



GMB @ Durham County Council

**Welcome
to your
April 2011
Newsletter!**

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Durham Branch of GMB Takes Part in March for the Alternative

26th March 2011



20 representatives of Durham County Branch of GMB took part in the march for the alternative (organised by the Public Service Alliance) in London on 26th March to protest against public sector cuts.

The march was over 5 miles between the Embankment and Hyde Park, passing the Houses of Parliament.

Reports on numbers who attended vary between 200,000 and 500,000 people.

If you would like to attend a meeting of the Northern Public Services Alliance the next meeting is scheduled as follows:

Date: Wednesday 13th April
Time: 5:30pm
Venue: County Hall, Durham

Contact the Branch for details on 0191 383 4417



Above: Durham County LA Banner

Cuts in Durham County Council

They could affect you...

We all heard the news announced in January that Durham County Council had to save £125 million over 4 years and over £60 million in the first year, and that the effect of this was that up to 1,600 jobs had to go.

These figures were so huge that it seemed almost unreal.

Well it isn't.

It is starting to happen now.

All services are making cuts.

For the first time in many peoples they are receiving a letter which starts with:

"Trade Union Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 as amended by Section 34 of the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993-Section 188 Notice."

This means that you are at risk of being made redundant.

For many people the shock of receiving this makes it too hard to take in.

It is often a large and very wordy letter, but it is very important that you read the section headed " Trade Union Consultation Meeting (Trade Union representatives only to attend)"

It states that it is the employees responsibility to make representation to the Trade Union to raise issues at this meeting,"

This is really important for two reasons:

- ♦ The Council have told us that under the Freedom of Information Act they are no longer allowed to tell us the names of staff who are affected by the "188 notice"
- ♦ We need you to tell us your views on the proposals

We need to know what our member's views are so that we can represent you during the Trade Union consultation.

Either email us at gmb@durham.gov.uk or ring the office on **0191 3834417**, or **0191 383 5515** as soon as you can.

Remember this is the start of the consultation process and these are only proposals at this stage, so any suggestions you may have could be important.

Progress on Equal Pay Claims



Former Manual Workers

Through talks with the Authority equal pay claims have progressed and Durham County Council have agreed to settle claims and have asked the Employment Tribunal to vacate the Council's Defence Hearing that was due to take place this month.

Thompson's Solicitors expect all offers to be received by May and they will be writing to claimants shortly.

If you do not have a claim lodged through Thompson's Solicitors the Council will not be making you an offer.

APT&C Workers

The ATP&C claims were stayed by the Tribunal pending the outcome of the Council's Defence Hearing. The Council have agreed to settle the APT&C claims, although Thompson's are still in discussions as to the terms.

Thompson's hope to receive these offers by May, **although this is not a certainty.**

If you would like to check that your claim is lodged please contact the Branch on 0191 3834417 or 0191 3835515.

Information for all Members

GMB are seriously concerned with what has been happening, firstly in ICT and now in the RED Service.

The Authority has stated that when the offer of a post is an alternative to redundancy there will be no protection for affected staff. We have sought Legal Advice and are still awaiting detailed clarification of this situation.

As a result of our frustration we added one item to the agenda of the Corporate Consultation Forum held on 8th March 2011. This meeting is attended by the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chief Executive, HR, Directors of the relevant services and Trade Unions.

When I informed them of the situation it was clear that the Leader, Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive were unaware of this. They asked the HR officer if this was the case and her response was that this was the policy.

The Deputy Leader gave an assurance that this would be investigated. The minutes of the meeting reflect this.

Proposed Leisure Centre Closures

You are probably all aware of Durham County Council's proposals to close up to six leisure centres. A three month public consultation exercise is now underway, and final decisions are expected in the Summer.

If you are affected by this and would like to speak to a representative please contact the Branch on 0191 3834417 or 0191 3835515.

GMB Services and Benefits

GMB Legal Services

Free legal services for accidents at work or on the road, and free initial advice for a wide range of other legal issues.

Free Basic Will Writing Service

Offered through the legal helpline, this service can save you up to £70

New Solicitor for the Durham Area

A new firm of solicitors will be working for GMB in the Durham area - Simpson Millar

Remember – You're better off in the GMB

How can I join the GMB

Telephone the GMB office on 0191 383 4417 or see your Shop Steward or ULR for a membership form

GMB Bulletins

Please note: up-to-the minute information for members is posted onto the Durham County Council bulletin board

Easter Egg Raffle

GMB will be holding an Easter egg raffle on 20th April. All members will be included through their membership numbers. Prizes will be Thorntons Easter eggs and shopping vouchers.

Winners will be contacted by the branch and their names will be posted on the bulletin board.

