

Ferrybridge closure a blow to workers

The proposed closure of the coal-fired power station at Ferrybridge in West Yorkshire is 'a hammer blow for the workforce'.

There are currently 172 employees at the site, as well as 200 contract workers.

Unite national officer Kevin Coyne said: "Unite wants to enter into talks with the company as to the need for the plant's closure. In the meantime, we will seek that any redundancies will be voluntary and that the maximum effort is made in order to seek alternative suitable employment in other parts of the business.

"Today's announcement is a hammer blow for the workers and their families. The closure of the power station next March again reinforces the message to ministers that they should speed up the development of alternative technologies, such as carbon capture and storage".



"The issues surrounding the loss-making Ferrybridge are complex – it is 48 years-old; there was a serious fire there last year and government policy sees a limited role for coal in the future".

The full Unite press release for this story can be found here - <http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/ferrybridge-power-station-closure-a-hammer-blow-for-workers/>

Tata workers to vote for strike action

A ballot is being held by Unite members at Tata Steel UK in a row over its proposal to close the British Steel Pension Scheme (BSPS).

Unite, who have around 6000 members at Tata, opened its ballot on 26 May 2015 and it will close on 5 June 2015. Other unions within Tata have already commenced ballots of their members.

At present, employees can retire at the age of 60 without an actuarial reduction. The company's view is that they should now work until the age of 65 for a full pension. If they were to retire at age 60 then, they would lose five per cent for each year of early retirement – 25 per cent in total.

Unite national officer for steel Paul Reuter said: "Following five months of intensive negotiations where the trade unions offered savings to the company of £850 million, Tata Steel UK has decided that it is ideologically wrong for employees, who have worked hard in an extremely strenuous and physically demanding environment, to be able to retire with the pensions that they were originally promised".



Scunthorpe steel works

The full Unite press release for this story can be found here - <http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/6000-tata-workers-to-vote-for-strike-action-in-pension-closure-row/>

If you would like to include a story in this bulletin, please email neyhprint@unitetheunion.org

NHS Rep Training

On Wednesday May 20th, a training day for NHS Reps was held at the Glebe Centre, Murton.

Speakers were Neil Guss from Thompsons Solicitors, who gave a very informative talk on TUPE Regulations, and Lesley Yule, Regional Legal and Affiliated Services Coordinator, who discussed Unites' Legal Services with the group. Both speakers were excellent, and well received by a well-attended meeting.



You can find details of all the latest news in our region
on the regional news page

<http://www.unitetheunion.org/how-we-help/listofregions/northeastyorkshirehumberside/northeastyorkshirehumbersidenews/>

Bus driver petition gains traction

Nigel Atkinson, branch secretary of Arriva Castleford branch, has launched a petition calling for a reduction in the time spent behind the wheel by bus drivers. The petition is seeking to restrict the amount of time bus drivers spend behind the wheel to 4.5 hours at any one time during their working day.

Nigel said "as people are aware, bus drivers carry the most important cargo in our lives, our family and our friends, children and loved ones. It is important that we realise, in today's modern society, that driving is no longer a pleasure but a chore, and a refreshed, vibrant, coherent and alert driver will be safer and more effective in their role".

Calling on the Secretary of State for Transport to take action, the petition seeks to:

- restrict to no more than 4.5 hours the driving piece
- ensure 45 minute rest breaks between driving pieces of work
- ensure that 11 hours of rest exist between each day's work.

[If you would like to sign the petition you can follow this link](#)



Nigel Atkinson, branch secretary, Arriva Castleford Branch

Learning agreement signed with Optare Group Plc

The relationship between Unite the union and bus manufacturer Optare Group Plc who are based in Sherburn-in-Elmet has taken a new direction following the signing of a Learning Agreement.

Representatives from Unite and Optare signed the agreement recently and Richard Bedford, regional officer, said "this agreement opens up a new dimension to our working relationship with the employer, as well as opening up vital learning opportunities for employees".



Pictured signing the agreement: (L-R) Siddharth Mohaptra, people development manager for Optare Group Plc; Chris Muscroft, Unite union learning rep; Richard Bedford, Unite regional officer.

Learning at work week

Unite the union representatives from across the region took part in Learning at Work week in May.

Unite representatives at Barclays, Millshaw, Leeds had a healthy eating theme which saw reps encouraging employees to make their own smoothies by peddling on a smoothie bike!

At The Big Lottery, Newcastle Upon Tyne, ULR Michelle Drummond organised a visit on site from the Anne Frank exhibition. The exhibition tells the story of Anne Frank's life and the impact that the Holocaust had.

Organising the Automotive Sector

Unite union reps from companies in the automotive and auto supply chain in the North East met in Durham recently to discuss how to campaign for a better deal for the region's hard working car workers. Unite reps met with Tony Burke, Unite assistant general secretary, Tony Murphy National Officer for Automotive and Regional Officer Steve Bush.

Following the meeting Tony Burke said: "The UK automotive sector has gone through some remarkable changes, with some of the most productive car plants now based in the UK. The success of our auto industry has been built on the skills and dedication of the workforce working together with companies to promote the UK auto industry globally. We know there have been positive changes that have happened in the industry but unfortunately this has not happened everywhere and is especially true of the automotive supply chain and contracting companies".

Unite will be campaigning to get workers in the supply chain a fair deal - but and this cannot be achieved without your help, support and commitment.

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