

In this Newsletter

1. FE dispute update
2. HE dispute update
3. The retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill
4. Midlands TUC Pensioners Network Meeting
5. Chesterfield TUC May Day 2023
6. MAY DAY MAY DAY!
7. UCU Retired Members Branch

Please join the new Branch Facebook Group at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1077256209678817>



More information and news

can be obtained from these websites.

UCU National Website:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk>

AgeUK: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

68 is too late: www.68istoolate.org.uk

National Pensioners Convention (NPC):

<http://npcuk.org>

Follow your branch:

Website: <http://www.ucu-em-rmb.org.uk>

Twitter: @ucu-em-rmb

Please join the new Facebook Group at:

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Branch Meeting

Wednesday 26th April 2023, 11.00am

The Gothic Warehouse
Mill Road
Cromford,
DE4 3RQ

At 12.00:
Alan Tuckman

The attack on Trade Unions



1. FE Members vote 'yes' in consultative ballot

Members in English FE colleges have taken part in a consultative e-ballot to demonstrate their support for a postal strike action ballot on pay, workload, professionalism and binding national negotiations.

The consultation closed on Friday 24th March. To the question "Are you prepared to take strike action to secure an above inflation pay rise, binding national bargaining structures, and a national workload agreement?", 87% voted yes, 13% voted no, with a turnout of 51%.

As Maxine Looby, UCU vice-president, said, this is a fantastic result and testament to the strength of feeling among college staff that they deserve respect and recognition for the work they do as further education (FE) practitioners.

When the time for action comes, or even in advance, if you can help support the Fighting Fund, please do so via <https://www.ucu.org.uk/fightingfund>.

Rob Kirkwood

2. HE staff renew strike mandate

Over the last few months our working colleagues in HE institutions in our region and across the country have been taking strike action and have been continuing ASOS (Action Short of a Strike). HE UCU members started taking action in November 2022 in long running disputes over pay, working conditions and USS pension cuts. The employers have, eventually, made commitments to restore cuts made to USS benefits. However, they have already begun to implement a below inflation pay 'rise' of 5-8% that has been rejected by UCU and other campus unions. Employers have also proposed time limited negotiations to reach agreements over casualisation, workloads and equality pay gaps.

There have been strongly worded debates within the union about how to proceed given these outcomes from the talks that have taken place under the auspices of ACAS. These internal disputes have been resolved, at least

formally, after the latest round of meetings concluding with the HEC meeting on March 31st. A consultation with members has now commenced.

On 3rd April, it was announced that UCU HE members have successfully renewed their strike mandate for a further six months, telling employers that 'staff are in the driving seat'.

In the Four Fights pay and working conditions ballot, the yes vote for strike action was 85.6% with a turnout of 56.4%. In the USS ballot, the yes vote for strike action was 89% with a 58.4% turnout. In both disputes, the yes vote was higher than in the previous ballot. The ballot results mean the union can call further strike action at 150 UK universities, should it be required.

Staff also overwhelmingly voted yes for action short of strike in both ballots and the union will now begin preparations to serve notice for a marking and assessment boycott.

As always, if you can help support the Fighting Fund, please do so via <https://www.ucu.org.uk/fightingfund>.

Rob Kirkwood

3. The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill

- an attack on democracy, standards and rights

The bill, also referred to as the "Brexit Freedoms bill", seeks to remove all EU-derived legislation, through a so-called sunset clause, by the end of 2023 (with extensions possible in some cases until 2026). From the point of view of those who voted for Brexit, it may sound logical that EU-derived law be removed, but this is just a smoke-screen for a blatant power-grab by the Government. If people voted for Brexit in the belief that this would restore the sovereignty of Parliament, then the bill would achieve the exact opposite were it to become law: legislation will disappear unless the minister, not Parliament, decides to save or re-write it.

Furthermore, while the bill is making its way through Parliament (at the time of writing this it has gone to the House of Lords), it is not altogether clear how much EU-derived law Britain actually has on the statute book. The Government claims it's 2400 laws, the National Archives claim to have found another 1500, and some commentators believe it's about 4500. Legislation may therefore lapse (as this is the default position), because the minister was not aware that it existed. There is little confidence that the Government can review this amount of legislation and how it interacts with other laws by the end of the year. As it is up to the relevant minister to decide what to retain, change, or abolish, the bill also creates in effect great legal uncertainty regarding people's rights as consumer and workers, food and other safety standards, and environmental protection.

Commentators seem, however, to be in broad agreement that at least the following areas of employment legislation would disappear or drastically change:

- Working Time Regulations
- Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations
- Agency Worker Regulations
- TUPE.

As is often the case, women are at a higher risk as they tend to be overrepresented in precarious work.

As a Union, we need to engage with these issues and mobilise to defend workers' rights. At the next Branch meeting, Alan Tuckman will speak on the subject of employment legislation. This gives us an opportunity to discuss what we can do to resist the Tory onslaught on democracy and people's rights.

Harry Ziegler

4. Notes from Midlands TUC Pensioners Network Meeting, March 29th 2023

This was a *meeting* in person/live held at the UNITE offices in Derby.

The agenda included:

- Elections/nominations to committees etc:

These included Chair:

Wash (Yvonne Washbourne), Max Hyde Secretary, Bob Deacon Vice chair, (apparently my nominations for membership and executive committee have not yet arrived at their admin)

- Delegates are required for more East Midlands members, three seats are available, Also, for the Inclusion Committee and Women's committees. Apparently, the NPC (National Pensioners Convention) is not a Trade Union Body.
- Discussions raised included the use of "Retrofit" as a significant issue for the elderly by helping to make housing warmer and more weather proof.
- The Bus campaign was raised although not much has been happening recently. The West Midlands campaign is still on going with strategies for action but here in the East Midlands there is possible need for campaigning, i.e. possible links to a national campaign on "Better Buses" to include the unions. (One member was particularly frustrated by media emphasis so often being on trains, hardly ever on buses). Issues were raised around the importance of bus passes.
- Other issues included Mayoral elections, a revised "Plan of work" for this group for future activities, thoughts on management of/help for asylum seekers.
- The next meeting of the executive committee will be on May 17th. I will be unable to attend due to a holiday trip. Full group is on 19th July. If anyone else is interested I will be pleased to pass on any further information etc.

Rowena Dawson

5. Chesterfield TUC May Day 2023

Chesterfield TUC May Day 2023 on Monday 1st May marks the 45th People's Gala &

Demonstration in the town. We will assemble at Chesterfield Town Hall at 10:30am to march off at 11:00am with a rally in New Square at 11:45am.

In light of the current and sustained trade union activity with a growing number of unions in dispute or on strike, we are expecting a very lively march and rally with many trade union and campaigning banners in attendance. We are pleased to report that the Ireland Colliery Chesterfield Band will be leading off the march. There will be blocs of several workers/unions currently on strike: a health workers bloc, an education workers bloc, and the Oil Monster and XR Samba will be joining the climate bloc. The PCS Samba Band will also be providing music along the route. There will also be a strong Stand Up To Racism bloc to counter the Tory government's anti-refugee rhetoric and the Illegal Migration Bill.

The speakers at the rally will be: Kevin Courtney, the General Secretary of the National Education Union; Barbara Plant, the National President, GMB Union; Sarah Woolley, the General Secretary of the Bakers Foods & Allied Workers Union; San Senik, a Kurdish Community Activist, and Toby Perkins, Chesterfield MP.

Music in New Square will follow with Straight Bends at 12:30pm and Yoko Pwno at 2:00pm. As usual, there will be market stalls from community and campaigning organisations, and refreshments in the Market Hall.

This year it is even more important than ever that trade unions and campaigning groups come together to counter the Tory Government's attacks on working people and refugees. Over the past 12 months the Trades Council has been proud to stand on picket lines supporting gig-economy workers, Unite B&Q Wincanton strikers, CWU strikers in the Post Office and Openreach, rail strikers, health workers (ambulance workers, nurses, junior doctors), education workers (NEU and UCU) and PCS workers. We've also been at counter-demonstrations defending refugees against racists and the far right. We therefore invite all UCU members to join the education bloc alongside other groups of workers and campaigners, as we take to the streets to

celebrate our movement, make our voices heard and to inspire each other in the struggles ahead.



James Eaden and Allister Mactaggart

6. MAY DAY MAY DAY!

Trade Unions are facing an existential threat from a government determined to render us impotent. We face the most draconian restrictions on union rights since the Combination Acts. Society faces an existential threat from grinding poverty, a lack of decent housing, a failure of public services, and the divisions being sown by the most vile and dangerous 'identity' politics. Humanity is facing an existential threat from the failure of international capitalism to deal with the climate crisis.

We witness, simultaneously, an explosion in trade union resistance in nearly every sector of the failing British economy. We are under attack but fighting back. Useful alliances are being formed. Union membership is on the rise again. The NEU alone has recruited over 50,000 new members. Local Trades Councils have been extraordinarily busy supporting workers on picket lines, organising rallies, and coordinating activities as well as being involved in campaigns in defence of public services, the climate, and asylum seekers. With thousands of workers in dispute right now it feels even more important that we come together to celebrate International Workers Day. We therefore urge all our members to do everything they can to attend one of our region's traditional Mayday rallies.

Nottingham and Notts TUC are returning to **Mansfield**, six years after their last successful rally in the town.

Saturday April 29th

Assemble 11am West Gate, Mansfield (Chesterfield Rd end). March to Old Market Cross for rally at 12 noon

Speakers include:

Daniel Kebede - General Secretary Elect of the National Education Union Speaker from the historic strike at the Amazon Depot in Coventry



Paul Wilkinson

7. UCU Retired Members Branch

See how to join our Branch Facebook group, as detailed in the information section on Page 1.

Our branch has been meeting since 2008 and now has well over 300 members. Our aims are listed below. We meet three times a year, often in places of interest to make part of a day out. Meetings focus on important issues for UCU pensioners and provide a chance to talk with other retired members.

A termly newsletter with articles of interest to retired UCU members is e-mailed to all branch members for whom we have addresses and to UCU branch secretaries in the East Midlands and to other RMBs.

Please let us have your personal e-mail address and let us know if it changes.

RMB Roles and Functions

- To represent the interests of retired members within the union.

- To represent the interests of retired union members within the wider union and pensioner movements.
- To provide a forum within the union for retired members to come together to consider and debate matters of mutual interest.
- To provide a resource of collective memory, advice and expertise in support of the union, in particular to those still in active employment.
- To provide active support, where appropriate, by involving the broadest section of the branch in support of the wider interests of the union and its members, including support for those still in active employment.

**For more information
please contact Rob Kirkwood**
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twitter: @ucu-em-rmb

facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1077256209678817>

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East Midlands regional UCU committee.

HE representatives: Harry Ziegler, Rob Kirkwood

FE representatives: Judy Wills, Margaret Davies