

# MINIMUM WAGE - I.O.D.

A survey published by the Institute of Directors (IOD) suggested a minimum pay rate, wait for it, of £1.50 to £2 for school leavers and people in training.

Although IOD members did not have much idea about what hourly rate would be acceptable for all workers under a Labour government, there was general support for fixing a minimum for school leavers and those in training.

IOD members were concerned that a minimum wage which raised the costs of employing the unskilled, part-timers, mothers returning to work, and the young, would lead to more employers taking on more experienced staff instead. So does this mean that £1.50 an hour is too much?.

We already know of one large employer in Mansfield who deliberately recruits young workers with no previous work experience, so that they are totally unaware of how poor their wages and working conditions are. They also have no concept of trade unionism.

Heartwarming isn't it to see the bosses

quibbling that £1.50 an hour is too high a wage. With JSA to be introduced fully in October, and the increased coercion this will bring to force the unemployed into low paid jobs, you can understand their concern that at £1.50 per hour, they will be setting the minimum at too high a rate.

Notts TU News is quite happy to put forward £4.15 per hour as a minimum wage, as a right for all workers. Not negotiable, only upwards.

## LETTER to the EDITOR

Dear Sir,  
Why May Day?

*I refer to the interesting article in the May/June TU News regarding the origins of May Day as a workers' holiday. Your contributor is correct in placing the modern identification of 1st May as the workers' day, but the origins of a May Day holiday, not associated with any religious festival (the original holy-days) go back very much further than the International Labour Congress of July 1889. Since medieval times this was the day for workers to relax and celebrate, often with Maypoles, singing, dancing and even drinking. Currently some of our more rabid Tory MPs have stated that May Day is some kind of evil foreign invention, and should be abolished. Having stolen just about everything else in this country, they now want to steal the workers' history!*

*Fraternally,  
Brian Howes  
(NUCPS)*

## EDITORIAL

After continual attempts by the media to write trade unionism off - apparently we are dying out, we are still here. In fact, the need for trade union organisation is as great now as it has ever been. Witness over 1300 Employment Rights cases dealt with in 2½ years by Mansfield Unemployed Workers Centre (MUWC), of which 3 were in trade union organised workplaces - and were passed on to the appropriate union. In 95% of the cases the problems would not have arisen had there been a trade union organised in the workplace. That is why Notts CATUC have made the promotion of trade unionism a priority.

That is why we publish Notts TU News, and Notts TU News is not going away - in fact the opposite. From the September issue, we will be looking at Notts TU News expanding to 8 pages. However to do this we need your support, your articles and your ideas.

In this issue we feature the dispute at Nottingham City Council, Derbyshire Firefighters and a follow up to McDonalds (Ronald doesn't like us). We would have liked an article on the CWU Royal Mail strike, we did ask, but I reckon they must have posted it and it got held up, can't think why.

Thanks to Unison Bassetlaw 'A' and Worksop and District TUC for the donations.

Deadline for Issue 7 will be Monday August 26th. Notts TU News, c/o MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts. NG18 1EY.

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# NOTTS TU NEWS

ISSUE 6  
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July/August 1996

Published by the Nottinghamshire Association of Trades Union Councils

## TRIKINGLY SUCCESSFUL! 95% STRIKE AGAINST POLICY THAT WAS THE DAY THAT WAS...

Nottingham City UNISON members struck in force on Friday in what the branch has described as a "marvellous response"

Around 95% of UNISON members were on strike- this despite the campaign from the Council to encourage people to break the strike-including the threat of Tory anti union laws. Not only was the day a huge success but 100 people joined UNISON with only 30 resigning.

UNISON Assistant Branch Secretary, Mick Moreton, said; "it is clear that the Council seriously underestimated the level of opposition to the Compulsory Redundancy Proposals. The vast majority of UNISON members indicated their protest through a tremendous show of support for the strike. Significantly, the action received a strong and positive response from the public, who are aware of the detrimental impact the reduction in jobs would have upon vital services."

Following on from Friday the branch has again written to the Authority asking for a meeting. UNISON hopes that the Council takes this opportunity and decides to negotiate on the issue.

If, however, the Council still refuses to meet then the branch will start it's campaign for selective action. A UNISON News will be produced next week to update members on this issue and detailing the next round of Workplace Meetings.

The Council's Civic Reception on the day was cancelled at the Council House because only ONE member turned up.

The "Jewel in the Crown" of the Leisure Service; Clifton Leisure Centre, was closed when only one member of staff turned up. The UNISON members there organised a picket all day long.

100% of the UNISON members in Housing Benefits struck.

Clifton, Radford, Strelley, Meadows, Bulwell, Crabtree and Homelessness Housing Offices were shut. Bestwood and Lenton Offices "opened" with 3 staff each. A challenger for the "Picket Line Of The Day" was at NCCW with around 30 gardeners picketing Eastcroft - over 90% struck.

Lawrence House stewards reported an even better turnout than 1989 - despite the fact that UNISON pickets were wearing "Stan the Stag" antlers!

Central personnel was slightly understaffed with only the Assistant Chief Executive, her secretary and the Industrial Relations Officer (!) at work.

All the Play Centres in the City Centre were shut with 100% of playworkers on strike.

...and 100% of Community Development Workers for that matter.

Development Stewards reported a 95% turnout with one member of staff trying to open Wollaton VTA.

Only one member turned up to work at I.T.

Parking was free at Broadmarsh and Fletcher gate car parks as 100% of UNISON members struck. Trinity Square was kept open by the "Labour" Council paying for a private contractor to break the strike.

Over 90% struck at NCBW - resulting in (so we are lead to believe) a rather despondent Assistant Director.

100% UNISON members struck at the City Information Centre which was only kept open by the use of 4 strike breakers from the Chief Executives Department. The service they offered was summed up by a member of the public who asked; "Are they new?"

Woodthorpe Grange also reported



ALWAYS PROVIDE AVANCE NOTICE OF STRIKES.

an over 90% turnout. High Rise Surveillance was also somewhat restricted with 100% of members on strike. Even Postal workers joined in with postal vans refusing to cross picket lines at the City.

....And yet Councillor Chapman said it was business as usual -mind you he did say that UNISON members would vote "no"!

## CONTACTS LIST

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## CODA (Community Data)

Community Computer Resources, Expertise, Bureau Services and Training in and around Nottingham CODA is a not-for-profit voluntary sector, community computer project based in the Lace Market area of Nottingham, established in 1982. Our aim is to expand the understanding and use of computers for the benefit of others by providing resources, expertise, training and services to the voluntary sector of the Greater Nottingham economy. We work with organisations of all kinds neighbourhood and community groups and centres, Trades Unions, arts groups, worker coops, collectives, community businesses and campaign groups. Our users do a wide variety of work anything from cashflow projections to mailing lists, from posters and leaflets to newsletters and periodicals, from Annual Reports to campaign materials, price lists to press releases. CODA can help your group take advantage of computer power and make the work you do more effective.

In our resources room we have 6 Pentium PCs, all running Windows95 and with CD-ROM fitted. All our machines have Microsoft Office Professional Word, Excel, Access and Powerpoint, Adobe PageMaker, CorelDRAW and Micrographx Picture Publisher as standard. We also have other programs too, such as Adobe PhotoShop, Astound, PaintShop Pro and WordPerfect. We have full colour A4 image scanning and text reading facilities, top quality A3 colour inkjet and A4 600dpi black-and-white laser printing resources.

CODA users can also access the Internet. By joining our Internet group you can surf the World Wide Web, subscribe to newsgroups and send and receive email via your own address. In the near future we hope to be able to help groups construct their own Web sites and publish them on the Net.

There is a sliding scale annual affiliation fee for groups wishing to use CODA. After affiliation, access to and usage of our computers is completely free of charge. You only pay for 'consumable' items print-outs, disks, address labels and so on. There is also an on-line time charge for Internet use.

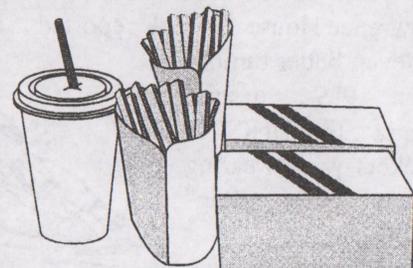
We also offer a range of bureau services including short run quality colour and laser printing from disk, address label and envelope printing, newsletter, leaflet and poster production and image and text scanning. If your group already has computer facilities we can provide a hardware and software troubleshooting, installation and upgrade service.

Additionally CODA has built an excellent reputation for delivering top quality training programmes. We offer a bespoke service, tailoring training to meet your needs in the following areas: word processing, spreadsheets, finances and payroll, database creation and management, desktop publishing, computer graphics, image and text scanning. We also offer short introductions to the Internet and multimedia. Affiliated groups enjoy substantial discounts on the cost of training. You are most welcome to talk to us about your training needs without obligation.

If your group or organisation is interested in what CODA has to offer, why not give us a call on 0115 952 6146. Alternatively fax us on 0115 924 0796 or send an email to [coda@codadata.demon.co.uk](mailto:coda@codadata.demon.co.uk) if you have access to the Net. If you are in the area, why not drop in for a chat and a look around? CODA is located at 7b Broad Street, off Hockley.

We're open to the public from Tuesday Friday 9.30am-12.30pm and 1.30-4.30. On Wednesdays we close at 3.30pm.  
Rob Raynham

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## DERBYSHIRE FBU APPEAL

You should be aware that Derbyshire Fire Brigades Union members are having £1.3 million worth of budget cuts imposed on them, which affects "front line services".

The "friendly" Labour authority is pulling out all the stops to use the Tory anti trades union laws against them, including a high court injunction to halt the first strike - which the authority lost, and has cost them tens of thousands of pounds.

The Fire Brigades Union after hours of talks through ACAS put a substantial offer to the authority which would have saved all the front line services and averted the strike. The authority for their part were not interested. As a consequence the first strike took place on Monday 10th June with a series of strikes to follow.

Any assistance you can give the Fire-fighters in Derbyshire, either morally, physically or financially would be greatly appreciated.

Any cheques should be made payable to "DERBYSHIRE FBU HARDSHIP FUND" and addressed to - Steve McNeil 4 Gascoigne Drive Spondon Derby DE21 7GL or Molly Pickering 131 Haven Bank Lane Littleover Derby DE23 7AF

Alan Poxon - FBU Regional Secretary

## OPEN LETTER TO McDONALDS

Nottingham and District TUC wrote to their local McDonalds regarding Trade Union organisation and recognition. We have no hesitation in repeating this action through the pages of Notts TU News.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing on behalf of the above organisation which is the co-ordinating centre for local trade union branches and the local representative of the national TUC.

A major part of our role is to spread knowledge and awareness of the role of trade unions, and especially to give workers a better understanding of the benefits of belonging to a trade union. We have in the past liaised with local schools and colleges to this end.

Members of the Council were impressed with the remarks of Paul Preston, McDonald's UK President, in the High Court on the 5th July 1994, when he observed of McDonalds workers that "it's their right to join a trade union if they so choose".

I am therefore writing to ask you if you are willing to liaise with us in making available to your workers relevant information about trade unions and how they might be of benefit to your workers. We would be very interested in discussing with you whether you would be interested in our proposal firstly in principle; and secondly, the means by which this could best be achieved to our mutual advantage.

I look forward to receiving a positive response from you and to hearing from you in the near future. In the meantime, if you require any further information from ourselves on any aspect of this proposal, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours sincerely  
Jon O'Neill

Secretary Notts & A.T.U.C.

## NOTTS TRADE UNION SAFETY COMMITTEE

Over the past few months, the TUSC has made steady progressive improvement in all aspects. Apart from the number of claims being processed with a view to compensation, there has been an increase in general enquiries relating to Health and Safety from various sources. More recently, there have been several requests for risk assessments.

TUSC generated a lot of publicity during National Hazards Week, 24th June - 28th June, including a live interview on the Jeff Owen show on Radio Nottingham.

Along with the Voluntary Sector Training Service and MUWC we will be jointly organising a one day seminar on Health and Safety for the voluntary sector at the Denewood Centre on the 13th July. It is hoped to organise a similar event with Mansfield Volunteer Bureau in early autumn.

Finally in October as part of



## NOTTS OFFA - Solidarity in Action

Nottinghamshire One Fund For All (OFFA) is the fundraising arm of the Mansfield Unemployed Workers Centre (MUWC). Notts OFFA is registered with the TUC, and is run by contributors.

In the last few weeks we have scored some notable successes. Thanks to the help of Unison and GMB we now have a "check-off" arrangement for Notts OFFA with Ashfield District Council. This will enable employees to make regular contributions to OFFA through deductions from their wage packets.

We have linked up with the Workers Beer Company to provide teams at the festivals at which they are running the bar franchises.

Our first team of Trade Unionists and unemployed activists have just

European Health and Safety Week we will be organising a "Good Health is Good Business" Seminar for the business community. This is being organised with the support of TUC, Midlands TUC, North Notts TEC and the HSE.

For more information on Notts TUSC, contact Tony at MUWC on (01623) 424720, to arrange free tests in Nottingham contact Ian at 118 Workshop on (0115) 9582369.

returned from Finsbury Park where they worked the bars, and got to see Madness on the Saturday, and the Sex Pistols return on Sunday. In return for their hard work they get in for free, get free beer, and raise money for Notts OFFA. This year we will also be running a team at Phoenix, and at the Reading Festival. Next year we will attend more festivals.

We will also be jointly organising two social events. The first on August 11 at Kirkby-in-Ashfield will follow the Ashfield Show and is jointly organised with Sutton-in-Ashfield GMB. The second event in October is being organised by The Miners Next Step (NUM) and ourselves and will be in Mansfield.

Can we welcome EMA members in Nottinghamshire who responded to their recent National Appeal by becoming regular contributors to Notts OFFA.

To find out more about OFFA, to arrange a speaker etc, please contact Jon O'Neill at MUWC (01623) 424720

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Contact Terry Oldham on (0115) 936 9369

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