the Socialist
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www.socialistparty.org.uk

# Fighting to save our services

## Anti-cuts campaign reports

### Greenwich

SIXTY PEOPLE, mainly local government workers in the Unite union, gathered at Greenwich town hall in Woolwich on Tuesday 21 September to protest at the council's plan to make £70 million worth of cuts to jobs and services.

The protest was called by Greenwich Save Our Services, a campaign launched by Socialist Party members which has the support of workers who are members of the Unite, Unison, NUT and CWU unions.

The council is notoriously secretive about its plans, wanting to head off resistance from workers and service users.

But it is already known that it plans to cut 40% of the grant that goes to voluntary sector organisations, as well as closing all the libraries in the borough and replacing them with one library in the new council building being built in Woolwich.

The next Greenwich SOS meeting will take place on 5 October.

***Paul Callanan***
***Greenwich Socialist Party***

### Reading

ON 23 September 60 people, including many trade unionists, packed out a meeting sponsored by the RMT union and organised by the Reading Shop Stewards Network to launch an anti-cuts campaign in the Berkshire town.

Speakers included RMT and NUT members and a nurse in Unison. 600 job losses have been announced at the Royal Berkshire hospital. Fears were expressed about structure 'reshaping' at the local university. The meeting also discussed how the government's "big society" initiatives, such as GP commissioning in health care, were going to affect local services.

A mother said she had never attended "anything like this before" but had a disabled child and felt very strongly that she should express her support for defending what little support she currently receives.

The meeting agreed to lobby Reading borough council's cabinet and to support any section of workers in the community facing cuts.

***Sara Gillman***
***Reading Socialist Party***

### Bristol

THE INAUGURAL meeting of East Bristol Against the Cuts was held in Fishponds, Bristol, on Tuesday 21 September. The meeting was organised by members of the Socialist Party as part of the Bristol Anti-Cuts Alliance and was attended by around 30 people.

John McInally, vice-president of the PCS civil service union, speaking in a personal capacity, opened the meeting by talking about the barbaric and economically reckless nature of the Con-Dem cuts.

A Youth Fight For Jobs speaker spoke about the lost generation of young people, unable to get into university, unable to get a job, and now increasingly unable to even get basic benefits.

A day of action on 2 October was called, to be followed by a rally on 23 October.

***Matt Gordon***
***Bristol Socialist Party***

### Hackney

ONE HUNDRED and fifty people, including Turkish and Kurdish community organisations, trade unions and campaigning groups, attended the public launch meeting of the Hackney Alliance to Defend Public Services which took place on 21 September.

HATDPS will be organising a lobby of the first council meeting after the comprehensive spending review on 27 October to demand that the council refuses to implement any cuts to jobs and services.

***Suzanne Beishon***
***London Socialist Party***

## Service users defend Ealing health centres

**Socialist Party member Lydia Dalton (left) who chaired the meeting, and one of the banners outside the Albert Dane Centre.** *photo London SP*

OVER 60 people gathered in the Southall Baptist Church Hall, west London, to launch a vital campaign to save the Albert Dane Centre and the Links Project.

**Neil Cafferky**
*London Socialist Party*

The Albert Dane provides support for adults with physical disabilities while Links provides services for young adults with mental health issues.

The hall is situated opposite the Albert Dane Centre where campaign banners opposing the closure can be seen on the railings.

These services are not available anywhere else in the borough of Ealing.

According to staff and service users the proposal that the voluntary sector should fill the gap is inadequate.

The closures are part of 'in year' savings by the Labour controlled council, before the government's comprehensive spending review in October.

Labour councillors were invited to the meeting but they declined to attend or even send apologies.

An Albert Dane Centre user, Val, told the meeting of how she had become isolated after her husband, her main carer, had died.

The centre was vital in helping her break out of her isolation and socialise with people on a regular basis. After going through a period when her confidence was at a low, she now chairs the service users' group.

The 14-year old daughter of another service user said the centre was vital for her mother, who had been in a wheelchair for the past two years.

The final decision on the closures will be made by Ealing council at a cabinet meeting on 9 November. A mass lobby of that cabinet meeting is now planned.

The following morning a council executive removed the banners outside the Albert Dane Centre.

Service users walked out of a meeting with the centre's management in protest at the destruction of the banners and management's refusal to pay for replacement materials. The banners have now been replaced.

Big public campaigns have stopped the Albert Dane from closing before and this campaign can win as well.

### Cardiff

CARDIFF TRADES union council launched a Cardiff Against Cuts campaign on Thursday 23 September to resist the avalanche of cuts promised by the Con-Dem government.

Gary Watkins, regional secretary of the Communication Workers Union, explained the threat of privatisation to Royal Mail by the Con-Dems, promising a campaign in Wales to put pressure on the government.

Greg Harrison, secretary of the RMT union branch at Cardiff Rail, warned that threatened rail maintenance cuts will put lives at risk.

Contributions from council, health, Companies House and Ministry of Justice workers, and campaigners in defence of the Welsh language S4C television channel, showed the scale of cuts even before the government's comprehensive spending review slashes 25% from most government departments.

***Dave Reid***
***Socialist Party Wales***

## datesforyourdiary www.socialistparty.org.uk/whatson

**Manchester Youth Fight for Jobs**
***Young workers united against cuts protest***
Saturday 2 October, 1pm
St Peters Square, open debate after demo

**Lancashire Socialist Party**
***How to fight the cuts***
Monday 4 October, 6pm
Black Horse pub, 166 Friargate, central Preston

**Nottingham Socialist Party**
***1926 general strike – workers taste power***
Monday 4 October, 7.30pm
YMCA, 61b Mansfield Rd. Nottingham NG1 3FN

**London Socialist Party and Socialist Students**
Fight the cuts: how we beat the Tories last time
Wednesday 6 October, 7.30pm
University of London Union, Malet Street, Euston WC1E 7HY

**South Lancashire Socialist Party**
***Lessons of the Liverpool socialist council***
Thursday 7 October, 7pm,
Anvil pub, Dorning Street, Wigan town centre

**Waltham Forest Anti-Cuts Union**
***How can we fight £65 million council cuts?***
Thursday 7 October, 7.30pm
William Morris Community Centre, Greenleaf Road, E17 6QQ

**Lewisham Youth Fight for Jobs**
***Fight for your future***
Thursday 28 October, 7.30pm
Toad's Mouth Too Café, 188 Brockley Road, London SE4 2RL

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## SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

July-September 2010 deadline: 8 October

| | £ target | £ received |
|---|---|---|
| West Midlands | 2,100 | 2,688 |
| Eastern | 1,200 | 1,485 |
| Wales | 2,300 | 2,611 |
| South East | 800 | 803 |
| Southern | 1,200 | 1,055 |
| South West | 1,400 | 910 |
| East Midlands | 1,550 | 954 |
| North West | 1,200 | 736 |
| Yorkshire | 2,900 | 1,452 |
| London | 6,100 | 2,490 |
| Northern | 600 | 173 |
| England & Wales | 3,650 | 353 |
| TOTAL | 25,000 | 15,716 |