

Annual Report 2019





Kev Terry, in the Chair as well as the saddle on his sponsored ride around Cuba

2018 was a very tumultuous year for many with no clear vision of what Brexit means. While the politicians argue the workers suffer attacks on their terms and conditions. Wages have been squeezed and all unions are fighting for their members. In all this we have had some wins. My own union, Unite, went to Brussels to help sister unions beat off attacks on drivers working time and rest periods and we won. No doubt they will be back so no resting on our laurels.

Tolpuddle was a resounding success, the weather was fair and Jeremy Corbyn both stole the show and caused havoc with his walk-about and

meeting as many people as he could. The festival is a coming-together of unions to celebrate the struggles of our forebears and that the fight still goes on. So let's look forward to 2019 with renewed vigour and with hope and positive actions we will prevail.

Thanks to Joanne Kaye, the vice-chair, all the Executive, Regional Council members and the team in the South West TUC.

Joanne Kaye, Vice-Chair



South West TUC Regional Council

Brexit has dominated so much of the news agenda for the last year. It has squeezed out critical issues that deserve attention. The South West, like the whole country, remains divided on the issue but there is much trade unions can unite around. We fight to protect the limited rights workers have and the highly skilled jobs that depend upon EU trade. Some of the regions 'crown jewel' employers, especially in aerospace and advanced engineering have sounded warning alarms over Britain crashing or slipping into protectionist border controls and tariffs.

Health and Social Care already has acute staff shortages, a problem that will only get worse after Brexit. The important South West food and drink sector could be boosted by higher prices but the consumer will pay the price. Finding labour for seasonal agriculture will probably lead the gang masters to recruit more vulnerable migrants from further afield than the EU.



Jess Hurd taking photos of apprentices at Bristol Port

Brexit has been on the agenda for many meetings through the South West TUC year. Clare Moody MEP provided the Regional Council with an update from Brussels and Matt Griffiths from Business West gave the Executive a stark assessment of potential damage to investment and long-term prospects.

The officers of the South West TUC have met the region's Labour MPs through the year and although Brexit has dominated discussions other issues have been raised such as the need to reform apprentice minimum wages, living wage campaign and workers' rights.

Apprentice Pay

The complexity of the National Minimum Wage and rates for young people are one of the key reasons why so many apprentices are underpaid. The rates are far too low in any event but the TUC believes more must be done to stop 'non-compliance'. After researchers from University of the West of England exposed the level of under payment the South West TUC launched a campaign to raise awareness of the issue and challenge training

providers to do more to tackle it.

A simple to use pay calculator is now online at www.tuc.org.uk apprenticepay and a range of materials has been circulated aimed at helping apprentices.

The South West TUC



South West TUC Officers meet Labour MPs from the region

believes the government should simplify the rules and end the discrimination against young workers. But action could be taken immediately by mandating training providers to check minimum wage compliance at the same time they check training records.



Apprentice pay campaign materials

Living Wage

The campaign for Better Jobs in Bristol has led to Marvin Rees, The Mayor, signing as an accredited Living Wage employer the first council in the region to do so. It is hoped that other authorities such as Cornwall, Plymouth and Stroud will follow suit. This ensures that staff in the supply chain as well as direct workers are paid the real Living Wage, currently £9 an hour.



Mayor Marvin Rees signs the Living Wage pledge

Care workers are amongst the beneficiaries of the Living Wage Campaign but the pressures to them to accept worse terms remain. UNISON



Dave Prentis, UNISON General Secretary joins Tudro Evans, Plymouth leader and union reps in signing the Ethical Care Charter

care workers took several days of strike action at Serona Care, a so-called social enterprise based mainly in Bath.

The action took considerable courage by carers who remain determined to stick together to be treated fairly and with respect.

New Deal for Workers

The TUC called a big march



Nigel Costley with Mayor Marvin Rees



New Deal for Workers demo

to demand a New Deal for Workers in May. The rally attracted a lot of media attention. The South West team again marshalled the front of the London procession.

Most workers have still not seen pay recover to their levels in 2008. The pay squeeze is the longest in 200 years.

Delegates supported a motion from PCS last year protesting at the on-going pay cap for many public sector workers especially in the civil service. A recent survey found 69% of civil servants dissatisfied with their pay and conditions.

College lecturers, fed up with being left further and further behind have taken strike action in four colleges across the South West. Further education has suffered from cut backs and staff teaching the same the courses, are on pay levels well below those in schools.

USDAW recently launched its Time for Better Pay calling for a £10 an hour, minimum 16-hour contracts and a right to 'normal hours' contracts. It backed up its case with a comprehensive survey of some 10,500 workers that exposed the problems of poor pay and insecure jobs.

Impact of cuts

The cuts to public spending continue despite the government's promise of an end to austerity. West

Sirona care workers lobby the council in Bath





Nick Ireland and Tracey XX promote USDaw's pay campaign

Country Councils have been hit hard and are yet to make further savings. Somerset County Council's Conservative leadership expressed its frustration with government and local Tory MPs after it announced its financial crisis.

Respect and racism

USDaw also highlighted the increasing abuse on shop workers including the lack of police response to shoplifters. The South West TUC met with Sue Mountstevens, the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner to discuss these and other issues. She explained the squeeze on police resources and the lack of capacity they now have, to respond as they would like.

The meeting also discussed rising levels of abuse and racist attacks especially in the wake of the EU referendum. Sue Mountstevens has been a strong advocate for more attention on such crimes alongside domestic abuse and modern slavery.

Trade unionists joined others to pay

tribute to Kamil Ahmad and Bijan Ebrahimi asylum seekers who were killed in racist attacks in Bristol.



Sorry! Tribute to the murdered Kamil Ahmad

Bristol Cable writer Rebecca Yeo, who has championed the cause of disabled refugees gave an impassioned speech to the Regional Council. The need to challenge prejudice and racism in workplaces remains a priority for the TUC and all unions.

Asher Criag, Bristol's Deputy Mayor joined Joanne Kaye at the Stand Up To Racism event to mark the Holocaust Memorial Day.

Heart Unions Week

Heart Unions Week is a

great



Roger McKenzie, UNISON Assistant General Secretary with Michael August at the Plymouth event to mark the anniversary of the Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympics

opportunity to celebrate the value and successes of trade unions as well as to promote current campaigns. This year a central theme was the case against zero-hour contracts.



Tom De Wit, Tolpuddle Martyrs Museum Manager and Amanda Brown, UNISON Dorset present a cheque to the homeless project for sanitary products

Unions used the week to recruit new members and promote their campaigns. Lots of people took to social media to shout out for their unions.

West Country Workers

A special edition of the popular West Country Workers was produced to be used in and around Heart Unions week. This



Asher Craig, Bristol's Deputy Mayor

well written, good looking magazine provides more in depth look at some of the key topics in the region.

The South West TUC mailing lists have been substantially pruned following strict adherence to GDPR. The South West TUC annual conference proved an

opportunity to share advice about GDPR as well as debate the tensions between the need to gather and spread news, information and solidarity messages with the needs of data protection rules.

TUC education

Matching the needs of reps with convenient training courses will always be a challenge in a big region like the South West. The network of college providers of TUC education shrunk in the face of falling demand,

the rise of individual union courses, pressures on reps over time-off and cuts in public funding. A London college had been covering the provision, but the South West TUC was delighted when the City of Bristol College agreed to take it back with Alison Foster employed as the new co-ordinator. She is developing the menu of reps training as well as a number of short courses and seminars.

Mental health at work

An area of huge interest for rep training is around mental health at work. Rising stress as well as heightened awareness has raised mental health as a core trade union issue. Unions won't accept that workers need to be hardened or 'resilient' to the causes of stress and anxiety. Union reps are also there to expose and help resolve the causes of mental ill health. Unions are also seeking to respond to the needs of neuro-diverse workplaces



Patrick Brione from the IPA speaks about the future of work

recognising that everyone has different needs and the best organisations are those who understand the variety of mental health conditions and accommodate them positively.

The South West TUC Executive established a mental health working group that allowed union reps to share some ground-breaking work being done. This led to a highly successful symposium in Exeter.

Past and future of work

Diversity, in all its forms, is one feature in the debates over the future of work. A discussion at the Annual Conference featured Patrick Brione from the Involvement and Participation Association



Alison Foster the new co-ordinator of trade union education for the region



Ines Lage discusses young workers with Unison delegates



Shire Hall advert for TUC150

and Simon Fox from Unite who presented different scenarios for the years ahead. Automation and digital technologies are going to transform work for good and bad and unions will be there to represent the interest of working people.

Nigel Costley gave a presentation on the future of work to Wiltshire Trades Councils Thomas Helliker Lecture. This was one of a number of trades council events through a year that was the TUC's 150th anniversary.

An exhibition highlighting the key stories of the TUC's history was shown at the Annual Conference and spent a few weeks at the Shire Hall in Dorchester.

Other events included taking the Tolpuddle story to London with Nigel Costley, Graham Moore and Gill Redmond providing an evening of words and song.

Historical trade union stories from around the region are told in a series online through the Tolpuddle Martyrs website. This also includes an extensive gallery of banners.

Tolpuddle Martyrs

The Tolpuddle Martyrs



Nigel Costley with Kate Addie



Lord Neuberger, former head of the Supreme Court helps launch the Shire Hall museum

Festival was held during the long, hot summer. It was a fantastic gathering to celebrate trade unionism and enjoy a wide range of music and political debate.

The South West TUC is



Hugh Robertson, TUC Heath and Safety Officer, Mike XX, Mayor of Salisbury, Joanne Kaye and Nigel Costley

represented on the Trust that has opened the Shire Hall and historic court room in Dorchester. The new attraction has already scooped a bag full of tourist awards.

Salisbury

Meanwhile Salisbury suffered

from the after effects of the Novichok poisoning attack. The tourist trade fell and work was disrupted by the big clean up operation.



Nigel Costley joins Petroc College management and union reps in signing the TUC's Dying to Work Charter



The South West TUC held a successful Health and Safety rep conference in the town including a discussion on dealing with hazardous materials and emergency response procedures.

Dying to Work Charter

The Dying to Work Charter has been signed in more South West organisations. This pledges to support workers who face a terminal diagnosis and who wish to continue working for as long as possible. Plymouth College, Petroc College in Devon, DAS in Bristol and Bristol City Council have agreed the terms of the charter.

South West TUC Pensioners

The South West TUC Pensioners' Conference attracted retired members from around the



Maggie Roberts in the chair for the pensioners' conference



Antonia Bance, TUC's Head of Campaigns and Communications with Nigel Costley and Joanne Kaye after speaking about the digital future for unions

region and lots of unions. Delegates heard Jacqueline Cobb highlight pensioner poverty, Nigel Costley spoke about the changing nature of work, Neil Duncan-Jordon from National Pensioners Convention covered a range of subjects including generational solidarity a subject also taken up by Jack Jones, Policy Campaign and support officer from the TUC.

West over many years. He is now a leading Labour councillor in Exeter.

New South West Unite Regional Secretary

Steve Preddy took up the position of Regional Secretary for Unite after Peter Hughes switched to Wales Unite.

Digital Future

The TUC has new online tools for unions and is working on a new digital initiative aimed at young workers.

Antonia Bance, TUC Head of Campaigns and Communications spoke to the Annual Conference to stress the need for unions to realise the potential of online organising.

Trades Councils

The region's trades councils help co-ordinate trade union campaigns in their areas. Championed by Dave Chapple, the South West rep on the TUC Joint Consultative Committee the councils have organised events, stalls and supported picket lines.

There were two meetings of all trades councils this year and they heard from a range of



Steve Preddy, the new Unite Regional Secretary

speakers about their experiences of becoming active in unions.

More to add:

Women in leadership - Ines



Phil Bialyk, RMT Officer is given a fond farewell

A range of motions were passed on topics including ID checks for voting, free bus passes, social care and defence of the free TV licence

for over 75s.

Farewell Phil

Joining the ranks of the retired was Phil Bialyk the well-respected regional officer for the RMT. Phil has played an active role in the South



South West TUC Regional Council supports the PCS pay campaign



Women in Leadership participants gather for their visit to Brussels



Women in Leadership at the European Parliament in Brussels



Cornwall Trades Council at one of its regular street stalls

Bridgwater Trades Council supports GMB pay campaign



Salisbury Trades Council at the Carnival



The first Wells May Day march



XXX spoke of her experiences as a black woman in Somerset





South West TUC Team

OFFICERS

Kev Terry Chair

Joanne Kaye Vice-Chair

Dave Chapple Trades Union
Council South West rep

STAFF

Nigel Costley

Regional Secretary

Marie Hughes

Education Officer

Ines Lage

Policy and Campaigns

Support Officer

Tanya Parker

Secretary

Unionlearn officers

operating from the region:

Elaine Dobson, Keith

Hatch and Andy Moss

Tolpuddle Museum

Tom DeWit Manager

Caroline Binder Museum

Shop and Festival Assistant



South West TUC

Church House, Church Road, Filton, Bristol BS34 7BD

0117 947 0521 southwest@tuc.org.uk

[@swtuc](http://www.tuc.org.uk/southwest)

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