

# Barnet

## Trades Union Council

Supporting trade unions and public services in LB Barnet

Newsletter issue 4: September 2008

*Next meeting: 7.30-9pm,  
Wednesday 8th October,  
Theatre room, Bull  
Theatre, 68 High Street,  
High Barnet EN5 5SJ*

## London Underground cleaners' strike shows that...

# Action can win!

LONDON UNDERGROUND CLEANERS organised by the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union (RMT) took three days' strike action in June and July and have won an important victory.

Cleaners employed by Metronet\* have won the London 'living wage', which is currently calculated to be £7.45 per hour. Cleaners employed by ISS, who have the contract for cleaning on TubeLines\*, will get a 60p per hour rise from 1 September, and incremental increases until they reach £7.45 by April 2009. These rises represent 30+ per cent increase on the

£5.50 per hour cleaners earned before the strikes.

The cleaners had been due to take further strike action, joined by cleaners organised by the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), but the action was suspended when the offer of a pay increase was made. The cleaners have not won all of their original demand which included more holidays, better sick pay, a better pension, and more job security. They will also have to be vigilant that the contracting companies really do pay up.

Despite these qualifications, this is an important victory for London Underground cleaners and for the RMT. It shows that

against difficult odds, taking action can win.

RMT activists report that the union worked hard for years to organise the cleaners before the ballot to strike was taken. Importantly, this work included training representatives from among the cleaners themselves. In the ballot, there was a 99+ per cent vote to strike. The strikes were solid, in spite of the considerable victimisation that took place of activists.

During and in the aftermath of the strikes, ISS has used immigration checks to intimidate cleaners, many of whom are migrant workers. A number of activists have been suspended and some even deported as a result of this

use of the immigration law by the employers.

\* TubeLines maintains trains and infrastructure on Jubilee, Northern and Piccadilly lines; Metronet, which was recently taken back in-house, does the maintenance on all other London Underground lines.

## And solidarity is helpful too...

THE MORALE OF the London Underground cleaners taking strike action was boosted by a number of protests organised in solidarity:

- Brent TUC met on 30 July to discuss the dispute. After the meeting, they marched to a nearby London Underground depot where a cleaner activist was facing a disciplinary. Seeing the protest, the employers agreed to an RMT rep attending the hearing, which they had not allowed before.

- A group called Feminist Fightback held two protests, in one they occupied the foyer of Transport for London (TfL) and insisted that TfL should not be allowed to 'wash their hands' of what was being done to cleaners by contractors.

- A group called Campaign Against Immigration Controls occupied the offices of ISS to protest against them using immigration law to intimidate their employees.



At least half a million Unison public sector workers struck on 16 and 17 July for a better pay offer. Unison, Unite and GMB have now referred the employers' pay offer to ACAS. Below: Barnet picket line scene.

Send any news items, dates for the diary or photos for the newsletter to: [publicity@barnettuc.org.uk](mailto:publicity@barnettuc.org.uk)

## 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.

**More details: contact [info@barnettuc.org.uk](mailto:info@barnettuc.org.uk) or visit our website [www.barnettuc.org.uk](http://www.barnettuc.org.uk)**

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

WHAT IS BARNET council *Future Shape* really about? Will it affect pay/pensions/leave/job security/career progression/sick leave? The answer to all of the above is: “Yes!” So what can you do about it? Pack a lunch and come along to the meetings! Unison and GMB *Future Shape* consultation meetings for all staff:

**Mill Hill Depot** every Friday in Unison Office, 11–1pm

**NLBP meetings** 12–1.30pm  
**Environment and Planning Services**

Tue 14 October Training Room 5, Building 2

Wed 29 October Cavalier Room, Building 4

Tue 18 November Cavalier Room, Building 4

**Resources and Corporate Governance**

Wed 15 October Cavalier Room, Building 4

Wed 5 November Training Room 3,

Building 2

Wed 19 November Training Room 5, Building 2

**Adults’ and Children’s Services**

Thur 2 October Training Room 5, Building 2

Wed 22 October Cavalier Room, Building 4

Thur 13 November Cavalier Room, Building 4

Wed 26 November Grampians, Building 4

**All Services**

Wed 3 December Training Room 4, Building 2

**Barnet House** for all services 12–1.30pm

Thur 16 Oct Committee room 2

Mon 17 Nov Committee room 2

Mon 1 Dec Committee room 2

*More details:*

[contactus@barnetunison.org.uk](mailto:contactus@barnetunison.org.uk)

Barnet Unison, Building 4, NLBP, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP

Tel: 020 8359 2088 / 2090

## Diary \* Diary \*

Wednesday 8 October  
**Barnet TUC (trades council) meeting.**  
Theatre room, Bull Theatre, 68 High Street, High Barnet, EN5 5SJ.

7.30–9pm (executive committee meets 7–7.30pm).  
*Details:* [info@barnettuc.org.uk](mailto:info@barnettuc.org.uk)

Tuesday 11 November  
**The Future Shape of Barnet Council—public meeting.**  
7pm.

Conference Room, Building 2, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP.

*Details:* [info@barnettuc.org.uk](mailto:info@barnettuc.org.uk)

**LAST WORD... if you enjoyed Barnet TUC newsletter, please share it with friends and colleagues; get future issues by emailing [publicity@barnettuc.org.uk](mailto:publicity@barnettuc.org.uk)**