



Our **priorities as a trade union council for 2018** are set by the Trades Union Congress in the **Trades Union Councils' Programme of Work** [www.wolvestuc.org.uk/index.php/wbdtuc/tuc-programme-of-work](http://www.wolvestuc.org.uk/index.php/wbdtuc/tuc-programme-of-work)

**Public Services** - support campaigning work in our communities in defence of the NHS; expose the negative effects on key workers in public services and mobilise support for all trade union opposition to the cuts. Support campaigns for new council and social home building programmes; to end the 'right to buy' and abolish the cap on housing benefit. Link in with tenants' organisations and campaigns against homelessness and encourage voter registration of homeless people. Support Action for Rail and individual union campaigns to oppose Driver Only Operations or other reductions in staffing or safety.

**Employment Rights** - support the TUC's *Great Jobs Campaign* and union campaigns for decent employment standards, helping raise awareness of insecure work, promoting employment rights and work with unions to expose employers who pay less than the National Minimum Wage. Commemorate Workers Memorial Day with events open to the public using European Health and Safety Week as a way raising awareness of these issues.



**Trade Union Organising** - support local campaigns for decent pay and conditions at work and union efforts to increase collective bargaining coverage. Promote the value of trade union organisation and support initiatives to develop organising skills and invite trade unions to speak at trades councils meetings about organising campaigns.

**Economic and Social Policy** - support public service campaigns and campaigns against trade deals that lead to the detriment of workers. Support anti-racism campaigns and fair treatment for migrant workers. Support campaigns to bring about legislation that prevents big business, private owners and governments taking funds from pensions. Support campaigns for fairer, more equal pensions and raise awareness of the Welfare Charter.

**International** - raise awareness about the extreme consequences of Trump's rhetoric and policies, leading to increased hate crime and community tensions and support campaigns organised to oppose a UK visit by Trump.

**Trades Councils** should reach out to affinity organisations, such as NUS, anti-racism organisations, anti-poverty groups, etc.

## WHAT WE DID

11 trade unionists from UNISON, RMT, ASLEF and UNITE organised by us in January 2017 gave out

1,100 early morning commuters at Wolverhampton railway station as part of the national campaign to protest against rail ticket increases while private companies rake in state sponsored profits and reduce safety standards and service. Press videos of interviews of our delegates.



The Action For Rail website is now out of date and no further action planned although rail unions are taking action at the start of 2018.

In March nine volunteers came out campaigning for RMT Save Our Guards. Wolverhampton TUC joined RMT involving UNISON, Unite, FBU and NUT members. The campaign focuses on:

- Save Our \*Services
- \*Guards
- \*Station Staff
- \*Engineers
- \*Cleaning & Maintenance teams

[www.rmt.org.uk/campaigns/rail/safe-trains-for-all/](http://www.rmt.org.uk/campaigns/rail/safe-trains-for-all/)



Message received from Ken Usher Midlands RMT Secretary:

*"Many thanks to all who attended today's event in Wolverhampton which I am sure will be appreciated by those members of the travelling public and those who work within the industry. I salute your efforts all round."*

We took a group of protesters to Save the NHS demo in London - see front cover picture.

**SUCCESS** - Wolverhampton, Bilston & District Trades Union Council and Wolverhampton General UNISON branch called on Wolverhampton Council to sign up and incorporate the Midlands **TUC Dying to Work campaign's** recommendations into it's employment practice to see terminal illness recognised as a '*protected characteristic*'.

A report was agreed at Cabinet and signed with UNISON and Midlands TUC secretaries Adrian Turner and Lee Barron in April. An employee with a terminal illness will have a '*protected period*' where they cannot be dismissed as a result of their condition; details on [www.wolvestuc.org.uk](http://www.wolvestuc.org.uk)

TUC **Heart Unions** campaign during Valentine's week - UNISON, UNITE, UCU and GMB members joined Wolverhampton & Bilston TUC's campaigning; six came out in the snow in Wednesfield and seven in the rain in Bilston to hand out Valentine flowers to 250 people and spread the trade union message as part of a national campaigning week.



Photos taken of supporters for social media appear on the front cover of this report.

### **TUC's Great Jobs Campaign / Heart Unions week 2018:**

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February Wednesfield High St stall 10.30am &

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February Bilston Market stall 10.30am  
also activity outside McDonalds, W'ton



**Wolverhampton Palestine Solidarity Campaign** has again been active throughout the year. Several film shows, public meetings, vigil, a garden party and a lobby of Parliament were held.

Figures published by the Office for National Statistics last October showed that **West Midlands workers are still £30 a week worse off than they were before the financial crash.** Real wages in the West Midlands were 7% below their 2008 level. Nationally, inflation has overtaken wage growth for the last 6 months, so the TUC is concerned that 2018 could be even worse. Once housing costs have been taken out, average household income in the West Midlands is £370pw, the lowest in UK.

**Bob Simm** local sacked senior W'ton PCS rep from Civil Service and member of PCS Ministry of Justice Executive has been giving regular updates of campaign. New inflexible attendance procedures being used to penalise staff and especially reps. His Tribunal hearing is due – offers of support came from delegates of different unions.

**This year's TUC demo at the Tory conference in Birmingham**

**Sunday 30th September 2018**

**Workers' Memorial Day** 28th April. More than 70 people were in attendance; ours is one of the largest events in the country. POA EC speaker.



Wolverhampton's annual **Workers' Memorial Day:**  
**12.30pm Saturday 28th April 2018**

@ Cenotaph, St Peter's Square Wolverhampton WV1 1TS  
*Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living.*

**1st May** 2017 was the 125th anniversary of the first Wolverhampton May Day in 1892 - around 300 came, one of our best attendances, over 200 meals served by the Indian Workers Association. 4,000 homes leafleted. *Tim Martin, Reckless B-Boy crew, Abba the Rastafarian Poet, Bricklin Delta Blues band and One Love sound system* entertained. *The Pegasus Pub* our May Day venue was saved from threat of closure; we had assisted in the campaign.

The new LP candidate Eleanor Smith, who succeeded our Vice President Rob Marris retiring MP, was introduced. She was elected a month later after promoting Corbyn's leadership in her social media and had a huge turnout in volunteers. Under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership the Labour Party has grown to half a million, the largest political party in western Europe. His election campaign speeches were heard by mass crowds all over Britain and he got across political messages that engaged people to vote and overturned a massive poll deficit. He has inspired a new generation of potential activists despite the attacks from some of his own MPs, the Party machine and almost all forces of the media. Labour MPs Pat McFadden and Emma Reynolds were also victorious.



Wolverhampton May Day  
Committee's **next event:**

**7pm Tuesday 1st May 2018**  
@Pegasus, Whitmore Reans WV6 0QQ

[www.1stmaywolverhampton.org.uk](http://www.1stmaywolverhampton.org.uk)

We had a stall with WB&DTUC merchandise sold again at this year's annual **Women Chainmakers' festival** in July, organised by Midlands TUC in Cradley High Street, the biggest annual celebration of women's history in Britain. It celebrates the achievements of 800 women chainmakers against the local employers who sought to deny them their rights. The women, led by trade unionist Mary Macarthur, founder of the National Federation of Women Workers, met them with with forceful opposition and won a minimum wage in 1910, following a ten week strike.

**Women Chainmakers' festival will be on SATURDAY 7th July 2018**

**11am-5pm, stalls, entertainment , re-enactments and union banner procession along Cradley High Street**

see [www.wolvestuc.org.uk](http://www.wolvestuc.org.uk) volunteers needed to help staff our stall

The Conservative government announced that it was closing 150 Tax Offices, including the Wolverhampton office at Crown house, which employs over 500 staff. Employees will inevitably face redundancy, this office could be closed within the next two years. The impact on Wolverhampton will be huge with the loss of £millions from the local economy.



We had a speaker from the branch and PCS union members were joined by members of WB&DTUC executive committee to petition Wolverhampton last May.

Another speaker on the hot topic of **Universal Basic Income**, an income paid to individuals, as a right of legal residence, without means testing or requirements to work. The non taxable payment should be sufficient to cover basic needs. Everyone who qualifies for the payment will receive it from birth till death. Having a basic income in place will provide a secure floor for people to build on rather than a safety net with holes so big many fall through. High housing costs main problem for low incomes, UBI may not address this. Would need to be set at least pension rate for pensioners. UBI support from right wing based on abolition of benefits system and has been put forward as an answer for a future more automated society. Lot still to be worked out, it would be a medium/long term policy development. Pilot projects are taking place in Fife and elsewhere in the world currently.

**WASPI** fights the injustice done to all women born in the 1950s affected by the changes to the state pension law (1995/2011 acts) raising pension age for women from 60 to 68 and to achieve fair transitional state pension arrangements. They raise awareness and offer speakers. 12,000 women in Wolverhampton affected.



National, Local Waspi Day

May 2017 held in Queen's Square, Wolverhampton; speakers included Lynn Trannah Wolverhampton, Cannock & Staffs WASPI who had also spoken at our meeting; contact [cswwaspi@gmail.com](mailto:cswwaspi@gmail.com)



Thompsons (trade union) Solicitors spoke on the latest attack by this Tory government on access to justice and the rights of working people who sustain injuries due to their employers' negligence. Currently...If you are injured and it's not your fault any legal fees, for a lawyer to fight for you to get back any wages you have lost and damages for your injuries, are paid by the person responsible for your injuries. This is your right. **The government wants 95% of people injured at work and elsewhere (1 million per year) to be left with no funding for legal help.** [www.feedingfatcats.co.uk](http://www.feedingfatcats.co.uk)

We took part in the *National Conversation on Immigration*, held our own debate and made an agreed submission.

The Supreme Court unanimously ruled in July 2017, that the government's sky-high **tribunal fees were unlawful**, accepting UNISON's argument that the fees are restricting working people's access to justice. What's more, the government will have to refund any fees paid since 2013 — costing £27m.

When tribunal fees of up to £1,200 per case were introduced in 2013, the number of cases taken dropped by nearly 70%. Only union members and the well-off were guaranteed access to justice. Low-paid and insecure workers all but lost their ability to take cases, whether on non-payment of the national minimum wage, unauthorised deductions from pay, or even unfair dismissal. The number of discrimination cases plummeted too, hurting women, workers with disabilities, black and minority ethnic and LGBT+ workers who had been unfairly treated or harassed. It's a massive win for working people, and we congratulate UNISON for doggedly pursuing this case.

Saturday, 12 Aug 2017: Fascist Britain First group (the group linked to the murder of Jo Cox MP) tweeted about a national mobilisation at which 21 of them attended a 'Day of Action' which Wolves TUC found out about with less than 24hrs notice but called an **anti-fascist mobilisation** along with Black Country UAF and passers by joined to to make it know they were not Welcome. We were the Express & Star front page.

We complained to Wolverhampton Chief Superintendent of the way police were directed to act on the day and had support from Wolverhampton City Council leader, who said:

*"The impact of the Britain First event on trading in the City Centre was marked and we feel a return will worsen the local economy further. Community Cohesion is also under threat as the Bilal Mosque on Newhampton Road was fearful that the demonstrators would target them."*



177,000 people in UK took advice from our webpage on the **National Minimum Wage**, on average spending 4 ½ minutes reading our advice.

Adult hourly rate of the national minimum wage 25 years+ is £7.50.

It will rise on 1st April 2018 to £7.83/hr.

A speaker reported on Yoo Recruit, set up a year ago by Wolverhampton Council offering temporary public service contracts – worked very well compared to other agencies. Taken over by Adecco who moved office from walk-in site without telling some of own staff and users. New office is inaccessible and out of sight. No consultation with Labour Group or cabinet members done by officers.

TUC

**A new deal for working people**

TUC March and Rally

**Saturday 12 May 2018, London**

Stop press:

The bigot Donald Trump has cancelled his visit to Britain which was expected in February. A TUC national demo had been expected and protests had been planned on the anniversary of his inauguration in Wolverhampton but were called off.

We get regular delegate reports of the Midlands TUC Pensioners' Network. **Tenth Anniversary of the Bus Pass campaign bus tour** likely to be in Wolverhampton midday Wednesday **11th April 2018**. Campaign **SUCCESS** by Midlands TUC Pensioners Network - as government dropped its plans for Bedroom Tax for Pensioners.

**Shrewsbury 24 campaign** have now received final statement of reasons from CCRC why not referring to Court of Appeal. The campaign has taken further legal advice and a letter of claim was sent this month challenging their decision. reply due early January 2018. Judicial Review in Court of Appeal could follow, we donated £200 towards legal costs after picket Terry Renshaw spoke at our meeting - he's been seeking justice for 45 years.

*The cost of childcare for young children has risen almost 5 times faster than wages in the West Midlands since 2008, according to new analysis published by the TUC.*

*The analysis reveals that in the West Midlands the average wages of those with a one-year-old child rose by 14% in cash terms – although pay is still falling in real terms – between 2008 and 2016. However, over the same period, childcare costs shot up by 67%.*

We had a speaker on **Land Value Taxation**, a tax on unimproved land value in Labour's manifesto – the press's misnamed Garden Tax, a more equitable distribution of the Land Values that are created by the whole community. . It would stop developers sitting on derelict land or speculating on massive land price increases due to major public sector infrastructure improvements. Efficient and easy to collect, could replace other unfair taxes. Existing tax systems were drawn up by large landowners. [www.labourland.org](http://www.labourland.org)

**The Wolverhampton Worker**, monthly newspaper of Wolverhampton Trades and Labour Council (what we used to be called), from 1913-15 was deposited in Wolverhampton Archives and is ONLINE to read at [www.wolvestuc.org.uk](http://www.wolvestuc.org.uk)

*History of Wolverhampton, Bilston & District Trades Union Council* available £1 at our meetings or free to read online: [www.wolvestuc.org.uk/index.php/wbdtuc/589-wbdtuc1865-1990](http://www.wolvestuc.org.uk/index.php/wbdtuc/589-wbdtuc1865-1990)

Years 1990-1995 are in Wolverhampton City Archives and annual reports 1996 to present are on our website.



**TUC Trade Union Studies Representatives' 2018 Programme** - sign up now...for January, April and September at Shrewsbury & Stoke (and Wolverhampton if sufficient numbers) see [www.wolvestuc.org.uk](http://www.wolvestuc.org.uk)

Union Reps Stage 1 ten weeks 9am – 4pm on Mondays

Health & Safety Stage 1 ten weeks 9am – 4pm on Tuesdays



**Wolverhampton TUC facebook page has over 500 fans and our posts were viewed 16,700 times in 2017.**

## **Fundraising @ music festivals**

Wolverhampton TUC has sent local volunteer teams to work on the bars at music festivals for the last nineteen years, raising £38,000. Half this money we use for adverts and donations to the Morning Star and the rest for Wolves TUC campaigning.

This year £2,000 was raised by our volunteers at Glastonbury and Latitude festivals; other groups raised £300k in total.

### ***What is expected of you?***

- to work shifts for each day of a festival on a bar serving pints, usually 6 hours.
- hard work, reliability, honesty and a sense of humour.
- No experience needed, all volunteers get on site training of bar operation & health and safety .



### ***What you get?***

- free entry to a festival (which would cost often £200+).
- 2 free meals & drinks each day you work;
- subsidised bar, open after hours, secure camping with hot showers and flush toilets; tips are shared communally.

**We are recruiting for places at 2018 festivals working with us.**

**Deadline: 20th March - all details on [www.wolvestuc.org.uk](http://www.wolvestuc.org.uk)**

**Tolpuddle + Latitude festivals** are on at the same time and bar volunteers go 12–16 July; we share cars and visit the seaside. There maybe other festivals too, possibly Leeds again.

We are currently awaiting a response from Battersea & Wandsworth TUC who own Workers Beer Company about the payment of £7/hour which is below NMWage.

More people viewed our website [www.wolvestuc.org.uk](http://www.wolvestuc.org.uk) with a total of **205,000 page views by people in the UK on our site** last year. The most popular pages were: national minimum wage, homepage, local unemployment, Chainmakers' festival, volunteering at festivals and MPs surgery details.

Our main email base maintained at 182 local union contacts; we have several other databases of people interested in other activities locally. People sign up directly from our website.



*WB&DTUC delegates assisted Midlands TUC touring Wolverhampton and Dudley with the Britain Needs a Pay Rise campaign.*

2017, saw a **drop in affiliations to WB&DTUC from the previous year's high of 25 to 16 branches; 10,813 affiliated members down from 18,216.** ASLEF 236, Community W'ton Craft, CWU W'ton, FBU, GMB X13, Musicians Union, NUT, RMT, UCU University, UNISON W'ton General, UNISON West Mids Police staff, UNISON Sandwell General, UNISON University, UNITE Faith Workers, UNITE W6150, UNITE WM6151-NULMW affiliated to us.

As a trades union council, **we meet third Thursday every month** currently at the UNITE office to discuss issues of joint concern to the local labour movement and make democratic decisions to organise events and campaigns which bring the message of trade unionism to the wider public - all welcome. Delegate meetings averaged 12.6 attendance, down after last year's increase. 29% of attendees were women. Affiliated branches continue to elect fewer delegates to us than their allocations. Only half of affiliated branches sent delegates to our meetings although almost all of the branches were involved in our activities this year. It is our activities and campaigning that have continued to draw in new visitors and delegates.

#### **Thanks to outgoing officers:**

President: Marie Taylor (UNITE)      Vice-President: Rob Marris (UNITE)  
Treasurer: John Grant (UCU)      Auditor: Adrian Turner (UNISON)

*Nick Kelleher, Secretary WB&DTUC January 2018*

# EVENTS in 2018

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018 **Annual General Meeting WB&DTUC**

Saturday February 3<sup>rd</sup> national **NHS demo**, London

**TUC Love Unions week:** Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February Wednesfield High St stall 10.30am & Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February Bilston Market stall 10.30am

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February WB&DTUC Delegate meeting

1<sup>st</sup> week March 2018 **Midlands TUC Women at Work Week**

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March WB&DTUC Delegate meeting

March 19<sup>th</sup> **deadline for festival applications** [www.wolvestuc.org.uk](http://www.wolvestuc.org.uk)

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April WB&DTUC Delegate meeting

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April **Workers' Memorial Day** 12.30pm  
@cenotaph/Workers' Memorial Day Tree, W'ton.

**Tuesday 1st May, 7pm Workers' Day @ Pegasus WV6 0QQ**

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May **TUC demo**, London - *A new deal for working people*

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May & 21<sup>st</sup> June WB&DTUC Delegate meetings

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July **Cradley Women Chainmakers' festival** from 11am,  
Cradley Heath High St

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July WB&DTUC Delegate meeting

*no August WB&DTUC Delegate meeting*

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September **Burston Strike School Rally**, 3 free places are sponsored by Wolves TUC each year

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September WB&DTUC Delegate meeting

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> Sept **TUC demo at the Tory conference** Birmingham

WB&DTUC Delegate meetings:

Thursdays 18<sup>th</sup> October, 15<sup>th</sup> November & 20<sup>th</sup> December 2018