



THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE TEACHER

Newsletter of the Gloucester Association of the National Union of Teachers

October 2011



Please come to our General Meeting on 19th October where we will be joined by guest speaker Sam Tiwari, Foundation Project Manager at the Steve Sinnott foundation. Many of you will remember that Steve was our General Secretary and tragically died in office. The foundation was

inspired by one of his most famous speeches which included these words:

"I think there are those who are hopeful supporters and activists for justice, human rights and equality; and there is the rest. Those who exude hope and optimism generate the energy and stimulate the progress that we in education and progressive teacher trade unionism, for example, work for. I find such people are as fascinated as I think I am by the liberating power of education in this country and across the world."

You can find out more about the work of the foundation at <http://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk>.

At the meeting I will also be able to update you on the pension's campaign. It would be great if you could make a particular effort to come if you would like to join the lobby of parliament on 26th October as we may be able to assist with travel arrangements. Hopefully by now you will have had a meeting in your school and signed the petition which we will be presenting at the House of Commons on the 26th.

We will also be taking nominations for national officers and our national executive member at the meeting. Our executive member, Max Hyde, is standing for vice-president and I know would appreciate your support as would I for the national executive.

Now is an important time of change in many areas of education and society. The NUT can influence events for the better but only with your support. Remember, together we are stronger.

John Pemberthy - Divisional Secretary

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Lobby of parliament: 26th October 2011

National day of action over pensions: 30th November 2011

GENERAL MEETINGS

Wednesday 19th October 2011

Wednesday 25th January 2012

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 14th March 2012

All General Meetings run from 7.15 to 8.30 pm

Venue: The Gloucester Farmers Club, Sandwell Road. Directions to the meeting can be found on the meetings page of our web-site. Can't make the meeting? Then let us know your views via www.glosnut.co.uk

If you would like to attend the annual conference or join the executive committee contact the Divisional Secretary for details of how to apply. Nominations close at the end of January.

Local Association website: www.glosnut.co.uk

PENSIONS CAMPAIGN

Government proposals mean that teachers and other public sector workers are being asked to work longer, pay more in contributions and receive less in benefits.

Pensions remain a big concern across the whole public and wider private sector. The Union will continue to work for the broadest possible coalition in opposition to the attacks we face on our pensions.

Our lobby of parliament with all the major teacher unions on October 26th and the national day of action by teaching and other public sector unions should send a message to government that we will not allow them to unfairly target us for the mistakes of others. We believe that the Teachers Pensions Scheme is fairly funded, affordable and sustainable.

The collective action taken on 30 June was fantastic and reports show that many teachers stepped forward to become school reps; and many thousands of teachers joined the NUT to take part in the action.

The action put the Government on the defensive and exposed its arguments to close scrutiny. The argument that teachers' pensions are 'unaffordable' was comprehensively undermined. Opinion polls showed that our action won widespread public support.

In recent weeks, the Government has reiterated its claim that it is taking talks with us seriously and that there is genuine room for negotiation - there is no evidence to support this claim.

It is clear we need to maintain, and escalate, the pressure on the Government.

Next steps:

1. Mass petition: every workplace to sign and return the petition
2. Lobby of Parliament - Wednesday October 26th

We are pleased that we will be working with six other teaching unions in England and Wales (ASCL, ATL, NAHT, NASUWT, UCAC, UCU) to achieve this. We want this lobby to involve thousands of teachers from up and down the country, and we want as many schools as possible represented either in person or through petitions.

This mass lobby has several aims;

- Firstly, we want to put pressure on individual MPs.
- Secondly, a publicly visible demonstration of our continued anger and resolve. To this end, we intend to hold a march and rally on the day too.
- Thirdly, to demonstrate that our approach is 'reasonable' by not immediately taking further industrial action.

Of course the lobby doesn't preclude further strike action this term. Indeed if the Government doesn't negotiate in good faith, strike action is probable in November. This is especially true given that the EIS, NAHT, NASUWT and UCAC are currently or will be balloting their members for industrial action. Indeed many other Public Sector Unions are considering Industrial Action.

Action steps: Remember you should always look to involve as many members as possible in this campaign. By acting together we are more effective.

- Talk to your head teacher - All heads are being sent a letter from the General Secretaries of the seven unions alerting them to the lobby and asking for their support. Remember all leadership unions are supporting this lobby.
- Work with staff to organise and attend a meeting for ALL unions before the end of September to consider selecting at least one representative for the lobby.
- Get all staff to sign the petition
- Ask any non-union members to join the NUT.
- Please inform Gloucestershire NUT Division via email of the outcome of any meetings / discussions and send in a copy of the petition - representatives from the division will be attending the lobby and hope to hand in many school's petitions.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE ASSOCIATION

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Update your membership: 0845 300 1666

Need someone to talk to?

A free counselling service for teachers is open
365 days per year. Ring 08000 562 561

The Gloucestershire Teacher

is published by Gloucester NUT Association

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Members' Articles and letters welcomed

Local Association website: www.glosnut.co.uk