

● **UNITE AGAINST FASCISM:** Mass unemployment, inflation cutting living standards and cuts all give openings to the far right and fascists. The BNP and English Defence League hoped to grow massively in 2010 and 2011. They were defeated by effective campaigning and united action by those opposing their violent philosophies. Unite Against Fascism's annual conference is on 25 February. The branch will be considering sending delegates. More information at: <http://uaf.org.uk/>

Newsletter of the Camden Unison Branch

# CAMDEN EYE

[www.camdenunison.org.uk](http://www.camdenunison.org.uk)

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Photo: Pete Ainsley



## After a glorious 'N30': Pensions fight on knife edge



On 30 November 2011 Britain witnessed the closest

approximation in sheer numbers to a general strike since, well, the General Strike of May 1926. Even Government sources conceded that well over one million workers had heeded a strike call from nearly 30 trade unions and professional associations with members covered by public sector pension schemes. Some estimates have sug-

gested that more than two million took part and numerous cities and towns across the whole of Britain undoubtedly saw their largest weekday demonstrations in generations. All told half a million may have marched that day. According to mainstream media reports some 25,000 took to the streets of Manchester, 15,000 in Liverpool, up to 20,000 in Bristol and 50,000 in London.

Fifty percent or more of those on strike nationally were members of UNISON,

with far and away the largest concentrations in the two biggest public sector pension schemes covering workers in local government and the NHS. In the midst of the three-week long strike ballot and the four-week run-up to the strike itself, UNISON invested unprecedented resources into securing support. A flurry of emails and text messages supplemented a steady stream of leaflets. Even those who are prone to be cynical about our union's leadership might have felt

that somehow something had transformed their thinking.

Speaking in Birmingham on the day, UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis proclaimed the 30 November strike 'an incredible success and one of the proudest moments of my career'. Just eight days later at the next meeting of the union's national executive, Prentis seemed to be suggesting that it was not a matter of if there

*Continued on page 4*

# LGBT UNISON Conference 2011

UNISON's LGBT (Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) conference was held in Glasgow from 18-20 November. Motions ranged from pensions to cuts in public services to issues relating to the Equality Act. Debate throughout the conference was constructive. All the motions were agreed and adopted.

There were particular motions that related to the Localism Bill, the Mental Capacity Act and the implications of funding cuts to service users and employees. Much of what was discussed was of particular relevance to my union shop. One motion dealt with cuts in funding to the voluntary sector, (an increasing number of council services, such as personal care and youth services, are now sub-contracted to the voluntary sector).

Much was thought-provoking. It was shocking to hear



a member working in the voluntary sector/housing association report serious institutional racism at their workplace.

On both the Friday and Saturday there were workshops held after the main conference. I attended a workshop on the then forthcoming 30 November pensions strike. This discussed

how to answer questions that members might ask you as the shop steward. I found this particularly helpful. In my workplace there were varied views held about whether to strike or not. Could union members take leave so as not to lose pay? This workshop enabled me to respond to my members in a clear and straightforward way.

The other workshop that I attended was the UNISON voluntary sector LGBT group. It was good to meet other voluntary sector members to discuss issues that we are facing. These are slightly different from those confronting public sector employees. Many organisations were facing re-organisations and possible redundancies.

There was also time for socialising and I met other members from London as well as those from other regions. The hotel allocated was really well situated for

accessibility to the conference centre and the facilities at the conference centre were fairly good. All in all I found it a rewarding experience as a first time attendee to the LGBT UNISON conference finding other members friendly and helpful.

If there are any other members of Camden UNISON who are interested in becoming involved in 'out in unison' they are welcome to email me at [Helen@cclc.org.uk](mailto:Helen@cclc.org.uk) or alternatively they can contact 'out in unison' via the UNISON website.

*Helen Roberts, Camden Law Centre shop steward*

● UNISON's LGBT pages are at <http://www.unison.org.uk/out/index.asp> UNISON's national officer (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality) is Carola Towle, UNISON Centre, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY Email: [out@unison.co.uk](mailto:out@unison.co.uk)



## Organising at NSL

For the past two years Camden UNISON has been recruiting members working for NSL, the company which runs the parking services. Last year we had enough members to force the company to sign a union recognition agreement. Since then our members have elected eight stewards who have begun to organise

themselves into a committee and started to meet with NSL management. The company has a poor record of industrial relations and our stewards have a challenge ahead of them but are keen to try to improve the position of their members. It is good to be able to report on a success story for union organisation.

## Use your vote

The branch committee has nominated our branch's co-chair, Phoebe Watkins, for the National Executive Council (NEC) for the Local Government female seat. The NEC is the major policy making body across the union between its annual conferences. Please use your vote.

### Who can vote?

Only full members in the Local Government service group are eligible to vote. Members not on the UNISON central membership system on 9 October 2011 are not eligible to vote and should not receive a ballot paper.

### Ballot papers

The despatch of ballot papers began on 9 January 2012. The deadline for receipt of ballot papers by the Independent Scrutineer is 5pm on Friday 10 February 2012.

If individual members have not received a paper then they should contact the ballot helpline operated by UNISONdirect, on 0845 355 0845

Lines are open from 6am to midnight Monday to Friday and on Saturday from 9am to 4pm. Members with hearing difficulties can use textphone 0800 0 967 968.

The latest point at which members can request a ballot paper is 12 noon on Tuesday 7 February 2012

For more information go to:

[http://www.unison.org.uk/elections/pages\\_view.asp?did=13884](http://www.unison.org.uk/elections/pages_view.asp?did=13884)

# Whatever happened to the Big Society?

David Cameron's much vaunted alternative to public services was the 'Big Society', a vague notion that somehow the voluntary sector would be able to step in and provide those services that were under threat from Government spending cuts.

Recent events in Camden begin to demonstrate just how badly the voluntary sector is itself being affected by the cuts and make Cameron's 'Big Idea' even less likely to work in practice.

Most voluntary sector bodies now have to bid for Council contracts in order to finance their operations and the recent cuts are having a dramatic impact.

Several Camden-based

organisations with years of experience of delivering a wide range of services (from Tenants and Legal Advice to support for people with mental health problems) are in danger of going out of business because of the loss of Camden Council funding.

Sometimes contracts are lost to organisations that are submitting bids that are deliberately under-priced 'loss leaders'. These new providers know they can't deliver at the price they have tendered so set about reducing their costs either by employing fewer staff, reducing wages and other staffing costs or employing less experienced and therefore cheaper workers.

Another common outcome is that smaller

organisations which are in financial difficulties are 'taken over' or 'merged' with larger bodies which themselves need to bring in more income to remain solvent.

This process is well established in the social housing sector where over the past few years local housing associations with an historical link to particular neighbourhoods have been swallowed up by very large organisations that have no roots in local communities. It is now happening increasingly in aspects of social care and advice services.

The results are invariably worse services which in some circumstances can put vulnerable service users at risk. *John Mann*

## EYE VIEW

### Pensions and social justice

The tremendous unity displayed on 30 November with millions on strike together has fragmented with UNISON and other unions now negotiating within a 'Heads of Agreement' framework when the Coalition has put no new money on the table. In local government the delayed rise in contributions will have to be paid for elsewhere in the overall package.

Ten unions, the 'rejectionists', have refused to sign up. They include the two biggest teaching unions (the NUT and NAS-UWT) and the UCU, representing university and college lecturers. The UCU has now voted to strike on 1 March and is approaching the other 'rejectionist' unions about renewed joint action.

So there is the possibility of further co-ordinated strikes over pensions by unions representing up to one million affected workers. In UNISON there is a drive to requisition a special conference of all local government branches to debate the pensions dispute.

In the private sector Unilever workers are striking for at least 11 days over the threat to scrap their final salary pension scheme. Unilever made £6 billion in profits last year and rewarded chief executive Paul Polman with £2.8 million, of which £1.7 million was a bonus. His pension was increased by a company 'donation' of £352,000. The average pension pot for directors of Britain's largest companies is now £3.6 million.

We do not need austerity; we need social justice. The gilded 1% have free-loaded on society for far too long. We need action to defend pensions, private and public, as a key part of reversing the serious redistribution of wealth in favour of the richest, which has marked the past three decades in Britain and most other Western societies.

# Shallow Slumber

Camden UNISON member and award-winning playwright Chris Lee (pictured below) writes on his new play *Shallow Slumber*

'I wrote this play as a reaction to my own feelings in the immediate aftermath of the Baby P case, though I must stress that the play does not dramatise that story. I wanted to capture something of the fear, panic and sense of persecution that all social workers felt in those weeks. It became clear that the government and sections of the media loathed social workers with a renewed license to despise.

I wanted to examine all of this in dramatic form and I chose the simple structure of the developing relationship between



a social worker and a young mother that unfolds over a long period of time. I wanted to ask how the job of social work changes you as a human being and I also wanted to ask what it must be like to be the subject of social work scrutiny.

I want the audience to

leave the theatre less convinced of their certainties but with a renewed sense of the complexity and danger of all social interactions.'

*Shallow Slumber* runs from 24 January to 18 February at The Soho Theatre, Dean Street, box office 020 7478 0100.

<http://www.sohotheatre.com/whats-on/shallow-slumber/>  
Guardian interview is at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/jan/17/social-work-blame-game-baby-p-new-play>

## Camden UNISON Annual General Meeting 2012

Monday 5 March  
3.30 pm  
Council Chamber  
Camden Town Hall  
*Management has agreed paid time off for council staff*

■ We are facing major issues on pensions, pay, cuts, re-organisations and redundancies. Put this date in your diary and please attend the meeting.

■ Closing date for motions: 5pm Monday 20 February

■ For more information ask your steward, check notice boards, and go to the branch website: [www.camdenunison.org.uk](http://www.camdenunison.org.uk)

## Annual election of Stewards and Branch Officers 2012

Nomination forms for these posts (and additional information) are available from your Steward, Departmental Convenor and the Camden UNISON Branch Office: Tel: 020 7974 1633 or Email: [paul.England@camden.gov.uk](mailto:paul.England@camden.gov.uk)

Forms can also be obtained from our website [www.camdenunison.org.uk](http://www.camdenunison.org.uk)  
The closing date for nominations is 5pm on Friday 2 March 2012. All posts can be job-shared.

## Visit our website

Since the launch of our website [camdenunison.org.uk](http://camdenunison.org.uk) in September 2011 it has been visited 5,000 times and contains up-to-the-minute news and information from the branch to members. For an easy way to get important updates from the union, why not like our facebook page, **facebook.com/camdenunison**, or follow us on twitter: **twitter.com/camdenunison**, and suggest us to your colleagues.

John Shepherd  
Co-convenor CSF

# Pensions fight on knife edge *from page 1*

would be further action, but when. In mid-December UNISON activists receiving copies of the union's monthly 'In Focus' magazine were told that we had made history.

But even before the magazine had arrived at the printers UNISON's negotiators had very nearly signed up to so-called 'Head of Agreement' defining the framework for further talks, which are now underway. The Heads of Agreement conceded several of the fundamental issues that had supposedly been at the heart of our dispute, in particular:

- A Retirement Age rising in line with the State Pension Age to at least 68
- Replacement of final salary with career average schemes that will almost certainly prove worse
- Pensions devalued by uprating them in line with the Consumer Price Index instead of Retail Price Index.

What UNISON's Head of Local Government Heather Wakefield and other national officials were recommending to members by 19 December as grounds for settlement seemed very similar to what Chief

Secretary to the Treasury Danny Alexander had outlined in Parliament on 2 November – four weeks before the strike - as the framework for future public sector schemes from 1 April 2015 onwards. The officials in UNISON's local government service group have emphasised the gain of additional protection for those already within 10 years of the current standard retirement age and a moratorium on increased employee contributions until at least 1 April 2014.

By 20 December, however, we had the unwelcome sight of Danny Alexander boasting to the House of Commons that the Coalition had achieved all its key objectives in terms of pension 'reform' without earmarking an extra penny, while his Tory sidekick, Francis Maude, proclaimed that the outcome demonstrated that 'strikes don't work'.

Just six weeks after the massive 30 November action, members of UNISON's various Service Group Executive (SGE) committees met on 10 January at the union's national headquarters in Euston Road to endorse the 'Heads of Agreement' frameworks for the local government (LGPS) and NHS pension

The situation in the NHS is more complex in that members of the Health SGE neither endorsed nor rejected the 'heads of agreement' for the NHS scheme, but instead reaffirmed that any final proposed settlement would go to a full membership ballot among affected UNISON members with at least the possibility of the Health SGE recommending rejection. The unanimous rejection of the NHS framework deal by Unite's health service committee the previous week must have had some impact on the thinking of the SGE members, who are doubtless aware that Unite's ranks have grown in the NHS over the previous year to nearly 100,000 members

schemes. A lobby of around 100, called by several UNISON branches including our own, gathered outside in an attempt to persuade SGE members to reject the deals.

After a fractious debate, the vote within the Local Government SGE was 24-to-10, with three abstentions, to accept the 'Heads of Agreement' as the basis for further negotiation between now and April with the aim of achieving a final settle-

## Unions that have refused to sign or rejected the pensions Heads of Agreement\*

- BMA (British Medical Association – not TUC affiliated)
- EIS (Scottish teachers' union)
- Into (Northern Ireland teaching union)
- NASUWT (National Union of School Masters Union of Women Teachers)
- NUT (National Union of Teachers)
- Nipsa union (Northern Ireland's biggest public service union)
- POA (Prison Officers Association)
- PCS (Civil Service workers' union).
- Unite Health workers
- Unite local government workers
- Unite Ministry of Defence
- UCAC (Welsh teachers' union)
- UCU (College and university lecturers)

\*As at 19 January 2012



# I'm leaving!

ment with the local authority employers and ultimately the Government. The margin was much narrower in the Higher Education SGE, many of whose members come under the LGPS, but it too endorsed the 'Heads of Agreement'. This means that there will be no further official strike action by UNISON members across local government and the higher education sector in connection with the pensions dispute until at least April.

In my view and that of our branch committee as a whole, the decisions taken on Tuesday 10 January by the local government and higher education SGE committees mark a significant setback. These votes threaten to squander the potential for further united action to build on the impressive 30 November strike in exchange for a settlement that falls far short of our stated objectives.

Dave Prentis proclaimed at last June's UNISON conference that we would be waging 'the fight of our lives' over the pensions issue. My greatest fear is that the Con-Dems will seize on the union's swift retreat since 'N30' to push forward with their wider austerity programme including real pay cuts and massive job losses now projected to exceed 700,000 across the public sector. The erosion of facility time for union representatives and a dilution of the limited protection afforded by the TUPE regulations are all on the Con-Dem checklist.

Demoralisation among UNISON activists would be an understandable response to recent developments. But this need not and should not be the end of the pensions fight.

There is already evidence of spontaneous opposition

to the framework deal. In Camden the branch committee on the first working day of 2012 voted unanimously (20-nil) to reject it and issued a call to lobby the SGE meetings. Lambeth's annual general meeting attracted some 300 members, who voted unanimously against acceptance with dozens holding up posters declaring 'Reject the Deal'.

Within UNISON there is a limited window of opportunity to try and reverse what I believe are unnecessary and unwarranted retreats in recent weeks. Our branch committee along with several others has already backed a motion calling for a special local government service group conference to advance a far wider debate about this crucial dispute. Supporters of the call have roughly eight weeks from 16 January to garner the support of branches whose combined membership accounts for at least 25 per cent of UNISON members across local government. While challenging, this is an achievable task as demonstrated in 2006-07.

There are elections this spring to the union's various SGEs and members should look to back candidates who firmly rejected the pension deals.

Over the coming weeks here in Camden and across UNISON as a whole we urgently need workplace, shop and branch meetings to examine and debate the framework agreements. Our leading UNISON activists recognise the need to maintain and indeed revitalise existing links at local and regional level with members of the so-called rejectionist unions, especially the NUT and PCS, but also Unite.

The challenge we now face is undeniably daunting, but the stakes have rarely been higher.

After eight years of employment with Camden Council I am leaving to work for the probation officers trade union, NAPO, as a national official. I am sorry to be leaving but this is too good an opportunity to turn down.

I started work with Camden in December 2003, a year later I signed up as a UNISON rep and shortly afterwards was nominated as branch health and safety (H&S) officer. I later took on additional duties until I was on full-time release for trade union activities from 2007 until now.

Some of the highlights of my time as a branch activist have included:

- Organising a Women's Health Fair in 2009 to mark International Women's Day. With 20 stall holders, including an ergonomist, masseur, dietician and Camden's various different health providers it was a great event with over 150 women workers attending, which ensured the branch lots of good publicity.

- Building the union membership on the Camden parking contract to a point where well over 50% of the workforce was in UNISON and the company (NSL) was forced to recognise the union. The reps and union 'contacts' who worked with me on this recruitment campaign knew that the only

way they would be able to tackle the problem of their very low pay rates was by getting organised.

- Raising the profile of health and safety within the branch and Camden Council.

- Raising international trade union issues in the branch including:

- in 2007, arranging a meeting with a delegation from the Israeli Workers Advice Centre (for Jewish and Arab workers) to meet branch activists

- in 2008, organising support for the international day of action for imprisoned Iranian trade unionists

- in 2009, taking part in an exchange visit with US women trade unionists.

As branch H&S officer I have inspected many of your workplaces. But because your local representatives are best placed to deal with your day-to-day issues I have concentrated on making sure there were more of them, doubling the number of branch safety reps since 2005, and ensuring they were able to deal with your workplace issues. I organised 12 reps training courses on issues such as office H&S, bullying and harassment, and stress; built up a comprehensive H&S library and compiled a regular H&S news update.

I have worked with some lovely people, learnt lots from them and wish everyone all the best for the future. But good luck will not be enough - public sector workers face huge challenges in the next few years to defend both their jobs and their terms and conditions and it is only through collective action that this will be achieved. So it needs far more of you to get active in the union. I've loved it - why not give it a go?



Sarah Friday

# Still looking for Justice: Steven Lawrence to Rolan Adams

The recent convictions of Gary Dobson and David Norris for the murder of Steven Lawrence have been hailed as a major step forward in righting the wrongs of a previous racist and incompetent police investigation into the murder of an innocent teenager.

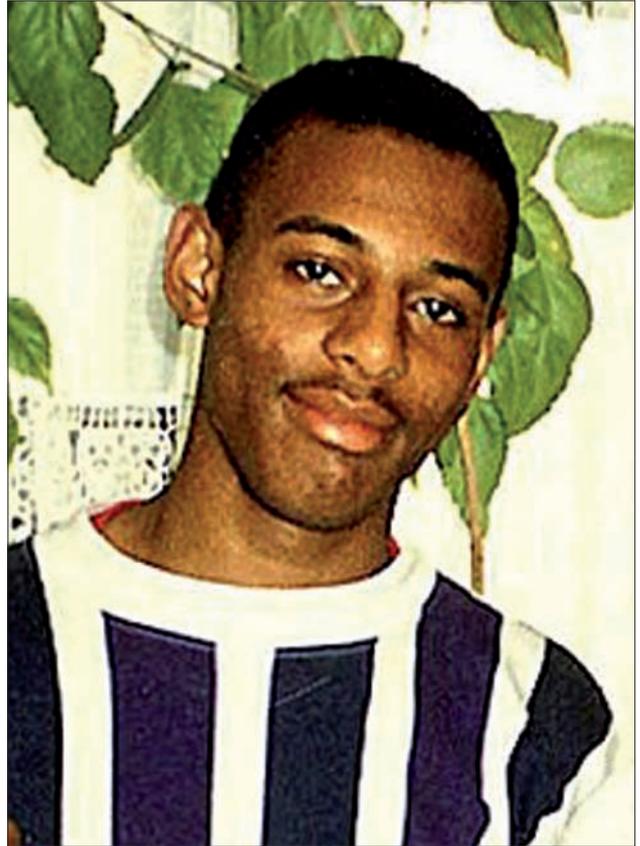
The *Daily Mail*, long term press campaigners on the case, smugly declared the verdict as a 'glorious day for the Lawrence family' and a 'glorious day for British justice'. However, one has to consider the torturous journey this campaign has taken and the words of Doreen Lawrence who counselled those who talked about justice, noting the accomplices of Dobson and Norris are still at liberty.

In the late 1980s Camden was plagued with racist violence directed primarily at the Bangladeshi and other Asian ethnic minorities. A survey carried by Time Out

magazine in July 1989 recorded Camden as having the highest level of racist attacks in London outside of Tower Hamlets. A series of senseless racist murders in the borough led to a double page spread in TO headlined the 'Long Hot Summer'.

In response, a union led local campaign sprang up that Camden NALGO (forerunner to UNISON) and Camden Black Workers Group (CBWG) ran in alliance with the Bengali Workers Action Group (BWAG). That campaign worked with others across London.

Wherever we could support victims of racist murders or violence, we would be there to offer our backing. Indeed, Azim Haji former CBWG Convenor would later form part of the Steven Lawrence legal campaign. In 1997 Neville Lawrence visited Camden to talk about the architects' training foundation named



after his deceased son.

The case though that is firmly etched on my memory from those days is that of Rolan Adams. In 1991 Rolan aged 15 years and his eleven-year old brother Nathan were chased by a white gang in an unprovoked attack in South East London. While Nathan escaped Rolan was stabbed in the throat and left for dead. The murder took place less than two miles from where Stephen Lawrence would be killed

twenty months later. The two teenagers were distantly related.

I spent the next few months with Rolan's father Richard, a bus driver from Stockwell, going from one meeting to the next raising public awareness about his son's case. One afternoon I brought him into the Camden Council Chamber to address a packed meeting of CBWG and trade union reps. Richard made a tearful moving plea for justice for his son. He highlighted the police dismissal of a racial motive for the killers. They described it as a mere territorial gang dispute even though there were as many as 12 people involved in the attack hurling racist abuse at Rolan. More significantly, those involved in the murder were already known to the police from their participation in a spate of racist attacks.

Rolan Adams, murder was treated with total indifference by the media until the high profile Reverend Al Sharpton mentioned it in an interview on the BBC's Newsnight programme. His



**Trades unions and Stephen Lawrence** On 22 April 1993 Stephen Lawrence was stabbed to death. On 10 May 1993 Camden Nalgo (one of UNISON’s precursors) agreed a motion from Camden Black Workers Group to send a message of support to his family and to support a broad-based demonstration against the BNP HQ which was within a mile of his murder. Trade unions were an important part of the Stephen Lawrence campaign from the beginning. Neville Lawrence spoke at the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in September 1993. After more years of campaigning, Noreen and Neville Lawrence received a standing ovation at the 1998 TUC Conference. Much of the money and support for the campaign came from trades union branches.

Photo: David Hoffman



Opposite page top, Stephen Lawrence; bottom: the five accused fighting their way out of court in 1998, two are now in jail, the other 3 are still free.

This page: 20th anniversary commemoration for Rolan Adams 21 February 2011

intervention caused a kind of – ‘how dare you, an American come over here and lecture us about racism in Britain’, response. However, by the time Sharpton had left the UK press interest had faded.

A lot has changed in British society has since the Adams /Lawrence murders. The ‘double jeopardy’ ruling that led to the new Lawrence convictions is now part of English law. It means you can now be tried for the same offence twice, removing one of the most important principles of English law and can only be seen as a retrograde

step. More positively the police are more likely now to consider race as a factor in acts of violence. DNA now plays a prominent part of police investigations.

For the Adams family there was no newspaper campaign, no TV documentaries, no magazine articles and no forensic investigation.

Despite at least 12 people being involved only one of Rolan’s assailants, Mark Thornburrow, was convicted.

On 5 January 2012, in the *Daily Telegraph* Richard Adams, stated:

‘Stephen Lawrence might have been alive today if my

son’s murder had been investigated properly... If more of the gang who killed my son had been locked up, it would have sent out a message that such behaviour would not be tolerated.’

He is now calling for his son’s case to be reopened.

However, it would be a mistake to believe that nothing has changed since the Lawrence/Adams murders. A significant, legalistic, state driven machinery has developed around anti-racism practice throughout society. Anti-discriminatory frameworks have emerged in every realm of society from football

to new legislation such as the Equality Act 2010. Likewise, calls for changes to the law to make prosecutions of acts of racial violence easier.

But trade unionists know from historical experience that the law is a very blunt instrument, which can never offer complete solutions to fighting racism - and arguably in some areas of social life, it has actually made racial tensions worse.

Trade unions in the workplace and local communities have a vital role to play in challenging racism in the wider society just as activists in Camden and across London did all those years ago – not only because of racism’s horrific impact on the victims and their families like Richard Adams, Doreen and Neville Lawrence who suffer its consequences, but because those who would seek to divide and so weaken our movement rely on racist and other backward ideas.

**Kunle Olulode**  
Convenor CBWG 2002-11

There's strength in numbers:

## JOIN CAMDEN UNISON

You cannot defeat the attacks on your pension on your own. You need to join a union, a union that will fight. With nearly 3,500 members Camden UNISON is the largest union in the council. Join online or access PDFs of application forms at: <http://www.unison.org.uk/membership/> If you are already a member why not ask your colleagues to join? There's strength in numbers. The website sets out the advantages of UNISON membership. Phone the branch office on 020 7974 1633 or email: [paul.england@camden.gov.uk](mailto:paul.england@camden.gov.uk) or go online at: <http://www.camdenunison.org.uk/join>

Campaign Against Climate Change



The 2011 international Global day of Action on climate change took place on 3 December with marches and events across the world. In London there was a Climate Justice march from Blackfriars to Parliament where the giant banner denouncing the US-based Koch brothers – the biggest funders of climate denial and bankrollers of the Tea Party in the US – was unfurled. Brief speeches at the rally were made on fracking, the Occupy movement, tar sands, bio-fuels, aviation and the campaign for a million climate jobs. Numbers were small compared to previous years as activists have focused on jobs, services and pensions. However, as the planet warms even more this issue will rise in importance again.

More at: <http://www.campaigncc.org/>

## Retiring? Don't miss out

To become a retired member for life you need to have been a UNISON member for at least two years on the day you retire and have paid a one-off subscription fee of £15. The majority of Camden UNISON Retired Members are able to continue membership of UNISON, and receive a range of benefits. This includes legal advice, welfare support, and special discounts on a wide range of

financial and other services. You retain your current membership number and card.

Moreover, UNISON gives you the option of remaining with Camden UNISON, or transferring your membership to the branch nearest to where you live. Contact [paul.england@camden.gov.uk](mailto:paul.england@camden.gov.uk) Tel 020 7974 1633 for a retired membership application form

*Ron Shillingford*  
Retired Members Secretary

## TUPE victory at Talacre sports centre

As part of last year's cuts the Council announced the privatisation of Talacre, the last sports centre still being managed in-house. Such privatisations involving the transfer of staff from one employer to another are covered by the 'Transfer of undertakings (protection of employment)' or TUPE regulations.

During the initial consultation about the TUPE transfer of staff from Camden to GLL (the company which runs the other Camden centres) it emerged that some 20 staff were not being offered such protection and would be likely to lose their jobs or at best have to work on worse terms and conditions.

The reason for this was that Camden regarded these workers as 'casuals' with no contractual rights or obligations. After protracted negotiations (which have seen the transfer delayed by a year) 13 of the workers involved have finally been offered proper permanent contracts under which they will transfer with full TUPE protection. These were people who worked regular hours with a consistent pattern who should have been regarded as employees not casual workers.

This victory could have implications for other workers in Camden who are currently being denied their proper contractual rights. If you are employed on a casual basis or know others who are, please contact your local steward for advice or email me at [John.mann@camden.gov.uk](mailto:John.mann@camden.gov.uk)

## CAMDEN EYE

**Editor:** *Pete Ainsley*,  
Finance

**Newsletter Team:**  
George Binette, Phil  
Lewis, Vinothan  
Sangarapillai, John  
Shepherd, Tsui Tsang

*Want to get involved?*  
We need writers,  
cartoonists,  
photographers.

Email: [peter.ainsley@camden.gov.uk](mailto:peter.ainsley@camden.gov.uk)

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issue: 6 March

The views expressed  
in this newsletter are  
not necessarily the  
views of Camden  
UNISON, but the  
branch will defend the  
right of members to  
express those views.