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Don't treat colleges and staff like Cinderella - p3



**PUBLIC WORKS:**  
a million voices for public services

March 2013 No. 101

# Scotland in UNISON

scottish council activists bulletin ..... Use these stories in your branch newsletter or circulate the pdf version to members

## Aim for 100% union workplaces...

compiled by John Stevenson  
SiU Editor

**Just when UNISON Scotland officers, stewards and members thought they could have a wee rest, we are on a recruitment drive again!**

On the back of the autumn drive in Scotland that brought in 4,000 new members, the union launched a UK-wide recruitment campaign on 11 March to boost our strength in workplaces at a time when public services are under sustained attack from the coalition government.

General secretary Dave Prentis wants the union to represent thousands of workers who have not joined a union and who have little or no defence against the government's attack on their jobs.

**And UNISON Scottish Secretary Mike Kirby added:** "UNISON is campaigning against the job losses we have seen in Scotland's public sector over the last few years.

*"But although jobs are*

**'We need to strengthen the union, we need to make sure that the activists are supported and that our members and potential members know that UNISON is there for them.'** *Dave Prentis*

*going, UNISON is retaining very good recruitment levels as people see the need to get the protection of a union around them."*

Dave Prentis has told UNISON members and activists: "In many workplaces we're 50% unionised. We should be 100% unionised."

And he promises that UNISON will do everything in its power to help its activists achieve that, saying: "We need to strengthen the union, we need to make sure that the



activists are supported and we need to make sure that our members and potential members know that UNISON is there for them."

The first phase of the campaign is spearheaded by a national advertising campaign including television adverts, national and local press advertising, online and social media.

Half of UNISON's 80 or so branches in Scotland are involved in the initial campaign.

A series of hospital walkabouts is taking place in the central belt and open days are taking place at major secondary schools.

With the advent in April of a single Scottish police force, UNISON will be present at police courses for staff transferring to the new set-up. UNISON will also be holding its own seminar for police staff.

**What you can do..**  
*...more on page 3*

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£30,000 - £35,000	£2.30
£35,000 - £40,000	£2.50
£40,000 - £45,000	£2.70
£45,000 - £50,000	£2.90
£50,000 - £55,000	£3.10
£55,000 - £60,000	£3.30
£60,000 - £65,000	£3.50
£65,000 - £70,000	£3.70
£70,000 - £75,000	£3.90
£75,000 - £80,000	£4.10
£80,000 - £85,000	£4.30
£85,000 - £90,000	£4.50
£90,000 - £95,000	£4.70
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**106,000 reasons to be in UNISON**

UNISON won £106,853 in personal injury settlements for Scottish members last month.

The members came from 10 local government branches, four health branches and two in the voluntary and community sector.

**Free Legal Expenses Insurance**

Did you know that you can avoid paying extra for Legal Expenses Insurance because you already get it free just by being a UNISON member?

**Professional Indemnity**

Did you know that UNISON provides up to £1m professional indemnity insurance for nurses?

## Council staff to be balloted on pay

**UNISON Scotland is to ballot local government members on a 'final' pay offer from councils.**

Branch delegates were to meet in Glasgow on 15 March to decide on any recommendation on the 1% offer from COSLA, before a full postal ballot.

Dougie Black, Joint Trade Union Side Secretary, said the local government unions had wanted to negotiate to

have the offer improved, but the employers had made it clear this was their final offer.

It has two parts – a 1% increase for all staff and a Scottish Local Government Living Wage, set at £7.50 per hour. The offer is for a single year, applicable from 1 April 2013.

Dougie said: "We welcome the fact that the employers have finally gone some way to

addressing low pay by the introduction of a Living Wage. This has been a key component of our pay claims for the last few years.

"However, we are disappointed at the level of the offer at 1%. This has to be seen in the context of local government workers only having seen pay increase by 0.65% over the last three years, while many other public sector workers

earning under £21,000 have received an annual payment of £250. And of course the cost of living has gone up, with big energy and food price increases."

UNISON is also concerned that COSLA has not promised to uprate the Living Wage annually, leaving this up to individual councils. The union will continue to pursue this.



## Cuts in food safety and environmental health are putting public at risk

**UNISON Scotland has warned that new figures and staff surveys show cuts to council environmental health departments and to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) are putting public health at risk.**

Council responses to Freedom of Information requests and the results of two surveys of UNISON members confirm the union's warnings about the

impact of cuts on food safety, public health and health and safety. One member working on food safety in an environmental health department said: "We have not submitted any samples for food in ten months!"

The number of qualified Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) employed by 30 of Scotland's 32 councils, has gone down by 13% between 2008/9 (519) and 2011/12 (450). There

**the number of meat inspectors has more than halved since 2003 - a shocking statistic in the light of the current horsemeat scandal'**

has been an even bigger drop of 17% in other staff carrying out an enforcement role.

UNISON also revealed that the number of meat inspectors has more than halved since 2003 - a shocking statistic in the light of the current horsemeat scandal.

In a new survey of

environmental health staff and meat inspectors, 56% said that their team has seen 'major' cuts, with a further 10% describing cuts as 'severe', and more than 95% expecting further cutbacks and job losses.

Alex Gordon, UNISON vice convener for environmental

health and trading standards at Glasgow city council warned that paper trails showing the number of inspection visits being maintained hid the real picture:

"They are not as thorough inspections as was possible with higher staffing levels. You want officers in food hygiene premises telling them how to avoid a Wishaw butcher scenario, not coming in to investigate after it has happened."

## New police service set to fail on Best Value warns UNISON

**Scotland's new police service is set to fail significantly behind England and Wales in best practice for modern policing, failing its Best Value duty.**

That is the warning from UNISON as a new report revealed that the numbers of police staff in Scotland have fallen by 11%, with further job losses predicted.

Dave Watson, Head of Bargaining & Campaigns, presented the updated Stewart report on police civilianisation commissioned by UNISON at a successful event at the Scottish Parliament, attended by 60 people including up to 15 MSPs

He said: "Police staff do an incredibly important job in roles from corporate and admin support to functions such as intelligence, crime prevention, custody and detention and scenes of crime officers.

"It makes no financial sense to have police officers backfilling these posts. There are many police functions where properly qualified civilian personnel are simply the most effective way to

deliver the full range of routine, complex and specialised functions that are central to modern day police forces."

George McIrvine, Secretary of UNISON Police Staff Scotland, said: "We welcome this report in showing how important it is that the new force gets it right on police staff. They are getting it very wrong just now and could fail their Best Value duty without a change of direction.

"We have said all along that we need a modern balanced police team with the right people doing the right jobs for a better safer Scotland. The Scottish Government should resource the new police service to provide that and abandon their policy of maintaining police officer numbers at 17,234, which forces all the cuts onto police staff."

Scottish Labour's justice spokesperson Lewis Macdonald MSP welcomed the report, saying: "This report clearly indicates that civilian police staff are paying the price for the SNP's reckless approach to setting up a single police service.



George McIrvine addresses the Parliament event

"Hundreds of trained and experienced civilian workers have already lost their jobs, with thousands more redundancies expected after the launch of Police Scotland on April.

"Our communities don't want to see police officers spending their time working in offices, control rooms and custody suites when they could be out on the streets fighting crime."

### Payback Time For Council Workers

**That is how the Hamilton Advertiser's front page heralded UNISON's success in gaining 500 catering members a recalculation of their pay, earning them two days pay a year for six years.**

Following a member raising a query with Tony Slaven, branch vice-chair, about how her pay was calculated, investigations revealed that a mistake had been made in 2006 which meant that school catering staff were being underpaid by an average of two days each year.

What looked like a minor error turned into an underpayment which could amount to over £200,000.

So far the Council have had to pay out to all those still working in the service but the branch is identifying others who worked in the service before and who are due money also.

Tony said, "Members had queried the calculation before but it was only once UNISON took up the case that progress was made. Members from all over the Council have been calling us to look into their own situation. We're delighted to have been able to get members the money they are due for the days they worked."

## Putting dignity (and radicalism) back into social care services

by John Stevenson  
SiU editor

**UNISON seminar of members working in social care and home care has called for dignity for service users and dignity for the staff who serve them.**

Members from across the UK attending the seminar in Birmingham in February heard harrowing stories of service users condemned to brief 15 minute visits to provide care, Alzheimer's sufferers subjected to regular changes of carer and welfare cuts taking away the independence of disabled people.

They heard of the widespread exploitation of outsourced home care workers on zero hours contracts, paid on or less than the minimum wage, not paid or reimbursed for travelling between service users and having to do the job with precious little training.

There were first-hand personal stories, not least from Graeme Ellis of UNISON's National Disabled Members' Committee who told of the human cost to himself of cuts in budgets and the vicious attacks on benefits.

Attacks like changes to Disability Living Allowance will have life-changing effects on disabled people and the savage 'bedroom tax' will throw many people into deeper poverty, family breakdown or homelessness.

But it was not all despair. Activists told how they were recruiting, organising and fighting back. Sharing campaign strategies and lessons was a major part of the seminar with workshops on issues like UNISON's Ethical Care Campaign, Health and Social Care Integration, Cuts in Children's Services, Organising in the Voluntary Sector, Residential Care Conditions and

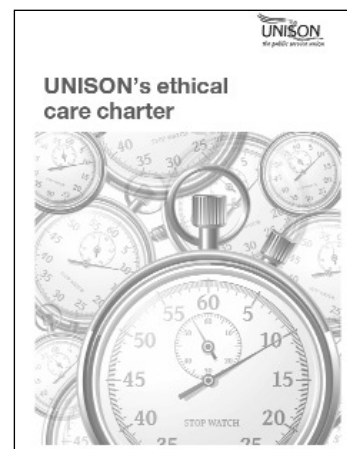
Practising Radical Social Work.

The term 'dignity' was one brought up across the groups. UNISON's Ethical Care Charter demands that the time allocated to visits has to match the needs of the clients. "In general, 15-minute visits will not be used as they undermine the dignity of the clients", it says.

Calling on all councils to sign up to the charter, UNISON lays out immediate principles that services should match need, home carers should be given adequate time to meet that need, workers should be paid for travel and given enough time to get from one service user to the other. They should also get sick pay.

Doesn't sound like too much to ask, does it? The modesty of the demands shows just how bad things are in this sector.

The charter has been sent out to branches who should be using it



to engage with councils on improving the service.

Colin Turbett's workshops on Practising Radical Social Work also tackled the issue of dignity.

Calling for the values of respect, building positive relationships and advocating for service users, Colin warned against the oppressive practice and attitudes deriving from 'managerialism' and an over-structural approach to social work practice.

This was not about rampant revolutionary action, but about client-centred practice and about

recognising issues of poverty and class in anti-discriminatory practice. It was also about honesty and not avoiding the hard decisions.

A culture change was possible, said Colin, as he promoted a manifesto for radical practice with an emphasis on "security, dignity and resilience building rather than surveillance of risk".

The manifesto calls on social workers to focus on empowerment and capacity building, agreeing goals, recognising power imbalances.

They should seek opportunities for 'small scale resistance' but also use collective opportunities to campaign for social justice.

Really, it was about practising ethically. It was about good practice as we used to know it.

Colin, from UNISON's North Ayrshire Branch and a member of the UNISON Scotland Social Work Issues Group, has written a book on the subject to be published soon.

For the full story and a link to the charter, see [www.unison-scotland.org.uk/socialwork](http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/socialwork)

## Don't treat colleges and staff like Cinderella

**UNISON members in colleges lobbied MSPs in Parliament on 7 March, demanding that they stop treating Further Education as a Cinderella service.**

A postcard petition representing the 1,300 jobs which have been lost in FE as a result of recent cuts was delivered to Scottish ministers, pointing out that short term cuts mean long term damage to our economy and some of our neediest communities and people.

At the lobby hosted by Neil Findlay MSP, Chris Greenshields, chair of

UNISON's Further Education Committee, said: "Scotland can no longer sit by and let our colleges be turned into a Cinderella service by another year of savage cuts.

"We urgently need the Scottish government to explain to us how they are planning to protect jobs and services for our students in the wake of more rounds of job cuts.

"Services are being decimated even before the predicted job losses as a result of mergers and no-one at the Scottish Government is asking why. Our college staff and students deserve better.

"Support staff provide invaluable services which enable our students to prosper after they take their first steps into education.

"Without these essential services many college students will fail to progress and millions of pounds of public money will be wasted.

"College students need support services more than most as many are taking their first steps into education.

"College staff and students are no Cinderellas. We deserve to go to the education ball on a fair equal and properly funded basis."



UNISON's Louise McGurk as Cinderella makes the point to MSPs

## Aiming for the 100% workplace

From page 1

Events at sports centres in Glasgow are targeting potential members working for Glasgow Life - the arms-length leisure trust set up by the council to replace directly-run services.

### What you can do

Find out what is happening in your branch and make sure you volunteer with recruiting new members in your workplace.

You can put up posters, talk to your colleagues or make sure that our recruitment leaflets are available to non members where you work.

You can find out what resources are available to help on the UNISON website at [unison.org.uk/recruitment](http://unison.org.uk/recruitment).

## This is not the time to cut, Prentis tells Western Isles

by Fiona Montgomery  
Joint Communications Officer

**Dave Prentis flew into Stornoway last month, inspiring the local branch on fighting cuts - and taking on the Comhairle over the Living Wage and facility time.**

Western Isles local government branch had invited the General Secretary to speak at their AGM and he said he was keen to support the branch's case against cuts to services and jobs.

Over the last two years 200 jobs have been cut, with a further 70 going as a result of the 2013-15 budget, and more job losses expected from the setting of the capital programme.

Dave said: "The Western Isles rely heavily on the public sector for employment, for services and for maintaining the health of the local economy. More job cuts will simply add to the misery of families affected and will do nothing to assist the economy.

"People out of work have no money to spend in the local shops and businesses, and the economy suffers as a result. All the evidence shows that there are few private sector jobs out



Alison MacCorquodale presents Dave Prentis with Harris Tweed

there, apart from those that are part-time and low paid.

"This is not the time to cut jobs and the services that people need to help them through these tough times."

At a meeting with Councillor Roddie MacKay, Chair of the Human Resource Sub-Committee, and Katherine MacKinnon, Head of Human Resource, Dave strongly pressed the case for the Living

Wage. Branch Chair Flora Somerville, Branch Secretary Alison MacCorquodale and Regional Organiser Ken Matthews also attended.

The Comhairle argues they do pay the Living Wage, but they include the payment of Islands Allowance. Before that is applied, the lowest rate of pay is £6.56 per hour, compared to the Living Wage rate of £7.45.

Dave Prentis later told the

Stornoway Gazette: "It's not a lot to correct. It would probably cost the council only around £10,000 to become a real Living Wage employer. It would also be a very possible way for the council to replace some faith and help raise morale."

Alison MacCorquodale thanked Dave for tackling the council on a decision to cut trade union facilities.

Alison said: "Dave urged the council to reconsider, stressing the financial benefits associated with early intervention by the trade unions in employee related issues.

"Cllr MacKay asked us to submit a detailed response to reinforce Dave's points."

At the AGM, Dave praised the Branch Committee and members and urged them to "actively stand in the way of cuts."

Alison presented Dave with a gift of Harris Tweed.

She said: "The Branch has received some excellent feedback from members following the AGM and quite a few membership forms have already been sent in.

"We are very grateful to Dave for taking the time out from his hectic schedule to visit us. Hopefully he'll be back next year to model his new jacket!!"

## Living Wage first at Central Scotland Police



**UNISON Steward Raymond Farrell and cleaner May Coupar celebrate Central Scotland Police becoming the first force in the UK to be an accredited Living Wage employer. The win will benefit more than 20 people.**

Raymond said: "UNISON is calling for the new Scottish Police Authority to follow Central Scotland and introduce it to all Scottish police staff."

## So 40 years in NHS wasn't long service then?

by Fiona Montgomery  
Joint Communications Officer

**UNISON NHS Glasgow and Clyde Branch led the way again recently after it was discovered that the Health Board were refusing to pay staff long service awards if they retired on grounds of ill health.**

The issue came into focus after a local member with 40 years service retired at age 59 1/2 after undergoing open heart surgery and was denied the £100 long service payment because he had retired before he reached 60 years old.

Local UNISON activist Raymond O'Donoghue took up the case. He said: "Our member had worked for the NHS since his late teens and his sick record was amongst the best I have ever seen.

"Ironically he could have stayed on sick leave, gathered his wages and got the long service award after six months. He didn't; he was honest and the employers tried to withhold payment."

Following a formal complaint to the Chief Executive, NHSGGC have agreed that the policy needs amending and that the criteria for access should not be based on age.

## Video report on health branch's successes

by John Stevenson  
SiU editor

**Many branches do an annual report but a Scottish health branch has taken a step forward with an innovative video report of its successes over the last year.**

Area Organiser Jennifer McCarey has produced a lively video of UNISON Glasgow and Clyde NHS and CVS branch's work over 2012.

The branch has probably the longest name in the union but that's OK because it's also the

biggest branch in Scotland.

Entitled 'The past we inherit, the future we build', the video covers an impressive list of successes in 2012, some of them covered in previous issues of *SiU*.

The video reports on wins on the accrual of public holidays on maternity leave, getting 80% of domestics on Band 2, the 'pay as if at work' success when on annual leave, protection of flexibility payment for theatre staff at Golden Jubilee Hospital, and following a ballot, no reduction



STILL MARCHING FOR THE NHS

of Easter holidays.

It also reports on record student nurse recruitment, and tribunals settled for 14

members at Beardmore Hotel, along with winning refunds for staff who had previously paid PVG fees.

## Time to act against tax-dodging companies, says UNISON

by Fiona Montgomery  
Joint Communications Officer

**UNISON Scotland**  
**quoted Chief**  
**Secretary to the Treasury**  
**Danny Alexander in**  
**calling for tax dodging**  
**companies to be barred**  
**from public contracts.**

Mr Alexander told the Liberal Democrats conference

last September that 'Taxpayers money should not be funding tax dodgers.'

Dave Watson, Head of Bargaining and Campaigns, said that considerable cross party support for that principle and strong public anger meant the timing was perfect for the Scottish Government to legislate.

He told a Holyrood conference on sustainable procurement that ministers can use their forthcoming Procurement Reform Bill to ban firms involved in tax dodging from winning public contracts.

He added: "At a time of massive public spending cuts it is outrageous that some £120

billion of tax is not being collected. The UK Government should be doing more with stronger anti-tax-avoidance legislation, more tax staff and greater transparency in company accounts.

"The Scottish Government can encourage companies to change their ways through procurement."

## Trade unions reclaim ground in the constitution debate

by Malcolm Burns  
and John Stevenson

**T**rade unions have reclaimed the ground in the debate on Scotland's future with the Yes Scotland campaign issuing a 'serious' response to the STUC's 'A Just Scotland' interim report.

STUC general secretary Graeme Smith said: "The STUC believes that 'A Just Scotland' has played an important role in shifting the independence debate onto the ground of social justice".

Welcoming that shift in the debate, Mike Kirby, UNISON Scottish Secretary reiterated: "It's not where the power lies, but in whose interest that power is exercised that really matters."

And to underline the point, UNISON has launched a set of policy proposals calling for fresh powers, including pensions and income tax, to be devolved to Scotland.

The union's 'Fairer Scotland and devolution' document opens up a debate which has so far focused on fiscal issues and argues that new devolved powers for the Scottish parliament are essential to create a Fairer Scotland and



**‘We are intent on putting public services and the people who provide them at the centre of the debate’**

Lilian Macer

**Call for more devolved powers to improve lives of working people**

improve the lives of working people.

UNISON Scotland says a range of fresh powers should be devolved: public sector pensions, health and safety, labour market regulation and broadcasting – as well as stronger fiscal powers, including all of income tax revenue.

The focus for UNISON of decisions about which powers to devolve and which to leave at UK level is social change and the creation of a more equal society.

Lilian Macer, Convener of UNISON Scotland said: "Our union hasn't made a decision about which option to back in the referendum - but we are intent on putting public

services and the people who provide them at the centre of the debate."

The union has challenged all parties to the debate to explain how their preferred option will match UNISON's priorities laid out in the previously

published document 'A Fairer Scotland'.

Mike Kirby added: "We have always been strong supporters of devolution - and supporters of strong devolution. As political campaigns and parties are discussing more powers for the Parliament we want to make sure we are part of this debate.

"Our concern isn't with constitutional mechanics. Our aim is to create a fairer and more equal Scotland.

"The referendum debate so far has focused on fiscal matters. These fresh new powers which we are calling for should be devolved to the Scottish Parliament and used – along with the many existing powers it already has – to improve the lives of working people."

### Scots mourn Chavez too

**P**eople in Scotland with a commitment to social justice will mourn the death of Hugo Chavez says the Scottish Venezuela Solidarity Campaign.

Matthew Crighton, Secretary of the Campaign said: "Chavez was a great leader for the people of Venezuela, with a practical commitment to improving the lives of its people and in particular the millions who had been left to a life of poverty by previous regimes. He was a great man and our thoughts and solidarity go out to his family and the people of Venezuela."



## Sean Redmond: Lifelong student of Irish and British labour history

by John McFadden  
UNISON Past President

**O**n 15 December 2012 and 21 January 2013, two great fighters for justice and equality on the island of Ireland and internationally were lost, with the deaths of Sean Redmond and Inez McCormack.

I came across both in the early 80's at a fringe meeting on Ireland. Both were passionate speakers, having been active in the civil rights campaigns in Northern Ireland in the 1960's.

Both addressed issues almost impossible to raise in a trade union context at the time because of deep, sectarian divisions and ongoing paramilitary campaigns, but which needed airing if people were to be brought together.

Their work helped pave the way for the later Belfast Agreement. I am proud to have known and worked with them.

My closest relationship was with



Sean. A tall man, with a cliché Dublin beard and sense of humour, he loved Irish and international history and culture.

He came from a family steeped in politics and trade unionism, and had many passions including classical music, football (with any shape of ball) food, a good pint of Guinness and, occasionally, a glass of Laphroaig.

Personal visits to Dublin to meet Sean and other Irish trade unionists led to close friendships, since formalised in a UNISON Scotland/IMPACT memorandum of

understanding.

The Connolly Club, later Association, was established on 4th September 1938 in Manchester, to support the Irish in England, a united Ireland and socialism. Sean joined in 1957; went on its executive committee in 1958 and was general secretary from 1961 until 1970.

He represented it on the executives of the National Council for Civil Liberties (now Liberty) and the Movement for Colonial Freedom.

He worked closely with Desmond Greaves, campaigning to expose the deplorable civil liberties situation in Northern Ireland.

In 1961 he took part in the Irish Freedom Marches, pre-dating the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement.

On returning to Ireland, Sean became general secretary of the Irish Municipal Employees Trade Union. When it merged with IMPACT in 1991, he became national secretary for municipal workers, gaining great respect for his shrewdness, good

sense and political and industrial experience.

Sean was a lifelong student of Irish and British labour history and national movements. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Irish Labour History Society. His writings included: -

- the history of his former union IMETU, for their centenary in 1993;
- 'Desmond Greaves and the origins of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland', describing the solidarity work of the Connolly Association;
- 'Partners in Revolt', highlighting the links between English and Scottish radicals and the independence struggle in Ireland in the 1790's; and
- "Belfast is Burning 1941", documenting assistance from Dublin Fire Brigades to Belfast following German air raids in 1941.

## Climate change plan 'not credible'

by Fiona Montgomery  
Joint Communications Officer

**T**he Scottish Government's action plan on climate change is not credible, according to Stop Climate Chaos Scotland.

The SCCS coalition presented written and oral evidence to the four parliamentary committees scrutinising the draft Report on Proposals and Policies 2013-2027.

The document ought to be the blueprint for how Government will ensure that its legally binding targets to reduce emissions, as set out in the Scottish Climate Change Act of 2009, can be met. This is particularly important given that the first emissions target was missed and with emissions from housing and transport higher now than they were in 1990.

Dave Watson, UNISON Head of Bargaining and Campaigns, represented SCCS to give evidence to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee in February.

He said mandatory annual reporting by public bodies should be introduced, along with training for senior managers, local councillors and other relevant public sector staff to understand the business case for climate change action.

He told MSPs: "We are not delivering on climate change cuts. We need only look at the change in the weather, the speed at which the Arctic ice cap is melting and many other things. People can start to see that, and we need to broaden it out and say that if we are going to do something about these things, it will involve some hard decisions at local level."

Branches can support climate change action with green workplace campaigning. Two current initiatives are a new book raising funds for Stop Climate Chaos, and Earth Hour 2013.

'Beacons, stories for our not so distant future', is a collection of stories from writers including Janice Galloway, A.L. Kennedy, Alasdair Gray, Toby Litt and Joanne Harris. Details on the SCCS website.

### Earth Hour 23 March

And on Saturday 23 March, people and organisations around the world will take part in Earth Hour, switching lights off at 8.30pm for an hour.

Branches can get ideas for involvement in the toolkit from Earth Hour 2012 on the UNISON Scotland website.

### We want to hear your news

SiU is your paper, we want to hear your stories.  
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