

BATTLING FOR BOLTON



Autumn 2026 Issue 32 free

UNISON Calls for Green Reps
Britain swelters, workers suffer...

Bolton Politics on Edge
From Andy Burnham to Breightmet

Life Changing Fairy Dust from UNISON
A new you awaits...

Scandal at Greater Manchester University!
Bolton Vice-Chancellor sacked, three arrests



Why Bolton Cares Needs to Cease...
Bolton Council - bring it back in-house!

UNISON Panto...Trip to Blackpool Lights...Wigan Diggers and more



CONTACT BOLTON UNISON

Bolton UNISON, Second Floor, Bolton CVS,
Bold Street, Bolton BL1 1LS

Phone: 01204 247947
admin@unisonbolton.org
www.unisonbolton.org

Follow Bolton UNISON online...

*To keep right up to date with all the
union news and views follow Bolton
UNISON on the web...*

We need your contact details

Moved House?
Changed phone?
Different Surname?
Changed workplace?
Retiring or leaving your job?

Please let us know!

Bolton UNISON needs to keep your membership
details up to date.

Email changemydetails@unisonbolton.org to notify
us of any changes. If you're not sure whether
you've already told us, then don't worry, we don't
mind if you tell us again!

Website:

www.unisonbolton.org

Facebook:

facebook.com/bolton.unison

Twitter:

@UNISON_Bolton

Instagram:

#boltonunison

Printed by Mixam
team@mixam.co.uk / 01923
594 040

Address: 6 Hercules Way,
Watford, Hertfordshire, WD25
7GS UK

MARY BURNS

UNISON

Contents

The Campaign to Bring Bolton Cares Back In-house
Care company riding roughshod over staff and unions

All Change at Bolton UNISON
Read where the union is headed, plus AGM Report

The Political Merry-Go-Round
Andy Burnham PM, Reform Trowned in GM Mayor Election but gains in Local Election – the UNISON view

The Great Class Divide Is Alive
Has anything actually changed for the working class?

UNISON Calls for Green Reps

Fairy Dust from UNISON

Scandal at Greater Manchester University!

UNISON Joins New Government Negotiating Body for Support Staff

Why Water Needs to Be Re-Nationalised

New Rights for Workers!

Horwich Repair Cafe on the Move

Pay Ballot Result...

Bolton On Holiday Back In The Day!

UNISON Wins Tax-Free Mileage Rate Increase

Fair Visas Now!

The £4million Funding Gap

Bolton Links to the Famous Corinthians Footy Team

UNISON's Snow White Panto, Wigan Diggers Free Fest, Blackpool Lights Trip





UNISON

Intro...

Looking Back, Moving Forward

As we reach our first seven months as your Joint Branch Secretaries, it feels like an appropriate moment to reflect on the journey so far. Taking on these roles has been both a privilege and a challenge. We stepped into positions previously held by exceptional leaders, supported by a branch with a proud reputation for activism, organisation and solidarity. What has become clear throughout these first few months is that the strength of Bolton UNISON has never rested with one individual. It rests with its members, stewards, activists and branch staff who continue to show up, support one another and fight for what is right.

The last seven months have not taken place in easy circumstances. Across local government, our members continue to face the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis. While inflation may have eased from its peak, many workers are still struggling with rising household costs, housing pressures, energy bills and food prices. For too many public service workers, wages have simply not kept pace with the reality of everyday living. This is why our pay campaigns and organising work remain so important. Behind every pay claim is a member trying to provide

for their family and maintain a decent standard of living.

At the same time, local government continues to face significant financial challenges. Councils across the country are grappling with reduced resources, increasing demand for services and difficult decisions about spending priorities. The consequences of these pressures are often felt directly by our members through restructures, staffing shortages, increased workloads and uncertainty about the future. We have already seen examples of this locally and know that further challenges are likely to emerge as employers seek to balance increasingly stretched budgets.

Alongside the economic pressures, we are also witnessing a changing political landscape. The growth of Reform and the increasingly divisive narratives emerging in national and local political debate present new challenges for trade unions and working people. Division has always been the enemy of collective action. Whether those divisions are based on community tensions, migration, race, or attempts to pit workers against one another, the outcome is often the same: working people are

weakened while the issues affecting their lives remain unresolved. Trade unionism succeeds when it brings people together around shared interests, shared values and a shared belief that collective action delivers change.

Yet despite these challenges, there are real reasons for optimism.

One of the most positive developments for our union has been the election of Andrea Egan as General Secretary. Andrea understands local government, understands organisation and campaigning, and understands the importance of ensuring members' voices shape the future direction of our union. Her election represents an opportunity to build a stronger, more visible and more organising-focused UNISON that is prepared to meet the challenges facing public service workers in the years ahead. For many activists, her leadership brings a renewed sense of confidence and purpose at a time when strong union leadership matters more than ever.

Here in Bolton, we have already begun laying foundations for the future. Over the last seven months we have increased workplace engagement, visited members across services, developed plans for steward training, expanded recruitment activity, strengthened communications and continued building an organising culture across the branch. Through workplace meetings, campaigns and direct engagement, we are encouraging members to recognise that they are the union and that real change comes from collective action.

We have also seen what can be achieved when members stand

together. Whether securing improvements, supporting colleagues through difficult workplace situations, challenging unfair treatment or growing membership, the branch has continued to demonstrate the power of organisation. These successes remind us that even in challenging times, collective strength delivers results.

As we look ahead, our ambition is simple. We want to continue growing the branch, developing new activists, supporting existing stewards, empowering members and strengthening our workplaces. We want a Bolton branch that is confident, visible, inclusive and ready to meet whatever challenges come next.

The first seven months have shown us that while the road ahead may not always be easy, we have every reason to be hopeful. We have strong activists, committed members, a proud history and a new generation of leadership both locally and nationally. Most importantly, we have each other.

Together, we will continue to organise, campaign and grow.

In solidarity,

Christine Collins and Jo Pickersgill
Joint Branch Secretaries





Bolton Cares Is Just Riding Rough Over Staff and the Union

Here, ex-employees sum up what it's like dealing with Bolton Cares...

Bolton Cares, established by Bolton Council ten years ago, tries to do what it says on the tin, care about people...Indeed, as it states on its website, Bolton Cares is "passionate about supporting people to thrive". On its tenth anniversary, those people should be jumping for joy in celebration...*In yer dreams...*

The company had a party but staff don't think there's anything to celebrate... "They don't support us; they treat us like a commodity really..." says one worker.

Ex-employees who worked for the company in support centres with some of the most vulnerable people in the



ghshod

town won't be celebrating either. They allege that every employee's worst work nightmares were suffused in the management culture...Where to begin?

"The most joyless, diabolical, unfulfilling experience of my varied 35 year career, the majority of which has been working in social care"... "an oppressive atmosphere"... "blatant cronyism"... "staff being mistreated"... "a bullying culture"...

"You work for a service that is there to support people with mental health, provide therapeutic approaches, better

people's lives, yet the management team are destroying the workers' lives and causing them to have mental health issues themselves" one former employee reflects. After trying to raise concerns, they left and are now financially worse off, having had to take another job with more hours and less wages.

"I found working at one of the centres, quite frankly, horrific" recalls another former support worker "In my opinion, on a daily basis, there are far, far too many service users to too few staff...and most staff feel they are constantly walking on



eggshells, prior to being told what they are doing is wrong.”

Ex-employees site all sorts of specific instances and incidents where professionalism arguably went out of the window...from being asked to “send out begging letters for donations” from their own personal social media accounts, to attitudes about ageism and sexism, to medication ‘near misses’, to trying to deny leave entitlements, to falsifying minutes of meetings, and overly complicated support plans that clients with learning difficulties are expected to read, understand and agree to...

In the last couple of months UNISON has come close to going into dispute with Bolton Cares, alleging that they’re changing policies without consulting the unions, creating new jobs without consulting and, at the moment, everyone over grade 5 is going to have their job description renewed and changed.

The company’s uncaring view of the union is underlined by those who have experienced it...

“Their attitude towards UNISON is disgusting” insists a former employee “Why don’t they want the union involved? If they have nothing to hide and were not treating staff members wrong, why do they care whether UNISON is there or not?”

It seems that everyone has had enough. There’s now a growing campaign to get Bolton Council to bring Bolton Cares back under its control...

“Having worked as a support worker when it was under Bolton Council, and under Bolton Cares, I believe that

it should be brought back in-house” says Julie Tudor, a support worker and UNISON Convenor at Bolton Cares.

UNISON currently has a team working to prove that business-wise it would be better to bring the company in-house, with the Council able to make savings as it already has its own administration, maintenance, cleaners and HR department.

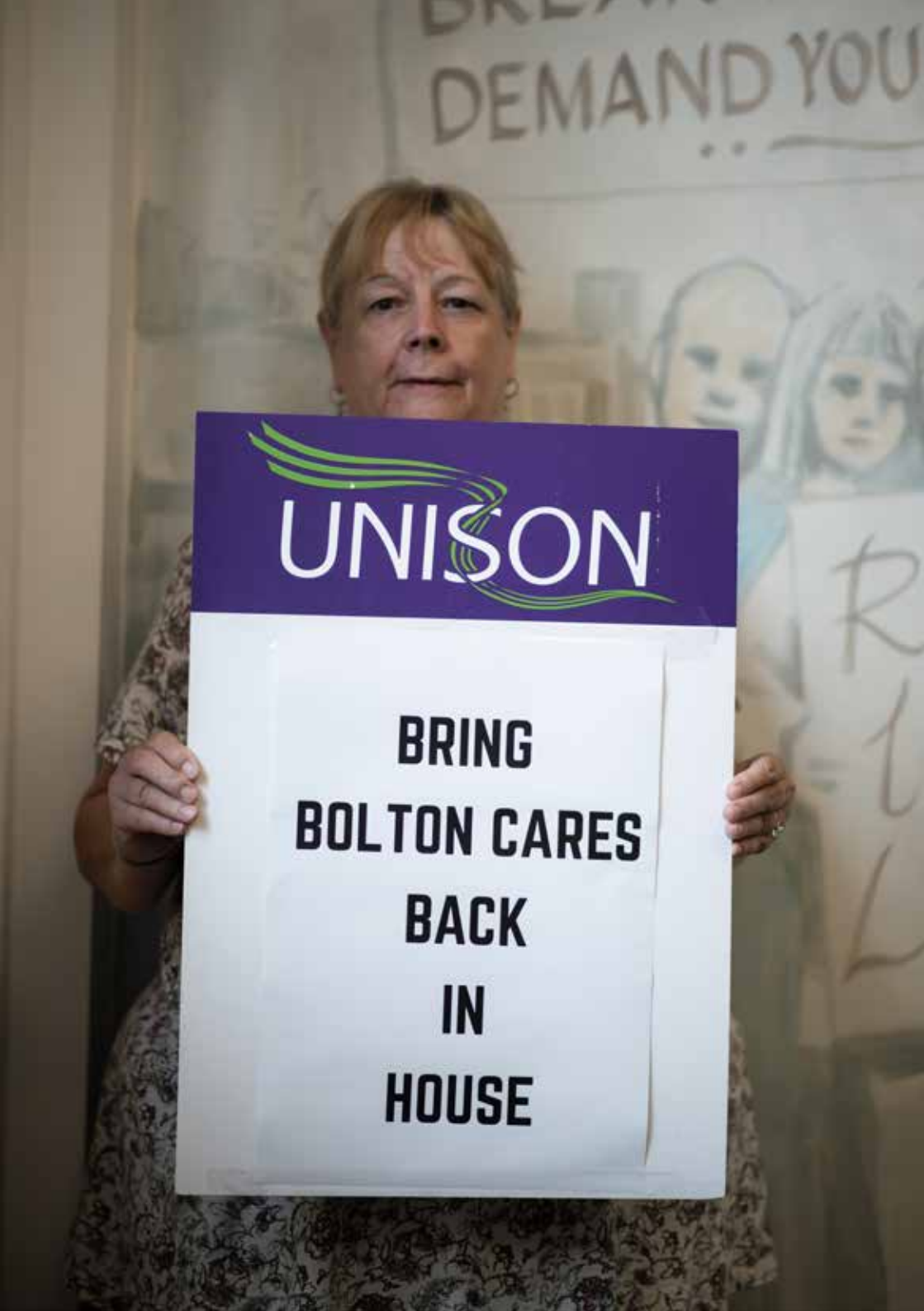
Bolton Care’s own HR department itself attracts lots of criticism, the main one being that it is too close to management to objectively judge staff and their grievances.

“We have suggested that even if it’s just Bolton Care’s HR department that is brought back into Bolton Council it could be a massive improvement because we didn’t have all these issues about the treatment of staff when it was the Bolton Council HR department” says an ex-staff member.

So why would Bolton Council let its own established company behave this way towards its staff, and, ultimately its clients? Apparently, Bolton Cares, of which the Council owns 100% of shares, has made £36million profit. The business case can show that there could be even more surplus if it was brought in-house. Yet there are also very moral reasons to bring Bolton Cares back under Council control for both staff and client wellbeing.

The ten year anniversary is not being celebrated by those we spoke to, but they might be popping the corks if Bolton Cares ceases to exist and becomes a proper Bolton Council service showing respect to staff, clients and UNISON...

DEMAND YOU



A woman with short blonde hair is holding a large protest sign. The sign has a purple top section with the UNISON logo, which consists of the word 'UNISON' in white capital letters and a green stylized wave graphic. Below the purple section is a white section with the text 'BRING BOLTON CARES BACK IN HOUSE' in bold black capital letters. The woman is wearing a patterned dress. In the background, there is a mural with the words 'DEMAND YOU' at the top and a drawing of two people's faces below it. To the right, another sign with the letters 'R', 'L', and 'L' is partially visible.

UNISON

**BRING
BOLTON CARES
BACK
IN
HOUSE**

UNISON Slams Bolton Cares and to be Brought Back Under Council Control

Here, Joint Branch Secretary, Christine Collins, accuses the company management of hostility towards the union and a culture of intimidation affecting both staff and clients...

The Branch remains deeply concerned by the significant number of serious issues raised by members across Bolton Cares relating to grievance procedures, management conduct, safeguarding practice, staff wellbeing, and operational governance.

Reports from staff indicate a lack of confidence in internal processes, with concerns that evidence provided during investigations has not been fully considered and that grievance and appeal outcomes have lacked transparency, fairness and accountability.

In addition to the specific concerns raised by staff, the Branch wishes to place on record its ongoing concerns regarding management's continued hostility towards engaging constructively with recognised trade unions. Despite the existence of a recognition agreement, there has been a persistent failure to engage meaningfully with union representatives, consult appropriately on workforce concerns, and work in partnership to resolve issues affecting staff and services.

This has undermined established industrial relations arrangements and damaged confidence in management's commitment to positive employee relations.

The Branch is equally concerned by the apparent disregard shown by the senior stakeholders when concerns have been repeatedly escalated over the years. Throughout this period, trade union representatives have consistently highlighted systemic issues relating to governance, management culture, safeguarding, staff retention, wellbeing, and service delivery. Despite numerous opportunities to intervene, many of these concerns have remained unaddressed and, in some cases, have intensified.

The allegations raised by staff regarding safeguarding practices, consent, medication management, risk assessments, record keeping, audit processes, and the treatment of employees who raise concerns are extremely serious.

Members have reported feeling unable to speak up without fear of repercussions, while others describe a culture of intimidation, stress and a lack of support when concerns are raised in good faith.

The Branch believes that the issues now being reported provide further evidence in support of the concerns that were raised when opposition was expressed to the decision to remove the service from direct Council control.

and Calls for it Council Control

At the time, the Branch outlined risks associated with governance, accountability, workforce engagement, oversight, and the potential impact on the quality of services delivered to vulnerable people.

The position taken by the Branch was based on a belief that reduced accountability and weakened oversight would create conditions where concerns could be overlooked and where staff voices would become increasingly marginalised.

The evidence now available, including the concerns raised collectively by staff across multiple locations, demonstrates that many of those warnings were not without foundation.

Reports of poor management practices, inadequate oversight, communication failures, safeguarding concerns and a lack of confidence in governance arrangements suggest that the organisation is not delivering against the standards and assurances that were presented when the service model was introduced.

Most importantly, it is both staff and the people they support who are experiencing the consequences. Employees report deteriorating morale, increased stress, fear of victimisation



and a lack of trust in management processes.

Given the seriousness, consistency and longevity of these concerns, the Branch continues to call for Bolton Cares to be brought back in-house. This will help to restore confidence and help ensure transparency, accountability and a genuine commitment to addressing the systemic issues that have been repeatedly brought to the attention of management and the Council over an extended period.

Horwich Repair Café Moves to Horwich Community Centre



Repairs without the schmaltz as trend grows for fixing stuff...

Ask Bolton Council social worker and UNISON steward, Anne Lee, if she watches The Repair Shop on telly and she almost winces...

"I watched it at first but then it got more and more schmaltzy, too sentimental for me" she decides "You're just fixing stuff..."

Without any drama, Anne is one of the twenty or so volunteers who provide their skills to 'fix stuff' that people bring into the Horwich Repair Café, which is moving to new exciting premises at Horwich Community Centre (formerly Horwich Resource Centre) from 19th September.

"People think we're like The Repair Shop but we're not because they are professionals and we're volunteers" she explains "Obviously we're all skilled at what we do but we have two hours once a

month so we can't do French polishing or renovations. We do clothes, bikes, hedge trimmers, vacuum cleaners, clocks...you name it, umbrellas...all sorts...

"Most simple repairs are done on the day, and sometimes we can't fix things but we'll know where to find professionals" she says "For instance, a lot of people ask about broken screens on computers, phones or tablets but that's beyond the Repair Café because we could make things worse. There's three phone repair shops in Horwich that we know of, so we point people in the right direction."

While 'community customers' usually bring in broken toasters or school uniforms that need patching up, one of the strangest 'fixes' was a robot dog; a dementia-friendly robot dog that was the size of a Labrador Retriever and reacted 'lovingly', via sensors

under its fur, to petting and stroking.

"One of our volunteers, Wilf, managed to get it working again and the lady who brought it in said that it had really made a difference to her husband's life" Anne reflects "When we switched it on in the Café everyone was going 'Aaaaahhhh' as if it was a real dog...It's made their lives easier but most of things we do are run of the mill household objects. It saves people money, saves people buying new and saves these things going in the bin."

The Café, which opens its doors in the afternoon of the third Saturday of every month, tries to limit people to one item per session so everyone gets a fair chance to be seen, and it's 'pay as you feel' for donations*, which cover running costs like liability insurance and... "*We should have shares in super glue*" Anne laughs.

The average numbers attending the Café on any given week is around thirty people of all ages and backgrounds who just turn up without needing to pre-book, and there is a sixty to seventy per cent repair success rate, which is incredible.

While the Horwich Repair Café is well established and has recently celebrated its fourth birthday, Anne is encouraging people in other areas of Bolton to start their own Repair Cafés and join around four thousand others around the world.

There is another Repair Café in Bolton which opens in the morning on the third Wednesday of the month at the Hope Centre, while another is hopefully opening at the Harwood Methodist Church...

"They're just popping up, there's now twelve in Greater Manchester, there's a lot happening" Anne confirms "People in other parts of Bolton can come in and we can show them how it works and give advice. They can also sign up to Repair Café

International and they send you everything you need to start up."

Meanwhile, the Horwich Repair Café carries on providing an affordable, angst-free service for the community, without the need for tv tears and histrionics... "Some people think that's what they're expected to do and will start telling you the story behind the item" she says "That's fine...but there's no expectation..."

Horwich Repair Café runs from 12-2pm on the third Saturday of every month at Horwich Community Centre, Beaumont Rd, Horwich, Bolton BL6 7BG

To donate to the Horwich Repair Café see <https://buymeacoffee.com/horwichrepub>

For further details see Horwich Repair Café Facebook site www.facebook.com/horwichrepaircafe

For more information on starting a Repair Café see <https://www.repaircafe.org/en/>

The Bolton Repair Café runs on the third Wednesday of every month at the Hope Centre, St. Andrews Church, Tattersall Ave, Bolton BL1 5TE, UK



Social Class Should Be Diverse

Issue States New Report



A new report underlines how working class people are getting excluded more and more from the creative sector in what it calls a ‘class crisis’...

When an anonymous Bolton head teacher talks about ‘class’, he means it with all interpretations of the word blazing. In *Class Ceiling*, a new report backed by Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Head argues that “We are now at the point where too many kids hate school and they are just not enjoying learning. It’s the reason why there is so much truancy in school, exclusions, suspensions and bad behaviour. It’s the worst I can remember...”

The reason for this, he explains, is the lack of access to creative opportunities in the state education system for working class kids...“The arts have been systematically devalued for a long time...” he says “As long as we’re constantly driving kids to do triple science and ignoring the creative subjects, we are letting pupils down. There

are lots of kids who really value creative subjects and the fact that schools are in a curriculum strait jacket means some people just aren’t able to get the best out of their education.”

He contrasts this with a former private school where he worked, that had loads of creative activities, plus workshops with industry specialists and work experience placements on the likes of *Les Misérables*... “When you look at what these schools offer, you can see why the people who go there dominate the arts” he concludes “They have a massive head start...”

And, like, wow! The *Class Ceiling* report - a ‘*Review of Working Class Participation in the Arts Across Greater Manchester*’ – highlights that “Top selling musicians are six times more likely than the public to have

attended private schools, BAFTA nominated actors are five times more likely to have done so, and only eight percent of TV and radio workers are from working class backgrounds..."

Does it matter? Well, yes. As the report states, Greater Manchester's economic upsurge in recent years has been largely down to the perception that it's a happening place, built on the appeal of its post-industrial working class culture. Think Oasis, Maxine Peake, Sophie Willan, New Order, Happy Mondays, Caroline Aherne, Peter Kay, John Cooper Clarke et al.

Twenty years ago, Manchester was named the most creative place in the UK, top of hip theorist Richard Florida's so-called Boho Index of cultural attractions for young, well qualified intelligent people. This, the report adds, was the "driving force for economic development".

The fallout from this, however, has seen indigenous talent squeezed out as young people can't afford to be creative... "Across the region, many arts venues, mills and rehearsal spaces have been converted to flats and housing" the report reflects "This is creating a lack of affordable space for artists, driven by rising demand, property development and changing land use, which is pricing creatives out."

Hundreds of creative people in the area responded to calls for their opinions, and the report's authors heard "multiple stories of poor pay, exploitation and an absence of affordable studio and rehearsal space forcing artists to give up. It all pointed to a collapsing ecosystem that was no longer able to properly nurture working class talent and was instead pushing it further to the margins..."

Add to this that employers, grant givers and commissioners in the sector tend not to be working class, the report concludes that

"entrenched inequality and exclusion look set to shape the country's cultural output". As part remedy, it recommends that "class is put at the centre of inclusion" for "cultural democracy" to work.

The report cites its survey in which over half of respondents said they had experienced differential treatment, bullying, harassment or bias based on social class, or perceived social class... "Many spoke of being mocked for having a distinct northern accent with employers making assumptions about their experiences, background and intelligence..."

The report recommends that "Greater Manchester Combined Authority should look to unilaterally recognise people from working class backgrounds as having protected characteristics. When arts and cultural institutions are required by law to conduct equality impact assessments, they should ask additional questions to measure how policies, services or decisions impact on working class communities in the region."

Amongst its other recommendations are the creation of affordable spaces for artists, community owned music venues, providing more opportunities for young working class people to access high quality cultural experiences and careers in the arts, creative apprenticeships, a guarantee that every child will have "an outstanding creative and cultural experience before they leave school", and an end for unpaid work (*'it will be good for your CV'*) with a living wage for early roles in the arts.

It's all about tackling 'class discrimination' as a central plank of diversity policy. As the report concludes, "Affordability should not decide who belongs..."

To read the full report see www.riseassociates.co.uk/news/rise-launches-class-ceiling-inquiry-to-widen-participation-in-the-arts/

Bolton Links To The Incredible Story Of The Corinthians

The women's footy team, banned in England, who conquered the world...

Martin Challender reviews and raves about the must-see feature length documentary with archive footage and interviews with the team's surviving members...

I was absolutely blown away watching this truly amazing film at Bolton's Light Cinema in April. ***Manchester Corinthians: We were the champions***, tells the incredible and at times moving story of a group of working-class women and girls brought together at Fog Lane Park, Didsbury, Manchester. The team were founded in 1949 by Boltonian, Percy Ashley, a Bolton Wanderers scout and football referee, when he found there was no women's football team for his daughter, Doris, an enthusiastic and talented player.

Despite humble beginnings and a lack of facilities at home, the Corinthians, and their sister team, the Nomads, went on to conquer the world. They played in front of enormous crowds at some of the biggest stadiums in Europe and the Caribbean, as well as in Central and South America. They became internationally recognised, playing in all manner of tournaments and exhibition games, often raising money for charity.

The Corinthians won numerous trophies and, at their peak, played around 140 games without defeat. This was no thanks to the football establishment. The English FA refused to support women's football on the basis that it was, 'not a suitable game for women'. For decades, women's football, here in England, was effectively banned as they were denied any access to FA facilities, officials, and assistance of any kind.

Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, has rightly, in my view, described the Manchester Corinthians as "the suffragettes of football". Thankfully, this film by Bafta winning director, Helen Tither, goes some way to help these pioneering football women get the recognition they so rightly deserve.

This film is powerful stuff, honestly. I can't recommend it enough.

The Corinthians is currently available to watch on the BBC iPlayer www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m002wnjw/the-corinthians-we-were-the-champions

For more details on the film and screenings see the website <https://filmsnotwords.co.uk/>

A FILMS NOT WORDS PRODUCTION

THE CORINTHIANS

WE WERE THE CHAMPIONS



**HOW A BANNED WOMEN'S FOOTBALL
TEAM CONQUERED THE WORLD**



UNISON Campaigns for Green Reps as Britain Swelters



As part of its Year of Green Activity, UNISON is leading a campaign aimed at gaining recognition and facility time for green reps

As Britain sweltered in recurring heatwaves, which are set to get regular and worse in the future, UNISON is campaigning for greener and fairer workplaces and wants greater recognition and empowerment for its green reps. Like Health and Safety reps and Equality reps, the union wants the recognition to be statutory along with guaranteed facility time.

“Meeting the challenges of the climate emergency requires all hands on deck” says UNISON policy officer Michelle Singleton “As with health and safety, learning reps and equality reps, green reps are pivotal in ensuring that workplace transitions to net zero are fair, inclusive and effective. Spanning advocacy, oversight, education and collaboration, they are essential agents for a just and successful climate transition.”

Despite the urgency of the climate crisis, the TUC states that “the majority of organisations still lack even basic climate adaptation and decarbonisation plans. Even among those with emissions targets or publicly stated goals, credible pathways to achieve them are very often lacking.

“We make the case that achieving a net zero economy for the UK, and ensuring that this process is completed fairly and consensually, can be greatly supported by legally recognising and empowering green reps.”

UNISON insists that “a fair transition to net zero needs workers to have a voice.” And over the summer the union lobbied Parliament with these aims.



Building UNISON

Could you recruit a friend?

UNISON is the UK's largest trade union with 1.4million members. Our union represents workers providing public services regardless of whether they are employed in the public sector, the private sector, or the voluntary sector.

If you have colleagues, family members, neighbours, or friends working in public services, are they UNISON members?

UNISON members are care workers, social workers, refuse collectors, market porters, administrators, school support staff, library workers and more. UNISON campaigns for better working conditions – wage increases, a safer environment, protection against cuts and exploitation, while helping with legal services, cost of living expenses and even holidays.

The more people join UNISON, the stronger and more effective UNISON can be.

Joining UNISON is easy, why not encourage a friend to join by phone or online:

Freephone: 0800 171 2193

Website: <https://join.unison.org.uk>

QR Code:



UNISON membership forms and further details are readily available from the Bolton UNISON Branch office, UNISON noticeboards, or any UNISON steward.

Reform Trounced as Bev Craig Wins GM Mayor Election for Labour

Bolton Backs Labour's Bev Craig to Replace Andy Burnham as GM Mayor

With Andy Burnham vacating his Greater Manchester Mayor role to become an MP and then Prime Minister over the summer, the Labour Party's Bev Craig was backed by voters in Bolton and all areas of Greater Manchester to replace him.

In Bolton, with a 23% turnout, Bev Craig got 19,718 votes, ahead of Reform UK's Sian Astley who polled 12,524 in the first preference vote. In the second preference votes, Bev Craig received a further 4,170 votes compared to 4,998 for Astley.

In the whole of Greater Manchester, Bev Craig polled over double the votes of Reform in the first preference votes, plus an additional 58,076 from the second preference votes, compared to Reform's 45,250 votes.

The final count saw the Labour Party trounce Reform UK, getting almost double its vote, with 309,525 compared to Reform's 157,178

"I will defend this city region with every bone in my body and I will fight for a better life for all of us" she said after being elected "I'm honoured, I'm

humbled and I stand ready to serve the three million people that live across this fantastic city region. I will serve every single one of them, every single day."

Full result in Bolton after first preference votes:

Bev Craig, Labour Party 19,718
Sian Astley, Reform UK 12,524
Geraldine Coggins, Green Party 5,095
Phil Eckersley, Conservative Party 5,041
Scott West, Restore Britain 4,820
Martin Kilpatrick, Liberal Democrats 1,016
Marcus Farmer, Independent 484

GM Mayor Election % Vote Share in the whole of Greater Manchester

Labour and Co-op Party 47.1%
Reform UK 21%
Green Party 12.2%
Restore Britain 8.7%
Conservative Party 7.7%
Lib Dem 2.8%
Independent 0.6%

How Much Can PM Andy Burnham Achieve?

Here UNISON General Secretary, Andrea Egan, and UNISON Media Officer, Martin Challenger express their hopes...

Andy Burnham has earned the legitimacy to lead and offers the first chance for tangible change in a long time. His diagnosis of the UK's problems is right, from privatisation to the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. But we need policies to match. For the Government to deliver real change it must be prepared to tax the super-rich, invest properly in public services and take key utilities into full public ownership.

It has to challenge the private companies benefiting from the status quo, or it won't be able to turn round social care and other parts of the public sector. The same applies to outsourced services that must be systematically brought in-house as Labour promised. Neither will ministers have the money to invest in our communities if they give in to pressure to increase spending on the military.

That's why Andy Burnham must resist the temptation of caution and compromise. He's already shown he's prepared to take decisive action with his pledge to end the scourge of rough-sleeping. He has to embrace more of the actions needed to deliver a historic new economic settlement.

As he's pointed out, the public are impatient and this may be Labour's last chance...
Andrea Egan

Keir Starmer's start as Prime Minister in June 2024 and Andy Burnham's start as Prime Minister in July this summer could not have been more different in manner in and tone.

Starmer began by telling people how difficult things would be, with talk of a "£22 billion black hole" in the UK economy, soon

followed by cutting winter fuel payments to pensioners. Burnham began by telling people that "help is coming", removing VAT from energy bills and extending the £2 cap on bus fares.

Admittedly I have been a big fan of Andy Burnham for some time, not simply because I think he did a good job as Greater Manchester Mayor, but because of his personal support for various struggles including the Hillsborough families' fight for justice and the 1972 building workers, Shrewsbury 24 campaign. Having met Andy Burnham, I can vouch for the fact that he comes across as personable and genuine, someone that people can relate to. I was delighted to see Andy Burnham claim the keys to 10 Downing Street, but I know that he's only human and doesn't have a magic wand.

As a council worker and a Labour supporter, I want a Labour Government with a positive agenda to offer a level of hope and security. We need public services to work in the interests of local communities, rather than privately run services operating in the interests of company directors and shareholders. We need a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality - that means some of the super rich paying a bit more in tax. Over the months and years ahead we will see how much a Labour Government under Andy Burnham can achieve.

Martin Challenger



Andy Burnham Can Help Me Become a Bolton Councillor Again!



After losing the 2026 local election to Reform, Kate Taylor sees hope for Labour...

Kate Taylor, who works in the governance team for Be One Homes, has been in and out of Bolton Council over the last few years, and got soundly beaten by Reform in the Brightmet ward at the May local election. However, having heard comments on the doorsteps during her campaigning, she now believes that Andy Burnham can help the Labour Party to restore its fortunes in the town.

"I think I've got a better chance of getting in now that Andy Burnham is the Leader" she says "We went to the same high school and he came out campaigning for me when I stood in Astley Bridge a few years ago. He's our hope, a really good guy. That could turn the tide and perception of how people feel about things. I think generally people just want to feel individually that their lives are going to get better."

Kate first got unexpectedly elected as a councillor for Astley Bridge in 2023, getting drafted in at the last minute as a 'paper female candidate'. Her term lasted just one year as, after boundary changes, all seats on the Council had to be re-contested. She lost by one vote to the Conservatives..."It was a weird time" she recalls, but nothing prepared her for this year's local elections...

"This time I stood under a Labour Government and there was quite a lot of discontent: I'd not had that before. A few people got some grief on the doorsteps

but I didn't" she reflects "People were talking about the cost of living; they didn't feel like things were changing for them as individuals, and I think a lot of people were listening to what is put out on social media and even the mainstream media really. It was very anti-Starmer

"They weren't saying they were unhappy with the local picture but they were unhappy with national picture and with Keir Starmer, which is really hard in a local election because we're saying '*That's a national picture, understand what the local council can do for you, not the government*'."

And, as everyone who observes politics national and locally knows, putting yourself forward as a candidate is now asking for a barrage of abuse...

"As a candidate you are putting yourself in the firing line, and over the last three or four years it's quite a brave thing to do on some levels" she explains, adding that this election was different from many before it, with much higher turnouts all over the town and crazy voting patterns.

"In local elections you don't see a high turnout of voters, it's usually about 30% and we were like, '*Where have these votes come from?*' We thought Reform would split the Tory vote but it didn't even do that, it transcended it" Kate says "Where they won, the Reform candidates were winning

Bolton Council Local Election Results 2026

by huge margins whereas in previous elections it was all very small margins. Reform has a different kind of voter, I think people who have never voted before or just thought they would bother. It surprised us.

"Meanwhile, the Greens took votes, and we lost more seats to the Greens than Reform this time, mainly because of Gaza really" she adds "That's the frustration sometimes. I fully believe that when I lost my seat in 2024 quite a few votes went to the Greens on the issue of Gaza, and split my vote, that's why I lost to the Conservatives. This is the challenge that if you vote for Green or LibDem or an Independent you are splitting the vote and essentially letting Reform or the Conservatives in the back door. We thought Reform would split the right vote but it didn't and that's what surprised everyone.

"It is strange, I think it is a protest vote" she says "You need to understand what you are voting for and I don't think people do. That's the difficulty. It's understanding what your local councillor can do for you, rather than what the government does for you. Whilst I can fully understand the frustrations at a national level, and I don't disagree with some of it, but if you're voting in the locals on national issues you're not going to get what you want."

Based on her experience, Kate draws a parallel to the Brexit referendum... "People didn't know what they were voting for. I think a lot of people who voted for Reform thought that

they would be running the council but it doesn't work like that. People ask me, 'If Reform won all these seats why aren't they running the council?'. Yet only a third of the total seats were contested. It will be interesting to see how things play out in the council."

Instead, Kate is urging people to understand local politics and its dynamics, even to go to council meetings or watch them on the Bolton Council website... "But sometimes, it's easier to believe things that are right there in front of you. What Reform are really good at is the soundbites and the videos, and getting everyone riled up on social media and stuff. If people went away and thought about it, they might think a little differently."

And she certainly thinks that things might look a little different with Andy Burnham at the helm.

"Would I stand again? Yes, probably next year" she decides "I feel a bit more galvanised..."

Local Election 2026 Brightmet Ward results...

Mike Tucker (Reform UK) 1,890
Adele Warren (Conservative Party) 974
Kate Taylor (Labour & Co-Operative Party) 605
Gillian Fernley (Green Party) 413
Derek Gradwell (Liberal Democrats) 80
Wendy Hopkinson (Independent) 33

The ruling Labour Party, as well as the Conservatives, LibDems and Farnworth and Kearsley First all lost seats to Reform and the Greens, in part due to increased voter turnout.

May 2026 Results
With one third of the sixty council seats up for election, Reform won 9 wards, Conservative 3 wards, Greens 3 wards, Labour 2 wards, Horwich and Blackrod Independents 2 wards, LibDem 1 ward.

Overall Political Picture of Bolton Council – No Overall Control
Labour – 14
Conservative – 10
Reform – 10
Labour and Cooperative – 6
LibDem – 5
Green Party – 4
Horwich and Blackrod First Independent – 4
Farnworth and Kearsley First – 3
Communities First – 2
Independent – 1
Vacancy – 1



FAIR VISAS NOW

UNISON Calls for MPs to Stand with Migrant Care Workers

Thousands of UNISON members are supporting the campaign for a fair visa system...

The social care workforce is reliant on hundreds of thousands of employees from overseas, but proposed visa changes will slow down recruitment and force many to think about leaving. UNISON is calling for the plans to be scrapped so millions of vulnerable people who rely on care won't be left without vital help and staff are valued properly.

Under the Government's original proposals, migrant workers will need to have worked in the UK for 15 years to qualify for a more permanent right to settle (known as 'indefinite leave to remain'). At present the period is five years, and many workers took jobs on that basis. Moving the goalposts is morally wrong, but will also deepen the staffing crisis in social care and leave workers more vulnerable to exploitation.

International staff make up almost 30% of the care workforce but recruitment of migrant staff is down more than 80% according to latest figures.

The Government's wider plans to improve pay and standards in social care risk being undermined if migrant workers are forced

into prolonged insecurity. In addition to dropping the 15-year qualifying period, UNISON is urging the Government to introduce measures to enable workers to move between employers more easily to reduce exploitation through a sector-wide visa, and speed up the new fair pay agreement to improve wages.

"Social care is already under immense strain, with tens of thousands of vacancies" says UNISON General Secretary, Andrea Egan "The sector's been reliant on overseas staff willing to do this essential work, but the Home Secretary is closing the door on them.

"If the Government's serious about fixing social care, it must match its ambitions on pay and standards with fair treatment for the workforce" she adds "But the best way to start is by scrapping these cruel, unnecessary proposals."

Members are being urged to lobby their MP to join with 180 MPs who have publicly committed to push the Government to abandon its regressive immigration plans...



SAVE OUR SERVICES

Campaign against local cuts

Bolton Has Funding Gap of Over £4million

UNISON is calling on the Government to Save Our Services...

UNISON is calling on political leaders to end the cuts and 'Save Our Services', as more and more public services that people rely on are crumbling away...

"Local services need proper funding to ensure their resilience" the union states "Right now, even our most basic services are facing cuts as a result of chronic underfunding. Staff working in local councils are finding their budgets slashed to the bone; after 14 years of constant cuts, there's not much left. We face the very real risk of the number of councils declaring effective bankruptcy growing rapidly. We desperately need to save our services."

Bolton, UNISON estimates, faces a funding gap of £4.142million, while nationally councils face funding gaps of £4.25bn for 2025/26, and a cumulative funding gap of £8.45bn by 2026/27.

The union is calling on the Government to provide emergency funding and urging members to email their MP to get them to pledge their support.

For their contact details see www.theyworkforyou.com/mps

For more details on the [#saveourservices](https://councilcuts.unison.org.uk/) campaign see here <https://councilcuts.unison.org.uk/>



Bolton UNISON Joins Thousands on Anti-Far Right March

Bolton UNISON members joined over 100,000 people demonstrating against the far right in London last March. Organised by the Together Alliance, messages on placards included 'Fight ignorance not immigrants' and 'Reject racist lies'...





UNISON

Is A New You Possible?

UNISON doesn't just campaign and support members, it also has some life-enhancing fairy dust

As it's getting nearer to panto season, imagine a fairy godperson landing on your bed and granting you a few wishes...What would you like to do?...Get promotion? Get a new job? Go to university? Get more money? To find some personal fulfilment?

Shazzzaaaam!!! Your wish is granted, with a little help from yourself, as the sparks from fairy's wand transports you to an enchanted webpage where everything and anything is possible. Unbelievably, it's called Learning UNISON and all paths to a new you are mostly free.

UNISON College, as it's also known, isn't a physical college. It's mostly online and is like Hogwarts for trade union members only, with infinite doors leading to all sorts of

courses, from Dog Hydrotherapy to British Sign Language, Mindfulness, How To Take Photos On Your Mobile Phone, to How To Sell Online...

You what? How to sell stuff online? "If you want to put things on Facebook Marketplace or Vinted or those kind of things, what's the best way of doing it?" asks Diana Warren, UNISON's Regional Learning and Development Organiser, with responsibility for Member Learning "It's important because people are looking for ways to earn extra money and it's a very popular course.

"We do put things on that help people with their careers and jobs but it's wider than that, to help with personal confidence and development" she adds "This could be numeracy skills to help with

children's homework, and we've also got a course in helping to understand payslips which we can put on."

At North West Region level, there is a set programme of courses which includes everything from Interview Skills to British Sign Language to the very popular Menopause Awareness. But UNISON Learning can put anything on, that's being suggested by branches with a demand from members. If it can't be delivered by the in-house team there are many other routes to learning like the Skills Academy. And it's all free for members.

"I would like to work with branches and ask them *'What courses do you want me to put on, what do your members want?'*" Diana reflects "I run the equality courses for branches and menopause courses, but I want UNISON learning reps coming to me saying *'We need this course, at this time when our members can access it'*. I need more information from members through the branch."

Bolton UNISON has Janet Bryan as the Education and Lifelong Learning Officer, and while the word *'education'* can bring back some horrid memories of school, Diana is at pains to point out that this learning is nothing like the torture of teachers...

"Our learning is very accessible, it's different...trade union learning is nothing like school learning, it's student centred and it's about people's experiences and how that experience can be applied to

other situations" she insists "People have had bad experiences with education and that might put them off but there's no expectations, it's 'Come and have fun, come and find out stuff that's really useful'. It's a role of the unions that's always been there; support and education. It's really important.

"I think less and less there are opportunities to access learning for people because of funding cuts, not only in jobs but in the wider community" she concludes "A lot of information I hear about employers is that learning and training within the job is either not there, of poor quality or people can't access it unless its mandatory. Within work and the community there is a need for more learning..."

And learning can be a magic carpet to a totally new doorstep...

To see the North West courses click here <https://northwest.unison.org.uk/learning/member/nw/>

To see national paths and courses click here <https://learning.unison.org.uk/member-learning>

To contact Janet Bryan, Branch Education and Lifelong Learning Officer janet.bryan@unisonbolton.org





UNISON College

**High quality learning
and training
opportunities for
UNISON members**

Financial support for
UNISON members
through bursaries and
grants - find out more at
[learning.unison.org.uk/
financial-support](http://learning.unison.org.uk/financial-support)

**Continuing professional
development workshops
for members**

Free and discounted
access to accredited self-
guided online learning on a
wide range of professional
skills

**Request your free
careers advice session**



**Find out more about
UNISON member
learning**

Horwich

REPAIR CAFE



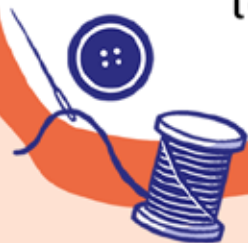
When and Where?

Horwich Community Centre,
Beaumont Rd, BL6 7BG

3rd Saturday of the month,
12pm - 2pm

Bring along your:

Clothes, bicycles, small electricals,
toys, jewellery, electronics
and more!



horwichrepaircafe@gmail.com

The union for *all* school support staff



New Negotiating Body for Support Staff...

UNISON the union for all school support staff

With over 250,000 school support staff members, UNISON is by far the largest union negotiating pay and terms and conditions for support staff in schools. Teaching unions like the NEU cannot negotiate national pay for support staff.

Support staff are the backbone of our schools. Unfortunately underfunding, staff shortages, and increased pressures make work harder than it should be. Through joining UNISON, getting involved and standing with colleagues, school support staff can make a difference, helping to build a future where support staff are valued, respected and properly rewarded.

UNISON has been at the forefront of working to secure important new legislation for school support staff in England. The union has worked with the Labour Government to create a new negotiating body which will determine

the pay, terms, and conditions for school support staff. This body will also take a new approach to staff training and development.

The Government has now committed to establishing the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB). This will cover all state funded schools in England including academies and schools within multi-academy trusts. This means that all schools support staff will benefit from the same pay and conditions, and that academies will no longer be able to opt out of nationally negotiated rates of pay.

There are only three recognised trade unions for school support staff: UNISON, GMB and Unite. These will be the only three unions that will sit on the new negotiating body. Please note that the NEU are not part of this process and are not able to negotiate pay for school support staff.

UNISON Responds To Greater Manchester University Arrests

Three arrested on suspicion of money laundering by GMP

Following revelations in Battling For Bolton and other media about dodgy goings on at the University of Greater Manchester (formerly Bolton Uni), Greater Manchester Police has arrested three people in connection with financial irregularities and alleged money laundering.

Greater Manchester Police has confirmed that the arrests are in response to what they describe as a “complex investigation” at the University, which for several months has been looking at potential fraud totalling more than £1million.

“For some time now, there have been allegations of financial mismanagement at Bolton’s Greater Manchester University” says Christine Collins, Joint Branch Secretary of Bolton UNISON “For thousands of students and hundreds of staff this has been a worrying time. Clearly this is a complex situation and it’s vital that concerns about misuse of public funds are fully addressed. Our local university needs to be able to move forward from this and hopefully get back on track. Our local university should be asset to the town, not an embarrassment.”

University of Greater Manchester

Many constituents will know that the ongoing concerns at the University of Greater Manchester (Bolton Uni) have been reported on more than a year ago.

Today, Greater Manchester Police has issued a statement that a man in his 40s and a woman in her 50s have been arrested on suspicion of fraud and a man in his 30s has been arrested on suspicion of bribery. This follows the execution of a search warrant at the University of Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Humberside and West Yorkshire.

These are serious developments. Bolton needs to be working in the town’s best interests, which concerns the welfare of students and of staff. I’ll continue to liaise with the Department for Education as the investigation continues.

I am grateful for the work Greater Manchester Police are doing and am not commenting further.

May I remind anyone with relevant information to contact the police.

Phil Brindley
Bolton UNISON

ter rests

y of Greater
ter (Bolton)



g investigation into alleged financial impropriety
(on) has been of significant interest to me ever
financial irregularities were first publicly

a statement confirming two men in their 60s
on suspicion of money laundering. The two men
d and one of the men is additionally being held
ution of five warrants across Bolton,

is a strong university with good governance
an command the confidence of my constituents,
with the university, the Office for Students and
ation continues.

er Police is undertaking and will not be

on to contact Greater Manchester Police directly.

ickell MP
on West

Uni Protests:

From 28th August, the joint unions of UNISON and UCU will be holding protests every Thursday, 12-2pm outside the University premises near the Senate House, including on 1st September when the TIRIAE Conference takes place. The protests will continue until "the Board of Governors and other senior staff step down" Everyone welcome to attend.

Vice Chancellor Sacked as Uni Unions Vote No Confidence in Governors

***Damning verdict on
leaders at Greater
Manchester University...***

Amidst all the controversy surrounding alleged dodgy dealings at the University of Greater Manchester, its Vice Chancellor, George Holmes, currently at the centre of the storm, has been sacked.

In an email to staff, Andrew Roberts, Chair of the University's Governing Body, wrote "Dr George Holmes' contract as Vice Chancellor has been ended by the Governing Body of the University. Dr Holmes is therefore no longer an employee of the University... The Governing Body will meet in due course to consider the process and timelines for appointing a permanent head of the institution."

Meanwhile, the University's Board of Governors itself has been given a resounding vote of no confidence by two University unions, with over 91 per cent of voting UNISON members and ninety per cent of voting UCU members agreeing with the damning motion.

The sacking of George Holmes was hailed as "excellent news for staff, students and our institution as a whole" by the unions.



It's Time to Bring Water Companies Back into Public Ownership

UNISON is on board to re-nationalise water

Earlier this year, the Channel 4 TV series *Dirty Business*, starring Jason Watkins and David Thewlis, told the true-life story of poisoned rivers, polluted beaches, whistleblowers and water companies. And it

re-ignited public anger about sewage discharges, pollution incidents, executive pay, and rising bills. UNISON maintains that these problems flow directly from the privatisation of water services in England and Wales,



a process that began under Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government of 1989.

UNISON represents thousands of dedicated frontline workers across privatised water companies and the Environment Agency (EA), and believes that they should not be scapegoated for actions of those at the top.

“Water workers and EA staff are highly skilled engineers, scientists, environmental specialists, technicians, and customer service staff who work around the clock to keep water flowing and protect our rivers and coastlines” says UNISON's National Secretary for Water, Donna Rowe-Merriman “They are passionate environmentalists who carry out vital monitoring, enforcement, and flood defence work – often under severe resource constraints after years of funding cuts. They want clean rivers and seas as much as the public does. They live in the same communities and share the same concerns.

“The people working in our water companies and the EA are not the villains in this story – they are the ones holding the system together” she adds “Our members did not drain billions out of the sector in dividends and complex financial structures while pipes crumbled and treatment works

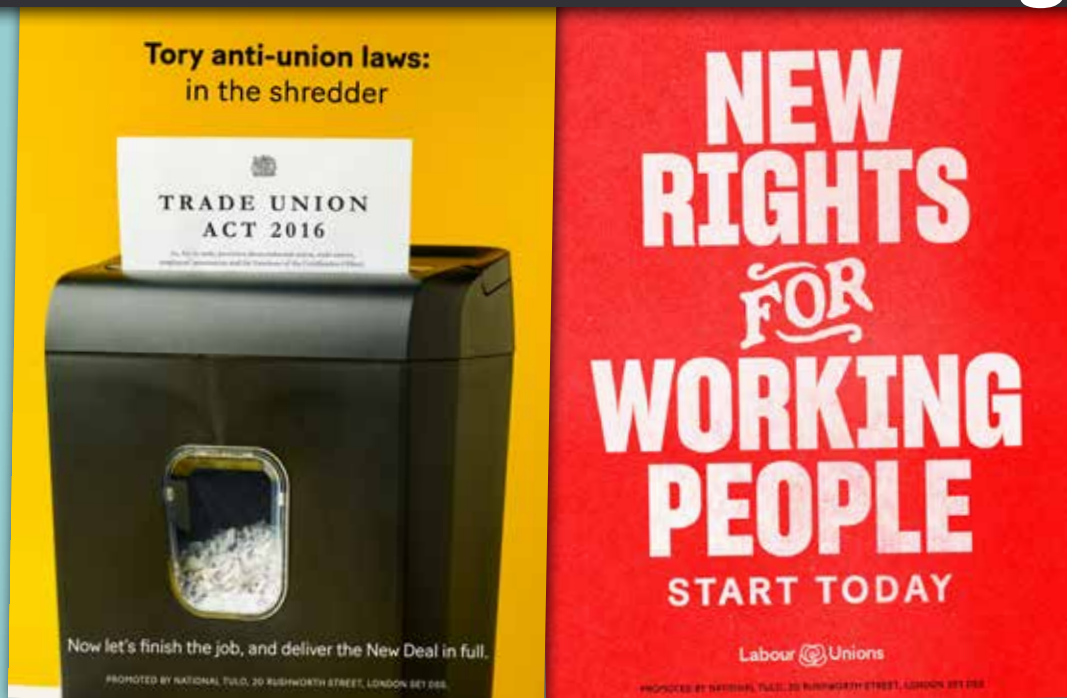
aged. They did not choose short-term returns over long-term resilience. If we are serious about restoring public trust and cleaning up England's rivers and coastlines, we must confront the root cause: a privatisation model that has delivered what we knew it would – lining the pockets of big business to the detriment of the environment and human health.”

UNISON is calling for:

- England's water companies to be brought back into public ownership
- Long-term investment in infrastructure and environmental protection
- Proper funding for the Environment Agency to strengthen monitoring and enforcement
- Safe staffing levels across water companies
- A reset of the sector that puts public interest, environmental protection, and workforce expertise as its primary mission.

Dirty Business can still be streamed via the Channel 4 app.

New Deal on Workers' Rig



After years of anti-union legislation, hope is beginning...

Thanks to February's Employment Rights Act, all of that began to change, with the majority of the 2016 Last February, new rights came in helping unions to organise and win a better deal for their members at work. 14 years of Tory Government saw attack after attack on unions – including the 2016 Trade Union Act. It was carefully designed to undermine the right to strike, stop workers standing up for better pay and conditions, and to silence trade unions' political voice.

Trade Union Act repealed, giving unions new rights to get on with the job of organising to win better pay and

conditions.

This was just the start. The changes included...

- Reducing the notice period for industrial action from 14 to 10 days, making it easier and quicker for unions to take action in a dispute.
- Increasing the length of mandate of a strike ballot from 6 to 12 months.
- Simplifying industrial action and industrial action ballot notices.
- Removing picketing restrictions.
- New protections against dismissal for workers taking industrial action.
- Removing the 10-year ballot

IT'S A GOOD DAY TO Organise

New trade union protections start today

Labour  Unions

PROMOTED BY NATIONAL TULIP, 30 RUSHWORTH STREET, LONDON SE1 0SS

requirement for trade union political funds.

- Returning to the opt-in to a union's political fund on joining the union, undoing Tory attempts to silence unions' political voice.

Many of these rights came into force in April with others coming through later.

There are details to be worked out about how much of the Employment Rights Act will work in practice, electronic and workplace-balloting needs to come online, and the Government need to press the button to enact scrapping the final parts of the 2016 Act that were repealed in the Employment Rights Act.

Trade unions have to keep organising and campaigning until all the New Deal is delivered in full. Every union member is encouraged to help spread the word, to mark what we've achieved together, and help ensure that we finish the job.

Reform UK Plans to Scrap Workers' Rights

Reform's plan for working people includes...

- Taking sick pay, bereavement leave, and pregnancy protections off millions.
- Legalising fire-and-rehire and workplace discrimination.

Unions and workers have long campaigned for these essential new rights, now Reform is threatening to snatch them away...



Image: UK Parliament

Bolton Workers in Holidaytown Blackpool

Bolton Museum and Art Gallery show of 'worktowners' in 'exotic' Blackpool 1937...

Back in the day, Blackpool was a magnet for thousands of Bolton workers who went, not just for the sea air and sand but also for the strange sideshows and sites – a fortune telling robot, sinister looking animated twins, a café shaped like a teapot, a woman who was a bloke in separate beds with his/her wife, and lots of colonial 'glamour' from the Empire.

While the workers were flocking to holiday in the resort during late 1937, they were being followed by researchers from the Mass Observation project, which aimed to document the lives of ordinary people from Bolton, or what they christened 'Worktown'.

As well as notes taken on the boarding houses, B&Bs and hotels where people stayed, the team also documented how they spent their time, dancing in the Tower Ballrooms, riding the rollercoaster at the Amusement Park, or buying souvenirs from Woolworths. And a lot of this activity was captured in photos which make up a fascinating exhibition at Bolton Museum and Art Gallery.

Holidaytown: Mass Observation in Blackpool, runs until 31st October, and features icy black and white photos by the project's Humphrey Spender and Julian Trevelyan that really are a time capsule...

"Researchers observed what people got up to in Blackpool, and it was an extension to their interest in what working people did in their leisure time in Bolton" explains Matthew Watson, Art and History Access Officer at Bolton Museum "So here, they would document them going to watch Bolton Wanderers or going to the pub or cinema. In Blackpool, they would follow them on the promenade, to sideshows, to rides at the Amusement Park, like the Noah's Ark and rollercoaster..."

The Mass Observation people even documented the holiday makers' sex lives, counting 253 couples on the beach during one night in August – crowded conditions meant that outdoor sex was de rigueur.

Both photographers, Spender and Trevelyan, were particularly drawn to a sideshow called *On Strange Honeymoon* on the Golden Mile...





"It was this strange story of Colonel Barker, a biological woman who caused a scandal when she/he maybe married another woman" says Matthew "People queued up and in the cellar was Colonel Barker in one bed and his/her wife in another; and they would file past the sleeping couple.

"There was strange exotic

element to Blackpool at the time, which fascinated the mass observers, and particularly Trevelyan who was a surrealist and brought an artist's eye to Blackpool; things like the Teapot Café and the lifelike Twins" he adds "Our photos are just an amazing documentary record of Blackpool at the height of its popularity..."



2027 also brings the 90th anniversary of the whole Mass Observation project in Bolton, and there's lots more details of the larger project in display cases at the Museum. Meanwhile, until the end of October, this Holidaytown exhibition is well worth a visit

Holidaytown: Mass Observation in Blackpool runs

at the Bolton Museum and Art Gallery until 31st October 2026 entrance is free. For further details and open times see the website www.boltonlams.co.uk/bolton-museum

All photos © Bolton Council. From the collections of Bolton Museum

It's All Change At The Branch Moves Even Closer To M



After Andrea Egan elected as General Secretary the branch is in good hands...

Following the appointment of Christine Collins and Joanne Pickersgill as the new Joint Branch Secretaries, there are now also two Joint Assistant Branch Secretaries, in Samantha Ramsden and Tracey Rigby. It's not title-bureaucracy gone mad, it's a way for the branch to fan its wings, as Tracey reflects...

"We've had a full change in the secretariat with Andrea getting elected

to General Secretary" she says "When Andrea was there she was Branch Secretary, and we've now got joint branch secretaries and joint assistants, so there are more of us and we can spread ourselves out a bit more.

"Bernie Gallagher and Andrea left a really good legacy for us to take up" she explains "We've learnt from them and are moving forward with their ideas and how to keep the branch

Branch Which embers

running in good health. I'm just getting used to the role and we are doing a lot of planning. We all have the same aim and have all come through the branch, and we do have a secretariat breakfast once a month to chat without a formal setting. It's exciting times with everyone new."

In her workplace role, Tracey is a front line social worker for older adults, and has seen the results of decades of cuts and austerity first hand...

"When care is being put in place there's a lot more hoops to jump through and more penny watching" she says, and adds that sitting on the national Social Work Forum she knows that staffing shortages and caseload overload is a countrywide problem.

"It's everywhere, not just Bolton" she insists "We're all in the same boat, trying to do what's right for people and sometimes our hands are tied. We do have to follow the Care Act but sometimes we can't do what we want to for the patients. But the benefit of being in a union is the collective bargaining. When things are changing in social care, which they do, it's knowing that you're not alone; you're with others under the umbrella of the union."

As if being Joint Assistant Branch Secretary, a front line social worker and UNISON steward isn't enough,

Tracey is also the branch's Health and Safety Officer running training courses for other stewards four times a year...

"It's encouraging them to be aware of their surroundings" she says "And every time we do the training we do some work on workplace inspections, reiterating that if we don't know about something we can't work with it. I try and keep it as light hearted as I can – for health and safety! Last year, we did a lot about extremes of temperatures, and this year we're looking at workplace stress and violence that's not part of the job."

With all these roles and responsibilities, it's a wonder that Tracey isn't herself stressed out...

"It's just about managing my diary, making sure I leave time for myself" she decides "And I know I can ask for support if I need it. It's all about a balance."

The future for Tracey and the branch is all about campaigning, organising and moving forward, while keeping the branch's social events thriving, from the panto to Pride and tripping the light fantastic at Blackpool Illuminations.

"We are all still finding our way" she concludes "But people should get more involved in the union. We're like-minded people, we all get on..."

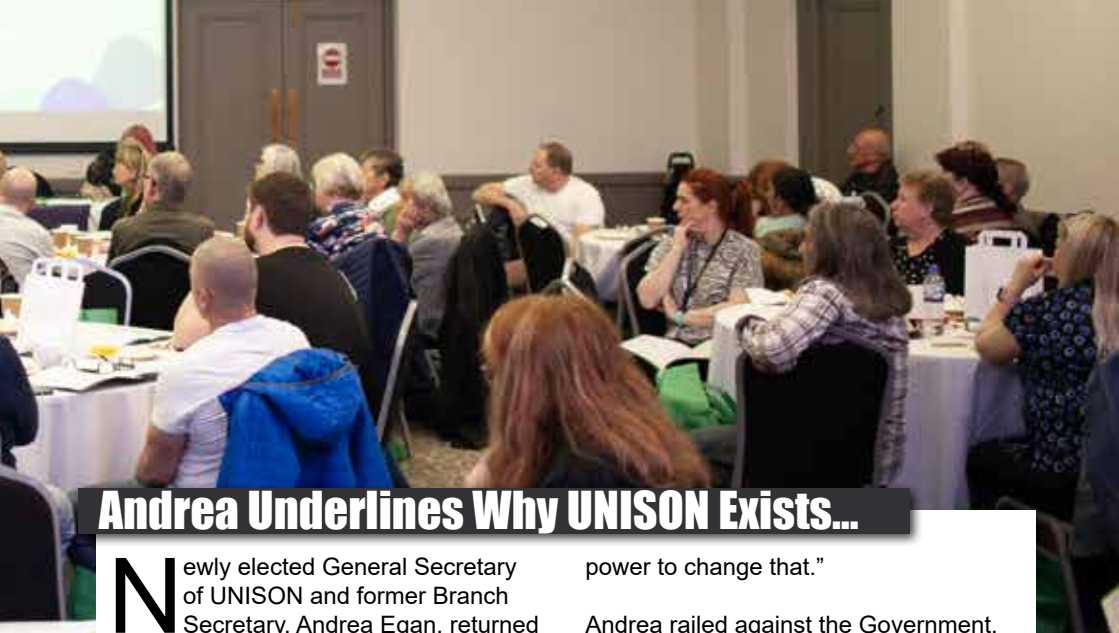


Another Packed Out Bolton Branch AGM...

In March Bolton UNISON held its Annual General Meeting at the Lancaster Suite in Bolton Town Hall...

There were free teas on offer as raffle prizes plus Geoff Brown's ace book on the Anti-Nazi League. There were stalls and a free buffet. There were reports on the branch from officers. But the main memories were of the caring and defiant speeches which underlined a new spirit coursing through the union...





Andrea Underlines Why UNISON Exists...

Newly elected General Secretary of UNISON and former Branch Secretary, Andrea Egan, returned to the Bolton AGM as guest speaker, and underlined the principles that led her to the post as the first ever General Secretary of the union to come from the membership rather than the bureaucracy...

"It's an opportunity to make sure that our voices as members are heard in every corner of UNISON, and a clear reminder that our union exists for one simple reason, to improve the lives of working people" she explained "It's a clear mandate for a union that puts its members first - bold confident and unafraid to get behind and in front of workers who want to fight for better pay, terms and conditions and dignity in work."

She urged members to get more involved in the union and not just leave it to a few stewards and officers..."We are much stronger when we come together and organise together and act together" she added "...The year ahead is about strengthening our foundations and building lasting power from the ground up. The world and life is becoming a bit more challenging and you have the

power to change that."

Andrea railed against the Government, Reform UK and the media which are focusing on migrants and asylum seekers which obscure the real issues... "Let's be clear" she insisted, citing years of underfunding and privatisation of public services, "It's the rich and the powerful who seek to profit from our labour...building up their stocks and shares."

And, perhaps in a reference to the Jeffrey Epstein scandals, added "The rich and powerful are telling us to tighten our belts while they undo theirs...."

Andrea's plea was to help her resist and fight back... "Remember our mantra, 'an injury to one is an injury to all'" she concluded "The union is you, the union is all of us, and there's a real opportunity in front of us. I can't change things on my own. If you want better pay, terms and conditions, and respect at work then we must organise every day. I may have won the biggest job in the union through your votes, but my job is to be your voice. We have so much to fight for and we can't sit back...we have to make sure that the gap between rich and poor stops widening..."

Why Do People Come To The AGM?

"I believe that UNISON is a fantastic organisation and hopefully we get more members. I've just got six new ones today! I'm a steward hoping to be a senior steward and I do believe in fair rights."

Lee Hawsworth, Steward, Children's Services

"I come to the AGM every year as I like to receive all the information and nominate new stewards or vote for them if needs be. I think it's one hundred per cent important for people to attend. They've changed it from the evening into the afternoon, which, unfortunately stops some schools from coming because they cannot get the time off as the support staff are working at that time but there are others on more flexible hours that can."

Hayley Burt, Steward for schools in Farnworth

"I always come to the AGM as far as possible because as we are not going to workplace meetings it's a good way of keeping up with gone on in the branch over the last year, and it's a chance to meet up with old work colleagues and have a natter. It's a nice social event as well."

Sarah Wilce, Retired Member

"We come just to support each other, it's a time when we can get together, look back on what we've achieved, what we need to look forward to, make plans and just connect with each other. I think it's really important that people should come, and more employers should let people out for this as this is what the members need to see. They don't need to see us in school, they need to come out and know that they are valued by stewards and UNISON."

Shelley Matthews, Steward St Joseph's High School and winner of the Graham Walmsley Award for Steward of the Year

"I'm a new and enthusiastic steward, part of the new team. People should come down and know that this is what they are paying their money for. I think they will go, from one snippet of one conversation they've had, 'I want to get involved with that' or 'I didn't know that was going on'. I've just spoken to two members who previously had no idea what was going on in the branch. Members should come and see and get involved in the branch, and to ripple that information back, until it goes back and back and back. And then, hopefully, we'll have this massive part of Bolton that is a big UNISON family."

Samantha Ramsden, works at Adelaide House, Women's Officer and Joint Assistant Branch Secretary.



Bolton Retired Members Group Leading the Way...

Andrea paid tribute to the Bolton Branch Retired Members Group... "It isn't something that you just pay £15 and join" she said "This retired members group are absolutely leading the way across the country. I've been to enough AGMs, and the retired members groups say '*Oh come and join us for tea and cake*'...I'm trying to get other groups to look what this one is doing.

"They are outside the Town Hall demonstrating, supporting strike picket

lines... They are a phenomenal group of workers with a phenomenal history and knowledge, and are an absolutely integral part of this branch. They used to say to me '*We are retired from work but not from activism*'.

"Many people say they struggle with adjusting when they are leaving work and going into retirement" she reflected "This is a fantastic opportunity to remain involved. And the group should be celebrated."

AGM Motion Passed on Violence Against Women and Girls

The branch passed a motion 'rejecting hate-fuelled narratives'...

Bolton Joint Branch secretary, Christine Collins, introduced a motion aimed at challenging racist or misleading narratives that misuse women's safety to justify hate or division. She explained how the far right have hijacked women's and girls' safety, illustrated by social media rumours that foreign nationals are largely responsible for attacks on females, and the subsequent protests and violent protests at so-called 'asylum hotels'.

The motion asked the Branch to note that 'the vast majority of violence against women is committed by men known to the victim'; that 'migrants are not disproportionately responsible for violence against women and girls'; that 'levels of violence against women and girls are rising...while cuts to women's services mean fewer support options'.

Christine added that hate-based

narratives harm women in real ways...

"They detract from real crimes of violence against women and girls, and the underfunding of services" she said "Let's stand with survivors, not those who exploit their pain..."

The Branch resolved to reaffirm its commitment to building confidence amongst women members, to actively challenge and publicly oppose racist or misleading narratives that misuse women's safety to justify hate or division; to promote fact-based understanding of violence against women and girls, to campaign for increased funding for domestic abuse services, to support women through available networks and to provide training and political education for reps and members on recognising and challenging hate-based narratives.

The motion was carried unanimously.



Bolton UNISON proud of strong member mandate despite ballot threshold narrowly missed

Bolton UNISON has responded positively to the outcome of the recent NJC pay ballot, highlighting a significant increase in member engagement and a strong mandate for industrial action from those who participated.

Although the branch narrowly missed the legal turnout threshold required for industrial action, falling short by just 280 votes, the result demonstrates the growing strength and determination of UNISON members across Bolton.

"While we are naturally disappointed not to have crossed the threshold, there is a great deal to be proud of" say Christine Collins and Jo Pickersgill, Bolton UNISON Joint Branch Secretaries "We saw an increased turnout and a strong mandate from members who voted in favour of acting.

"Missing the threshold by only 280 votes shows how close we came, despite the restrictive ballot rules introduced to make it harder for unions to take lawful industrial action" they add "More importantly, this result sends a clear

message that Bolton members are engaged, active and prepared to stand up when they feel they are being taken for granted. They are not afraid to challenge either the Government or their employer when necessary."

Christine adds: "I am incredibly proud to be a member of this branch and to lead it alongside Jo. The commitment shown throughout this campaign reflects the strength of our membership and the determination of public service workers across Bolton.

"While this was not the outcome we had hoped for, the progress made should give us confidence" she explains "The branch is strong, the Northwest region is strong, and with proposed reforms such as electronic balloting expected to make participation easier, I am optimistic about the future.

"This campaign has shown that our members care deeply about their pay, their services and their communities" she concludes "We will continue to organise, grow and ensure their voices are heard."

UNISON Achieves Increase in Tax-Free Mileage Rates

After trade union lobbying, Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced 10p per mile increase...

Following lobbying by UNISON and a direct approach by General Secretary Andrea Egan, Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced a 10p per mile increase in tax-free mileage rates, backdated to April 2026, for people who have to use their own cars for work.

The increase is up from 45p per mile to 55p per mile, and Money Saving Expert founder Martin Lewis applauded the move...

"The big one that I think is going to be under-covered, but is actually really important, is the increase in the mileage allowance for people who drive as part of their work" he wrote on his website (www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2026/05/mileage-allowance-increase-chancellor-martin-lewis/) "This has been frozen at 45p since, I think, 2011, so the increase from 45p to 55p for the first 10,000 miles that you drive is really important.

"If you drive (your own car, not a company car) as a part of your work (for example, care workers driving from house to house to house), this mileage allowance is the amount

that your employer can give you to cover your costs, and you don't pay tax and National Insurance on it" he added "So it doesn't count as earned money. It's a special allowance. So moving that from 45p to 55p is important..."

With UNISON having been co-credited with the mileage lobbying success by the Chancellor, our General Secretary Andrea Egan praised the trade union's campaign...

"This simple measure will provide immediate help for countless frontline workers in public services" she said "Particularly at a time when living costs are going through the roof once again. People who need their own cars for work have been left thousands of pounds out of pocket for far too many years.

"UNISON has campaigned hard for this long overdue change" she explained "It's good to know the Chancellor has listened to the concerns of staff penalised by frozen rates. There's still more to do to ensure no-one is losing out and the union will continue to campaign for more over the coming months."



GREATER MANCHESTER TENANTS UNION

Tenants Union Meets In Bolton

Greater Manchester Tenants Union is now holding Bolton Branch meetings

Greater Manchester Tenants Union, which has branches all over the region and aims to help its members to secure cheaper, better homes, is now holding branch meetings every second and fourth Thursday of the month at Bolton Socialist Club.

"We think our homes should be safe to live in and repairs are dealt with quickly" the Union states "We believe that everybody should have access to affordable, safe homes that we can live in for as long as we want or need."

Anyone who has housing issues, or knows of others who have such issues, are urged to attend.

Greater Manchester Tenants Union Bolton branch meetings are held at 6:30pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street Bolton BL1 1DY

For more details on GMTU see <https://tenantsunion.org.uk/>

A People's History of the Anti Nazi League

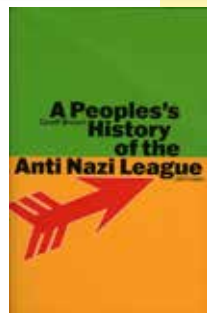
Copies now available...

Read how the fascists were beaten in the late Seventies, as the National Front was stopped in its goosesteps by the Anti Nazi League. Author Geoff Brown was the full-time organiser in Manchester, and his reflections show how a movement was built in workplaces, youth clubs and on the streets to defeat the far right, with many implications for today.

A People's History of the Anti Nazi League (1977-1981)
Geoff Brown (Bookmarks)

Available online from Bookmarks at £12+p&p.
<https://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk/product/a-peoples-history-of-the-anti-nazi-league-1977-1981/>

Or from Waterstones online (+p&p) or from its shop in Bolton (£12.99 if there is no copy in stock the book can be ordered)
www.waterstones.com



Wigan Diggers Festival

Saturday 12th September

Wigan Diggers is a unique annual open air festival celebrating the life of and values of Gerrard Winstanley, a radical 17th Century pamphleteer and philosopher from Wigan. The festival usually attracts hundreds of people wishing to celebrate the life of the man who founded the Diggers movement and is well-known for his view that *"the Earth was made a common treasury for all"*.

On 1st April 1649, Winstanley and his followers took over vacant or common lands aiming to cultivate them and distribute food without charge to anyone who would join them in their work. Local landowners took fright from the Diggers' activities and in 1650 sent hired armed men to beat and destroy their colony. But the ethics live on.

At Wigan Diggers expect lots of trade union and activist stalls, live stage performances, food, drink and lots of comradely vibes...

MAIN STAGE - Headliner – Shanghai Treason
McHale's Permanent Brew; Bard Company; Double Yellows; Fine Lines; More Than Words; Mora and the Fab

Wonders; Maddy Carty; Reformers of Peterloo

SONG AND STORY STAGE - Headliner – Joe Solo
Sally Pepper; Just Fran; Doug Livesy; Road to Poppyville; Samba Band (on square); Captain of the Lost Waves; Brother Bastion

Festival opens at 11am, there's a Diggers' Re-enactment at 11.15am to 11.45am, followed by the main stage festival opening at 11.45am to 12pm.

Wigan Diggers Festival

The Wiend, Wigan

Saturday 12th September 11am-9:30pm Free

The Branch will reimburse public transport costs to the event. Contact the Branch office at The Hub for more details.



Blackpool Lights Trip

Trip the lights fantastic with UNISON...

Sunday 26th October sees the annual Bolton UNISON trip to Blackpool to see the ever-amazing illuminations, with an equally affordable price to match. Adult tickets are just £5, while children can go for £4.

Blackpool Lights Trip
Sunday 26th October
Coach leaves Bolton at 1:30pm and returns around 7:30pm. Seats can be booked from 7th September. Contact the UNISON office at The Hub.

Snow White in Bolton

This year's UNISON panto day brings some classic characters to the Albert Halls stage...

Snow White is a traditional folk tale that has been around for centuries with variations stretching across Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

The Brothers Grimm first published their version of the story in Germany, in 1812, which was translated into different languages, becoming popular with children worldwide. Despite reinterpretations of the Brothers Grimm story down the years, the tale generally includes, a magic mirror, a poisoned apple, a glass coffin, an evil queen, and a prince. Seven of the tale's most popular characters are the seven friendly 'dwarfs' who work at the local coal mine.

In 1937, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs found box office success with Walt Disney's first ever full-length animated film, as renamed the seven as Doc, Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy, Bashful, Sneezy and Dopey. This year sees the return of Snow White to Bolton's Albert Halls, with the production company stating that "We're determined to make it the biggest and most spectacular one yet.

"Audiences can expect breath taking scenery, stunning costumes, incredible special effects and a first-class cast" it adds "...a truly magical experience."

**Snow White at Bolton Albert Halls
Sunday 6th December**

Tickets go on sale Saturday October 3rd (from 9am at the HUB) and Monday 5th October (from 8.45am at Castle Hill Centre breakout area)

Unfortunately, after eight years, we have had to increase ticket prices by £1 to £8.50 per ticket this year. But this is still a massive saving on full price tickets which are £23 for adults and £20 for children, and £2 more if you want to sit in the front stalls, plus booking fees!



BOLTON UNISON

BRANCH CONTACTS

Branch Officers

Branch Chairperson:	Phil Chanin (01204 247947)	phil.chanin@unisonbolton.org
Joint Branch Secretaries:	Christine Collins and Joanne Pickersgill	christine.collins@unisonbolton.org joanne.pickersgill@unisonbolton.org
Joint Assistant Branch Secretaries:	Tracey Rigby and Samantha Ramsden	tracey.rigby@unisonbolton.org sam.ramsden@unisonbolton.org
Joint Branch Treasurer:	Liam McLoughlin (01204 247947)	liam.mcloughlin@bolton.gov.uk
Vice Chair:	Jane Howarth (01204 247947)	Jane.howarth@bolton.gov.uk
Equalities Co-ordinator:	Christine Collins (01204 338906)	christine.collins@unisonbolton.org
Women's Officer	Samantha Ramsden	sam.ramsden@unisonbolton.org
Disability Officers	Joanne Pickersgill Tracey Rigby	joanne.pickersgill@unisonbolton.org tracey.rigby@unisonbolton.org
Education Officer:	Janet Bryan (01204 247947)	janet.bryan@unisonbolton.org
Lifelong Learning Officer:	Janet Bryan (01204 247947)	janet.bryan@unisonbolton.org
LGBT+ Officer	John McSwiggan	admin@unisonbolton.org
Welfare Officer:	Julie Tudor (01204 247947)	admin@unisonbolton.org
Membership Officer:	Phil Chanin (01204 247947)	membership@unisonbolton.org
Young Members Officer:	Vacant	
Environmental Officer:	Vacant	
Communications Officer:	Martin Challender (01204 247947)	admin@unisonbolton.org
Joint Labour Link Officers:	Christine Collins (01204 247947) Phil Chanin (01204 247947)	admin@unisonbolton.org admin@unisonbolton.org
Health & Safety Officer:	Tracey Rigby (01204 247947)	admin@unisonbolton.org
International Officer:	Karen Dalley (01204 247947)	admin@unisonbolton.org
Sports & Social Officer	Joanne Pickersgill	joanne.pickersgill@unisonbolton.org
Retired Members Secretary:	Jackie Winstanley (01204 247947)	admin@unisonbolton.org
Black Members Group Lead:	Yusuf Atcha	admin@unisonbolton.org

Convenors

Adult Services:	Phil Chanin (01204 247947)	phil.chanin@unisonbolton.org
Chief Executives:	Shelley Duncan (01204 247947)	shelley.duncan@bolton.gov.uk
Be One Homes:	Janet Bryan (01204 329850)	janet.bryan@boltonathome.org.uk
Bolton Cares:	Julie Tudor (01204 247947)	boltoncares.convenor@unisonbolton.org
Children Services & Schools:	Lauren Alergant (01204 338907)	childrens@unisonbolton.org



Bolton UNISON Social Events

Wigan Diggers Festival

Saturday 12th September

*Fab, free open air festival celebrating the life of
and values of Gerrard Winstanley. The branch
will reimburse travel costs...details inside*

Blackpool Lights Trip

Sunday 26th October

*Annual trip to see the ever-amazing
illuminations, with an equally affordable price to
match...details inside*

Snow White at Bolton Albert Halls

Sunday 6th December

*Oh yes it is UNISON panto day with affordable
tickets for members...details inside*