



Quarriers take fight to Holyrood

After a solid strike, workers take pay cuts issue to MSPs p2



Freedom doesn't fall from the trees. It takes struggle

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a million voices for public services

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Scotland in UNISON

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

JOB, SERVICES, PENSIONS Standing up for a Better Way

Vote YES for action on pensions

Change not needed

The Local Government and Health pension funds are sustainable and in good shape.

Local Government unions agreed changes in 2008 to ensure that. We expect the deal to be honoured. The Health fund takes in £2 billion more than it pays out.

The only risk to the funds is one the Government is creating - forcing people out because they can't afford it.

50% rise not 3%

If you pay 6% of wages in pension contributions, an additional 3% means 50%. If you currently pay £100 a month, you would have to stump up another £50.

And it's not even going into your pension fund!

The extra 50% you pay will not go into your pension fund. It will go straight to the treasury to pay off the banks. It is purely and simply a tax on public service workers.

Compiled by John Stevenson
SIU Editor

Scotland in UNISON analyses the effects of cuts in the Scottish Government's Strategic Spending Review

As the union gears up for a ballot for action on pensions on 30 November, the Scottish Government has announced its spending plans for the next session of Parliament.

Local government and FE colleges face huge cuts and job losses. Public sector pay will still be frozen with limited help for some low paid, and tens of thousands of workers will face a 50% rise in pension contributions.

John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, said he was imposing the rise for NHS staff because the UK Government will dock his budget if he doesn't. He said he would not impose it on local government but would 'leave decision making' to 'those who manage the scheme'.

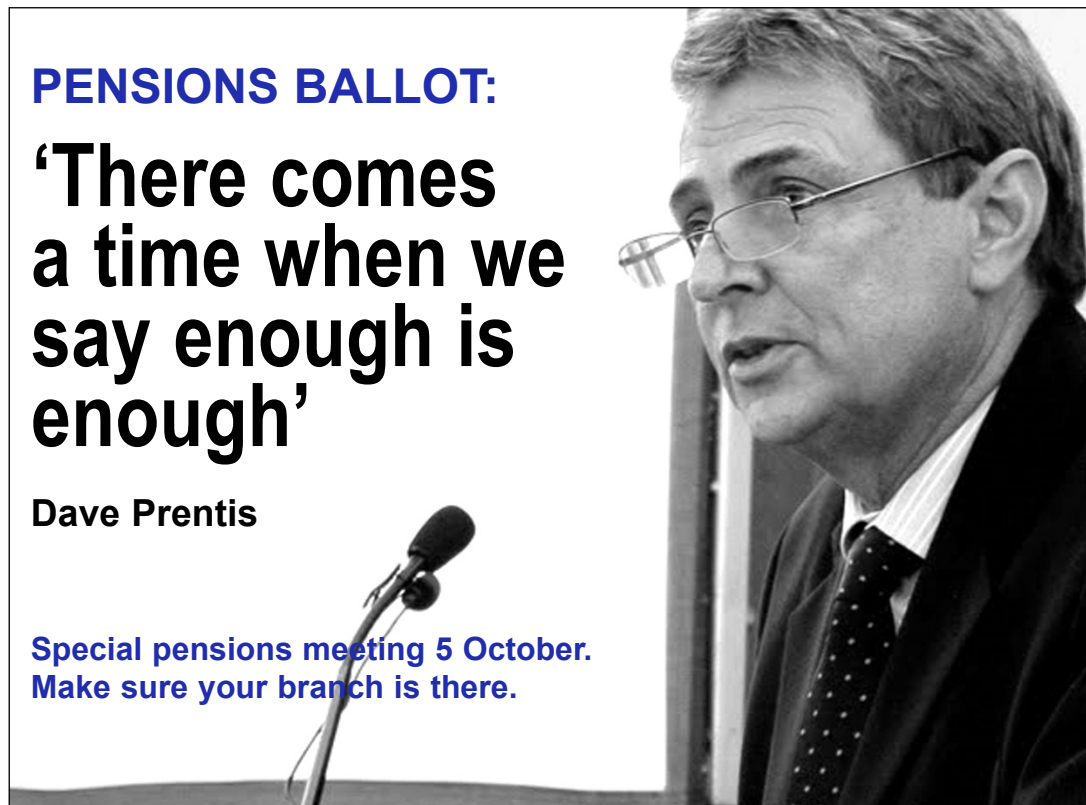
But other pensions threats remain and as we went to print UNISON's negotiators were seeking more details with a

PENSIONS BALLOT:

'There comes a time when we say enough is enough'

Dave Prentis

Special pensions meeting 5 October.
Make sure your branch is there.



special meeting of UNISON pensions champions called for 5 October.

Mike Kirby, UNISON Scottish Secretary, said: "Along

with the parallel budget, this review contains the seeds of the attack on jobs, services and pensions of the hundreds of thousands of public service

workers in Scotland. That's why we march on 1 October. That's why we'll ballot for industrial action in November."

Turn to Page 2

If we don't save pensions - privatisation will follow

by Stephen Low
Policy Officer

There is a reason that the Government and their friends in big business are so determined to take our pensions. It's because if they can remove our pensions it makes it easier to privatise the services we deliver.

This isn't a great secret. John Cridland the Secretary General of the CBI is quite open about it. In an article for the Guardian's website he was quite upfront about it.

"Pension reforms will also help the prime minister's "big society" programme to really get

off the ground. Public sector pensions remain the biggest barrier to the private and third sectors providing public services.

"When third sector and private sector organisations currently bid for work they have to be able to cover the full cost of public sector pension liabilities, and many simply do not have the money to do so."

So there you have it - straight from the fat cat's mouth. They want our pensions reduced, not because our pensions are unaffordable but because they are a barrier to taking over services and making profits from them. So the attack on our pensions -

and it is an attack, not a reform - isn't about whether or not our pensions are sustainable. It's about removing a barrier to big business making a profit out of the services we deliver.

This makes our pensions campaign all the more urgent and necessary - everyone, not just those in the pension funds - but everyone who relies on public services has a stake in this issue.

If our pensions are destroyed then a major barrier to the privatisation of services is removed.

Services will be handed to big businesses - this will mean the driver of public services will not

be need, but the capacity for extracting profit.

This drive for profit will of course not just be at the expense of service users - it will very definitely be at the expense of staff.

Privatisation would see an assault on jobs and wages that would make current problems look like a golden age.

So if your colleagues are in any doubt about why fighting for our pensions matters, you can and should tell them that our pension schemes are a far better deal than purchasing a private pension, that we deserve them - and contrary to the lies told to us

by big business - they are perfectly affordable. But more than that, tell them that if they manage to take our pensions - they'll come back for our jobs.

And when you are out campaigning and people are asking why they should care about our pension schemes - tell them that if our pensions are taken out - then their services will follow.

This is a struggle for our pensions - and that would be a good enough reason to get involved - but it's about much more than that. Protecting public services starts with protecting pensions.

Better care, not cheaper care, says UNISON

The Scottish Government must take responsibility for social care procurement and ensure the focus is on better care, not cheaper care.

UNISON has told MSPs that current guidance fails to address vital workforce issues and ignores the Scottish Government's own statutory rules that are designed to end the two-tier workforce.

The call came on the day of a Scottish parliamentary debate on

social care procurement. UNISON says there is an urgent need to review the government's outdated guidance on social care procurement or face a 'race to the bottom' in service delivery.

The guidelines, issued in September 2010, outline procurement as a way of generating efficiency savings. The guidance also states the need for a 'mixed economy' in care across in-house, third and private sector providers.

Dave Watson, UNISON's Scottish Organiser, said: "The Scottish Government must aim higher and the key to effective service reform is to put the user at the heart of the process to ensure all care packages reflect the needs of each individual."

"That requires retaining services in-house and involving users and staff in the redesign of services."

One of the current pressures on social care procurement budgets is the drive towards

personalisation and self-directed support.

While UNISON recognises the role of self-directed support, it must go hand-in-hand with appropriate services and resources for those who choose not to take this option, and must not be used as an excuse to cut costs.

Dave added "We need a government that's committed to raising the standards in care and that means a focus on quality, not cost."

Quarriers take pay cuts fight to Holyrood

After Quarriers members' magnificent strike turnout on 6 September, they took their fight against massive cuts to their pay and terms and conditions to the Scottish Parliament.

They lobbied MSPs, including the deputy first minister Nicola Sturgeon, at Holyrood on the day parliament was debating social care procurement.

Quarriers – one of Scotland's largest social care charities – is pushing through a package of cuts that will see some staff taking huge reductions in wages

up to 23% as well as higher pension contributions, reduced sick pay and cuts to their terms and conditions.

Branch secretary Stephen Brown said: "These brutal cuts are unheard of throughout the rest of the country and Quarriers staff shouldn't be singled out."

"Politicians of all parties and at all levels should be looking closely at this situation and asking themselves if this is how they expect Scottish charities to behave."

"By decimating workers' terms and conditions, it's only a



Quarriers strikers in Glasgow's George Square on 6 September

matter of time before they decimate the vital services our members provide."

Stephen Low, UNISON Scotland policy officer said: "It's really grotesque. A number of senior managers actually get houses because Quarriers was originally a village - so they get a rent and council tax-free house, enormous salary and they're taking it on the chin with a three

percent cut, whereas frontline care staff are going to lose 23%."

The UNISON members told MSPs that they "need action" not sympathy and a number of MSPs said they would pursue the matter with Quarriers management.

Negotiations continue and the union will be contacting UNISON members in Scotland urging them to take up the case.

Edinburgh calls for Scotland wide support against privatisation

Edinburgh UNISON is calling on all Scottish branches to back its campaign against privatisation because 'it has been explicit from the start that the Edinburgh experiment is a template for the rest of Scotland'.

Edinburgh Council's LibDem/SNP coalition is considering bids for the privatisation of large swathes of almost every local council service. This would be the largest ever single council privatisation in Scotland affecting up to 4,000 jobs.

"It has been explicit from the start that the Edinburgh experiment is seen as a template for the rest of Scotland. That will especially be the case if the lead is taken on by other Lib Dem and/or SNP councillors who form at least part of the administration of over half of Scotland's councils.", warned branch president John Stevenson.

"But it is also the case because privatisation is a self generating process. Once the contracts have been won, the next step is to create a dependency, consolidate and get more. It is not long before contracts this size run the councils instead of the other way around. In short, they are too big to fail."

The branch will be calling on other branches to back lobbies and demos. Check www.unison-edinburgh.org.uk for details.

A better way: Fair taxation, a living wage and equality

From page 1

Mike slammed pensions contribution rises as a 'cash grab'.

"At a time of pay freezes, increases in national insurance contributions, higher VAT, rising inflation and fuel costs, it is wrong to increase public servants' pension contributions. Contributions which will go straight to the Treasury to pay off the deficit caused by the banks."

"We recognise the case for pensions reform and we are committed to working to consider that case in partnership with government and employers. However, this is just a cash grab".

UNISON's Spending Review briefing reports that staff helped deliver savings £673m over target last year. Some of this could have been used to fund the £55m it would cost next year to avoid NHS staff having to pay more.

Preventing poverty

Inequality and poverty are the root causes of Scotland's problems.

That is backed up by evidence from the Spirit Level report and the Scottish Parliament's own Finance Committee report.

In addition the Christie Review lays out clearly the value of prioritising prevention, reducing

Ensuring that work pays is the key to reducing poverty and inequality

Mike Kirby

inequalities and promoting equality.

Yet Government plans on services and pensions will do nothing to help, "with the danger of forcing people who are saving for life after work onto state benefits".

Taxation

"If we are to tackle poverty and inequality rather than merely their consequences, the government needs to focus on those with wealth as well as those without it."

"Taxing the super rich makes society fairer by both providing resources to pay for services and by reducing the wealth inequalities that cause so much harm", said Mike.

While many of the tax levers remain outwith the Scottish Government's control they still have the power to act.

But they have frozen Council Tax again, losing - some reports say - up to £3billion that could have saved jobs and services.

UNISON argues that the freeze benefits the wealthiest house owners the most and does little for low paid staff.



Mike called for a plan for a reformed property tax as "a reasonable indicator of wealth, simple to collect and hard to avoid. The wealthiest people tend not to be found living in small high rise flats in poor areas to avoid property tax."

But only tax plan the government seems to be working on is one that "reduces taxes, claiming it will create new jobs."

Yet there is little evidence that cutting taxes on business creates new jobs. Most of the savings are likely to go into big company profits and shareholders pockets.

"Devolution of taxation is not a free lunch because there will be a corresponding cut in the block

grant", argued Mike.

Living wage for all

All the evidence shows that increasing pay at the lower end of the scale not only reduces inequality, it also stimulates the economy.

An aim of government should be to create jobs on a living wage. "Moving people from being unemployed and poor to working and poor will not prevent negative outcomes."

"Ensuring that work pays is the key to reducing poverty and inequality", said Mike.

The Spending Review brought some help for the low paid - but the £250 for staff below £21,000 and the £7.20 Scottish Living Wage will only apply to staff the government directly employs and not across public services or the voluntary sector. It's the same for the no compulsory redundancy promise.

UNISON's briefing says: "The pay freeze will mean a double digit cut in the living standards of public service staff and again workers will be making the biggest sacrifice towards funding a deficit that they did not cause".

"Ending low pay for women would be a significant step in tackling gender inequality", added Mike.

Key points

- Pay frozen for a further year with some limited help for the low paid.
 - Local government funding is cut again.
 - University funding increases but FE colleges face steep cuts.
 - The UK Government's 50% pension contributions rise imposed on NHS Staff
 - NHS funding gets some protection but failure to recognise NHS inflation
 - The Christie Commission reforms will be implemented
- * Full briefing on the website

"Equal pay is widely recognised as the greatest destabilising force to hit local government finance in recent years. Despite compensation payments running to several hundred million pounds, low paid public service workers are still having to pursue tens of thousands of equality claims".

Urging government to change course, Mike said, "The Better Way, to save jobs and serve communities is the message from Scottish Civic Society on 1 October."

Shared services plan had 'Edinburgh trams' written all over it

UNISON has welcomed West Dunbartonshire Council's decision to opt out of a shared services scheme for support services.

As we went to print, the news is that Glasgow City, the biggest council involved in the plans, has also pulled back at least for now.

The plan would have involved considerable upfront investment and disruption, delivering only modest savings - in the unlikely event of targets being met.

UNISON has analysed the full business case for the Clyde Valley Shared Services scheme. There is very little evidence to support the sweeping financial assumptions in the proposal. Savings are based on current delivery models, not the systems that will be adopted in this massive operation.

There has also been a lack of staff engagement and involvement in the development of the scheme - this is a 'one size fits all' solution covering many different Council

areas. It is no surprise that individual councils will not think it meets their requirements.

UNISON's Scottish Organiser Dave Watson said: "We are glad that West Dunbartonshire has backed away from taking a risk with people's services and council taxpayers money.

"This plan was based on a poor business case and flawed assumptions - it had Edinburgh trams written all over it.

"If councils are serious about



Denise McLafferty

reform they will engage with their staff before drawing up schemes. Reforms will only be successful when they are driven from the

bottom up with the aim of improved services."

West Dunbartonshire Branch officer Denise McLafferty said: "The Branch has campaigned relentlessly throughout the process, highlighting the need for democratic control over retaining jobs and services within West Dunbartonshire, not a shed at the side of the M8. To promote and develop the local economy in an area of high deprivation is a welcome and vital decision".

40 years on, a new fight on the Clyde

by Trisha Hmlton

Communications Officer

It's more than 40 years since a group of young communist shop stewards decided to organise local ship yard workers faced with being thrown on the scrapheap following a decision to close their yards.

The dispute 'electrified' Scotland and the UK and drew support from mega stars of the day such as John Lennon and led to marches and demos on the streets of Glasgow.

Now, 40 years on, there's a new fight on the Clyde.

A group of young men and women have organised in their attempt to secure stable employment, fair and equal pay and respect at their place of work.

These 'Clydeside' workers are employed at the Beardmore Hotel - a part of the Golden Jubilee Hospital (owned by our NHS after buying out the failing private hospital in 2002).

Their fight centres around a



Beardmore workers are fighting for equal pay and respect

dispute over their employment status and rate of pay. Their employer disputes their claim that they are NHS workers and are entitled to the same pay as other NHS workers.

Branch Secretary Cathy

Miller said: "Workers on the Clyde have a proud history in fighting for their rights and UNISON has a strong track record of defending our members.

"This is a simple dispute. It's

about wages, fairness, equality and respect.

"UNISON members and members of the labour movement should get behind the latest campaign for a fair deal on the Clyde."

New stewards course is a rousing success

The first regional new revamped Organising Stewards course was held in West Campbell Street Glasgow on 19-20 April and 24-26 May this year.

The new course is now over five days and incorporates Grievance & Disciplinary Stage One. Fourteen eager new Stewards from all over Scotland were the guinea pigs for the new course and they all thoroughly enjoyed it.

Learning and Organising Committee Chairperson Lynne Rankin who co-tutored the course with Nancy Kelly, Regional Education Officer, said: "The new course is significantly different from the previous Organising Stewards course whilst still retaining the best parts of the original one.

"It sets the scene politically and highlights the role of trade unions today nationally and internationally - and also covers bread and butter stuff like representation and organising members."



The feedback from the course was very positive and new steward Sarah Wilson from North Ayrshire branch said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed the Organising Stewards course and feel it worked really well with the two days in April, having a break and then the three days in May as it allowed me to go back to my workplace and branch and come back refreshed for the next part of the course.

"It was great to meet new stewards just like me from all over Scotland and find out how things are done in other branches".

It was great to meet new stewards just like me from all over Scotland and find out how things are done in other branches'

Sarah Wilson

So far, including branch organised courses, we have trained around 100 new stewards across Scotland and early concerns about time off to attend the five days appear to have been unfounded. Indeed forthcoming courses are full and we are running waiting lists.

Due to the overwhelming success of the course, we are trying to organise dates for a further course in the central belt in October this year - look out for details coming to branches soon.

We also hope to launch the new training suite in Belford Road Edinburgh towards the end of this year and hope to hold the new Stewards Course in January 2012.

The next Organising Stewards course will take place in Aberdeen starting on 25-26 October with part two on 29 Nov - 1 December. Participants must attend both parts; contact Nancy Kelly on n.kelly@unison.co.uk for further details.

New branch officers

In September, about 100 new branch officers and full time and lay tutors gathered at the Beardmore (see above) for a lively weekend school on the role of the branch secretary, treasurer, equalities, education and communications officers.

The hard work was complemented by great service from our colleagues in the Beardmore.

The ability to mix socially with other branches and share experiences and ideas is almost as important as the formal input and exercises on these courses.

The 2012 branch officer courses will be held in the spring. Look out for details.

Ambulance ballot over meal breaks

Ambulance workers have been balloted over proposed changes to their unpaid meal breaks.

The latest proposals by the Scottish Ambulance Service would see ambulance workers receiving a payment of £4.80 per week to agree to be available during meal breaks, and a payment of £50 for each time they are called to respond to an emergency during an assigned meal break.

UNISON, the union representing ambulance workers in Scotland, has consistently argued for ambulance workers to retain the right to take a short, unpaid meal break.

Ambulance crews, along with other NHS staff, work 37.5 hours per week, with an additional 30 minute unpaid meal break each day.

During these short breaks it is the employer's responsibility to ensure that adequate staff and resources are in place to cover these periods.

However, statistics from the Scottish Ambulance Service show a greater increase in the number of 999 calls than in resources.

David Forbes, regional organiser for UNISON, said: "Ambulance work is very demanding and our members have to make life or death decisions every day.

"They work long shifts and are often rushed off their feet, so they greatly value this short, unpaid break.

"We're currently balloting our members on the latest proposals and will continue to engage with the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Scottish Government to find the best way forward that provides the best care for patients and a fair deal for our members."

At the time of going to print, both UNISON and UNITE had balloted members on these proposals and an announcement was about to be made. Check the website for updates.

Bringing public services message to Tour of Britain



British rider Mark Cavendish won the first stage.

Members of UNISON swapped the hospital corridors, classrooms and council offices to line the streets, and welcome cyclists on the first leg of the Tour of Britain on 11 September.

As the tour made its way from Peebles to Dumfries, UNISON members waved flags and blew whistles to show their support for the world champion cyclists.

UNISON was sponsoring the tour this year and it brought its public services message to the

event across the country.

Handing out leaflets, members reminded participants and the crowds that just as events like the Tour of Britain bring communities together, so too do public services.

Mike Kirby, Scottish Secretary for UNISON said: "As the UK's leading public services trade union, our members are at the heart of local communities, providing healthcare, support and advice.

"But the services they provide, as well as their jobs, pay

and pensions are being put at risk by government cuts.

"As well as celebrating the achievements of cyclists today, we will be calling on the crowds to remember the vital role that public sector workers play in their local communities."

Stephen Smellie, UNISON Scotland vice-convenor, and a keen rider himself, was on the podium to present the Young Rider Award to Dutchman Barry Markus who came fourth in the stage. The stage was won by British rider Mark Cavendish.

Fun day has 'People First' message

by Jane Aitchison
Communications & Campaigns Ctee

UNISON members, their families and friends had another fantastic fun day at New Lanark World Heritage Park on Sunday 28 August.

There was face painting, a bouncy castle and balloon modelling for the kids, music and wildlife walks for all.

On a more serious note, Lynn Henderson, Scottish Secretary of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union, highlighted the massive threat to our pensions - this Government wants us to pay more, work

longer and get less - to help pay off the bankers' bail out.

Dave Moxham, Deputy General Secretary of the STUC, warned against the ongoing onslaught against public services and urged everyone to attend the People First March and Rally that would be held in Glasgow on Saturday 1 October.

People First is calling for

- a redistribution of wealth across Scotland through fair taxes and living wage jobs
- protection for the hardest hit through decent services and fair benefits
- stronger communities for all

Organised by North



Josh Marshall, son of Dougie and Yvonne Marshall, gets an apt face painting at UNISON's New Lanark members fun day

Lanarkshire Branch, South Lanarkshire Branch and the Lanarkshire Health Branch, the Fun Day for all UNISON members and their families has become an annual event.

New Lanark is a World Heritage Site and a key

historical site in the labour movement with its association with Robert Owen, the co-operative movement, early years education and workplace health and safety.

See more details at www.newlanark.org

SDS should listen to real experts

UNISON has revealed that Skills Development Scotland (SDS) staff have no faith in its new Careers Information and Guidance (CIAG) strategy.

A comprehensive survey by UNISON of the staff who will implement it shows they do not believe it can deliver.

SDS launched the new web-enabled service - My World of Work (MyWoW) - on 31 August. This is central to the CIAG strategy and will mean a major shift away from school and community based face to face guidance.

UNISON surveyed members in SDS about the proposed new strategy and got 410 responses, just under half of the membership.

Almost all respondents had huge reservations about a strategy that will be overly reliant on web-based services which UNISON members feel cannot offer high quality advice and guidance. There is a view that it is predominantly driven forward due to financial constraints but dressed up as modernising the service.

94% believe that the new MyWoW system will fail to offer clients high quality advice and guidance.

UNISON Regional Organiser Gerry Crawley said: "The Scottish Government should listen to the real experts in this field - UNISON members. We want to ensure the best possible careers guidance for Scotland's young people. It seems like the Scottish Government wants to fob them off with a cheap 'point and click' option".

Freedom doesn't fall from the trees - It takes struggle

by John Stevenson
SiU Editor

Glasgow City Chambers welcomed UNISON and other trade unions and activists in 'A Night for the Children of the Rainbow Nation' to raise funds for Community HEART, the charity founded by anti-apartheid campaigner Denis Goldberg.

Denis, sentenced at the same trial as Nelson Mandela, spent 22 years in a South African prison before being reunited with his family exiled in Britain.

In 1995 he set up Community HEART - Health, Education and Reconstruction Training. At the event, Denis paid a warm tribute to the charity's current organiser, Isobel McVicar, a UNISON activist and a previous Glasgow branch secretary.

Speaking of the charity's work, Denis told the audience, "In 1995, of 30,000 schools in South Africa, 20,000 had no library".

Since then the charity has



Denis Goldberg at Glasgow City Chambers on 17 September

shipped 2.78 million books to schools through its 'book and 10p' campaign.

Among its many projects, Community HEART has supported a rape crisis centre in Cape Town which, as well as directly supporting women, also trains police, prosecutors and other workers not to 'victimise women but to treat them with sympathy, dignity and understanding'.

It also supports therapists to help traumatised parents and children overcome the legacy of abuse and

hunger and the problems of drug and alcohol abuse.

Housing projects and a mobile science lab for schools are other projects, along with fundraising for 'Igniting the Spirit' which makes musical tuition accessible to all in Hout Bay.

Denis stressed that rebuilding South Africa for the people was not an easy task.

"In many ways the struggle was the easy bit where we all had one common enemy. Building a country is much more difficult".

Apartheid laws categorised

people and their lack of rights by race, robbing them of dignity through 'day to day humiliation'.

So rebuilding is more than housing, food, water and political rights. It is also about "the sheer joy of people being able to enjoy their dignity and their talents", he said.

Brian Filling, chair of Action for South Africa Scotland, reminded us of the sad role of British colonialism in building the system that Denis spent 22 years in jail for resisting. He also spoke of Scotland's honour and pride in being able to work with one of the Rivonia trialists.

Denis (the youngest of the trialists and still referred to by Mandela as 'the boy') is one of the last four surviving. At a recent meeting of Ahmed Kathrada, Andrew Mlangeni, and Nelson Mandela, Denis was bounced into giving a speech at only five minutes notice.

"But it was OK. Knowing that my comrades were not very organised, I had predicted this and

had been preparing one for three days", quipped Denis.

In so-called retirement at 78, Denis takes part in speaking tour after speaking tour, promoting the political messages of peace and justice, still railing against exploitation and poverty.

Calling on his audience to carry on their role in taking forward campaigns for justice at home and internationally, he finished with the reminder: "Freedom doesn't fall from the trees. It takes struggle."

To find out more about Community HEART - and better still to donate - go to www.community-heart.org.uk

We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories. Contact:-
John Stevenson (Editor)
0131 220 5655,
webmanager@unison-edinburgh.org.uk
Or Trisha Hamilton
t.hamilton@unison.co.uk