



## Scotland at UNISON Brighton Conference

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# Scotland *in* UNISON

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# College staff win pay cap busting deal

## CONFERENCE We will smash the pay cap

**UNISON will smash the public sector 1% pay cap in the next twelve months", Scotland's Gordon McKay, promised the union's national conference in Brighton.**

"(It is) a pay cap that is driving loyal, dedicated and hard working people and their families into poverty", said Gordon in the week he was elected UNISON senior vice president.

Jane Carolan in her last Conference as an NEC member told delegates: "While Theresa May will publicly applaud our heroes in the emergency services at whatever disasters are thrown at them, that applause never translates into the pounds, shillings and pence that would see our members fairly rewarded for the jobs that they do."

She urged delegates to organise in branches to get members ready to take action.

Dundee's Jim McFarlane added: "We are at our best when we campaign and organise, taking action and winning."

"We have been on the defensive for too long. The Tories are in disarray. Let's use that to our advantage."

Glasgow's Jim Main underlined the organisational task: "Only six million people are in trade unions, yet 12 million voted for Labour."

"Some of these people must work in public services. We must find a way of bringing them in."

**Union negotiators have won a flat rate pay rise of £425 for Further Education members in Scotland from 1 April 2017 plus five days' additional annual leave.**

UNISON will be recommending the deal to its members.

John Gallacher, UNISON Scotland head of bargaining, said: "This exceeds the pay cap for those who earn under £22k."

"The deal represents 2.6% at the bottom end (Living Wage level) and more than 1% for all those who earn less than £42k - the vast majority of support staff."

"This is the third year in a row that UNISON has led negotiations to achieve better than pay policy for some 5,500 workers in 20 Scottish colleges."

The 2015 pay talks saw industrial action by EIS, and 2016 saw national strikes by UNISON, GMB and EIS. Up to 2015 pay and conditions were determined at individual college level.

UNISON FE Committee chair Chris Greenshields said: "This proposal breaks the government's 1% pay cap in the public sector but it is still not overly generous given inflation is at 2.8%."

"The Scottish Government needs to seriously review its position across the board of pay bargaining with fair pay re-introduced across the public sector for 2018."

Committee vice chair Shirley Sephton, added: "If there is to be a generational shift on how college staff are deployed and remunerated, any money spent should be seen as a transformational investment in Scotland's future, not a source of further efficiency and austere approaches to negotiations."

"Scotland's FE students deserve the best support services available and our members are committed and motivated to deliver quality in the sector. This is a reasonable first step but there is a long way to go."

UNISON has been particularly pleased with the flat rate settlement, bringing the same cash deal for all.

John Gallacher added: "We have also achieved, through three years of national bargaining, a national working week of 35 hours and a minimum leave entitlement of 44 days - the best in the public sector."



**"This is the third year in a row that UNISON has led negotiations to achieve better than pay policy for some 5,500 workers in 20 Scottish Colleges"** JOHN GALLACHER

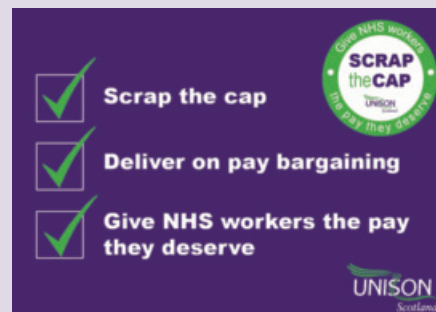
**Local government workers pay action vote beaten by turnout law - Page 2**

## UNISON mounts NHS 'Scrap the Cap' campaign

**UNISON has launched a summer of campaign activity calling on the Scottish government to scrap the cap on NHS pay rises, which will include the union and its members lobbying Scottish Government Ministers on pay as they carry out their annual round of NHS Board Reviews.**

Tom Waterson, Chair of the Scottish Health Committee has offered a cautious welcome to media speculation that the Scottish Government are committed to lifting the 1% pay cap, just weeks after the union launched 'Scrap the Cap'.

"Of course we welcome the commitments made by Scottish Ministers



in the chamber that they will scrap the pay cap, but with no detail on what that will mean. Lifting the 1% cap is one thing, delivering an above inflation pay rise across the NHS is something else."

Health branches across Scotland are being asked to step their campaigning in

response to a formal proposal by the Scottish Government to enter into direct pay bargaining whilst joint research is commissioned on NHS pay by unions, Scottish Government and the Scottish employers.

Tom Waterson continued: "The Pay Review Body lost any pretence of independence when it awarded a below inflation 1% pay rise to NHS workers."

"The Scottish government's suggestion that we dump the Pay Review Body and deal with pay in Scotland by negotiation is supported by UNISON and we will be using our influence over the summer to secure a conclusion which sees the Pay

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## Scrap the Cap

From page 1

Review Body consigned to the bin as we campaign to 'Scrap the Cap'.

The union's summer campaign will coincide with the annual review process which takes place in all NHS Scotland health boards. UNISON vows to be 'seen and to be heard' in the lead up to and at each and every event.

Matt McLaughlin, UNISON's head of health for Scotland, said: "UNISON is the only union in the NHS with the grass roots organisation and resources to organise and sustain a campaign like this. Across Scotland, UNISON activists and members will be seen and heard as we demand that the government 'scrap the cap and whilst media comments and parliamentary statements are welcome, there will be no let up in the UNISON campaign until we've well and truly scrapped the cap!"

## Conference in brief

### Brexit: NI peace process must be protected

UNISON will spearhead a campaign to protect the Northern Ireland peace agreement as a priority in EU exit negotiations, amidst fears that a hard Brexit will result in the return of a border across the island of Ireland which will damage its fragile but hard won peace.

Scotland's amendment, moved by **Lilian Macer**, highlighted the impact on Scotland, Wales and England that the reintroduction of a hard border would have in relation to freedom of movement, trade and solidarity in these islands.

### Standing for LGBT equality

Scottish Electricity's **Elaine Duffy** told Conference that UNISON research revealed that LGBT members were disproportionately hit by service cuts.



But she had a message of hope:

"Chilling as the research findings are, we must use the findings to reject the politics of austerity. We must show young LGBT people – indeed show everyone – how things can be different."

"There's a sense of change in the air," said Elaine. "Let's build on it and stand together for LGBT equality."

### Support for WASPI pension campaign

Conference pledged to continue its support for Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) following on from UNISON Scotland's support and the STUC's support in April.

### Public housing only way to solve crisis

UNISON will call for a restoration of direct investment in public housing as the only way to resolve the housing crisis, with Renfrewshire's **Brenda Aitchison** calling for public landlords to be democratically accountable.

### Support confirmed for woman's right to choose

On the 50th anniversary of the Abortion Act, Conference reaffirmed its support for a woman's right to choose in terms of abortion and Scotland's **Davena Rankin** made a powerful and reasoned speech.

"The motion is not calling for a celebration of abortion, but a celebration of women taking control of their lives", she said.

## Council vote for pay action beaten by turnout law

**Despite UNISON members voting by 62.7% for strike action on council pay, the action could not go ahead because the turnout did not reach the 50% required by new law.**

The union has therefore now written to the employers seeking implementation of the pay offer which was:-

A flat rate increase of £350 for all staff up to £35,000 (based on a 37 hour week).

For those above £35,000 a 1% uplift will apply.

Councils will commit to

using the Scottish Local Government Living Wage as the minimum pay level for all pay and allowances including additional hours worked, contractual overtime and other allowances/premia (where applicable) and it will be pensionable.

COSLA Employers agree to participate in a joint working group with the trade unions tasked with developing a future pay strategy that both sides can sign up to.

The offer is for one year from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

Staff side secretary **Dougie Black** said: "In intimating our acceptance we have urged the employers to recognise that the outcome of our ballot was to take industrial action, however it was the thresholds in the new Trade Union Act 2016 that prevented this from happening and that pay remains a high priority for our members."

The union has agreed with the Scottish employers that there should be early talks to develop a joint approach or campaign to influence the outcome of the Scottish

Government's Spending Review to seek additional funding for local government - part or all of which can be targeted towards improving pay.

UNISON also wants an early meeting of the Pay Strategy Group to agree terms of reference and a planned programme of work with a joint commitment to conclude the work of the group by December 2017.

As we went to press, negotiators were still awaiting formal confirmation of the terms of our acceptance.

## End of an era as Jane steps down after 30 years at the top

by John Stevenson

SiU editor

**Scotland's Jane Carolan, chair of UNISON's key national policy committee, stood down at the end of Conference after 30 years in the leadership of the union.**

The journey to UNISON NEC member and member of the TUC General Council and its ruling Executive Committee, started in the 1980s in the Glasgow District branch of Nalگو.

Passionate about equalities at a time when it was an uphill struggle, Jane was elected to Nalگو's National Women's Committee in the mid 1980s.

She was then elected to the National Local Government Committee, the lead negotiating body, soon rising to be the chair.

In 1997 she was elected to the NEC and became chair of the influential Policy Committee.

By 2003 she was a member of the TUC General Council and its Executive Committee.

### Organising

Personal recognition is not something Jane has ever craved. Standing up for equalities, raising working class consciousness. It was just what you did.

But she did take some pride in the fact that some women had told her: "You've made it alright to be a woman in a leadership position." That says a lot about her achievements in those days.



**It's not about getting the best possible deal in the circumstances, but creating the circumstances to get the best possible deal.**

JANE CAROLAN

When you talk to her, the agenda always comes back to organising.

"Committees don't make lay leadership, but working together with everyone having a hand and a role in developing the objective, does", Jane explained.

Jane regrets that the union is not so political these days. "All we do in a trade union is and should be political. Politics affects all parts of our lives", she said.

But when so many people say they don't see politics as relevant, what do we do about it?

"Dare I say we need to do something about class consciousness?" asked Jane.

"There's almost too much focus on keeping members happy when sometimes it should be about making them angry - that's what will get them to take action at the end of the day.

"It's not about getting the best possible deal in the circumstances, but creating the

circumstances to get the best possible deal."

When asked about significant achievements over the last 30 years, Jane was absolutely clear: "Getting equal pay in Local Government and in the Health Service. We don't blow our trumpet enough about it."

Jane has also long been a strong internationalist involved in the Chile, Nicaragua, and Palestine solidarity movements.

Jane's 'retirement' will include activism in CND ('it's in my blood'), being a director of Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI), 'stuff' for the Institute of Employment Rights, being a Children's Panel Member and getting back to writing.

So does Jane have any advice for the future?

Her head throws back and that guffaw of a giggle takes over (one that has got her into trouble before when I have made a quip in her ear during formal proceedings).

"Organise!", she said. "Get back to the broad trade union principles. Single issue campaigns have their place. But whether low pay, benefit cuts or child poverty, they all have significant political reasons behind them that we need to understand and communicate to our members."

In a message to delegates at Conference, Jane said: "I have always been proud of the role Scotland plays in the union, taking forward radical policies that have shaped the political agenda and modernised our union to make it fit for purpose."

"I have always felt that in Scotland we dealt with things in a comradely manner and respected collective responsibility when decisions are taken. That's the way things should be."

Jane Carolan has always been true to herself, consistent in the convictions she holds and accountable to the members she serves. She is a tireless campaigner for socialism and feminism.

She has never been afraid to take responsibility and articulate the difficult issues. You will never be in any doubt about her views on a subject but you will always be able to debate it with her.

There's not many like her left and UNISON will be the poorer without her.

(See [unison-scotland.org.uk/news/conf2017](http://unison-scotland.org.uk/news/conf2017)) for the full interview with Jane.

## Pat Rowland: UNISON Scotland's first and only treasurer retires

**Since UNISON Scottish Council was established in July 1993 we've had only one treasurer - Pat Rowland and she has now retired.**

She has been a West Dunbartonshire branch delegate to Scottish Council and National Delegate Conference - and Scottish Council treasurer for 24 years

She sat on the UK branch financial appeals panel, which she has also chaired in recent years.

And with that vast knowledge and experience in turn, Pat has made that available

to numerous branch treasurers over decades through her annual treasurers' workshops and her work as branch auditor.

Pat has also overseen the introduction of OLBA online branch accounting system - and been there to dig many of us out when we got stuck with it.

But Pat has had a wider engagement and influence than looking after the money.

She has been a champion of nursery nurses before they were 'early years'; and she has been instrumental in trade union crèche and childcare facilities which allow others to play their part in trade union business



Pat Rowland speaking at this year's STUC Congress

Pat has also been active in Labour Link having chaired the Scottish Committee for a period. And she has carried NALGO

and UNISON's case into the STUC both at annual congress as a frequent contributor and for the last five years or so as member of the general council.

Scottish convener **Lilian Macer**, paying tribute to Pat at Scottish Council, said: "Pat, your immense contribution has been greatly valued by your colleagues."

"In wishing you well in retirement we know that you'll still be keeping a hand in. We wish you an enjoyable and well deserved time."

Pat's place will be taken by Elaine Duffy of the Scottish Electricity Branch.



## Save the planet and our pensions investments

**UNISON Scotland, in the form of Stephen Smellie, won Conference backing for a campaign for divestment of fossil fuel extraction from our pension funds for the sake of our planet while also warning that fossil fuels pose a risk to our pension fund investments.**

Stephen said: "We need a successful investment strategy to pay our pensions. However we do have a wider interest – good pensions might not help if the planet is frying."

"Our kids and grandkids won't thank us if they have to deal with more extreme weather conditions, poisoned air, and a shortage of drinking water leading to millions of

deaths, and a refugee crisis that will make the last few years seem like nothing."

Stephen explained that when governments do actually honour existing agreements to keep the temperature rise below 2°C, the value of fossil fuel reserves and share prices of BP, Shell and other such companies will drop, and so will the value of our pension fund investments.

"We need to propose alternative strategies that will be more socially useful and less environmentally damaging at the same time as making the necessary return on investments. It could be renewable energy, social housing or public transport."

Glasgow's **Nora Adeyemo** supported and also warned of the dangers of fracking.

# Organising to tackle crisis in social care

**UNISON Scotland took the message to National Conference that social care workers are a pressurised and a growing section of the public sector workforce but there are significant challenges to organising them.**

Scottish convener **Lilian Macer** won backing for our motion calling for an organising strategy specific to these workers to support them to expand their roles and to meet regulatory requirements.

Separate motions underlined the crisis in social care and the risk that integration will become a front for cuts.

Scotland NEC member **Jane Carolan** told delegates "This union pioneered the Ethical Care Charter, a gold standard.

"But we can do more to fight for universal, publicly provided care services."

NHS Glasgow Clyde and CVS member **Una Provan** told the Conference: "I have no problem with change.

"I want to work in an integrated way. But not at the cost of producing a reduced, watered down service."

She underlined that health and social care integration



Lilian Macer

should meet the needs of communities not be an excuse for cuts like those seen in school nurse and district nurse services.

## Devolution must be respected in Brexit deal

**C**onference backed Northern Ireland's call for the devolution settlement to be respected throughout the the Great Repeal Bill process

It also backed UNISON Scotland's Stephen Smellie in his call that: "Negotiations around Brexit must not be used to dilute powers

And recognising that many social care members will be in private companies, **Craig Griffiths** – a first time speaker

devolved to Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales."

He also stressed the importance of defending human rights.

However, Katrina Murray's call on behalf of Lanarkshire Health for the devolved administrations to be able to reach their own positions on access to the single market was



**'I want to work in an integrated way. But not at the cost of producing a reduced, watered down service'**  
UNA PROVAN

from Lanarkshire Health - won support for action to ensure private sector stewards are fully involved in branches.

a step too far for Conference and it was lost.

UNISON will press for legislative consent from the devolved nations and a commitment from the UK Government not to claw back already devolved powers; and for further devolution of powers including any repatriated from the EU.

## Conference 2017

**UNISON's annual National Delegate Conference is the union's ruling body. Every year delegates from all over the country take part in debates to vote on our policies and priorities.**

Every UNISON branch elects reps to attend and vote on behalf of their local branch members. Scotland has about 200 delegates.

Despite many uplifting moments - not least a rousing performance by **Jeremy Corbyn** - the cloud of the tragic events in London and Manchester hung heavy over this year's Conference.

The aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, whatever the causes, threw into focus the reality of the divide in a Tory UK between obscene wealth and inexcusable poverty.

The need to address that was reflected in policies we set on breaking the pay cap, on campaigning for decent public services, on housing policies and on a decent living wage that is actually enough to live on.

*Conference stories are by Kate Ramsden, John Stevenson, Jane Aitchison and Marie Quigley. Much fuller reports and photos are on the website under the news menu.*

## Dying to Work campaign

**S**outh Lanarkshire won groundbreaking support for the Dying to Work campaign as Conference pledged to lobby for legislation to protect the rights of workers who are terminally ill.

Moving the motion, Jane Aitchison asked delegates to imagine what it would feel like to be diagnosed with a terminal illness... unimaginable, earth-shattering, "and then the last thing folk need is a knee jerk reaction from their employer to move to dismissal on the basis of incapability.

"Facing the indignity of dismissal whilst managing a terminal illness is quite simply cruel and wrong," slammed Jane.

She told delegates that South Lanarkshire Council and trade unions signed up to the TUC's Dying to Work Campaign last November and they are also making sure that HR understands what this means and that it is applied.

East Lothian's **John Nisbet** gave a moving account of his own situation when, having worked for his employer for 37 years, he was diagnosed with cancer.

"It was like bloody hounds surrounding a fox! After 37 years as an employee I felt they wanted rid of me. Terrible"

John recovered, "thanks to the wonderful NHS staff" but has not forgotten his experience.

Scotland's **Maggie Cook** and **Susan Kennedy** also made contributions in this debate.

## Support for members living with mental ill health

**C**onference commended the Cymru Wales Mental Health Champions scheme and called on other regions to adopt a similar initiative.

Moving the Disabled Members' motion, Scotland's **Kathleen Kennedy** said: "It is vital that anyone with mental ill health is able to get the support they need, without fear of judgement or discrimination."

**Susan Kennedy** backed the motion saying: "Thousands of members living with mental ill health being supported by branch stewards... Sadly the supporter can very quickly become the sufferer of mental health. And that is why this motion is so important."

## Your UNISON National Executive members

**Scotland's UNISON members elected their National Executive Council (NEC) members in a recent postal ballot.**

The NEC is the union's supreme body of lay activists tasked with setting the union's strategies and taking decisions between national conferences.

The Scotland team is Maggie Cook, Falkirk branch; Jim McFarlane, Dundee City; Davena Rankin, Glasgow Caledonian University; Kate Ramsden, Aberdeenshire and Stephen Smellie, South Lanarkshire branch and Scottish deputy convener.

It's the first time on the NEC for Jim, Kate and Stephen.

They took up their NEC posts after UNISON Conference on 23 June and attended their first



L to R: Maggie Cook, Jim McFarlane, Kate Ramsden, Stephen Smellie and Davena Rankin

proper NEC Meeting in London on 4 July.

This meeting allocated NEC members to committees and also elected the chairs and vice chairs of these committees.

We were delighted that Davena Rankin was elected as vice-chair of the Policy

Development and Campaigning Committee (PDCC) and Maggie Cook was elected as vice-chair of the Services to Members Committee.

The meeting also agreed UNISON's campaigning priorities over the coming year.

Smashing the 1% pay cap is UNISON's number one

priority and the general secretary laid out a wide ranging political and industrial campaign to bring this about.

Our second priority is to save the NHS and the third is our anti-austerity campaign.

All are underpinned by UNISON's anti-racism work.

The NEC agreed a donation of £10,000 to support those affected by the Grenfell Tower tragedy and there will be liaison with the local branch and other UNISON reps on the ground as to how best to deliver this to make sure it goes directly to those in need.

We will be keeping activists up to date with the work of the NEC and your Scotland NEC members through a regular column in *Scotland in UNISON*.



Jane Aitchison



Kathleen Kennedy



## Building control staff overworked, stressed and stuck in office

**B**are overworked, stressed and stuck in the office, says UNISON.

That's the conclusion of UNISON Scotland's latest survey – Building Stress: a survey of building control staff.

The report, available on the website, is the latest in the union's Damage series which looks at the impact of austerity cuts on the country's public services and the people who deliver them. The survey

reveals a group of workers who are short-staffed and long overdue a pay rise.

The Building Standards service in Scotland is provided by local authorities. Their role is the processing of building warrants, therefore checking building design and construction. They also ensure that dangerous buildings are made safe.

Key findings from the survey show: Almost half (48%) said there have been budget cuts this year while one in five (20%)

said the cuts had been severe.

There are 56 fewer staff working in Building Standards now than in 2010. The overwhelming majority (89%) feel their workload has got heavier.

Nearly 40% work unpaid hours 'now and again' while over a third (37%) work unpaid hours most weeks.

Dave Watson, UNISON's head of policy and public affairs, said: "This report reveals a dedicated workforce committed to ensuring that

buildings meet the standards required but who are under enormous pressure.

"They feel exhausted, undervalued and are struggling to deal with the demands placed upon them.

"People with these qualifications are in demand and there are many opportunities for better paid work in the private sector. There is a real risk that without decent jobs and pay they will take up these opportunities."

## People Power film festival returns to key Scottish cities

**T**ake One Action, the UK's leading global change film festival, returns to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Inverness this autumn, bringing some of the most acclaimed films of the year about the big issues of our time, from social inequality and women's empowerment to workers' rights and climate change.

Celebrating the people and the movies that are changing the world, Take One Action will host over fifty screenings across the four cities.

The event, which is supported by UNISON Scotland, enables thousands of audience members each year to experience cinema with a difference, to engage actively with campaigners, artists, filmmakers, journalists, politicians and each other – and to take action themselves.

Among the varied titles on offer, many of which will be presented as UK or Scottish premieres, some of this year's highlights include films such as Workers Cup, which sheds a light on the lives and hopes of



'Disturbing the Peace', a humbling and hopeful account of ex-PLO fighters joining ex-IDF soldiers to work towards peace in Israel and Palestine.

construction workers building Qatar's World Cup infrastructure, the UK premieres of Burning Out, a timely doc highlighting the strain under which health care staff have to operate and To End a War, which offers fascinating insight into the Colombian peace process, as well as Disturbing the Peace, a humbling and hopeful account of ex-PLO fighters joining ex-IDF soldiers to work towards peace in Israel and Palestine.

Every screening at the festival is accompanied by

discussions, with audience members encouraged to get involved in the issues raised by the films.

Take One Action executive director, Tamara Van Strijthem, thanked UNISON Scotland for their continued support: "This is a relationship we value immensely. Our focus as a Festival is strongly attuned to the campaigns UNISON supports and we look forward to welcoming many UNISON members to our events."

The festivals will take place 13-24 Sept in Edinburgh and

**TAKE ONE ACTION!**  
film festivals

Glasgow (various venues), 17-19 Nov in Aberdeen (Belmont Filmhouse) and 24-26 Nov in Inverness (Eden Court).

Full programme and booking details available from [www.takeoneaction.org.uk](http://www.takeoneaction.org.uk) from 11 August.

## Unions' positive input to fragile rural communities in Brazil

**T**wo UNISON members have learned at first hand how landless and unemployed people have accessed and cultivated land in Brazil to support their families and communities.

Kaila McCulloch, Shetland UNISON and vice chair of UNISON Scotland International Committee, and committee member Louise Giblin from UNISON's SEPA branch, headed to Sao Paulo, Brazil last month.

The trip was organised in partnership with Strathclyde University and the Federation of Rural Workers of the State of Sao Paulo (FERAESP).

Louise and Kaila's role was to research and identify a project with the possibility of a sustainable bid to UNISON International Development Fund. Both have degrees related to the research and both live on Shetland so have insight into the challenges facing



Louise and Kaila with FERAESP, Strathclyde University, and leaders of the Descalvado settlement.

remote communities.

After a five hour drive to Araraquara, they heard about the 'From Land to the Plate' project and 'Generation of energy and food' projects to be developed in two settlements with UNISON, University of Strathclyde and Sao Paulo.

Then it was on to Piracicaba to visit the Higher School of Agriculture before visiting the Fazenda, Capao Das Antas 'occupation' camp where 200 families were growing and

producing foods to sell in local markets.

Occupations are communities that the government do not recognise and they have no rights to a title to the land they are claiming.

They then visited Parque das Hortencias, which is a 'settlement' recognised by the state and the community have legal entitlement to the land.

Next was remote Descalvado where 42 families grow a vast array of crops.

Corrego RICO settlement followed. Set up in 1998, the women's association has grown to become the strongest part of the community.

The villagers cooked their visitors a huge feast of 100% organic grown vegetables, along with their fresh juices and jelly puddings.

Professor Larissa Bombardi gave a presentation about the use of chemicals that are being used in the Agri Industry and the devastating effects these toxins are having on the land and the people who depend on it.

Kaila reported: "This field trip has demonstrated the positive input unions are having with these fragile rural communities. We are delighted to now have established strong links with this project and look forward to sharing experience and knowledge between unions."

*Read the full report on the website under Brazil Blog.*

## Local Government Conference

### UNISON must lead fight against council cuts

Delegates backed a raft of actions to step up the fight against cuts to local government funding.

Moving Renfrewshire's call for co-ordinated action and sharing ideas, **Brenda Aitchison** pointed out that the general election has shown increasing public support and awareness of the value of public services. "Now is the time to build on this momentum", she said.

Backing the motion, Dundee's **Jim McFarlane** said: "The communities our members work in day in and day out have had enough. We deserve better."

### Bring home care back in house now

The conference heard harrowing stories about the state of home care in the UK as it called for councils to sign up to UNISON's Ethical Care Charter and for Labour to pledge to bring the service back in house.

Labour councils should not wait for a Labour Government before stopping privatisation and putting an end to zero hours contracts.

Aberdeenshire's **Kate Ramsden** told delegates: "If railways can be renationalised then surely home care services can be too."

Aberdeen City's **Deirdre Macdonald** reported on her authority's adoption of UNISON's Ethical Care Charter and added:

"We're watching the new Health and Social Care partnership very carefully to make sure that they don't seize on any opportunity to privatise."

In a separate motion from the Service Group Executive, Scotland's **Carol Ball** restated the union's commitment to oppose the privatisation of our public services.

"Private companies are not democratically accountable and are driven by shareholders profit at the expense of our members' pay term and conditions."

### Zero tolerance of bullying and harassment

Building on the work of Scotland Young Members' award-winning "Gonnae no dae that" campaign, delegates backed a complete zero tolerance on bullying and harassment and actions to eradicate it.

Scotland's **Alison MacCorquodale** noted health and safety reps were reporting that bullying was one of the top five hazards at work.

"This is not acceptable," she said. "Remember, we all have a legal right to a safe working environment."

### Organising is more complex than just facility time

While facility time is a major issue in organising in the third sector, it was more complex than just representation, Edinburgh's **John Stevenson** told delegates.

Reflecting on previous Edinburgh motions, he called for measures to address the 'democratic deficit' preventing these members from playing a full part in their union.

He understood some branch's concerns but backed the new Activity Based Budgeting that had brought Edinburgh additional resources to try to deal with this.

### We want to hear your news

*SiU* is your paper, we want to hear your stories. Contact John Stevenson (Editor) [john.stevenson@unison-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:john.stevenson@unison-edinburgh.org.uk) Danny Phillips [d.phillips@unison.co.uk](mailto:d.phillips@unison.co.uk) Trisha Hamilton [t.hamilton@unison.co.uk](mailto:t.hamilton@unison.co.uk)