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How one Branch campaign saved services to vulnerable p3



I'm marching for public services
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We have a fight on our hands but nobody does it better than us!
President Angela Lynes p3



PUBLIC WORKS:

a million voices for public services

March 2011 No. 89

Scotland in UNISON

scottish council activists bulletin Use these stories in your branch newsletter or circulate the pdf version to members

UNISON launches manifesto for Scottish Parliament elections

FOR public services

by Trisha Hamilton
Communications Officer

As public services face their biggest crisis ever, UNISON Scotland has launched a manifesto as part of its Public Works campaign to defend public services.

The document concentrates, not on the pressure on budgets facing public service organisations, but on what needs to be done to sustain and improve Scotland's public services.

The manifesto – For Public Services – highlights the need for fair taxation; the importance of transparent and accountable services and calls for an end to PFI and PPP.

It also raises concern about the increasing trend to move services out of democratic control. The union will use the manifesto to lobby political parties standing in the forthcoming Scottish Parliament elections.

Scottish Convenor Lilian Macer said: "The cuts process we are witnessing across the UK is not about money, it's about politics. UNISON's vision is very different; we don't accept there is any need



There is nothing efficient about providing worse services with fewer staff and our manifesto highlights a real alternative to the cuts'

Lilian Macer - see the manifesto at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/publicworks

for massive spending cuts at the expense of our public services.

"There is nothing efficient about providing worse services with fewer staff and our manifesto highlights a real alternative to the cuts as well as the importance of protecting and investing in our public

services."

Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby said: "Public services are part of the fabric of society and an attack on those services is an attack, not on unions or workers, but on society itself.

"Quality public services benefit us all and renewed

investment in Scotland's public services in recent years has made a real difference to people's lives, strengthening our communities and boosting the economy. Our view is clear: the choice should always be for public services – publicly delivered."

Cuts roundup: 120,000 jobs at risk: Public and private

by John Stevenson
and Fiona Montgomery

The human cost of cuts topping £700m - with over 7,000 jobs going from local government and nearly 4,000 from health - was brought into sharp focus in February as the Scottish Government and councils set their budgets.

Trade unionists, community groups and members of the public lobbied council meetings across Scotland to urge their elected members to put the needs of their communities first when setting budgets.

Mike Kirby, UNISON's Scottish Secretary, said: "To let the government dictate how council funds are spent is absolute madness and sounds the death knell for democracy.

"Democracy is the defining difference between public and private services and it is vital local authorities are able to allocate funds based on the local needs of their communities, not political ideology.

"This move by the Government is an attempt to handcuff our councils and our elected officials need to stand up for their communities and set a needs-based budget that protects our public services."

And Scottish Organiser Dave Watson warned of the folly of the cuts: "We calculate that some 60,000 public sector and 65,000 private sector jobs could go in Scotland.

"They could cost the Treasury around £500m in lost tax revenue and £640m in increased benefit payments - adding to the annual deficit and



Edinburgh lobby

almost entirely cancelling out the saving to the public sector pay-bill."

Edinburgh members lobbied the council as the Lib Dem/SNP budget, threatening 1,200 jobs, was voted through on the casting vote of the Lord Provost cutting £90 million over three years.

Labour's alternative budget, pledging no compulsory redundancies and a living wage of at least £7.15 for the lowest paid, was beaten despite the Tories voting with them. The Council also voted to close the Blindcraft factory.

Glasgow saw cuts of £60 million with 2,600 staff leaving over three years through voluntary redundancy and early retirement.

Aberdeenshire approved budget cuts of over £50 million. The UNISON branch warned of the damaging impact that this will have on jobs, services and the local economy.

Kate Ramsden, Branch Chair said: "Cuts to public services are driven by political ideology and not economic necessity.

"In fact, as many respected economists have pointed out, public service cuts will only make things worse. Look at Ireland which went down the same austerity route. That shows beyond a doubt that it is not the way to repair the economy.

Turn to page 2

Health wins living wage

by John Gallacher
Regional Organiser

NHS Scotland employers have agreed to implement a Living Wage.

The December Scottish Health Committee had debated the 'Living Wage' policy and received a presentation from the Living Wage Campaign.

A UNISON paper was then presented to the February 2011 Scottish Partnership Forum and the Scottish Government the employers agreed to implement the Living Wage in 2011/12 across NHS Scotland.

The mechanism for this will be to delete from use the bottom point of band 1. Assuming a £250 increase, this would see a starting rate of £ 7.29 in NHS Scotland. The Government estimates it will benefit 4,500 people at annual cost of £2million on payroll.

Tom Waterson, UNISON Scotland Health Chair, said: "A good day at the office for UNISON Scotland. This is far more than a fringe benefit, it goes to the heart of the household budgets of working people struggling to make ends meet.

"£2m in workers' pockets is a better use of public money than £2million in bonus to one senior Scottish banker!"

Regional Convenor Lilian Macer pressed home the public health arguments to the Forum: "Slightly more money to help people to heat their homes and feed their families healthily is the best ill health prevention strategy"

Homecare Delegate Meeting

Thursday 17 March 2011

10.30am - 2.30pm

City Of Glasgow Branch Office
18 Albion Street, Glasgow

The Social Work Issues Group has organised the delegate meeting as a follow on to our meeting in the autumn of 2010.

Branches can nominate up to three delegates to attend who can represent their homecare membership.

Agenda items to be discussed will include:

- Cuts to budgets/services
- Personalisation
- Privatisation and the future of Homecare Services.

Previous branch delegates have been invited and new branch nominations are very welcome.

Contact Mandy McDowall
m.mcdowall@unison.co.uk

Scottish anti-cuts alliance formed

The first meeting of the steering committee of the newly formed Scottish Anti Cuts Alliance will be held on 3 March in Glasgow.

The Alliance, made up of local campaign groups, unions, and community groups across Scotland, will: "Support the building of a broad based and united campaign working with labour supporters, nationalists, environmentalists, socialists and trade unionists from across the political spectrum, who are opposed to the ConDem cuts".

The groups involved include UNISON, Unite, the Fire Brigades Union, National Union of Students, and the Scottish Pensioners Forum.

Cuts hit services

From page 1

"And we are not 'all in this together', added Kate.

Cuts will hit the poor and low paid much more than the rich. You only have to look at the "business as usual" banks to see that. They have announced a £6 billion bonus pay out for this year which is the same amount that is being cut from public services. How can the Westminster government justify that?" she asked.

Aberdeen City's Lib Dem/SNP administration began putting through cuts of £127million over five years. It pulled back from the 900 compulsory redundancies decision to a voluntary redundancy scheme for 600.

East Ayrshire Council was looking to close a funding gap of £8.26M, with 260 FTE jobs to go.

North Ayrshire Council is looking to cut £1.68m from its budget through savings in personalisation of home care. The council is set to cut 327 FTE posts in 2011/12 with nearly £9m savings agreed at the February budget meeting.

Moray Council has cut £9.4 million on a budget of £193m, with 75 jobs to go.

South Lanarkshire Council. £25m cuts in a budget of £715m - 340 jobs to go. See Page 3.

Stirling council will be making £30m of cuts at £10m per year from 2011-2014, with the loss of 360 posts from a workforce of 4,500. This includes the closure of two primary schools, Proposed savings of more than £700,000 in social care and increasing charges by up to 10%.

Highland's Independent/Lib-Dem/Labour administration had been proposing to slash all 344 mostly part-time classroom assistant posts to save in the region of £1.5 million but at the last minute called for a 'review' of the plan.

But UNISON says the move would only delay the inevitable and create further worry and uncertainty for employees, parents and children.

"Morale is going to go down because they don't know whether they are going to have a job or not," said Highland branch secretary Liz Mackay. "It's just a form of words which does not give our members any assurances on their jobs."

"UNISON will still be campaigning — we are not taking our foot off the pedal at all."

In East Renfrewshire the Labour Council pushed through cuts but also a pledge for a living wage.

This was one of the few bright notes on a day when £450 million was cut from council budgets across Scotland with thousands of jobs at risk and services decimated.

All change for Scotland's public services?

The Scottish Government has established the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, Chaired by Campbell Christie, former General Secretary of the STUC.

The commission has a broad remit to look at the long term pattern of public service delivery in Scotland and will report in June 2011.

In addition, all the political parties are developing new approaches to public service reform in the run up to the Scottish Parliament elections.

Scotland's public services face many challenges in the coming years, including at least four years of cuts as part of an ideological attack on the

we set out real examples of what works and what doesn't, based on our members' deep knowledge of public services in Scotland and elsewhere'

role of public services by the UK coalition government.

These challenges are huge and are seen by those who have always disparaged the Scottish public service model as an opportunity to promote their market orientated solutions.

Reform can also be used as a convenient distraction from the difficult decisions many of the challenges throw up.

UNISON has a well

developed approach to public service delivery as set out in our Revitalise Manifesto.

This approach is based on public service principles of democratic accountability, fairness, investment, excellence and partnership.

However, it is right that we continue to develop this approach in light of the new challenges facing Scotland's public services.

In UNISON Scotland's evidence to the Commission we set out real examples of what works and what doesn't, based on our members' deep knowledge of public services in Scotland and elsewhere.

Our members will be there delivering services long after the consultants selling the latest fad have moved on to

more profitable pastures.

We outline the concept of an active state promoting Scottish values. This includes a new approach based on liberating staff to organise service delivery with the service user as a partner, not as a simple consumer.

We caution against a mere redrawing of boundaries that gives the appearance of action without addressing service delivery.

Branches are being encouraged to discuss this issue with members.

P&I Briefing 243 summarises the issues and a PowerPoint presentation is available.

The UNISON response to the Christie Commission is on the website.

Police cells privatisation plans 'crazy' says UNISON

UNISON has called apparent proposals to privatise police cells "crazy" and claimed that they would result in another costly PFI scheme which would be bad value for money for the taxpayer.

The comments came after press reports that two Scottish police forces were in discussions with private security firm G4 Security to provide prison cells.

The track record of G4 in handling prisoners and running prisons does not inspire confidence.

This is the company which ran the Oakington detention centre where violence against prisoners and racial abuse against inmates was exposed in a BBC documentary at the detention centre.

This is the company which ran the Yarl's Wood detention centre in Bedfordshire where fire caused around £35 million in damage.

Group 4 had ignored the fire brigade's warnings that a sprinkler system should be installed before the centre was opened.

This is the company which ran Campsfield detention centre - scene of inmate suicides and repeated complaints of violence against detainees. It eventually burnt

Scottish justice needs continuity and investment - not disruption at the hands of a multinational trying to fleece the taxpayer.'

Dave Watson



down.

This is the company which runs HMP Rye Hill, about which in her latest report (July 2009) the Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales noted that against three of the four tests for a healthy prison the establishment was "still not performing sufficiently well."

Staff at the prison "remained stretched" and this

"limited the quantity and quality of interactions with prisoners."

This is the prisons company which made a 20% increase profit to £417.1 million for the financial year ended 31 December 2009.

UNISON Scotland organiser Dave Watson said: "Privatising police cells would be crazy. If money is to be put

into locking people up, that's where it should go - not into the pockets of shareholders of a multinational security firm.

"Custody is about public safety not private profit.

"This is a company looking to using worries that police forces have about budgets to try and bounce them into PFI property deals which will be hugely profitable for the company but hugely expensive for the Scottish taxpayer.

"Scottish justice needs continuity and investment - not disruption at the hands of a multinational trying to fleece the taxpayer." See the full press release on the website.

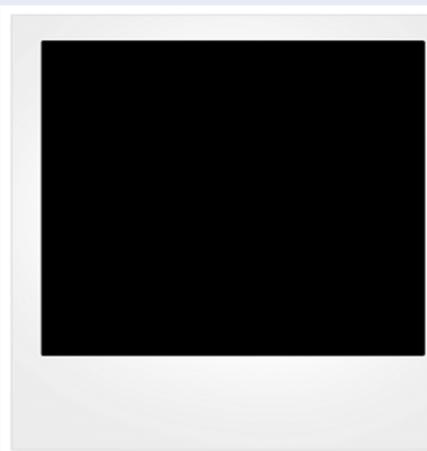
Picture this: the real picture of Scotland's public services

UNISON's Public Works campaign is about more than just cuts, it's about promoting a positive image of our public services.

UNISON Scotland is looking for photographs to illustrate the excellent work of Scotland's public services.

Do you have pictures you can send us of people carrying out their daily duties in the public sector?

We're looking for



photographs that can be used in leaflets, articles and online and we're looking for

everything from cleaners to gardeners and police staff to school crossing patrollers.

So if you've got some snaps of roads staff gritting winter roads, graffiti removal teams cleaning up our communities, office staff, classroom assistants, care workers or anything that you feel shows the importance of public services - then send them to UNISONScotland's communications officer, Trisha Hamilton, at t.hamilton@unison.co.uk

A tribute to Margaret O'Neill

Margaret O'Neill, long serving Lothian and Borders Police branch secretary, died in December 2010 after retiring on health grounds two years before.

Maggie to many UNISON friends, and 'Mags' to other friends and family, will be remembered as someone who lived life to the full, gave great commitment to the union for over 25 years and who had an

infectious sense of fun.

"Margaret was instrumental in resurrecting the Police Regional Committee on which all eight Scottish Forces are represented", said long time colleague, friend and current branch secretary Lucille Inglis.

"Margaret was also a National Rep for many years".

Before Lothian and Borders Police had their own Branch,

Maggie, as I knew her, was a Service Conditions officer from the 1980s with the Lothian Region Branch of NALGO then UNISON. A huge responsibility then for a young woman in her 20s but one she took on with energy and enthusiasm.

She was an advocate for equalities, like championing the rights of single parents, way back in the time when that was a much harder job than it is today.

She had an enormous network of contacts and who she didn't know in the police force was not worth knowing!

Her sense of fun and her warmth is what most colleagues will remember and friends and family spoke so eloquently of that at her funeral.

After retiring Maggie was able to spend quality time with her real treasures in life - her daughter Jenna and her grandson Liam.

John Stevenson

Get to London and march for public services on 26 March

UNISON members can book transport to the big London demo which has been arranged through the STUC.

Places are available on buses and trains from Glasgow and Edinburgh and will be allocated through union branches.

The times for transport to and from London on 26 March are printed here but please

check with your branch to confirm.

TRAINS

Glasgow – Euston
05.00 (approx) Glasgow Central – Euston arriving at 10.30 a.m. (approx)
18.00 (approx) Euston – Glasgow Central arriving at 21.50 (approx)
(Glasgow train will also pick up and set down at Motherwell)

Edinburgh – Kings Cross
06.05 Edinburgh – London Kings Cross arriving at 11.25
16.05 London Kings Cross – Edinburgh arriving at 20.58

BUSES (Departure point TBC; times approximate).

Glasgow – London
00.00 Glasgow – London arriving 08.00
19.00 London – Glasgow arriving 03.00

I'm marching
for public services
26 March

Edinburgh – London
00.00 Edinburgh – London arriving 08.00
19.00 London – Edinburgh arriving 03.00

We have a fight on our hands but nobody does it better than us!

by Kate Ramsden

Comms and Campaigns Committee

UNISON National President, Angela Lynes, returned to her home turf in Glasgow when she attended the meeting of Local Government branches in February to thank activists for their hard work, to urge them to keep up the campaign against cuts and to mobilise for the demo in London on 26 March.

She slammed the Tory-led government's ideological hatred of the public sector, its failure to recognise the impact that public sector cuts will have on the rest of the economy and its stubborn refusal to change course as it plunges us ever nearer to a double dip recession.

However, she told the meeting that the news last week that the economy has officially gone into reverse might be seen as something of a turning point in the years to come.

"We now have conclusive proof that the threats to the economy that UNISON has been warning about for the past year have come to pass.

"Proof that the Tory cuts agenda is poisonous for our recovery; that the economy is not strong enough and the private sector is unable to come to the rescue. Even their friends in the City have turned on them," warned Angela.

"And the impact is not just about facts and figures. It's about massive pain for working people and their families."

She warned that unemployment, already at 2.5 million, will soar when 600,000 public service workers are thrown out of work

She spoke of the challenges faced by council branches in Scotland; the grant settlement that is a 5.5% cut in real terms; the council tax freeze which is neither realistic nor sustainable in the current circumstances; the budget cuts and job losses planned by many councils.

"These are the direct fruits of the cuts imposed by the Westminster government," said



The pain is clearly not being shared by all'

Angela Lynes

Angela, "but they are being translated to our services and our jobs in Scotland.

"Those who can afford it must pay their share," she said, calling for an end to tax evasion and avoidance by the rich, and an end to the bonus culture in banks, where it is "business as usual."

"The pain is clearly not being shared by all," she said, pointing out that Bob Diamond, the Chief Executive of Barclays will be paid £8 million this year and Goldman Sachs have awarded £9 million in free

shares to the boss of a company whose profits slumped by 38%.

"At the same time thousands of Scottish workers are too low paid even to afford their rent with around 22% of those on housing benefit in work.

She called on branches to mobilise members to be at the TUC demonstration in London on 26 March.

She urged members and activists to recruit new members to build strength and to reach out to families, friends and communities.

"I know that branches are working harder than ever before to ensure our members get the advice support and back-up they need in these hard times.

"Up and down the country our union has been campaigning, lobbying, negotiating and taking industrial action locally to protect jobs and services."

"And we are making an impact," she added. "Time and time again employers have had to retreat and rethink their plans."

"We have a fight on our hands, but fight we will, and nobody does it better than us."

PENSIONS ROBBERY

The UK government plans to increase pension contributions by 3.2% over three years, grabbing £2.8bn, for the Treasury - not for pensions.

In Scotland this means around £375m being raided from Scotland's budget, £140m from local government and further £140m from health.

The Scottish Government has now written seeking views on how they should respond. UNISON pension contacts gathered in Glasgow on 7 February to discuss a response.

"This increase bears no relation to the actual cost of public service pension schemes in Scotland - it is a simple cash grab from our members salaries", said Scottish Organiser Dave Watson.

"The Scottish Government is a party to an agreement on the funding of the new pension schemes. That agreement included an increase in average employee contributions and a commitment on cost sharing. This plan would be a major breach of that agreement."

The Treasury may argue that this cash grab reflects an alleged past underfunding of the schemes.

"If there has been any underfunding it has been during the period (mid 80's to mid 90's) when many employers took a contribution holiday. Employees have always paid the full contributions", said Dave.

"We are particularly concerned that a substantial increase in contributions is likely to result in significant numbers of members opting out of public service pension schemes. A point we also made to Lord Hutton who is heading up the Pensions Commission at his recent visit to Scotland.

"Of course this isn't the only way governments are breaking the pensions 'contract' members believed they had entered into. The switch from the RPI to the CPI will result in a cut in pension benefits of at least 15%.

More details on this and other pensions issues in the latest Scottish Pensions Bulletin on the website.

Case Study: Cuts - but campaign saves services for most vulnerable

by Fiona Montgomery

Information Development Officer

Excellent campaigning work by members in South Lanarkshire saw councillors pull back from some controversial cuts affecting the most vulnerable people.

Members were also pleased to avoid any compulsory redundancies and to head off 'unfair' car parking charges at council headquarters, described as a regressive tax on workers.

The UNISON branch had warned that 20.6% of the 2011/12 cuts package would hit elderly, disabled and low income families hardest, as well as children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) in education.

An analysis by branch secretary Stephen Smellie was sent to every councillor.

The work put into the detailed examination of the human cost of cuts is just what the union has been calling for in these

Nothing illustrates more clearly that David Cameron's claim that we are all in this together is a lie.

This is the reality of his government's policy - make the poor and weakest pay for crisis while the rich are protected.'

Stephen Smellie



campaigns.

Instead of just numbers, it helps expose the real effects on people, not just in South Lanarkshire, but across Scotland.

Stephen's analysis showed that of nearly £28m of proposed savings, a fifth were cuts in services and created new or increased charges that would severely affect those groups.

Examples included: cutting funds to voluntary groups for services for adults with learning disabilities and mental health problems; cutting posts supporting ASN children and removing a play therapy budget for them; axing footwear and clothing grants for children of families on benefits.

Stephen said that £5.7m worth

of cuts were "targeted directly at the most vulnerable in the community."

He added: "Nothing illustrates more clearly that David Cameron's claim that we are all in this together is a lie. This is the reality of his government's policy - make the poor and weakest pay for crisis while the rich are protected."

The branch also lobbied hard on the planned introduction of car parking charges at the Hamilton council HQ.

They detailed 11 reasons why the 'tax' would be unfair to those on low incomes who need to bring a car to work, calling for a review to address how to make existing and any new charges fairer for part-time and low paid workers and those with the most fuel efficient cars.

Branch chair Margaret Gallacher said, following approval of the final £715m budget, that partnership working at the council had been

tremendously important in some of the success of their lobbying work.

She added: "The cuts included closing two day care centres and they are not closing any now. They are not making the cuts to play therapy for children with ASN, nor cutting the ASN posts and support staff jobs".

The council also agreed to abandon an increase in school meals prices.

"Because we have a partnership agreement, we get in early, get all the budget papers and can target the worst of the cuts.

"In September all the trade unions within South Lanarkshire set up a conference and agreed our priorities, with the number one priority being no compulsory redundancies.

"We have managed to achieve that. It is disappointing that 340-350 posts will go, but it will be through redeployment and not filling vacancies."

Lobby pushes social housing up the agenda

UNISON housing members joined the STUC housing lobby of the Scottish Parliament on 10 February in an attempt to push social housing in Scotland further up the political agenda.

The key message was that Scotland needs more affordable housing, built and maintained to higher standard.

This is not only good for housing but also for the economy by creating quality jobs.

Around 19,000 additional households in Scotland require housing every year and some 250,000 people languish on housing waiting lists.

The housing budget is suffering a massive cut in the Budget Bill and spending plans for the coming year.



As a number of speakers pointed out, councils and housing associations do not have the reserves to plug the gap on the funding for each new house.

Therefore, they either won't be built or housing associations will have to borrow at high cost and pass the burden onto the tenants through higher rents.

The lobby put a particular focus on the Con-Dem coalition's cuts in Housing Benefit. This will impact on all tenants with up to 110,000 people in Scotland being forced to move house, when alternative smaller accommodation is simply not there.

There was a further concern over the quality of housing.

Fuel poverty is supposed to be eliminated by 2016.

However, 45% of rural households and 30% of urban ones still live in fuel poverty and rising energy bills are likely to increase those numbers.

A big energy conservation programme would help and create new jobs quickly.

The NHS but not as we know it?

Scotland has taken a very different model of reform to the NHS.

NHS Scotland's two most distinctive features are: opposition to the use of the market in the delivery of NHS services and the partnership system of industrial relations and policy making.

In 2004 Scotland completed the process of abolishing the internal market.

New Community Health Partnerships were established with resources and decision making power to work with boards and involve patients and a broader range of staff in their work.

Legislation prevents corporation bidding to run GP services.

The one Independent Treatment Centre (Stracathro, Tayside) has been brought back into the publicly delivered NHS.

The current Scottish Government has, as a matter of policy, determined that cleaning and catering services will not be market tested.

Procurement is an NHS success and Scotland has an NHS national distribution centre, strategies which have produced millions in efficiency savings.

This overall 'public' approach has delivered success in terms of quality of service, patient satisfaction and cost efficiency.

Scotland's is the longest established national-level NHS partnership agreement in the UK.

It aims to provide for high levels of staff involvement in improving patient services; it is legally mandated and backed by broader Staff Governance standards.

The partnership approach receives significant support



John Gallacher, Regional Organiser, looks at the Westminster Health and Social Care Bill - and contrasts with the 'Scottish vision'

significant challenges within NHS Scotland which is not immune from the policies of the UK Coalition Government.

Due to shrinking public finances, further structural change may be on the agenda from 2011. The role of functions of the Special Health Boards is receiving policy attention.

Universal benefits, like free personal care for the elderly, free prescriptions are also the subject of political debate.

The financial challenges to NHS Scotland over the next three years are unprecedented since Devolution.

There are significant workforce reductions and redesigns, though the policy of no compulsory redundancies is being maintained currently.

The reforms in England will directly impact on some health services delivered to the Scottish people.

New Stewards Training Courses

The main training for new Stewards is the current three day Organising Steward course. Most new Stewards then follow that up with the two day Handling Grievances and Disciplinary course.

From April 2011 this is all changing. The main course for new Stewards (and the required training for accreditation) will be a new five day Organising Steward course.

The Scottish Learning and Organising Committee will be planning a series of the new courses as part of the

annual programme and are looking for views on how the course should be delivered.

This could be as a five day block, one day a week for five weeks, two days together followed by three days together etc.

The key thing is that stewards will need to complete all five days to get accreditation and therefore time off may be an issue.

If you have views on how this would work best please let us know - email Nancy Kelly at n.kelly@unison.co.uk

New climate change events

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland is aiming to keep climate change high on the political agenda in the Scottish election campaign with some innovative events planned.

A series of 'speed dating' type Climate Cafés is being organised for

key constituencies in March as well as a major 'Climate Day' online political debate with all the parties on the evening of Wed 13 April.

Other actions to get involved in include promoting the SCCS manifesto and taking part in an election E-action.

And don't forget about supporting WWF's Earth Hour on Saturday 26 March, the day of the TUC March for the Alternative in London. Get any family, friends and colleagues who aren't going to the march with you to sign up and switch off their lights for an hour that evening.

UNISON members in Aberdeen South, Glasgow Southside, Edinburgh Central, East Lothian, Perthshire North and Falkirk West are urged to take part in the Climate Cafés there.

These are being set up to lobby candidates in an informal and engaging way in some of the hardest fought constituencies. With a small group of people, you'll get ten or fifteen minutes to ask questions of your candidate before a bell rings and you move to another table and another candidate.

The discussions will be pretty lively, and show candidates why they should do all they can to tackle climate change should they be elected. You can find out about these and others, or how to organise your own climate café, at www.stopclimatechaos.org/scottish-elections

Full details, including the SCCS manifesto, are also on the UNISON Scotland Green Workplace website pages.

**The Scottish Government has published guidance for public bodies on how they should be putting their climate change duties into practice.

UNISON lobbied hard for the duties to be in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act, and they will be useful for branches to know about in local campaigns on cuts. The Scottish Government guidance is available online at

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/02/04093254/0

● Watch out for information coming soon about an important STUC climate change conference being organised for May or June. The aim is to look at job opportunities and threats, identify how to enhance the STUC-Scottish Government 2009 communique on climate change and build trade union capacity in workplace and community initiatives.

We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. Contact:-

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