

# Grapevine

The Official Newsletter of *Angus Council Branch*

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## Lifelong Learning

### Back To School for Advisers

On 7– 9 July the first session of training courses for Lifelong Learning Advisers were held in Forfar.

The course, lead by Alan Cowan, Education Officer, covered the elements of becoming a Lifelong Learning Adviser. The trainees included, 1 from Finance, 2 from Social Work and 1 from Dundee University. See Page 2 for further details.



Darren O'Shea, George Martin, Alan Cowan, Mavis Leask & Morag Pollard during training

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## Pay Increase On Hold

### OTHER LG UNIONS REJECT OFFER

Whilst UNISON were willing to accept the annual pay award, it has been rejected by the other 2 Local Government unions.

The offer of 2.95% from 1/4/04 to 31/3/05 and 2.95% from 1/4/05 to 31/3/06 was accepted by UNISON, after a straw

poll throughout the branches. However, at the joint unions meeting, the GMB and T&GW both rejected the offer. Even though UNISON could force through the pay rise they respected the views of the other unions, letting them go forward to the COSLA meeting on 24th August, requesting an

increase to the offer. At time of going to press there was no information regarding that meeting.

If COSLA refuse to increase the offer then the 2 other unions have the choice of balloting their members for industrial action.

*(Continued on page 2)*

Remember to use the FREEPOST address for any written correspondence

Unison - Angus Council Branch, FREEPOST SC07380, FORFAR, DD8 1ZR



# UNISON & LIFELONG LEARNING

(Continued from page 1)

Promoting the lifelong learning agenda on behalf of the workforce is one of UNISON's main learning and organising priorities. UNISON seeks to improve access to learning opportunities at all levels. One outcome of the training programme, which has been started in Angus is that a plan has been put together to agree time off for advisors with the employer, how best to access members and non members and how Lifelong Learning Advisors can promote Lifelong Learning through the link with the Angus Council Branch

We are about to begin a campaign to publicise the new Lifelong Learning Credit scheme being launched by the Scottish Parliament, which will help low paid workers gain access to some funding for learning activities. Our immediate plans include a network meeting with other Lifelong Learning Advisors and launching the campaign after our Branch Executive meeting in October.

You may ask why have Lifelong Learning Advisors (LLAs) in the work

place when we already have stewards. UNISON is first and foremost a members led union. Experience has shown that although people are interested in helping each other, we all have different areas of interest and different things what we are willing or confident to do to help. This can depend on our own knowledge, skills and time commitments. It also depends on the support we feel we receive from our friends, work mates and our Union.

**“Health and Safety Reps have made the workforce safer, Lifelong Learning Advisors can make the workforce smarter!”**

UNISON is asking you to help us to promote the case for Lifelong Learning at a local and National level. We are looking to build a network of contacts to help us gather information and pass on information in the workplace. The more people involved, giving as much or as little information or time, will help us raise training and development issues with the employer at a local level and reduce barriers to learning through the Branch Executive. Your comments

all, including UNISON members. The other unions may decide to accept the offer after balloting their members and the pay rise would be paid hopefully before the end of the year. There will be more information available in the next newsletter.

However in an attempt to get the information to the members you can join the Branch email list. Simply send your name and home address by email from your computer (home or office) to:

**emailreg@unison-angus.org.uk**  
to register that email address.

and support will also help us raise particular issues at a national level through the Scottish Parliament and with the national employer representatives as part of any negotiated agreements on lifelong learning. *Do you like learning new things? : Are you a good listener? ; Do people often ask you for advice?*

The revised ACAS code of practice, gives trade unions the right of recognition for Union Learning Reps. UNISON have recruited LLAs to take on this new role and would welcome contact with staff interested in promoting learning in the workplace. We have developed courses in partnership with the Workers Education Association aimed at helping the workforce become more active in influencing training and development priorities and spending decisions. Lifelong Learning is more than just the 3 R's and training for work! It also covers social activities, being active in communities or learning for fun either gardening or a new language for example.

The role of the Lifelong Learning Adviser in UNISON is a new one. You can help a little or a lot.

- ❖ Encourage people to take up training, for example, join a Return 2 Learn course.
- ❖ Support colleagues who want to learn but think they're too old, too thick, too anything.
- ❖ Find out what training is available or needed, what skills people would like to develop – from computing to calligraphy, from French to Feng Shui.

A Lifelong Learning Adviser (LLA) can't guarantee time off or money to help you follow your dream but once trained they'll know who to ask and how to ask, with the support of the local UNISON branch committee behind them.

For more information on Lifelong Learning in UNISON contact Alan Cowan, Branch Education Officer or contact us at the branch office through our freepost address: at **UNISON Angus Council Branch, FREEPOST, SCO7380, FORFAR, DD8 1ZR.**

*Alan Cowan, Branch Education Officer*

## Pay Award

(Continued from page 1)

UNISON would not be balloting its members and if the other unions decided to take strike action then UNISON members would not take part in it, as happened in reverse when UNISON members undertook strike action the last time.

If the GMB & T&G are successful in getting more money out of COSLA then this would also be applicable to

You can Telephone or Fax the Office

01307 468950

## Health & Safety Reps

To the right is the current list of Health & Safety Reps. If you have any problems in your workplace then please contact the appropriate rep. As you will notice there are no reps in a number of departments, especially Leisure Services. In that case please contact Louise Trayner, Branch Health & Safety Officer on **01241 802127** or **louise.trayner@thea92.co.uk**.

In a perfect world there would be a safety rep in each workplace. The post is not onerous and full training is given by the Branch with Louise always on hand to guide you. If you wish to become a Health & Safety Rep or want further information then please contact Louise at the above number or email address.

Charlie Lorimer	Chief Executives, Dens Road, Arbroath
Tracy Bedwell	Education, Friockheim Primary School
Alan Tait	Education, Wellbrae Primary School
Darren O'Shea	Finance, St James House, Forfar
Ian Sutherland	Finance, Invertay House, Monifieth
Bill White	IT, The Mart, Forfar
Peter Bell	Property Services, Bruce House, Arbroath
Bob Bruce	Roads, County Buildings, Forfar
George Martin	Social Work, The Gables, Forfar
Steve Milne	Social Work, Arbroath
Gordon Holder	Rossie Secure Accommodation Services
George Patullo	TVJB, Nethergate Centre, Yeaman Shore, Dundee

## Get To Know Your Branch

## The TVJB

You may have seen reference made in Branch Minutes and other Unison literature to TVJB or Tayside Valuation Joint Board, to give the full title.

It may be that members employed within Angus Council are not aware that their Branch contains a significant number of members from several "outside agencies", of which TVJB is just one. This article is produced to help members understand the background behind the incorporation of such bodies within the Angus Council Branch.

Back in the "old days" before the last local government reorganisation the Assessor's Department was part of the Tayside Regional Council but under the Local Government Scotland Act 1994 it was decided that, instead of being hived off to one of the new unitary authorities – like most other departments, the Assessor and his staff would be employed by a Joint Board. The reason for this was that the service that the Assessor and his staff provided (the maintenance of the Valuation Roll

and Council Tax Valuation List) would continue to cover the whole of "Tayside". Accordingly, Councillors from the three constituent authorities (Angus, Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils) sit as members of the "Joint Board" and the Assessor is accountable to the Board for the provision of the Valuation services. The Assessor, as Electoral Registration Officer, is also responsible for the Register of Electors within Angus and Perth & Kinross.

This situation is not unique to Tayside – there are a number of other "Valuation Joint Boards" within Scotland.

As far as Union membership was concerned the staff that were previously Unison members of the Tayside Region Branch had, in 1996, to decide which of the new local branches they should join. These members were located in the Board's three offices (in Dundee, Perth and Forfar) and overwhelmingly they voted to join the Angus Council Branch.

TVJB is no different from other Council Departments in that, from time to time, issues arise which require Unison involvement or advice and Branch Officers endeavour to give the members the same supportive service they would give to those members employed by Angus Council. The membership within TVJB is also directly represented on the Branch Executive and the Branch's Health & Safety committee.

Whilst the members employed by the Board are governed by the same national terms and conditions for local government employees there may be some "local agreements" which are slightly different. This is because, when reorganisation occurred, it was decided that staff would transfer under the existing terms and conditions they "enjoyed" with Tayside Region. Local agreements subsequently entered into by the "Councils" would not apply unless the "Board" approved them. Similarly, any changes to existing local agreements require this approval.

*by George Patullo, TVJB Rep*

You can Email the Office

[office@unison-angus.org.uk](mailto:office@unison-angus.org.uk)

# Snippets

## Wanted: A Branch APF Officer



Petra McFatrige has left Angus Council's employment for the dizzy heights of the Dundee Procurator Fiscal's Office. In doing so, she has regrettably had to step down as the Branch Affiliated Political Fund (APF) Officer. If any member who contributes to the APF wishes to take up the post then please contact Kate Leiper at the Branch Office for further information. The Branch wishes Petra good luck in her new job.

## National Delegates Conference 2004

The Branch Chair and Secretary joined the hundreds more delegates at the national conference in Bournemouth between 21—25 June. The first day was devoted to Local Government with the biggest debate dwelling on the LG Pension Scheme with the motion carried to mount a campaign amongst the members to defend the scheme and to not allow any changes which would be detrimental to members, such as the removal of the 85 year rule, raising the retirement age to 65 and the earliest age to 55 which the LGPS benefits are paid. The remainder of the week was strung out with the usual motions. If any member wishes any details then please contact the Branch Office. The NDC 2005 is to be held in the SECC, Glasgow in late June.

## Nursery Nurses Welfare Raffle: Prize Winners

1st Prize	£100	M F Paton, Kirriemuir
2nd Prize	£50	H Orsi, Arbroath
3rd Prize	£25	D Hovell, Carnoustie
Bottle of Whiskey		D McArthur, Carlogie Primary School
Bottle of Wine		N Wilson, Kinloch Primary School

## Care First

Angus Council have launched a 24 hour counselling, information and advice system for its employees called Care First. The system is totally confidential and can help employees with a range of problems from practical everyday matters to sensitive, traumatic or emotional issues. Information is available on the Council's Intranet system or by contacting Judith Harding in Personnel Services.

## TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

There were a number of responses from the members since the request in the last "Grapevine", but we need more! Email :

[travelandsubs@unison-angus.org.uk](mailto:travelandsubs@unison-angus.org.uk)

Many were commenting on the rate for car allowances as intended, however there was also a great number of complaints about other "allowances", systems & schemes operated by AC.

Included were comments on Lease Car provision being departmental and not corporate, therefore leading to differences throughout the Council.

It was the Branch's intention to have had a meeting with Angus Council by now, however holidays have not made this possible. Hopefully the meeting will be arranged to take place before the publishing of the next issue of The Grapevine.

## WORKPLACE CONTACTS

# YOUR BRANCH



As a member you will understand the great importance of communication. After all you want to be told what is going on before your boss tells you!

For the Branch to communicate properly we need contacts in all workplaces. The workplace contact only has to aid with the distribution of local Branch literature as and when they receive it. There are NO meetings to attend apart from the AGM and you would not be asked to carry out any other UNISON duties unless you wished to become a Workplace Rep or Health & Safety Rep, etc.

If you are willing to help then please complete the slip below and send it to the Branch Office using the FREEPOST address.

### UNISON Angus Council Branch Workplace Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Workplace Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You can visit the branch website

[www.unison-angus.org.uk](http://www.unison-angus.org.uk)

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