



THERE FOR YOU - SUPPORTING UNISON MEMBERS WHEN LIFE GETS TOUGH

UNISON Scotland there for you Newsletter

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **NEW LANARK FAMILY FUN DAY**
30th AUGUST 2015
- **SEMINAR 21st and 22nd NOVEMBER**
2015

August 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to our Newsletter

by Mike Smith & Andy Douglas

This is the second edition of our new look newsletter to inform both experienced and new Branch Welfare Officers of activities being undertaken by your Scottish Welfare Committee. Hopefully ice cream for summer!

Branch Officer training weekend

This year the Branch Welfare Officer training took place in Glasgow on 24th to 26th April. Eleven Officers attended (see photo gallery - last page), the majority being new Welfare Officers and one experienced Officer being accredited.

Jane Clack did a presentation on behalf of Payplan and assisted throughout the weekend. Julie Grant (Head of UNISON Welfare) and Andy Douglas (Trustee) presented the training course. Overall, the training was very well received and the entire group participated very well and were enthused about the course and its materials - a resounding success again for UNISON Welfare 'there for you' and Nancy Kelly from the Scottish Learning and Organising Committee.

Highlights of last year's training weekend can be found in our August 2014 newsletter, which if you didn't receive it last year, is

located on the UNISON Scotland website at www.unison-scotland.org.uk/welfare.

Charity Challenge 2015

This fundraising adventure went ahead from 14th to 18th May 2015 and twenty-five walkers and their supporters attended a reception for the Scottish walk that was held at the Station Hotel in Dumfries on 15th May. The reception was very well received from the hungry walkers, which was partly funded by the Dumfries and Galloway Health and Local Government Branches as well as UNISON Scotland. Among the walkers and supporters were Julie Grant (Head of UNISON Welfare) and Maureen Le Marinell (Chair of the Trustees).

Participating in the walk was our very own Elaine Laurenson and Tracy Leith from Shetland Local Government Branch. (see photo gallery - last page). A fantastic effort by all who took part and reports suggest that possibly up to £20K was raised from collections and pledges etc. Branches are still welcome to arrange sponsorship of the event independently by making a donation with cheques payable to 'UNISON Welfare' and sent to Julie Grant, There for You, 130 Euston Road, 4th Floor, London, NW1 2AY.



Fundraising there for you

UNISON Scotland embarked on a fundraising event last year - the New Lanark family fun day and we have highlights of the event here. Find out what's in store this year and how branches can sponsor the important fundraising activities of UNISON Welfare 'there for you'.

Page 2



UNISON Scotland Seminar 2014

Delegates attended last year's Welfare Seminar on the 8th and 9th November in Edinburgh - find out what went on including the Debt and Budgeting Course; Discussion with Julie Grant - Head of Welfare; Mental Health and Keeping Safe; Guest Speaker from The Trussell Trust (North Edinburgh Foodbank) and more.

Page 3

New Lanark family fun day fundraising

by Adanna McCue & Lila Sneddon – Chair & Vice Chair of the Scottish Welfare Committee

Joining our colleagues from South Lanarkshire Branch at their family fun day we helped to raise money for UNISON Welfare's Bucket and Spade Appeal which raises funds for short holidays giving a much needed break to UNISON members and their families after facing difficult circumstances such as ill health or bereavement of a loved one.



On the day

The family fun day and fundraiser was held in the grounds of the New Lanark World Heritage Site, South Lanarkshire on Sunday 31st August 2014. The joint venture had a variety of activities including gift stalls, birds of prey, balloon modeling, face painting and a bouncy castle amongst other things to keep families entertained. There was even dancing on the plaza for the more daring fun seekers.

There was an opportunity to take part in our raffle as there were some great prizes to win and it was all for a good cause. Over the course of the day, we also had some great music from Alastair McDonald, Pauline Bradley, Liam Toner and Hilary McFarlane, with a variety of songs from the three acts from 'You Can't Throw your Piece off a Twenty Storey Flat', right through to Black Sabbath's 'Paranoid'.

This proved to be a great success raising £230 and an additional £1075 was raised from donations from branches. We would like to thank South Lanarkshire Branch once again for organising the event and allowing us to fundraise for UNISON Welfare's Bucket and Spade Appeal.

Our guest speaker

Closing the New Lanark family fun day, Glen Williams, Chair of UNISON's Local Government Service Executive, slammed the continued public pay restraint, contrasted against the plans for 11% pay rises for MP's, and obscene increases for cabinet advisers - in one case a rise of 36%. Yet there is no money for public sector workers to get a decent pay rise. It would cost £1bn for a 5% pay rise, whilst Trident costs £32bn. There is

money; it's just what you choose to spend it on. This is robbery. It's not a recession.

Fundraising for 2015

More than ever, UNISON Welfare 'there for you' needs to fundraise to continue the good work our charity delivers. This year in Scotland we are embarking on an ambitious challenge to fundraise directly with the help of local branches and their members. Although we will still fundraise with the help of our South Lanarkshire Branch colleagues at New Lanark as in previous years (**this year's event is held on 30th August**), we want to try and organise a region wide prize raffle taking fundraising directly to both regional and local branch meetings as we further our aim to raise the profile of UNISON Welfare 'there for you'. This fundraising could be held at local branch AGM's and regional service group meetings. This is all in the planning stages at the moment, but we hope to have more concrete proposals for publication in the next newsletter.

We need you!!!

The Scottish Welfare Committee intends to organise this fundraising event, but we need Branch Welfare Officers across Scotland to help us. For example, we would propose to invite Welfare Officers or Branch Secretaries (for branches without an elected Welfare Officer) to promote the prize draw, explaining the fundraising initiative and offer to sell prize raffle tickets to their members at branch meetings and /or events.

As previously mentioned, this is still in the early stages of planning and we would appreciate your feedback in regard to the feasibility of such a goal. The Scottish Welfare

Committee would provide all the necessary guidance and promotional material so that the prize raffle would be as simple and straight forward for branches as possible.

If not, why not donate

Of course over the years we have benefited from kind one-off donations from local branches supporting our annual fundraising events. We still encourage donations of this nature whether or not your branch chooses to help us with our region wide prize raffle. As usual, we will be in contact with all branches with further information on how you can donate once we have our fundraising activities up and running. The Scottish Welfare Committee would like to thank all branches for their continued support.

THERE FOR YOU SEMINARS – GET YOUR COPY OF THE PRESENTATIONS

If you are a Branch Welfare Officer who has not received a copy of the **Guest Speakers** presentations, you can download them from the UNISON Scotland website.

CALLING NOTICE FOR SEMINAR 2015

This year's seminar will be held on 21st and 22nd November at the Beardmore Hotel, Clydebank.

<http://www.thebeardmore.com/>

Further information on the seminar events and speakers to follow in due course along with registration details.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR INVITATION

UNISON SCOTLAND 'THERE FOR YOU'
www.unison-scotland.org.uk/welfare

'there for you' Board of Trustees by Andy Douglas

Andy, who is an elected member of the board, gave delegates an overview of how the Board of Trustees worked and what their roles and responsibilities were. Each trustee is allocated to a Regional Welfare Committee, but not to their own. He had been attached to the North West region for a couple of years, but now attended the Yorkshire and Humberside meetings. Maureen Le Marinel from the North West was the Trustee who advised the Scottish Welfare Committee and was able to keep us updated on current events being considered by the Board of Trustees.

Discussion on fundraising

Various suggestions were put forward for fundraising. One was UNISON's NEC looking at new ways of providing long-term funding. Some examples of ideas were that if new members don't want to pay into UNISON's political fund - why couldn't they be given the

option to pay into UNISON Welfare or could we make better use of our reserves. Julie Grant (Head of UNISON Welfare) stressed the importance of fundraising walks and sponsorship, but also said that gift aid for donations was very important. See page 2 previously in this newsletter about fundraising activities either being carried out or in the planning for this year.

Mental Health Awareness

Kathryn Sinclair from the Centre for Healthy Working Lives touched on the increase in mental health issues in the workplace, particularly as a result of workplace stress, which was now the dominant health problem for working adults, with 1 in 6 people being affected by a condition, e.g. depression or anxiety at any one time. Mental health issues now accounted for 40% of all sickness absence and cost Scottish employers over £2bn a year. She focused on defining mental health by outlining good mental health and poor mental health and the various ranges between them. She believed there were

great benefits for employers who took a positive approach to the mental wellbeing of their employees.

Other training and resources reminder

UNISON 'there for you' online training via the TUC website is an ideal resource when starting your role as Branch Welfare Officer. You will need access to a computer with internet connection, but no particular computer skills are needed. You can do this at your workplace, at home or in your branch office. You don't have to complete the e-note in one go - you can exit at any point and return to where you left off when you next log in. If you don't have access to a computer, contact 'there for you' so that other arrangements can be made for you by calling 020 7121 5620. To search for, register and access the e-note visit:

<https://www.tuceducation.org.uk/index.php>.

UNISON Scotland Seminar in November 2014

by Mike Smith & Diane Anderson

The Scottish Welfare Committee would like to thank all delegates that attended last year's seminar. This page has been dedicated to giving all Branch Welfare Officers a report on the events held over the weekend.

Debt and Budgeting

Adanna and Lila welcomed the 23 delegates attending the annual seminar and explained how the weekend would be organised. The first session was the Supporting Members with Debt and Budgeting course hosted by Jane Clack from Payplan - UNISON's partner in its Debtline Service. There were practical workshops and questionnaires which enabled people to understand the scale of the

problem, learn about different kinds of debt, work out which were classed as priorities, e.g. mortgages, council tax and energy etc, and appreciate the consequences of each type of debt.

Foodbanks

Guest speaker Arthur Mathieson explained how Trussell Trust Foodbanks were run and in particular, the history of the one he was associated with in North Edinburgh, which had started with a harvest festival collection. He explained how they worked with the City Council and their Scottish Welfare Fund. They are now able to signpost to other agencies if they pick up particular problems from individuals, who are often happy to have a cup of tea or coffee and a chat. Many people walk miles to their premises, but they have acquired bus tickets which they can give to them to get home. The staff are very careful not to judge anyone who comes for their help as many of them feel bad that they have to use Foodbanks at all, so they do not need additional



stigmatising. Staff are also scrupulous in keeping proper documentation of who is given assistance, who has donated, where referrals come from etc. Arthur and Ella both expressed their appreciation of the donations given by our delegates (see picture above).

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW YOU CAN ATTEND OUR SEMINARS JUST ASK

Diane Anderson (Committee Secretary)
0141 342 2842 (Direct Line)

Email: diane.anderson@unison.co.uk



Current issues and membership recruitment via 'there for you'

At our last seminar, Julie Grant (Head of UNISON Welfare) gave an appraisal of current issues that UNISON 'there for you' was involved in. She referred to training, Payplan, new online application forms, fundraising, Octopus lottery, Charity Challenge events, new guidelines for Branch Welfare Officers, Bucket and Spade appeal, AGM 2015 and Credit Unions.

The proposal for online application forms were going to start with the Winter Fuel Grant and School Uniform Grant schemes before going on to the general application forms. A few members expressed concern at how this would work. She explained that with the large increase in applications, these were taking longer to process and it was hoped the proposed online forms would help address this.

Regarding fundraising, Julie emphasised the need for more funds to be provided as the demand was ever increasing. As austerity continued, members were becoming more and more stretched: older children were returning home to stay with their parents; many people had elderly parents to assist. In addition, shorter hours, zero hours contracts, redundancies, sickness, particularly stress and mental health issues were all becoming

more prevalent.

The Octopus lottery had been funded by UIA in its start-up years, but was now able to be self-financing, although it was seen as a priority for more branches and individuals to become involved. Funding used to be given by the Britannia Building Society, but since its merger with the Co-op, this money had now stopped. The Bucket and Spade appeal which was specifically for holidays for members, had not had funding for some years, but it was hoped this could be reinstated and a questionnaire was being considered for branches. Other wellbeing breaks were still being offered.

She finished by giving a report on the Credit Union Forum which had been set up to attempt to co-ordinate various Credit Unions across the UK to form a partnership with 'there for you'. The forum had looked at loan sharks, pay day lenders, banking and their different practices.



UNISON Branch Welfare Officers attend their AGM at UNISON Centre in 2013. The AGM for 2015 was held at National Delegate Conference, Glasgow in June.

UNISON
Scotland
there for you
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Photo gallery from events during 2015

Branch Officer training weekend in Glasgow

'The new Branch Welfare Officers came from Local Government, Health, Police Civilians, Gas, Universities and the Voluntary Sectors. A great mix and all worked well together' - Andy Douglas (Trustee) pictured second from left.



Four Nations Charity Challenge 2015

'Participating in the walk was our very own Elaine Laurenson and Tracy Leith from Shetland Local Government Branch' - Andy Douglas (Trustee).



UNISON Branch Welfare Officer Elaine Laurenson (below right) and colleague Tracy Leith (below left) pose for snaps and a rest no doubt while completing the charity challenge in May this year.

