

All out together on 30 November

30 November (N30) is going to be a momentous day. Millions of workers across the country will strike together in a mighty show of force to warn the Con-Dem government and its cabinet of millionaires that we will not accept drastic cuts to our pensions.

Striking workers will offset the loss of a day's pay against thousands of pounds lost over a lifetime if these changes are implemented. We won't turn up for work on N30. But neither can we regard it as a 'day off'. The government will be watching and we need to show our strength, not just through absence from work, but with mass demonstrations in every area. The government and media will try to belittle our strength. So what every individual does will count.

If you are in a workplace being balloted, organise a workplace meeting to discuss the strike before the day. Make sure you speak to work colleagues in the run-up to N30 and give them a leaflet explaining why millions are on strike.

We need to prepare ahead of N30. Get union placards that clearly say Official Union Picket Line on them.

Ask your workmates now to start making their own placards and banners and you can also get a supply of your union's placards, banners, leaflets and posters.

If there is picketing in your workplace, get along as early as possible. We would encourage everyone to picket their workplace as picket lines are where we can discuss the strike and issues that flow from it,



Marching in London on 30 June photo Martin Powell-Davies

like how we could escalate the action if needed.

After picketing, all striking workers should make their way to their nearest rally or demonstration to swell numbers to the maximum.

Bosses should not ask you before N30 if you intend to strike. Workplace reps only need say, if asked, the number of members in each workplace - nothing else. Bosses are,

The National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) has produced a leaflet for workers preparing for N30. A summary is below but you can get supplies of the leaflet for your workplace by ringing 07816 134690 or emailing info@shopstewards.net

ballot, you can still join a union right up to the day and strike with your colleagues. If you're in a dispute other than the pensions dispute, can you coordinate any planned action so that it takes place on N30?

Many workers who were not directly affected by the pension strikes on 30 June took a day's annual leave in solidarity with striking workers and joined their demonstration. If you are not being balloted but can take leave on N30, book it now.

Unions have millions of members. We need every one of them out on the streets on N30. But we also need everyone else's support - whether working or unemployed, student, or pensioner. Let's fight back together against all the cuts and win together.

The National Shop Stewards Network was set up by the RMT and launched in July 2007. It is now sponsored by a multitude of national unions, union branches, and trades councils.

Its aim is to forge links between grass-roots trade union members across workplaces, industrial sectors, trade unions and regions; to rebuild the strength of our trade union movement from the bottom up; and to help sweep the anti-trade union laws off the books.

www.shopstewards.net

In brief

Support Paul Kelly!

Transport union RMT rep Paul Kelly has recently been involved in protesting against the imposition of new rosters at Wightlink Ferries in Portsmouth. The new rosters were brought in after the Maritime and Coastguard Agency identified shortfalls. These shortfalls are largely due to poor management structures.

Now Paul has been charged with gross misconduct, after being seen without personal protection equipment (PPE). Yet many managers frequently ignore PPE requirements.

Management's first action was to issue informal advice to Paul, which he accepted. Clearly this was not enough for some managers and further allegations were made, which in spite of being refuted by five witnesses, were used to dismiss Paul.

The RMT is demanding that Paul Kelly be reinstated and a transparent investigation be carried out into how this manager was allowed to abuse the disciplinary process. Please send messages of support to: portsmouth@rmt.org.uk

TV licensing workers

Hundreds of TV licensing workers are planning to strike again on 17/18 November. Their employers, Capita, make £1 million a day in profits but are refusing to negotiate over a reasonable pay deal. The workers are low-paid, many are earning just above the minimum wage but the company are trying to fob them off with a below-inflation pay rise, a pay cut.

Picket lines will be out in Bristol, Darwen (Lancs) and Glasgow on 18 November, with field officers on strike on 17 November.

More N30 strike votes

Joining with tens of thousands of other workers, members of the main public sector union in Northern Ireland, Nipsa, have voted by a two thirds majority to strike on 30 November. And 81% of senior civil servants in the FDA ballot have voted to strike.

RCN pensions ballot

The Royal College of Nursing's (RCN) governing council has unanimously decided to ballot for industrial action if the current pensions negotiations fail. The council will meet again in January to make arrangements for the ballot. RCN members are so angry about attacks on their pensions that the leadership has made this unprecedented decision.

The RCN council is also sending support to the strike by public sector unions on 30 November.



photo Paul Mattsson

Southampton - opposing all the cuts

Nick Chaffey

Southampton council workers have been at the forefront in recent months in fighting savage pay and job cuts by the Tory council. On 30 November, as on 30 June, they will be joined by thousands of others in action by trade unions across the public sector.

Increasingly the question being asked is what is the alternative to cuts? What can we do to build support for such a campaign? Socialist Party members in Southampton have put a clear and consistent approach, supported by many in the unions, that we must build a united movement by opposing all cuts.

But what is becoming increasingly clear to many on strike is that while the Tories are carrying out the cuts, New Labour neither supports

the strikes nor opposes the cuts. Richard Williams, leader of Southampton Labour group has said that if elected in May 2012 Labour would carry out massive cuts of its own.

While the Tories are rightly in the line of fire, at the mass meeting following Williams' comments, anger was also directed at New Labour from growing numbers of council workers.

At the strike rally on 13 July, Ian Woodland, Unite regional officer stated: "We will oppose the cuts, whoever makes them."

Nationally, Labour leader Ed Miliband showed his true colours opposing strike action on 30 June and more recently, stating that a future New Labour government would not reverse Tory cuts.

It is therefore vital that socialists challenge this view that cuts are necessary or inevitable, both within the trade unions but also politically.

In Southampton, 13 Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) candidates, standing in the local elections in May 2011, argued the case against cuts and in full support of the council workers' strike. TUSC candidates received over 1,800 votes, a very positive response. This represented one TUSC vote for every ten Labour votes, something for Labour to look over its shoulder at.

Southampton TUSC met recently to discuss the May 2012 council elections. Clearly it is vital to offer a political alternative to cuts and stand in all 16 wards in the city.

However not all socialists in

Southampton have adopted this position. At the Southampton TUC organising meeting for the 30 November strike, Socialist Workers Party (SWP) member Bobby Noyes, chairing the meeting, obstructed any criticism of New Labour locally or nationally, saying this was not relevant! Local SWP members have argued that support should be given to the trade union campaign for New Labour.

We need to ensure there is full democratic debate in all trade union and anti-cuts meetings. We must build a successful united campaign against cuts.

Southampton Socialist Party rally Fight the Cuts, Fight for Socialism

Tuesday 6 December, 7.30pm

Sir James Matthews Building, Above Bar, Southampton, SO14 7NN

Speaker: Peter Taaffe, Socialist Party general secretary

Reinstate Vik Chechi

Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) Unison is currently running a public campaign demanding the reinstatement of its suspended branch secretary Vik Chechi. The branch believes this suspension is linked to Vik's opposition to the cuts. These cuts include 100 redundancies and imposed restructurings.

On 10 November, a public meeting comprising of workers, students and supporters was convened. Speaking at the meeting was Vik Chechi, April Ashley (Southwark Unison assistant branch secretary and a member of Unison's national executive, personal capacity) and Glenn Kelly, former Unison national executive member.

QMUL Security had received orders from senior management to bar members of the public and supporters from the meeting. Not deterred, workers and students braved the

cold, holding the meeting outside and took the opportunity to leaflet passing staff and students.

QMUL management have threatened to do the same at the 24 November Stop the Cuts meeting which is being organised by trade unions and students in the run-up to 30 November.

QMUL Unison communication officer, Olivia Ribeiro, said it was: "a fantastic meeting, with a wide range of supporters. However, banning members of the public is against the proud working class history of the university, whose campus centerpiece is called the 'People's Palace', and the local area. It's also a clear attempt to curtail support for trade union campaigns."

QMUL Unison is organising a lobby of the employers on 15 November.

Sparks battle pay cuts

Elaine Brunskill

Emboldened by the construction electricians' protest in London on 10 November, around 200 sparks turned up at Corus Steel on Teesside on 14 November. Both Corus gates were obstructed and traffic tailed back for a couple of miles from the entrances. Other workers walked out in solidarity at the Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station site in Nottinghamshire.

As the 35% pay cut for these workers looms, the protesters are taking on a more serious stance. The police 'lifted' one of the protesters for handing leaflets to workers entering the site. Immediately the electricians surged onto the road, blocking all the traffic. It was demanded that

she was released - the police promised she would be released without charge - which she was.

A cheer went up when it was announced that no sparks had gone into work. Many of them, seeing their workmates blocking traffic, turned their cars around, tooting their horns in support of the protest.

Other workers driving onto the site, who aren't affected by these attacks, made a point of driving slow to further hold up traffic.

The next "dawn Corus" has already been organised for 16 November at 6.30am.

•Unite opened the ballot of 1,000 workers at Balfour Beatty BBES on 14 November. Counting should be finished by 28 November, meaning strike action could begin on 7 December.