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Lancashire UNISON Newsletter: Elections Extra Edition April 2013

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*Don't let apathy win the election.
Remember to vote on
Thursday 2nd May 2013*

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Elaine Cotterell, UNISON Branch Secretary



VOTE ON THURSDAY 2nd MAY 2013

It is a sign of the times we are living through that almost everything UNISON tries to do for members is affected by the politics of austerity.

Therefore UNISON are standing up for members and challenging the falsehood that public spending is to blame for all our problems, the pay freezes, job losses and cut backs that threaten the very fabric of a caring, decent society.

Your representatives struggle on your behalf every day but we can only go so far in defending members in the workplace if the policies, laws and spending regimes are being unfairly turned against the services we provide, and against the most deprived northern boroughs. Therefore we are stepping up our political campaigning.

In the past we have asked members for support; strike action to defend pensions and to support marches in London against austerity. Now we are just asking you to set aside a few minutes on polling day to vote, and to talk to your family and friends and urge them to vote too. UNISON members cannot afford to abstain and let others decide our fate.

Particularly in these elections, to decide how Lancashire County

Council will be run over the next 4 years. Sadly, probably less than 40% of people will vote in these important elections. We will be vitally affected by decisions to come and we need to vote in force.

Vote for candidates that you believe will best support your daily struggle to deliver public services and make ends meet. Please help UNISON to help you by making a stand and having your say.

Three simple ways to join UNISON today:



Join online at
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Call us on
0800 171 2193



Fill in the form on the back page and send to the branch

Elections really matter – UNISON Activists say why...



“Less moaning more voting”. Says our Young Members Officer, **Jamie Griffin**, “The majority of young people that I know do not vote because they are not bothered, they think they can’t make a difference. But, I feel that if you don’t vote, you do not have a say in the majority of things that go on in this country, and therefore you have absolutely no right to moan when decisions are made that go against your interests.

Elaine Brookes, Assistant Branch Secretary and Schools Lead Officer says “It is vitally important that everyone gets out to vote for the County Council Elections on May 2nd. I will be! It is my chance to vote for the candidate I think will do their best for all the people of Lancashire. It is my chance to vote for a candidate who will listen to the people of Lancashire which also includes employees of Lancashire County Council. Don’t just grumble about how dissatisfied you may be about how the County Council manages things- things will only change if the voters elect Councillors who will deal with budget constraints in a fairer and more accountable way. **VOTE ON MAY 2nd!**”

THE COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS ARE ABOUT YOU!

UNISON are engaging with candidates in this election to put issues affecting you, our members, whether working for the County Council, Colleges, Private Contractors or in the Voluntary Sector. UNISON believes the key issues for members are:

- **Preventing future, and questioning existing, outsourcing of public services.**
- **A Living Wage of £7.45/ hour as a minimum for public service workers, and a model for the private sector to tackle poverty and make work pay.**
- **Investment in apprenticeships to provide jobs for our children, and support children’s centres.**
- **Protecting public services as the only way to both make Lancashire a better place to live and to secure our jobs long term.**
- **Focus on our future , invest in renewable energy and recycling.**
- **Prevent waste by using**

the Council’s purchasing power to cut energy bills, not its workforce.

- **Protect the most vulnerable. Dignity for the elderly and protection for those with disabilities.**
- **Protect public transport.**

WHY YOUR VOTE MATTERS!

Voting does not guarantee success, but not voting clearly lets politicians off the hook. If public service workers fail to vote, and make our views heard, the government will either say we support them or we don’t care. They cynically believe that those being hardest hit right now have lost all hope in politics and simply won’t bother to vote. Everything we believe in, and strive for, is being threatened. If UNISON members and our families turn out in force, we could constitute 10% of those likely to vote. If all our trade union colleagues do the same, we can send a real message on the disastrous and divisive politics of austerity.

There really is an alternative – How Australia has rejected austerity and are doing well on it

Jason Wood is an Area Organiser for UNISON working closely with the Lancashire County Branch. He left life behind as a Union Organiser in Australia for family reasons.

“And what a shock it was. Australia was hit by the world wide banking crisis just like Britain. Yet there, the government put money directly in people’s

pockets. Instead of big investment projects, like the rail link, that won’t start for years, they gave cash hand-outs and invested in small projects at local level, building school halls or community centres. The result is growth. The last thing I did before I left was negotiate a 3.5% annual pay rise for public sector workers”.

Jason couldn’t believe the strict anti-union laws that exist here.

“In Australia, if a union has one member, the employers have to recognise them. It is a far more balanced arrangement for workers and they can hold on to the hope that their kids will be better off than their parents. Something no longer true here”.

DID YOU KNOW!

From the financial crash to 2011, British real wages fell by over 4%, the worst record among richer countries. Most of this was in the first year of the coalition and things have worsened since then. Australia was top of the list with a 6.9% increase in real wages.

ED MILIBAND LAUNCHES LANCASHIRE LABOUR CAMPAIGN

Ed Miliband, Labour Leader, launched the 'short campaign' of the Lancashire Labour Party for the County Council Elections on Thursday 28th March in Preston.

Trade unionists were well represented, including LANCASHIRE UNISON, Assistant Branch Secretary Chris Lomax. Chris explains "Labour pledges seem broadly in line with what UNISON have been campaigning for over a number of years. UNISON agree these pledges would make Lancashire a better place to live. To achieve these outcomes we need

you to vote, take your family to vote and encourage your friends to vote, to achieve a better Lancashire for ourselves and our communities."

Labour Promise You : One Community, One Lancashire, One Nation.

Following detailed consultation with party members and trade unionists, with strong input from UNISON, the Lancashire Labour Party have adopted 5 pledges. These are just the headlines of a deeper manifesto which covers most issues members will be concerned about.

However the 5 Pledges are:

Jobs for young people and Support for Childrens Centres.

- Extra Investment in Lancashire apprenticeships and more money for Childrens Centres.

Dignity for the Elderly and Protection for those with Disabilities

- A Lancashire gold standard for care of older people and support for you and your family.

Cheaper Fuel Bills and Greener Lancashire.

- Help you to use less and buy cheaper energy



and invest to save local recycling centres.

Protect Public Transport and Improve Our Roads.

- Extra investment in live, real time transport information and repairing our highways.

A Lancashire to be proud of

- Making work pay with the Living Wage and a Fair Trade commitment.

These are just the headlines of a deeper manifesto which covers most issues members will be concerned about.

Local Government Pay Claim

The employer's side have indicated they will make a final offer by the end of April. The Trade Union side do not expect an improvement 1%. As a prelude to an indicative ballot on the final offer, the Branch would like to receive the views of members and in particular whether or not members would be prepared to take ANY forms of industrial action. Views can be e mailed to unison.enquiries@lancashire.gov.uk. Further information can be found at www.lancashireunison.org

Social Workers under pressure – feedback needed

UNISON has been contacted by several social worker members who have concerns about caseload/workload issues. If that is a concern you share please contact the UNISON Branch Office on 01772 533072 or by email Unison.enquiries@lancashire.gov.uk to relay your concerns.

UNISON NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (NEC) ELECTIONS 2013

The ballot papers for the NEC elections will be sent to members at their home address from 22 April, you may have already received a ballot paper. The NEC is the most important national committee in UNISON and leads union's business and is accountable to you as

a UNISON member. If you haven't received a ballot paper by Monday 29 April, contact 0845 355 0845.

The Branch has nominated the following members who are standing in this election because in the view of the Branch Committee,

these are the candidates who best reflect the views of Lancashire UNISON members. It is important that with so many threats facing us locally and nationally, you exercise your right to be involved in the democratic processes of the union.

Glen Williams, Eddy Redmond, Paula Barker, Tracy Delaney, Rena Wood, Wendy Nichols, Lynn Poulton, Linda Crowther, Elizabeth Cameron, Calvin Smeda, Paul Gilroy, John Gray, Isobel McVicar

