

Abingdon Pickets at the police station, Vale of White Horse Council, and Oxfordshire Council Foxcombe Court. Strikers then joined the Oxford rally.

Andover There were pickets at the Test Valley borough offices at Beech Hurst, at the Ministry of Defence and at the JobCentre in Andover town centre, and there were hundreds more teachers, health service workers and other public servants on strike. Strikers and Andover Trades Union Council activists joined the many hundreds-strong march and rally in Basingstoke. The message was a simple one: working people will not pay with their jobs, services and pensions to bail out the bankers and corporations whose unregulated greed caused the economic crisis.



Aylesbury Picket lines at the Old County Offices, Bucks Health Tindal Centre, Kingsbury Square, Bucks County Council, County Hall, Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury Probation Office. Then a march from Kingsbury Square to the Railway Club for a rally of 500+.

Banbury Pickets lines at the probation office, Horton Hospital and Banbury Town Hall.

Basildon had about 105 attending and among the speakers was DWP Essex Branch President Alan Chipperfield.

Basingstoke Pickets at Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and Basingstoke & North Hampshire Hospital. This was followed by a rally of 300+ at the Civic Offices/War Memorial Park.

Bedford The rally at the Salvation Army Hall in

Bedford town centre saw well over 300 attendees crammed in. The trades council president was interviewed (and published) by the *Bedford Times & Citizen*. The rally speakers were very well received and included the trades council, Bedford Labour Party, Unison, ATL, Bedford Against the Cuts, UCU & Beds Green Party, FBU, PCS, NASUWT and NUT.

There were many impassioned contributions from the floor including a POA member from Bedford Prison and a worker from social housing provider (Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association).

It was decided to march around the town centre afterwards to parade banners and flags, and two Beds Police Officers and four PCSOs were available to escort the procession. Relations with the Salvation Army (in the face of some hostility in the town) and the local Police were outstanding, as they should be. Their interests and ours do indeed coincide. The manager of the hall explained afterwards about their long standing interest in social justice and I hope this will be the beginning of a fruitful relationship between us.

Bracknell Picket lines at Bracknell Forest Council, Berkshire Healthcare NHS HQ, Bracknell Forest LG.

Brent Central Middlesex Hospital Picket line set up by Unison, Unite and Physios, and the rally supported by Brent Fight Back and Brent Trade Union Council attracted good support. Nearly all schools were closed due to teachers strike. PCS members on strike at Wembley JCP and Kilburn Office picketed. Massive rally at Brent Town Hall supported by all main unions (including Unison, GMB and Brent TUC).

Brighton & Hove A fantastic response to the strike was seen across Brighton and Hove. More and bigger Brighton & Hove PCS pickets than ever before at JCP, HMRC, Pension Regulator, DVLA and Courts.

Across schools (all 67 were closed), council workplaces, job centres and a multitude of civil service workplaces, the strike was solid. At the universities the response was the same, with Brighton University shutting completely for the first time during industrial action with large pickets on NHS workplaces and across the city.

BRIGHTON & HOVE



With an unprecedented level of coordination, three major feeder marches from large picket lines joined with thousands more at Victoria Gardens to form up for the main march. In what the local paper described as “Sussex’s biggest ever protest” the GMB delegation led around 8,000 strikers and supporters through the city. The atmosphere was lively and determined and many thousands stayed on at the Level to hear speakers from Unison, GMB, Unite, NUT, PCS, UCU, NASUWT, Brighton Benefits Campaign, local MP Caroline Lucas, and a student activist from Sussex Uni. Thanks to support from Unite conferences being held in Brighton this week, strikers were also treated to a rousing speech by a leader of the US Teamsters union. The message of the day was clear: the workers of Brighton and Hove are determined to do what it takes to defend our pensions, and if necessary, strike again.

Unison Deputy General Secretary, Jon Richards, summed it up: “what a fantastic response by Brighton and Hove – second to none”.

The *Brighton Argus* dedicated a pretty positive 4-page pull-out section to the amazing day!

Bury St Edmunds marched down Abbeygate Street to a rally at Angel Hill. 200 people attended and it was the first rally of many years in Bury St Edmunds. Derren Branson from the PCS spoke as well as Sam Leigh from Unison. Protesters from many unions, teaching health and local government including Unite, PCS, NUT, Unison, the Society of Radiographers and BOAT. It was great! Many contacts were collected and it is

CAMBRIDGE



hoped that we will build a trades council from this event.

Cambridge saw the biggest demonstration since the war as around 4,500 people attended a march and rally at Parker’s Piece. The day started with two feeder marches which took in the largest and most significant employers in the county, Addenbrooke’s Hospital and Shire Hall. There were large delegations from Unison, Unite, GMB, PCS, NUT, ATL, NASUWT, UCU and also represented were the Society of Radiographers, Physiotherapists, the RCN and Cambridge University Students Union.

There had been pickets at most major workplaces in the morning. The GMB picketed at the Mill Road Depot and at Shire Hall workers and delivery drivers turned away, refusing to cross. At Cambridge University, UCU had most sites covered and there were also pickets at Anglia Ruskin

University and Cambridge Regional College. Most schools had closed due to the industrial action and some were picketed including Chesterton Community College, now an Academy, despite hostility and bullying from the head. English Heritage had a lively and well attended picket by Prospect members and they lost count of the amount of car horns being sounded in support.

There was support for the action from those who were not on strike themselves. A significant development was the support from Cambridge University Students Union (CUSU), who had voted to support the strike and called on students to walk out of lectures and join the march and rally. They held an event at Great St. Mary's Church before marching to Parker's Piece together with the local UCU branch. They are now linking together the issues of tuition fees and Higher Education cuts with the wider austerity measures being imposed by the government.

Similarly, Cambridge Labour Party had voted to support the strike action and the march and rally. Many members were of course among those taking action and a delegation marched behind the CLP banner. At the rally, Councillors Kevin Price and Jeremy Benstead both spoke in support of the strike and were warmly received. The MEP for the region, Richard Howitt sent a message of support which was read out.

The most hostility was directed at the ConDem coalition government. Boos echoed around Parker's Piece at the mention of Cameron's name and it is clear who people hold responsible for the attacks on pensions. It was reinforced that the fight is for decent pensions for all and that we are not letting the government drive a wedge between the public and private sectors.

Media coverage of the event was positive with a live feed from the rally being shown on BBC Look East at lunchtime. Several activists were interviewed for Channel 4 news and the *Cambridge Evening News* gave 5 pages of coverage. The response from the public was encouraging also. Many of them clapped as the march passed, shouting messages of support and there were many that joined as the ranks had swelled significantly on return to Parker's Piece.

The message from Cambridge was clear. Cameron's 'Big Society' was angry and fighting back. Speaker after speaker reiterated that this is a fight that we will win if we remain united. As one speaker said 'Remember Cambridge, today we rose like lions'.

Camden Thousands of public sector workers across Camden took part in the extraordinary day of strike action across the public sector in defence of pension rights. Camden Council staff in both the GMB and Unison, teachers in the NUT and other unions, lecturers in the UCU at FE colleges such as Westminster Kingsway and University of London sites across Bloomsbury swelled picket lines; PCS members who had struck on 30 June were joined by co-workers from Prospect at both Euston Tower and the British Library. Many of the pickets joined a Town Hall rally and marched in large numbers, eventually exceeding 1,500, along the Euston Road before joining the SERTUC London demonstration, which took more than an hour and a half to snake its way out of Lincoln's Inn Fields.

The day of action achieved considerable and largely favourable local media coverage in both the *Camden New Journal* and the *Ham & High Express*. Of 58 community and voluntary aided schools in Camden at least 55 were effectively closed for the day. While the strike within Camden Council did highlight some areas of organisational weakness it was without doubt the best supported action by Unison members in Camden during my 15 years of working for the Council. Others with still more experience believed that the level of participation in picketing at Council buildings matched or exceeded that witnessed during the broadly successful 1989 pay dispute involving members of what was then NALGO.

At the York Way transport depot some 20 GMB and Unison members picketed through the morning in an unprecedented show of unity and strength, while the Holmes Road depot, used by Camden Building Maintenance also had a successful and quite effective picket involving more than 15 workers, mainly Unison members. Large numbers of Unison and Unite members joined forces with members of the unions for radiographers and physiotherapists to form a

large ring of protest outside University College Hospital's entrance on Euston Road, while a lively picket at St Pancras Hospital attracted a visit from TUC general secretary, Brendan Barber.

A Camden Unison battlebus toured the borough for two hours before arriving at the Town Hall for a late morning rally, where the PCS's own battlebus was already waiting and where a samba band had pounded away earlier. Nearly 300 attended the rally, which was addressed by RMT Trades Council delegate John Reid, and Raj Chada, the chair of the Holborn & St Pancras Constituency Labour Party. There was even a surprise visit by a contingent of French trade unionists, just off the Eurostar at St Pancras. They happened on the Camden rally en route to the main SERTUC demonstration.

All things considered it was a remarkable display of solidarity and strength, though many of those taking part recognised that 30 November was only the start of resistance not only to oppose the attack on pensions but the whole of the Con-Dem government's assault on the public sector workforce and essential institutions of the welfare state.

Canterbury Strong pickets covering DWP, ATOS and Crown Court and a first ever at CPS. Solidarity visits from Unison and UCU. March from Canterbury City Council Unison to Abbot's Barton Hotel for a rally, visiting picket lines at Christchurch College and HMRC. Huge support from pedestrians and passing motorists, many beeps and waves.

At the Rally Peter McHugh (DWP) spoke for PCS, alongside members of NUT, ATL, GMB and UCU. Estimated 250 inside room and further 150

outside. PCS got support for the launch of a Canterbury Trades Council, and a Kent Association of Trades Councils. A further march to Dane John and then around the city centre followed by more speeches. Excellent media presence from Radio Kent, both BBC TV and Meridian and press journalists.

Chelmsford Picket lines at County Hall, The Borough Council, Police HQ, Broomfield Hospital, Job Centre to name but a few. The rally was attended by 2,000 and speakers included Jerry Glazier (NUT), Linda Pennell (Society of Radiographers), Tony Durcan (RCN), Andrew Coburn (Essex County Association of TCs), and DWP rep Rob Ellis from Harlow JCP. Front page press coverage in the *Essex Chronicle*.

Harlow trades council ran transport to get people there and we had support from a number of parts of the County where there were not similar events going on. FBU, USDAW, TSSA and other TUs were also represented.

(A week later the trades council reports another two pages in the *Essex Chronicle* all with good positive comments and great photos. Headline was *Pension protest hailed as a success; Day of Action aftermath: Biggest demonstration that county town has seen makes PM's "damp squib" remark "foolish" says union.*)

Colchester Pickets from 6.45am including at Customs House in Harwich – public support expressed by hoots and cheers. March and rally was the best seen in Colchester with 1,000 marching from the Colchester Institute to the Town Hall. PCS activist Simon Collis reported press interviews and three radio interviews.



Croydon There were over 30 pickets at the Croydon Home Office buildings at Lunar House and around 300 at the Croydon Rally.

Dover Four picket lines in Dover at the Council offices (Unison), DWP at Social Security office (PCS), UKBA at Dover Port and Customs St John Priory Dover entrance throughout the 24 hours (PCS). All pickets had trades council members present and they also toured all locations from early morning giving support.

The rally at St Mary's Hall Dover was attended by over 100 with speakers from NUT, PCS, GMB, Unite, Unison with RMT in the Chair. The rally was very positive with a good Q&A session at the end.

GMB contributed to cost of rally with major contribution from the trades council.

The day finished with an impromptu social in a local supportive pub with about 40-50 meeting for an informal forum etc!

The trades council notes that the number of first timers far exceeded established activists; there is ignorance on the street by public re public sector pensions – many people think they are free! There is a lack of knowledge by strikers about their own unions and how to engage at grass roots level; the support from CGT in Calais was pro-active and practical (included help with UKBA logistics); although we are only a small TC we felt we were instrumental in pulling it all together and we feel that nationally TCs have been crucial to the fightback.

Media attention, particularly at Dover but also at the Channel Tunnel, included BBC regional interviews (and BBC national picture coverage), ITV Meridian News, *Daily Mirror*, Press Association, *Kent Messenger*, *Dover Express*.

Interviews with four Home Office reps. Prior to 30th there was a filmed Case Study of steward and pension impact pre-recorded and broadcast on 29th on BBC SE News, Branch Secretary live and pre-recorded on BBC TV, Meridian TV and BBC Radio Kent (x3).

Ealing Unison and GMB Council workers were well supported and the rally on the steps of Ealing Town Hall was attended by 150 union members

followed by a march to Ealing Broadway led by Ealing Trade Union Council Secretary Eve Turner. Many schools were closed.

At Ealing Hospital Trust a picket line and rally set up by Unite and Unison was supported by 70 staff, workers then marched to support Hanwell ambulance station led by Bansa Unite Branch Secretary and Chair of ICO NHS Trust.

Eastbourne Picket lines at Eastbourne District General Hospital and Eastbourne Borough. 300+ at the rally at the Unite Eastbourne Centre

Enfield Pickets and demo with many young workers taking part for the first time (eg. at Job Centres, North Middlesex Hospital, Southgate College) as well as old campaigners re-energised. Very good coverage (including an excellent editorial in the *Enfield Advertiser*).



Fareham (from *The News*) out of 41 schools 25 are closed, 3 are partially closed and 13 are remaining open.

Gosport (from *The News*) out of 30 schools, 20 are closed, five are partially closed and five are open.

Gravesend Picket line at Kent LG followed by a day time event in the Three Daws pub.

Greenwich & Bexley The trades council organised a rally in General Gordon Square Woolwich. About 250 pickets, trade unionists and supporters were there including Unite, Unison, GMB, NAHT, UCU, PCS and NUS. Everyone was in buoyant mood coming from their well attended

picket lines that morning. NUT (Tim Woodcock Greenwich Secretary) reported that all but two schools were closed across Greenwich, Unite spoke about the need to build for the future, UCU had been on their picket line since 7am. They urged everyone to step up the fight as the Tories want to attack not only pensions but educational rights. Unison reported that hardly anyone had crossed the picket lines. GMB said management were doing their work and we chanted anti government slogans and "The workers united will never be defeated" went down well.

A few of us – with the Greenwich & Bexley TC banner – UCU, BECTU and NUT visited the Queen Elizabeth Hospital picket on Woolwich Common. About 75 there. Very lively. Attended by Unison, RCN, PCS, BMA (a full timer) and Unite. Speeches about how great the unity was this day. I spoke for the trades council encouraging people to join us and affiliate getting a good response.

Earlier in the day local MP Teresa Pearce joined pickets at Woolwich Crown Court.

On pickets and rallies there was great support from passing buses, lorries and van drivers hooting and waving to us. It appears that many people joined the unions during the lead to the strike. Certainly in my college, Greenwich Community College, membership is up. We recruited on the picket lines as well.

A great day! Thanks for everything!

Haringey Wednesday was the biggest and broadest day of industrial action in Haringey since the Borough was formed in 1965. The first picket up was at St Anns Hospital from 6.30am where Health Unison had 40 pickets and sympathisers bringing cakes to the picket line. UCU at Tottenham College had a lively picket line and a rally at 10am. Unison had pickets out where needed and a rally at the Civic Centre at 11am addressed by Cllr Joe Goldberg.

84 of the Borough's schools were shut and therefore a decision was taken only to picket specific schools. Pickets were maintained on Park View School, Hornsey School for Girls, Mulberry, and 6th Form Centre.

Both customer services centres closed to the public

as did Apex House, strikers from these buildings therefore picketed 40 Cumberland Road and Alexandra House where strike breakers had been told to report.

Buildings were picketed jointly by Unison and GMB around Wood Green, while some went in the overwhelming majority stayed out, the quietness of Council car parks and the roads around spoke volumes for the solidness of the action. Unison and GMB members in CCTV joined a picket at Ashley Road Depot which had up to 40 people on it, the bin men (Unite/Veolia) also strongly supported the strike and the only vehicle out was one agency lorry.

UCATT picketed at Broad Water Farm and Lordship Lane Depot and strong support from their members was reported.

Finally (particularly in the light of recent events) we joined PCS members on the picket line at Tottenham police station where a good response was received from the public and police alike.

Over 100 pickets and other supporters assembled at the Civic Centre where they heard speeches from Cllr Joe Goldberg, Keith Flett (trades council secretary), Steve McKenzie from the GMB, and John Cahill from UCATT. A large group then went onto the central London demo including some younger people who work in areas where there is little union organisation (pub trade etc) who came out to support on the day.

Harrow Over 100 Harrow council workers from Unison and GMB marched around the civic centre supported by Harrow trades council; PCS members on strike at two offices; schools were shut due to teachers strike.

At Northwick Park Hospital Trust members of Unite and Unison set up a picket and rally outside the main entrance attended by approximately 110 workers (including RCN and other support staff). The meeting was addressed by Sarah Cook Unite, Perry Miles Harrow Trade Union Council, and Unison Stewards Shashi Nathvani and Peter Nzekwe.

Hastings The CSA, Jobcentreplus, the Magistrates Court, the schools, Sussex Coast College, UCH, the local council, the Dept of Communities and Local

HASTINGS



Government and HMRC were all out on strike and picketed in Hastings on Nov 30.

An estimated 1,100 people marched through Hastings in the biggest local demonstration since the Poll Tax before holding a massive open air rally in the town centre. Speakers included Adam Khalif of PCS NEC, Sam Buckley of the Trades Council who said austerity had failed and brought us to the edge of a new recession, Jeremy Birch of Hastings Borough Council who condemned the actions of this illegitimate government, Kasren Mahon of the GMB, Fraser MacInnes of NUT, well known victimised trades unionist and Trades Council Chair, Eddie Fleming, who urged workers to "fight, fight and keep fighting" as well as Gareth Docherty (CSA PCS), Nigel Sheahan (JCP PCS) and David Francis of Hastings Against Cuts.

The Rosie the Riveter Women Workers Choir provided musical accompaniment.

Havant and Waterlooville (from *The News*) out of 47 schools, 30 schools were closed, seven were partially closed, and the remainder bar Padnell Juniors who refused to say were open.

Hertford There were 250 schools closed in Hertfordshire and 50 schools partially closed and picket lines on all four of the main sites of central Hertfordshire County Council.

Over 2,000 marched through the county town of Hertford with a rally at county Hall. Hertford hasn't seen anything like it since the Poll Tax, just under 2,500 marched to County Hall. This followed pickets all over Hertfordshire. This was

HERTFORD



the biggest strike action for a generation. The speakers said this battle must be continued until the government gives in. The biggest cheers came when speakers attacked the bankers for getting us into this mess in the first place. Speakers included PCS, Unison, NUT, UCU, ATL, NASUWT.

High Wycombe Picket lines at Wycombe Hospital and two at Wycombe District Council followed by a march of 300+ people past Bucks New University, the Police Station and Post Office to The Hub.

Horsham More than 300 people were counted as being at the rally (including Phil Wood, Unison Regional Secretary). Those assembled were from teaching unions, Unison and Unite (amongst others) as well as representatives from Crawley Trades Council. Unfortunately Francis Maude was not there to answer questions but a 15 minute vigil took place outside his office and individuals were asked to mail their questions to him.

Huntingdon pickets at two Huntingdonshire District Council premises – the offices and office/depot.

Ipswich Pickets at many workplaces across Ipswich, and media coverage on BBC Radio Suffolk and BBC Look East.

The official police figures for the march on the day were 1,200. The *Evening Star* says 1,600 and Ipswich Trades Council says 2,000.

You could tell something big was afoot as we assembled outside the County Council Offices in Russell Road. Massed trade unionists, friends,

IPSWICH HOSPITAL PICKET



IPSWICH



comrades, old faces and new, and the popular masses milled listening to the sound of Bob Marley's *Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights!*

Before we set off there were brief speeches, by Teresa Mackay of the Trades Council and Margaret Boulaitis of the NUT, who explained why we were there, and how good it was to have so many come along. All the unions were present, Unison, Unite, PCS, GMB, the Teachers' Unions NUT and NASUWT, the UCU, and a host of others (that is, ones whose names I'm not too familiar with!).

The FBU had a banner. As did Ipswich Labour Party (many prominent local councillors were there) and Suffolk Coastal Labour Party, and there was a big contingent from Save Suffolk Libraries.

We had people clapping us in Tavern Street and

one elderly woman came up and congratulated us as we moved towards Lloyd's Avenue. I was one of those carrying the SERTUC Banner at the front of the march and only really grasped just how many we were when I turned at that point. We filled a large part of the Corn Hill. From the steps of the Old Town Hall you looked at a sea of union flags and home-made placards.

There was a message of support from French trade unions; Richard Howitt MEP could not attend but also sent a message of solidarity.

The speeches were to the point and well put: Megan Dobney (SERTUC Regional Secretary) led off and made the union case crystal-clear; I was struck by the Unison speaker who indicated why later retirement meant a heavy burden for many in stressful or low-paid work; David Elesmere, the Labour leader of the Borough Council and PPC for Ipswich, said that private and public sector workers should stand together.

There had been many pickets across town and this really was the people of Ipswich on the march.

Islington Some trade union activists in Islington joined the early morning protest for the electricians picket at Blackfriars, which later marched to HSE offices near Southwark Bridge in solidarity with the PCS and Prospect picket line. The HSE are facing cuts in H&S inspectors and cuts in legislation that will inevitably have an effect on construction safety.

Meanwhile in Islington there were PCS pickets at Archway Tower, The Office Board of Guardians, and at Elthorne Road Jobcentre.



Jeremy Corbyn MP and speakers from Unison, NUT and UCU were joined by Islington Trades Council in a rally outside the City & Islington Building in the Holloway Road. Further up Holloway Road there was a picket at London Metropolitan University and an active rally. Hot drinks and mince pies were provided to pickets from IHoops (Islington Hands off our Public services) to keep up the spirits.

There was a morning picket line at the Whittington Hospital and an afternoon rally with music organised by Unison Health. RCN, although not involved in the strike, came out for the rally joined by Defend the Whittington Hospital Coalition.

Islington Unison Local Government and GMB held active picket lines outside all office buildings including Central Library and the municipal buildings in Upper Street held a strong picketline. At 11.30 there was a brilliant show of strength at the Town Hall in a rally joined by Labour Council Leader Catherine West and Jeremy Corbyn MP.

The rally decided to march from Islington Town Hall through the Angel towards Lincolns Inn Fields. A day of defiance and a sense of pride against the Government's attack on pensions.

Kensington & Chelsea Unison and GMB Picket lines out at a number of local council offices (eg Westway Centre) in the borough and the main one at Town Hall; most schools in the borough were closed due to action of NUT, NASUWT and ATL. PCS and Prospect members picketed the three South Kensington museums and held a rally in Exhibition Road. UCU members were on strike



at Imperial College in South Kensington. Local hospitals were also affected eg St Charles & St Marys in neighbouring Westminster.

A strike rally was held at the Town Hall with some 200 people attending. It was organised by the trades council and chaired by Dave Welsh (Unite). Speakers included Tony Benn, Sonya Howard (Unison), Kieran Parsons (NUT), Glenroy Watson (RMT), Jan Pollock (UCU retired and DPAC), Judith Blakeman (CLP & Labour councillor). Several leaflets were distributed at the rally, including a trades council leaflet on pensions and a local anti-cuts leaflet on children's services in the borough.

Following the rally, pickets and supporters went to the central London march and rally. A big contingent from the local unions with Kensington & Chelsea Trades Council, Unison Kensington & Chelsea local government, and Unite 1/684 banners.

The strike has given a real boost in confidence to local trade unionists. The trades council has been working closely with the local anti-cuts campaign and plans to develop anti-cuts work in the new year are underway. A much better level of organisation is beginning to emerge in the borough under the aegis of the newly re-formed trades council and we hope to continue to build on this progress in 2012.

King's Lynn saw the first union demonstration in decades as 200 people marched through the town and held a rally in the middle of the High Street. See film at:
<http://www.coalitionofresistance.org.uk/2011/12/n30-kings-lynn-unions-protest-the-first-in-decades/>

Kingston upon Thames 800 on march and rally.

Leatherhead about 500 on the march and rally.

Lewes Pickets at Sussex Police HQ, Queen Victoria Hospital, East Sussex County Council, Lewes Council Offices, Lewes Library, South East Coast Ambulance HQ, Sackville House. POA protest on Brighton Road pavement outside HMP Lewes; Unison & UCU pickets at Sussex Downs College Lewes Campus.

London In London, in addition to picket lines, there were local campaign events and in



particular 'health rallies' at hospitals, organised by TUC affiliated unions, but visibly supported by non-affiliated unions such as the Royal College of Nursing, the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Midwives. Later in the day there was a London march and rally, from Lincoln's Inn Fields to Victoria Embankment. The attendance was larger than the attendance at the June 30 demonstration, which itself was estimated at 25,000-30,000, so it is credible to think that there were at least 30,000 on the London march. The attendance at London November 30 was such that the Form Up over-spilled out of Lincoln's Inn Fields and onto the Kingsway, it was such that as the head of the march had reached the rally, the tail of the march was still in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and so the police reported the march to be three kilometres long.

The rally was chaired formidably by Martin Gould, the SERTUC President. There were contributions at the rally from Frances O'Grady, TUC Deputy General Secretary, and from ATL, NASUWT, NUT,

UCU, CSP, SoR, Unison, BMA, RCN, GMB, Unite, PCS, NAPO, POA, London Region NPC, GLATCS, Ken Livingstone and a speaker on the myth of the public sector private sector split. And Gloria Hanson, from the SERTUC Executive Committee, spoke from the perspective of a Black local government worker. The event received considerable media coverage including live broadcasts by the BBC, ITN and Sky, radio and newspaper coverage – as well as substantial interest from foreign broadcasting services from countries including Finland, Canada, USA, Belgium, Iran, Germany and France. The spirit of the day was buoyant, aided at the Form Up by some well chosen music and words of encouragement by John Ball on a PA system, and at the rally by the rapid speeches, a big screen and more music and campaign images. The Met Police has tweeted its commendation of the behaviour of the demonstrators and the commitment and professionalism of the steward team. SERTUC wishes to thank all those unions that helped make the day a success, especially those who provided volunteers to act as Deputy Chief Stewards and March Stewards.

PCS reports strong joint pickets with FDA and Prospect in Whitehall showing unprecedented unity amongst staff across the civil service. For example, at Petty France NOMS, where one of the PCS pickets laid on entertainment leading to a festive atmosphere and there was a strong FDA presence.

Jobcentres, museums, courts and tax offices across the capital had their best strike turnouts ever.

Lowestoft Congratulations, and a good base for renewed vigour for the alternative! A march of about 200 with about 100 (full house) at the rally. A DVD is being produced as local cine club was



there to film it. The evening meeting at Lowestoft Football club with Graham White (NUT) went well and the bands (they are all electro folk) are very politically motivated and suggest that you might wish to invite them to Ipswich!

Luton The Luton trade union council had a great march with 600+ and eight unions participating and people from the Luton public. The Irish forum supplied a piper and three drummers which made the occasion really loud. We marched right through the town centre and got great support from the public. We then had excellent speeches at Market Hill and the whole event had good media coverage.



Maidenhead a very good response to the action with joint picket lines with PCS, Unison and NUT.

Maidstone March through the town with 650+ in total (far exceeding expectations) which was well received by members of the public. Rally was compered by David Lloyd of Unison Kent Local



Government, with speakers including Zoe Van Dyke from Unison, Frank Macklin from GMB, Vince Maple Deputy Leader of Medway Labour Group, Rory Weal Chair of Kent Young Labour along with speakers from NUT, ATL, NAPO and messages of support from French Trade Union Branches. *Meridian News* showed footage of the march and rally.

Medway Picket lines at many workplaces across Medway including Gun Wharf, Medway Hospital and the the recently opened "Dynamic Bus Facility", Chatham Job Centre, Border Agency, HMRC and County Court, Mid Kent College, Kent & Greenwich Universities, Gillingham and Rochester libraries, Medway Council and Medway Civic Centre. 15 pickets were out at midnight at the start of the strike at Medway Hospital and picketing there continued throughout the day. Around 100 people at the Command House rally, attended by NUT, GMB, Unison, PCS, Unite, Medway against the Cuts, Medway Trades Council and Labour Councillors. BBC Radio Kent spoke to trade unionists at Medway Hospital and Medway Council. There was a free pensions gig with Rebel Control in the evening for those who weren't already exhausted.

Milton Keynes About 500 rallied outside the Council offices in the centre and marched round the shopping centre with PCS taking the lead. The HMRC and DWP shared office was picketed by PCS and FDA, PCS picketed the two Job Centres, NAPO and PCS picketed the courts. The POA held a lunchtime car park meeting at the prison in solidarity with striking PCS members.

On the march shoppers spontaneously came out clapping and cheering us as we marched in a very moving show of support. We finally got coverage and a picture in the local paper which is a real first.

Newham 95% of NUT members were on strike; 71 schools were closed (15 partly open, 2 fully open). GMB members at London City Airport walked out causing delays at border control.

Newport Isle of Wight Picket lines at Isle of Wight County Hall and St Mary's Hospital. Marches of 400+ from College and hospital to rally in town centre.

Norwich march and rally

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmkEDB_Y06w

Oxford Joint union march and rally of 6,000, all unions and sectors of public services represented plus students. Also solidarity speakers from Anti-Cuts campaigns and Palestinian Trade Union Federation, messages of support from Iman of local Mosque and American Trade Unions. The rally still going strong at 4.30pm. Very buoyant and determined mood with much public support.

Across the county, more than 200 schools were shut or partially closed and other public services halted as around 15,000 workers went on strike. Prior to the strike, the O&D TUC distributed around 15,000 copies of its newsletter, outlining reasons and plans for the strike.

Peterborough Over 550 public sector workers marched through the City Centre on the day of action. A rally took place in Laxton Square at midday, organised by the Peterborough Trades Union Council. Speeches were given by representatives from Unison, Unite, GBM, PCS, The Pensioners Association, NUT and the Peterborough Sixth Form Union.

Portsmouth (from *The News*) Thousands of striking public sector workers staged a rally in Portsmouth's Guildhall Square today as their walkout caused widespread disruption.

Union organisers have declared a record turnout for a midday rally in Guildhall Square, with more than 3,000 people joining the protest.

Sion Reynolds, secretary of the local branch of the NASUWT, said: "This is about empowering teachers to stand up for themselves. We want to be delivering top quality lessons but the government is refusing to be reasonable and negotiate."

After gathering in the Guildhall Square, the strikers set off on a march through the city centre before returning to the square.

Among the groups appearing in support of the strikers during today's rally were the Portsmouth Pensioners, members of Hampshire Fire and Rescue, an offshoot of the global 'Occupy' movement who carried banners declaring 'we are

the 99 per cent', and some Portsmouth city councillors.

Groups of public sector workers had marched towards Guildhall Square for the rally. Mick Tosh, president of the Portsmouth Trades Union Council, joined marchers outside Kingston prison to head for the city centre.

He said: "The main event will be at noon outside the Guildhall, but there are feeder marches coming in from across the city. There is a lot going on and a lot of people have come out to show their support for the strikers."

Yvonne Cleary, regional organiser for Unison, said the day was proving to be a huge success. "It is hard for public servants to go on strike because it is not in their nature," she said. "We care for people and it is always a difficult choice for people to make. Which is one reason seeing so many people here is so powerful. Everyone has just had enough, and this is only the beginning. The government needs to start listening to us."

Some of the day's loudest chanting came from transport union the RMT, and earlier their national president Alex Gordon addressed the crowd and congratulated them for turning out.

He said: "We are sending a message that we do not accept the government's cuts, and long may this dispute continue until our voices are heard."

As the rally in Guildhall Square continued, the crowd watched as the big screen showed images of similar demonstrations taking place across the country.

Headteacher of Stamshaw Junior School, Simon Cattermole, said: "This strike isn't just about our pensions, it's about the generations who are going to follow us into the public sector in years to come. If we don't have good pensions we are never going to attract the best and the brightest into our public services."

Sue Logan has worked for the Havant probation service for 22 years and said she came to the rally because public service workers had to stand up for themselves. She said: "We are the backbone of this country and we are being robbed of our pensions and our rights. It is not fair."

As the protest rally in Guildhall Square drew to an end 22-year-old former University of Portsmouth student Claire Heath, who lost her place on an internship after speaking out about the cuts, addressed the crowd. "This is the most amazing thing I have ever seen in Portsmouth," she said. "I'm so glad I could be here to see this."

Today's strike was called amid protests that government pension plans will mean public sector workers will have to work longer, pay more into their pensions and get less when they retire.

Members of 31 unions have voted in favour of industrial action that saw the majority of schools closing, non-emergency hospital operations and non-emergency ambulance call-outs and bins left uncollected. Pickets took place this morning all across the region, including outside Fort Cumberland, Rubbish depots in Havant and Fareham, the closed offices of Gosport borough council, Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth University, and Portsmouth City Council's civic offices.

Jon Woods, Portsmouth Against Cuts Together convenor, said: "The mood is determined. We want the government to start genuine negotiations."

Union members at Portsmouth International Port have been picketing since midnight as part of a day of national strike action. More than a dozen port workers spent the night outside the port's freight gate, just off the Rudmore roundabout, to protest the government's planned changes to public sector pension schemes. Joining them was Unite organiser Richard Smith who told *The News* more than 25 port staff in his union will be on strike today and managers were having to step in to replace them. He said: "This might cause disruptions, but at the end of the day it is only for one day, whereas these pension changes are going to affect our members for the rest of their lives. This 24-hour picket is just a sign of how strongly our members feel about what is being done to them."

Portsmouth City Council has confirmed 35 of the city's schools are closed today, 17 are partially closed, two are closing this afternoon, and 14 are open. All the city's libraries are closed and any

staff who arrive for work are being asked to report to the Central Library, in Guildhall Square, in the hope of partially opening it later today.

Reading The pre-march rally started warming up from about 10am and by 11.30 speakers from NUT, ATL, PCS, NAPO and Unison were talking to a packed Reading Irish centre. Many thanks to Joan Boyd (Chairperson Reading NUT) for an inspirational speech, other speakers included Andrew Dunn of PCS Rural Payments Agency, Teresa Dawes from West Berkshire ATL who summed it up nicely by pointing out that, while the government may play down the anger of the public, they should be very scared when the ATL, a union that hasn't been on strike in its 120 years, decide to take industrial action as the thought of some "poor old dear" sitting on the carpet with her primary school students who will need to help her stand up, especially with a generation of young people crippled by debt, doesn't bear thinking about. John Ennis from NAPO and Kevin Jackson, lead spokesperson for Reading Unison health branch also gave inspirational speeches. When the rallies finished at 12.15 people were packed on the street to the sound of tooting horns in support from the public. The march then gathered on Queens Walk, met by picketers from Unison.

The march then left Queens Walk with the Reading TUC banner at the front. About 2,000 people marched down the main high street taking up the entire length of it from top to bottom. Crowds of people then gathered in Forbury Gardens to hear the highlight speaker of the day, Antoinette Earl from Reading borough Unison, who gave a most inspirational and heartfelt speech. Speeches were also heard from Malcolm



Jones of NASUWT who has taught in Reading for 33 years and felt so strongly about the pensions issue that he has decided to strike for only the second time in his life. We also heard from Terry Pearce of the National Pensioners Convention. The rally finished successfully after the biggest protest Reading has seen since 1926. There are signs of real discontent in leafy Berkshire and workers from all around the region must be congratulated for taking this stand.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p99wT9j421k>

Slough Strikers at Slough Jobcentre see: <http://youtu.be/lrtE4sln8t0> followed by a rally in the town centre with 150+ strikers. PCS from DWP and HMRC, Unite, Unison, NAHT, GMB, Radiographers, NUT, NASUWT, and Labour Party activists and Councillors. Good press coverage and pictures in the *Slough Express*. Best turn out in Slough in years – over anything!

Southampton Our march and rally was a fantastic success! A huge march of 3,000+, judging from the fact that Guildhall Square was packed and overflowing. The march was very lively and many bystanders applauded as we went by. In addition to the British TU speakers (including Unite and Unison council workers who have been in a long-running dispute over pay and job cuts) we had visitors from the USA, the Teamsters and United Steel Workers who brought fraternal greetings. The mood is still very positive from local trades unionists and the feeling on the day and since has been that “the struggle continues”.

BBC and local press interviewed several members including Andy Cooper, Maritime & Coastguard



Agency HQ. 75 of Southampton's 81 schools were shut, and PCS support was solid.

South East London Battlebus (ATL, CWU, NUT, PCS, UNISON, UCU) spreading the message to the public “stop the pensions robbery!”

Southend Picket lines were organised at 14 of the major public sector workplaces. Southend Central Library was closed. There were reports of very large numbers staying away from work at all the major workplaces within the towns with many schools closed. There were PCS pickets on most of their sites and reports show 84% support and three sites were partially closed. The service given to the public attended sites went along the lines of “Sorry can't help today come back tomorrow”. Reports are that the phones were all engaged so nobody could get through that way.

The support from the public was great and horns blown by passing cars helped to keep the picket lines happy. The liaison between all the other unions involved was good and in most areas we did exchanges between lines.

The rally in Southend High Street was a great success, with 300 people attending. There had been two marches to the rally, the first from South Essex College to the rally including UCU and PCS members from JobCentrePlus. The second from the Civic Centre had members from Unison, GMB, NASUWT and PCS members from Revenue & Customs. The rally was addressed by representatives from NUT, NASUWT, PCS, Unison and GMB. In addition there were speakers from Southend Against the Cuts, Southend Labour Party and Occupy Southend.





Southwark Strikers reported that picket lines were better attended than in previous years and the strike seemed to be solid. In local government, Refuse and Street Cleaning were badly disrupted and 82% of schools were closed. There were large pickets at Kings College Hospital and the Maudsley Hospital. Dave Prentice, General Secretary of Unison made a surprise visit to the Tooley Street picket line which boosted morale as he told pickets how proud he was of the response to the call to action.

200 to 300 strikers and supporters then assembled at the Strikers' Canteen at London Southbank University organised by Southwark Save Our Services, NUT, UCU and NUS. We listened to speakers over hot drinks, cakes and sandwiches. The assembly agreed a joint statement on the dispute.

At midday we all marched together across an already closed Waterloo Bridge passing and



greeting picket lines on the way including the London Ambulance Centre in Waterloo Road.

Stevenage There were five major picket lines in Stevenage Lister Hospital (Unison, Unite and Radiographers), Council Department (Unison and Unite), Council Chambers (Unison), PCS admin office and Herts County Council offices (Unison). Schools were shut, with NUT, ATL, NASUWT and NAHT taking action as well as UCU at the college. Hundreds went to the demo in Hertford.

Thanet <http://youtu.be/ZGzdd0HNvJY>
The film has interviews of strikers across Thanet on various picket lines. In the afternoon we had a meeting in Broadstairs that was very well attended by members of the NUT and other teaching unions.

Waltham Forest saw a good response to the strike with lively picket lines across the borough from schools to libraries to hospitals to revenue offices. John Cryer MP was made welcome on the numerous picket lines he attended on the day, though our other Labour MP (Stella Creasey) and the Labour councillors did not support the action.

Many workers were on strike for the first time and expressed pride in standing up for themselves and for justice. Unsurprisingly support for the action was strongest where local reps have been building amongst the membership. For example the UCU branch at Waltham Forest College reported their best picket response for years, as a good branch campaign around a local issue translated into support for the national action.

The Trades Council has been active in co-



ordinating local action amongst unions and jointly organised a successful rally in the Town Square with Unison, which united the various unions and their supporters before heading down to the London march. Already buoyed by picketing, we all felt lifted by the size and energy of the march.

Winchester We had an excellent turnout for the pensions march and rally in Winchester city centre. Local press estimated that over 1,000 local public sector workers attended. There were platform speakers from Unison, NUT, NASUWT, ATL, Unite and GMB, plus a very amusing and witty rap delivered by a UCU university lecturer.

Windsor & Maidenhead Picket line at Tinkers Lane depot.

Witney attended Oxford rally.

Woking The Rally was set for 11am in Woking, organised for 100, however, 500+ turned up! The marchers comprised PCS, Unison, various teaching unions, Unite. March through Woking, rally at the Labour club where there were speakers from all unions.

PCS reports that HMRC had best ever picket line of approx 11 members/ reps. JCP reps joined them later in the morning, then PCS reps visited local Unison picket lines, (Unison reps visited PCS also!) Lots of supportive messages and comments from the public. There was a piece in the *Surrey Advertiser*, leading up to 30 November and PCS also spoke to *Woking News and Mail* and Eagle Radio on the day.

London Tonight filmed a piece on the local activity and the unions got positive coverage. Reps confirm that sleepy Woking has never seen anything like this before!

Worthing Rally in Worthing at St Pauls Community Hall, march from there to Worthing hospital and then the town centre. 400 plus at the rally with approx 1,000 on the march (the largest demonstration of trade union strength that anyone here can remember). Visits organised between picket lines involving non-striking unions (CWU) and community representatives. Good media coverage on press, radio and TV; front page of the *Worthing Herald* with multi-page feature due next week. A key feature was the



involvement of local community groups and particular thanks were given to the organisers of the childcare which looked after 80 children on the day.

Solidarity messages

SERTUC has the privilege of holding the Vice Presidency of our InterRegional TUC (IRTUC Channel). This comprises eight trade union confederations from Nord-Pas de Calais in France, and Hainaut and West Flanders in Belgium, plus SERTUC from the UK. We received messages of solidarity from our French and Belgian colleagues – and Didier Louvet, President of IRTUC Channel, joined marchers in London with a delegation from the CGT.

The **IRTUC** concluded:

“Workers, pensioners, the unemployed, students and all young people are not those responsible for the crisis. And they must not be the ones to suffer the consequences.

“Receive, dear Comrades, our fraternal greetings.”

Solidarity greetings have also been received from:

- ABVV West Flanders
- CFDT Nord-Pas de Calais
- CGT Nord-Pas de Calais
- CSC Hainaut
- CGT Armentieres
- CGT Public Services of Roubaix & District
- CGT Mairie de Roubaix (Nord)
- CGT Commun aux de Raismes
- CGT P&O Ferries
- CFDT Nord-Pas de Calais
- FGTB Nord-Pas de Calais
- FO Postal Workers from Nord Pas de Calais

The only Labour MEP in the East of England, **Richard Howitt**, also sent a message of support. Richard is a strong friend of the trade union movement and tells us that the East of England Labour Party’s Regional Conference voted to support Wednesday’s industrial action. Richard concludes his comments by saying:

“So to the nurses and the physios, the dinner ladies and the nursery assistants, to every single public sector worker who does your job because you want to serve the public interest – I stand by you again today and will campaign with you on behalf of the public who I am proud to represent.”

Solidarity messages have been received from **War on Want** partners:

The National Garment Workers Federation, Bangladesh

The Free Trade Zones & General Zones Employees Union, Sri Lanka

The **British Medical Association** also sent greetings:

“The doctors, the BMA, are completely with you in the fight for fair pensions, and we fully support this day of action.”

Two Venezuelan comrades from the newly created **TUC in Venezuela** marched with Unite London & Eastern Region in London and said:

“We support your day of action on November 30. We stand against cuts and privatisation and we know from our own experience of social change that there is an alternative. You have our full solidarity.”

CWU London Region sent a message of support concluding “we will be joining you on the march and raising our flags and banners in support”.

A statement from the **Writers’ Guild of Great Britain**:

The Writers’ Guild (which pioneered pension rights for TV and film writers) supports the public workers in their fight to protect their pensions.

Guild member John Donnelly took the Guild banner to the teachers’ picket line at Central School of Speech & Drama, north London.

The National Union of Journalists said that many joint NUJ members, for example those who work as lecturers and press officers, are part of this battle and were on strike. NUJ chapels across the UK held special workplace meetings to show solidarity for workers on strike throughout the public sector and many more attended local picket lines and rallies to demonstrate their support. The NUJ National Executive Council met last month and reminded journalists of their responsibility to report on the dispute ethically and called on editors across the media to ensure that coverage of the strikes is accurate and balanced.