

# Branch Newsletter Autumn 2019

## Croydon UNISON

Message from Yvonne Green,  
Branch Secretary



Autumn is upon us with the days drawing shorter. We are coming near to the deadline for a Brexit deal with no definite solution at present. The Labour Party are wanting to ensure there is not a no deal Brexit which Boris Johnson as Prime Minister threatens to implement if no agreement is reached with the EU by the end of October. We are entering unknown territory in terms of our laws, increased food prices and job losses.

On a more positive note October is **Black History Month**. This month I was honoured to receive the **Nelson Mandela Award** given out annually by UNISON since 2015. The award is presented to someone who has supported and 'gone above and beyond' to represent Black members celebrating their achievements, courage and determination within the union and more widely in our society. Also challenging inequalities at work, promoting inclusion and diversity in the community and challenging all forms of discrimination.

Halloween Quiz Night

Tuesday 29th October at  
Ruskin House in the  
Nelson Mandela Lounge

7-9pm, doors open  
6.45pm



The award will be presented to me at the **Black Member's Conference** in Bournemouth which is from taking place from 31st January to 2nd February 2020.

Kai Pokowa, our Chairman, kindly organised a special event in the Council Chambers to celebrate with members of the branch committee and the Mayor Humayun Kabir (pictured opposite), Tony Newman, Leader of the Council and other councillors including two previous Mayors, Councillors Bernadette Khan and Toni Letts.

*"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."*

*"Courage is not the absence of fear — it's inspiring others to move beyond it."*  
— **Nelson Mandela**

**Grovember** Across all our regions, throughout the month of Nov... sorry, **Grovember**, UNISON activists will be spreading the message that we're **#strongertogether** and that by acting together we can push our recruitment into growth.

We have recruited a number of Reps this year but we could always do with more due to the increasing number of enquiries that the branch receives.

Burak Cetindag who works in the Economic Growth Team at BWH is one of latest Reps to join us and the committee gave him a warm welcome at our October Croydon UNISON Branch meeting.

I would also like to thank Sally Tsoukaris, our Regional Organiser, for all her support as she is leaving UNISON at the end of October and we wish her well in her new job.

The London Model Council Motion on **NJC Pay** was tabled at the CSPP (Croydon Staff Partnership Panel) meeting held at the Croydon Town Hall on Thursday 10th October 2019. The motion was for “a fully funded, proper pay rise for council and school workers.”

In regard to the **£95 exit cap** the government has stated they are “capping exit payments to stop unacceptably large pay-outs for senior managers.” The proposals clearly affect employers on very moderate salaries who will have dedicated years of their life to public service more than highly paid staff with short service who will remain relatively unaffected.

A **Regional Campaign** chaired and hosted by Yvonne Green at the UNISON Centre in London was a round table discussion on **Gun and Knife Crime** and the impact it has on members and the services they deliver with key occupations directly impacted including youth workers, school support staff, nurses and ambulance staff. The attendees were clear they all want to be part of the solution.

## UNISON Quiz Ruskin House



Due to the success of our two quiz nights this year we are holding a **Halloween Quiz** on 29th October at Ruskin House in the Nelson Mandela Lounge from 7 to 9pm. The quiz is open to non-unison members as well. Entry fee is £5 per person with a maximum number of six people to a team. Prizes will be given and a raffle. Please contact the branch if you may like to enter a team. Money raised will go to the **Ruskin House Restoration Fund** and UNISON's charity **There for You**.

The **Retired Members Re-Union and AGM** took place at Ruskin House on Thursday 15th August. It was hosted by Peter Howard and Laurie Pocock who share the position of Retired Members Officer.



We appreciate all the work they both do especially Peter who regularly attends the Pension Committee meetings. If you are near retirement age don't forget you can become a lifetime UNISON member when you retire by making a one off payment of £15.

**The Retired Member's Conference** was held between the 1st and 2nd October at the Southport Convention Centre. Laurie Pocock attended on behalf of the branch.

**The LGBT Conference** is taking place from Friday 15th to Sunday 17th November at Bournemouth and the branch will be sending a delegate to the event.

The first **Local Champions Day** was on 17th October 2019.

The **Local Service Champions campaign** highlights the invaluable contribution of local government workers. A UK-wide celebration day on the 17th October will provide an opportunity for us all to consider the vital role these unsung heroes play in our lives.

Refuse workers, trading standards officers, environmental health inspectors, youth workers, librarians, school cleaners, care assistants – and many more – deliver vital local services. They are the glue that hold our communities together. The Local Service Champions campaign aims to raise the profile of these unsung heroes.

**World Mental Health Day** was on 10th October 2019

This year, **World Mental Health Day** focussed on 'suicide prevention'.

According to the World Health Organisation, more than 800,000 people die by suicide a year, making it the principal cause of death among people fifteen to twenty-nine years old.

The mental health website <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk> uses the acronym **Wait** in the message to help with suicide prevention:



**W** - watch out for signs of distress and uncharacteristic behaviour

**A** - ask "are you having suicidal thoughts?"

**I** - it will pass – assure your loved one that, with help, their suicidal feelings will pass with time

**T** - talk to others – encourage your loved one to seek help from a GP or health professional

**Green UNISON Week** took place from the 16th to 20th September 2019



UNISON have called for strong action on climate change for many years. This September, our branches across the UK organised a week of activities to call for urgent action to tackle climate change.

One suggestion is to have an **Environment Rep** at all UNISON branches. **We do not have one at Croydon but if anyone is interested in promoting green issues please contact the branch office.**

**White Ribbon Day** is on 25th November 2019

**White Ribbon Day** is held on November 25th, also known as the **International Day for the Eradication of Violence against Women**, and is an annual day to raise awareness of family violence. The day is run by the **White Ribbon Campaign**. White Ribbon Day has been running for 17 years, and was founded by a group of men in Canada who felt that they had to raise awareness and work towards prevention of violence against women.



The White Ribbon Campaign and Day spread through Canada, with hundreds of thousands of people joining the event in the first year, and wearing white ribbons to oppose violence against women. The event then spread beyond Canada, becoming international, and the UK branch of the White Ribbon Campaign was founded in 2004 and has continued to grow since then.

## Support Nightwatch Croydon

The branch is collecting any tin food items to support Nightwatch Croydon for the homeless. Ring ext 65435 to arrange to drop off your donations in the office. <http://croydonnightwatch.org.uk>



## Branch office Information

Our new web site is now live and we are hoping to recruit a volunteer to help us keep it up to date due to the pressure in the Branch Office with general enquiries and other administrative matters.

Visit <https://croydon.unison.site>

**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. 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. Branch Office no: 020 8760 5435



**Don't get angry - get active!**



**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](mailto:branchoffice@croydonunison.co.uk) and your details will be updated.

**Proud to be in UNISON**

**Remembrance Day 11th November 2019**



## The UNISON Year 2019/20

### November 2019

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

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

### January 2020

Black Members Conference: January 31st – 2nd February Bournemouth

### February 2020

Branch AGM: Ruskin House Thur 20th February

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

### June 2020

Local Government Conference: Sun 14th – Mon 15th June 2020 Brighton Centre

National Delegate Conference: Tues 16th - Fri 19th June Brighton Centre

### August 2020

Croydon Retired Members Re-Union and AGM –. Ruskin House To be confirmed

### October 2020

Retired Member's Conference: To be confirmed

