

# West Cheshire

## April Newsletter



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mail@westcheshireunison.org.uk

## Don't let the weather silence your vote: Apply for a Postal Vote

We would urge you all to think about applying for a Postal Vote in this, or any, forthcoming elections.

It's so easy and safe.

You will receive your ballot paper in the post – you vote for who you want – and put it in a secure envelope, which then goes into another envelope for posting.

If you still want to visit the Polling Station, you can hand in your postal vote envelope.

The link to apply is here:

[Postal Vote Application Form](#)



Ask a colleague  
to join UNISON today



Join online at  
joinunison.org



Call us on  
0800 171 2193



Ask your UNISON rep  
for an application form

## **“Tell Ya Ma” – We did it!**

Government Exit Payment Rethink will bring relief to millions of Public Sector Workers.

The Government is revoking regulations capping public sector payments to £95,000.

UNISON had filed a Judicial Review, which was due to be heard Mid-March, but the Government has finally seen sense, as regulations were flawed.

UNISON General Secretary, Christina McAnea, said “Through no fault of their own, long serving staff over the age of 55 and facing redundancy, would have been hit by the regulations because they’re obliged to take their personal pensions if they lose their jobs; when

combined with redundancy payments, the final amount could have exceeded the £95,000 cap.

We need to be vigilant, as they will try and come back with something else.

**A GREAT WIN FOR UNISON.**

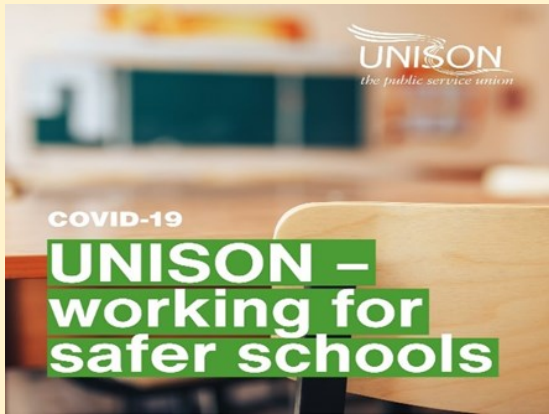


### **West Cheshire Branch Officers for 2021**

|                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Branch Chair                | Geoff Wright     |
| Branch Secretary            | Teresa Connally  |
| Assistant Branch Secretary  | Geoff Wright     |
| Assistant Branch Secretary  | Cheryl Wood      |
| Branch Treasurer            | Fran Suckley     |
| Assistant Branch Treasurer  | Diane Wright     |
| Health and Safety Officer   | Teresa Connally  |
| Communication Officer       | Aileen Charteris |
| Environmental Officer       | Aileen Charteris |
| Women’s Officer             | Mags Abbott      |
| LGBT+ Officer               | Liam Crawford    |
| Equalities Officer          | Gareth Dudley    |
| International Officer       | Teresa Connally  |
| Labour Link Officer         | Teresa Connally  |
| Sports and Social Secretary | Denise Hancox    |
| Retired Members Officer     | Sonia Young      |

**JOIN A  
FIGHTING  
UNION  
JOIN  
UNISON**





## **Schools Update from Geoff Wright-Schools Lead**

UNISON recognises that members in schools are without doubt the 'unsung heroes' of the pandemic and we thank all of you for your hard work and dedication.

Without Teaching assistants and other support staff, schools would not have been open as they have been over the last 12 months.

As the school lead, I would like to understand how the recent full opening of schools in Cheshire West has impacted on you and would welcome your feedback via email to me [geoffwright@cheshireunison.co.uk](mailto:geoffwright@cheshireunison.co.uk)

UNISON'S advice around CEV staff working from home remains unchanged, as this is the safest option for those of you with underlying vulnerabilities. There are a number of staff who may be at higher risk from the virus than the general population because of certain characteristics, including race, gender, age and disability.

Schools should conduct individual risk assessments for employees in known higher-risk groups, with consideration of working from home as a protective measure. UNISON has published specific guides for Black and disabled members on their rights during the pandemic.

**If you have any concerns about your personal situation in school contact the Branch on 01244- 346894.**

**Stay safe.**

**Geoff Wright-Schools Lead**







If you are interested in joining the group, please can you contact me by emailing:

[liamcrawford@cheshireunison.co.uk](mailto:liamcrawford@cheshireunison.co.uk)

I will then organise our 1<sup>st</sup> meeting (virtually) where we can pull together ideas you have that would not only benefit yourself, but also the larger LGBT+ community and help in promoting UNISON, and plan ahead for the future.

Thank you.

## **UNISON CHESHIRE WEST LGBT+ SELF ORGANISED GROUP**

Liam L Crawford

LGBT+ Officer, UNISON West Cheshire Branch.

UNISON continues working to improve the working lives of their members, yet lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender employees still face harassment and discrimination in their workplace, which can be hard to deal with on your own. Joining UNISON will give you a voice in the UK's largest public service union, committed to working for LGBT+ rights.

As the LGBT+ Officer for UNISON's West Cheshire Branch, I am now looking at setting up a self-organised group for our LGBTQ+ members.

The aims of the group will be to meet up 3 – 4 times a year to discuss issues members maybe facing within the workplace and to see where, as a group and a union, we can offer help and support to outside organisations such as Chester Pride, The Kaleidoscope Trust, Body Positive etc and support within our local community.



## The UNISON North West Climate Emergency group

The North West Climate Emergency group is made up of branch environmental officers but is open to everyone. If you have an interest in the environment, climate change and a just transition to more "green" jobs then please come along. The group's main focus is on environmental issues around peoples work, but we are also interested in conservation, biodiversity, pollution and climate justice.

Currently the group are looking at,

- Safe cycling links and changing facilities in workplaces.
- Divestment of pensions
- Making sure UNISON has a presence at COP26 and beyond

Climate change can often be difficult and overwhelming issue to face as an individual, which is why facing it as a group beneficial. It also means we can share ideas of how to change, because carrying on with the status quo will not ensure a healthy happy future for the generations to come.

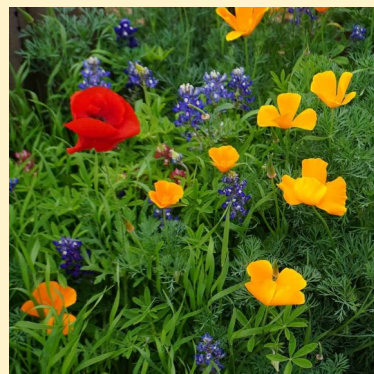
For more details, please contact Aileen (West Cheshire Branch Environmental Officer)

Email - [a.charteris@chester.ac.uk](mailto:a.charteris@chester.ac.uk)

**"Environmentalism without class struggle is just gardening"**  
**Chico Mendes**



Why not look at encouraging bees and butterflies by adding a wildflower patch to your garden, balcony or local area?



A bug hotel is also easy to make at home



For this I used an old Tupperware container and toilet roll tubes filled with dry leaves, twigs, stones, rolled up cardboard, stones, pet fur and moss.

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – 8 MARCH 2021

International Women's Day is one of the most important days of the year.

We celebrate women's achievements

Raise awareness about women's equality

Lobby for accelerated gender parity

The campaign theme for this year was:

## “Choose to Challenge”

The colour theme for International Women's Day are:

**PURPLE** – signifies Justice and Dignity

**GREEN** – symbolizes Hope

**WHITE** – Represents Purity

The colours originated from the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPV) in 1908.

There were lots of events taking place on this special day. I was asked to do a small video on a woman who has inspired me, and this woman is Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

This woman **“Chose to Challenge”**. Born in Brooklyn, New York to a hardworking immigrant Jewish family. Her parents didn't have much money but they pushed their two children to read and to be educated.

Ruth lost her mother to cancer the day before her High School graduation. Ruth graduated



from Cornell University and married her sweetheart, gave birth to a daughter, graduated first in her class from Columbia Law School, became one of the first female law Professors in the United States and gave birth to a son.

She co-founded the Women's Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and argued six gender discrimination cases before the US Supreme Court and won five. She was nominated by President Jimmy Carter to a seat on the US Court of Appeals and was nominated by President Bill Clinton as an Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court.

Ruth hasn't had it easy in her profession. It was very much a man's role and she even had to hide her pregnancy when carrying her second child, by wearing baggy clothes, so that she could continue with her job.

Ruth went on to become a tireless advocate for the advancement of gender equality and women's rights.

She was a *“notorious”* popular culture icon and she **“Chose to Challenge”**.





discrimination they may face. Yet many single parents surveyed by the campaign feel they are discriminated against, and routinely so.

### What does the campaign hope to do?

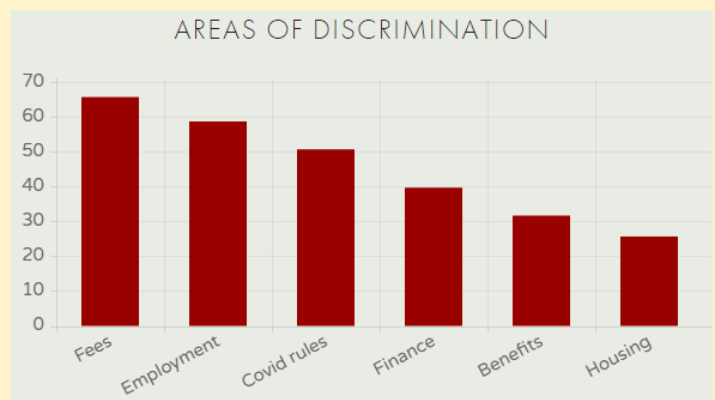
The campaign wants single parents added to the Equality Act 2010. This would give single parents the chance to challenge discriminatory policies, fees for holidays or comments from the media or work colleagues that are negative and/or prejudiced to single parents.

## The Single Parents Rights Campaign

The single parents rights campaign was started by campaigner Ruth Talbot who is single parent to two young boys. During the first lockdown last year Ruth realized that the government were disregarding single parents as a group when making lockdown decisions. Soon after writing a letter to Dominic Cummings the government allowed single parents to start support bubbles.

Unfortunately there was something very familiar about the governments ways of thinking. Decisions around families are often based around the "nuclear family" and do not take single parents into account. Work places and their policies often do the same and don't anticipate extra difficulties that will be faced by staff who are single parents. Then there are holidays and days out which often charge single parents extra compared to couples for the misfortune of not attending with a second adult.

Single parents as a group do not have any specific protections in law to challenge



Mags Abbott (women's officer) and Aileen Charteris (Environmental and Communications officer) are both single parents and are backing this campaign fully.

If you would like more information on this campaign please contact branch and ask to speak to Aileen and Mags or read more on the following link.

<https://www.singleparentrights.org/>



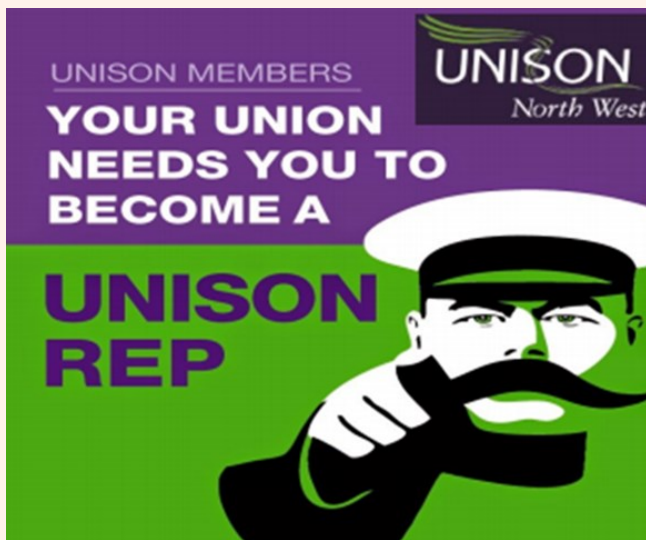
## **UNISON at the University of Chester: Why you should become a rep**

There has been a lot of activity from the reps at the University of Chester (UoC). Now boasting 5 reps and 4 work place contacts across all sites they are in a position to challenge management and make sure that members voices are heard.

This is what we need in all workplaces so that UNISON can make a difference and improve working conditions for everyone.

It might seem daunting to become a rep but the you are given all the

training and support needed for your role. You may also get to be part of an enthusiastic and motivated team, just like the one at UoC.



**Concerned about job insecurity,  
inequality, pay and conditions,  
privatisation, pensions,  
harassment or safety issues?**

**BECOME A  
UNISON  
STEWARD**





## WEST CHESHIRE BRANCH STEWARDS 2021

|           |          |  |
|-----------|----------|--|
| ABBOTT    | MAGS     | UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER  |
| BILL      | KEVIN    | TARPORLEY HIGH SCHOOL  |
| CANNON    | RON      | FORFUTURES   |
| CHARTERIS | AILEEN   | UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER  |
| CONNALLY  | TERESA   | BRANCH OFFICE  |
| CRAWFORD  | LIAM     | VIVO CARE  |
| DUDLEY    | GARETH   | GOLDSMITH HOUSE  |
| GORDON    | JOHN     | BRIO   |
| GOSSETT   | PHIL     | UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER  |
| HANCOX    | DENISE   | WEAVER VALE HOUSING TRUST  |
| HIGGINS   | MARK     | HELSBY HIGH SCHOOL   |
| HIGNETT   | TOM      | UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER  |
| PAGE      | GEOFFREY | FOR-HOUSING CIVIC WAY-<br>EMPLOYEE SERVICE CENTRE -<br>GOLDSMITH HOUSE |
| SUCKLEY   | FRANCES  |  |
| TURNER    | DAVID    | VIVO CARE  |
| WOOD      | CHERYL   | SUTTON BEECHES - REABLE<br>MENT TEAM                                   |
| WOOLLEY   | LAURA    | TARVIN PROFESSIONAL<br>CENTRE  |
| WRIGHT    | GEOFF    | BRANCH OFFICE  |

## WEST CHESHIRE BRANCH HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE 2021

|          |          |                               |
|----------|----------|-------------------------------|
| ABBOTT   | MAGS     | UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER         |
| CONNALLY | TERESA   | BRANCH OFFICE                 |
| GOSSETT  | PHIL     | UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER         |
| HANCOX   | DENISE   | WEAVER VALE HOUSING TRUST     |
| KNIGHT   | JONATHAN | BRIO, FRODSHAM LEISURE CENTRE |

|        |        |                                      |
|--------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| PAGE   | GEOFF  | FOR-HOUSING CIVIC WAY                |
| TURNER | DAVID  | VIVO CARE                            |
| WOOD   | CHERYL | SUTTON BEECHES - REABLE<br>MENT TEAM |
| WRIGHT | GEOFF  | BRANCH OFFICE                        |

## WEST CHESHIRE BRANCH UNION LEARNING REPRESENTATIVES 2021

|        |        |                           |
|--------|--------|---------------------------|
| HANCOX | DENISE | WEAVER VALE HOUSING TRUST |
|--------|--------|---------------------------|

## WEST CHESHIRE BRANCH EQUALITIES REPRESENTATIVES 2021

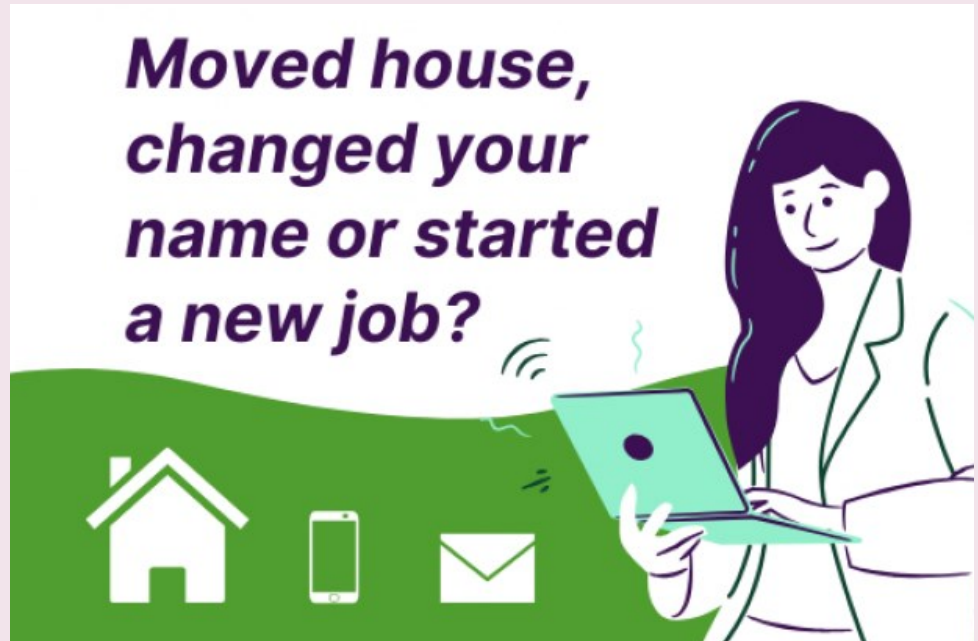
|           |        |                       |
|-----------|--------|-----------------------|
| CHARTERIS | AILEEN | UNIVERSITY OF CHESTER |
| CONNALLY  | TERESA | BRANCH OFFICE         |
| WOOD      | CHERYL | SUTTON BEECHES        |
| WRIGHT    | GEOFF  | BRANCH OFFICE         |



To contact your local steward please get in touch with West Cheshire Branch office.

Contact details can be found on page 1

Have any of your details changed?



You can update your details online using [My.Unison](#)

To update your details via telephone, please ring your regional office and ask for the membership department. You can then let them know what needs changing:

North West – 0161 661 6795

