

CLACKMANNANSHIRE UNISON AGM 22 February 2023

Branch Secretary's Annual Report

I would like to welcome all members to our AGM 2023 and thank you all for coming.

2022 was an extremely hectic year with industrial disputes over pay.

I would like to thank all our members for their fantastic support during the strike. In Clackmannan we are one of the smallest branches in Scotland yet we managed – through a lot of hard work from the officers – to return a ballot result of more than 50% of our members. Congratulations to you all.

As a small branch we also increased our membership by nearly 20% due to the fantastic support from our members and new members wanting to be part of that. Again, a huge thanks to all our members and welcome to all our new members.

The year coming is looking to be another difficult one with the council threatening cutbacks and the inevitable job losses. UNISON will fight for each and every job and it has never been so important to be part of the union as it is now.

I retired at the end of 2022 but I know I am leaving the branch in safe hands with the branch officers who will be taking the branch forward. I know the members will give the new team of officers as much support as they have given me over the years.

Clackmannanshire UNISON has our website on www.clacksunison.org.uk and this is updated regularly to keep members up to date with any news.

If there is anything you would like to see on the website please let us know.

Can I ask all members to inform UNISON of any changes to their circumstances (name change, change of address) so that we can keep our records up to date? This is extremely important in the case of a ballot having to be sent out.

We do get a lot of members telling us that they don't get any mailings but if we don't have your correct address – you won't.

If any of you have an e-mail address, please let us know and we can send mailings to you by e-mail. UNISON is also looking to e-mail members and having a correct e-mail address would be very useful. You can e-mail the branch on clacksunison@btconnect.com with your e-mail details.

I would like to thank all the officers and stewards who have helped in the branch and I would like to invite anyone who does not have a steward in their department, to come forward and take on the role of Representative. With all that's coming to us in the future, we will need as many hands on board as we can get.

Pam Robertson

Branch Secretary

Environment Officer Report 2023

This year I have been continuing the push for the removal of single use plastics from the Council and more emphasis on recycling our waste in schools. We should be focusing our attention to these issues in schools so they become second nature to the children who will be faced with the looming climate disaster. As we've seen in the past year the cost of living has increased significantly and although we had significant percentage pay rises still the value of the pay of many of our members dropped once more, this years fight for fair pay is just beginning however it will be increasingly difficult for low paid workers to get by. That is why the Government should be investing in environmental policies that protect the planet while ensuring the climate change does not result in an increase in poverty. I will be asking our elected members to ensure that this message is part of the council core principles now they have at last recognised the Climate Emergency.

As always if you have any suggestions to help the council reduce energy costs or use fewer resources please get in touch with myself or any other shop steward.

UNISON - Clackmannanshire Branch

Report to: AGM

Subject: Communication

Report by: Chris Horne

1.0 Introduction

1.1. Over this last year the branch has released several different documents and updates, the feedback has been positive, but we're always open to constructive criticism or suggestions so please feel free to contact the branch or any steward if you have an opinion or a request. Once again in 2022 we have been dealing with the ongoing situations regarding ever-changing working methods for staff. So moving forward things will look to change in the way we do things and even the smallest of change could lead to the staff structure being impacted. If things are changing within your area of work, please do get in touch to let us know.

2.0 Our current communication methods

2.1. First and foremost is the Website. [www.clacksunison.org.uk]www.clacksunison.org.uk. No matter what we do during the year, all the information we have available will be published on the website. It's always worth checking back to the site now and again to see what we've been up to.

2.2. We also have the Clackmannanshire UNISON Facebook page which sees a fair bit of traffic and we hope that you are all following us now. Please feel free to like and share our posts so that we can reach a wider audience. If not please do so as this remains very useful in getting instant information out about planned action and up to date information, Strike action, Ballots etc.

2.3. Twitter - @Clacks_Unison please follow if you have this platform.

2.4. Notice boards in the workplace - We have these within Kilncraigs and Kellibank and they have been regarded as being a successful point of contact for information. We will be looking to freshen these up with up-to-date information in the near future. **If you don't have anything in your workplace**, please speak to a steward or send an email and we can look at getting something for your place of work.

2.5. Lastly, and arguably most importantly, speak to our stewards. There are stewards in and around the workplace. If something is bothering you or if you want something investigated, please approach one of our stewards and ask them. Due to many staff working from home you can also drop us an email at clacksunison@btconnect

3.0 Benefits of Membership

3.1. There are many benefits of being a Unison member. These range from getting legal advice to getting discounts on holidays as part of the UNISON travel club. We include information on these things in our newsletters and website, so please have a look and take advantage of being a member of UNISON.

3.2. Current members – It is extremely important that we have the correct information of your membership details. If you have either moved house, changed your name, started a new job or any other details have changed. You can do this at unison.org.uk/my-unison

3.3. More Important than ever the local Unison branch needs additional stewards. We are short in some departments and only a few would help us significantly. We have introduced

steward mentoring which will enable any new steward to feel comfortable as they take on the duties of becoming a new steward . It is highly rewarding and you are entitled to paid time off for training and to represent your work colleagues. If you would like to know more, please get in touch by either speaking to a steward or email clacksunison@btconnect

Lawrence Hunter – Education Officer Report 2022/23

Learning and Organising (L+O) remains pivotal to the development of our Branch and empowers our members. My role in the local branch has been to promote training and educational opportunities for our stewards and members. During the past year I arranged Stewards Induction courses and specialist training for our stewards to help improve their knowledge and ability to negotiate with management and to help them tackle situations in the workplace that have impacted upon the lives of our members

In March 2022 I was re-appointed as the chairperson of the Scottish Region's Learning and Organising committee. This committee plays a key role in the development of training for all UNISON Members.

UNISON training is designed to give our activists the skills needed to carry out their roles and to ensure that they can perform them with confidence.

UNISON training creates a framework that unites all UNISON activists, providing knowledge and skills for new activists to allow them to become proactive and also re-energising our existing activists.

UNISON education and training is vital to help improve workers' rights and to deliver UNISON campaigns to improve pay and conditions, make workplaces safer and promoting equalities.

As a long term lay tutor I tutored on a variety of courses during the year. I have found this to be very rewarding and equally informative as it provided me with insights as to what was happening in other branches and from this I have been able to share good practice with our own local branch. Courses that I have tutored on include – Organising Stewards, Health and Safety and ERA refresher. In addition to this I have co-tutored on Equalities courses and UNISON's lay tutor programme (an intensive programme of training that permits those who complete the course to become accredited and able to tutor on the UNISON regional Education programme and within local branches).

During last year, as the Chairperson for L+O committee I worked hard with other members of the committee to develop training opportunities for activists in UNISON. The vast majority of training during the early months of 22/23 was on- line training which provided opportunities for people to attend our courses whilst working from home and also increased opportunities for those living in remote areas.

In the latter half of the year we were actually able to establish face to face and hybrid meetings which opened up our training agenda even further.

Following on from the L+O Development weekend in October 2023, I have chaired a variety of meetings to develop and update our protocols and procedures which has led to models of best practice in our learning environment. I have also chaired workshops to appraise and develop our learning materials as well as developing our publicity and organising strategy within the region.

Another key area I have worked on with the L+O committee is a review of the support that is provided to our lay tutors. The aim being to help ensure that our lay tutors are fully equipped and up to date with the materials they deliver and that they are assisted with their own personal development.

Working with the Vice Chair and Regional Organiser I have helped establish our regional training programme for 2023/24 which provides for a comprehensive suite of learning activities that will educate, inform and motivate new and existing activists.

At a local level, in November '22 I co-ordinated with our Branch Secretary, our very successful, local branch development weekend which has created improved branch working practices and helped to establish our priorities for 2023/24. It also allowed us the opportunity to work with Clacks Human Resources which has culminated in the development of opportunities for joint training on key issues associated with disabilities and equality in the workplace.

In addition to the above, I have established our own local Self Organised Group to support those with disabilities. I am currently working with the group to develop publicity and support mechanisms for those who have become disadvantaged in the workplace due to mental or physical disability and who require our guidance and assistance.

My role in the Branch in the future

I look forward to continuing my work as the local branch Education officer to help ensure local members and activists receive adequate training to help them develop and to ensure that we as a branch are strong and supportive in a time when we are all facing unprecedented rising costs of living and Government cutbacks which are creating changes in work practice, job losses and reduction in service provision.

My motto is Keep Learning, Keep Active and Keep jobs

Regards

Lawrence Hunter

Clackmannanshire UNISON Branch

Officer Report – Equalities

I am Elaine Dewar and I am the equalities branch officer for UNISON.

UNISON is all about fighting for fairness and equality in the workplace.

This has been a difficult year to advance equality issues in the workplace simply because many workplaces are still recovering from covid and have used this as an opportunity to introduce hybrid working which means a lot of staff are working from home.

This has been another year full of uncertainties and with a new cost of living crisis as well to contend with.

I would like to take this opportunity to send my condolences to all of our members who that have lost a loved one thru covid it still exists.

This does not mean that UNISON has been silent on equality issues. In the past year UNISON has campaigned and made 2022 Unison's year of the disabled worker. Raising awareness to issues regarding disabled members on coming to work and staying in their roles with reasonable adjustments and support. Unison stewards have been attending training on how to support disabled members and the laws and policies that govern them to do so. A disability self organising group has been started to come together and discuss what we can do as a branch to support our disabled members. There have been a number of free learning courses for members to learn more about burn out and mindfulness is just a few. Please feel to get in touch if you would like more information or you need support from our branch.

UNISON has a women members group, not just to help fight their specific issues but also to offer support in a range of areas. Please do get in touch if you would like to know more.

We continue to fight for fair pay and equality for all and we help to ensure our employers are abiding by the public sector duties in relation to equality impact assessments.

A key topic for the coming year for me will be UNISON's "bridge the gender gap " Men are still paid on average 18% more than woman. This is why Unison is leading a nationwide campaign to bridge the gap. Unison represents over one million women making us the largest women's organisation in the UK.

Another key topic for the following year is Unison's "louder and prouder "Trans equality campaign to roll out Trans ally training across all unison regions. To build Trans and non – binary member activism to organise and campaign on workplace issues. To ensure workplaces are safe by adopting Unison's model Trans policy and to fight to make sure Unison's activism is heard by politicians. If you feel you would like to join the fight become a steward and let your voice be heard. Inform us of the issues in the workplace and allow us to assist to resolve these issues please get in touch.

Look out for more information and the bridge the gap campaign. and please to do get in touch if you would to discuss equalities and/or any issues you have at work.

Elaine Dewar

Clackmannanshire UNISON Branch

Officer Report – Vice Chair

I am Kevin McIntyre and I am the Vice Chair branch officer for UNISON.

The Vice Chair role is predominately about filling in for the Branch Chair on whichever occasions he/she is unavailable either to chair meetings, negotiate with the employer, provide advice on procedure and rules and ultimately in a leadership capacity within the branch offering advice and guidance to other branch officers and members.

This has been another challenging year for trade unions and their members in an ever changing work environment delivering vital public services. In addition to our usual role of representing members your UNISON stewards have spent much of this year reviewing new guidance/ working practices, performing health and safety audits and challenging management to ensure that our members were working as safely as possible and that we were all treated fairly. In addition we had mandated strike action over last years pay award in August/September which was certainly a challenge.

We continue to strive for improvement to your working conditions and pay, and to help when things are not going as well as they could. Next years pay negotiations are starting up and are hopeful that a more speedy resolution and offer will be made on this. Lastly there are some major changes in the branch as our long serving Branch Secretary Pamela Robertson has taken well deserved retirement taking a wealth of knowledge, experience and skills with her. It has been a privilege to work with Pam for more than a decade and we have some big shoes to fill in taking the branch forward.

Look out for further members engagement sessions as we progress in 2023 and please get in touch with the branch should there be anything we can help you with.

Kevin McIntyre
Vice Chair.

WELFARE OFFICER REPORT

Hi everyone

My name is Kevin Keane and I am the Welfare Officer for the Clackmannanshire UNISON Branch. 2022 has proven to be another challenging year, and hopefully 2023 will be more positive year all round.

There For You

Once again UNISON's charity There For you has been assisting members facing financial difficulties as a result of the cost of living crisis, which has seen unprecedented increases in fuel costs (as well as record profits for those imposing these price hikes), spiralling household shopping costs and continued high fuel costs for motorists albeit this has remained fairly static in recent times.

There for You has provided support through it's Energy Support Fund and it's winter fuel assistance schemes. The next phase of the Energy Support Fund will open to applications in March, if you would like further information in regards to this you can visit <https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/> which provides details of the help and assistance available.

There for You can also provide direct financial assistance to members experiencing challenging circumstances such as those suffering a loss of income, experiencing a relationship breakdown, for members who care for someone with a disability or special needs etc. .

Unison provides a benefit calculator for members on low incomes who can use the calculator to ensure they are receiving all the benefits and income to which they are entitled.

There for You also provides a free, confidential debt advice service to members via UNISON debtline which can assist members by providing advice and assistance in dealing with a wide range of debts.

For further information on any of these projects please visit the website at <https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/services-support/there-for-you/financial-assistance/#heading-1> or get in touch with myself or the branch at one of the e-mail addresses below:

kkeane@clacks.gov.uk

clacksunison@btconnect.com

Whilst we would hope all our members are well and comfortable financially, we are only too aware that for many this is not the case and falling into financial difficulty can be triggered very easily.

We would therefore urge members to keep in mind There For You is available to assist members in many circumstances, as described above and should you require any

assistance or just want to enquire if you would be eligible for any assistance please do get in touch.

Wishing all our members the very best for 2023.

Kevin Keane