

Branch Newsletter Summer 2019

Croydon UNISON

Message from Yvonne Green, Branch Secretary



We hope that our members are enjoying the summer weather and looking forward to their holidays.

In July there was an announcement in the media relating to Brexit that Jeremy Corbyn, Labour Leader, is set to unequivocally back a second Brexit referendum after Britain's biggest unions including UNISON agreed for the first time that the issue should be put back to the public.

In June I attended a number of events including one to celebrate **Windrush** at the Selsdon Park Hotel.



The event attended by the Mayor Bernadette Khan and Sarah Jones Croydon Central MP was to honour the Croydon Windrush generation. Windrush originates from when the ship the Empire Windrush docked in Tilbury in 1948.

It sparked an influx of migrants from the Caribbean and now the Government is facing an outcry over fears some of them may have been deported "in error"

I attended the **Local Delegates Conference** and **National Delegates Conference** with a number of my committee members, both conferences took place in Liverpool.

I also attended the annual **Labour Link Forum** in York on the 5th July which included a debate on modern day slavery which I spoke on. Part of my speech made reference to the Polish gang who were trafficking people from Poland to Birmingham – amounting to 2 million pounds. The victims were forced to work and had to give most of their wages over. The case had gone to court and at least 6 people have been convicted. The event was attended by our leader, Dave Prentis, who stated that "So from Brexit to privatisation and social care to local government funding – I know that our Labour Link will remain vital in fighting for our union's politics within Labour".

Summer Quiz Night

Tuesday 6th August at
Ruskin House in the
Nelson Mandela Lounge

7-9pm, doors open 6.45pm

Retired Members Re-union
& AGM

Thursday 15th August at
Ruskin House in the
Nelson Mandela Lounge

1pm, doors open 12.30pm





On the 13th July the branch had a stall at Croydon Pridefest at Wandle Park.



This was a popular event being London's second largest Pride Festival. Both Yvonne Green and Kai Pokowa ran the stall.

Pictured right, Yvonne Green with Sue Adams, a previous Croydon UNISON Branch Secretary and Joan Matlock, a previous Croydon Branch Welfare Secretary.

The Branch continues to be busy with further **council restructures** so please contact your local rep first if you have an initial enquiry rather than contacting the branch office. These restructures include Housing Solutions & Gateway and the Violence Reduction Unit. A number of schools have also been effected with reorganisations including Oasis Rylands Academy, Harris Primary at Kenley, Downsview Primary and Nursery School, Margaret Catholic School and Orchard Primary School (TUPE), Virgo Fidelis, Croydon College and Cyprus School.

The **Tolpuddle March** took place on the July 21st July. Julia O' Maley took part in the march in memory of Malcolm Campbell, a previous Croydon UNISON Branch Secretary. It is the 10th anniversary of his death this year. He was a regular participant at the event.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs were a group of six agricultural labourers in the village of Tolpuddle in Dorset, who were convicted of swearing a secret oath as members of the Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers in 1834. This event and their harsh sentences led to the early inception of trade unions to support and protect worker's rights

UNISON Quiz Ruskin House



In April we held a Spring Quiz at Ruskin House, due to its success the branch has decided to set up a quarterly quiz event.

The next **Summer Quiz** will be on Tuesday 6th August 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**.

Members experiencing financial and emotional difficulties can contact our welfare charity, **There for You**, which provides a confidential advice and support service for members and their dependants. There for You has once more set up a limited fund to help members on low incomes towards the costs of school uniform through a one-off payment of £50 per child, up to three children in a family. Although the deadline of Friday 19th July for this year has gone please be aware of it for future years.

In April we held a UNISON recruitment stall promoting **World Book Night** at Croydon Central Library in April 2019. This was organised by our Chairman, Kao Pokowa and Dawn Gibbons, the Croydon Libraries UNISON Rep. World Book Night is an annual event to promote reading and is organised by the Reading Agency.



The Retired Members Re-Union and AGM is taking place on Thursday 15th August at Ruskin House, South Croydon in the Nelson Mandela Lounge. The start time is 1pm with doors open from 12.30pm. The event ends around 3pm.



Please join Peter Howard and Laurie Pocock, the joint Retired Members Secretaries. The branch has 500 retired members. The branch would like to remind any members with emails currently not on our email contact list to contact the branch.

In June, our Chairman, Kai Pokowa, (pictured opposite) attended a demonstration in Trafalgar Square campaigning against the official visit of Donald Trump, the American President.

The Together Against Trump coalition, made up of trade unions and justice campaigners organised the event.

The aim was to make Trafalgar Square a “Trump Free Zone” and to create a family-friendly, carnival atmosphere and celebrate the diversity of the city.

Dave Prentis, UNISON’s General Secretary attended as well. UNISON felt the Trump should not have been given the honour of a full state visit.



There has been a HM Treasury Consultation which ended on the 3rd July 2019 on a **Public Sector Exit Payment Cap**. UNISON strongly recommends delaying implementing these proposals until a full and meaningful Equality Impact Assessment is conducted and acted on as it could adversely affect low and moderately paid workers especially those aged over 55. The level of the cap has not been updated – it remains at the £95,000 proposed four years ago, and there is no proposal to index-link it in the future. Please check on-line for further details and to keep yourselves updated on this important matter.

Our **Croydon UNISON AGM** took place on Thursday **21st February 2019** at Ruskin House in the Nelson Mandela Lounge. Attendance was low and this was very disappointing and we hope more members will find time to attend next year as it is a good way for members to meet the committee and discuss relevant issues.

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.

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 time 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.

Proud to be in UNISON

The UNISON Year 2019/20

August 2019

Croydon Retired Members Re-Union and AGM – Ruskin House
Thursday 15th August

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

January 2020

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

February 2020

Branch AGM:
Ruskin House
To be confirmed

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

June 2020

Local Government Conference:
To be confirmed

National Delegate Conference:
To be confirmed