

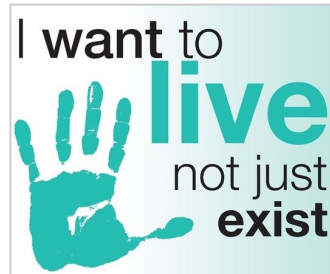
## Pay claim consultation

The Branch has been consulting members during June about how to respond to the proposed 1% pay increase being offered to all Higher Education pay points (from 1 August).

This is now the fifth successive year of minimal pay offers. These add up to approximately 2.2%. Over the same period the cost of living increased by more than

15%. In real terms pay has not just been "restrained" it has been cut significantly.

UNISON members work hard to provide a positive experience for students and deserve to be valued and rewarded.



*Consultation results are on page 3.*

## Supporting our members

The Branch is proud of the work we've been doing to support individual members. This past year we have referred several cases to the Regional legal team. Compensation was received by a member of staff who had suffered industrial injury over a number of years.

As well as helping and/or representing members who are facing disciplinary procedures we have:

- \* supported individuals with advice such as how to prevent a work-related issue from escalating
- \* assisted with regrading issues
- \* supported staff who have been off sick
- \* supported people who were suffering abuse in the workplace.

**Can you support your colleagues in these valuable ways?**

**We need more people to train as Stewards... please get in touch.**

**Got a story, a question, an idea? Could you volunteer some time? Just need to get in touch?**

UNISON office  
N2.N6 Rutherford College  
Tel 01227 82 3203

email: [unison@kent.ac.uk](mailto:unison@kent.ac.uk)

**UNISONmatters** is also online:  
<http://blogs.kent.ac.uk/unison/>



## 2013 Annual General Meeting

The 2013 AGM was originally due to take place in January but had to be rescheduled due to insufficient attendance. Here is a summary of the proceedings of the rearranged AGM, held on 9th April 2013.

49 members were present plus Suzanne Tipping (Area Organiser). Apologies were received from 56 members and from Simon Bolton (Regional Officer). Christine Hooper chaired the meeting.

The minutes of the 2012 AGM were agreed and there were no matters arising.

Reports were received from the Branch Officers and questions relating to these were answered. The Treasurer reported that income for the year ending 31st December was £5,326.94; Expenditure £6,847.05.

The nomination of Officers and Stewards then took place - see the list on page 3.

The Area Organiser gave a brief talk to the meeting and thanked the Committee for their work in the Branch.

Other business:

1. Changes to statutes and ordinances—a paper from the Branch for the JSNCC was tabled.
2. Pay Award—a paper setting out the claim for 2013/14 was tabled (see our headline story on page 1)
3. Members were made aware of a special screening of *Happy Lands*, a film set at the time of the General Strike of 1926, at the Gulbenkian Cinema on 24th April.
4. Unsocial Hours Payments were discussed. When these were proposed to be phased out 4 years ago HR had stated that expected rises in pay would compensate for the loss of unsocial hours payments this year. Pay rises since then have been very small and have not closed the gap at all. The Branch is challenging this—more details on page 4.
5. Shift Rotas in Campus Watch—Estates is consulting the Branch regarding proposed changes to these.

A buffet lunch was provided after the meeting.

If time had allowed, a proposal would have been tabled at the AGM to amend Branch Rules. If agreed this would have changed the quorum needed for meetings from 25% of all members to 10%. This may be raised at next year's AGM instead (but naturally that will need to be a quorate meeting for any Rule change to be valid).

### Contributors to this edition

Karen Adams,  
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### Got a story? Get in touch!

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## Branch Committee 2013

**At the branch AGM on 9th April the following were elected/re-elected to the Branch Committee:**

**Treasurer** - Jayne Bloodworth

**Health & Safety Officers** (job-share) - Ann Stewart-Paver and Chris Thornton

**Equal Opportunities** (job-share) - Karen Adams and Peter Walker

**Welfare Officer** - Karen Adams

**Publicity/Communications Officer** - Derek Baldwin

**Retired Members' Coordinators** (job-share) - Annie MacDonald and John Whyte

**Recruitment/Membership Officer** - Mark Vella

## Noticeboard monitors

A number of members very kindly maintain our Unison noticeboards around the campus, but we have a few vacancies and would appreciate help...

Items for noticeboards are sent via internal mail and it generally only takes a few minutes every now and then to take down old notices and to replace them with new ones. (And to remove any "rogue" notices, particularly at Kent Union election time!)

**The areas we need help in are as follows:**

- **Eliot college**
- **Keynes college**
- **R&D Centre**
- **Cornwallis NE**

## Pay Ballot—Result

The results are:

**ACCEPT pay offer: 33**  
**REJECT pay offer: 36**

Very close as usual and, although a slightly higher number of members replied this year, it is still a long way short of 100% response. I'm afraid I do not understand why people do not use their vote, abstaining is not part of the democratic process and doesn't help when gauging what the majority want.

**Christine Hooper**  
**Branch Steward**

## Branch Stewards:

Christine Hooper  
Phil Rogers  
Patrick Clark  
Chris Thornton  
Mark Vella

- **Estates dept.**
- **Library**
- **Marlowe building**



## Unsocial hours payments

The University intends to stop paying enhanced rates in July for people who work unsocial hours. The Branch believes the University should look at this issue again.

A protection arrangement for existing staff was negotiated nearly four years ago. The expectation was that during the transitional period pay would eventually have risen by around 10%. It was hoped this might "cushion" the loss of this payment. (Of course **all** staff would have had the benefit of this projected increase in pay... though none of us have in fact.)

Those of us not affected may find it hard to comprehend the impact this will have on our colleagues, some of whom have written to the Director of HR explaining this. Hopefully the VC is also very much aware of the problem too.

The university seems to think that there is a need for its staff to be available for longer opening times but that it is all right not to compensate them financially. We acknowledge that there are a lot of people who are very willing to work hours that allow them to be available for their family during what would commonly be considered core working hours. We are

sure that evening and weekend working suit those people very well. But staff who signed contracts that included the payment of unsocial hours working, and who are still expected to work unsocial hours, should rightfully carry on receiving that payment. These are colleagues of ours who are already relatively low paid and whose household budgets are under massive strain. Why is the University seemingly determined to make that worse?

A term that is over-used by employers nowadays, the University being no exception, is 'flexible'... and that is what the University should be. Sticking to the plan of ceasing the payment is, we are told, consistent with the 'Framework Agreement' and the aim of 'harmonisation'.

We recognise that there were issues with the former system. There was a lack of clarity on when the additional payment was triggered, for example. But simply withdrawing the payment did not address this.

**Please support your colleagues in their fight to retain the enhanced payments.**

As well as the offers and entitlements that UNISON membership brings with it, members are entitled to "Rulebook benefits". These include confidential welfare assistance including how to access advice on a range of issues (e.g. debt counselling), and help with costs like school uniforms, holidays, and essential items (e.g. fridge, washing machine).

The Branch has the custom of sending a card and, if the member is off long-term, can also send flowers/fruit.

We are not always aware of who is off sick so we need help from our members to keep track of this.

**If you are a UNISON member and you know of a UNISON member colleague who is off sick we invite you to contact the Branch Welfare Officer Karen Adams, [k.adams-273@kent.ac.uk](mailto:k.adams-273@kent.ac.uk)**

### Did you know...?

As a UNISON member you get free legal assistance if you sustain a personal injury through the legal assistance scheme provided by UNISON's lawyers, Thompsons Solicitors.

# Retired Members—maintaining contact

We have three get-togethers each year – two lunches at a restaurant (self-paid) and a Christmas “do” in the UNISON office on campus just before Christmas (paid for by the branch). Those who attend these events find them very enjoyable, meeting up with old friends, and we would heartily welcome more of you to come and join us. This year we have been to the Victoria Hotel, Canterbury and The Duck Inn at Petts Bottom. Members and their spouses/partners or friend are also welcome.

Dates for future events are:

- **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013** Christmas tea/coffee, with mince pies and sausage rolls in the UNISON office between 10am and 12noon.
- **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014** at The Victoria Hotel 12:30 for 1pm
- **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014** at Bybrook Barn Garden Centre (with restaurant) , Canterbury Rd, Ashford TN24 9JZ. We would meet at the delivery entrance for the Rutherford Kitchen at 10am (if a lift is wanted – please say below – a small contribution towards petrol, eg: £2 per person, would be welcomed).
- **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014** for tea/coffee, with mince pies and sausage rolls in the UNISON office.

The cost of mailings to home addresses is very high and we need to make economies so please would you return the slip below. You could send us your answers by email or tell us your answers by telephoning the office and leaving a voicemail.

Very much looking forward to hearing from you.

**Annie MacDonald (Retired Member Coordinator)**

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Please return this reply slip (or email/phone) to

**UNISON Office, Rutherford N2.N6, University of Kent, Giles Lane, Canterbury, CT2 7NX**

Your name			
Your address			
Postcode		Telephone number	
Email address			<i>&lt;- Very important if we are to cut costs</i>

Are you interested in being kept in touch with the UNISON Branch?	Yes	No
Would you like to continue to receive correspondence from the branch?	Yes	No
Are you interested in joining in with the get-togethers (if available of course)?	Yes	No

If you answered 'Yes', please let us know if you will try to attend the events listed above. (It is important that you supply this information so that Annie can contact you if the dates, venue, or times change.)

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