



Carnegie library occupied!

The historic library in Herne Hill, Carnegie Library, has been occupied by community groups and supporters of the Library. As we go to press the occupation is ongoing.

The library was due to close on 1 April, but the Friends of Carnegie group organised a farewell party that turned into an occupation when people refused to leave.

Although council management turned up and have stopped new people going in, occupiers are committed to staying in.

The protestors put out a series of demands, including: To keep all Lambeth libraries fully open with professional library staff; the scrap their plans for closures and healthy living centres, and reverse their decision and; to continue to provide a full library service.

The council claim that the buildings will still be libraries—but a few bookshelves with no librarian and gym equipment doesn't sound like much or a library to the occupiers!

Just Say No—new campaign launched to reduce workplace stress

With so many staff leaving the Council it is clear that a tremendous strain is being put on some teams and individuals. Lambeth UNISON has had reports from many of our members with examples of being made to work through their lunch breaks, work unpaid overtime, and carry out tasks that are not in their pay grade.

The UNISON branch committee agreed to launch a campaign of awareness raising—Just Say No! — to help members stand up for their rights at work.

Jon Rogers, joint branch secretary outlined the importance of the campaign "If we don't stand up for ourselves as Council workers no one else will do so for us - no one should be pushed to work excessive hours or take on responsibilities they aren't being paid for."



Just Say

“No”



UNISON is opposed to the cuts that are tearing through local government. The cuts are ideological, based on the Conservatives desire to shrink the state sector which is impacting on not only council funding but also the NHS and education provision.

Our councillors aren't fighting these cuts, they are implementing them—although they claim to be protecting services for the most vulnerable that does not explain job cuts to Children's Social Care that are currently being pro-

posed.

We do not think that the council workforce should be made to bear the brunt of these cuts. That is why we have to stand up for ourselves to say:

- No to unpaid overtime
- No to working outside our pay grades
- No to missing our lunch breaks

If you have any concerns about how your work life is being affected by the redundancies, please call us [020 7926 2858](tel:02079262858)

Council ballot result—a big yes vote!

Thank you to everyone who took part in the consultative ballot around the library dispute. We had a brilliant outcome, 85% yes to industrial action. We are now taking that forward to look into calling an official ballot around not just libraries but against the job cuts that are tearing through the council.

Workfare to pay off rent arrears? Not a good idea

A steward in housing asks if the new Get set Go! Scheme is ethical and why Lambeth Council is doing it.

Lambeth Council Housing Services new welfare reform assistance scheme has taken a page out of the Workfare Book of Indentured Servitude and created a new way to “help” tenants get back into work called *Get Set Go*. Get Set Go get taken advantage of, more like.

Get Set Go targets tenants in rent arrears—mainly due to the horrible Bedroom Tax that has impacted on so many disabled people—and offers them some relief on those arrears in exchange for work experience in housing. But the reality is that Lambeth Council is using their position of power as the landlord to make up for low staffing levels by getting tenants in arrears to carry out unpaid work. The landlord is dangling the

carrot of rent arrears relief in front of tenants and then using them to fill staffing gaps.

There was no consultation with staff, unions, or residents before implementation. DPAC has publicly lambasted the council for the program. You can read more about this on the Disabled People Against Cuts website <http://dpac.uk.net/2016/01/lambeth-council-creates-its-own-brand-of-local-workfare-get-set-go/>

This scheme should be immediately stopped and there be full consultation with unions and tenant’s organisations. Workfare has no place in society, and it’s all the more shocking that social housing organisation would use such a scheme.

Stop the press! Corbyn is popular...

Despite rumours from the media that Corbyn is hated by everyone on the planet, a recent poll suggest he is now more popular than David Cameron. Ipsos MORI on 24 March put him 14 points ahead of Master Cameron. The media later confirmed that Corbyn is a demon

straight from hell come to undo all the good work that Saint Thatcher brought to our country, and were baffled as to why some people might think his left wing views represented common sense thinking. Cameron responded by promising “more austerity and sadness” for poor people.

Councillor accuses UNISON of being political— yes, trade unions should be political!

Ruth Cashman, striking library worker and joint Branch Secretary, replies to a Cabinet member who accuses Lambeth UNISON of being “engaged in a political campaign”

Jane Edbrooke, Cabinet Member responsible for the library closures has, criticised our union for engaging in a “political campaign alongside libraries groups rather than simply an industrial dispute”. There is some truth in her statements. Our strike is part of a wider fight to save Lambeth’s libraries.

Library workers have the privilege to spend our days helping Lambeth people access ideas and information. On Monday I helped a man apply for a 60+ photo card, showed someone how to apply for the *Life in The UK* Test, signposted a young pregnant woman to services who help vulnerable families who need extra support and helped people find the books that they wanted to read. Of course we want to save Libraries that we’ve watched change lives. We are passionate defenders of our services.

It is true that we don’t just take industrial action in isolation, we do it as part of a broad movement for the defence of library services in Lambeth and across the country. We stand with the Friends of Libraries Groups and others who use our libraries. We’ve had support from all kinds of people –

Lambeth pensioners, disability campaigns, MPs, educationalists, writers, celebrities and Mumsnet. We also consider ourselves as part of a national campaign against



cuts, Barnet and Lewisham library workers have visited our picket lines to show their solidarity.

We face a Tory government which has made massive cuts to services, privatised the NHS, cuts benefits for people who are already struggling and cuts tax for those who are already ridiculously rich. If we want to defeat them it will mean uniting the unions and community campaigners in solidarity, in the greatest tradition of the labour movement.

Lambeth UNISON is proud to be accused of standing with our communities and engaging in a political campaign against these cuts, we have had great support from Labour members in Lambeth as well as some Councillors, we hope Jane Edbrooke will follow them and will join us

Housing and Planning: The death of social housing in Britain

Eamon Maguire explains how the Housing and Planning Bill will reduce council housing even further and create sink estates



Protestors gather to defend social housing

There was another demonstration against the Housing and Planning Bill on Sunday 13th of march in central London. I think it is very important that we keep up the momentum on this for several reasons.

First, the government are showing signs of irresolution on the issue, with the "pay to stay" provision already being watered down. This provision was the one whereby any social housing tenants earning over a certain arbitrarily decided amount (forty thousand PA in London, thirty elsewhere) would be required to pay full market rent instead of the fixed social housing rate. They are now proposing a sliding scale of rent increase depending on how much over the limit the tenants' earnings are. This might seem like a very small

concession to justice and common sense given the other horrific provisions in the bill but it is a sign that second thoughts and amendments are possible as the bill goes through the House of Lords.

Second, the amendment already proposed is a clear sign that the government have not thought through the effects of the legislation in any realistic way. No great surprise there but some of the other provisions, particularly the sale of "high value voids", can be highlighted as leading to disaster in the same way as "pay to stay".

Finally, the issue is climbing up the agenda of the opposition parties at last. The shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, was due to speak at the demonstration although I cannot confirm if this actually took place. The Labour mayoral

candidate for London, Sadiq Khan, has also flagged up the issue of social housing as a significant part of his platform.

The provision of social housing in this city is the only factor that tempers the insanity of "the market" alone regulating the price of housing in London. As the price spirals upwards to dizzying heights driven by foreign investment portfolios we are looking at a sharp increase in the horror of homelessness and a whole generation of Londoners dispossessed of a chance of living anywhere near the neighbourhoods in which they grew up. It seems painfully obvious that the cabal of privileged millionaires currently running the country have no idea of the real world consequences of their decisions and will continue to attack our quality of life until we find a way to stop them.

I urge all members to keep a watchful eye on developments on this issue and join in future protests. Everything we can gain on this issue will have a huge impact on the future for thousands of our comrades, friends, relatives and neighbours.

Become a UNISON rep

All posts can be job shared. There is a facilities agreement allowing paid time off work to cover work duties and get training in the role.

UNISON Representatives

Should seek to

- Be the first and main point of contact for members with the union
- Recruit new members
- Work with members to establish an organised workplace
- Support and advise members on workplace issues
- Act as a spokesperson for the members they represent and for the branch
- Represent members with the employer, dependent on their experience and confidence
- Represent members within the branch committee
- Be answerable to the members they represent.

Health and Safety Reps

- To be accountable within branch arrangements to those they represent
- To have access to local negotiations so that the health and safety implications of any decisions are properly considered at an early stage
- To be trained in dealing with management and members
- To be valued equally with UNISON representatives and other representatives within the branch
- To be encouraged to work with UNISON representatives, branch officers and members
- To carry out workplace inspections every 13 weeks or when there has been a substantial change.

Call **020 7926 2858** for more details

Calendar

Saturday 5 March— Don't Steal our libraries march

Meet at Windrush Square
at 10.30am to march to
Tate South Lambeth Li-
brary

Friday 8 April — Radical Readers of Lambeth

Meet at Brixton Library at
7pm to discuss this
months book and enjoy
some radical chats and
discussions

Saturday 16 April — March for Homes, Health, Jobs, Education | End Austerity Now

Assemble: 1pm, Gower
Street / Euston Road,
London NW1
March to Trafalgar
Square

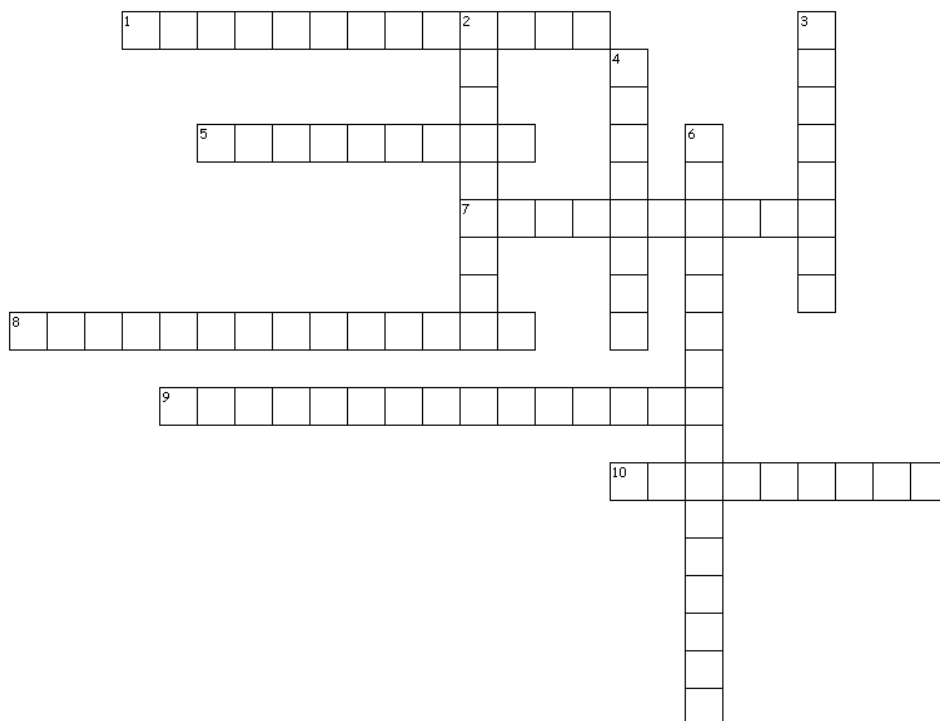
Wednesday 20 April— Lambeth Momentum

6.30 –8.30 Lambeth
Momentum meeting at
Stockwell Community
Centre (round the back of
Stockwell Tube)

Thursday 5 May—GLA and Mayoral elections

Elections taking place for
London Mayor and the
GLA. UNISON encour-
ages its members to vote
for Sadiq Khan for mayor
and Labour for the GLA.

April Crossword—Famous British politicians



Across

1. You'd feel safe with this person! Large stone walls from Labour
5. One word - Iraq
7. Founded the Labour Party
8. Newt lover, GLC
9. Suffragette, several sisters
10. Brixton boy, a bit grey

Down

2. - Running for London Mayor
3. Gave up his title to become a left wing MP
4. - Vauxhall Labour MP
6. Didn't like miners - or Lambeth!

Last months answers: Across 2. Bowie
Mural 3. Lambeth Town Hall
6. Windmill 9. Brixton market **Down** 1. South-
bank 4. Fridge bar 5. Electric Avenue 6.
Windrush sq. 7. London Eye

BRAINTEASE

Ah, Jim lad!

JOHN

Ag

To contribute to next months
issue, please submit articles,
pictures, letters or arguments to
MAthini@lambeth.gov.uk