

Branch Newsletter Winter 2022

Croydon UNISON

**Message from Yvonne Green,
Branch Secretary**



The branch would like to wish our members a **Happy Christmas** and **New year**.

2022 has been a challenging year and as your Branch Secretary I have been working hard to support members over the last 12 months with the cost of living crisis helped by our case worker and branch reps.

We have seen two new Prime Ministers after Boris Johnson resigned from office on the 5th September. Liz Truss took over from him briefly but stood down after a disastrous “mini budget” on the 23rd September. The budget worried markets, sent borrowing rates up, and devalued the pound. Rishi Sunak took over as Prime Minister on the 25th October. He was the previous Chancellor of Exchequer under Boris Johnson.

Locally, in May Conservative councillor Jason Perry became the **first directly elected mayor** for Croydon. However, in November the council issued its **third Section 114 notice** in just two years. When Croydon first issued a Section 114 Notice in November 2020, it was only the second council to do so this century.

We were sorry to hear of the sad **death of Queen Elizabeth II** on the 8th September at the age of 96. She had been our longest-reigning British monarch. I represented the branch by attending a memorial service attended by the Mayor and other officials at the Town Hall and I also signed the book of remembrance.



On a global note the **Russian attack on Ukraine** which started in February and has continued since has seen terrible scenes of destruction take place. This has also unsettled global markets with resources in short supply such as grain and gas supplies from Russia. The branch donated to the Disaster and Emergency Community Ukraine Humanitarian appeal which is collecting to help provide food, water, shelter, healthcare and protection for those fleeing the conflict. If you would like to donate please use this link:

<https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal>

Further restructures have taken place at the council over the last 12 months with more job cuts. In April, the **library restructure** was implemented after consultations with both staff and the public which resulted in a 21% cut of library opening hours.

There have been a number of protests and strikes that have affected us locally including the bus, tram and rail services. With the issuing of the recent **Section 114** savings will need to be made to cover the council budget for the 2023/24 year. It has been announced that various assets may be

sold off to cover some of the debt. This may include some Libraries and the Colonnades off Purley Way. This was bought by Croydon Council as an investment in 2018.

A **World Book Night** and recruitment event took place on the 22nd April in the Croydon Clocktower. <https://worldbooknight.org>. The book which we gave away was Live Well Everyday by Dr Alex George. The branch office still has a few spare copies left so please contact us if you would like to pick one up.

The branch attended the **Jamaica Independence Day** fund raising charity event at the Braithwaite Hall on the 5th August. The event was organised by the new civic mayor Cllr Alisa Flemming. On the 6th August Jamaica celebrated its 60th anniversary of independence.

In October the branch attended the Fairfield Halls to see the film 'The Help' in celebration of **Black History Month**.

Branch AGM 2023

We hope members will attend the Branch AGM on Tuesday 23rd February 2023 at Cedar Hall, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road Croydon CR0 1BD.

There will be two meetings. The lunchtime meeting will start at 12.30pm and for those who cannot make lunchtime, there will be another meeting held at 4.30pm. Please remember – you only need to attend one. Photo taken at the 2022 AGM on the 8th March.



NJC Pay Offer

On the 1st November **local government trade unions accepted a pay offer** that will see hundreds of thousands of workers, over 350,000 of whom are UNISON members, paid an extra £1,925 this year, equating to a 10.5% increase for the lowest-paid workers.

Following agreement by the National Joint Council (NJC) – the National Employers and majority of national trade unions – all Croydon Council pay grades from 1 to 17, and Croydon Special Range (CSR) A and B will be increased by £2,229 from 1 April 2022. The pay award will be applied to basic pay, backdated to 1 April 2022, and will be paid as part of December's payroll. **The national pay agreement for Local Government Services employees was of a pay increase of £1,925. Because Croydon Council is an Outer London borough, this has been adjusted to £2,229.**

Croydon UNISON support NHS Protest



In January 2022 Yvonne Green attended a protest organised by GMB with other union members outside Croydon University Hospital. The protest was to support low wage cleaners and porters who no longer receive sick pay if they come down with COVID.

Photo: Yvonne Green (left) & Val Shawcross (right), Labour candidate for Croydon Mayor.

Over the year other workers have been protesting and we have seen bus and train drivers on strike. Royal mail postal workers have also gone on strike.

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 11.1% in the 12 months to October 2022, up from 10.1% in September 2022.

Hence the feeling of unrest by workers worried about paying their bills, heating their houses and feeding their families.

Conference Updates

The **Black Members Conference** did not take place in January 2022 due to growing concerns over COVID. The **Women's Conference** in February 2022 took place on line.

In June the **Local Government Conference** and the **National Delegate Conference** both took place in person and were held at the Brighton Centre.

Yvonne Green and other branch committee members at the National Delegate Conference with Christina McAnea, UNISON General Secretary (centre).



The **Retired Member's Conference** took place in October at the Telford International Centre and was attended by Laurie Pocock and Kieran Gilmore. The

Disabled Member's Conference also took place in October at the Brighton Centre.

The **LGBT Conference** took place in November at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

Croydon Retired Members Re-Union and AGM



The Croydon Retired Members Re-Union and AGM took place on 18th August at Ruskin House which Laurie Pocock the joint Retired members Officer attended.

Laurie Pocock, the joint Croydon Retired Members Officer also organised a visit to the Houses of Parliament in October which was well attended. The group were shown round by Ellie Reeves MP for Lewisham West and Penge.

Laurie Pocock is fourth from the right in photo.

Croydon TUC

We have renewed our affiliation with the Croydon TUC committee Croydon UNISON with meetings taking place at Ruskin House. The Croydon TUC have supported further protests included the one at Croydon University and we thank them for their support.

<https://www.croydontuc.org.uk/>

COVID19 Update

Concerns around COVID have been relaxed but we recommend that you keep aware. If eligible for the booster jab this Autumn Winter please consider taking it up.

Important Branch Update

The new telephony system that was recently implemented without consultation with the unions has created lots of difficulties for incoming calls from members. We have raised our concerns and hope to rectify the issues asap.

If you are unable to get through on our branch phone send an email to branchoffice@croydonunison.co.uk.

If contacting us by email with an enquiry please can you provide your membership number, workplace and job title and a contact telephone number.



Are you receiving?

Reminder: My UNISON – Make sure your details are up to date.

If you have not been receiving **any regular email communication**, it is important that you register an email address online with MY UNISON. If you have changed address or employer these can also be updated.

<https://www.unison.org.uk/my-unison/>

Branch office Information

Visit our web site for updates. <https://croydonunison.co.uk/>

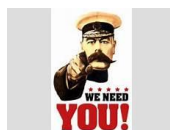
If you need advice in the workplace please contact your local Representative in the first instance. You can find a list of all our representatives and their contact numbers and their email addresses listed on our local Branch website. Branch staff are now working under a hybrid system. The office will be staffed on a Monday, Tuesday or Friday but may vary due to availability. **Please contact us by email if possible and we will endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible.**

Email branchoffice@croydonunison.co.uk

The Branch office does have a voice mail but again this has been affected by the new telephony system.

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 email the Branch Office.

Proud to be in UNISON

Happy Christmas & New Year

The UNISON Year 2023

January 2023

Black Members Conference:
Fri 20th - Sun 22nd January
Edinburgh International Conference Centre

February 2023

Women's Conference:
Thurs 16th – Sat 18th February
Bournemouth International Centre

Branch AGM:
Tues 23rd February
Ruskin House

June 2023

Local Government Conference:
Sun 11th – Mon 12th June

National Delegate Conference:
Tues 13th – Fri 16th June
Both at ACC Liverpool

August 2023

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

October 2023

Retired Member's Conference:
Tues 3rd – Wed 4th October
Edinburgh International Conference Centre

Disabled Members Conference
Sat 28th – Monday 30th October
Edinburgh International Conference Centre

November 2023

LGBT Conference:
Fri 10th – Sun 12th November
ACC Liverpool