

Branch General Meeting – all welcome

**Thursday 9 December 2010 - 12 noon till 2pm
in the Council Chamber, Walthamstow Town Hall**

~ Fighting against the cuts

- **They are not inevitable**
- **They are not necessary, and**
- **They are not fair!**

Meeting to discuss branch wide action to defeat cuts. Come and have your say.

The Government says there is NO ALTERNATIVE but UNISON does not agree. UNISON has an alternative budget based on fairer taxation and protecting public services to promote economic growth.

The Government says we are all in together. We are not.

But Trade Union members are in it together!

UNISON in Waltham Forest is campaigning:

- Against a Council wielding the axe with a track record of failure
- Against a senior management who are protecting their jobs
- **Against a government of MILLIONAIRES**

**Enough is Enough
Save Our Jobs, Save Our Services**

Emergency Call to all our members to come to this meeting where we will be discussing the possibility of Industrial action to defeat the cuts.

If you are not in the firing line now you may be tomorrow and with 5 people chasing every job this is a fight we ignore at our peril!

The Local Picture.

At the moment we believe that there are 244 jobs to be deleted from Waltham Forest Council saving nearly £8million.

This means homeless hostels being cut. It means economic development and regeneration being cut at a time when we urgently need to encourage business and jobs into the borough. We need to equip our young residents for work.

Cleaning services staff are facing severe cuts in hours and pay: they are already the lowest paid staff in the Council.

The Careers Service is being cut to a point where it will struggle to cover its basic statutory obligations, while youth unemployment is rising sharply.

Facilities Management is being cut to a point that there will not be permanent cover for the Council's main buildings.

These cuts are being made by a Council that has presided over an unprecedented mismanagement of funds, bungled privatisations and continuing restructuring with an extensive use of private consultants.

The Kier Contract continues to rise in price. It is now more expensive than the in house service was. (cont'd p2)

The Local Picture (continued from p1)

Spending on consultants and agency workers continues unabated at a cost of £14 million a year. When will it end?

The missing pounds highlighted in the Independent Panel Report last year. It was supposed to be spent on the Waltham Forest Community but wasn't.

**WE SAY PAY ALL THAT MONEY BACK
BEFORE YOU START ON OUR JOBS.**

What's the alternative?

There is an alternative: UNISON has produced an alternative budget which includes

- £1 billion saved each year by cutting government agency bill
- £2.8 billion raised by ending government use of private consultants, who are really only fly-by-nights
- £3 billion saved if interest of PFI bank loans were cancelled.

From 1918-1961 the UK National Debt was over 100% of GDP, yet successive governments introduced massive government spending in the form of the NHS, state pensions, council housing and taking over water, gas and electricity. These points illustrate that this crisis is being used as a cover to transfer wealth from the poor to the rich.

The richest 1,000 people in the country are worth £300,000 billion. They saw their profits rise by 30% last year, a year of supposed recession. That figure would pay for the deficit twice over - it would clear it in a day.

Our debt is £1.3 trillion = National debt. This debt has become so huge because of the financial mismanagement and the greed of those who run our banks and financial institutions. The debt hasn't arisen because of welfare provision, Council housing, benefits fraud or any of the other scapegoats that this Government blame. It was not the poor of this country who created the debt. It was the rich and it is the rich that should pay back the money that they have effectively stolen from our economy.

The Local Fightback

The mass media friends of big business have successfully placed in the minds of a layer of people that the banking crisis was caused by home helps, cleaners or teaching assistants. Our job is to turn the tide in our homes, our workplaces, and in our communities.

UNISON has been involved in numerous events and campaigns to counter the cuts propaganda. We are involved in an extensive campaign to get national co-ordinated action through the TUC. This would act as a first step to building national events that pull people together in opposition to the cuts and the government's lies.

We have been at the forefront locally by campaigning in Walthamstow market, at the Bakers Arms, at Leyton baby clinic, at the Cyber Link and in the various management negotiating bodies, to limit cuts damage and save jobs.

Whilst Martin Esom, Waltham Forest Council's Chief Executive gives us updates on his holidays and "good work" for the poor, UNISON is engaged in a battle to defend jobs and services across the council. We will stop the clock turning back to the Victorian era where people had to rely on charities, and do gooders to get welfare, healthcare and education. This was a pre-second world war model and was smashed by the post-war consensus. But it is the model our council is set to pursue as they are organising events at the Town Hall on 17th, 18th, 19th November for groups to take over services that were previously provided by us.

This is not a time to keep our heads down and hope for the best. The government is setting Councils up to privatise, cut and reconfigure so that when we emerge from the cuts our expectations on state support provisions will resemble that pre-war model and the next generation will have the expectations that our grandfathers and grandmothers had.

We need to think about what leverage we can exert locally on the Council and its partner employers, or this rolling programme will gather speed and will roll across council services, decimating them.

But there is resistance. Amongst the fire fighters and amongst the tube workers the unions are forcing management to reconsider their approach through industrial action.

Motion for Branch Meeting

These are the issues we will be discussing at our next branch meeting on 9th December at 12 noon – make sure you attend and bring your UNISON colleagues with you.

We will be suggesting a co-ordinated lunch time protest whilst we consider a branch wide ballot for strike action.

It is important that UNISON unites the sectors that are in the front line at the moment. The Council will only usher in more cuts once the current crop is dealt with. The management feel confident enough to bring phase 4 forward because they believe that there is no opposition.

They tell us we are all in this together but we are here to tell them that if that's so, then we in UNISON are united in opposition to the cuts.

There are currently branch campaigns being developed in the Careers Service, Economic Regeneration, Building Cleaning and Facilities Management. There will be press releases, lobbies and petitioning. The Branch will be using the UNISON One Million Voices Campaign to support our branch campaigns and to link it to the national fight against the cuts. We will give you more information on this and be getting as many people joined up as we possibly can.

There will be regional events that UNISON has supported and will continue to support.

This branch believes these areas of campaigning must be stepped up. We are calling on the TUC to organise national demonstrations to show our opposition to the cuts.

Our Aim

The people of this borough voted en masse for politicians who they believed would protect them. We are willing to work with any brave politicians who ally themselves with the aims of our trade union but we have no time for those who wield the small axe of behalf of the Con-Dems and if we have to make a stand by taking action we will.

Come along to our branch meeting and join us in the fight against the cuts.

Don't believe the hype

The all out attack on working people and the vital services they rely on by the Con-Dem coalition government are part of a global attempt to make workers pay for the economic crisis.

The wave of protests and general strikes across Europe; and now student unrest at home, sends a clear message to the government that we will not take these attacks lying down.

TUC leader Brendan Barber has called for united campaigning against cuts and promises that "where members, faced with attacks on jobs, pay or pensions take a democratic decision for industrial action, they will have the support of their unions. The TUC stands ready to coordinate that".

The TUC conference called for a national demonstration against the cuts on 26 March 2011.

This crisis was caused by the bankers and politicians, not workers and it is the bankers and the rich who should pay for the crisis.

There should be no more cuts to working class peoples' jobs, conditions and services. We should not pay for the bankers' crisis.

The government should be creating jobs and investing in sustainable future.

The response of the trade union movement in the UK, as elsewhere, should be to fight against the cuts at a local and national level both through a mass political campaign and industrial action.

The TUC protests against the cuts needs to be built on the biggest scale possible. It will take strike action on the scale seen in Greece, France and Spain to stop Cameron.

We need to work with other trade unions and campaigning organisations and call on the TUC to name the date for an additional national demonstration before the end of this year, and build the biggest possible turn out for it.

We should call on the TUC to co-ordinate a 24-general strike against the cuts and attacks on wages and pensions.

“Private” in UNISON

Cuts, cuts and tenders

Redbridge Council is putting its two Connexions/Careers contracts out to tender. We have members in both services employed by Babcock and LECP.

Meanwhile members are picking themselves up after 24% cuts to the Havering Connexions service run by Prospects – unfortunately we lost 9 members but can at least now boast a 100% membership apart from the senior manager.

Members in Lewisham Connexions are bracing themselves for cuts up to 20%. We are asking the borough to provide an Equality Impact Assessment of their proposals.

London Living Wage

ISS Caterhouse employs catering staff at both Lammas and Highams Park schools and pay them well below the London Living Wage. UNISON has been calling for the company to improve pay and conditions.

London Citizens, which promotes the London Living Wage held an assembly in Walthamstow in November. We wrote to Council Leader Chris Robbins to ask when he is going to declare Waltham Forest a London Living Wage employer. We await his reply.

The London Living Wage is currently set at £7.85 an hour. Any members paid less than this should contact the branch office.

Ascham Homes

A new Chief Executive, Madeleine Forster has arrived and we are now picking up the pieces after the restructuring earlier this year where we lost dozens of jobs.

FE pay

UNISON has agreed the national pay claim for colleges this year of 0.2%. Waltham Forest College has agreed to this year's pay increase but still have not paid last year's!

Outlook Care

Personalisation of care is now top of the agenda for our stewards and we are planning a stewards away day early next year to discuss on going issues and especially Personalisation. We believe Personalisation could have huge implications on the pay, terms and conditions of care staff.

Kier

UNISON has been taking up the issue of numbers of temporary and agency staff employed by Kier and the difference in pay and conditions between them and permanent Kier employees. We are pleased to see that Kier has converted a number of agency jobs into permanent ones.

Norwich Property Services (NPS)

We have been dealing with a concern over pensions as it appears that LBWF and NPS have failed to agree the appropriate financial package for handling the LGPS following the TUPE transfer of LBWF staff a few years back.

The quibble is over the amount of money each needs to provide to the administrators of the fund with regard to the bulk transfer of members. After some effort we have ascertained that the issue will not affect the pension benefits paid to our members.