

Doing our AGM differently during the pandemic

Due to the Covid19 Pandemic, Rochdale Local Government UNISON's AGM will be held in a slightly different format this year.

The date of the AGM is Thursday 11th March 2021.

There will be 4 meetings available – 2 physical meetings to be held at Green Lane Environmental Management and 2 virtual meetings via Zoom.

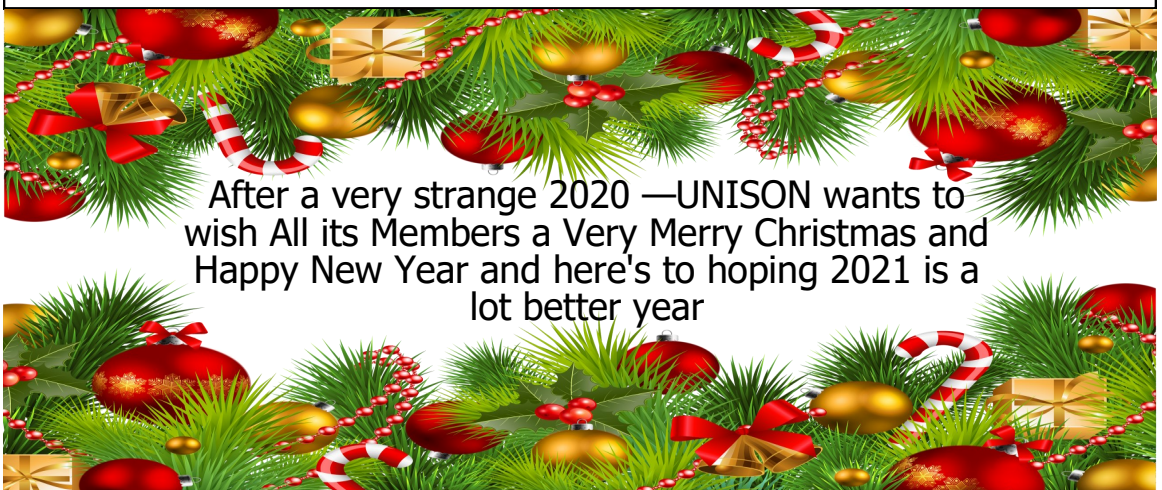
6.30am @ Green Lane Heywood
7.00am @ Green Lane Heywood
12.30pm – Virtual Meeting
5.00pm – Virtual Meeting

Due to Social Distancing Rules, we can only accommodate a maximum of 12 members at the Green Lane Meetings. To reserve a place at one of these meetings, please contact the office on 01706 925952.

To attend a Virtual meeting – we will require an email address from yourself. Please contact the office (unison@rochdale.gov.uk) with your email address and chosen virtual meeting. The branch will then send you the log in details for the meeting, for you to log in on the day.

The Annual General Meeting will elect your Branch Officers, Auditors, and Representatives and ratify the election of Workplace Stewards for the forthcoming year. Elections will also be made for National and Local Government Conference 2021, subject to COVID regulations.

If you wish to stand for a position in the branch, please ensure that your nomination form is received at the Branch Office by no later than 28th January 2021. **(Nomination forms can be obtained from the Branch Office)**



After a very strange 2020 —UNISON wants to wish All its Members a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and here's to hoping 2021 is a lot better year

UNISON's COVID 19 response fund

The COVID-19 response fund reopened on Monday 16 November, offering grants of up to £500 to help members whose household incomes have been affected in any of the following ways:

- You and/or your partner are currently furloughed
- You and/or your partner are currently receiving Statutory Sick Pay and are either shielding, self-isolating or off sick due to other COVID-related reasons
- You and/or your partner have been made redundant or lost your job due to coronavirus
- You and/or your partner's employer have reduced your working hours, including loss of regular overtime (applicable also where partner is self-employed and loss of earnings can be proven)

Please note that applicants must be a UNISON member with savings of less than £2,500 and have paid at least two months' subscriptions.

Depending on your situation, help will be awarded as follows:

- £350 living costs for applicants who are furloughed or have a salary reduction due to COVID
- £500 loss of employment grant due to redundancy
- Up to £500 housing costs grant – towards rent, mortgage, or council tax arrears that have accrued since March 2020

Apply here <https://www.unison.org.uk/covid-19-response-fund-2/> or contact the branch if you are not able to apply online.

Please check that your UNISON colleagues have received this newsletter electronically—if not please ask them to contact the branch on 01706 925952 or [email unison@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:unison@rochdale.gov.uk) so we can update their membership record

No divide and rule on pay freeze

The Government have announced they intend to impose a new pay freeze on public sector workers in 2021. After all of our hard work during the pandemic the reward is that once again our pay and pensions will fall behind inflation.

The chancellor Rishi Sunak has used the economic devastation caused by the Government's failure to properly respond to the coronavirus pandemic to justify the cut. He argues that because poorly paid private sector workers have lost wages and been made redundant he has to freeze public sector pay:

"In such a difficult context for the private sector, especially for those people working in sectors like retail, hospitality and leisure, I cannot justify a significant, across-the-board pay increase for all public-sector workers."

This is the old game of divide and rule the Government tries to play every time they want to make us pay for their failings. In reality public sector workers are not responsible for job losses and pay cuts in the private sector. UNISON represents thousands of low paid staff in the private sector none of them will benefit if their colleagues in the public sector take a pay freeze. A lot of UNISON members have partners and family who work in the private sector. Some of us have second jobs with private companies because pay in our main jobs is so low. So this is just a double blow.

We are a convenient target. Whereas billionaires like Sir Philip Green who made a fortune out of his Arcadia empire are still able to live the high life on their luxury yachts. They will not be made to pay for this crisis to support the thousands of shop workers who have been made redundant and lost their pensions. They don't take money from public sector workers and hand it to those out of work. In fact the Government want to cut the money going to people on Universal Credit by £20 a week as well.

Whether it is private sector workers trying to get a fair deal and fight redundancies or public sector workers fighting yet another wage freeze and further cuts to public services we all need to stand together to make sure that the Government don't get away with making us pay for the current crisis.