



THERE FOR YOU - SUPPORTING UNISON MEMBERS WHEN LIFE GETS TOUGH

# UNISON Scotland there for you Newsletter

**THE PREVIOUS YEARS EVENTS:**

- NEW LANARK FAMILY FUN DAY  
27<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2017
- SCOTTISH SEMINAR 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>  
NOVEMBER 2017
- STIRLING LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
BRANCH XMAS FUNDRAISER

## January 2018

IN THIS ISSUE

# Welcome to our Newsletter

by Mike Smith

This is the fourth edition of our current newsletter to inform both experienced and new Branch Welfare Officers of activities being undertaken by your Scottish Welfare Committee.

## Andy's Pyrenees Adventure

Andy Douglas, one of our Link Trustees from Stirling Local Government Branch (pictured above at the last Croyde Bay Seminar) trained hard for his latest adventure in May last year - a 26 mile walk through the beautiful Pyrenees to raise money for a cause close to his heart, 'there for you', UNISON's Welfare Fund. He joined another 11 UNISON walkers (hailing from Dundee to Devon via Northern Ireland) for the three days it took them to cover the distance, walking an average of over 30,000 steps a day. "And not on the flat," Andy reminds us, "Up and down hill!"

The initial target was for each walker to raise £1600. Andy thinks he will have raised about £2,000 plus gift aid and that altogether, the intrepid trekkers will have raised around £20,000 for 'there for you'. Andy was keen to thank all those who donated. Branches and individuals can still contribute - contact Andy Douglas for a sponsorship form. More on Andy's adventure is found on our website.

## Fundraising 2017-2018

This year our committee is taking on the challenge of organising an all Branch fundraiser by doing a nationwide (Scotland Region) raffle. This is quite an undertaking for our committee as it involves obtaining an appropriate license to allow this fundraiser to go ahead.

It's now more than ever (see page 3) that we continue to support UNISON Welfare's General Fund, which helps our members on a daily basis with financial assistance or much needed debt advice, and also the 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.

The committee will shortly be contacting all Branches with regard to how they can help our fundraiser by selling raffle tickets, donating prizes or simply just cash. Look out for flyers and other information at UNISON Scotland events, such as Scottish Council and local Branch AGM's. The raffle will also be publicised on the UNISON Scotland website. Let's make this a fundraiser to remember!!  
\*\*Stirling Branch Fundraiser - See Page 3\*\*



## Scottish Branches 'we need you'

UNISON Scotland's Regional Welfare Committee explain how it's important that all branches in Scotland, whatever your service group, start to, or continue to make donations to our unique charity 'there for you'. Our charity gives financial assistance to many branches in our region and we need your help to fundraise too.

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## New Lanark and 'there for you'

Last year's family fun day and fundraiser was once again held in the grounds of the New Lanark World Heritage Site in South Lanarkshire on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2017, organised by our colleagues from South Lanarkshire Local Government Branch. Find out how the day went.

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# The Scottish Seminar and Croyde Bay 2018

by Mike Smith & Adanna McCue – Members of the Scottish Welfare Committee

It's been another eventful 2017 for UNISON Welfare in Scotland as Branch Welfare Officers have attended meetings /seminars, training events and the UNISON Welfare AGM. Of course, we plan once again to organise another Scottish Seminar for 2018, but there will also be the chance for Branch Welfare Officers to attend the national UK seminar being organised by our colleagues from our London headquarters. What follows are details of our most recent seminars held in Scotland (although 2016 seems so far away now) and some details of the upcoming Croyde Bay Seminar this year.

## Scottish Seminar 2016

Our previous annual welfare seminar took place at the Golden Jubilee Hotel, Clydebank on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November. Our first speaker was Julie Grant, Head of UNISON Welfare 'There for you' where she gave details of key issues facing the charity, a state of the nation so to speak. After coffee, there followed two presentations, one by our colleague Scott Donohue, Chair of UNISON Scotland's Health and Safety Committee and Tom Berney, Chair of the Scottish Older People's Assembly. Scott's was about Mental Health and Effects on Welfare Issues (part one) and Tom's was about Funeral Poverty. Adanna also discussed throughout the afternoon, how Branch Welfare Officers can support each other. On Sunday morning, Scott continued his presentation on Mental Health and Effects on Welfare Issues (part two). That was followed by our next speaker, Anne McWhinnie from Alzheimer's Scotland, who gave us a presentation on Dementia Awareness. Our final presentation was from Andy Douglas, who went over the UNISON Welfare 'There for you' Celebration of Success for 2016.

## Scottish Seminar 2017

Once again, this year's annual welfare seminar took place at the Golden Jubilee Hotel, Clydebank on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November. Both of us welcomed the delegates and our guest speaker, Jeane



Freeman MSP, Social Security Minister for Scotland, to the Saturday afternoon session. Jeane led delegates into discussions surrounding the administration of 2.7 billion pounds of DWP state benefits being transferred to the Scottish Government over the next few years and how this will be implemented. This was well received by delegates as it gave a much needed insight on the changes ahead. Our next speaker was our colleague Julie Grant, where she gave her usual update on the charity from a national perspective. This was followed by a contribution from our Link Trustee, Maureen Le Marinel, giving her own story of her relationship with the charity and the work that she has done over the years. It was then time to close for the day to network with colleagues across Scotland over dinner and a social evening. The Sunday morning session consisted of a presentation from Mike, including a workshop to discuss what's in your area and who to contact with regard to partner organisations that can help our members when in need. Again, our final presentation was from Andy Douglas, who went over the UNISON Welfare 'There for you' Celebration of Success for 2017 similar to last year, including how to conduct a Welfare presentation at your Branch AGM.

## Croyde Bay Seminar 2018

The national seminar which is held every two years at Croyde Bay, North Devon, will be on 27<sup>th</sup> September to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and you will be informed of how to register and details of the seminar programme nearer the time. Should you wish to attend, please do so before the deadline by completing the

required registration forms and notify your Branch as special arrangements are put in place for Scottish delegates with regards to their travel to the village of Croyde Bay. Traditionally, Scottish delegates travel to Croyde Bay the day before the seminar starts (Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September) due to the distance involved and would return on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September. Delegates, if they wish, can make their own way to either Edinburgh or Glasgow Airports on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September and catch the morning return flight to Exeter airport where a coach is booked to take delegates from Exeter to Croyde Bay and back. Branches can take advantage of these arrangements as they tend to work out cheaper per delegate.

### 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 2018\*\***

This year's seminar will likely be held once again in November at the Golden Jubilee Hotel, Clydebank. Details will follow soon.

<http://www.goldenjubileehotel.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'  
<http://www.unison-scotland.org/there-for-you-unison-welfare/>

# New Lanark Family Fun Day & Stirling Local Government Branch Fundraisers

by Mike Smith & Pam Campbell

Although the Scottish Welfare Committee is working towards its national fundraiser, it is important to note the work that is done by local branches and how they go about raising funds for our charity. Here we have two examples of where two Local Government

branches have helped during 2017.

## New Lanark fundraiser

For several years now, South Lanarkshire Branch has kindly allowed our Committee to have a stall at their Family Fun Day event at the end of August. The stall holds our tombola with many prizes donated from branches across Scotland. This year retired member Pat Rowland, our former Scottish Region Treasurer and current Committee member arranged the stall and managed to raise around £480. Pat will be doing the tombola again in 2018 - great work Pat.

## Well done Stirling Branch

December 2017 saw Stirling Local Government Branch hold their first Christmas raffle in support of our charity. They did a great job in not just obtaining prize donations and selling raffle tickets, but raising awareness of UNISON Welfare 'There for you'. Branch Welfare Officer Pam Campbell said "Stirling Branch held their first ever

Grand Christmas Draw on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December. We are most grateful to our members, stewards and fellow branches for their support, especially donating the wide range of prizes and purchasing tickets raising funds for UNISON's charity 'There for you'. We would like to express sincere gratitude to everyone for supporting this deserving cause, and are delighted to advise together we raised £400.00. We would also like to thank fellow Branch Welfare Officers for purchasing tickets at the seminar in November". Andy Douglas said "On behalf of the Trustees and UNISON Welfare we thank You, Donna, Paul and all the helpers, contributors and everybody who purchased tickets. This was a fantastic effort from you all for our inaugural Christmas Draw. As you know donations are very important to 'There for you' (UNISON Welfare) and without these we would really struggle to facilitate all our requirements. This money will go a long way to assisting our more needy members, especially at this time of the year".

# Scottish Region Branches 'we need you'

by Adanna McCue

Adanna, Chair of the Scottish Welfare Committee has kindly made a further contribution to this newsletter by giving some information on the following subjects.

## Facts and Figures

Out of 80 branches across Scotland, average grants of £480.00 are paid to each individual branch. Therefore, branches are benefiting from more in paid grants to members rather than what donations they provide, and although our committee is very grateful for every donation made, whether by direct donations or fundraising events, we must do more.

If two members from an individual branch

receive one grant each, this is almost £1,000. Very few branches donate that much. The new lottery gives the charity a steady stream of income. It is being re-launched in early 2018 as the UNISON Lottery, with a new website and online joining. This will be promoted in UNISON Week and other UNISON Scotland publications.

## Get involved

If you're a Branch Welfare Officer attending your Branch Committee or Executive, get UNISON Welfare on your agenda and discuss our fundraising activities. Ask your Branch to either make a one off donation to the welfare fund or regular donations via UNISON Lottery. Promote UNISON Lottery within your workplace as there are many opportunities for your members to win a prize as well as your Branch. Throughout this newsletter, you will have read about examples of how Branches have done local fundraising events – why not give it a try, and your Committee



would be happy to help with any of your ideas. Also, remember the upcoming Scottish Region all Branch fundraiser, as we will look to Branches to help us promote and deliver a successful raffle, including making prize donations if you can.

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

Mike Smith (Vice-Chair of the Committee)  
0131 469 5362 (Direct Line)

Email: [michael.smith@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:michael.smith@edinburgh.gov.uk)



## UNISON WELFARE REMEMBERS

there  
for you

supporting UNISON members  
when life gets tough

### Sad loss of Donna Marie Lyons

Donna Marie Lyons (Gas Branch) died suddenly on Wednesday night of 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017. Donna Marie was a long standing Gas Branch activist for 15 years. She was a Steward and Branch Welfare Officer. Donna Marie was only 40 years old and our thoughts go out to her family and all those close to her.



### A State of the Nation

Julie Grant, Head of UNISON Welfare attends our Scottish Seminars where she gives details and great insight into key issues facing the charity, her very own state of the nation.

#### FAST FACTS ON FOODBANKS

26%

'26% of referrals to Foodbanks in 2016/17 were caused due to a delay in benefits being paid, for example, the new Government flagship benefit - Universal Credit'

17%

'17% of referrals to Foodbanks in 2016/17 were caused due to benefit legislative changes'

#### INFORMATION ON CREDIT UNIONS

More information is available on the UNISON 'There for You' website.

SIMPLE SAVINGS, SENSIBLE LOANS  
<http://www.unison.org.uk/credit-unions>



This was the training at Glasgow on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017. This was Maggie Holland's (pictured centre) last training event for UNISON Welfare. Next year's training should return to the Branch Officers weekend around April/May 2018.

## Our achievements, success stories and training during 2017

by Mike Smith

### Winter Fuel Grants

The winter period is upon us and UNISON Welfare 'there for you' is once again making Winter Fuel Grants available to its members. Further details of this year's application form and criteria have already been issued with details also being published on the UNISON Scotland 'there for you' website. Here are some details of the Winter Fuel Grants awarded in 2015. Across the UK, we provided help with additional heating costs over winter to 563 households. Our survey findings in 2015 revealed that 75% of grant recipients avoid putting the heating on to save on costs; 50% cut back on their food shopping to keep their home warm; 66% were in arrears with their fuel bills. Details on how this small grants programme performed during 2016 and 2017 will be made available soon.

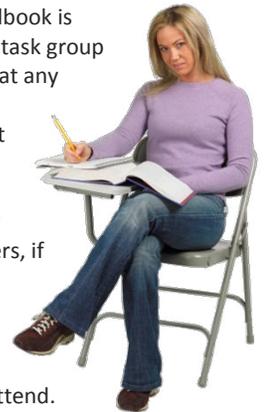
### School Uniform Grants

This summer, UNISON Welfare 'there for you' sent information about this small grants scheme to all branches, and once again, thanks go out to all our Branch Welfare Officers in helping to promote School Uniform Grants across Scotland. As with our Winter Fuel Grants, here is how the grants were awarded across the UK. The total amount awarded was £29,000 with 725 children being assisted over a total number of 821 applications received. The number of applications received from UNISON Scotland was 65.

### Welfare Officer Training

Several of our colleagues across Scotland attended the Branch Welfare Officers training in Glasgow last year. We requested feedback on how the course went and suggestions

were made to include anonymised examples of past cases and what the success rate might be. One session that our colleague Andy Douglas led near the end of the training was said to be very useful. Often, new Branch Welfare Officers have never held a position in our union before. UNISON Welfare is working with Learning and Organising on a new training programme this year. Discussions have included commissioning a short video about the right way to interview members. Andy had set up a group chat via social media, which new Branch Welfare Officers have also found useful for asking general advice when dealing with their first case. All the feedback from the training event will be taken on board and discussed at both regional and national level. The Welfare Officers Handbook is being reviewed and a task group is going to be looking at any proposed changes soon. Remember, that although our training programme is directed towards new Branch Welfare Officers, if your Branch does not have an elected Branch Welfare Officer, any other Branch position can attend. However, we would always encourage all Branches to ensure that they recruit to their Branch Welfare Officer positions as the role is pivotal in supporting our members in UNISON. Also, UNISON Welfare is one of our top recruiting tools for increasing our membership nationwide.



# Signposts to helpful information, websites and other updates

by Mike Smith

## New Welfare Lottery

A running report of changes to the lottery has been given over the course of the last twelve months or so, and we are therefore pleased to announce that the transfer of administration from UIA to Sterling is now complete. Most recent work included, that all branches that play the lottery were written to a while ago advising of changes that were being made to ensure the lottery remained compliant with Gambling Commission Rules and Regulations. More recently, all 'players' (branches and individuals) have received written confirmation that the transfer has taken place and, other than checking that the information held is correct, there is nothing further they need do. A second letter containing all the personal data held on file and details of who to contact to update information has since gone out. The lottery draw was held on 13 October 2017 under its new name 'UNISON Lottery'. UNISON Communications has been running a promotion campaign from November 2017.

## Welfare Criteria Explained

The Board of Trustees has been reviewing many of the charity's policies to ensure they are fit for purpose. At its most recent meeting, changes were discussed and agreed to our Financial Management Framework and Conflicts of Interest policy and procedures. The Board also agreed a new 'Code of Conduct'. We plan to complete the review of our policy on Financial Assistance (Criteria) at the next Board meeting. However, we can share a number of changes that have already been introduced as a result of feedback received from the consultative questionnaire that was sent to all Branch Welfare Officers at the end of 2016, and previously circulated to Regional Welfare Committees.

Members who apply for financial assistance in the first four weeks of membership will receive advice only. Members who have paid between four weeks and three months subscriptions may receive financial support up to £150\*. Members who have paid over three months and up to six months subscriptions may receive financial support up to £300\* (\*Note that these financial limits do not apply to those members who have no recourse to public funds). No more than two applications for financial assistance (excluding requests submitted through the small grants programme) will normally be

considered in any three year period, other than where there are wholly unusual or exceptional circumstances. The updated criteria for financial assistance will be circulated following the next Board meeting. Other policies are currently under review.

## Foodbanks

There has been a growing interest in Foodbanks in both the UK and Scottish Parliaments, and among the media, prompted in large by evidence of a rapid growth in the number of people turning to Foodbanks to feed themselves and their families. The coordinating body of the UK's largest network of Foodbanks is The Trussell Trust. In an April 2017 press release, the Trust reported 1,182,954 three-day emergency food supplies were provided by their Foodbank network in 2016-17, a new record high. Of these 436,938 were for children. Over 40% of the referrals to its food banks in 2016/2017 were primarily due to benefits issues e.g. 26% were as a result of benefit delays, around 17% due to benefit changes. Use of Foodbanks tends to be for short-term emergency relief, with 60% attending only once to help get through an acute crises.

## Funeral Poverty Update

The Head of our charity, Julie Grant, has recently been working with the Head of Services to Members and the Chair of the Service to Members Committee. This piece of work is following an 86% increase in the cost of assisting members with funeral bills. This work has produced a very helpful guide that was tabled to the Board and will now proceed to the next meeting of the NEC Services to Members Committee. Once agreed, the guide will be issued. A workshop on this topic will take place at this year's Retired Members' Conference.

## UNISON Welfare Online

We continue to publish content on the UNISON Scotland website, including Facebook and Twitter posts, with the help of our colleague John Stevenson (Communications). Although we will still issue appropriate material to our Branch Welfare Officers by traditional means, this is a great portal to obtain the latest news and events being undertaken by the Committee and the charity overall. Click [UNISON Welfare](#) now.

THERE FOR YOU WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP



## Charis Grants

Charis works with companies and Local Authorities to deliver a number of Charitable Trusts, Hardship Funds, Rebate Schemes, Social Tariffs and Local Authority Welfare Schemes.

Call us on: 01733 421021

Email us at: [admin@charisgrants.com](mailto:admin@charisgrants.com)

Website: <http://www.charisgrants.com>



## Payplan Scotland

Since 1992 Payplan have given money advice to over one million people in the UK. In fact many organisations including the **Citizens' Advice Bureau**, the **Police Federation** and unions such as **Unison** refer their clients to us because they know we can be trusted to give the best money advice possible.

Call us on: 0808 271 3594

Website: <https://www.payplan.com>



## Turn2Us

Turn2us helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face through our partner organisations.

Call us on: 0808 802 2000

Email us at: [info@turn2us.org.uk](mailto:info@turn2us.org.uk)

Website: <http://www.turn2us.org.uk>

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