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**PUBLIC WORKS:**

a million voices for public services

March 2014 No.106

# Scotland in UNISON

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

## STUC report casts welcome light on referendum debate

by John Stevenson  
SiU editor

The STUC's 'A Just Scotland' report has been hailed for casting welcome light on a referendum debate that has become bogged down in the heat of rhetoric.

Billed as a 'comprehensive analysis of the key referendum issues', the report looks in detail at issues like taxation, public services, pensions, the role of trade unions, equality and the key economic and currency questions (see page 4).

It follows UNISON Scotland's 'Fairer Scotland' reports from last year that underpin the union's position of campaigning to have the key issues of public services, rights at work, jobs, the economy and equality at the front of the debate.

With polls showing people are hungry for more information on the issues, part of UNISON's campaign is to give members the facts behind the sound-bites. That strategy is underlined in a statement backed by the union's Scottish Council.

Quoting from the statement, Scottish secretary Mike Kirby said:



**UNISON Scotland will continue to press the various parties and organisations in the debate on the issues of importance to our members at work and in communities, while respecting the diversity of views of the members...**



Referendum beer taps in the Royal McGregor bar in Edinburgh. Not sure if it is a political statement that they are all the same beer!

"UNISON Scotland will continue to press the various parties and organisations in the debate on the issues of importance to our members at work and in the services and communities, while respecting the diversity of views of the members which they will register in the referendum".

UNISON was a key player in the campaign for devolution in the 1990s but the union is keenly aware that the referendum context is different from the wide consensus for devolution. The views on what option will be the best for Scotland are less clearly defined and subject to differences of view across the membership.

Mike Kirby explained: "UNISON's approach to constitutional questions is

### See more in UNISON inFocus mailed with this issue

driven by the interests of our members, by the sort of Scotland we want and deserve to live in.

"This means that for us, precise constitutional arrangements are the end point and not the starting point of the debate."

The STUC's report won praise from the Herald newspaper's political editor: "It bypasses the entrenched positions, debunks the overblown rhetoric and provides a realistic assessment of various possible outcomes following a Yes or No vote."

See the report at [www.stuc.org.uk](http://www.stuc.org.uk).

## Be brilliant this Earth Hour

The theme for Earth Hour 2014 is #BeBrilliant and UNISON is supporting the international 'lights off' action once again.



The WWF event on Saturday 29 March aims to raise awareness about the need to protect the planet against the devastations of climate change.

Branches can check out the special UNISON 2012 toolkit on the website for ideas for Earth Hour activities. See the blog for full details. [unison-scotland.blogspot.co.uk/2014/02/unison-scotland-supports-earthhour-2014.html](http://unison-scotland.blogspot.co.uk/2014/02/unison-scotland-supports-earthhour-2014.html)

## Real wages cut for fifth year in a row

Workers are £1,753 worse off than in 2010 with income inequality and gender pay inequality both on the rise, according to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

Median full-time earnings have now fallen by 6.2% and the lowest paid have seen the biggest real terms fall. The gender pay gap has widened to 15.7%.

So what of Government claims that we are getting better off? UNISON Scotland head of bargaining Dave Watson sums it up perfectly:

"The problem for government spin doctors is that workers can read their own pay packets and supermarket bills. So they know this is just mince!"

## Social work guides from UNISON

UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group (SWIG) is updating and re-printing its well-received guides on workload management and supervision and on keeping safe in the workplace.

You can see the guides on the website by clicking on 'social work'.

SWIG member Colin Turbett has written a fascinating book on 'Doing Radical Social Work'. We will review it in the next issue and it is in bookshops now.

## Colour views wanted

For this trial issue, Scotland in UNISON has moved from its usual mono style with spot colours to a full colour version. What do you think? Do you prefer the traditional look or the colour version? Let us know by emailing [john.stevenson@unison-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:john.stevenson@unison-edinburgh.org.uk)

## Universities' pay inequality must end

UNISON Scotland has called for urgent action to redress the pay balance in universities.

As university members took a third day of strike action on 6 February against a one per cent pay offer, the growing inequality in pay in higher education between senior

managers and the workforce as a whole was put under the spotlight.

The union criticised university bosses for taking above-inflation salary increases while low-paid staff are left to pay the price.

Emma Phillips, Regional Organiser for UNISON

Scotland, said: "The pay balance needs to be urgently redressed.

"If the money exists to pay whopping pay rises to university bosses, then the money exists for employers to improve their measly current one per cent pay offer.

"It is the hard work of employees in higher education

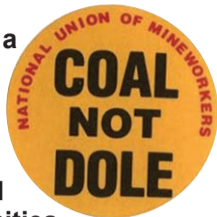
that supports the delivery of world-class education to students, yet staff have seen a 13 per cent decrease in the value of their pay in recent years.

"Staff are being asked to do more and take home less and it's time for universities to reverse the wage cuts."



## The miners' strike 30 years on

Thirty years ago Britain's miners embarked on a year-long strike to defend the coalfields, their jobs and their communities.



Only now is the scale of the media propaganda and government lies and manipulation, that miners complained of at the time, coming to light.

The secret list of over 70 closures, which miners' leader Arthur Scargill warned of, has now been shown to be true after the release of cabinet papers.

And Labour MSP Neil Findlay and MP David Hamilton, NUM delegate at Monktonhall during the strike, have asked the Scottish government to launch an independent review of the convictions of 500 men convicted during the miners' strike after it emerged that some police statements during the strike in England may have been manipulated.

### March to March

Edinburgh UNISON member **Rab Amos** was an NUM activist in the strike in the Lothians and has written a critique called 'March To March: The Miners' Strike of 1984-1985'.

Rab told *SiU*: "Some nine thousand miners were arrested and two miners were killed during the strike. Miners and their families in Scotland were made fully aware of the use of the power of the state machine, the police, the law, the judges, the civil service and importantly the media."

And he draws parallels with the struggles of today: "We are facing similar attacks today with threats to public services... under austerity packages agreed by the Labour Party, Conservative Party and Liberal Party. The labour movement is facing the same choices the miners faced."

### Local support

Rab slammed the lack of backing for the strike from some quarters but had praise for the local support:

"In the Lothians and elsewhere in Scotland, miners and their families could not have survived without the co-ordinated efforts of the support groups, the Labour Party, Communist Party, Edinburgh Trades Council, Sogat, and Nupe and Nalگو in Edinburgh, whether it was Christmas parties or leaflets that we desperately needed."

### Women's Support Groups

Rab makes particular mention of the role of the Women's Support Groups. They were: "a formidable force in the strike centre kitchens, out on picket lines and addressing meetings and rallies. They also formed important links with other women's organisations."

Rab recalls the words of iconic leader Mick McGahey at a strike 10th anniversary event in Mayfield Labour Club. He was asked: "Did the miners have an alternative?" His answer was: "Yes. They could have capitulated and accepted McGregor's pit closure programme: Instead, to their credit, they chose to fight."

**Rab's critique draws important lessons for today about addressing de-politicising of workers and winning hearts and minds. See it at [www.el4.org.uk/el4-cd/mining.html](http://www.el4.org.uk/el4-cd/mining.html)**

## Public money does not belong in hands of tax dodgers

UNISON has called for an end to tax dodgers winning public contracts as the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill passed its first stage in the parliament.

In a briefing issued to all MSPs prior to the stage one debate, the union asked them to decide if they are on the side of the tax dodgers or if they will take action to tackle them.

Dave Watson, UNISON Scotland's head of bargaining and campaigns, said: "It is entirely wrong that companies who dodge paying their fair

share of tax should be awarded public contracts. Almost £10bn of public money, over a quarter of the Scottish Government budget, is spent on public procurement. It is an important lever to change the behaviour of big companies who do not play by the rules."

The union also says the Bill does not go far enough to tackle the issue of low pay.

Dave said: "We are very disappointed that the Scottish Government made no mention of the living wage in the bill or any supporting documents. If decent pay really is going to be

the norm in Scotland, procurement is a key tool in driving up employment standards.

The Scottish Living Wage was one of '10 asks' for the bill from a coalition of civil society organisations, including the STUC, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland and SCVO. The 'asks' include action on blacklisting and tax dodging, a sustainable development focus and measures on ethical/fair trade, employment standards and positive social outcomes.

Deputy first minister Nicola Sturgeon claimed EU law does

not allow the living wage to be in contracts but it would be included in the bill's guidance.

However, Dave challenged this: "The Scottish Government has taken positive action to support the Scottish Living Wage, but they are hiding behind a misleading EU Commission letter on procurement."

"It is simply absurd to worry about a challenge under the Posted Workers Directive for low paid jobs.

"I suspect the Scottish Government is more concerned about the cost than tackling this issue."

## Scotland: It's time to care

### UNISON survey exposes shocking care crisis

A survey of Scottish homecare workers has exposed the shocking reality of the country's care services.

The majority of workers polled in the UNISON survey believe the service is not sufficient to meet the needs of the elderly and vulnerable people they care for.

Almost half of carers (44%) said they were limited to specific times to spend with their clients. Half are not reimbursed for travelling between client visits, while three in four said they expected the situation to get worse over the coming year.

The survey – Scotland: It's Time to Care – also revealed that one in ten are on zero hours contracts. This is being fuelled by the way councils commission care and is leading to worse services for the elderly and some



**It's getting worse. I don't know where its going to end, no one cares about the patient or client anymore.'**

of the most vulnerable people.

UNISON Scotland deputy convener Stephen Smellie said:

"Our care services are hanging by a thread and this survey shows that as austerity

has bitten, it is the elderly and vulnerable in our community who are paying the price. The elderly in our society deserve better – much better – and so do care workers."

In the report, workers tell the human stories behind the cuts.

One worker said: "It's getting worse. I don't know where its going to end, no one cares about the patient or client anymore."

Another said: "No one cares anymore. It's all down to money that the council hasn't got."

Poignantly one worker said "I feel worthless."

The shocking results of this survey were a focus of a debate on Scotland's care services at The Gathering in February involving UNISON, Alzheimer Scotland and Labour MSP Neil Findlay.

The report calls for the Scottish Living Wage to help recruitment, retention and continuity of care; improved training; proper employment standards ending the abuse of zero and nominal hour contracts, and adequate time to care in every care visit.

## Renee's 40 years of service

Renee Gillan, secretary of the UNISON South Ayrshire branch has celebrated 40 years of trade union activism.

She started work as junior assistant librarian in 1973 on the princely salary of £597 a year - thank goodness for trade unions fighting for pay awards!

She became a steward in 1974, went on to be branch secretary in the NALGO and UNISON Kyle and Carrick branch and was a founder member of the Ayrshire Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1983.

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis wrote to Renee to mark the occasion: "UNISON could not survive without people like you and it is exceptional in these times to have one activist who has consistently and unselfishly committed herself to 40 years of serving your fellow workers."

Renee is a senior library assistant in Children's Services. She is heavily involved in BookBug outreach which is a Scottish Book Trust under-fives



A cake to mark the event from Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby

programme.

With her ready smile and real commitment, Renee has won friends throughout the union movement.

She is renowned for her holidays in Turkey and when one coincided with the 2008 pay strike she made sure she was still part of the action (see pic).



The picket line in Turkey 2008!

## Welcome move on free school meals

Free school meal campaigners welcomed the recent Scottish Government announcement to provide all P1-P3 pupils with free lunches.

UNISON was part of a coalition of organisations which successfully called on Ministers to extend free school meals using the money from 'Barnett' consequentials from a similar decision in England.

The Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland said the news was a "huge boost" for children and families.

The Scottish Government is now in discussions with COSLA about implementing the policy from January 2015.

However, branches should monitor progress including any impact of cuts on meals services already, and the availability, or not, of suitable kitchens etc.

Last year's survey of members working in catering found more than half reporting major or severe cuts in the last 3-4 years, with another half expecting further cuts.

Many believe service levels are only being maintained because staff work beyond the call of duty, under high pressure, with heavy workloads. And 23 improvement notices were served on school kitchens.

A Freedom of Information request by the Greens found that many school dining rooms are at capacity and many schools don't have kitchens for preparing fresh food – issues UNISON has raised for years in opposing PPP/PFI funding of schools.

UNISON's Food for Good Charter is on the website and calls for public service catering to provide fresh, local, healthy and sustainable meals.



## Young members produce housing guide

by Wendy Hudson  
Scottish Young Members Officer

**Whether it's renting social housing, becoming a private tenant or buying your own home, entering the housing market for the first time can be daunting.**

That is why the UNISON Young Members in Scotland support have

produced a Young Members Housing Guide 2014/15.

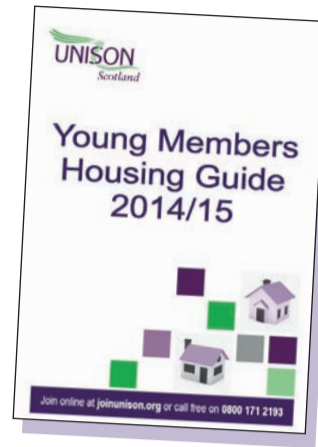
It gives a simplified overview of your rights and responsibilities, as well as schemes out there aimed at helping young people get started on the property ladder.

Scotland is currently facing a housing crisis. The lack of social housing in particular is impacting

heavily on young people who are either forced to stay with parents or are struggling to afford rented accommodation and save enough money to be able to buy their own home.

We believe everyone should have a home and shouldn't be struggling to afford a place to call their own.

The guide is on the website.



## Local Government in Scotland is bearing the brunt of cuts

**The double whammy of austerity measures and the council tax freeze has left local government in Scotland bearing the brunt of cuts.**

Local councils across Scotland are setting their budgets for 2014-15. Communities across Scotland will see services being cut.

There have been 39,300 job losses in local government out of a total of 49,500 job losses across the public sector in Scotland. Local government is the only major Scottish spending portfolio to take a cash cut since the crash.

The union says cutting any vital services - which is a direct result of UK coalition government's unnecessary austerity measures and the Scottish government's council tax freeze - is not the way forward.

Local people should have a say in their local services and should not feel powerless in the process. It is also the most vulnerable who will be most affected.

Mark Ferguson, Chair of



Edinburgh UNISON members lobbied the council on 13 February against £36 million in cuts following £90m over the last three years and much more to come.

UNISON Scotland's Local Government Committee, said: "Local government makes up half of the public sector workforce, yet accounts for eight in 10 of the job cuts. These cuts are completely unnecessary and terrible for our communities.

"It is the most vulnerable, for example the elderly, disabled, and young

unemployed who feel it the most.

"And it's ordinary families already struggling with cost of living increases who have to stump up extra for increased charges for services like bulk refuse uplift, swimming and leisure services and school breakfast clubs."

UNISON is calling for:

- councils to be able to control their own budgets including council tax and not have them set centrally through the council tax freeze

- all political parties to accept the council tax is broken and get around the table to agree how to take forward reform of local government finance.

## Demonstrations against more police cuts

**UNISON members held demonstrations as the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) announced the closure of five control centres over 18-24 months.**

Dumfries and Galloway in April 2014 will be first to go, with a loss of 34 jobs; then Stirling in December 2014; Glenrothes in March 2015; Pitt Street Glasgow in March 2015; Aberdeen in December 2015. 300 jobs are at risk.

Gerry Crawley, UNISON regional officer said: "We will keep hammering the point that these closures are not about making our communities safe. They are budget driven cuts. Scottish Government is cutting £139 million from police budgets between now and 2017 and

£1 billion over 12 years.

"This decision to close control centres puts 300 police staff jobs at risk. These are hard working and loyal staff that bring crucial skills to keeping communities safe and they have a huge amount of local knowledge which will all be lost.

"This is just part of the longer term problem. The Scottish Government is hiding behind their line that they will keep police numbers.

"This means police staff will bear the brunt of these cuts even where this may not be the best way forward.

"Cutting jobs does not mean cutting the workload. The tasks still need to be done. More police officers will be back in the police stations rather than on the



Police control room staff used the visit of the Scottish Cabinet to Portlathen to demonstrate against the cuts.

beat. It is the most expensive option."

George McIrvine UNISON Police Staff Scotland branch secretary said:

"If these cuts go through, the public need to understand that when they phone 101 they could be speaking to a central control centre hundreds of miles from where they are.

"This is on the back of the

decision to shut or reducing the hours of about 60 of the 214 local police counters. There already is a lot of anger in local communities.

"Police staff came to Glasgow to demonstrate from as far afield as Dumfries and Galloway and Aberdeen to show how angry they are that local people feel less safe and many police families will be in hardship."

## Members say why they're Worth it!

**Worth It is UNISON's UK-wide, cross service group campaign on pay. It aims to raise the profile of pay within the membership, with decision-makers and the wider public, and to find a new way of talking to people about the impact of the continued pay injustice - making pay about people.**

To do this, we need members to share their experiences and to show the real reasons why pay matters.

You're WORTH it

### The facts

- Your pay is frozen while prices are going up all the time, meaning a real-terms pay cut
- You have less money to spend and may be struggling to make ends meet
- Your public services are being closed or cut, it's not as easy to use them, waiting times increase and the quality of the service falls
- Your local shops and businesses are feeling the pinch and may close, which has a huge knock-on effect for local communities.

**“To add insult to injury, I've just found out that my electricity and gas bills will go up by 9.2%.”**

### Tell us your story

We want to be able to illustrate the real-life experiences of public service workers in Scotland. To do this, we need to know your story.

Please email us with a few lines on how the issue of pay and increased cost of living affects you: [worthitstories@unison-scotland.org](mailto:worthitstories@unison-scotland.org)

### What members have said:

"You pay your debts and you pay your rent. Mobile phone unfortunately is a necessity. I end up counting on my tax credit for the shopping."

"I don't have enough money to go to a restaurant or to treat myself or my kids sometimes."

"To add insult to injury, I've just found out that my electricity and gas bills will go up by 9.2%."

"This year we won't have a holiday."

## Care strikers humbled by support

**Care workers in Glasgow City Council's residential homes have been embarking on a series of strike actions to defend standards and wages.**

Members have been in dispute since January and have taken part in three separate strikes to date. The move is in response to the council's decision to enforce new job roles, longer shift patterns and pay cuts of up to seven per cent.

UNISON Glasgow Branch Secretary Brian Smith said members were left with no other option in the face of new 12 hour shift patterns that UNISON believes are unsafe for staff and residents alike.

He said: "UNISON members have been humbled by the support that they have received from members, local communities and residents' families during the dispute. Those closest to the service understand the job residential workers do. The inadequate staffing levels on the new 12 hour nightshift is a real concern for residents, their loved ones and the workers."

One striking UNISON member said: "It's hard as a care worker to see a major safeguarding problem looming and feel helpless to avoid it."

At the time of going to print, UNISON is currently in talks with Glasgow City Council to find a way forward to resolve the dispute.



# One Big Drum goes to parliament

by Marta Chaba

Learning &amp; Devt Organiser

First Minister Alex Salmond and Highland MSP Rhoda Grant welcomed a Sutherland-based music group to the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh last month.

One Big Drum, a community music group made up of young people from Brora and Golspie, were visiting parliament during Trade Union Week, an annual programme of events based at the seat of Scottish government.

The group performed their African drum music to over 100 MSPs, trade union officials and others, and received a wonderful response from the audience.

One Big Drum is a unique group which brings together young people with learning disabilities and youngsters with no disability.

When I started the group three years ago, along with Roxana Meechan, a local youth development officer with High Life Highland, our aim was to promote better relationships between young people with and without disabilities, and to foster self-esteem and confidence.

Our trip to Edinburgh was our greatest success yet. Tracey Campbell of High Life Highland, Peter Moore from



PHOTO: PETER MOORE

One Big Drum members meet MSPs at the Parliament

Key Housing in Golspie and myself accompanied nine young people on the trip.

All of the group members took a full part in discussions with MSPs and asked excellent questions about issues that concern them, from employment opportunities to the imminent referendum on Scottish independence.

Other highlights of the trip were a tour of the Scottish Parliament building and an opportunity to sit in the public gallery during First Minister's Questions. It was during this session that Alex Salmond took the opportunity to welcome us to Parliament.

Group member Antony Crayton, from Brora, said: "It was really interesting to be in the public gallery and hear Alex Salmond debating with the other MSPs. And it was great that he mentioned One Big Drum."

In the past, people with learning disabilities have lived separate lives from mainstream society and have been given little chance to prove their abilities.

One Big Drum is part of a movement to change this situation. Group members with learning disabilities are valued in the same way as everyone else, and include some of our best drummers.

The Edinburgh trip has been a great boost to One Big Drum's reputation and confidence.

We are very grateful for the generous support we have had from the Scottish Trades Union Congress, Jean Urquhart MSP, Health and Happiness, High Life Highland, Brora Community Council, Golspie Community Council, Key Housing, and others.

We will be giving more performances later this year and we hope to go on flying the flag in Sutherland and proving that people with and without learning disabilities can work and play together as equals.

## Who assists the assistants?

Personal Assistants (PAs) provide social care assistance to service users through funding via Self Directed Support, SDS. They are an unregistered and hidden workforce which will continue to grow in numbers as SDS spreads across Scotland.

UNISON Scotland has been running a project to identify and assess the needs of Personal Assistants. And to see what role, if any, UNISON has in supporting them. Who assists the assistants?

The next phase of UNISON's work is to provide skills and knowledge training and to ensure personal assistants know their employment rights. Our first joint training will be in Glasgow this April.

The training, in conjunction with Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, Cardonald College and UNISON/ Workers Educational Association, is being offered to existing PAs looking to update their skills and long term unemployed people looking to become PAs.

Lynne Rankin, project worker, explains: "This is a fantastic opportunity for us to be involved in training for PAs right from the start and if successful we would hope to roll it out in other areas. UNISON's input will be around PA rights at work and what they can expect in this employment relationship."

Organising work to find PAs is also continuing and widening out and we need the help of branches in Scotland to get our new contact postcards into their local communities.

Lynne will be visiting branches soon and will be at Scottish Council where she can answer any questions.

If you want to find out more, or want some of our new postcards there will be a stall at Scottish Council on Saturday 5 April or contact us at [pauinoninboxed@gmail.com](mailto:pauinoninboxed@gmail.com)

## Currency options: the facts behind the debate

by John Stevenson

SiU editor

The major hoo-ha about the pound in an independent Scotland has generated a mass of confusing debate. Thankfully the STUC's 'A Just Scotland' paper at last shines some light on what the real currency issues are.

What is clear is that no option for currency is without problems. Here we try to distil some of the issues from the STUC report.

When looking at these options it is important to keep in mind that the status quo (without independence or enhanced devolution) brings its own problems and restrictions too.

The STUC argues that the level of integration between the Scottish and the rest of the UK (rUK) economies, uncertainty over the balance of payments in an independent Scotland and direction of policy following the Eurozone crisis, makes 'none of the options 'wholly compelling'.

### Sterlingisation

This would be a decision to continue using sterling without the explicit agreement of rUK. The report says: "A unilateral decision to use a currency without any access to or influence over the institutions of monetary control - is not a viable option for a nation at Scotland's stage of economic development particularly



one with such a highly developed financial sector."

### The Euro

The Euro's benefit of smaller transaction costs with Europe would be 'more than offset' by higher costs with the rUK which is by far Scotland's biggest trading partner. Scotland would have to have its own central bank with little influence over the 'largely unaccountable' European Central Bank. There would be severe limits on economic policy

### A new Scottish currency

The STUC agrees that *in the long term* this would give most control over fiscal and monetary policy.

However, the transition would be 'fraught' and would probably need even more austerity until the currency won confidence. The STUC calls for more detail on how proponents would see this working and outlines the serious risks involved for a new

currency on day-one - not least the risk of not being able to borrow at acceptable interest rates.

### Currency union with rUK

The STUC sees this as 'a sensible approach in the circumstances in which the newly independent nation is likely to find itself in 2016'. However, while attractive for Scotland, it is not all that attractive for the rUK

This is a complex issue involving issues like the share of assets from the Bank of England, share of debt, say over fiscal policies etc.

The report goes into detail covering the loss of economic sovereignty through having to rely on a central bank in another country and the difference in size meaning

Scotland would have little real say, especially as economies diverge as the Scottish Government envisages.

The crisis in the Eurozone has led to a view that currency unions should work towards banking union and eventually political union. This is not what proponents of independence envisage.

The STUC argues that if Scotland is to accept its share of debt it must also get a fair share of assets including gold and foreign exchange reserves.

But it warns that an independent Scotland would no longer be able to rely on the Bank of England to bail out Scottish based financial institutions or be a lender of last resort because it would now be in a different role - that of a central bank 'backstopped' by rUK taxpayers.

Despite these concerns, the STUC says the UK Government was wrong to so categorically rule out currency union, however it questions whether the inherent lack of control can be reconciled with most voters' understanding of independence.

There. That's made it all clear for you, hasn't it?

## Willie Carolan

A host of tributes have been paid to Willie Carolan who died on 27 February.

Willie was a Glasgow UNISON steward, an activist in housing, communications, and the credit union, a dedicated internationalist and partner of Scotland NEC member Jane Carolan.

The warmth that was felt for Willie was writ large in the numbers attending his funeral including Dave Prentis, UNISON general secretary.

Tributes were delivered by long time comrades and friends, Mike Kirby, UNISON Scottish secretary, John Wright and John Stevenson, who said: "Willie was someone who epitomised all that is right in friendship. All that is right in comradeship. A fighter for causes all his life."

The order of service summed up his friends' and comrades' feelings: "He was much much loved and almost unbearably missed. He leaves a hole at the centre of the universe."

Almost £700 was donated at the funeral for Medical Aid for Palestinians, a cause supported for many years by Willie. See a full tribute at [unisonactive.blogspot.co.uk/2014/03/willie-carolan.html](http://unisonactive.blogspot.co.uk/2014/03/willie-carolan.html)

### We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. John Stevenson (Editor) 0131 558 7488, [webmanager@unison-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:webmanager@unison-edinburgh.org.uk)