

## Branch AGM

This years Annual General Meeting on 17th February was attended by 30 members. Our Branch Regional Officer Leonie Sharp was present and explained some of the changes coming to our pension arrangements.

Rebekah Dale has taken over the role of Equality and Diversity and Marcus Green has taken the communications role.

### **10% Discount at Barnitts**

Barnitts, York's excellent hardware store, a short walk from the University, offer 10% discount to UNISON members on production of a UNISON membership card.

## The Trade Union Bill

The Trade Union Bill is a new set of laws that will severely restrict working people's ability to organise for their own rights and campaign for a more progressive society. It could become law this spring and start to apply in England Scotland and Wales.

It undermines the right to strike. The Bill subjects trade union members to unprecedented levels of civil and criminal penalties, regulations and technical and monitoring requirements. Workers will only be able to withdraw their labour through industrial action if 50% or more of eligible members vote in the industrial action ballot.

In case of strike the law will require unions to appoint a picket supervisor and notify the police of their name and contact details. There are many other details that will undermine the rights of Unions. To read more about UNISON's campaign against this bill go to <http://unison.org.uk/TradeUnionBill>

### **Higher education unions reject initial pay offer for 2016-17**

Employers' initial offer to higher education unions does not include the living wage

The five higher education trade unions have rejected an initial pay offer from the employers and urged them to improve it before the next meeting.

The unions met UCEA, the employers' representative body, on 21 March – the first of the 2016-17 pay negotiation meetings.

The trade unions presented a joint claim and the employers responded with an opening offer.

This offer included a 1% increase on all pay points, as well as a statement that the employer has a genuine interest in exploring whether all sides can agree joint work on reducing both the gender pay gap and casual work in the sector.

The joint unions rejected this proposal, which does not address areas such as the living wage, and urged the employer to improve the offer before the next meeting, which is scheduled for 28 April.

## New State Pension

From 6 April the Basic State Pension and Second State Pension (S2P) will end and be combined/replaced by a new state pension.

The new state pension will affect you if you are a woman born on or after 6 April 1953, or a man born on or after 6 April 1951. The changes mean you will see an increase in the amount of NI contributions deducted from your pay from 10.6% to 12%

This will apply to nearly all our members who are contributing to a workplace pension e.g. LGPS, NHSPS and private sector pension schemes. Those who reach their State Pension Age after 5 April 2016 will have their State Pension calculated on the new basis.

UNISON has advised that everyone should apply in writing or on line for an up to date state pension statement

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/application-for-a-state-pension-statement>. The increase and equalisation in State Pension Age has meant that particularly - women born in the first half of the 1950's are being faced with a larger than expected increase in their State Pension Age.

The government is being pressured into looking again at the transitional period and possible compensation for women whose

State Pension Age is set to rise by more than a year by April 2020. There is an ongoing petition with currently 148,000 signatories and ongoing debates in parliament.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/110776>

Pensions are a complex area and you can find out more from the UNISON website at

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

## Member benefits

As well as representation at work, and a voice in local and national negotiations, UNISON members can benefit from a range of services, including:

- Legal representation inside and outside work,
- Good deals on car, home or pet insurance,
- Savings on holidays and travel insurance,
- Educational and training opportunities,



- And much more...

## Meet the team

These are your key contacts if you need advice or have any concerns or suggestions. UNISON prides itself on being "your friend at work", and we need to know what you are thinking if we are going to represent your views in the University.

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Chair: Dave Thompson (Maintenance, x6668)

Deputy Chair: Hazel Eldred (Registry, x6926)

Secretary: Gelayol Holme (Registry, x6923)

Treasurer: Jo Ripley (Registry, x6670)

General enquiries: [unison@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:unison@yorks.ac.uk)

Health and Safety: Dave Thompson (Maintenance, x6668)

Rebekah Dale: Equality and Diversity (Admissions x6970)

Communications: Marcus Green (ILS, x6367)

Workplace reps: Sally Rollinson (Grounds, x6508)

Simon Davis (Grounds, x6508)

Keith Vasey (Maintenance, x6668)