



# DERBY CITY BRANCH

Here for you

## December 2020

# UNISON is not just for CHRISTMAS

It's for the rest of your working life.

## Our Year In Review 2020

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## Branch Secretary Report

Hi Everyone,

2020 - what do I say about my year as Branch Secretary other than YOU our members have been amazing. All our members have kept the city of Derby ticking over and front-line services have kept going (at times with our head in our hands) you, us, we did that! And as always, we did it with stresses and worries and no idea what our own future held. The Covid-19 virus has turned all our lives upside down, from the long list of symptoms to look out for, shielding, isolating, schools closed, the list of disruptions was and continues to be long, we continue to follow the guidelines and make all the changes needed to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.

I used to love the thought of a Working From Home day now I look forward to a work in the office day.

I have been working with many of our core employers throughout the pandemic and working on risk assessments, supporting with re deployment and supporting with learning events for members to do while at home. While also supporting our many members wellbeing, the anxiety Covid has brought is very real. Living with the fear that you may bring Covid into your home has been very real for many of our care staff & education staff members. We listened! We helped you get individual risk assessments and we kept in touch. Where we could we helped you arrange working from home and different duties to help you keep your family at home safe.

I've also picked up my fair share of member case work, I do enjoy case work it's a great way to get to know members and I do get a sense of pride in helping members through difficult situations. I've still not mastered the unmute when in meetings, has anyone?

As a branch you will recall we moved to Chaddesden just before lockdown, to date we have never all been at the office at the same time. We look forward to the day we can open the doors to you - our members.

We are soon to have office space within the Council House where our Derby City Council Assistant Branch Secretaries will be based for easy access to members and meetings. (If we ever go back to face-to-face meetings)

### Stewards and Branch officer training.

All stewards who were ready to redo their accreditation are currently mid-way through the online training, Branch officers have had training on settlement agreements, legal time limits and statement of case training delivered by Louisa Wass Griffiths Regional Manager. We've all done various courses offered by UNISON and updated many of our own skills. Dennis and Jill have also completed the Disability Discrimination UNISON Course. I have been very keen to improve training for us all, having up to date knowledge is important, legislation changes and it's important we know what's what. Our stewards and Health and safety officers were all invited to an online induction meeting delivered by David Limer from UNISON, these events were well received, and we got some great feedback.

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## Annual General Meeting

This year the date is set however we are unable to confirm details of how this will be carried out due to current Covid-19 Restrictions. We will let you know as soon as possible if this will be a physical event or a virtual one.





We have welcomed our new H&S officers with open arms this year and those of you who completed the online training - well done! We again had some great feedback regarding some of your workplace H&S reps. Great work from all. Unison learning is free and available to all. Get in touch if you want to learn something to help with work or just for fun. Learning keeps your brain alive.

Please do get in touch if you think you can make a positive difference to your workplace, I would like a steward and a H&S rep in every workplace - you really

can make a positive difference.

Thank you every single one of you for your hard work in 2020, Thank you for your continued membership and being part of the largest UNION.

Wishing us all a Merry Christmas and a happy and safe 2021.

Best wishes

**Becky Everett - Branch Secretary**

[beckyeverett@derbyunison.org](mailto:beckyeverett@derbyunison.org)



## Equal Pay Cases

Matthew Pull continues to work for us on the equal pay cases, we have had quite a bit of movement in this over the last few months. It's looking like the cases will be in court early 2022. Derby City Council have already spent over a million pounds in defending the cases! Anyone who needs to speak to Thompson's about their own case should contact Matthew or Hannah on **0161 819 3554**



## Coming soon to the Council House

Derby City Council branch officers can soon be found in the Council House on the ground floor (near staff entrance) Making it much easier for DCC employees to speak to us. We know not all DCC employers are Council House based - don't worry we are still available to meet virtually, on the phone and hopefully very soon in person.

**Our members receive our essential cover and support, have access to exclusive benefits and can take advantage of many training opportunities.**

Lighthouse Financial Advice  
Travel insurance  
Pre-paid Plus Mastercard  
UNISON protect accidental death insurance  
UIA home insurance  
Pet insurance  
UNION energy  
Learning and development

Car insurance from LV  
Vauxhall partners programme  
Breakdown cover from LV = Britannia  
Rescue  
UNISON Drive  
Wellbeing  
Health plans  
Vision Express  
Dental plans

UNISON rewards  
UNISON protect - family protection insurance

Personal and career development courses  
Financial support for learning  
Courses for reps and activists  
Legal advice

Travel club  
Croyde bay holiday resort

Simply Visit...

**benefits.unison.org.uk**

## Retired Members Report

Dear friends and colleagues, It seems a lifetime ago since the last meeting and the Branch AGM and Branch of the year awards at Nottingham. Corona virus has changed everything including the ever-confusing rules and guidelines, oh to be a fly on the wall when the Government advisors are sitting round the table, trying to decide what we should do or not do next. Anyway, we hope you are keeping safe and sane!

## Pensioner Revolt over TV Licence

The battle between pensioners and the BBC over the withdrawal of free TV licences for the over 75s, unless they receive pension credit, has the makings of a public relations disaster for the broadcaster. A campaign has begun by 'Silver Voices' Urging pensioners to cancel their direct debits and pay the fee in post-dated monthly cheques, which could cause a clerical nightmare and take longer to process. They are also being encouraged to register for pension credit to be exempt. The Government also wants to replace nonpayment of the Licence fee (currently a criminal offence) with a civil penalty (like a parking ticket) which could be outsourced to debt collectors.

The prospect of older people having their furniture removed by bailiffs, is something the BBC managers might want to think about. Those who still won't pay could face fines. The maximum is £1000, but the average imposed in 2018 was £176, still a considerable sum. Have the BBC forgotten its most loyal audience? Silver Voices Director, Dennis Reed lobbied the BBC, and this is the result – a six-month amnesty.

**BBC AGREES ENFORCEMENT AMNESTY FOR THE OVER-75s** - Following intense pressure from Silver Voices, the BBC has agreed that, "at this time", no enforcement visits will take place to households who previously held free licences and nor will enforcement letters be issued to this group. This is a major U-turn

by the BBC and provides a window of opportunity for new discussions on the restoration of free licences for the over 75s

I know this mess is not the BBC's making, and that the Government should still be funding free licences, but a compromise will have to be reached.

'Silver Voices' is an online information and campaigning project for older people. they can be found here <https://silvervoices.co.uk>

## Beware the Equity Release Trap

Equity Release also known as a lifetime mortgage is when you free up money from the value of your home and turn it into a tax-free cash lump sum. Rather than having to make monthly payments, the money is paid back on death or if the borrower moves into a care home. The benefit of equity release is that it allows borrowers to stay in their home whilst they can spend the cash released. Of course, the scheme comes at a cost and the companies involved in it have been criticised for their high interest rates. In the worst-case scenario, the loan could compound and leave the borrower in negative equity and unable to move home.

When you see TV adverts with happy couples doing up their homes and gardens by using the cash released from their home, think if this is the right thing for you. The cost of borrowing £50,000 over a 20-year period at 2.28% is a future debt of £78,853 The total interest charged is £28,853. There are some products now available that have a 'No negative equity guarantee'

**Over 50s Life Insurance** – There are many Insurance companies and others who are pushing this product, but again check if it's for you. In my opinion this is just about one of the worst deals you can get. Check the small print details as it is possible you will pay more in if you start a plan too early, than your family will get on your demise. Also, if you miss a payment for any reason then the plan is null and void. You'd be better off putting £15 – 20 per month in a savings account, which you control and have access to, should it be needed.

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## Did you know?...

Unisons emails are tailored to the information you give us, for Eg if you work in a school you will get emails relating to education - if you work in the care sector you will get emails related to care services - it's important to update your place of work details. **If your workplace has changed email us [contactus@derbyunison.org](mailto:contactus@derbyunison.org)**



**Beware the Lowlife Scammers** - It's nearing Christmas and these scumbags are sending out messages by email or text to try and catch and rob unwary people. I've been getting a text which says that someone has been set up to receive a payment from my bank. It goes on as follows – 'SANTANDER -a payment has been authorized from your account to a K Ross. If this was not you, please click here.' DO NOT click on this link. Simply look on your phone messages menu and delete the message and put a block on the number. Watch out for another scam which uses the Post Office to say they've tried to deliver a parcel and click on a link to rearrange delivery. Don't click on the link!

*Wishing all retired members, a happy and safe Christmas, and a good New Year*

## Chris Wheeldon - Retired Members Secretary

### Assistant Branch Secretary for Communities and Place & Health and Safety Officer Report

I don't think there is much to talk about Except for COVID19. For me it has been a very busy year going through risk assessment after risk assessment, then having to do them again because government guidelines have changed.

Having to work within the government guidelines can be very tricky at times very hard. Peoples mental health anxiety and stress would be very high for a lot of employees, it is probably causing more damage to people then the virus itself, and the effects of this will be felt for quite a few years to come.

The children have also suffered, lots of education freedom to go out and play

with their friends and for some of the smaller children, confusion not fully understanding what is going off, and why is mum and dad so worried and upset.

Christmas is almost upon us and I don't think I need to remind you about social distancing especially around grandparents, although some of you are probably old enough to be grandparents. As some of you are vulnerable or over 50 just take a little extra care at this time of year and you can still a great Christmas. Take care and we can still all together in the new year.

They have a vaccine ready to roll out for the new year, let's hope it is as good as they boast and we can all get back to normal.

Take care have a Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

**Dennis Jackson**

[dennisjackson@derbyunison.org](mailto:dennisjackson@derbyunison.org)

## Christmas Closure

**Our Branch closes for Christmas on Tuesday 22nd December at 1.30pm  
Branch reopens on Monday 4th January 2021 at 9am**

for support while we are closed please call  
**UNISON Direct on 0800 0 857 857**  
their opening times can be seen  
at the bottom of this page



## UNISON DIRECT OPENING TIMES

24 December 2020 - 6am - 3pm  
25 to 28 December 2020 - Closed  
29 to 30 December 2020 - Open 6am - Midnight  
31 December 2020 - 6am - 3pm  
1 January 2021 - Closed  
2 January 2021 - 9am - 1pm  
3 January 2021 - Closed  
4 January - 6am - Midnight (open as usual)



**Call 0800 0 857 857**

<https://www.unison.org.uk/get-help/>

**Getting help as a member of UNISON during the christmas closure period**

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## Assistant Branch Secretary for Peoples Services, Learning Rep, Labour link and Branch Convenor Report

Well 2020 has thrown us some very big curve balls with Covid-19, when I voted back in who would of thought that I would be working from home, with the cat for company! I wish to thank you all for voting me back in it has been a massive learning curve on how to use Zoom and Skype and remembering to unmute!

We have all had to learn new ways of working whether it I working from home or ensuring that all the front line services within my area are safe not only for the staff but the vulnerable people who use them. I would like to thank the amazing staff for all their hard work in looking after the people of Derby.

When we had the first lockdown schools were open for the front line staff and the vulnerable children of our city, I would like to say that all staff have and

continue to do an amazing job in difficult circumstances. Ensuring that the education of all children of Derby was continued .

Due to the pandemic a lot of things have had to be cancelled one of these was my first Labour Link Conference, along with the majority of the conferences within Unison. Since the pandemic has begun the learning within Unison has gone online and as always provided amazing courses even in these times. I am currently redoing my stewards training in the new way-online learning. I have also completed my disability discrimination training online. Please make use of the amazing learning within Unison-we are not just about when you have issues.

As we finish 2020 another election for branch officers is about to start, I hope that I can continue with the officers we have in the branch to carry on moving it forward but with members at the heart of everything we do.

**Jill Cartwright**

[jillcartwright@derbyunison.org](mailto:jillcartwright@derbyunison.org)

## Update your membership

Update any changes to your personal details, name changes, address changes, phone numbers, email addresses. Let us know to keep your membership right up to date.

Email us [contactus@derbyunison.org](mailto:contactus@derbyunison.org)



## Check your subs!

Check your wage sheet to ensure unison subs are being deducted (if you pay via salary) - especially important if you are TUPED over to a new employer.

When you need us, one of the first things we check is if subs are up to date. If you have a pay rise or pay decrease inform us so your subs are amended.





## East Midlands Regional Report

During the period of COVID -19 National Lockdown, recruitment has been steady, and it must be acknowledged the Branch have done well, considering there was no face to face workplace events or meetings being undertaken.

**Casework** - Queries and casework has increased since March 2020. There has been an increase in the private sector casework, which is always a challenge to the branch due to restraints on facility time to support these members.

Regional Support was provided on private sector casework, which included collective redundancies within the private sector of DG Services - Derby College, furlough issues, H & S issues within workplaces, and redundancy during maternity leave. There has also been an increase of case work with one core employer, Agin Care. Some of these cases are still ongoing, and it maybe sometime before they are resolved.

**Regional Learning and Development team** have been contacted with a view to having online learning on

the impacts of COVID-19 and Black members.

**Virtual Branch Training** - Settlements Agreements training delivered on 4th November 2020. Statement of Case training to be delivered on 11th November 2020.

Overall, it has been a busy year for Regional/Branch Officers. The branch adapted very well to the new way of working under Covid-19 restrictions, learning the skills quickly for virtual employer meetings. Risk assessments for Branch Officers undertaken, and all measures put in place for the opening of the new branch office for branch officers to be on a rota, one day a week worked very well. With the recent COVID-19 restrictions, Officers once again are working from home.

The Regional Team would like to thank all Officers, who have gone over and above to support members in some difficult circumstances.

Best wishes

**Louisa Wass-Griffiths,  
Nimisha Sisodia,  
& Brian Crosby**

## Get involved, become a steward

Whatever your problem at work, from broken central heating to mass redundancies, UNISON workplace representatives (reps), stewards and other activists work together to protect the interest of members.

**Get intouch with us if you want to get involved more, everyone can make a difference no matter how small.**



# Our Year in Review - Page 8

## Welfare Officer Report

This has been a difficult year for all of us and as your Welfare Officer I am committed to supporting you in any way that I can.

This year I have set up a free and confidential telephone listening service for members who may not want to take their problems further within Unison, but still need someone to talk to in confidence.

Please feel free to call me on **07963258748** any Weds or leave a message and I will call you back.

Each month I circulate an information power point on current issues or requests from members. These have included; Panic, Dementia, Covid Anxiety and Bereavement and Grief. This coming month will be 'Bullying in the Workplace'. If you have any requests or require copies of previous issues, please email me.

Remember, we also have our unique registered Welfare charity 'There for you' who may be able to offer you financial assistants, confidential debt advice, grants and support.

**Jayne Daniels**

[jaynedaniels@derbyunison.org](mailto:jaynedaniels@derbyunison.org)

## Branch Treasurer Report

I am a Steward and Health and Safety Rep for Derby Homes, as well as completing my 9th year as Treasurer for the Branch. I also sit on the Region Finance Committee and I am delegate to Regional Committee to ensure, along with my colleagues, that Derby City Branch member's voices are heard.

This year I have been largely involved in the move to our new branch offices, and the renovations, which I am very proud of our achievement to have an office that can be used when it is safe to do so to support all of our members.

I attend monthly online Trade Union meetings with my colleagues in UNITE and continue to raise member's issues, covid - 19 compliance within Derby Homes, with Senior Management Team when needed.

I also sit on the Health and Safety Forum ensuring that this is at the forefront of business decisions.

This year conferences have been cancelled due to Covid - 19 but I have ensured I have kept informed of the issues and feed back to the Branch and disseminate to members with issues relating to their workplace.

I am also part of the Steering group for the Work Stress Network where I keep up to date with current issue and information relating to work stress for our members.

**Julie Walker**

[juliewalker@derbyunison.org](mailto:juliewalker@derbyunison.org)

## Free Confidential Listening Service

For members who may not want to take their problems further within Unison, but still need someone to talk to in confidence. you can Call Jayne any Wednesday or leave a message and she will you back. **You can call Jayne on 07963258748**





## Results in 2020

A small group of our members didn't want their personal photo attaching to emails - we met, we planned, we held meetings. We jointly worked with our sister unions on this campaign. Covid came and put a hold on the campaign, however the IT issues that came with Covid showed us your photos would no longer remain for internal use only. You then were allowed to not display your photo! RESULT!!!

Well done to all who fought for what was important to you!



## Acting Branch Chair, Communications officer and LGBT+ Rep Report

For the past 5 years I have been ensuring that the branch are communicating effectively where possible, using social media and the website as well as traditional communication methods including this annual review you are reading now. you may see part of my work in The Derby Intu Centre where we now have a Digital Advert on the screens and also certain derby area magazines advertising our branch. I have many exciting things in the pipeline if i am able to continue my roles in the branch.

Using my Marketing and social media knowledge from my job roles I have made sure that the branch informs our members regularly. I am always keeping myself informed with national changes to Employee rights, National Campaigns, and anything that affects members.

This year due to Covid - 19 conferences that i would normally attend have all been cancelled but i have ensured i keep upto date on anything

## An example of ongoing casework

5 Unit managers across a group of school Kitchens in Derby employed by a private company put in a grievance regarding a much deserved and needed pay rise. (These managers were on the same rate of pay as the staff they supervised and managed and carried out a wide range of management duties and had responsibilities to cater for numerous allergens which could result in fatalities if not adhered to) They followed policy and did everything they could to resolve the matter. With UNISON support they each raised a grievance and got there deserved pay rise and are now fighting for it to be backdated till 1st April.

Keep fighting ladies



that would affect the branch and ensure this is shared appropriately. I did however attend the LGBT+ Live event which was one of the first online events of its kind for UNISON and i also attended the virtual LGBT+ Regional Meeting in November which i will be reporting back from in the future.

This year I have become the Acting Branch Chair to ensure branch business can continue effectively and efficiently to move branch business along, and that members are supported. I am now also a Steward for Derby Homes Staff.

I am part of the Steering group for the Work Stress Network where this year due to the pandemic we have developed online sessions which we hope to provide for our branch for free, with special guest speakers, coming very soon.

**Richard Platt**

[richardplatt@derbyunison.org](mailto:richardplatt@derbyunison.org)



## Winter Fuel Grant

Winter fuel grants are available again for UNISON members who are having difficulty meeting their heating bills. The grants, which are available from the union's independent welfare charity, There for You, are particularly timely after recent price rises by all the major energy companies. They consist of a one-off payment of up to £40. **Closing date 28 February 2021**

**contact us to apply or go to <https://bit.ly/37knBW0>**

Did you know we have a retired members group? Would you like to still be involved and take part in helping future activists with your knowledge and experience? you can join for a fixed price of £15 to Join don't hesitate to contact us below.

Please feel free to cut out the below to keep to remember how to contact us

## Our New Location

We couldn't be more proud about our new offices and our office move, and the new offices, we cant wait to welcome you in when it is safe to do so. We have two private meeting spaces and a communal space where we will be able to engage with you, and also deliver small training sessions, also providing desk space for our officers to work effectively in the future



## Contact us

**UNISON Derby City Branch,**  
**59 Roosevelt Avenue,**  
**Chaddesden,**  
**Derby, DE21 6JR**

Telephone:

**01332 643216 / 643217**

Email:

**contactus@derbyunison.org**

## How do I Join?

You can become a member anytime for support and help.

**Call FREE to join - 0800 171 2194**  
**or Visit [join.unison.org.uk](http://join.unison.org.uk)**

From  
**£1.30**  
a month



**there  
for you**

supporting UNISON members  
when life gets tough

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.

For more information contact us on **020 7121 5620** or email  
**thereforyou@unison.co.uk** or contact us for more information

## Keep informed

Make sure you Like us on Facebook and follow us on twitter for regular updates and information

**facebook.com/  
unisonderbycitybranch**  
**twitter.com - @unisonderbycity**

or visit our website on

**[www.derbycityunison.co.uk](http://www.derbycityunison.co.uk)**