

Branch Newsletter Winter 2018 - Spring 2019

Croydon UNISON

Message from Yvonne Green, Branch Secretary



Wishing all our members a **Happy New Year** and that everyone had a good Christmas.

We look forward to the challenges of 2019 with the anticipation of Brexit taking place in March. The UNISON Press Office stated "Any deal that fails to protect public services, defend the rights at work, and avoid a hard brexit in Ireland is a deal that's bad for all of us."

Our **Croydon UNISON AGM** will be taking place on Thursday **21st February 2019** at Ruskin House in the Nelson Mandela Lounge. There will be two sittings at 12.30pm and 4.30pm. Please note you only need to attend one meeting. We urge all our members to attend and show their support to the branch.

The Branch has been busy dealing with members queries relating to a number of **department restructures** including Housing, the Wheel Chair Service transferred to the Equipment team, the Older People and Commissioning Team was integrated into the Adult, Health and the Integration Commissioning Team, schools - Norbury Manor Secondary and the Libraries. The branch was also **consulted on a number of HR policies** including whistle blowing, parental bereavement policy and additional leave policy. In December we have sadly lost Lauren who was helping in the office during the last 12 months with administrative duties. We wish her all the best in her new job. However, we will continue to deal with members enquiries as soon as possible. However, due to the high volumes of cases **we need new reps to support the branch**. Training will be provided so please contact us if you are interested your help would be much appreciated.

In January during the weekend from the 18th to 20th January the **Black Members Conference** took place in Venu Cymru in Wales which I attended with a number of committee members. There were 34 motions debated and they were all carried. They included how the local government cuts impact on black staff and black women and mental health problems.

In January **Councillor Maggie Mansell** died aged 75 after a short illness. She had served over 30 years with the council including being Mayor for 2005-06. Until her death she had been one of the longest serving councillors in the borough. She was the Norbury and Pollards Hill Labour Councillor. There was a memorial service for her at Croydon Minster on Tuesday 29th January which I attended with two other committee members.



International Women's Day is celebrated on the 8th March 2019.



Looking forward to Easter

The office will be shut from Thursday 18th April and reopen on Tuesday 23rd April 2019.

Holocaust Memorial Day took place on the 27th January 2019. It is important to reflect on those who have lost their lives in harrowing circumstances not only in the Second World War but in other conflicts since.

Since the last UNISON Branch Newsletter **the Retired members Re-union and AGM** has taken place on Thursday 30th August at Ruskin House in South Croydon.



It was well attended. Peter Howard (far left) and Laurie Pocock (far right), the joint Retired Members Secretaries, organised the event.

October was **Black History Month** and Croydon UNISON organised an event in the Braithwaite Hall, Croydon Clocktower. It was led by our Chairman, Kai Pokawa. Please refer to the article below for more details.

The **Retired Member's Conference** took place from Tuesday 9th to Wednesday 10th October at Bournemouth. Peter Howard attended on behalf of the branch. Our retired members' group works closely with other members' groups on almost every issue that affects workers in the UK, as well as fighting for quality public services on which older people rely.

The **Disabled Member's Conference** was from Saturday 27th to Monday 29th October at Brighton. There were four workshops which covered Brexit and disabled people's rights, bargaining for disability rights in the workplace, campaigning against PIP and Universal Credit and disabled people standing for political office

The **LGBT Conference** was from Friday 16th to Sun 18th November at Harrowgate.

On the 11th November 2018 we remembered the **100th Anniversary of the ending of the 1st World War.**

On the back of others we stand tall. We reflect on the sacrifices and the struggles of those people who served in the Great War leaving families and friends behind.



On the 9th November we also remembered the **2nd Anniversary of the Croydon Tram Crash** when seven people tragically died and others injured some seriously. Both Yvonne Green and Kai Pokawa attended the memorial service in New Addington. There is general concern that a number of the recommendations made to improve safety on the tram system are still outstanding.

Black History Month



The event took place on the 1st November 2018 in the Braithwaite hall.

There was music provided by a steel band and poetry reading.



Bernadette Khan, the Croydon Mayor, attended and three Labour councillors - Councillor Patsy Cummings, Councillor Clive Fraser and Councillor Louisa Woodley Lucy Davis, a female film producer, Lucy Davis also attended.

Yvonne Green (left) and Mayor Bernadette Khan (right)

Spot Light on our Retired Member's Secretary - Peter Howard who has spent over 35 years supporting the local branch. He recounts his life in the article below.



Early Career: I left school at 14 and had various jobs until I entered the RAF Police in late 1958 where I worked for 3 years. Then I joined the police force in April 1962 where I served mainly in the CID for just over 21 years becoming an inspector. After leaving the police force I worked as a Security Officer at the Dorchester Hotel, and then became a Security Manager at London University. While there as a result of bullying by my manager, I joined **NALGO** in August 1983 and left with a settlement



and references. Thanks to the NALGO rep, who said to me, and I remembered it whenever, I represented anyone, "Don't tell me any untruths, as we will be caught out by Management!!"

Croydon Council Career:

In October 1983 I became an Enforcement Officer for Croydon Council covering the South of the Borough. Shortly after, I became the local NALGO rep in Planning and sat on the Joint Staff Council during the 1980's and 1990's.

In 1993 UNISON was formed when NALGO and two other public sector unions NUPE and COHSE combined together and so I became known as a UNISON Rep. When retiring in 1996 from Croydon Council I was asked to be Unison's Rep on the Pension Committee and also be Unison's Retired members Secretary.



I have carried out both tasks for over 20 years. However, while sitting on the Pension Fund I am now voted in by ALL Pensioners, Unison, Non Unison & no Union. Although in 18 months' time I will be 80, I still hope to carry on. Whilst I admit I am not Unison's usual active member, I wholeheartedly believe in worker's rights.

STOP PRESS

The branch are hoping to hold an event later in the year to remember Malcolm Campbell as it will be the 10th anniversary of his death in 2019. He was a previous Branch Secretary of Croydon UNISON and also President of the Croydon TUC. He was Branch Secretary for ten years until his death in 2009. Details to follow.



Changes to the branch office

Due to staffing changes in the Branch Office, there will be times when it will not be possible to answer your calls or respond to your email straight away.

Since Lauren Dell left we are currently reviewing how best to cover telephone or email enquiries at the branch office.

If you need advice in the workplace please contact your local Representative in the first instance. You can find a list of all our representatives and their contact numbers and their email addresses listed on our local Branch website www.croydonunison.co.uk

The Branch office does have a voice mail and this will be checked on a regular basis, so please leave a message and we will endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible.



Don't get angry - get active!

Have you ever thought about being a steward? We are always looking to welcome new Reps into the branch and this could be a role you might be interested in pursuing.

The Branch will organise full training for you, both from UNISON and the TUC as a Rep you are entitled to come off to train. We would not expect you to carry out any representations or to support your colleagues until you have carried out training.

Our most experienced Stewards and officers are also on hand to support you. Whether you work in the public or private Sector we need you! If you would like to find out more about the role, please contact the Branch Office on 020 8760 5435



Are you receiving?

If you are not receiving emails that our sent out from time to time from UNISON and the branch, please contact the Branch Office by phone or email branchoffice@croydonunison.co.uk and your details will be updated.



The Croydon Branch wishes all its members a **Happy Easter**.

Proud to be in UNISON

The UNISON Year 2019

January 2019

Black Members Conference:
Fri 18th – Sun 20th January
Cymru, Llandudno

February 2019

Branch AGM: Thu 21st
Ruskin House

Women's Conference: Thu 14th –
Sat 16th February Bournemouth

June 2019

Local Government Conference:
Sun 16th – Mon 17th June
ACC Liverpool

National Delegate Conference:
Tue 18th – Fri 21st June
ACC Liverpool

August 2019

Croydon Retired Members Re-Union
and AGM –
Details to follow

October 2019

Retired Member's Conference: Tue
1st – Wed 2nd October
Southport Convention Centre

Disabled Member's Conference: Sat
2nd – Mon 4th November Brighton

November 2019

LGBT Conference: Fri 15th – Sun
17th November Bournemouth