park at Hyde Park Corner.

UNISON are looking for volunteers amongst the retired members to help Steward the March, if you are interested, contact Maggie on, m.barr@unison.co.uk or ring 0207 535 6559, You will be asked to attend a Stewards Briefing.

ONLY 5 WEEKS LEFT TO GET ORGANISED.

EDITORIAL by Rob Beeston

Chair to the GL Region Retired Members Committee



Here we are with our latest newsletter hoping to cover most issues since the last publication in May. One thing is for certain that this government is determined to carry on their austerity programme of cuts etc. For us it means an attack on our bus passes, reducing the winter fuel bills allowance, plus freezing of our tax allowance which means, we as pensioners will be paying more tax, having paid taxes all our working lives. Scandalous. But we have got a chance to show our feelings at the TUC March/Demo on 20th October against the cuts and for the creation of jobs. I would urge you to attend to make sure our voice is heard. At the National Delegates Conference in June a motion from our Retired members Conference was prioritised and passed after a lengthy debate concerning our campaign on "Elder Abuse" which now makes it a National Campaign. We still have a lot of work to do and we need our members to get more involved as at present we are considering all sorts of avenues to go down, like the use of social media, Twitter and Facebook, plus meeting MP's and perhaps the House of Lord. We have had a really disappointing response to our e-petition, considering we have 130,000 retired members and 1.3 million working members. We have until January 2013 to increase the signature numbers.

If you haven't signed it do it now,

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petition /27208>.

The scam word is a pain, but keep clicking for a new word until you can read it.

There are so many other issues facing us at this given time, our NHS is still very much under threat, which we must defend at all costs, not only for us but for future generations, also the outlandish fare rises on the railways from January 2013. By the time you get this newsletter the result on the ballot over the pensions issue will be known. I would like to thank those of our retired members who were active at the Regional Pension briefings and also in their branches it shows we do care about our present members and that they deserve their full pension rights as we did.

Finally I would like to thank Maggie Barr our Secretary for organising a series of IT Training courses which have proved to be hugely successful and well attended. I know other regions are a bit envious of access to such training.

**Rally & Lobby of Parliament
Wednesday 31st October 2012
11.30am Protest, George V statue,
Old Palace Yard
1pm Rally/Lobby, Committee Room 14
House of Commons**

In recent weeks there have been a series of attacks against universal pensioners benefits, such as free bus travel and the winter fuel allowance. Critics argue that pensioners have escaped the austerity measures at the expense of young people, when in reality the only ones who have escaped the cuts are the rich. The headlines talk about taking benefits away from millionaire pensioners, but means-testing the benefits would end up excluding pensioners with incomes of little more than £10,000 a year. Evidence shows that even after paying these universal benefits, pensioners contribute an extra £40bn every year to the economy in taxes, volunteering and unpaid care. What the critics don't understand is that pensioners still need these benefits because the UK has one of the least adequate state pension in Europe.

**HANDS OFF THE BUS PASS
DEFEND UNIVERSAL BENEFITS**

UNISON Members vote to accept changes to LG pension scheme

- Members across England and Wales have voted 90.2% in favour of accepting the proposed changes to the LG Pension Scheme.
- The union led the negotiations, which resulted in proposals to maintain the current contribution levels for 90% of LGPS members, introduce a 50/50 "low cost" scheme for the low paid, and move from a final salary to a career average scheme.
- Head of Local Government Heather Wakefield said "these were tough negotiations, but with a focus on the majority of members who earn less than £21,000 a year, we have ensured that current LGPS members can afford to remain in the scheme and those who could not afford to do so to date, can now join via 50/50 option. This is vital for many of our members who have suffered a decline in earnings as a result of the Coalition's pay freeze policies. Contributions are now on a fairer "progressive" basis. We will continue to campaign with all of the union's , through the TUC, against the proposals to increase the state retirement age"
- UNISON will now move into the next stage of discussions on improving the governance of the new scheme which is due to come into effect in 2014.

White Paper on Social Care “ *Caring for our Future*”

After months of delay, the white paper finally arrived, but crucially ducked the vital question of funding

What's in and what's out

- A cap on care costs, but no decision on how much that will be.
- A deferred payment loan scheme to pay for care costs recovered from the sale of any property, but with added interest and admin charges.
- An increase in the level at which means-tested support is made available, but no detail.
- A nationwide eligibility criteria for accessing services which is likely to be set at a level which excludes 800,000 people with moderate care needs.
- The right for carers to have their needs assessed, but no new money to pay for additional services.
- A new code of conduct for staff, but no change to the postcode lottery of home care charges.

There is a commitment to make a further announcement in the spending review next Autumn. Ministers indicated they were in favour of a cap on the lifetime costs of care, and suggested that might be set between £75,000—£100,000. However this would still leave 90% of those in receipt of care paying for everything. There was also a general agreement that the means-tested level at which individuals could qualify for financial help would have to be raised, but there was nothing to say how much higher it would eventually be, compared to the existing £23,250 threshold.

The white paper also proposes a universal scheme of deferred payments operated by local authorities which would provide loans to cover the cost that could be repaid after the individual's property had been sold. Alongside the headline announcements were also other proposals to give carers the right to have their needs assessed, greater use of direct payments in residential homes, a new website for people to compare care home costs and initiative for helping older people share their skills with others in return for support in the home.

On another note, has your branch affiliated to the NPC, They are a good organisation and we in the region are affiliated to them, but it would be really helpful to them if all UNISON branches were affiliated. £20 for branches annual membership or individuals can join for £5, Contact Barry Todman, barrytodman@tiscali.co.uk, for a form.

Useful Numbers

GLRM Regional Committee
Chair -Rob Beeston
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Secretary—Maggie Barr
0207 535 6559 direct line
m.barr@unison.co.uk
UNISON Welfare
0207 121 5620

UNISON Direct for
all other number s
0845 355 0845

Join my email tree,
please email me.
m.barr@unison.co.uk
It would defiantly help the
postage bill with the
newsletter.

PLUS

I can let you know of any
thing that comes my way that
may be of interest to you,
easily and quickly.

Key dates for 2012

Committee Meetings
Thursday 15 November
IT Training
7th/8th November
Annual Seminar
Thursday 20th September
Retired Members Conference
9th/10th October
TUC March
Saturday 20th October

UNISON ANNUAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE 2012
Bournemouth International Centre - June 19th to June 22nd

The vibrant cosmopolitan town of Bournemouth has it all—It is a large coastal resort town in the county of Dorset. Founded in 1810 by Lewis Tregonwell it became a recognised town in 1870. According to 2010 statistics the town has a population 168,000.

The conference was held at Bournemouth International Centre, the conference started at 10.30 on the 19th and was Chaired by Eleanor Smith, the first black woman president for UNISON and finished on Friday 22nd June. There were 137 motions and 23 rule changes, condensed into 13 composites and 101 motions.

The following motions were prioritised by the National Retired Members Committee;-

Motion 15, RPI not CPI for indexation of Pensions

Motion 83, Elder Abuse, which included our Campaign

Motion 14 Pensions policy

Motion 69, Defending the NHS

All week there were speakers and speeches, at the HUGE conference and the number of delegates attending the conference was 1512 plus 716 visitors, representing 1,314,500 members. We had two members from the National Retired Members Committee and 12 representatives from the Regional Retired Members Committee

The UNIZONE is an exhibition of UNISON's key Campaigning , Bargaining and Organising work. The Zone was open from Sunday to Friday in Solent Hall. This is where the Greater London Region Retired Members Committee had there stall, promoting their "Campaign Against Elder Abuse" run by Rob Beeston and Marjorie Roscoe and assisted by Raymond Gnanapragasam. Hundreds of signatures were collected on the petition," Introduction of Adult Protection Legislation". You can sign this petition online at

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/27208>

Raymond Gnanapragasam. Our conference delegate.



NHS Rally in March with Paul Duployen, Kathy Tytler, Rob Beeston and Marjorie Roscoe,

If you have any articles or photo's you would like to contribute to the next newsletter, please contact Maggie, m.barr@unison.co.uk , hopefully one before Christmas

Members signing the petition at the
National Delegates Conference in June 2012

