



## ***Members' Newsletter - December 2024***

**Welcome to the final newsletter of 2024.**

We're still waiting for a solution to the funding problems faced by all higher education institutions. As we've explained many times before, the funding available to universities has declined in real terms since the £9,000 fee was first introduced and now many institutions face an uncertain future. The rise in fees for full-time undergraduates to £9,535 will not offset other costs, such as the rise in employers' national insurance and the increase in the teachers' pension scheme contributions. Universities are forced to grow student numbers and cut costs at the same time, leading to poor quality education, cuts and course closures, staff stress and overwork, and generations of students in debt for decades.



The failure of successive governments to fix this has led to where we are now, with the sector waiting for the first major university to get into serious trouble i.e. not being able to pay its workforce and having to ask the Office for Students for help. In all likelihood, this would mean forced closures, redundancies and managed transfers of students to other universities, and/or mergers with other institutions, but not without a heavy "loss" of jobs. Many politicians over the years have moaned about the reality of having two or more

universities in one location, as if that's actually a problem. With a heavy government emphasis on shared services as a way of saving money, there are clearly options to be explored for Brighton and Sussex, and our neighbours at Falmer are not without their own financial problems - looking to find voluntary severance volunteers as a reaction to a drop in international students.

Trade unionists are not opposed to efficiencies. There's evidence to suggest that democratic workers' control is much more efficient than paying inflated and often ludicrous salaries to senior managers to "get the right people". The problem is that left to the decisions of overpaid managers, efficiencies are often found by extracting more work from those who actually do it. Shared services between universities will inevitably mean fewer people working harder to get stuff done.

It's likely than some movement in this direction will happen at some universities in the future. University of Brighton management have generally, up to now, had the sense to recognise that outsourcing services is counterproductive and likely to provoke a reaction from the trade unions that they would want to avoid - all the more reason for having strong, well organised trade unions here.

Meanwhile, the campaign for proper university funding continues so that those who work here can live on their wages, rather than just survive.

**Join the union!**

**Scan here:**





## UNISON Members' Survey

This month we're launching our survey of all members. We want to know your up-to-date contact details and what you're interested in. In exchange for completing the survey, we'll give away water bottles, sandwich bags and other UNISON-branded items.

It's important that this is something that as many members as possible complete, so please let all other members know about this and let's encourage non-members to think about joining.

A link to the survey will go out with emails in late December and into the new year.

## 2025 Annual General Meetings

Our three meetings for 2025 will take place as follows:

**Monday 24 March - City Campus**

**Tuesday 25 March - Falmer**

**Wednesday 26 March - Moulsecoomb**



All three meetings will start at 12.30pm with the option to join us for a free buffet lunch at 12 noon beforehand. We'll also make all the meetings hybrid so that members can join via Teams.

A formal invite to all members will go out in the New Year and obviously, we'd like everyone to attend one of the meetings (it doesn't matter which one).

Our AGMs vote on important stuff and confirm the election of the branch committee. All members can stand for any roles, which are all up for election, and any member can propose a motion for the meetings to consider and vote on.

More importantly, we can discuss the direction of our branch and what we want to be concentrating on during 2025 and beyond, so please make every effort to attend if you can.