



***Our newsletter is free to all members.***

*If you're not a member, we want you to join us.*

*You can still join UNISON easily on-line.*

*Just follow the link from our blog on Staff Central.*

## **University of Brighton Branch Newsletter**

# **April 2021**

As I write this, we've just heard that the University Executive Board have decided to close One World Nursery at the end of July.

The University used to have a childcare service across all sites. By 2010, this had dwindled to two, One World at Moulsecoomb and Phoenix at Grand Parade, which we now call City Campus.

In 2010, the decision was taken to close Phoenix and staff, parents and children came together to campaign against this. The campaign coincided with an upsurge of protests against austerity, cuts to public services and the raising of tuition fees to £9,000. A public campaign, involving lobbying the Board of Governors and embarrassing the University leadership, ended in the nursery provision being relaunched to allow members of the public to use it.

Ten years later, Phoenix was once again threatened and regrettably, closed before the pandemic. Two of the four staff members were

transferred to One World, but since March 2020, as you'd expect, the nursery has been closed, then open, then closed again.

The decision to close it for good is based on the financial subsidy required because the income nowhere near covers the costs of the operation. This is not unique across the University. Very few activities have income streams and most rely on full-time undergraduate fees for funding, either partially or in full. The mentality that some activities should only happen if they can pay for themselves would be disastrous if it were to apply universally and thankfully, the argument about needing to break even only seems to crop up when the University leadership seek to justify a poor decision.

The decision to close Hastings campus was apparently based on finance, and now the University doesn't have enough students!

*Ivan Bonsell, Branch Secretary*

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## **LGBT+ UNISON members meet up**



We are holding a meet up on Thursday April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 3pm for UNISON LGBT+ members to chat about the possibility of setting up a UNISON LGBT+ self organised group at Brighton Uni. This will be on teams.

We have invited Tony Faraway, an LGBT+ UNISON member to come along and speak to us. Tony has experience of setting up a UNISON LGBT+ group in his workplace which runs alongside and works with the staff network there, and is happy to come and chat about how this was accomplished.

If you identify as LGBT+ and would like to come along please email either :

Sarah [s.e.pickett@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:s.e.pickett@brighton.ac.uk)

Amanda [A.Bailey@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:A.Bailey@brighton.ac.uk)

and you will be sent an invite.

### **Monthly Members' Meetings**

We'll continue to host all-members' meetings for the next three months, held on-line via Teams in the UNISON Meeting team. The dates for your diary are:

***10am, Thursday 29th April***

***12pm, Wednesday 26th May***

***3pm, Tuesday 22nd June***

## Pay Campaign

As we approach the end of the academic year, we're still planning to campaign effectively to get our members a decent pay rise. As you'll be aware, we suffered a real terms pay cut in August 2020 and are still in dispute with employers over this, despite the fact that it was imposed on us.

UNISON's Industrial Action Committee, which signs off all national pay ballots, has agreed that we can have ballots at all university branches, providing that those branches decide they want to have one. This is because we won the vote on our motion to the Higher Education conference in January 2020 to make the ballots disaggregated i.e. a separate dispute at each university.

So what we're allowed to do is not exactly what we wanted. We wanted each branch to be involved without the bureaucracy and wasted time in establishing if they want to be themselves, but at least this method means that we'll be balloting across all the largest and most organised UNISON university branches, and we're proud to be in that group.

thanks  
for **n%** thing

UNISON  
the public service union

University staff have been offered 0% for  
the toughest year of our working lives

**Vote  
yes**

to strike  
for the  
pay we  
deserve

[unison.org.uk/thanksfornothing](https://unison.org.uk/thanksfornothing)

This branch committee voted unanimously to be included in the group of branches to take part, which means that unless there are any further complications, a full postal ballot of all our members will take place, probably throughout late May and June.

Ideally, we'll then see a significant proportion of university branches with a strike mandate to threaten action at the start of the next academic year unless we get a decent offer to settle this year, or a significant offer made from August 2021. We're not too fussy about the timing as long as we get a pay increase which rewards people for their hard work and deals with the shocking levels of poverty pay for the lower grades, many of whom have worked really hard, on site, throughout the last year.

## **Kill the Bill - UNISON opposition to the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Bill**

Trade unions have always supported and fought for the right to protest and campaign. Without the democratic right to do so, our predecessors would not have created trade unions and we would not be allowed to organise. The anti-democratic trade union restrictions in this country, some of the most draconian in Europe, are already with us, and a future government should repeal them straight away, but this proposed bill goes much further.

The PCSC bill makes it much easier for the police to curtail the right to protest if the establishment wants to prevent it, the excuse being that the protests might be disruptive. Protests have always been disruptive, but other than causing a bit of noise and inconveniencing people trying to use the roads, most protests are peaceful and give those protesting an idea of the power of collective action. Of course the most powerful collective action is that of working people withdrawing their labour - being very disruptive for the employers.

Ultimately the police are not neutral. Of course some of them are very well meaning, but they are there to protect property and "law and order" i.e. the status quo, where exploitation is deemed to be normal business and paying working people poverty wages is just the way it is.

We have to defend the right to protest against this system and all the injustices which come with it.



**@KILLTHEBILL\_BRIGHTON**  
**KILLBILLBTON**

**#wewontbesilenced** **#policecrackdownbill**  
**#blockthebill** **#righttoprotest** **#PCSCbill**

**NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION**  
**PROTEST**  
**1PM @ THE LEVEL**  
**APRIL 17TH**