

SHEFFIELD TRADE UNION COUNCIL est 1858

The progressive voice of Sheffield's trade union movement

tucsheffield@gmail.com

tel: 07761078482

<https://sheffieldtuc.co.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Sheffield-TUC-136443963099901/>

c/o Trades and Labour Club, 200 Duke Street, Sheffield S2 5QQ

SHEFFIELD NEEDS A PAY RISE!

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



During 2021, Sheffield TUC continued to be active during the pandemic, meeting online but managing still to have a presence on the streets of Sheffield where possible with numerous rallies and even a few demonstrations, always abiding by COVID restrictions in force at the time.

Branch affiliations

In 2021, 34 union branches affiliated to Sheffield TUC representing over 26,000 unionised workers in the city:

ASLEF Sheffield No 1 184; ASLEF Sheffield Midland No 185; BFAWU Fletchers (3554); CWU South Yorkshire & District Amal; CWU South Yorkshire telecoms branch 23404; Equity Sheffield General; FBU Sheffield Division; GMB S35 Sheffield Health; GMB S38, S75 and S96 Local Government; Musicians Union North of England; NAPO South Yorkshire; NEU Sheffield

and District; NUJ South Yorkshire; PCS DfE Education Yorkshire; PCS DWP Sheffield HQ; PCS DWP; PCS BEIS Scotland and North of England; PROSPECT Connect BT South Yorkshire Branch T544; RMT Sheffield and District All Grades (1405); TSSA North East General 433; UCU Sheffield Hallam University; UCU-70 University of Sheffield Branch; UCU NE197 University of Sheffield International College (USIC); UNISON Sheffield Hallam University Branch 133348; UNISON City of Sheffield Branch; UNITE NE/Geo/1 (Sheffield East); UNITE NEYH 302/25 Sheffield First South Yorkshire Buses; UNITE NE206/6 Sheffield 2; UNITE NE 407/33 Sheffield City Council/Amey; UNITE NE403/5 CYW and NFP South Yorks; UNITE Community South Yorkshire Branch NE/COM/008; UNITE NE/410/4 Sheffield University and Students Union; USDAW Sheffield & District PT F164; USDAW South and West Yorkshire Coop F007.

Several of the above branches declared increased membership as workers valued unions more during the pandemic, especially for delivering better COVID protection under negotiated health and safety working procedures. However, some of the above branches were finding it more difficult to function, unable to access the union branch office for instance and in 5 of the above branches, we did not receive the affiliation fee due for the year due to internal branch difficulties.

164th AGM 23rd February 2021

We were delighted that Sarah Woolley BFAWU General Secretary attended to give the keynote speech.

The following were elected at the 164th AGM held on 25th February 2021:

Officers President: Bob Jeffery UCU -Secretary: Martin Mayer UNITE - Treasurer; vacant – Vice Chairs (2); Maxine Bowler UNITE & Same Morecroft UCU –

Executive Committee Ray Jackson ASLEF; Les Wray UNITE; Simon Murch NEU; Julia Armstrong NUJ; Ed Mustill GMB; Carrie Hedderwick UNITE; Katy Fox-Hodess UCU; Steve Coe TSSA; Jane Scott UNITE. There were 3 vacant places plus 2 reserved women's places that were not filled.

Sheffield Needs a Pay Rise – organising low paid workers

We began the year by agreeing with our partner BFAWU to increase the salary of our full-time Union Organiser to £12 per hour. This meant Sheffield TUC's share of the annual salary rose from £10,000 per year to just over £13,000. We continued to raise money from union branches and we were very grateful for donations from Labour Party branches and individuals. Crowd funding and other fund-raising events raised over £4000.

Our Union Organiser Rohan Kon continued to find innovative ways to meet and organise fast food workers in 2021 despite COVID restrictions which prevented face-to-face meetings for much of the period. She identified worker leaders, helped them to organise via WhatsApp groups, Zoom and Facebook, and assisted them in taking grievances to the boss. We were all very impressed with this progress so were saddened when she told us she had to leave in the summer due to personal issues and health problems.

In order to secure a replacement for Rohan, we advertised via our partner BFAWU in late summer. The first round of interviews failed to deliver a suitable candidate so the process was repeated in the Autumn and we now have a promising new appointment starting in January 2022.

Interest from other Trades Councils has grown over the year and we have spoken at their meetings and answered questions. BFAWU have built on the Sheffield model to create a

vehicle “Union Towns” to support extending this to other towns and cities. The recent appointment for Sheffield also included a new Union organiser for Leeds and one for Rotherham.

Supporting workers in dispute

We sent a message of support and a financial donation to the GMB Veolia Refuse collectors strike on Monday 1st November over pay. We also issued a press statement and secured a favourable interview in the local media. Veolia made an improved offer which was accepted.

We have been proud to support the longest gig-economy strike in the country when IWGB couriers working for Just Eat/Stuart Delivery staged strike action in Sheffield. These mainly Black, Asian and ethnic community workers have never been organised before but were determined to fight back against a cut in the minimum delivery payment from £4.50 to £3.40, implemented on 6th December 2021. The dispute is ongoing.



IWGB Just Eat riders start strike action against pay cut on 6th Dec



UNITE Stagecoach drivers on the picket line outside Halfway depot

The biggest strike action of 2021 was UNITE’s Stagecoach drivers’ dispute which saw 3 one-week strikes at the end of 2021 and start of 2022 across all 4 depots in South Yorkshire. The drivers at the two Sheffield depots were on the lowest pay for bus drivers in the whole region. We supported the strike with press releases and media interviews and attending their picket lines. The final settlement was overwhelmingly agreed by the drivers in a ballot in January 2022 and represents a huge victory for UNITE.

Very much a spin-off from our Sheffield Needs a Pay Rise campaign, we assisted UNITE University of Sheffield Students Union Branch to win a battle to end zero hours contracts. Later in the year, the same UNITE Branch organised its mainly female cleaner workforce to successfully demand £10 per hour. This was achieved with the support of Sheffield Needs a Pay Rise’s assistance and advice on tactics.

Sheffield TUC promoted a Day of Action on NHS pay on Saturday 3rd July in Barkers Pool hosted by Sheffield Save Our NHS and NHS Workers Say NO! campaign. We had a speaker to our Delegate Meeting and passed a motion in support.

We supported both UCU branches at Hallam university and University of Sheffield in their various national and local ballots on pay, pensions, workloads, and in the case of University of Sheffield the fight to stop the closure of the city's world-renowned Archaeology Dept. We wrote to the Vice Chancellor and issued a statement on our Facebook Page and website.

We made donations to a number of other disputes including UNITE Go-Ahead Fire and rehire dispute Queens Road Manchester and the GMB national strike ballot against fire-and-rehire at British Gas. We affiliated to Strike Map UK.

We passed a UCU resolution in support of students on rent strike and provide practical support on their demos and wrote to the Vice Chancellor. University of Sheffield agreed a 30% reduction in rent in its own residences. A rally held in Weston Park in April heard a Sheffield TUC statement in support.



International Workers Memorial Day 28th April

A wreath laying ceremony took place at 11am outside the Town Hall on Pinstone Street, followed by a small socially-distanced static protest re COVID safety



A Zoom ceremony took place afterwards with speakers 1230hrs till 1330hrs. This was opened by Lord Mayor Cllr. Tony Downing and presided over by Sheffield TUC President Bob

Jeffery. Speakers included Carolyn Jones from Institute of Employment Rights and number of local trade union speakers and those from other campaigns including SARAG and Hazards.

May Day



Our May Day banner stands proudly on City Hall steps as Secretary Martin Mayer speaks to the crowd

It was decided in April to go ahead with a May Day rally to mark International Workers Day, assembling at Devonshire Green at 1230 for 1pm in conjunction with Sheffield Against the Policing Bill for the National Day of Action "Kill the Bill", then a march to Barkers Pool for a May Day rally with speakers on City Hall steps.



Little Amal is borne aloft to be carried through the streets

and asylum seekers including those confined to two hotels in Sheffield, and supply coats and shoes to refugees in Calais. On Friday 29th October we were there at Victoria Quays to welcome Little Amal's dramatic arrival in Sheffield on her 8000-mile journey across Europe to highlight the plight of refugees.

Fighting racism and fascism

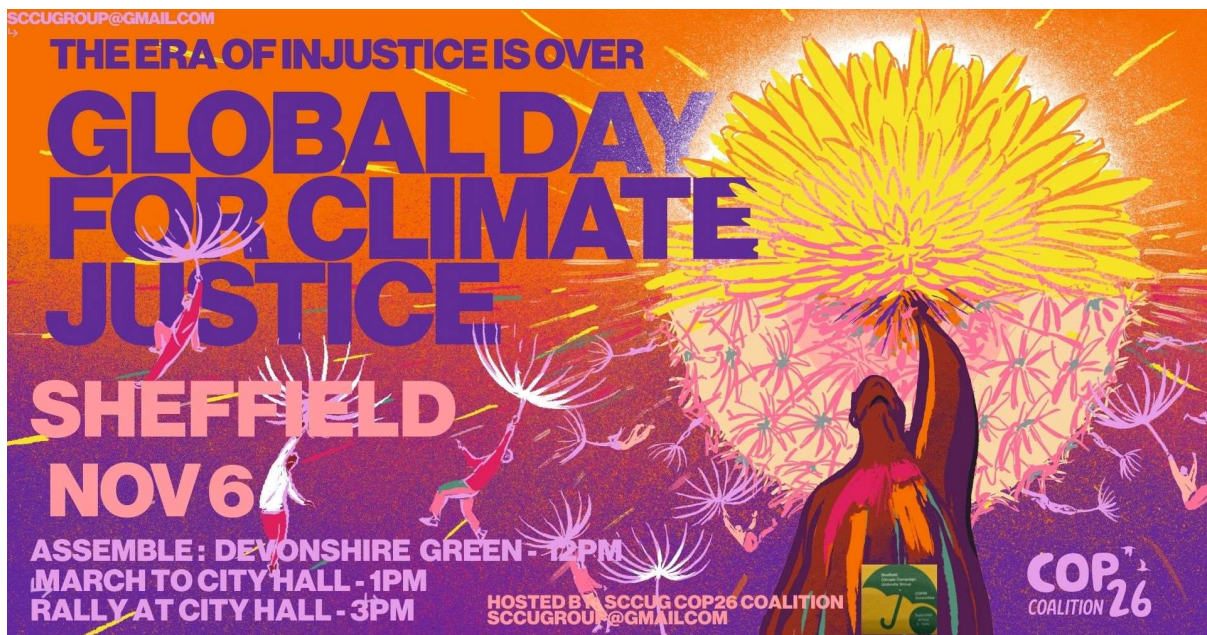
We stood with Sheffield Stand Up to Racism to mark UN anti-racism day in Sheffield on 20th March with a static rally outside the Town Hall which saw 80 people silently "Take the Knee" for 8 minutes in solidarity with George Floyd. To mark the anniversary of the death of George Floyd a rally was held outside the Town Hall on Saturday 22nd May. We have made donations and supported SUTR in its support for refugees

Climate Campaigns; Just Transition and New Green Jobs

We supported a Green New Deal model motion with an amendment *"to promote public ownership of our energy generation and distribution, public transport and other essential*

services, and to oppose all privatisation of public services as we cannot rely on market forces to solve our Climate Crisis.” We have joined the campaign to pressure Dan Jarvis City Region Mayor to secure funding to deliver investment in new green jobs.

We have participated in a ground-breaking Sheffield Climate Campaign Umbrella Group, bringing together trade unions and climate campaigns e.g. XR, FoE, YouthStrike4Climate, Sheffield Climate Alliance etc. A third Sheffield Climate Summit was held on Sunday 2nd May with workshops, the main theme being building for COP 26 – National Day of Action 6th November. We supported street stalls and speakers outside the Town Hall and held donations for COP 26 from across the climate action movement in the Trades Council’s account. We co-hosted a welcome event for the Spanish walkers for Climate Justice who arrived in Sheffield on their way to Glasgow outside the Town Hall on 14th October.



We successfully organised a 4000-strong demonstration in Sheffield for COP26 on Saturday 6th November. We have carried on this work post-COP 26 with a 4th Climate Summit on 27th November on the theme Global Climate Justice.

We supported a motion for Climate Education South Yorkshire and donated to the campaign.

Better Buses Campaign South Yorkshire

Sheffield TUC has been very active in this campaign supporting the pressure being put on S Yorks Mayor Dan Jarvis and the 4 Labour Council Leaders to go for franchising. We have issued press releases and supported and spoke at rallies including lobbies of the Mayoral Combined Authority outside their office on Broad Street West.

Holding the Government to account over COVID

We supported NEU in their campaign for better COVID protections in Sheffield schools and facilitated an online meeting with Council leader Bob Johnson and Education Cabinet member Cllr Abtisam Mohamed. Sheffield TUC delegates took part in We Own It’s Day of Action on Tuesday 27th April giving out leaflets highlighting the £37B wasted on the failed SERCO Test and Trace contract. In May we adopted a motion in support of a Zero Covid strategy. A Council of Action meeting was held on 3rd August with speakers Prof Susan

Michie, Indie Sage, and Jack Czauderna, Sheffield Community Contact Tracers. We have issued press releases condemning the Government's handling of the pandemic which has seen one of the highest deaths per head of population globally.

Standing up to the Tory Government's attacks on our rights and freedoms



We supported a new organisation Sheffield Against the Policing Bill which took the initiative to lead a fightback against this draconian legislation starting with a demo on 27th March in Sheffield. We adopted their statement and donated £100 towards cost of leaflets etc. On 18th December we co-hosted a rally with Sheffield Stand Up to Racism and Sheffield Central Labour Party against the Nationalities and Borders Bill. The new Clause 9 which gives the Secretary of State unprecedented powers to remove UK nationality from up to 6 million UK citizens has struck fear across our black and immigrant communities.

above Top: OTJC banner on May Day march. Above Nat & Borders Bill protest 18.Dec

Solidarity with Palestinians

We held our first Sheffield/Nablus Trade Union Partnership zoom meeting 12th January and have continued to build solidarity working with Sheffield Labour Friends of Palestine and Sheffield Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Sheffield TUC supported rallies and protests in the city about Israeli bombing of Gaza and ethnic cleansing policies, especially in Sheikh Jarrah and IDF assaults on Al Aqsa Mosque. We passed an emergency motion and donated £100 to medical aid to children in Gaza.

Sheffield TUC Executive Committee member Katy Fox-Hodess hosted a webinar on behalf of Sheffield TUC on Wednesday 30th June involving dock worker trade unionists in Sweden, USA, Italy and South Africa who have engaged in solidarity action to block Israeli boats. Recently we have worked with Sheffield PSC and LFP to pressure South Yorks Pensions Authority to divest from companies collaborating with Israel's policies of oppression against Palestinians.

Universal Credit and the fight for a decent Social Security system

We supported the campaign led by UNITE Community to stop the £20 cut to Universal Credit in April. We participated in Sheffield Stop and Scrap Universal Credit's leafleting of passers-by on the Moor and issued a press release condemning the cut. We supported UNITE Community's Day of Action on 25th August with a leafleting event. We held a Stop and Scrap Universal Credit demonstration outside DWP HQ to protest the cut. A Stop and Scrap Universal Credit campaign relaunch took place on Friday 1st October to discuss how to take the campaign forward.

Hearts Unions week 8th -14th February

Due to COVID restrictions, TUC was recommending online activity only. However we found innovative ways to get the message out onto the streets that trade unions are doing excellent work and everyone should join one! We did a banner drop from the bridge over Park Square roundabout with a bold pro-union message. Sheffield TUC purchased a laminator and prepared laminated A4 leaflets for posting with a variety of messages including It's Time to Join a Union. Volunteers tied the posters to park railings or stuck them up in bus stops or even in windows. Many of the posters were still up weeks later.

Other campaigns

- Sheffield TUC invited a speaker from SAYit on trans rights and had an at times contentious debate on perceived conflict with women's rights and women's spaces. We agreed a resolution in defence of trans rights and donated £100 to SAYIT.
- We have supported a project initiated by International Brigades Memorial Trust to install a sculpture of Picasso's boy with a dove in Sheffield Peace Gardens – to commemorate Picasso's visit to Sheffield for the 1950 International Peace Conference. We facilitated a meeting with Terry Fox Council Leader on this.
- International Women's Day 6pm Monday 8th March. Sheffield TUC hosted a zoom event with an all-female speakers line-up including Olivia Blake MP. Unfortunately we did have logistical problems with the zoom so not everyone could participate.
- We wrote to the Head and the Chair of Governors in support of Louise Lewis, Vice President NEU Kirklees victimised union rep.
- Sheffield TUC sent a letter of thanks to Eileen Turnbull c/o Shrewsbury 24 campaign for the magnificent court victory which achieved justice for those wrongly convicted of conspiracy in the 1972 building workers' strike
- Sheffield TUC wrote letters to MPs, the City Council and Dan Jarvis City Region Mayor following passing of the UNITE motion to save 75 jobs at Rolls Royce at the Advance Manufacturing Park. UNITE reported some progress in reducing the number of job losses.
- We supported the Culture Unions manifesto by having a speaker from the Musicians Union. We responded to the Government's consultation on the privatisation of Channel 4 by defending the role of public broadcasting.
- We passed a motion in support of Acorn Community and donated £200 to help their legal fight against landlords.