

MEET THE ACTIVISTS



Stefanie Pottinger

Position in UNISON:
Treasurer

Job Title:
Office Administrator, Shetland Charitable Trust

Reason for Becoming Active:

I have been a Unison member since I started working for the SIC in 2001. I thought the post of Treasurer would be challenging and would enable me to find out more about the Union. As an added bonus, Unison sent me on a training course to learn some accountancy skills. I feel it is important for young people to be members of Unison as the matters being decided on will affect their future.

Post Involves:

Monitoring finances, processing payments, preparing financial accounts & budgeting. I have to make sure that the accounts comply with accounting standards and monitor where branch funds are being spent.

Hopes for Future:

I would like to see all current issues being resolved fairly. I would also like to see more young people getting involved in the Union as it can be a great way to meet people and learn new skills.

Hobbies and Interests:

Travelling & Going to Concerts/Festivals. I was at the Live 8 concert in Hyde Park last year for the Make Poverty History campaign. It was an excellent experience.

Who's Who and where- Local Officers and Stewards

Chair	Brian Smith	01595 744354
Vice Chair	John Leach	01595 744858
Branch Development	Tracey Leith	01595 692973
Officer/Secretary/Co-ordinator	Kaila Tarrant	01595 692019
Branch Meetings Secretary	Val Turner	01595 694688
Equalities Officer	Amanda Pearson	01595 696698
Health & Safety Officer	Jim Grant	01595 744871
Membership Records Officer	Michelle Goudie	01595 744859
Membership Services Secretary	Barry Edwards	01595 744202
Newsletter Editor	Karen Fraser	01595 743868
Retired Members Officer	Donald Silk	01595 692451
Stewards Co-ordinators	Elaina Leach	01595 744816
	Graham Stiles	01806 522722
Treasurer	Stefanie Pottinger	01595 744994
Union Learning Rep.	Mary Anderson	01595 744992
Young Members Officer	Daniel Robertson	01595 744995
DEPARTMENTAL STEWARDS		
Assessors Office	Kaila Tarrant	01595 692019
Drugs & Alcohol Services	Amanda Pearson	01595 696698
Economic Development	Marvin Smith	01595 744921
Education Services	Tracey Leith	01595 692973
	Susan Jamieson	01595 809217
Environmental Services	John Leach	01595 744858
ICT	Heather Jones	01595 744701
Housing	Ewan Balfour	01595 744336
Legal Services (Market Street)	Karen Irwin	01595 744095
Library	Karen Fraser	01595 743868
Organisational Development	Peter Peterson	01595 74 4538
Planning	Gwenan Hughes	01595 744834
Ports and Harbours	Barry Edwards	01595 744202
Social Work (St Olaf Street)	Fiona Morton	01595 744442
	Shirley Mackay	01595 744450
Social Work (Viewforth)	Heather Butler	01595 692760
Shetland Amenity Trust	Mick Clifton	01595 694688
Wastview Care Centre	Margaret Forrest	01595 809483
WORKPLACE CONTACTS		
Finance	Andrew Hall	01595 744649
Social Work (St Olaf Street)	Francis Prittie	01595 744447
	Eleanor Robertson	01595 744495

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Unison Shetland
Local
Government
Branch
August 2006

UNISON

Yarns

SINGLE STATUS: 'FINAL' OFFER

By Brian Smith, Branch Chair

After discussions with the trade unions about single status that have lasted eighteen months, Shetland Islands Council has made a final offer to staff. Here are the main details:

- The Council have in mind a new pay model that contains any pay bill increase to no more than £500,000 in the fifth year of the scheme, 'at 2006 prices'.
- They favour a target implementation date for the scheme of 1 October 2006, with basic pay for 'winners' backdated to 1 April 2006.
- They have offered a conservation period of five years for 'losers'.
- In the case of posts that are still on preservation at the end of the five years they promise scrutiny, perhaps with a view to job redesign; and

- the possible use of a 'market forces' argument for postholders who lose by 25 per cent or more.

Terms and conditions

- In addition, they propose a 37 hour working week for all full-time employees; and
- a payment to full-time employees who move from 34 to 37 hours of £1000 gross.
- They offer an additional day's annual leave to all single status employees, beginning next year.
- Finally, they propose a detailed package of new conditions of service, covering overtime, unsocial hours and the like.

Single status doesn't apply to chief officials, so there will be no losers there. But the SIC is proposing a 37 hour week, £1000 and an extra day's holiday for chief officials as well.

The Council 'considers this to be a very generous offer and one that they are in no position to improve on'.

Negotiations

The discussions about single status have been very difficult. The union side has always backed the single status principle. But the government has refused to provide funds for local Councils, and the result has been that the management sides everywhere have been trying to implement it at nil annual cost.

It was clear from the beginning that Unison members in Shetland are likely to be hit harder by single status than any other group of staff. The management side and some others were desperate to push changes through, but your Unison negotiators refused to allow that to happen. (You probably heard stories about how

Unison was deliberately holding up the process, and how Unison members were flocking to join other unions!)

There is no doubt that the offer would be even worse if your representatives had bowed to pressure.

What happens next

This is by no means the end of the matter. Unison's national officers have written to the Council to point out that detailed negotiations about the pay model have not yet taken place. They have asked the Council to provide an equality impact assessment, to show that their proposals conform with the equality principles of single status.

When these matters are attended to, there will be discussions about the offer in its final form. You will be able to scrutinise it in detail, and discuss it with colleagues and Union officials. Your branch committee will decide whether or not to recommend it to staff or not.

Then there will be ballots, involving affected members of the three trade unions. As we have always pointed out, single status is a matter for *agreement* between unions and management – not something that management imposes on the workforce.

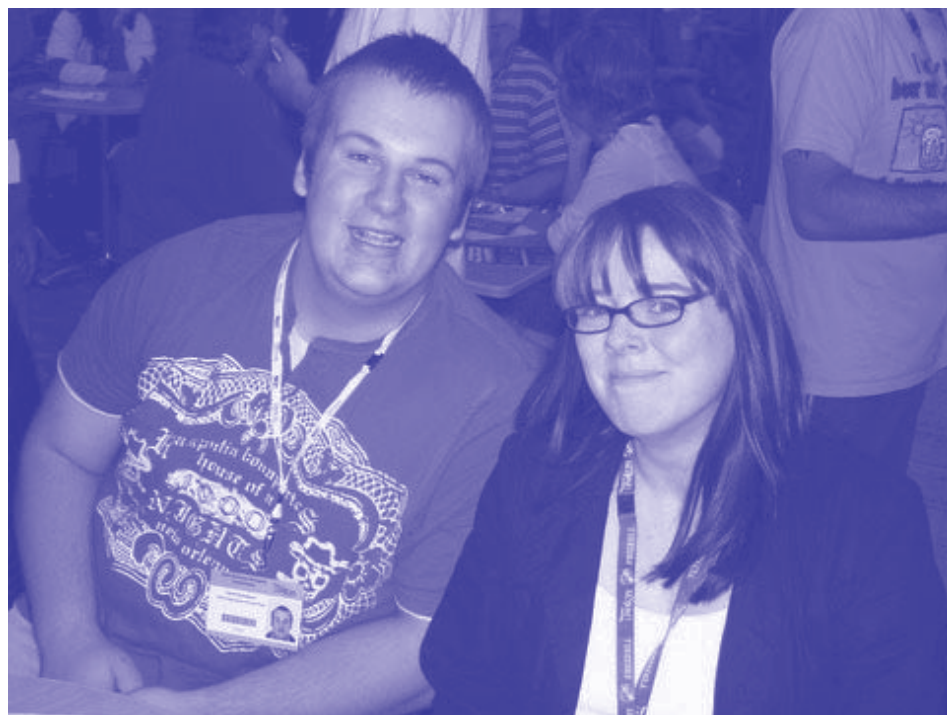
In the ballot YOU will decide if the pay model, and the new conditions of service, are acceptable or not.

Your steward has a copy of the draft offer to date. Approach her or him to get a closer look at it!



On the big screen: in June, our Young Members' Officer Daniel Robertson attended the UNISON National Delegate Conference in Bournemouth. He was nominated by the Scottish Young Members Committee to address conference on the **Votes @ 16** campaign, and spoke to an audience of over 3000 in the conference hall. "It was a once-in a lifetime experience and I loved it" said Daniel. More about the Votes @ 16 campaign on the next page.

Below: Daniel with branch officer Tracey Leith, who also attended as a delegate.



Donation to Local Appeal



Tracey Leith of UNISON Shetland LG presents a cheque for £100 to CATS Chairman Peter Malcolmson.

UNISON Retired Members

by Donald Silk, Retired Members Officer

The retired members of Shetland Local Government Branch usually meet four times a year and apart from any business or issues to be discussed, this gives us the opportunity to meet former colleagues whom we may not otherwise see. At two meetings per year we have a meal which is subsidised by the Branch, and at the other two meetings we usually have a guest speaker giving a short talk followed by discussion.



Being a retired member gives you access to the same assistance as working members so, for instance, if you were to have a problem with your pension, UNISON would be there to help you overcome any difficulty.

The cost of joining is £15 life membership, payable to the Branch. If you are retired or about to retire, why not come and join us. Please contact myself on Lerwick 692451 or Michelle Goudie the Membership Records Officer on 744862.

We look forward to your company in the near future, we are a friendly bunch of people and would make you most welcome.

UNISON Welfare Debtline and online Debtclinic

Many people fall into debt at some point in their lives. Sometimes all it takes is a small change in circumstances to tip the balance and turn a manageable situation into a debt problem.



UNISON Welfare are used to helping members who are struggling to cope with the stress and worry of debt. Through partners at Payplan they can provide you with free and confidential advice to help clear your debts.

Contact details:
Telephone UNISON Welfare Debtline
Freephone 0800 389 3302
8am to 9pm Monday to Friday
9am to 1pm Saturdays

UNISON Welfare Debtclinic, the online version of their debt advice service, contains advice and debt information and outlines some of the main debt problems. There are also diagnostic tools to help you set up the best recovery plan for your particular problem. Like UNISON Welfare Debtline, the service is completely free to UNISON members.

www.debtclinic.co.uk/unison

Challenge X - Building a Stronger Union

UNISON is proud to be the biggest, and fastest growing union in the UK. The challenge now is to sign up more new members. 'Nobody asked me!' That's the single biggest reason people give for not having joined a trade union. And the best people to recruit new members are the UNISON members who work alongside them.

Challenge X is UNISON's campaign to achieve a target of 1.5 million members by the end of 2007. This will take us to the next level of membership and recruitment success, strengthening the union in both the workplace and the wider world. New members mean more



influence, more strength and a secure future for our union and our members.

Why not take the Challenge now and commit to recruiting 10 new members. It's as simple as that.

All you need to do now is pledge yourself to recruiting 10 new members over the next 12 months. Just register your details at www.unison.org.uk/challengeX and you will be sent a recruiter's pack (including application forms and top tips on recruiting). Your name will appear on the website and will transfer to the Challenge X Roll of Honour when you have reached your target.

Pensions Strike

In our last issue we included a statement about local members of Amicus and the pensions strike. These remarks were misjudged: Unison did not appreciate difficulties that Amicus had had in the period up to the strike. We withdraw what we said. It is vital that all public service trade unions are united on the pensions issue, and we look forward to working with Amicus, the TGWU and GMB when the matter emerges again.

Branch International Officer Needed

The role of the branch international officer is to encourage among branch members an awareness of national policy on international matters and an understanding of the importance of international issues to everyone.

Electing an international officer would help the branch focus its international activities on issues most relevant to its members. Every branch is encouraged to elect a Branch International Officer who can take responsibility for raising international issues and leading the branch's international activities.

As with other branch officers, training to develop the skills you need for your role is available.

This is a good time to volunteer for this role as UNISON holds an international seminar twice a year to enable branch and regional international officers (BIROs) to hear more about international developments and the work of the Unit. The seminar also provides activists with an opportunity to exchange information.

The seminars are run over a weekend and feature workshops, guest speakers and informal and formal discussions on UNISON's international programme. Regions may send two delegates: branches may send one.

The next international seminar will be held in Southampton from 13-15 October 2006. The seminar will include sessions on Cuba, Palestine, Venezuela, China and the work of the new UNISON International Development Fund. There will also be sessions to develop work skills for International Officers.

If you would be interested in taking on this role please contact Elaina Leach or any of the Branch Officers detailed on the back page.

UNISON National Young Members Weekend

By Daniel Robertson
Young Members' Officer

In March, while attending the Scottish Young Members' Committee AGM I was elected to represent UNISON's Scotland Young Members on the National Young Members' Forum. This meant that I was not only attending the conference but also had to help facilitate the conference and workshops.



The Scottish Delegation to the Conference

So, in May I travelled to Birmingham along with 10 other delegates to the National Young Members Conference.

The focus of the weekend was "Getting Equal" which meant all the weekend activity was based around Young Members, Black Members, LGBT Members, Female Members and Disabled Members.

Throughout the weekend I attended 2 workshops, one on how to make steps towards equal pay for young people including modern apprentices, and another on the difficulties faced by Lesbian Gay Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT) members. This workshop made me realise how bad this group of people have it—even though

they are in a union there are still members of the union who do insult them. This raised a point that all branches should have an



The LGBT Workshop

LGBT Contact and I was nominated to put this forward to the Young Members at the conference.

On Sunday I attended a panel debate which helped me understand much more about UNISON, its aims and its values. We also spoke about the campaign which I am involved in, the **Votes @ 16** campaign which basically is lobbying the Government to give 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote.

In this newsletter is a letter to MSP First Minister Jack McConnell: please add your address and sign if you support the campaign then return to me at the Shetland Charitable Trust, 22 – 24 North Road, Lerwick (on the Councils internal mail run) and I will send them onwards to UNISON's Scotland Office.

On the whole I think this was a great weekend and also a good way to meet new people. I have been very lucky since I joined UNISON as I feel that all of their campaigns are so important to Young People and I have spent the past 5 years sitting on local forum and youth councils trying to make life better for young people.

**Contact Daniel on: Tel – 07886456206
Email – daniel@youngshetland.info**

Return to Learn

by Mary Anderson, Union Learning Rep

Return to Learn (R2L) is aimed at staff who have been away from formal education for some time, or who have had a poor experience of learning in the past. The course aims to boost the learners' confidence and teaches core skills such as study skills and communications.

The successful students on the January – July 2006 course were:

- **Unst:** Elma Moar, Julie Ferguson, Andrea McConnell, Sylvia Priest, Alison Priest, Doreen Craig
- **Yell:** Rayann Thompson
- **Brae:** Gail Conroy, Cynthia Tulloch, Helena Johnson, Rosie Jamieson

I went to North Haven Care Centre in Brae to meet with some of the students of R2L, which UNISON organised in Yell, to serve staff based at care centres in Brae, Unst and Yell. I also met with the tutor, Pat Dugard, who was funded by the Workers Education Association (WEA) to lead the course.



Back row from Left: Cynthia, Helena, Rayann, Rosie. Front row: Gail, Pat (tutor)

The students had all had a really good experience, and were full of praise for the tutor. All had doubts about starting the course, but felt it had given them a confidence in themselves which would stand them in good stead for the SVQ's to come. Here's a

selection of what they said about R2L:-

- *"Boosted my confidence*
- *Would like to go straight on to SVQ's*
- *Confidence with reading and speaking in public*
- *Didn't really want to do it, but it turned out to be a thoroughly enjoyable experience*
- *Brilliant tutor – and all the students really got on well and helped each other*
- *More confident in knowing how to find information"*

I asked them what they would say to anyone thinking of doing R2L, and they all said **GO FOR IT!!** Then added, "if I can do it anybody can!"

Unfortunately I was unable to get to Unst, but they sent me a photo of the group, except for Doreen who was away on holiday.

Back row from Left: Alison, Elma



Front row from Left: Julie, Andrea, Sylvia

This is what they had to say on the course and the tutor.

"Pat Dugard was inspirational, she got us all to achieve the work she set for us. She made us feel our self worth, managing to build our confidence.

It would be worthwhile for the course to be available to all SVQ candidates, before they start the actual course.

The course helped us acquire the abilities to source information in many differing outlets, to put it all together in readable form. The

course improved our quality of work and gave us the confidence to branch off into other areas of learning too. Great 10 weeks"

Pat was full of enthusiasm for the way the students performed on the course, and was really pleased to see the students grow in confidence as the course progressed. She said:-

"I was fortunate to have an excellent group of R2L students from Unst, Yell and North Mainland. Part of the course was a Local Investigation, and they all wrote fascinating reports on their chosen topics. Also, though most had never done public speaking before, they all gave interesting short talks on them to the class. They did some creative writing and enjoyed it so much that they are planning to edit some of their stories for a booklet to raise funds for the Shetland CAT Scanner Appeal. Everyone enjoyed the course, not least the tutor!"

Unfortunately the tutor, Pat Dugard, is leaving Shetland soon, so we shall have to find a new tutor for the next course. The students praised her very highly for her commitment, phoning to offer support and in particular supporting a student who had a period of illness during the course. We wish Pat well, and hope she will come back, at least for a visit.

Thanks are also due to the unit managers who supported the students and who arranged cover for them as necessary, and to the Shetland Islands Council Social Care Service who funded the cover and incidental expenses. UNISON has gained three new members. It is important to emphasise that this course would never have got off the ground had UNISON not got involved. The funding from WEA has to be matched by a commitment from the employer to fund the time off for the staff, and UNISON's role was to make sure WEA and SIC were talking to each other.

If you have any comments on this article, or would like to discuss your learning needs, I am here to help. I am on 01595744992. Please do not hesitate to contact me about any learning issues, not necessarily related directly to your job.

STOP PRESS: Look out for a Learning Awareness Event on 5 September.

- STUC and ILA Scotland are coming up to do an event to publicise the help available for Return to Learners.
- The event is to be in the Shetland Hotel, and everyone is invited to find out more about how they can claim £100 or more to help towards the cost of courses.
- You can drop in any time between 9 am and 8 pm to hear more.



UNISON Scotland in association with Thompsons Scotland offer the following legal services:

- Family Law Service
- Criminal Law Service
- Road Traffic Scheme
- Work-related and Non-work Related Accidents and Diseases
- Property, Mortgage and Estate Agency
- Free Wills, Trust and Executry
- Independent Financial Advice
- Benefits and Consumer Law
- Human Rights
- Health and Safety
- Employment Law

www.unionscotlandlaw.co.uk

FREEPHONE 08080 864 766

Criminal Law Service (24hr helpline):

0141 950 1441

Would you like to be better at maths? or improve your spelling and grammar?

We can provide free, individual support to help you improve you skills – at a time and place to suit you.

Contact Carol Jones, Adult Learning, at the Old Library Centre, Lower Hillhead, Lerwick for more information.

Telephone: 01595 743888

