

STAYING ACTIVE in UNISON

GREATER LONDON REGION RETIRED MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 11 DEC 2010

Million Voices Myth Buster Public Service Workers are

Overpaid The richest 1 per cent of the UK population take home more money every year than the total pay bill for the NHS, school and local government put together. The majority of public service workers earn less than £22,000 a year, and 20% of them—more than 1.5 million in total—earn less than £7 an hour. Since 1997 public sector pay has risen less than private sector pay and for the past few years public sector pay deals have been below inflation. A report from the Office for National Statistics confirmed that the main reason public sector pay appeared to rise faster than private sector pay last year is that salaries paid by bailed-out banks are now classed as public sector. **In every downturn, politicians and press turn on the public sector—feather bedded, gold plated, protected.....Picking on choice examples of public excess, the right aims to persuade voters to cut services in ways that will cause immense public harm**

Polly Tonymbee, journalist and commentator

Sir Michael Parkinson backs UNISON campaign against elder abuse from Interactive

Greater London Region made the front page of Interactive the newsletter sent out from Head Office nationally to all retired members. Our campaign is gathering steam. Members have written to their MP's and had replies, **have you written to your MP yet?** A copy of the letter and petition can be found on www.unison.org.uk/london or email me maggiej1@unison.co.uk or ring me 0207 535 6559, leave a message and I will get back to you. Peter Howard Committee member and Tony Vass co-opted onto the committee, for this campaign, both from Croydon LG are leading on this campaign. They arranged a meeting with their MP and they will be attending a meeting in December with Action on Elder Abuse, who we are working with in partnership. To discuss the next stage of our campaign. We have also had a meeting with Colin Derrig Retired Members National Officer, who will be taking the campaign to the National Retired Members Committee in the New Year to see about rolling it out to the other regions of UNISON. Now we are starting to get replies from MP's Colin will be involving the Policy dept at UNISON, and they will be coming up with some guidance for meeting MP's. Here at Congress House, London Regions home, we have had quite a few filled in petitions returned, Dave Prentice, General Secretary Linda Perks, GL Regional Secretary, Gloria Hanson Regional Convenor and many others have signed, thanks to Rob Beeston, who collects signatures where ever he goes.

Once again it is newsletter time and I am afraid to say we are producing it with hard times ahead.

This coalition government with no mandate has decided on an all out assault on working people and their families under the guise of cutbacks to meet a budget deficit not caused by working people but caused by rich bankers gambling with the nations' finances like being in a betting shop.

But this government chooses to ignore this fact and still allows vast bonuses to be paid out, whilst working people are suffering job losses and cuts in essential services, wage and pension freezes. The government strategy is to make the workers pay especially Public Service workers for the rash behaviour by the bankers [and do not forget they were bailed out by our money].

As pensioners we are not immune from the policies, we must remain vigilant and campaign for decent state pensions as proposed by the NPC. We must protect the winter fuel payment which could be scraped . Gas and electricity is on the price rise , 7% in December. Also the change in calculating our pensions from RPI to CPI which would cost us hundreds of pounds in income.

We also need to join our present day working colleagues in their struggle to protect their jobs and pensions [which are under real threat].

We must join in local campaigns and branch activity.

On the 26th March 2011 the TUC is mounting a massive demo in London on all of these issues, we must make sure we support it, get out there and march.

In October I attended two rallies and lobbies of parliament organised the TUC and NPC which were well supported, I was pleased to see other committee members there as well.

I believe 2011 will be an eventful year for all of us.

Public Service Pension scheme

In the year 2007/8 the Local Government Pension scheme [LGPS] in England had an expenditure of £6.187 billion against income, from employer/employee contributions and investment returns of £10.610 billion.

In 2008/9 the scheme income exceeded liabilities by 65% Employer contributions may have gone up by 8% but this includes making good past service deficits when they paid to little. Employee contributions have gone up by 15% over the same period and employers still pay less than 50% of the cost of the scheme. This confirms our key messages that the scheme is cost effective and affordable. A large

part of the investments are in the UK.

The next scheme valuation date is April 2010 which misses the

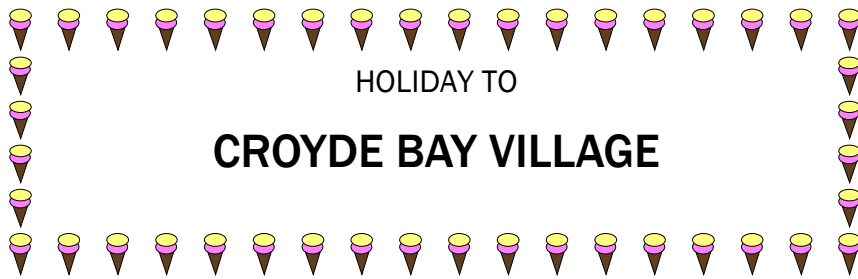
The middle of the recession. The result should be known towards the end of the year, when the debate will start it may include discussion on a move to career average and increasing retirement ages to match state pension age.

Myths about the LGPS

The Public are being poisoned by the media, about the LGPS. "Gold Plated pensions", and "that's where all your Council tax goes".

The LGPS is not a "perk" it allows 2 million workers to save for their retirement and is affordable. Only around 5.4% of total income generated for LG including Council Tax goes to the pension scheme.

The average pension is £4000 pa, for woman its £2000 pa , hardly gold plated. Changes to money purchase schemes in LG would mean a high proportion of the work force would become reliant on the tax payer for means tested benefits. Over half the cost of the LGPS is met by employee contributions and investment returns. Stopping public service schemes will not cut the costs of past service liability . People do not choose to rely on the state. Government policies often leave them with no choice e.g. miss-selling of personal pensions in the 1980's. **Marjorie Roscoe**



HOLIDAY TO

CROYDE BAY VILLAGE

Of sandy beach. To contact Croyde Holiday village ring 01271 890 890

Or look on their website

Www.croydeunison.co.uk

The 13th June finally arrived amid lovely sunshine, a day we had all been looking forward to for many months.

Twenty six member of our group were going down to Croyde Bay Holiday Village for a 6 day break. Arrangements were easy to make, including the return coach travel by, the staff at the village. Two days trips included whilst we were there.

We were made welcome by a team of staff who managed our luggage to the chalets and a cup of tea !

We had an excellent driver for the whole time who kept us fed with information of the area. We went to Exmouth [the oldest seaside town in Devon] and a lovely day to Dunster, Porlock and along the Exmoor coastline to Lynton/Lynmouth, to add a few more pounds with a great cream tea !

The group all thoroughly enjoyed themselves with excellent food , entertainment and helpful staff.

Time soon passed and now all want to know, can we go next year !

Janet Smith

Sec./Treasurer

Ealing Retired Members Group.



Croyde Bay holiday Village is a great place to stay. Just a short walk through the sand dunes which back onto the campsite is this lovely beach. There is loads of onsite entertainment, my grand children love the Benny Bear club. Bars , indoor swimming pool, entertainment every night. Choice of accommodation, half board in the en suite twin, double, family rooms or self catering in the recently built cottages. Croyde village is lovely with thatched cottages, places to eat, holiday shopping. Saunton Sands just around the headland, 3 miles

If like Janet you would like to write an article for the newsletter, about your holiday, or something your Retired section in the branch has done, or is doing or a letter, I would be happy to hear from you.

Maggie

Pictures from a recent NPC rally



Dates for your diary

2011

Thursday 17th February
Annual Delegates Meeting

Thursday 21st April
2nd Committee meeting

Thursday 16th June
Development Day

Thursday 21st July
3rd Committee Meeting
Thursday 22nd September
Seminar

Thursday 17th November
4th Committee Meeting

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NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

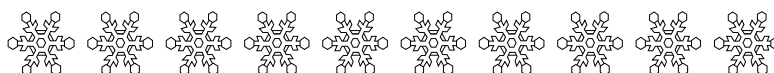
Over the past year the newsletter distribution has grown and is now reaching members who want to read it, rather than being left in branches offices.

This and past newsletters can be found on www.unison.org.uk/london

For downloading.

Greater London Gas have it on their Branch website www.unisongasgl.org.uk

Members can access the website by using their membership numbers. If you don't have your number, you can do a membership number check.



**Members of the
Greater London Region
Retired Committee of 2010/11
Would like to wish you all**

a

**VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A
HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR**

