

Barnet

Trades Union Council

Supporting trade unions and public services in LB Barnet

Newsletter issue 3: July/August 2008

Next Trades Council meeting:

Tuesday 12th August

7.30-9pm

Tel. 07719 283132

for venue details

Unison strike 16th-17th July

Support better pay for local government workers!

UNISON MEMBERS in local government will hold a two-day strike on Wednesday 16 and Thursday 17 July after rejecting a below inflation 2.45 per cent pay rise for the year. Even the 3.3 per cent offered to the lowest paid just matches Consumer Prices Index annual inflation which was 3.3 per cent in May – the lowest paid are at best standing still and the rest are being asked to take a pay cut.

Barnet TUC supports Unison's demand for a proper pay rise. It is absurd, as Unison points out, that the Government is not willing to pay decent salaries to workers performing vital public services, when it is ready to bail out Northern Rock in

the private sector for £25 billion. There may be troubles ahead in the economy, but the UK remains a rich country which can afford to fund public services properly.

The Government is warning the public sector against 'inflation-busting' pay rises, but leading academics say there is no evidence that a proper pay rise for public sector workers will fuel inflation. On the contrary, it is inflation that is making a decent pay rise all the more necessary.

When the Government takes workers for granted, a strike is more than justified. Local government workers need an improved offer and a well-supported strike can help them to get it. Tanker drivers delivering to Shell recently won 14 per

cent over two years as a result of striking. Those workers have shown the importance of their work to the functioning of the economy. Sometimes it can be harder for public service workers to go on strike – not just because they lose pay, but also because politicians can cynically try to turn service users against them. The public support for Fremantle strikers here in Barnet shows that is unjustified. Most people understand that public services cannot survive without decent pay and conditions for public service workers. But other workers need to let the strikers know we are on their side.

Show your support

When Barnet local government workers strike on 16th and 17th there will be picket lines at North London Business Park, Barnet House and Mill Hill Depot. Please visit a picket line and give them your support. If you are not a Unison member but work in Barnet local government, and you want to take part in the strike, contact the Unison office on 020 8359 2088.

There are plans to hold a London region march from 1pm from Lincoln's Inn Fields on 16 July, marching to a central London rally, provisional start time 4pm, at Friends' House, Euston Road.

Barnet TUC

Tube cleaners who are members of the RMT union held solid 24-hour and 48-hour strikes recently. They are considering their next move in their fight for a London living wage of £7.20 an hour, a pension, and better holidays and rights at work. Picture: B. Haughian



Send any news items, dates for the diary or photos for the newsletter to: vickimorris@btinternet.com

What is Barnet Trades Union Council?

Barnet Trades Union Council (Barnet TUC) is a group of people from across the borough of Barnet who support trade unions and want to defend and improve public services.

We are part of the structure of the national Trades Union Congress (TUC). Our constitution includes the aim:

"To improve generally the economic and social conditions of working people, including seeking improvements to the social services, public education, housing and health."

Our activities include sharing news and ideas about our trade union issues and discussing wider questions such as social justice and opposition to racism and other forms of discrimination.

How can I get involved?

You can attend Barnet TUC meetings as a non-voting visitor if you live or work in Barnet and you agree with our aims.

To become a voting member of Barnet TUC, you should ask your union branch to join us (affiliate). Your union branch can affiliate if you live or work in Barnet.

It will cost your union branch 10p per member per year to affiliate, with a minimum payment of £10 per year. Your union

branch needs to pass a motion agreeing to affiliate, and elect a delegate to Barnet TUC. If your union branch is large and you think that the joining fee will put the branch off joining, let us know – we can work something out!

How is Barnet TUC run?

Our monthly meetings last 1.5 hours. Before each meeting there is an executive meeting for half an hour. The executive were chosen at our launch meeting in April 2008. They will be re-elected or replaced at our annual general meeting in spring 2009. The current executive is:

Chair: Helen Davies, Unison

Vice-chair: John Burgess, Unison

Secretary: Austin Harney, PCS

Assistant secretary: Ken Montague, UCU

Treasurer: Alex McRae, PCS

Assistant treasurer: Gloria Pereira, PCS

Youth officer: Kieran Crowe, RMT

Publicity officer: Vicki Morris, NUJ

Committee members: Deana Hamed, PCS; Paul Coles, GMB; Maggi Myland, Unison; Craig Diggins, RMT; Keith Nason, NUT; Colin Tull, CWU.

For more details, please contact Vicki Morris - vickimorris@btinternet.com or Austin Harney - au5tin67@yahoo.co.uk

LGBT workers of the world unite!

ON 3-4 JULY I was a visitor at the TUC's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) conference in London.

The trade union movement has been at the forefront of fighting for LGBT workers' rights at work and in other areas of life. For example, the campaigning priority for the next year will be against homophobic bullying in education. Schools and colleges can raise these issues in a way that helps non-LGBT people to

understand why homophobia is wrong and to support potentially LGBT students and pupils and LGBT staff and parents. Find out more from campaigning organisation Schools Out:

<http://www.schools-out.org.uk/>

New pieces of legislation in the pipeline are the UK Equality Bill and a new European Union anti-discrimination directive. The unions will have to make the most of these opportunities to ensure that equality means a level playing field for all people, and to make the unions welcoming bodies for LGBT workers.

There has been a lot of progress,

but there are many battles yet to win!

RMT Tube cleaning grades secretary Clara Osagiede addressed the conference.

On Saturday 5th delegates took part in the trade union contingent of the Pride parade.

Trades councils can send observers to the TUC LGBT conference; if you would be interested in attending the conference next year on behalf of Barnet TUC, or you would just like more details, you can email me in confidence:

vickimorris@btinternet.com

Vicki Morris

“Future Shape of Barnet Council”? – make sure it isn't pear-shaped!

THE FREMANTLE dispute has shown the damage that can be done to public services and the people who work in them when services are put out to the private or voluntary sector. Under plans for a shake-up of local government, we might be facing more of that in the future. That is why

Barnet council unions are consulting their staff on 'the future shape of Barnet Council'. Unison is distributing a questionnaire to its members and holding consultation meetings. The first meeting is at 12.30-1.30pm on Tuesday 15 July in Training Room 6, North London Business Park.

Diary * Diary * Diary

Fri 18-Sun 20 July
Tolpuddle martyrs' festival. Tolpuddle, Dorset.

Details: http://www.tuc.org.uk/the_tuc/tuc-14521-f0.cfm

Fri 15-Sun 17 August **Stop the BNP's Red White and Blue festival.** Codnor, Derbyshire.

Details: <http://nobnppfestival.wordpress.com/>