



The Premier Trade Union for Professional Firefighters and Emergency Fire Control Staff: Nov 2011

FBU GOES TO PARLIAMENT

SOUTH WEST FIREFIGHTERS AND CONTROL STAFF TRAVEL TO PARLIAMENT AND TELL MP'S: HANDS OFF OUR PENSIONS!



at length to MPs giving them FBU evidence confirming current schemes as affordable and sustainable. Members from the RDS, Officer, Wholetime & Control sectors all attended ensuring full representation.

“The lobby gave me the chance to speak face to face with my MP about the proposed increase to contribution rates and retirements ages” said Dorset Firefighter Dan Perrett. “He appeared sympathetic to our case and engaged with the issue”.

Cornish FBU Member Sandy Gourley added “this is part of due process and we will continue to chase up MP’s when we return to Cornwall.”

FBU Official Tam McFarlane praised Members saying “these lobbies have been a huge success and left MP’s in no doubt as to the level of opposition within the Fire Service to pension cuts”.

“FBU Members travelled hundreds of miles to give MP’s the facts about Fire Service pensions and express their anger at the Governments disgraceful plans. This is just the start and more lobbies will follow. MP’s should be under no illusions that we will be holding them to account and I urge all FBU members to write to their MP or meet them locally to demand these plans are scrapped.”

Why Lobby?

As part of the FBU campaign against pension cuts we need Government MPs to hear directly from their constituents that the cuts are unfair, unjust and totally unnecessary. The best way to deliver this message is through joint delegations of FBU Members either going directly to Parliament to speak to their local MP or meeting with them at their local constituency surgery.

MPs vote on changes to our pensions and we need to give them the facts, outline our opposition and hold them to account as constituents. The recent South West FBU lobbies in Parliament gave Members the opportunity to travel with colleagues and brief their MP using specially prepared packs. The impact of the lobbies was praised nationally and led to MPs from the Region speaking in the recent Commons debate where the Government altered their position.

See videos and photos of FBU Members experiences at the lobby on our facebook and youtube site:

www.southwestfbu.com

Firefighters and Emergency Fire Control Staff from across the South West made the long journey to London to make the case for pensions justice in the Houses of Parliament. The lobby, which took place over two days in October, was organised by the South West FBU as part of the Unions opposition to Government cuts in Fire Service pension schemes.

All of the six Fire Services in the Region were represented as FBU Members spoke

Fighting for the Fire & Rescue Service



Protecting Firefighters & Control Staff



Join the TUC Day of Action on Weds 30 November: March in solidarity & tell the politicians: Hands Off Our Pensions!

At the recent TUC congress the TUC's public service unions had an urgent meeting to consider the next steps in the united campaign to defend decent pensions for millions of public sector workers as part of the battle for decent pensions for all. At this meeting the decision was made to step up the campaign and to hold a first day of action on Wednesday 30 November.

TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said " Each union has been asked to consider taking what they judge to be the most appropriate form of action possible to show their support for this united campaign.

"This would range from strike action, where ballot mandates have been secured from members and unions judge that appropriate, through to lunchtime meetings, rallies and joint events with community groups and service users. The intention will be to take the call for pensions justice for both public and private sector workers to every corner of the land

on that day in the biggest trade union mobilisation in a generation."

FBU General Secretary Matt Wrack has urged all FBU Members to support the 30 November day of action saying "Colleagues in other schemes report that their talks are not seen as any form of genuine dialogue. That is the key reason why they are balloting for various forms of industrial action on 30 November. We will fully support them and I urge all members to attend picket lines, lobbies, marches and demonstrations on that day."

The TUC in the South West has organised a number of demonstrations and events across the Region on the 30 November and all FBU Members are being encouraged to participate and show their support & solidarity.

Details of events near you are on the opposite page. Please contact your local Brigade Officials for more details and come along to march under your FBU banner!

FBU OFFICIAL & SOUTH WEST TUC CHAIR - JOHN DRAKE: SOLIDARITY ON THE 30TH!



John Drake TUC Chair

Over the last 18 months it has been an honour to be elected as Chair of the SWTUC, to work with other unions, both public and private sector, on many different fronts, from support in industrial disputes, through to learning events and anti racism projects. The trade union movement is built upon solidarity: solidarity of purpose, solidarity in struggle and solidarity in our collective victories. There are over 650,000 trade union members in the South West, a vast army of workplace reps working to support their fellow workers backed up by a regional

network of officers and lawyers. This is the true "Big Society", looking after the individual and collective issues that we all face from day to day.

The issues we all face now are attacks on pay, pensions, jobs and conditions, all as a result of the cuts being forced through from central government. Cuts that are being imposed due to the rampant greed and selfishness of the privileged 1%, whilst the 99% have to pay for it.

The 99% are firefighters, nurses, teachers, civil servants and local government workers, all being forced to take a pay freeze, pay more, work longer and get less on pensions and under threat of losing their jobs. Students being forced to pay up to £27,000 for their degree, pensioners having to decide between eating and heating, the disabled facing huge cuts is Disability Living Allowance whilst in the city over £6 billion was paid out in bonuses earlier this year.

The last 18 months have seen, and continue to see, huge opposition to the cuts. The student protests last year, local demonstrations in hundreds of locations,

the huge 26th March demo in London, the 30th June strikes by educationalists and civil servants, the "Occupy" movement and now the 30th November strikes. All these show that we have to demonstrate, we have to let the Coalition know that we reject their ideology in favour of a better society, one based on fairness not privilege, in favour of the many not the few.

The TUC campaign for Pension Justice is based upon the premise that we all deserve dignity in old age, after a lifetime working and paying into a system, whether in the public or private sector, we all deserve to be able to enjoy our latter years.

I, along with thousands of other FBU members, will be marching with other workers on the 30th November – make sure you are there in true solidarity with those who are on strike, let's make the FBU visible and send a message to the government that we may not be on strike but we are "all in this together" with other trade unions. Solidarity is judged not on words but on actions.

See you on the 30th November.



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK:

Follow us on our own dedicated facebook page: Go to **South West Region of the Fire Brigades Union** and hit the "like" button. You will receive updates on our work and links to how we are fighting for you locally. You can also follow us on our dedicated website at: www.southwestfbu.com

Pensions Justice - Day of Action:

Events in the South West: 30 November



AVON:

Bristol

A march will take place at 11am at College Green to a rally at 12:30 in Castle Park. Members should assemble at 11am at College Green under the FBU banner. FBU will be providing stewards, volunteers welcome. For more details contact Chris Taylor or Gary Spindler.

CORNWALL

Truro

A rally is being held at the "Hall for Cornwall" in Back Quay Truro starting at 10am until 11.30am. The Cornwall FBU banner will be present. For more details contact Dominic Keen or Stuart Pulley.

DEVON

Exeter

A March will take place and Members are asked to assemble under the FBU banner at Cathedral Green where the march will begin at 11am. A Rally will follow at Flybe Stand, St James Park at 12.30.

Plymouth

A rally and day of events will take place. Members are asked to gather

at 11am outside Guildhall for a march through the city centre. A rally will be held at Holiday Inn, Armada Way at 1pm. There is a creche for children and activities for older children. Evening event in the voodoo lounge.

Torbay

10:30am Rally at Castle Circus outside Torquay Town Hall.

For more details of any Devon event contact Trevor French or Bob Walker

SOMERSET

Taunton

12 noon March from the Old Cattle Market to outside Somerset County Council offices for a rally at 1.30pm. For more details contact Trevor French or Bob Walker

DORSET

Dorchester

Members are asked to assemble under the FBU banner at 10am at the Dorset County Council offices. There will be some speakers prior to a march through town beginning at 10.30. A Rally will take place in South Street at 11am. For more details please contact Karen Adams or Simon Dennett

Bournemouth

12 noon March from Central Library, the Triangle to Rally in the Royal Bath Hotel from 12:45pm. For more details please contact Karen Adams or Simon Dennett

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Gloucester

Members should assemble under the FBU banner at 1pm outside Shire Hall for a March to Gloucester Park for the Rally at 2pm. For more details please contact Mike Tully.

WILTSHIRE

Swindon

Members should assemble under the FBU banner at 10am at Canal Wharf for the March to Meca Theatre, Regent Circus where a rally will take place at 11am. For more details please contact Paul Lawler, Brent Thorley or Tony Littler.



Trowbridge

A day of activities will take place. Members should gather at 11.30am outside Wiltshire Council Unison office, New Brook House, Bythesea Road Trowbridge. For more details please contact Paul Lawler, Brent Thorley or Tony Littler.

NB: Details correct at time of press but may be subject to change. Please contact your Brigade Officials or see website in case of alterations. Contact details on back page.



Phil Jordan

Trades Councils were set up all over Britain at the end of the 19th century to bring together delegates from Trade Unions in their own particular district. Regionally there are 19 trades union councils with local FBU branches affiliating to them. Trades Councils, like the TUC itself, have no political affiliations.

So, what role do trades councils play?

Trades Union Councils bring unions together to campaign around issues affecting working people in their workplaces and local communities. This includes:

- raising public awareness of rights at work & the union role in enforcing those rights;
- promoting recruitment drives to build union membership
- supporting union & community campaigns for dignity and respect in the workplace and beyond.

With threats of racism and fascism, attacks on pensions, jobs and general work-place conditions, the trade unions voice is as important as ever. The capacity of Trades Union Councils to organise trade unionists into coalitions with other progressive forces is crucial. They do this by keeping local trade unionists up-to-date with developments

GET UPDATES VIA OUR NEW SITES:

The South West Region knows the importance of keeping our Members up to date and making as much information as easily available as possible.

This is why we have been at the forefront of using new electronic media to give you the information you need and getting key campaigning messages out on your behalf to the audiences that matter.

The Regions facebook site "**South West Region of the Fire Brigades Union**" has received praise from other Unions for its use of format and fast relaying of information. We have now added to this by linking in a youtube site:

within the wider trade union movement, and by taking up relevant local industrial and community issues.

Never in modern times have the phrases Unity and Solidarity had such an important meaning. We speak of it in the FBU in terms of our recent fights with our own employers but national and local demonstrations and the joint day of industrial action on November 30th simply highlight the vital necessity for ALL trade unions to combine forces to protect workers and communities when we are under such ferocious attack.

Trades Councils play a huge role in pulling Unions together. Individual workplace battles can be explained to the wider trade union movement and support galvanised.

In conclusion, trades councils are a vital cog in the world of workers supporting each other. And right now workers need to come together, share experiences and pledge support like never before.

So, check out your local trades council and get involved. Play your role in building a coalition of trade unions in order to support workers and communities.

Contact your local FBU official for more information.

The current trades council in the South West are in the following areas:

Barnstaple, Bath, Blandford, Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole, Bridgwater, Bristol, Cheltenham, Dorchester Weymouth Portland and District, Exeter, Gloucestershire and Districts, Ilfracombe, Plymouth, Salisbury, Swindon, Taunton, Torbay and District, Weston and North Somerset, Wiltshire and Yeovil.

**Phil Jordan
SW FBU Regional Chair and
Gloucester Trades Council**

"[southwestregionfbu](http://southwestregionfbu.com)" which uses short films of members and officials during campaigns and other work to get our message across.

Members can also add themselves to an email update list by contacting us through our website: www.southwestfbu.com .

In the meantime please follow our work on your behalf via these sites and pass the details on to your friends and colleagues.



Contact Your Rep:

Avon: Chris Taylor

chris.taylor@fbu.org.uk

Cornwall: Dom Keen

dominic.keen@fbu.org.uk

Devon/Somerset: Trevor French

trevor.french@fbu.org.uk

Dorset: Karen Adams

karen.adams@fbu.org.uk

Gloucestershire: Mike Tully

mike.tully@fbu.org.uk

Wiltshire: Paul Lawler

paul.lawler@fbu.org.uk

Retained: Leigh Redman

leigh.redman@fbu.org.uk

Control: Simon Jones

simon.jones@fbu.org.uk

FBU SOUTH WEST

The Fire Brigades Union is the premier Trade Union for professional Firefighters and Control Staff across the UK. The South West Region is the largest Region in England and we cover Avon, Cornwall, Dorset, Devon & Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire FRS's.

We represent over 85% of uniformed staff across the UK. Our members cover every role from Firefighter to Area Manager, including the retained duty system. We are committed to protecting our Members, their interests at work and to ensuring that the public receive an excellent and professional Fire & Rescue Service. Join the professionals, contact us at:

www.southwestfbu.com

