

MAG Senior

UNISON

Scotland

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UNISON 2017 National Retired Members Conference

Llandudno 10/11 Oct 2017

Scottish Branches were well represented at UNISON's 2017 National Retired Members Conference - held in Llandudno on 10th/11th October.

We had over 40 delegates from 27 branches and 3 'regional' representatives - Regional RM Secretary Marie Macrae, Rose Jackson who sits on the National RM Committee and Bob Revie who is our rep on the Standing Orders Committee.

Scotland has a major influence in much of the Union's Retired Members matters.

All of our speakers were well-received and all but one of the motions we were supporting were approved.

(Our input to Conference is summarised on p.2)

Scottish RM Branch Officers Training

After what seems years of lobbying, it looks like Retired Members Sections' Officers will be included in the programme of courses for all other Branch Officers. Details will be sent to RM Branches as soon as they are available.



Retired Members urged to support the PAY UP NOW Campaign

"UNISON's Retired Members have an vital part to play in the campaign to secure properly-funded pay rises for all Public Service Workers. You owe it to former colleagues, to your children and grandchildren".

That was the message UNISON's Assistant General Secretary Christina McAnea gave to the National RM Annual Conference to update them on the union's high-profile Pay Up Now Campaign.

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Scottish Branch delegates assembled for this 'happy' group photo after the Regional meeting which was held on Tuesday afternoon. Many thanks to everyone who participated

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UNISON's National Retired Members Conference is one of the largest Union Conferences in the UK. Taken as a single entity, UNISON's RM membership (170,000+ strong) would be the 7th largest Trade Union in the UK. Llandudno Conference had nearly 600 delegates - with over 40 from Scotland.

Tuesday at Conference

Tuesday morning was taken up with registering, collection of ballot papers and more generally "hanging about".

This session was taken up with Caucus Meetings for the various minority groups within the Union structure

Women members
Black members
LGBTI members
Disabled members

The Scottish Region Delegates meeting was well attended despite it being late in the afternoon - after the workshops.

The WASPI Campaign

The Government's proposed pension changes will badly affect women in a narrow age band - so WASPI was a real 'hot topic' for Conference!

The workshop and Conference debates urged Branches to push for a change in the legislation to make sure that a narrow age-band of women are not unduly-affected by the Government's proposed changes in qualification dates.

Delegates from the North Wales Region lobbied on WASPI throughout Conference - even by totally hijacking one motion which had nothing at all to do with WASPI!



Conference took a few minutes to remember friends and colleagues who have sadly passed away during the year.

The President gave special mention to two people

One was former UNISON General Secretary Rodney Bickerstaffe ...

The other was our own "Wee Lillie" McNaughton.

UNISON Brexit Update

This workshop was by far the best attended. Fearing a pro-Brexit rant or two which would have made me angry I wasn't too sure of attending, but I'm glad I did ...

Alison Roche - Unison Lead Officer on Brexit - summarised UNISON's involvement in the ongoing negotiations and outlined the Union's key priorities.

- Protection of Employment & Trade Union Rights
- Equality, Citizen & Human Rights
- Protecting & funding Public Services

For more information contact a.roche@unison.co.uk

Jane Thomas - "Repeal the Bill" Coordinator - was the most outspoken of the 3 speakers. As her title suggests she is all in favour of forcing the Government to reverse its decision to

trigger Article 50. The Repeal the Bill movement argues that original 'Leave' decision was flawed by false information and evidence suggests that many Leave voters now would vote to remain if given a 2nd Referendum.

Kalba Meadows - "UK Citizens in the EU" outlined the concerns of UK Citizens who are resident in the EU - and their current insecurity. Kalba and her family live and work in France. They have fears for example on health cover and the certainty of being able to continue to living abroad if no suitable 'soft' Brexit Agreement is negotiated.



Kalba Meadows Jane Thomas Alison Roche

Funeral Poverty

This workshop was well-attended. It highlighted the escalating costs of funerals - averaging £4K to 6K (depending on region) and stressed the need for national regulation of the funeral industry.

Funeral costs are a developing national scandal. Families are being forced into debt to cover exorbitant cost which are too often presented by the funeral industry when relatives are in shock and mourning - and unable to make proper judgments on costs.

No doubt the vast majority of funeral directors are caring and professional to the hilt. However, various speakers gave examples of overcharging and bad practice

Lillie McNaughton our "Special Person"

Our union has many special people, who dedicate their lives to their friends, their communities and our movement. Lillie McNaughton was one of those people.

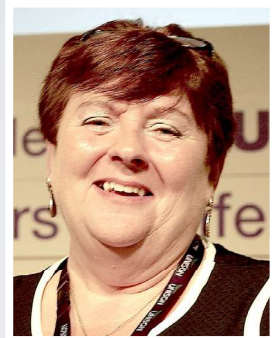
A brilliant trade union activist - active in the union until her 80s, Lillie was for many years Police Convenor in the Strathclyde Regional Branch, and later an active member of the Strathclyde Police and Fire Branch.

It is significant that her first speech at UNISON National Delegate Conference wasn't about her generation which she served so well. It was in support of the rights of 16 year olds, including the right to vote - a true example of solidarity across the generations within our movement.

Lillie spoke with passion on the same issue at subsequent Conferences - even when she was over 80 years old. She was made an 'honorary' UNISON Scotland Young Member as a result.

She will be missed by her friends in UNISON Scotland and across the UK - and by those who she stood up for in the workplace and the conference hall.

Lillie is pictured above with former Scottish Regional RM Secretary Irene Sweeney when she (Lillie) retired from the Regional RM Committee in 2009



Well done Margaret!

Margaret McKee
UNISON'S 2017/18
National President - has to be congratulated for keeping things running smoothly.

Margaret took up office at UNISON's 2017 National Conference in June so this was her first Conference as UNISON President.

She's from Belfast, has been a catering assistant at the Royal Victoria Hospital for 38 years.

Margaret was deservedly awarded the TUC women's Gold Badge in 2016 for her union and community work.



Rosie McGregor



Ralph Murray

Thanks also to NRMCC Chair **Rosie McGregor** and to old friend **Ralph Murray** Chair of the Standing Orders Committee.

Rosie chaired the Brexit Workshop and presented the Annual Report. Ralph worked quietly in the background and didn't mess us about too much.

Conference Comment

It was "a good Conference" but too much time was taken up with motions on issues which were broadly in line with long-standing policies e.g the current health and social care crisis, universal benefits, housing, and pensions.

One other thing - why did the Chair continue to ask speakers moving motions if they "wanted a right of reply"? As nobody had spoken against the motion, there was no right of reply. All it did was to waste time

End result is that we never completed the agenda (again!).

Scotland at Conference

All but one of the motions or amendments which were supported by Scottish Region were carried. Among the other motions, worth mention were

Funeral Poverty

This pinpointed much of the information that had been given out in Tuesday's workshop session - and incidentally at our Scottish Regional RM Conference last March. The motion **called for national regulation of the funeral industry.**

Investing Pension Funds in Care Homes

This called for the ethical investment of public sector pension funds in building new care homes for senior citizens, to be run and controlled by Local Authorities.

Bus Passes

This drew attention to eligibility for a free bus pass being 60 in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and London but at the (ever-rising) female State Pension Age in the rest of England. Conference agreed that the eligibility age should be 60 throughout the UK.

Jim Friedland from Shetland spoke well in this debate, urging the introduction of a UK Universal bus pass, which could allow RM travel throughout the UK.

Recruiting Care Workers

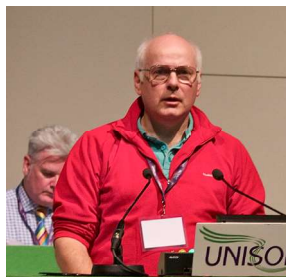
This called for the recruitment of care workers into the union to be prioritised, and urged the use of Retired members in the recruitment campaign.

Photo right shows Scottish branch delegates voting in support of one of the Conference motions.

Delegates must hold up the "VOTE" card for their vote to be counted.



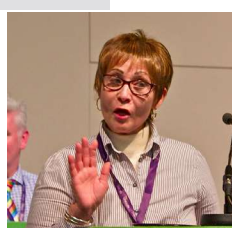
Marie Macrae in full flow



Tom Lithgow



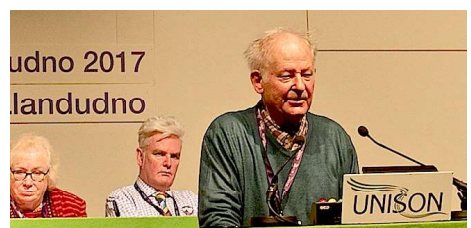
Jean McBride



Jo MacLean



Barbara Fulton



Jim Friedland from Shetland



Double success for Dumfries & Galloway

Dumfries & Galloway Branch had 2 motions on the agenda - both carried.

Sue Chalmers moved the motion on an "Advocacy Service for residents in Care Homes for the Elderly". She pointed out that no independent advocacy system exists for vulnerable care home residents and that the Care Quality Commission/ Care Inspectorate is not

equipped to do this. The resolution called for research into the establishment of a UK-wide system of trained volunteers available to carry out advocacy functions for residents.

Liam Chalmers called for active support for campaigns to combat the effects of Loneliness in Old Age which is a major contributory factor on ill-health among senior citizens.



Great Scots' Night out ...



Marie couldn't be persuaded to foot the drinks bill - but thanks are due nevertheless!

Thanks to Marie for organising the meal at a Llandudno Restaurant on Wednesday evening. Just shows ... you just can't keep an Community Worker down, can you?



Encouraging to hear a range of Scottish speakers. Various Scottish RM Committee members spoke on behalf of the Committee but special congratulations to Jim Friedland from Shetland who we think was the first ever Conference speaker from the Branch

Happy Birthday to you two (again)

Birthdays come round every year - whether we like it or not. And it's funny how they always happen at the same time of year.

Sue Chalmers and Rose Jackson shared a "Cake & Candles" at the Region meeting - and delegates got a wee slice of the cake.



"Support the PAY UP NOW Campaign" (Continued from p1)

Christina emphasised that UNISON has won the public argument that public service workers deserved a rise - but she warned that the problem of a gap in funding remained.

The Government may attempt to cherry-pick some public service workers (Police, Fire and Nurses) ahead of others in its effort to be seen to be rewarding public service workers as a whole.

Christina (pictured right) scorned hints that the Government aims to end the pay cap that has held down public service pay for seven years, by noting: "We haven't seen the colour of any money yet ..."

If workers find themselves being offered amounts that are only symbolically above the cap - for instance, 1.1% - "there'll be no champagne corks popping".



The union continues to hear locally that 'austerity is still around', but she emphasised that austerity is a political decision. There is also an expectation of being told, after the Budget, that the uncertainty caused by Brexit is an additional reason to continue holding down pay.

Two recent measures of inflation have shown prices rising at 3% (CPI) and 3.9% (RPI), further revealing the impact on public service workers' personal finances and the underlining the need for properly-funded pay rises.

Scottish UNISON RM Secretary Marie Macrae has urged support for the PAY UP NOW Campaign.

RM Motions for the 2018 National Delegate Conference

Delegates to the National RM Conference cast votes at the end of Conference to decide which two motions or issues should be submitted to the agenda for the 2018 National Delegate Conference ...

- **Triple Lock on State Pensions**
(submitted by UNISON Northern Ireland)
- **Dignity in Social Care, People before Profit, Building for the Future**
(submitted by North-West Region)

One of the motions from Dumfries & Galloway - on Combatting Loneliness - was included in the ballot - but unfortunately never made it through to the final selection - although it received unanimous support when the vote was taken during Conference.

Get ready for the call UNISON needs you ...

UNISON aims to build on its recent PUBLIC SERVICES CHAMPIONS' campaign to win public support for properly-funded public services. Retired Members should have a crucial role to play.

National Delegate Conference in June supported a motion acknowledging that Retired Members' can play a vital part of the Campaign

Retired Members "Crucial"

Backing a call from the National 2017 Retired Members Conference, Scotland's John Stevenson told Conference "this is probably my last contribution as a National Conference delegate. I have a vested interest ... I'm likely to be a Retired Member soon.

I've also got an interest because of the massive cuts faced by Scotland's Local Authorities. We've lost 2,000 jobs in the last 3 years - and 1,000 members" he added.

He pointed out that many Retired Members were experienced long-term committed members - many in reasonably senior positions and always ready to turn out when needed. They are a resource we must not lose," warned John. "We need to capitalise on our Retired Members".

"Retired Members Sections should be a major part of the campaigning arm of the Union - getting out and leafleting workplaces, lobbying council meetings and getting active in local and national politics" said John .



CHRIS BARTTER

Scottish UNISON Retired Members are saddened by the sudden death of our friend & colleague Chris Bartter.

Many will remember Chris when he was active in NALGO Glasgow District Branch. He became a UNISON full-time Official and as Unison's Scottish Communications Officer spearheaded national campaigns over the last 20 years. Chris was a big man big in stature, big on intellect and ideas and big on principles. Those who knew him consider it a privilege to have counted him as a friend. We'll miss him.

Our thoughts are with his partner Doreen (Kean) and others of his family. We'll keep fond memories of the Big Man in our hearts



Dates for your 2018 diary

- **UNISON Scottish RM Conference**
21st March 2018
- **UNISON National RM Conference**
9th /10th Oct 2018

MAC Senior

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**UNISON
SCOTLAND
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MEMBERS
COMMITTEE**

Contact RM Secretary,
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if you have any
comments.

Scottish delegates to Conference received a Conference handbook which had been published by Scottish Region RMC. Opinion was that the handbook was well received - especially for new delegates.

Special thanks to ... Dumfries & Galloway LG Branch

for sponsoring the printing and distribution costs.

Thanks also to Liam Chalmers from Dumfries & Galloway for putting it all together

