



*The communications union*

# *South East Central* 2017 Annual Report



**In Confidence for South East Central CWU members**

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### Picture on front cover.

This picture was taken at our pensions meeting, at Sevenoaks, which had more than 80 people in attendance.

We do deserve better!

*The views expressed in this annual report are personal to the author concerned and may not be the view of the branch. This report is "in confidence" and is meant for CWU South East Central members only.*

# Secretary's Report - Chris Power

2017 was my 22<sup>nd</sup> year as a Full time Union role, and my 28<sup>th</sup> year as an Officer of the Branch, and whilst those years have certainly flown by, I believe 2017 was a landmark year for all those members, within BT, that are considering retiring, or are at least thinking about retiring due to the massive decisions currently being taken on the BT Pensions situation.



With a shortfall of some £14 Billion in the pension scheme, it is certainly a worrying time, not only for those of us considering retirement within the next few years, but also those employees that have joined since 2001, where the scheme (BTRSS) that commenced for new employees, is also being looked at for change. The main point on changes to these schemes is so that the Company can move away from their long held commitments to us, as employees, and reduce their financial input for us the workers, once our long

working life finishes and retirement looms. Even the suggested 1% increase in the BTRSS scheme, that has been suggested, leaves a scheme which is far less in what it offers than the BTPS, and also has major failings that need addressing.

Currently the BTRSS scheme does not look like it will adequately support members when they retire, as the liability for ensuring that a good pension is paid is not with the employer, but with the stock market. The stock market will dic-

tate what pension anyone who joined after 2001 will get. If the stock market and other investments don't do that well, then the pension pay outs will also not go that well.

The Union is fighting for a pension that not only BT can afford (we are happy to negotiate) but will result in a meaningful pay when we are in retirement, and we will all retire one day. It's basically your PAY in retirement.

We had 4 Special Pensions meetings at the end of 2017, Sevenoaks, Brighton, Hastings and Maresfield where close to 200 members attended these important meetings. The issue has still not concluded, and with the 17<sup>th</sup> January consultation period ended, it is now down to whether BT will negotiate with the CWU and act upon our concerns on the issue.



Please watch noticeboards and emails for further SPECIAL Pension meetings around the Branch patch.

2018 could well be a watershed moment in Industrial relations between CWU and BT, and I would urge all members to support whatever the Union nationally asks for. It's in ALL our interests

## **BRANCH ORGANISING & RECRUITMENT**

The Branch finished the year with 1169 employed members, and around 109 retired members. Pete Francis who leads the recruitment project within the Branch will report back more on this in his report.

In relation to recruitment it again has been a very good 2017, with thanks to the head of the Branch recruitment team Pete Francis and all of those that were involved, including Lesley-Anne Ure our Regional organising Officer. It can be very rewarding recruiting new members, and the Branch has allocated substantial funds to support recruiting, not only within BT but also Hastings Direct, Virgin media in the last year.

BT Sevenoaks Workstyle , Withdean TE (CoE) and Kemptown buildings in Brighton, Tunbridge Wells



**Lesley-Anne Ure, CWU Regional Organiser**

TEC/TE are all visited monthly. Recruitment of new members is so important to the Branch, and when an AGM agrees expenditure for recruitment it is probably the best money well spent, as this gives us not only the financial backing but also gives the Officers that are BT Employees, more time off from the employer to support members.

This will all continue in the New Year, and there is a new project being driven from Head Office called

Target 100, targeting a 100% membership base within BT. Part of the recruitment also involves encouraging new activists, especially seeking youth, female, ethnic minority members to become more involved, as these areas are underrepresented. The first step is to come to a Union meeting and consider joining the Branch Committee.

Most of our Officer-ships are filled, although new members to the Branch Committee are always welcome.

For the first time at the end of 2017, I organised a BT Officers Strategic review meeting, where all of the 9 current BT Officers of the Branch attended a 1 day conference. As the Branch grows we need this 'once a year' in depth touch base, so that we can plan strategies for the following year. I was very pleased with how the review went, and it is intended to conduct another at the end of 2018, and possibly include the



**Branch Officers at the Strategic Review**

Non BT officers to attend a slot as well.

### **BRANCH GENERAL MEETINGS**

We are committed to an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and 2 General Meetings (GM) a year, and these are usually held in Tunbridge Wells and Brighton, as they were in 2017. In addition to the Special meetings on BT Pensions, we also had an additional meeting for the new 20:20 contract employees, down near Hastings, with a National Officer in attendance.

Attendances are steady at approaching 30 members at most meetings, but we always try and encourage especially youth (under 30) members to attend. The current intake of Union Branch Officers will not be here forever, and new Officers need a few years experience before taking a post up.

### **BRANCH COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Branch Committee meets 4 times a year, on the first Tuesday of each month, currently at Uckfield Civic Centre, and is an interface between the General (All members) meeting, and the Officers of the Union, and more so discusses strategic direction of the

Branch, and issues that cannot be taken to a General meeting quickly enough.

***We are always looking for new members to join the Committee and take the Branch in new directions. Come along to the AGM and say hello.***

The responsibilities of most Committee members is purely to contribute verbally, experiences at work and

companies are members of this Branch, and I have conducted either discipline/sickness/ performance cases in pretty much all the Companies over the last year.

Virgin Media is a Company that has given us more work than normal in 2017, so much so that maybe a revisit of the Virgin Media sites, to enable further recruiting is something to consider, for 2018.



workplace issues, and advise Officers of points to take up with BT Managers.

I would like to thank all Officers and Committee members for their help during the year,

### **Non BT Group Companies**

Virgin Media, EE, Cable TV installers, American Express, Hastings Direct and lots of other smaller

### **CONCLUSION**

Only now is the impact of the BT Pensions review being fully considered, in fact by the time this is being read the issue may well have either been resolved or escalated

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE BRANCH IN ATTENDING MEETINGS THAT ARE CALLED**

## Assist Sec West & H&S - Pete Francis



serve you and meet your expectations.

I am based in the Sevenoaks Workstyle building where a lot of you will see me, we have a branch office on the ground floor, next to the First Aid room, and my door is always open for members to come in, this is a full time role in its self. I try to be in the building at least twice a week, if not more depending on my other commitments.

Last year passed very quickly, but it was just as busy as the previous year, if not busier.

It has been my first full year of working full time, for the CWU. In this year I was also elected as the South East Regional CWU Rep for Business and Public Sector.

One of my chief responsibilities for the branch is that of membership recruitment, which means, like last year, I spent a lot of the time in the field introducing many potential members to the branch. But, I don't do this alone, I also coordinate the other officers to visit as many of you as well.

We had another good year on recruitment, we met our targets and I thank all of you reading this who joined the branch in the last 12 months, we hope we can

It appears we have many issues ongoing on the site and there will always be managers that need educating as well as how to treat members in the correct manner.

Unfortunately we had the cessation of the shift teams in B&PS, at the end of last year. This has had a great impact in the CNOC area

affecting 20 members. Some of the negotiations had been fraught and at times I had to engage the National Officer, for support and escalation. We are now negotiating attendance patterns for the remaining staff, we must hope that the teams can rebuild and expand again over the coming year.

Openreach have been recruiting more field staff, but they have been reducing the office based roles, so there have been release packages within the CoE

I have tried to help many individuals on site and I hope I have helped you all achieve what was required, or as best as possibly achievable.

The last quarter of the year has been extremely worrying for every team member



due to BT wanting to change all pension schemes and we believe they are in detriment of all.

Thank you for all of you that attended the meeting in Sevenoaks, where we had over 80 people in attendance. As we go to press, there will be many challenges ahead and we must all stick together to achieve our goal of a fair deal for all Team Members, whether you are on the BTPS or the BTRSS Pension.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY CO – ORDINATOR

As well as my roles above, I am also the Safety Co-ordinator for the branch. Firstly can I thank Rick Coburn, Steve Taylor, for helping me in this role. They both work tirelessly for the branch and helping ensure all our Union Safety Reps are looked after. Both are instrumental in manag-

ing our NAS Drive database. This is where all our information is stored and accessible for our USR's.

This year we have also been fortunate to be able to ask Richard Cain and Steve Rhodes to become more involved in branch safety. Richard leads on our ongoing Cable Chamber project. Both are also leading on safety education projects, which improve everyone's knowledge base and understanding of all safety matters. (See photo below)

It appears we have had an increase in accidents in the last year, within the branch, so I am investigating whether this is due to pressure on our members to increase performance.

I believe our safety team have really brought our safety processes into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and hopefully more developments to come this year. All these improvements help our USR's, but also it helps us be more transparent, as well as an asset to BT and the CWU.



## Financial Report - Steve Taylor

This last year has seen the finances of the branch, drop considerably, but this is because of our success in recruitment and the training of our new representatives and the opening of the Sevenoaks office. I expect that next year this report will be a lot better financially speaking. A full break down and budget for the coming year will be given at the AGM in Brighton.

This year I asked the senior auditor, Sam Healey, if she could co-opt a junior auditor after I got authorisation from the branch committee. Tracey Faux was duly asked and co-opted into the role, and I thank her for volunteering.

This year, for the first year of me being financial secretary, a mistake (a misplaced email) was spotted, and cor-



rected by the end of the day.

If anyone would like to be an auditor, please make yourself known at the AGM or contact me direct.

# Political Report - Di Hill



BREXIT ..it's all about Brexit! Article 50 triggered, the inclusion of the Henry VIII's clause, means Government does not have to consult Parliament to repeal laws, workers' rights?

The Country is in turmoil in many areas, education, teachers are leaving in droves and recruitment is at an all-time low. Parents are struggling to get their children into local schools. Bus services being cut, rail fares going up. The NHS, in its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, is in chaos, not enough nurses or doctors or ambulance drivers, Firefighters being told they are to act as paramedics on call out. Border control, well looks like you'll be able to put your name down and volunteer to do a shift... You couldn't make it up, could you? Austerity is doing untold damage to society and communities.

Election evening, and when the "exit polls" came out, you could almost hear the Conservatives saying to Mrs May, "another fine mess

you've got us into". The election backfired, instead of a Prime Minister who was "strong and stable" turns out she was, "**weak and wobbly.**" Although Labour didn't win, it felt as though we had. The Conservatives with no overall majority had to do a deal with the DUP which cost us over £1billion!

The Labour manifesto changed the mood in the Country on the doorstep and on the street stalls especially amongst the young and women. In the South East we went from 4 to 8 MP's, Rosie Duffield (see photo top left) winning Canterbury which had been Tory for 99 years, gives hope to places like Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, etc!!! In our Branch we now have 2 MP'S Lloyd Russell-Moyle who took Kempton with a 10,000 majority and Peter Kyle (see below) retaining Hove with nearly a 19,000 majority, up

21% on 2015. We nearly took Hastings, only a 346 majority to Amber Rudd. Hugh Gaffney, a CWU activist was elected to represent Coatbridge, he turned up on the first day in Parliament in his Parcel Force uniform, saying he represented, "justice for workers!" We need more working-class MP's representing us.

"**Oh Jeremy Corbyn**", whatever you thought of him he has done an amazing job getting lots of people, young and old, interested in politics. The Party is now debt free for the first time since the 1960's. During the Election campaign members, not big business, raised £470,000 online, in just one day with £10 here and £20 there. Wow the power of the people! Selections for Parliament candidates are now underway in case we get an early election. The Boundary changes are looking





“dodgy” in their current format. We go from 650 MP’s to 600, the main loss will be in Labour constituencies.

I have attended many political events throughout the year. I attended the Labour Conference in Brighton where Jeremy Corbyn gave a very good speech, to start with reference to Margaret Bondfield, a Brighton shop worker, who also lived in Tunbridge Wells (my Ward), becoming the first Female Government Cabinet member, in 1928, did it for me! The CWU reception at Conference was very well attended with Francis O’Grady TUC Secretary. Emily Thornbury, Clive Lewis, Angela Rayner, Angela and Marie Eagle, to name a few MP’s and of course Jeremy Corbyn. Good to see our branch represented there with myself, Chris Power, Pete Francis and Rick Cobern. Andy Kerr (Telecoms Deputy General Secretary) chaired quite a few Conference ses-

sions.

The Labour Party was founded in 1900, grown out of the Trade Union and Socialist movements. 2018, sees the 100 years centenary of the formation of many local branches including Tunbridge Wells LP and Sevenoaks where events will take place later in the year.

CWU is the first union to test the Tory Trade Union Act and what a result from our Royal Mail members. 73% turnout and 89.1% for a yes vote, after employers tried to attack pensions, pay, hours and job security. And they said it couldn’t be done!

From 1983, “Cardboard City” ,in London was where 100’s of rough sleepers lived. When Labour came to power in 1997, they were found homes within the year. We are now back to

huge numbers of rough sleepers after 8 years of a Tory Government. Housing waiting lists are now into 1,000’s in every Borough, and this Government will not allow Councils to “borrow to build” council houses, as they believe council tenants are more likely to vote Labour. Disgraceful behaviour.

As a trade union member of the S.E. Labour regional board I am overseeing some of the Parliamentary selection processes around the Region, I am also a Labour Councillor in Tunbridge wells. If you are a Labour Party member and would like to be a CWU delegate to your local Labour branch please contact me. Get involved.

### Up Coming Dates

Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival  
20th - 22nd July. Labour  
Party Conference in 23rd -  
26th September, Liverpool



# Assistant Safety Report - Rick Cobern



There seems to be a worrying trend that a lot of members have either decided not to contact their CWU branch office and ask for support, or their manager has not advised them they are entitled to do so?

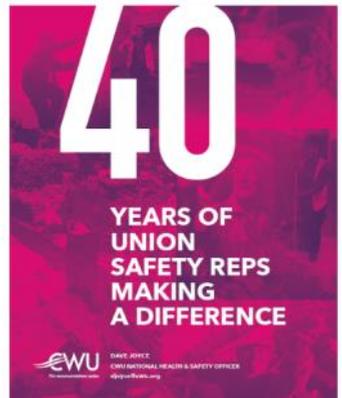
rep present, and that the member was culpable and has admitted all liability.

We cannot stress enough the importance of contacting us as soon as possible after any incident or accident, and you should certainly ask your manager to have a rep to be present at any investigation.

This is of grave concern to us, we strongly advise that if you have an accident, or are involved in an incident, follow the Company process for reporting incidents and accidents, then at the earliest opportunity contact your Union office or rep, to let us know what has happened. Remember culpability can be a matter of one wrong word in a statement.

Although we have had a really good year in Health and Safety, with low numbers of accidents and incidents, we have noticed a spike in the number of accidents reported. However, after our investigations, most reported accidents have not resulted in any disciplinary proceedings being taken against our members.

We have been contacted by managers, as a so called courtesy, informing us that an accident investigation has taken place without a



## Obituary

It's always with great sadness that we have to include this section in our annual report, as we mourn the passing of five of our members.

beneficiary payments to their named person. But even so, our best wishes and thoughts go out to their families.

- John Jenner**
- Kadri Kirbas**
- Noel Burr**
- Peter Cheal**
- Peter Trowel**

The members listed here have sadly passed away, some after a long illness and some quite suddenly. The branch has carried out its final duties to these members and passed on the death



# Assist Sec East Report - Steve Taylor



The last year has been eventful for the branch and the union as a whole, with pension negotiations appearing to be at an impasse, and BT putting the proposals out to consultation. It seems strange that when they were consulting, they had no meetings with the CWU! As Chris has said, look out for any further developments

How we all breathed a sigh of relief when the new incoming CEO of Openreach, pulled the plug on the persistent drive in Performance Management. With an ex-engineer at the helm, it seemed we almost hit a Utopian situation where, an employee was just expected to do their best, and not “squeezed until the pips squeak”, to use a favourite phrase of my mothers.

Unfortunately, this Shangri La was not achieved, and as

managers couldn't Performance Manage with the “Do More” attitude, they looked elsewhere for any improvement and moved to the individuals behaviours. We can understand the companies position if someone is late everyday for 30 minutes, but with the constant monitoring available, they are looking at the few minutes. So beware!

Throughout the year, I deal with a variety of cases, where the company wants to pursue individuals in a formal procedure. I have attended around 20 such hearings in the last year. Two of which led to the individuals being sacked. Ok, I went to the appeals and there jobs were reinstated, but both of these were “New Starters”.

If you haven't been employed for more than 2 years, within the old BT group, you are classed as a new starter. As a new starter you will not have a Initial Formal Warning (IFW), you will go straight to a Final Formal Warning (FFW).

The next step, should you do anything wrong again, would be to visit the Tier 2, for them to decide whether you keep your job or not! So should you find yourself on a formal process - call the union as **soon as possible** (look at the contact numbers

at the back of this booklet).

A lot of these hearings are for attendance (sick). So is there any difference between new starters attendance and the more experienced members? No is the answer, the only difference is you jump straight to the FFW hearing.

Last year at conference, I raised the inconsistent approach by the differing sections of BT, and CWU HQ have agreed to take this forward. In fact, the people at the top of BT, believe it is being done correctly, it just hasn't trickled down to the shop floor. This will be an ongoing issue for a while I think.

So any “New Starter”, if your manager says, come in and have a little chat, it'll be alright etc., after you've been off sick a few times or done something wrong. Just say that you would like your union representative there with you. You pay your subs, use us. You wouldn't buy a season ticket to the football and then not go, would you?



# Equality Report - Steve Rhodes



be able to Chair the meetings which are currently every three months. We cover all things equality, including feedback from all BAME/Women's/LGBT/Disability Conferences.

As a new committee, we are still finding our way in understanding what we can accomplish, as well as possible Props for conference. This has been very enjoyable so far and I hope to continue with it.

I have started the branch Twitter account, and throughout the pension meetings it has been interesting to see how other branches are using there's, along with our own being re-tweeted by Dave ward, Tracey Fussey, Andy Kerr and the main CWU account. The right tweet can end up being seen by many more people than just the ones following us.

This is still a work in progress and I think it will eventually be much more effective in communicating

short bursts of precise info to our members, but we need to let them know it's there to be seen.



In the coming year, I would like to: Promote the social media accounts, Continue to attend meetings, Complete the Fair and equal day, and Equal rights part 2, Equalities conferences, Support the Branch/ Members and my fellow Reps.

In the Equal rights 2 the pre-course work will make me look at the demographics of a branch, and I think it could help towards other things within the branch including recruitment. I am looking forward to completing this.

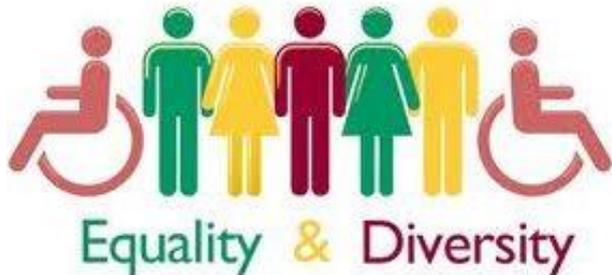
I'm currently the Equality Officer for the branch and I am not a full time rep as I also work on the Brighton/T-Wells frames team.

I came to the Equality role when George Hannah retired, so I have not had a full 2 year term yet.

Most of what I have done this year is either training courses or observations at meetings. This year I completed, Equal Rights Part 1, at the CWU training centre, at Alvescot.

Since May 2017, I have become involved with the South East Regional Equalities Committee, this was only set up this year and I was voted in as Chair at the first meeting.

This has been a bit of a steep learning curve, but with input from Dave Kauffman and Steve Taylor, this has helped me to



**LGBT Tunbridge Wells**

The CWU LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) advisory committee attended around 20 Gay Pride marches around the Country in 2017.

Tunbridge Wells held their first Pride march and event on the 20<sup>th</sup> August, with the CWU being the only union banner there, carried by John and Jason from the Advisory committee. The CWU banner was at the forefront of the march

which ended at the Forum where an evening event took place after the large gathering on the common.

So well done CWU.

Report by Di Hill



**Education Report - Steve Taylor**

As you will probably be aware, I often send out an education newsletter which has free online courses for everyone. I shall continue to do so and, those who want to take up music, look out for the next one as there will be free music lessons too!

Although I have a personal interest in genealogy, and run some lessons in Brighton and Sevenoaks, this is not just for office work-

ers. If you are nearby (in the ellipse) or have a day off, just come along. Those retired members are welcome too, but you will have to notify me first, so I can arrange accompaniment for you to enter the building.

The other main thing for the year is the photo competition and the production of the branch calendar, which I really enjoy as it can involve your family as well. I am hoping to run the competition again this year, so look out for the newsletter.

This years photograph competition was very good, and the results were spectacular.



**Photo Comp Results**

1st Ian Carter  
(Above)

2nd Shaun Bayford  
(Right)

3rd Marting Skinner  
(Left)



# Chair's Report - Dave Kauffman



I would like to thank all those in the Branch for their support during 2017.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on the past year within OUR Branch, South East Central. We have had the advantage of some big personalities in the Branch this year, and what has been great to see is, how the Branch secretary has help mould these characters into a team of individuals, who unite to achieve the projects and challenges that the Branch has faced during 2017.

I wish to thank the Branch Secretary for the drive that he shows in wanting the Branch to achieve great things year on year.

As for myself, I like to think I show the guiding hand that brings balance to the

Branch committee and through my role, I work hard to work for members and their issues. It is not always in my gift to give everything to those that would like it, but I do my best. I have had some success this year in getting people reinstated after dismissal, something that is not easy. I have represented people at all sorts of discipline and grievance and have had a range of results.

2017, has seen a moratorium on Performance management in Openreach field, has it gone for good? I doubt it. Although at present, there seems to be a drive toward quality and behaviours and these have presented challenges to the CWU and Openreach management, in trying to achieve the profile of a company OFCOM want Openreach to be. As at the end of the day, we all want to work for a company that treats its staff with respect and help it become a world beating company, unfortunately some managers don't always see this bigger picture, "a happy workforce is a more productive workforce".

The issues that I see as drivers going forward

are the issues around "Personal Travel Time" for all those who have it built into their contract of employment. It has always been the opinion, of this branch, that Openreach first line managers do not tackle this issue in the way in which it was intended at its inception. This Branch will continue to push for a better deal for people on these contracts.

Remember that our biggest challenge at the end of 2017 has been BT pensions and I am sure this will bring testing times in the months to come.

To new members of staff who have joined BT/ Openreach, I welcome you to the CWU. We work and strive to achieve better things for Team Member grades, with these employers. For other CWU members in other companies, I welcome you to the CWU family and hope we can support you in your work place, in the New Year.



# Changing Times - Dave Kauffman

It has been a long journey since the inception of IPOp and Service Delivery Transformation, way back in 2009, but it is a journey that I think we all need to reflect on and understand. I believe the journey is not over, but that we are only at a stop and pause, take a breath situation, before someone else comes in at the top of BT, and again starts to drive a culture that does not best suit the companies that BT and Openreach are.



It has to be said, that there were plenty of other parts of BT, that adopted the continuous improvement mantra which led to a culture of managers bullying people, to drive results, in a vain attempt to justify their high remuneration package.

This, it has to be said, has not seen a return to the high share prices of old, so something has not worked. Which, in turn, has led to the “roundabout” of change in some BT divisions

So, where are we? With the support of the CWU membership we, in the Branch, have challenged BT on many issues in the last 8 years, trying to push back against, what we perceived were, unfair or unjust policies. Something we are trying to do now, with the new 20 20 contracts that BT have introduced. These contracts have many points to them, that need to be challenged and as a branch this is one of our aims.

Performance Management, at present, is being judged in a different way, and productivity, although still there, is only one of a series of measures looked at in team based working. It will all come down to the ongoing results on Quality that will drive the agenda, in my opinion, this year.

Will BT still be able to achieve its OFCOM targets in the next 2 years? Targets that are getting harder and harder to attain. These targets will only be achievable if the fault queues are stable and new provision work is resourced correctly. A good quality network is what will help drive performance, and BT have yet to steer the course long enough, to reap the rewards.



So what can you do as a member of the CWU? Well, we are looking for you to support us in the best way possible. 2018 will hold big challenges and everyone’s support will be needed, going forward, whether it’s the pensions issue (remember we’re fighting for an uplift in the BTRSS, as well as a damage limitation on the BTPS) or some other issue.

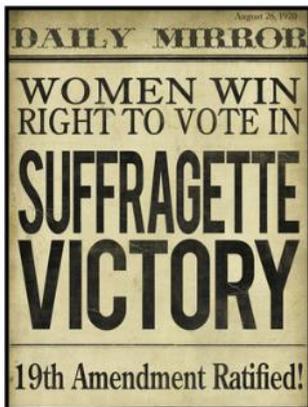
Remember the 20 20 contracts are our target and whether its pay, personal travel time, or pensions for the new contracts, as far as this branch is concerned, we will be campaigning on all issues for improvement.



# Women's Report - Di Hill

**2018 “the Year of the Woman”** 100 years since the first votes for women and we still only have 32% of women MP's in Parliament. 119 Labour (45%), 67 Conservative (21%), Libdems 4 (33%) and SNP 23 (34%). 208 women and 441 men were elected in June 2017.

No wonder women's refuges are closing or underfunded! Women still bearing the brunt of the effects of austerity. Women have worked hard to achieve basic rights in the home, at work and in public life, for hundreds of years. But the future looks unclear, equal pay is underpinned by EU law, as are many other women's rights, rights that could be eroded when Britain leaves the EU. That's why it's important that we have Women MP's, Councillors, etc to represent us. There are more women than men in Britain.



Controversy over whether a ten - foot statue of Margaret Thatcher should be located in Parliament square is ongoing, but looks like it will be refused. The Tories say she was the first woman Prime Minister but what did she do for women?... nothing, she got rid of all the women out of her cabinet and her policies did nothing to help the plight of women.

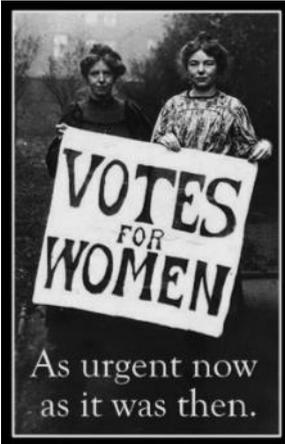
I attended the CWU Women's Conference in November held in Bristol, again it was the best attended Equality Conference. In Bristol (Labour City) 48.6% of Councillors are women and 12 of the 19 in the Cabinet are women. The main industrial motions were around toilet facilities for women, postal women on deliveries and for BT engineers saying some exchanges only have one toilet which can be a urinal, un-screened and no lock. This cannot be acceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Mary Honeyball a London MEP spoke of poverty and inequality disproportionately affecting women. Workers Rights all came from Europe which many Conservative MP's and employers want rid of (red tape)! Austerity has impacted more on women many of whom work in public services and also use them. 90% of all trafficked people are women.

2 motions were voted on to go through to General Conference which was one on “period poverty”, to campaign for all girls and women to have access to free sanitary products. This was highlighted recently in the Ken Loach film, “I Daniel Blake”, a must if you have not seen it. The other motion was to have equality audits to show the amount of equality activity in the branches.

I attended the relaunch of the Co-op party women's network in Parliament, an excellent evening with many women MP's. I also attend the Labour Women's Conference in Brighton where my submission from Tunbridge Wells Labour made it into the policy debate guide book this was on Equalities. The shabby treatment of women born in the 50's having to work longer to receive their pension, retirement plans shattered and work difficult to find because of age (over 60) was a big issue.

This year International Women's Day March 8<sup>th</sup> will have the theme “Press for Progress”. So important now with the misogyny, domestic violence and sexism many women are experiencing, press for progress, demand change!

2018 will see celebrations



across the Country for the Centenary of Women's suffrage. There will be events going on throughout

the year, in Tunbridge Wells all the political parties and women's groups are holding a march through the Town and an event in the Town hall on March 8<sup>th</sup>. The white, green and purple or red or gold depending on the suffrage group will be displayed across Towns and Cities in 2018.

We, as women, should all remember how women suffered for to have a voice, that is why it is so important we use it in the workplace and in public life and especially in the ballot box.

I shall be standing down as women's Officer this year, I was instrumental in having Women's Officers in branches, I served on the Women's Advisory Board and was Chair and Secretary of the women's Regional committee since their formation in 2000 so I feel like I've done my bit for the CWU Women's movement. I also represented the CWU on the TUC Women's Rights committee. I have to say it's been a pleasure and thank the branch for all their support.

## did you know?

In 1913, suffragettes asked a British official why the cricket pavilion in Tunbridge Wells didn't allow women. He replied, "It is not true that women are banned from the pavilion. Who do you think makes the teas?" They burned the pavilion down in protest.

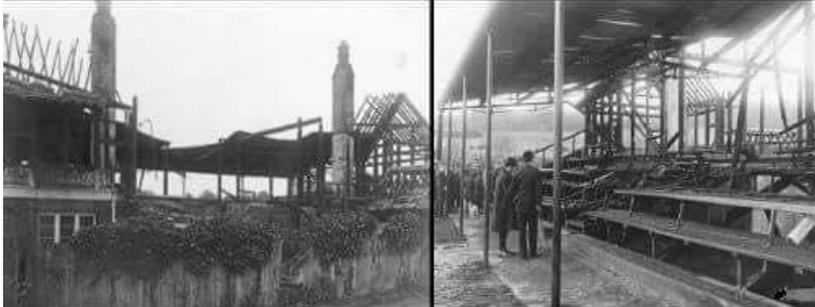


PHOTO: TUNBRIDGE WELLS MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

 DIDYOUKNOWBLOG.COM

# Retired Members - David Lomakin



in recent years has given rise to complex and unfor- giving negotiations with the CWU.

In my capacity of Retired Members Secretary, I represent our Branch at the CWU South East Region Retired Members Committee (SERRMC) of which I still hold the position of Chair. The committee deals not only with BT members but also Postal members, addressing many retirement issues, some regarding individuals, membership rights and the Pension agenda. To the committee’s credit we provided input and encouragement, to the Postal sector who gained a recent victory with their pension prospects and entitlement. The committee continues to assess and question the status of the BT pension proposals and their responsibilities toward the pension fund, whilst fully supporting the

CWU negotiating team.

From my position at the SERRMC, I attend the Retirement and Pensions Committee at the TUC headquarters in London where Government legislation, regulation and administration are examined and questioned with reference to State, Industrial and Company pension provisions.

Established concerns, criticisms and questions are then put directly to the MP’s Select Committee, on Pensions, held in the House of Commons which I have the privilege of attending.

On behalf of the Branch I attend the South East National Pensioners Council, which deals mainly with State Pension, benefit allowances and entitlement and NHS issues.

January 31<sup>st</sup> 2018, is the

2017 became a year in which our BT pension schemes have been challenged involving unsettling demands and decisions placed on members contributions and expectations, when looking forward to their retirement entitlements. CWU negotiators have taken to BT, the many disquieting, and in some cases, the loss in value of expected pension values.

Since year 2000, BT have re-aligned its pension responsibilities and during 2009 have introduced a new pension scheme that to new employees may view as a retrograde step with their employment values with BT.

Our National Executive Council team is addressing the many issues regarding current pension anomalies and ongoing expectations facing members who are hoping to retire soon. The new pension provision now applied to employees by BT

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The Communications Workers' Union

**BT PENSIONS PROPOSALS:  
BT CAN AFFORD  
MORE!**

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date set for the CWU Retired Members Conference. The main topics being placed on the agenda will be, pensions and the restriction of voting rights for Retired Members.

Retiring soon or facing retirement options or even leaving BT? Be sure to enquire, via any of our 3 Branch Offices, about retaining CWU Retirement status. This will enable you to receive CWU offers and benefits, legal services and the Union death benefit which now stands at £790. Also at Christmas you will receive your Branch diary and pen along with a

Christmas card.

I would take this opportunity to thank the Branch Of-

ficers and Committee members for their support and assistance, during the past year of stressful agendas.



## **BAME Report - Animesh Kana**



**BAME Officer:** Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (used to refer to members of non-white communities in the UK).

I have attended the majority of all Committee and AGM

meetings.

In March 2017, I completed Union Skills 1 Course. The course was 1 week in duration where learning and role play situations were part of the course objectives.

In October 2017, with other Branch Officers, carried out a check of branch membership details. This entailed amending details of members if required. This also included some transferring of members joining from others branches into SEC.

November 2017 was spent contacting members regarding possible Pensions changes. Updating their

contact details is essential for head office.

I have participated in the Pensions meeting organised by branch, providing information for members. In December I attended the branch Strategic Meeting, where we set our own agenda and expectations for the coming year.

I shall attend the Union Essential Skills 2 course, in February, but I am currently waiting for the availability, of a BAME Officers course. I shall continue to attend meetings, conferences and events associated BAME on behalf of the branch and its members.

# Brexit: 10 ways the EU protects British workers' rights

Leaving the EU means, giving up safeguards on employee protections. Here is what could be at risk as the Conservatives have outlined plans for a so-called hard Brexit – one in which the UK leaves the EU single market and customs union.

It means many of the workers' rights that have been won over many decades will no longer be protected by EU law and could potentially be abolished at any point. According to the House of Commons Library, a "substantial component" of workers' rights in the UK comes from EU law.

In truth the current government is unlikely to scrap many, if any, of the rights – not least because Theresa May has promised that workers' existing protections will be guaranteed while she is Prime Minister. The Government's Great Repeal Bill will also convert all EU laws, including the ones relating to employment rights, to UK law – at least for now.

The risk is how easy it would be, in theory, for a future government to get rid of those rights. Many hard-fought protections could be scrapped with just



a simple vote of Parliament

## Here are ten of the rights that could be under threat.

### Limits on working hours

Introduced in the UK in 1998, the EU's working time regulations mean employees cannot be forced to work more than an average of 48 hours a week. Workers can choose to opt out, and there are some exceptions - including emergency service workers, soldiers, servants in private households and fishermen - but this EU law helps stop bosses forcing their employees to work unhealthy hours.

### Time off

**The Working Time Directive also made days off a legal requirement.** Companies have to give staff a minimum of 48 hours off

work, per fortnight, and a rest time of at least 11 consecutive hours (12 hours for young people) every day. This is designed to stop workers being exploited and becoming unwell because of being overworked. The rules also include protections for night workers, ensuring they cannot work an average of more than eight hours a day and must be offered free health checks.

### Annual leave

EU rules also secure British workers' legal right to paid annual leave. According to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the introduction of these laws gave six million Britons better rights to paid leave, including two million workers who had previously not been entitled to any paid leave at all.

### Equal pay

Equal pay between men

and women has been enshrined in EU law since 1957. It was also part of UK law before Britain joined the EU, but in a more minimal way. The British government had refused to incorporate into law the idea that pay should be based on value, meaning a woman doing a more valuable or senior job could legally be paid only the same as a more junior male colleague. **The UK government amended this only after enforcement action by the EU Commission.**

### Maternity rights

EU law guarantees women a minimum of 14 weeks maternity leave. The 1992 EU Pregnant Workers Directive also gave women the right to take time off work for medical appointments relating to their pregnancy. It placed a duty on employers to look after pregnant women, including putting them on paid leave if the nature of their work was unsuitable during pregnancy – for example, if it was overly physical and potentially dangerous.

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has made clear any discrimination towards a woman because of her pregnancy or maternity leave is sexism and should be treated as such. The ECJ also ruled that employers must give women on maternity leave the same contractual rights as they do to other employees, for example

by continuing to pay in to pension schemes.

### Parental leave

EU law says parents must be allowed to take 18 weeks of unpaid leave from work to look after a child. It also says workers must be allowed additional time off for other family reasons, such as an ill child.

### Anti-discrimination laws

UK laws banning discrimination on the grounds of age, religion or sexual orientation, come directly from the EU's Equal Treatment Directive. EU laws have also made it easier for people claiming discrimination to get justice, by placing the burden of proof in discrimination cases on the alleged perpetrator, rather than the alleged victim.

### Compensation for discrimination victims

Under EU law, there is no cap on the amount an employer found guilty of discrimination can be ordered to pay in compensation. This could change after Brexit. The last government commissioned a report on employment law, by venture capitalist Adrian Beecham, that recommended introducing a cap on compensation payments for discrimination. Until now, EU rules have prevented UK government ministers from doing so. Critics say the current law can be crippling for employers but others say it is a reasonable reflection of

the huge consequences discrimination can have.

### Agency worker protections

EU rules adopted in 2008 say, temporary workers must be treated equally to directly-employed staff, including being given access to the same "amenities or collective facilities". They also say EU member states should do more to improve agency workers' access to training and childcare facilities. These regulations are not popular with employers and were resisted by the UK government during EU negotiations. They could be some of the first EU rules to be scrapped post-Brexit.

### Health and safety

The EU's Health and Safety Framework Directive forces employers to assess and act to reduce workplace risks. Other rules cover issues such as disabilities, noise and specific regulations for staff working with chemicals, asbestos or other potential hazards. The TUC says 41 of the 65 new health and safety regulations introduced in the UK between 1997 and 2009 came from EU laws.

Web based article adapted by Dave Kauffman.



# Women's (BT) Report- Una McMahon



What a year for Women of the South East Central. We have seen a women's event in Sevenoaks this summer, with over twenty in attendance.

This was an informal gathering to form a network of women in Sevenoaks. We openly discussed issues affecting women within the

Telecoms business, we also enjoyed a lunch together forging good communication and empathy in the WSEC (Women of the South East Central).

I was also lucky enough to join my fellow officers in Brighton Withdean, for a great feel good, data check exercise, at Halloween, where I was able to meet some wonderful WSEC's there also.

This year on personal growth, I have been upgraded to a qualified mental health first aider, care of a two day course supported by the CWU in conjunction with MIND.

I have passed the CWU Essential Skills course part two. Looking forward to the

year ahead, I am hoping to have proactive, positive involvement in the CWU.

I look forward to supporting all of our SEC women and men in uniting and strengthening our working lives. Together we stand!

If you have any feedback or suggestions, relating to the WSEC, please do not hesitate but to contact me. Happy New Year, let hope it's a good one.



## Local Heroes - Phoebe Hessel



In this section we celebrate a local person who has done something unusual which shows some union values.

Phoebe, born Phoebe Smith, reputedly in 1713, in Stepney, London and as with people from the past it is difficult to distinguish fact from folklore. Either story you would like to believe she had a remarkable life.

This was a period of British

history where women had little rights and there were often cases of husbands selling their wives, she made her way into the British Army dressed as a boy.

With the British Army, she travelled to the Caribbean and Central Europe, helping Britain in its more aggressive form of diplomacy, as an infantryman.

After 17 years in the Army, after telling no one, or be-

ing found out, her secret was revealed.

The War of the Austrian Succession started in 1740, when the European Powers, debated, in an aggressive way, over the succession to the Habsburg Dynasty.

Maria Theresa had become the heir of the dynasty, but she was a woman. Although most of Europe had previously agreed to her succession, as soon as her father Charles VI died, some countries decided, France included, to take advantage of a weakened state.

I'd like to say Britain stood firm and for a woman's right, but that would be untrue and go against the introduction of this story. Britain, was more concerned with France, and how the French could have a hegemony in Europe, and that is the simplified reason why they supported Maria Theresa.

So in 1745, Phoebe found herself in the Fifth Foot Regiment and part of the

20,000 strong British section of an allied army, facing the French. At some point in the Battle of Fontenoy, Phoebe received a bayonet wound to her arm, which led to her secret being discovered.

Phoebe, revealed her secret to an astonished Colonels wife in her regiment and she soon found herself invalided home. However, the Colonels wife arranged for her to be given an army pension.

This story would be remarkable enough had that been that, but there was more. She got married and had 9 children in Plymouth, but after her husband Samuel Golding died, she moved along the coast to Brighton.

There she married a local fisherman by the name of Thomas Hessel. When he died, she was left to her own resources. Did she give up and go to the poorhouse? No! She got a donkey and went from village to village selling vegetables and fish.

As time aged this indomitable lady, she became a familiar sight around Brighton, and in her eighties she'd be seen selling gingerbread and oranges and telling stories of her days in the army.

It was at this point she came to the attention of Prince George, who spent a lot of time in Brighton. In 1808, Phoebe now aged 95 Prince

George heard that she had fallen on hard times and was now in the workhouse, he granted her a pension of half a guinea a week.

So what did she do? She came out of the workhouse and used the pension to enable herself to sell her wares again.

In 1820, the now George IV, invited Phoebe to his coronation parade in Brighton.

Phoebe died in December 1821 aged 108 (reputedly) and she was buried in St Nicholas Church, Brighton. A local pawnbroker paid for her headstone.

In the 1970's, the Northumberland Fusiliers, successors to Fifth Foot Regiment, paid to have her grave restored. Most years a poppy is left on her grave on remembrance day.

So Phoebe, you were a woman ahead of your time. Fighting for everything you got, sometimes literally, in a mans world. One of the Brighton Buses has been named after her. Phoebe, you are our local hero.



# Young Worker Report - Liam Reed



hold a workforce 20 20 meeting at the Cooden Beach Hotel, where we invited a guest speaker down from head office to give an update on the negotiations taking place.

Throughout the year I have been able to call most of the Youth, within our branch, which has allowed me become more approachable as we have seen many new recruits join us.

2017 has been a busy year, where I attended both the Telecom & General Conference's. In the Telecoms Conference I had the opportunity to get up on to the rostrum and give my views relating to the workforce 20 20 contract. This, it seems, has been a burning issue on a national scale. Therefore as a branch we decided to

As part of the youth officer's duties I am required to attend the South East Regional Organising Committee (ROC) and events where we collectively come together, as a region, to discuss organising techniques.

In February 2017 I attended the national ROC forum, in Birmingham, where I repre-

sented the South East youth and managed to do a small amount of public speaking. I attended the National youth event in Liverpool, where I participated in one of the events supporting a charity called the Ron Todd Foundation. As part of the workshop we collectively decided that it wasn't much use sitting around talking about what a charity does, therefore we decided to go out on the streets of Liverpool to put it in action.

Throughout the weekend, we managed to give food and water to many of the homeless around Liverpool city centre and to simply give them some company.

As shown in the photograph I gave a speech, the following morning, promoting the Ron Todd Foundation.

## 50 Years On - Dave Kauffman

It has to be said that Unions have shaped our future and our past. Here is an example (notes taken from the web) of how Women started the struggle for Equal Pay.

The **Ford sewing machinists strike** of 1968 was a landmark labour-relations dispute in the United Kingdom. It was a trigger cause of the passing of the Equal

Pay Act 1970.

The strike, led by Rose Boland, Eileen Pullen,

Vera Sime, Gwen Davis, and Sheila Douglass, began on 7 June 1968, when women sewing machinists





at Ford Motor Company Limited's Dagenham plant in London walked out, followed later by the machinists at Ford's Halewood Body & Assembly plant.

The women made car seat covers and as stock ran out the strike eventually resulted in a halt to all car production.

The Dagenham sewing machinists walked out when, as part of a regrading exercise, they were informed that their jobs were graded in Category B (less skilled production jobs), instead of Category C (more skilled production jobs), and that they would be paid 15% less than the full B rate received by men. At the time it was common practice for companies to pay women less than men, irrespective of the skills involved.

Following the intervention of Barbara Castle (See photo to top of page) the Secretary of State for Employment and Productivity, in Harold Wilson's government, the strike ended three weeks

after it began, as a result of a deal that immediately increased their rate of pay to 8% below that of men, rising to the full category B rate the following year.

A court of inquiry (under the Industrial Courts Act 1919) was also set up to consider their regrading, although this failed to find in their favour. The women were only regraded into Category C following a further six-week strike in 1984 (source BBC documentary broadcast 9 March 2013).

Inspired by their example, women trades unionists founded the National Joint Action Campaign Committee for Women's Equal Rights (the NJAC-

CWER), which held an 'equal pay demonstration' attended by 1,000 people in Trafalgar Square on 18 May 1969.

The ultimate result was the passing of the Equal Pay Act 1970, which came into force in 1975 and which did, for the first time, aim to prohibit inequality of treatment between men and women in terms of pay and conditions of employment.

In the second reading debate of the bill, the machinists were cited by MP Shirley Summerskill, as playing a "very significant part in the history of the struggle for equal pay".

Once the UK joined the European Union in 1973, it also became subject to Article 119 of the 1957 Treaty of Rome, which specified that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work.

A film dramatization of the 1968 strike, *Made in Dagenham*, was released in 2010, and a musical followed in 2014.



# Meeting Dates 2018-19

Members of the South East Central, CWU Branch, are advised that the following meetings are open to all members:

General Meeting	Wednesday, 16th May 2018	Tunbridge Wells
General Meeting	Wednesday, 14th Nov 2018	Brighton
AGM	Wednesday, 20th Feb 2019	Venue TBC

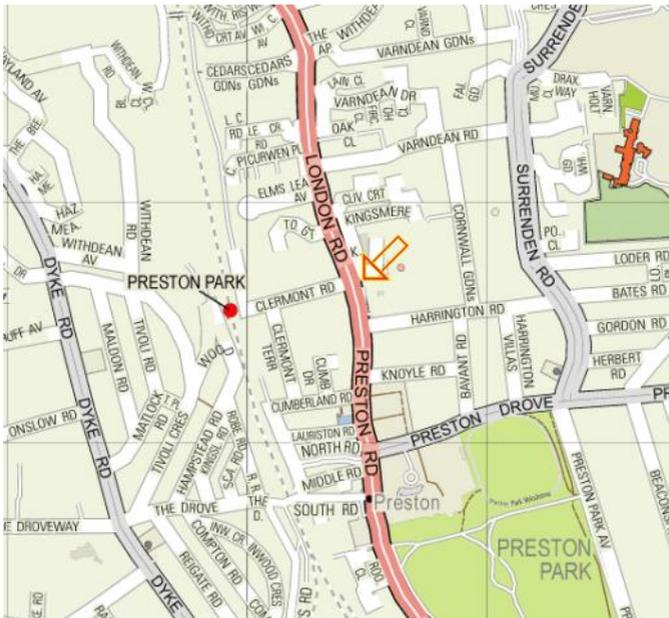
Meeting venues will be advised closer to the time. Special Meetings may be called to address urgent issues and notified to you via the email address we have for you.

Committee members are advised that the following meetings are open to committee members

Committee Meeting	Tuesday, 3rd Apr 2018	Uckfield
Committee Meeting	Tuesday, 3rd July 2018	Uckfield
Committee Meeting	Tuesday, 2nd Oct 2018	Uckfield
Committee Meeting	Tuesday, 8th Jan 2019	Uckfield

Dates of all meetings are advertised on the website  
[www.cwusec.org.uk](http://www.cwusec.org.uk)

## Map of the 2018 AGM venue, Preston Park Hotel, 216 Preston Road, Brighton. BN1 6UU



**South East Central**

## Current Points of Contact

		<u>Telephone No</u>	<u>Mobile No</u>
Branch Secretary:	Chris Power cwu.sec.br@btinternet.com	01273 565771	07850 840581
Branch Chair:	David Kauffman chair.sec.tw@btinternet.com	01892 522948	07850 815644
Financial Secretary: (& Asst Sec & ULR)	Steve Taylor cwu.sec.finsec@btinternet.com	01892 522948	07377 880526
Assistant Secretary (& Safety Co-ord)	Peter Francis cwu.sec.assistsec@btinternet.com	01732 742222	07740 720573
Assist Safety Officer: (Vice Chair)	Rick Cobern safety@cwusec.org.uk	01732 742222	07498 923159
Women's Officer: (& Political)	Di Hill dianne.hill1@btinternet.com		07747 193133
Women's BT:	Una McMahon una.secwomen@cwusec.org.uk	01732 742222	
Equality Rep	Steve Rhodes equality@cwusec.org.uk		07764 338836
Retired Members Sec	Dave Lomakin via cwu.sec.tw@btinternet.com	01892 522948	
Youth Officer	Liam Reed youth@cwusec.org.uk	01892 522948	07453 323773
BAME Officer	Animesh Kana via cwu.sec.tw@btinternet.com	01732 742222	

Think you could help?  
Think you could do better?  
Make yourself known to the branch  
and join our committee. Ring any of the  
officers above for more details.





South East Central Branch  
*Annual General Meeting*

**Preston Park Hotel**

**216 Preston Road, Brighton**

**BN1 6UU**

on

**Wednesday 21st February**

**7.30pm**

The agenda will include the submission of the Annual report, Branch officers/committee vacant posts and any proposals pertinent to an AGM, i.e. changes to branch bye laws and any proposals for the forthcoming year, including financial proposals, and proposals to the Union Annual Conference in April.

The meeting will conclude with any questions, current issues time permitting.

**There will be a buffet provided for members in addition to a drink at the bar**

**YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY-**  
**PLEASE ATTEND**