

Branch Newsletter Winter 2023



Croydon UNISON

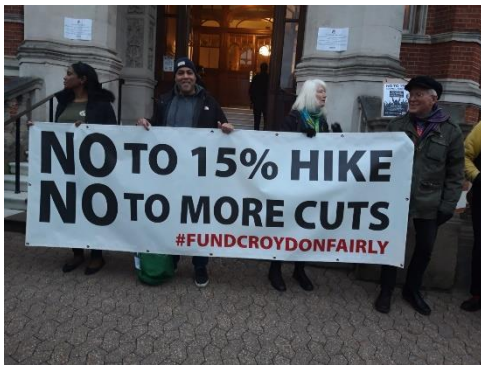
**Message from Yvonne Green,
Branch Secretary**



We wish all our members a **Merry Christmas and Happy New year.**

After a challenging year, we are still facing uncertainty in 2024 with a possible election at home and ongoing military unrest in the Ukraine and Palestine.

The Croydon council issued a 3rd Section 114 in November 2022 which resulted in **an increase in council tax of 15%** for Croydon residents in the **2023/24** year. Many of these residents also work in the borough and are UNISON members. This was the highest increase in council tax across the country despite local unions including Croydon UNISON and other local community groups and residents protesting outside the Town Hall when the two council budget meetings took place in March.



Plans to increase Croydon's council tax by **4.99%** have been announced as part of Croydon Council's **2024-25** budget which should bring some relief to members after the 15% increase this year.

The UK's annual inflation rate fell sharply to 4.6% in October on the back of cheaper gas and electricity, its lowest level for two years. This hopefully has helped members as inflation was still around 10% at the beginning of the year and were facing increased costs with their energy and food bills and other day to day expenses.

Globally the war in **Ukraine** against Russia is still ongoing with no end in sight to a peace settlement. If you would like to donate to the Disaster and Emergency Community Ukraine Humanitarian appeal, please use this link: <https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal>

Members wanting to know about UNISON's stance on the situation in **Palestine** please refer to this link: <https://www.unison.org.uk/news/2023/12/unison-condemns-the-resumption-of-violence-in-gaza-and-calls-for-an-immediate-ceasefire/>

Branch AGM 2024

The Branch AGM is on Tuesday 20th February 2024 at Ruskin House. There will be two sessions that members can attend.

Members attended the Branch AGM on Monday 21st February 2023 at the Cedar Hall, Ruskin House. Henrietta Phillips from Thompsons Solicitor was invited as guest speaker. Members can make personal accident claims which also cover outside the work environment such as car accidents of family members. Other services include free wills for members and their partners. Members and the committee raised concerns about the proposed 15% rise in council tax.

NJC Pay Offer

Just to remind members the NJC pay deal for 2022/23 included an extra day's annual leave so please this has been included in your annual leave allowance for this year.

The NJC pay deal for the 2023/24 year was only recently agreed. The increase and back pay from April will be reflected in our December pay.

Please see this link to the relevant Intranet page <https://intranet.croydon.gov.uk/news/202324-pay-award-confirmed>

Following agreement by National Joint Council (NJC) – the National Employers and the majority of the national trade unions – all Croydon Council pay grades from 1 to 17 and Croydon Special Range (CSR) A and B will be increased by **£2,226 from 1 April 2023**.

The national pay agreement for Local Government Services employees was of a pay increase of £1,925. As Croydon Council is an Outer London borough, this has been adjusted to £2,226.

Penn Report

The Penn report is an independent investigation looking into the reasons for the council's financial collapse, was finally published on 24 February 2023 after a long delay. The report includes the actions of Croydon's senior managers and councillors and suggests recommendations for the council to consider about what formal action, if any, should be taken.

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-02/penn-report-24-02-23.pdf>

Conference Updates

The **Black Members Conference** took place in January 2023 at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

2023 is "UNISON's Year of Black Workers."

UNISON's Year of Black Workers is underpinned by the desire of 'establishing legacy to generate change', and the national Black members committee hope to develop legacy campaigning work across several areas, including ethnicity pay gap, the TUC anti-racist manifesto and Implementing UNISON's race discrimination protocol, :

For more information: <https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2023/01/the-year-of-black-workers/>



The **Women's Conference** took place in February 2023 at the Bournemouth International Centre

Sexual harassment at work was a strong topic at this year's women's conference in Bournemouth, both in and outside the conference hall.

A motion on workplace policies on sexual harassment was passed and delegates called on the national women's committee to:

- Increase the understanding of sexual harassment and the different ways it can impact people in the workplace;
- Encourage equality and women's officers to negotiate and roll out sexual harassment policies with the employers covered by their branch, ensuring that they include references to the specific needs of women, both cis and trans, and of other marginalised groups, with a focus on intersectionality.

Other conferences that took place during the year were the **Local Government Conference** and the **National Delegate Conference** both in June and in November the **LGBT Conference** all taking place at the ACC Liverpool.



The 22nd June 2023 was the **75th** anniversary of the arrival of the passengers of the **Empire Windrush** in the UK.

The day celebrates the contribution and achievements of the Windrush generation and their descendants

UNISON's Greater London Region hosted an event at head office to recognise the vital contribution of Black workers to UNISON and London's public services.

Recruitment

In December we had a recruitment table in the Croydon Clocktower to attract new members. Please encourage your colleagues including new staff to join UNISON if they not already members. If you would like a general information leaflet to hand out please contact the branch.



From left: Sarah Brown Area Organiser, Marcus Sinclair Rep, Jean Bowes Chairman right and Yvonne Green Branch Secretary standing. Please remember you can be a **work-based contact** rather than a full rep. If you work away from the BWH council building and may be in a school or other organisation such as a care home it would help the branch. The branch can send communications through to a work contact as an email or a poster for display on a staff notice board

Croydon TUC

We have renewed our affiliation with the Croydon TUC committee Croydon UNISON with meetings taking place at Ruskin House. <https://www.croydontuc.org.uk/>

Important Branch Update

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 and branch staff will respond asap depending on volume of calls.

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

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice. You have chosen the side of the oppressor” Desmond Tutu

The UNISON Year 2024

January 2024

Black Members Conference:
19th – 21st January
Brighton Centre

February 2024

Women's Conference:
15th – 17th February
Brighton Centre

Branch AGM:
20th February
Ruskin House

June 2024

Local Government Conference:
16th – 17th June

National Delegate Conference:
18th – 21st June
Both at Brighton Centre

August 2024

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

October 2024

Retired Member's Conference:
8th - 9th October
Venue to be confirmed

Disabled Members Conference
26th - 28th October
Brighton centre

November 2024

LGBT Conference:
15th-17th November
Venue - to be confirmed