



Scotland stands up for NHS
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Matt Smith: Devolution - the next steps? - p4

Happy festive season to all our members ...especially to those delivering services over the holiday

scottish council activists bulletin

Scotland in UNISON

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Budget 'efficiencies' may become cuts

While welcoming 'attractive' measures in the new Scottish Government budget, UNISON has warned that 'efficiencies' could mean cuts in public services.

The budget set out for next year is important to UNISON members as it allocates headline resources to each public service.

The overall budget will rise by 1.5% a year - the tightest settlement since devolution. Detailed spending decisions are still to be taken by local councils, health boards etc.

"While UNISON has welcomed a number of attractive political announcements, we are very concerned that the under-funding of baseline budgets will hit the day to day services our members deliver", said Dave Watson, Scottish Organiser.

Health board problems

The health budget is a good example. Spending on initiatives like waiting times has increased by 31%, while health board budgets will only go up 0.5% in real terms.

"When higher health inflation is taken into account, this budget will cause health boards a number of problems", warned Dave.

Council Tax freeze cost

On paper local government looks to have done slightly better, but much of the increase is going to pay for a Council Tax freeze.

The 'Concordat' between the Government and CoSLA does

• 25% more savings needed to balance public service books

• 'Efficiency targets without a strategy look like budget cuts under a different name'

include a welcome reduction in ring-fencing but branches will need to monitor carefully the impact of local decisions on services currently delivered through ring-fenced funds.

"We are also concerned that the new emphasis on outcome agreements, without the necessary funding, may mean passing the buck to councils for policies that are not delivered", said Dave. For details of the 'Concordat' see Briefing 172 on the website.

The issues are similar in other services with minimal increases for Higher Education and Police.

"The only way the books will be balanced is through efficiency savings and the budget assumes a 25% increase in these savings next year", added Dave.

"It gives little indication as to how this will be achieved other than through better procurement and shared services. Efficiency targets without a strategy looks like a budget cut under a different name."

There is a welcome increase in capital allocations which will help fund more cost effective procurement than PPP/PFI.

"We are still waiting for the



UNISON's cake was a wow at the spectacular Big Gay Prom - see back page

announcement on the 'Scottish Futures Trust' alternative to PPP/PFI and we have some concerns that ministers may be back-tracking by supporting cosmetic changes through Non-Profit Distributing PFI models", Dave explained.

These concerns are reflected in UNISON's evidence to the

Parliament Finance Committee inquiry on capital infrastructure (also on the website).

"Overall the consequences of this budget are going to be very challenging as the consequences roll out at local level", Said Dave.

For details (Briefing 171) and much more see www.unison-scotland.org.uk.



Free UNISON film tickets for NHS birthday

Next year is the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the NHS and to mark the beginning of this celebration and also highlight UNISON's defence of NHS principles, UNISONScotland is showing Michael Moore's film Sicko at a special free showing at the Glasgow Film Theatre (GFT) starting at 5.30pm on 15 January.

The event is free but ticketed - tickets are available from the GFT box office on the day of the event. Call 0141 332 8128.

Sicko highlights the failings of the US privately-controlled healthcare system, contrasting it with other systems in the world. A key (and praised) comparator is our own NHS.

UNISON has also invited three key political speakers for a short discussion after the film.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, Nicola Sturgeon MSP has been asked to speak along with Margaret Curran MSP, the Labour spokesperson on health and Dr David Conway from the Socialist Health Association.

Lilian Macer, deputy Scottish convener, and chair of UNISON's Health Executive will chair the discussion.

The event is being run as part of UNISONScotland's Revitalise our public services campaign, and funded by the General Political Fund as a Positively Public event.

All we want for Christmas is our pension scheme!

by Chris Bartter
Communications Officer

Around 1,000 UNISON members who are scheduled to transfer to the new Skills Development Scotland are still waiting to hear what is to happen to their pensions.

The new agency should be up and running by 1st April 2008 and UNISON will be the main union representing around 70 -80 % of the 1500 staff. It is an amalgamation of Careers Scotland within

Highlands and Island Enterprise, Careers Scotland within Scottish Enterprise, the Skills and Learning Department of Scottish Enterprise and Learn Direct.

James Corry, Branch Secretary for the Careers Scotland branch says, "Despite the fact that it takes some 4 - 6 months to affiliate to the LGPS, we are still awaiting clarification on the pension options for the staff transferring to this new super sized quango.

"We had recently written to the reps of the new agency requesting

an urgent meeting to discuss this and other matters relating to the impending transfer.

"An initial positive meeting took place this week however we are still waiting a guarantee that transferring staff will not have to accept any detriment to their current pension provision .

"Although pension provision is a complex area there is a distinct possibility that staff will transfer to the new agency without appropriate arrangements in place for their continued pension provision - it

will not be surprising if such staff are reluctant to welcome the creation of the new organisation."

UNISON have impressed upon representatives of the new agency at the recent meeting that this matter that requires urgent clarification

The Branch is currently arranging Christmas cards with the message 'All I want for Christmas is my pension scheme.' These will be filled in by staff and delivered to The Cabinet Secretary responsible for Careers - Fiona Hyslop MSP.

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NO SLAVERY! NO RACISM! St Andrew's Day Rally

The annual Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) St Andrew's Day event against racism and fascism took place on 24 November in Glasgow and marked the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade with the theme, "No Slavery! No Racism!"

About 800 people took part in the event in which UNISON

members, fellow trade unionists, politicians and faith and community groups were represented.

The event was also supported by the Glasgow Anti-Racism Alliance and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The day started with a march from Blythswood Square and continued with a celebration rally at Glasgow Film Theatre. T

There were guest speakers, live entertainment, food and beer

stalls, plus solidarity and craft stalls

Celebrate together

Hamid Rasheed, Chair of UNISON Scotland Black Members Group said: "A good reason to join this year's St Andrew's Day March, is to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

"The legacy of the slave trade still exists ... even today in form

of racism and discrimination.

"And we must challenge these in human attitudes and unacceptable behaviours in our work place and communities we live in."

Phil McGarry, President of the STUC, said: "It sends a clear message to the people of Scotland that there's no place in society for racism or fascism. And I think today's rally demonstrates that."

UNISON first for Highlands

by Phillipa Clark
Learning Devt Worker

The first Union Learning Agreement in the NHS in Scotland was signed on 3 December in Inverness.

Learning reps from across the Highlands got together to talk about the best way to breathe life into the words which commit unions and management to work together to allow all workers in NHS Highland to access learning.

Adam Palmer is the Trade Union Chair of the Learning and Development Committee of NHS Highland, and the UNISON Branch



Signing up: Nigel Small, NHS Highland, Katie Rae, RCN, Jim Aitken Unite (T&G), Adam Palmer UNISON, Matt Smith UNISON Scottish Secretary, Maureen Watt MSP Minister for Schools and Skills, Rab Wilson UNITE (Amicus), Grahame Smith, STUC General Secretary]

Secretary. He said, "The trade unions in NHS Highland are excited about this Learning Agreement, the first in the NHS in Scotland.

"We are enthusiastic about making sure that all

staff have access to learning and training because we know this can literally change lives. We will be doing everything we can to make these words on paper a reality for NHS staff particularly those

who do essential jobs such as our porters, cleaners, our laundry workers and cooks but who do not always have equal access to training and development."

Matt Smith, UNISON's Scottish Secretary signed the agreement which was witnessed by the Minister for Schools and Skills, Maureen Watt MSP and Graham Smith, General Secretary of the Scottish TUC.

The agreement was the result of cooperation between UNISON, Unite and the RCN. NHS Highland covers a large geographical area and all Union Learning Reps

will work together to try and sure that members are "never too far from a ULR".

Janette McQuiston is a UNISON activist who is passionate about Learning. She spoke to the Minister and the media about her own experience.

"Since I first became involved in learning, which I did through UNISON," she said.

"I have developed both my skills and my confidence. This agreement can benefit many more staff like me and therefore also benefit everyone who uses and cares about our National Health Service."

Glasgow daycare back to work after winning pay grade increase

Striking UNISON Learning and Physical Disability daycare members in Glasgow returned to work this month after narrowly voting to accept an offer from the Council.

The deal wins an increase in pay grades based on the union's involvement in negotiations on service reform. It removes the need for pay protection under the Council's Pay and Benefits Review (Single Status).

Members were concerned about the possible nature of the service reforms which will include the loss

of posts at some grades and the creation of other posts at other grades.

However the deal secures the central demand that members were asked to take action on. The negotiations on service reform begin immediately with a commitment that the new pay grades will be applied as soon as there is an agreement on service reform.

UNISON congratulated the strikers for the determination they showed over eight weeks and in achieving the demands on which they were balloted.



Glasgow day care workers receiving the support of delegates at the UNISON Scottish Council this month

Research into Personal Assistants' conditions takes shape

by Chris Bartter
Communications Officer

A government-funded research project into the working situation of Personal Assistants and their employers is being run jointly by UNISON Scotland and the Scottish Personal Assistants Employers Network (SPAEN).

Vernon Alexander, the project co-ordinator has been in post now for around half of the project's life, and already certain clear issues are beginning to emerge.

Personal Assistants are staff employed directly by people with disabilities to assist them.

The money to do this is provided through the government's direct payments arrangements. This leads to a number of difficulties, says Vernon.

"Common issues that are arising," he says, "are things like personal conflicts, and sometimes bullying, harassment and even violence between staff and employers - from both sides.

"But a clear structural problem is the different attitudes to the system demonstrated by local authorities. I don't want to pre-empt the research conclusions, but national guidelines are long overdue!"

Vernon is based at SPAEN's offices in Motherwell, and was previously a union official with



Vernon Alexander

Amicus, as well as working with the Employment Tribunal service, so he has a wide and varied knowledge of trade unions and employers.

This is a six month project to look at all aspects of

employer/employee relationships, including terms and conditions, working environment, funding issues and all areas of employment.

A detailed report of this research will be presented to UNISON, SPAEN and the Scottish Government and made available to the wider public.

Mandy McDowall, UNISON's Regional Officer for Social Work said, "We hope to both learn from this project so we are better equipped to assist Personal Assistants across Scotland, and get detailed research to back up our campaign for better funding and better support for all home care."

Stirling leads the way in anti-racist fortnight

by Kevin O'Neil
Info Devt Officer

The recent Fortnight of Action organised by anti-racist charity, Show Racism the Red Card, has been their most successful.

All of Scotland's 42 professional football teams were involved in anti-racist events at fixtures and over 300 community based events also took place from 17 - 30 October.

UNISON was a key sponsor this year, exemplified by Stirling Council UNISON throwing their weight behind the campaign by sponsoring First Division newcomers Stirling Albion. The branch has commissioned an advertising board at the club, which broadcasts a strong message.

Kevin O'Neil Information Development Officer said, "UNISON helped establish Show Racism the Red Card back in 1996 and we are extremely proud to see the charity go from strength to strength.

"It is vital that we continue to promote an anti-racist message throughout the sport, in our schools and in our day to day life.

"The work that Show Racism the Red Card carries out is instrumental in changing behaviour and building the framework for a more inclusive and tolerant society."

Letter from one of the competition winners to Show Racism The Red Card

Dear Sir/Madam

Earlier this year I won first prize in the Show Racism the Red Card poster competition (P5 -P7 age group) while I was in P7 at St Joseph's PS, Helensburgh.

I am writing to thank you for all the opportunities that I have been given as a result of being a prize winner. Last night I attended the Rangers v Barcelona Champions League Qualifier and escorted Thierry Henry onto the pitch. This was a fantastic experience which I will remember for a very long time. I would like to offer my thanks to the Show Racism the Red Card campaign, Rangers FC, EIS and everyone else involved.

Yours faithfully
Michael Darroch

East Lothian unions to consult on strike over single status imposition

East Lothian UNISON and two other trade unions have told East Lothian Council that they are going to run a consultation ballot for industrial action after the Council ignored their successful ballot to reject the single status package.

Despite the rejection, the Council is moving to individual voluntary sign up of the package during a two week period in January 2008 and report back to council in February.

Dumfries campaign wins pull-back on cuts

A public campaign Arun by Dumfries and Galloway Branch to combat major plans for cuts in services and job losses by council officials, forced the council back from one fateful decision last month.

The papers that were due to be considered by the Council's Finance sub-committee, proposing a raft of closures, outsourcing and job cuts across the council's services, were withdrawn from the agenda.

This was particularly good news for Dumfries' Classroom Assistants who had been running a strong campaign against a proposal to cut 60-70 posts, involving



a public petition which collected 6,000 signatures, and press adverts.

Elaine North, Classroom

Assistant and UNISON steward said, "The members have thrown themselves into this campaign, and the level

of support we have gathered both from colleagues, the public and from across the political spectrum has made the council pause."

The press adverts urging the public to contact their councillors prompted attacks from the Conservative leader of the council, who accused UNISON of misleading the public.

Graham Abrines, Dumfries and Galloway Branch Treasurer said, "The leader's reaction clearly shows the impact that public pressure can have on politicians. While services remain under threat, it is clear that making politicians publicly accountable works as a campaign."

Signing up against violence



Eileen Dinning, UNISON Scotland's Equalities Officer signs the Statement of Intent for UNISON. The statement of intent, drawn up by The Women's Coalition - Zero Tolerance, Scottish Women's Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland, Engender, The

Women's Support Project - urges the new Scottish Government to pledge its commitment to addressing violence against women over the next four years.

Following Eileen, the next person to sign was First Minister Alex Salmond MSP!

Scotland stands up for its NHS



You could hear the noise of the tartan army as Scottish Health branches took to the streets of Westminster on the 3 November UK Demo in defence of the NHS.

The Scottish delegation cut a swathe through the streets to the skirl of the pipes and drums, resplendent in UNISON t-shirts bearing the legend "Stand Up for NHS Scotland" and with banners waving from the Scottish Health Committee, and a num-

ber of Scottish branches.

Tam Waterson (pictured centre), Scottish Chair of Health said, "The English model of healthcare has no place North of the Border"

Regional Convenor Mike Kirby (left) joined health branches marching through the sun drenched streets.

"The NHS is a key citizenship issue and, in Scotland, we pride ourselves on the quality of public service we enjoy. The market and profit taking from health care is not what the peo-

ple of Scotland wish to see."

In a keynote address to the rally in a packed Trafalgar Square, Lilian Macer, Chair of UNISON NHS Lanarkshire and UNISON's UK Health Group said, "The NHS of Aneurin Bevan is still fit for purpose north of the border. Our neighbours in Wales and Northern Ireland are still much closer to NHS UK 1948 than NHS England 2007."

See more photos at www.unison-scotland.org.uk.

UNISON questions Board over Monklands closure

UNISON Lanarkshire Health Branch has submitted a detailed paper to the Independent Scrutiny Panel (ISP) set up by Nicola Sturgeon MSP to re-evaluate the original proposals by NHS Lanarkshire to reconfigure accident & emergency (A&E) services and 'down-grade' Monklands Hospital A&E - one of the busiest in Scotland.

The union supports keeping three A&E departments (Monklands, Hairmyres, and Wishaw). However UNISON does not want the retention to come at the cost of other services - especially Mental Health or Care of the Elderly, and suggests that the ISP should recommend strongly that NHS Lanarkshire abandon its reliance on expensive PFI funding.

Lilian Macer, Chair of UNISON NHS Lanarkshire said, "Members of NHS Lanarkshire's board (with the exception of the one) need to reflect on why they promoted their previous recommendations for A&E as the only and best model of delivery."

Mary Samson, Lanarkshire Branch Secretary said, "We support the retention of three full A&E Departments to

allow for a proportionate and sustainable level of sub-specialisation, and with elective surgery at a site with access to intensive care facilities."

UNISON maintains that major capital investments for the long term must ensure value for money, be based on buildings and service configurations which stand the test of time.

John Gallacher, Regional Officer, said, "The Scottish Government should ensure that NHS Lanarkshire is fairly treated under the allocation of future budgets."

"This is essential to ensure the Board can revise and take forward its Strategy for A&E Services in Lanarkshire, as well as other key services"

UNISON's original response to the board said, the case for moving away from three A&E Departments had not been made.



Lilian Macer

Pensions - key decision approaching

Following considerable detailed negotiations between CoSLA and the trade unions agreement over the main constituents of the new Local Government Pension Scheme, a broad understanding has been reached on most of the outstanding issues.

These are mainly the provisions for ill-health retirement, how the transfer from the old to the new scheme will operate and the tiered contribution rates (see Pensions Bulletin

No. 8 - at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/pensions for more details of the agreements), but there remains a significant amount of detailed work to complete.

The next stage is to draw up a heads of agreement document that will form the basis for the draft regulations that should be completed by the end of the year.

The Cabinet Secretary will be asked to approve the regulations in January and there will

be a statutory consultation period to be completed by 21 March 2008. The final regulations will then be laid in the Scottish parliament by the end of May 2008. The regulations will come into force in April 2009.

Delegates from all branches with members in the LGPS are due to meet on Friday 18 January 2008 in Glasgow to consider the heads of agreement and the arrangements for the ballot of members.

'No confidence' at SEPA

A motion of 'No Confidence' in the management of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has been passed overwhelmingly by the troubled agency's staff.

UNISON members voted 93% for the motion in a secret ballot after management walked away from agreed bargaining arrangements and began to individually pressure staff to accept proposals to rewrite conditions, create a new pay structure and impose a pay rise. The ballot got a 65% turnout in four days.

Rebecca Noon, UNISON's SEPA Branch Secretary said "It was clear to all, that this huge and costly exercise to try and return industrial relations to the Victorian era, was planned and organised by the Agency's executive long before they even proposed their plans to the staff negotiators."

The SEPA proposals - while details have continued to be changed during the series of staff presentations - could lead to some staff losing thousands of pounds a year.

Alan Fleming, UNISON's SEPA Branch Chairperson said "Even after their advance planning, four different versions of the offer were presented to staff over two days and the presentation had to be changed halfway through the 'tour' as the information was misleading!

UNISON is now taking this vote back to the Board and the management of SEPA, and will urge them to resume normal bargaining procedures.

The union also continues to explore other methods of resolution of this issue, including legal and other action, including possible strike action if other activity fails.

Profile high as UNISON backs Big Gay Prom

UNISON Scotland's LGBT group and our Young Members worked closely with Glasgay! and LGBT Youth, to organise a spectacular night in the annual Glasgay! festival.

Based on the concept of the American School Prom, *Glasgay!* subtly changed the emphasis of its annual ceilidh to create The Big Gay Prom. Taking its inspiration from American

high school culture where gay and lesbian teenagers often feel excluded by overtly heterosexual ceremonies, The Big Gay Prom provided a community celebration and focus for love, togetherness and harmony.

Reps from the LGBT committee and Young Members Committee helped with the fantastically successful Prom King and Queen Competition.

So successful, that we had to hastily make more entrants cards halfway through the evening! After the Parade of Hopefuls, voting began in earnest and UNISON ensured an accurate result with only a few spoiled papers.

The men's competition resulted in a tie. As most of the men were wearing kilts, it was suggested the winner should be the one who was

a true Scotsman. However we decided to stick with tradition, and the award was given to the man who gave the best solution for World Peace.

Elaine Duffy from the LGBT Committee and Carrie Bell from the Young Members agreed the night had been a lot of fun and a tremendous success with UNISON's presence prominent throughout.

Devolution - the next steps?

UNISON has always been to the forefront of the debate on Scotland's governance.

We supported and campaigned for devolution over many years and were a major funder of the 'Yes/ Yes' campaign in 1997. This supported both the establishment of a Scottish Parliament, and one that would have the power to raise, or lower the standard rate of income tax by a margin of 3 pence in the pound.

It is important therefore that we maintain our interest and involvement in this matter, particularly now that Scotland's main political parties have re-engaged the debate.

For the Government in Scotland, the SNP has launched a 'National Conversation' on Scotland's constitutional future. This supports the creation of an independent Scotland and sets the scene for that debate.

The Scottish Parliament on a joint initiative from the other parties - Labour, Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives - has decided to establish a Constitutional Commission to consider further the powers available to Holyrood. This will involve the UK government because these matters are reserved under the Scotland Act.

UNISON has always been open to discuss further powers for the Scottish Parliament while maintaining its opposition to independence. So we should welcome the debate. But in doing so we need to make our position clear.

“The Scottish Parliament belongs to the people of Scotland and not to the political parties. Any means of reviewing its powers must reflect that fact.”

The last time there was a major debate there was established a Constitutional Convention. Trade unions along with many others in civic Scotland played a key role. Political parties were involved though the Conservative Party steadfastly refused to take part, and the SNP only came on board during the latter stages of the Convention's work.

Civic Scotland took the lead and gave the Convention its great strength, credibility and ultimately its victory.

This time the proposed Constitutional Commission comes from the initiative of the opposition parties in the Scottish Parliament. They share one overwhelming policy and that is to maintain the unity of the United Kingdom. UNISON agrees with that position but does not accept that the status quo is acceptable. If the three parties are offering a genuine opportunity to engage in a debate about the powers of the Scottish Parliament then UNISON will wish to engage in the process. The debate needs to be about the opportunity for new powers and not merely a response to the Scottish Government's own discussion paper.



By Matt Smith, UNISON Scottish Secretary

UNISON is already engaged in the debate about Scotland's future. We have made clear our desire to explore further the extension of powers and at last year's STUC we supported a call for such an enquiry. As recently as December, the Scottish Council of UNISON agreed to

support a proposal to give to the Scottish Parliament borrowing powers which have so far been denied.

The proposal to establish a Constitutional Commission needs to be taken seriously but our support should not be unconditional. It must be about opening the debate both on powers and on funding. Real engagement with civic Scotland is required. Trade unions need to play a significant role.

If and when we are satisfied that there is a desire to have a debate then we should become involved. The Scottish Parliament belongs to the people of Scotland and not to the political parties. Any means of reviewing its powers must reflect that fact.

Comms campaign winners

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Branch won this year's Scottish Campaigns Award for their Car Parking Charges campaign. Innovatively targeting members, politicians and local residents, the campaign grabbed the limelight and won a review.

Magazine winner was **Shetland Local Government's UNISON Yarns** with editor Karen Frazer excelling in good headlines, writing and graphics.

For the second year, **Aberdeen Universities' Colin Jones** won the website prize. Check out at www.aub-unison.org.uk. Winners were presented with a certificate and



NHS GG&C's John Leiser gets his award from Scottish Convener Mike Kirby

£250 at December's Scottish Council Meeting. Scores and comments will go out soon to entrants.

Black members: UNISON pressure brings carers' success

by Ismail Donmez
Scottish Black members

NEC member Sofi Taylor told the Scottish Black Members Annual General Meeting how pressure from UNISON on the Home Office led to interim extensions of work permits for senior carers threatened with deportation

Changes in immigration, visas and work permits mean overseas workers must be in continual employment for five years instead of four to qualify to apply for indefinite leave to remain. But many workers entered this country with a four year work permit provided by



Pictured left to right: Sofi Taylor, Hamid Rasheed, Ismail Donmez and Eileen Dinning

their employers.

After pressure from UNISON and the Department of Health, interim measures have brought extensions of work permit holders already in the UK. The Home Office announced that employers had to pay an hourly rate of £7.02 or the permit would not be extended.

20,000 senior care workers and families are potentially

affected by this change.

“UNISON continues the campaign to ensure that the changes are not applied retrospectively”, said Sofi.

EQUALITIES ISSUES

Eileen Dinning, Scottish Equalities Officer, spoke on key equalities issues relevant to black members in Scotland. The promotion of race equality

in Scotland, the Race Relation Act and amendments, anti-racist projects and the need to attend events such as the St Andrew's Day Rally were all part of her interesting talk.

Eileen pointed to lack of engagement locally in promoting compliance with the Race Relations Act. And from the employer side there is a lack of monitoring and feed back on race schemes.

“These schemes will remain a tick box exercise,” she said. “Unless we go back to our branches and ask employers to assess the impact of their race schemes in our workplaces”.

The meeting unanimously agreed the new committee.

Elizabeth Plazalska

Trade unions have their high profile general secretaries, their charismatic presidents and their forceful strike leaders. They also have their largely unsung organisers, who keep things going for the individual card-carrying union members.

One of these people was Elizabeth Plazalska (Lizzie Ross), who worked for UNISON and its predecessor NALGO for almost 25 years organising the branches in the greater Glasgow local government.

She was branch administrator for the largest branch in the United Kingdom, Strathclyde with 25,000 members, dealing with recruitment and organising, the individual members issues as well as providing the organisational platform for the erratic ministrations of elected leaders from the six county councils which made up the region. Similar challenges she addressed in the UNISON merger of 1993, bringing together three branches of three unions.

Lay leaders of trade unions come and go, but there are always the membership records to maintain for the strike ballot, the demonstration to organise for the pensions strike, the equal pay claims, the elections to organise, members reorganised into different employers, departments and sections. Throughout all that over the last twenty years and more was one constant, Lizzie.

And when that branch meeting was over, after everyone had had their say, at least once or twice, the minute had to be written and the action list drawn up. That is when Lizzie would say, 'Right, this is what really needs doing'.

The commitment, application and sincerity with which she tackled the work, the sensitivity and tact in dealing with thousands of trade union members, together with the sometimes robust style in dealing with determined activists, earned her the respect of current and retired members.

Lizzie will be greatly missed by colleagues and her many, many friends. Her lifelong work with the public service trade union movement will be remembered and the suddenness of Lizzie's diagnosis and passing has shocked us all and left a huge gap in our organisation and in our hearts.

Lizzie is survived by her husband Raymond and daughter Chloe and the thoughts of the UNISON family are with them.

Mike Kirby
Convener UNISON Scotland

We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories.

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