



Trade Union NEWS

Notts Unison strikes to defend jobs and services

Industrial Action to Stop the Cuts!

By Martin Sleath,
Joint Branch Secretary,
Notts County Unison

at most workplaces and a march and lobby of up to 700 at County Hall. The rally was addressed by local Trade unionists and many speakers from service user groups.

On 24 February Council workers across Nottinghamshire became the first full council workforce to walk out against Tory cuts.

3,700 Unison members were fighting 1,000 compulsory redundancies (this year alone, with up to 2000 to follow in the next 3 years) and savage cuts in services, including closure of Day Centres for Elderly, disabled and mental health service users, massive restrictions on home care services, the deletion of the Welfare Rights service and major cuts in youth services, Supporting People and many more.

Prior to the action Tory council leader Kay Cutts called it a "faux strike" that would have no effect. But she was completely wrong. The strike was well supported, with sizeable pickets

The Tory council ignored all this and voted through the massive £89M spending cuts (out of a total non schools budget of £470M). Later on local TV when Kay Cutts was asked if she felt this was a bad for Nottinghamshire said "NO" that it was a "good" day for the people of Nottinghamshire! They plan further cuts amounting to £150 M in total over 3 years.

Our struggle against these cuts will continue, including fighting the planned privatisation of the 12 Local Authority Elderly persons Homes in Notts. Our Industrial Action ballot remains "live" and in a series of meetings and surveys members are considering what further action to take. The TUC

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Photo: Alan Lodge (Tash)

Lecturers Strike the struggle against cuts in Higher Education

By Andreas Bieler
UCU committee,
University of Nottingham

result of likely mergers of institutions and closures of individual departments.

The savage budget cuts by the ConDem government also include an unprecedented attack on the ethos of, and working conditions in, Further and Higher Education.

There will be no universal right to Higher Education. A university degree will be open to those who can afford to pay for it. Similarly to other parts of the public sector, the budget cuts are also linked to a cut-back of pension benefits in Higher Education.

As a result of the cut-backs to Universities' teaching budgets by up to 80 per cent and the introduction of tuition fees of up to £9000 per year, we are witnessing an ever increasing marketisation of Further and Higher Education.

The establishment of a two-tier system is envisaged, in which the final salary scheme is closed for new members of staff. Finally, the proposed 0.4 per cent increase in salaries implies a cut in real wages considering the current inflation rate of around 3.5 per cent.

Funding will be redirected to those subjects and research areas which are perceived to have direct, short-term economic impact. Thousands of jobs will be lost across the sector as a

Overall, cuts and intensification of work go hand in hand. *Continued on page 3...*

Public Meeting and debate...

Fighting the cuts: the way forward

Wednesday 13th April, 7.30pm



Djanogly Lecture Theatre, Clarendon Street, Nottingham

Speakers:

Alan Rhodes, Labour Group leader on Notts County Council plus national and local trade union representatives

Defend your

By John Illingworth,
Nottingham City NUT

On of the attractions of working in the public sector has always been the pension scheme which offered some security in old age.

Public sectors workers have always received lower pay than those in the private sector. This has been justified by successive gov-

ernments on the grounds of job security and generous pensions. Both these 'perks', if they ever existed, are now at risk.

Public sector pensions are funded through contributions from the employee and the employer.

To explain the reality of why these are affordable and fair I will use the example of the teachers' pension

scheme which is similar to other such schemes.

Teachers currently pay 6.4% of salaries into their pension. The employers pay 14.1%, which is considered as 'deferred' pay.

These contributions have never been invested in a fund. Instead they go directly to the Treasury along with other taxation. The Treasury then pays out the pensions of

retired teachers. Existing teachers' contributions fund the pensions of retired teachers. The system has worked like this since well before I became a teacher in 1973.

For many of the last 40 years, teachers have paid in much more than the pensions paid out. To ensure what is paid in balances outgoing the schemes are assessed periodically (every 5

Nottingham Unison Rallies Against Cuts

By Jean Thorpe,
Nottingham City Unison

Nottingham City Unison is to ballot its members for possible industrial action in the face of a third year of attacks on the workforce by the Labour-controlled City Council.

Following on from big job cuts totalling nearly 800 in the previous two years, and previous attacks on redundancy payments, the City Council is now cutting a further 370 jobs.

Cuts are in both support services and in front-line areas such as youth, play and fostering and adoption. The City Council is also at-

tacking the fundamental conditions of service of staff, that include further cuts to redundancy pay, an incremental pay freeze that will particularly affect low paid female staff, and the introduction of staff car parking charges that represent a 2.1% pay cut.

"Enough is enough!" an increasing number of UNISON members are saying. Alongside GMB and UNITE who are also balloting their members for possible action, UNISON is starting a consultative ballot immediately after the demonstration in London.



Photo: Alan Lodge (Tash)

Nottingham Unison: organising to resist cuts

Officers and shop stewards from Nottingham City Unison representing members in education responded swiftly and effectively to halt plans to attack wages and conditions.

Within a relatively short period of time union activists greatly increased the number of workplace representatives and organ-

ised members into opposing the City Council's planned cuts.

Through meetings, demonstrations and the threat of well-supported industrial action, Unison forced the council to postpone their 'deliberations'.

This is the sort of action needed to halt all cuts!

Notts Unison Strike

Continued from front...

"March against Austerity" Demonstration is hugely important and must act as a catalyst to the demand for sustained co-ordinated action to beat back the attacks on jobs, services and pensions. This is a weak and unpopular government that can be defeated. We can't afford to merely wait for the next election as Ed Balls suggested in his comment

recently stating that we shouldn't be provoked into industrial action!

At our Branch AGM on 17 March, members unanimously voted for a motion calling for a One Day General Strike across the whole public sector. Unity is strength together we can win, in the interests of the millions not the millionaires! Whilst there are no guarantees of success if you fight, one thing is certain, if you don't fight you are bound to lose every time.

Anti-Cuts News

Trade unionists and community campaigners have been active across the county organising opposition to the governments' cuts agenda. The *Notts Save Our Services* group followed up a demonstration last December with protests

outside of Nottingham City Council on the eve of the budget vote. Elsewhere, local groups have sprung up in Bassetlaw and the Sneinton area of Nottingham. Activists from *Nottingham Uncut* have staged a number of actions against the tax-dodgers at Vodafone and Boots.

See nottssos.org.uk for more information.



pension!

PENSIONS

years for the teachers' scheme). The scheme was last reviewed in 2005 and changes were made to ensure affordability. The teachers' scheme is currently due for another review. It is clear a new review would NOT find the scheme unaffordable. It might suggest some changes but these would be likely to be relatively small. However, the government has postponed it.

In its place, this is what they have done.

1. Set up the Hutton Review.
2. Moved from RPI to CPI which is 0.7% lower as a measure of inflation, cutting possibly tens of thousands from the value of future pensions.
3. Indicated an intention to increase the teacher's contribution from 6.4% of pay to 9.8%.
4. Suggested raising the age for receipt of public sector pen-

sions from 60 to a possible 68!

This government is trying to avoid a fair and honest review and is instead determined to attack pensions across the public sector. We should campaign for fair pensions for all private sector workers and demand that fair public sector pensions continue.

Be prepared to vote for strike action to defend our pensions.

Communication Workers Union demonstrates to...

Keep the Post Public!

More than one thousand CWU members were joined by their Brothers and Sisters from the Nottinghamshire trade union movement for a demonstration in Beeston on 19th February.

Filling the streets with one clear demand: "Keep the Post Public", demonstrators were met with overwhelming support from local people.

The march halted outside of the Beeston Conservative Club where a wreath was laid. Broxtowe Tory MP, Anna Soubry, has drawn the attention (and wrath) of CWU members and all those who support the postal service through a number of gaffes and her refusal to recognise

the overwhelming support for a public—not private—post service.

The march concluded with a rally addressed by Nottingham South Labour MP Lillian Greenwood, Communication Workers Union general secretary Billy Hayes and Richard Buckwell from Nottinghamshire Trades Council along with other speakers.

The battle to save the post from privatisation is not over but the overwhelming show of force and the massive support it received—not least in pledges from Lillian Greenwood to oppose privatisation in parliament—was a massive step forward.



Photo: 'Class Warrior'

Notts Trades Council

May Day Social

7.30 till late, Thursday 28th April

Polish Club, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham

with the Banner Theatre presenting

'Fighting the Cuts'

Plus local bands. All Welcome!

Lecturers Strike

Continued from front...

Organised by the Universities and College Union (UCU), members of staff at Universities in Scotland went on strike on 17 March, in Wales on 18 March, in Northern Ireland on 21 March and in England on Tuesday, 22 March. On Thursday, 24 March a UK wide strike across all institutions of Further and Higher Education took place. At Nottingham University we had

picket lines at the most important entrances in the morning of both days. Moreover, in order to demonstrate solidarity across the whole sector within the city, a joint rally was held by the UCU branches of Nottingham University, Nottingham Trent University and institutions of Further Education in Nottingham city centre on 24 March. It will be important that Further Education is not divided from Higher Education and one University from another in this struggle.

'Educate, Agitate and Organise'

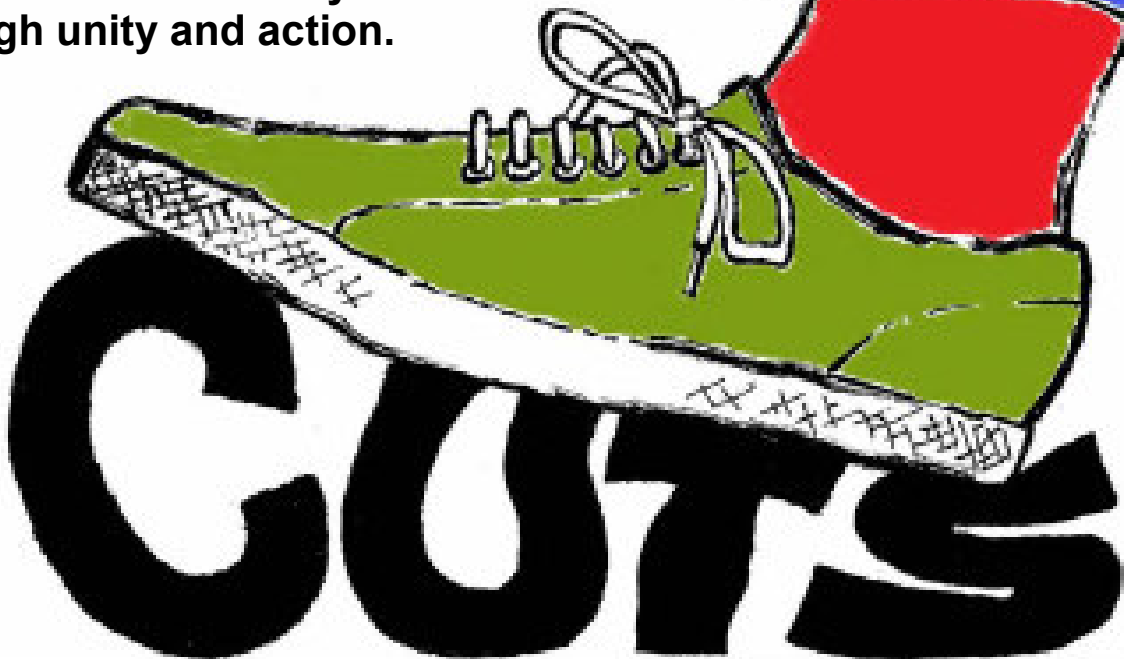
Nottinghamshire Trade Union News | Editor: Tom Unterrainer | To submit news, articles or opinions email nottstc@gmail.com

International Workers Day

MAYDAY 2011

**March on Saturday,
April 30th**

On International Workers Day we celebrate the achievements, culture and traditions of our class. This year and in the years to come we face huge threats from this Tory-Liberal government and their friends: threats we must and will resist! So join us to show the government and the bosses exactly what we achieve through unity and action.



Assemble in Victoria Park, Bath Street, near the Victoria Leisure Centre at 11 am. The march will leave the Park at 12 for Speaker's Corner (Clough statue). Then we return to Victoria Park for music, stalls, speakers, BEER TENT and much more.