



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

May 2021

Welcome to our May newsletter, which will feature lots of information about One World Nursery and our campaign to save it from closure.

First of all, we launched our consultative vote on whether members would be prepared to take strike action to save the Nursery and the jobs on 28th April. The vote is open until 5pm on Tuesday 11th May, so if you've not voted, please make sure you do so by then.

It's necessary for us to have a consultative vote because we need to be able to successfully convince the union's regional and national bodies that we stand a decent chance of winning a full postal ballot, before we can have one. With the dispute over Information Services job losses, we didn't manage to do this, for various reasons. This time, with a more clear-cut issue we're confident that if we achieve a decent vote and turnout in the consultation, we'll be able to progress to a ballot.

The rules that mean we require a 50%

turnout are down to the anti-trade union laws, which are some of the most draconian in Europe. Nowhere else do you need a majority of those voting to be able to act on the result. The logic of this approach means that you are assuming that those who don't vote have a specific opinion, which you will take into account even though they can't be bothered to express it. This is total nonsense and flies in the face of basic democracy, but it's laws that have been passed by those who don't want trade unions to be able to act on the democratic wishes of members.

Anyway, we have to accept this for the time being, so it's crucial that we get a decent consultative vote turnout. Please vote, and if you've already voted, please ask other members to make sure they do so as well. We owe it to our Nursery worker members to defend their jobs and the future of One World Nursery.

Ivan Bonsell, Branch Secretary

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Save One World Nursery !

Just a few reasons why we're opposed to the closure of One World

1. The Annual Subsidy is Tiny

We've been told that under normal circumstances, i.e. when we're not experiencing a global pandemic, the Nursery costs around £83,000 a year to run. That means the income from service users (i.e. parents and carers) is £83,000 a year less than the costs of running the Nursery (paying the staff and buying new equipment etc.)

To put this into context, £83,000 is what would get you:

- About one grade 10 member of staff (a middle manager)
- About 10% of the University's annual subscriptions
- About 5% of the University's annual consultancy bills
- About half of the cost of a Pro Vice Chancellor
- About a third of the cost of the Vice Chancellor

Or it's what the University would receive in income from:

- Just over nine full-time, UK undergraduates
- Six International undergraduates studying a science subject
- Two (!) International undergraduates studying medicine



In other words, the contribution the University is expected to make to keep the Nursery going is quite small in the great scheme of things, around 0.04% of the University's annual turnover of £197 million last year. (I'd do a graph, but it would look stupid.)

2. The Nursery is Brilliant

It's not just the people who work there who say that One World is amazing. It's won loads of awards and parents and ex-parents have been queueing up to say what a great place it is and how much their children appreciated being looked after and educated there.

The University agrees:

"..this decision is in no way a reflection on the work of the team at the One World Nursery. Some of you will know them personally, indeed your children may have benefitted from their outstanding care." (!)

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:

12pm, Wednesday 26th May

3pm, Tuesday 22nd June

3. The Nursery Widens Participation and Changes Lives

For decades, the University has been boasting about all the good things it does to encourage participation of higher education at all levels. Historically, the University has been one of those institutions which forged ahead with this, encouraging students with children to study and being proud of that.

This all seems to be going out of the window for the sake of £83,000.

Again, they have looked at the financial issues and failed to notice the bigger picture and the hidden financial issues involved in making the University a place people can feel proud of. It's a classic case of financial illiteracy - looking at the numbers and failing to see the environment in which those numbers exist.



4. Eleven people will be made redundant

Closing the Nursery would be pretty bad anyway, but doing so now means that eleven members of staff are likely to "lose" their jobs. This makes it even more of a stupid idea. Shoving people onto the dole queue at this point in time, after many decades of service in some cases.

Again, wasting students' tuition fees money on redundancy costs to save £83,000 makes absolutely no sense.

5. Nobody thinks this is a good idea

We've been overwhelmed with people expressing their sadness and outrage at this decision. Nobody thinks it makes sense and nobody is prepared to publically support closure outside of closed meetings.

When we've challenged the decision, we're met with a wall of "purely financial decision", and yet this financial decision makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

We appreciate the University is not a democracy. It is a dictatorship of Board members, the vast majority of whom have never been elected to their seats by anyone. If the Board and UEB had any sense of listening to the staff and students, they would see what a deeply unpopular and damaging decision this is and reconsider.

Please support our campaign to keep One World Nursery Open!

UNISON NEC Elections, 4th - 27th May

All full UNISON members will be entitled to vote in the forthcoming elections to decide which activists make up the 68-seat National Executive Council.

Ballot papers are due to go out from 4th May and will be posted to home addresses. Members have until 27th May to return their ballots, by post

If you don't get a ballot paper soon(ish), or by 13th May, then either

- A) you joined the union after 4th February (so you don't get a vote, sorry!)
- B) UNISON has an old or incorrect home address on the membership system.

If it's B), you can check your details by giving us a shout, but if you can't get hold of stray post, then you will need to call the hotline on 0800 0 967 968, between 13th and 20th May.

Please make sure you vote!

These elections might not seem it, but it's important that the type of leadership elected reflects the type of leadership members want.

Who you vote for is entirely up to you and the ballot is secret.

Members of our branch will be able to vote for a total of 14 seats.

Pay Update

Our branch has indicated we would like to be involved in the national ballot of higher education branches. In theory, this means we could be balloting all members over industrial action in June. More news when we have it...

The poster features a dark blue header with the text 'thanks for n%thing' in white, where the 'n%' is in a red circle. The UNISON logo is in the top right. The main body is red with white text: 'University staff have been offered 0% for the toughest year of our working lives', 'Vote Yes' in large font, and 'to strike for the pay we deserve'. A ballot box icon with an 'X' is shown. The URL 'unison.org.uk/thanksfornothing' is at the bottom.

UNISON NEC Elections, 4th - 27th May

Whilst it's entirely up to you how you vote, we are entitled to tell you our reasoning for nominating the candidates below for the NEC.

"We nominated the candidates we did because we believe they are committed to ensuring our union challenges Government nationally and won't leave members and branches to fight alone. We believe our nominated candidates will campaign to:

- *Break the pay freeze through national co-ordinated action*
- *Oppose further austerity and attacks on public services*
- *Resist attacks on pensions and terms and conditions*
- *Defend our NHS from further privatisation and closures of services*
- *Fight sexism, racism, homophobia and the scapegoating of migrants"*

Constituency	Female	General	Male	Low-paid Reserve
South East Region	Jacqui Berry Antoinette Solera		Dan Sartin	Abi Holdsworth
Higher Education	Kath Owen	Sandy Nicoll		
Black Members	April Ashley Nimi Trivedi		Hugo Pierre	Julia Mwaluke
Disabled Members	Paula Carlyle	Sharron Nicoll		
Young Members	Lilly Boulby	Kiera Hilder		

Paul Baker

Many members at Grand Parade and elsewhere will be saddened by the recent death of Paul Baker.

Paul was a technician, specialising in woodwork for many years and only retired from the University at the end of 2020. He was always keen to know what the union was up to and always first to come along to our meetings at Grand Parade, when we could meet round a table. His presence and sense of humour will be missed by all who knew him.

Thanks to Simon Sandys for the brilliant photo.



Save One World Nursery!

Just some of the things which people have said...

"My daughter attended One World and as a family we were directly affected by the closure.

We are a mixed heritage family. My roots are Indian and my partner is Flemish speaking Belgian. Whilst looking for a nursery for our daughter we visited many establishments that were inclusive but not really any that we felt were diverse.

We found the diversity we were hoping for in One World nursery which not only had a sound ethos for promoting diversity and difference but who were **actually** diverse, with a rich mix of children of different ethnicities and nationalities under one roof. I feel this is a direct reflection of the pool of international students and lecturers that the University attracts and employs. For us this was one of the main clinchers in our decision to enrol Koa as we knew there would always be a variety of different cultures for her to experience and to share her mixed heritage reality with.

I know that the Uni are trying to participate positively in BLM discussions and the attainment gap for both BME staff and students. I wonder if the decision-makers can be encouraged to shift their perception and view the nursery as a valuable asset to achieving their goals on equality and diversity as the Uni nursery is uniquely placed to actually offer a diverse range of children - more so than other local nurseries I would argue - and perhaps this aspect of the nursery could help the Uni achieve whatever goal it has set itself to show it's alliance to BLM and BME matters."

"When I returned to work at Brighton University after having my daughter I asked if I could continue my role on a job-share basis. It was clear to me that as a front-line library worker on a fairly low salary it wouldn't make sense to try and work full-time: any money I made would be wiped out by childcare costs, travel costs and so forth. Instead I carried on working for Brighton University on a part-time basis and my partner agreed to do the childcare for 2 days a week, so that I wouldn't be out of pocket.

In 2014 when my daughter was 2½ my partner was asked to go and work abroad for 6 months. I literally had a few weeks to sort out reliable and affordable childcare. It felt like an absolute life-saver when I found out that my daughter could go to One World while I was at work. I only had to pay for any sessions that were extra to the 15 hours a week that the government gave all nursery aged children at the time and I didn't have to worry about getting her there - because One World is on the same campus as me.

As a non-driver who relies on public transport and lives a long way from Brighton that made a huge difference. When I met the nursery staff for the first time I quickly saw how professional and dedicated they were. I knew I could trust them completely and that my child was in very capable hands.

My daughter loved her time at One World and her experience there paved the way for a very successful transition to primary school where she is currently thriving. It will be a huge loss to the University and to the wider community if One World closes. In my opinion any short term financial gain will quickly be wiped out by the cost of the reputational damage to the University not to mention the actual cost of losing those potential students who, without good childcare, will be unable to succeed in higher education."

I would like to add my name to the chorus of people who have benefited from the nursery over the years... all the staff were so amazing and this decision is an awful one.

What you can do:

Sign the petition and contact your MP/local councillors

Like and share Facebook posts and Twitter feeds

Make sure you vote in our branch consultation by the 5pm 11th May deadline

There's practical information on our blog: [University of Brighton UNISON Branch](#)

STOP

University of Brighton



Save

One World Nursery

