

Dear Branch Committee

Subject: Branch NEC Nomination request for:

Female Seat: Molly Ward



General Seat: Rob Turner



UNISON is changing. In the last 3.5 years, and with the adoption by NDC of our Organising to Win Strategy, we are becoming a union that is focused on an organising and campaigning approach that is delivering. We have seen record net growth of over 40,000 members in 2024, with 4,000 in new activists, and £millions won in pay rises for members.

Without the changes the NEC have pushed through since 2021; doubling of strike pay to £50 and made payable from day 1 rather than day 3 for example, it is doubtful that the unprecedented action Eastern Region has seen would have happened at all.

This policy change saw action or threat of action in Norfolk refuse, Harlow refuse, East Suffolk refuse, East of England ambulance, University of Bedfordshire, Colchester refuse, Colchester and Ipswich Healthcare, Essex and Suffolk Health over privatisation, Hertfordshire NHS over low pay, Norfolk's Wensum Trust Academy Schools and in 'our' Branch Huntingdon District Council. This list is impressive, but it still is not the full list of action our members have taken in our region. It has been the most resistant and challenging few years our Region has ever seen. All protecting terms and conditions and bringing more money into the pockets of low paid members, who without the support of the Industrial Action Committee, would not have had the resources to take action.

However there is still a lot more change that is required; it takes time to transform a union of our size. That is why we are asking you to nominate us and other **Time For Real Change** candidates for the National Executive Council. Now is not the time to turn back, now is the Time to Win

Molly Ward

My name is Molly Ward, and I'm proud to be a UNISON rep at Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and the Young Members Officer for the Cambridgeshire branch. I'm standing for election to UNISON's National Executive Council (NEC) as a Time for Real Change candidate.

As a workplace rep, I've seen the power of collective action to deliver meaningful change. At HDC, we are one of the few councils in the country to tackle pay locally, and since UNISON became formally recognised by the council, we've achieved higher pay awards than ever before. Through negotiation, persistence, and a clear focus on members' priorities, we've outperformed the National Joint Council (NJC) framework since recognition. These local pay settlements are a testament to what can be achieved when unions and their members work together to demand better.

I believe that UNISON must remain a union that is truly led by its members. That means prioritising organising—empowering members to act, build solidarity, and drive change from the grassroots. It should also be transparent and democratic, ensuring that every member feels informed, involved, and valued in shaping the decisions that affect them.

In addition to my role as Young Members Officer for Cambridgeshire, I've represented HDC members in a variety of cases, supporting them through workplace challenges and helping them secure fair outcomes. Whether it's assisting individuals with grievances, negotiating improved conditions, or ensuring members feel heard, I've worked hard to provide practical support and empower others to stand up for their rights. I'm passionate about ensuring young members are engaged and represented.

Standing as a Time for Real Change candidate, I'm committed to a UNISON that is bold, inclusive, and ready to fight for its members. Whether it's securing fair pay, improving working conditions, or tackling inequality, our union must always put members first and strive for justice in every workplace.

I'd be honoured to have your support for my nomination to the NEC. Together, we can ensure that UNISON remains a powerful force for good—a union that listens to its members, stands up for their rights, and builds a better future for all.

Rob Turner

I have been active in my Trade Union since I began working for the NHS. As a NUPE Steward, one of the three unions which formed Unison, I organised and took my department out on strike on an annual basis, pay, opposing privatisation of cleaning and laundry services and our terms being regular issues faced in the hospital.

My commitment to Social Justice and Trade Unionism continued when I joined Cambridgeshire County council in 1997 and immediately signed up as Rep with the Branch. I

have been with the Branch ever since, representing 1000's of members at the hearings and supporting action. After standing up in 2012, I was elected as Branch Secretary in 2013.

The Branch has had many success's, the introduction of the Real Living wage. This was within the main employer and across all commissioned services. It has placed at least £10 million in predominately low paid women's pockets in the private care sector. A huge win for members.

In 2022 Cambridgeshire County Council was and remains the only tier 1 Authority to sign the Anti Racism Charter. We are proud of this achievement, and that the ARC Tracker was and remains on target and complete. For us at Unison Cambridgeshire, seeing that this Charter was signed, was not a paper exercise. That is why we will also be the first Tier 1 authority and hopefully the first Branch in the Region, to push through our own International Workers Charter. Protecting our 'migrant' workforce from fear and exploitation.

My belief is the best way to protect members is through recognition agreement with the employer. That way, via collective bargaining all terms and conditions, changes and reorganisations, have to be done through consultation with the Union. The Branch has fought and won recognition at several employers, Huntingdon District Council being our prize example. An authority that for 25 years has derecognised all trade unions, relented and recognised Unison. We have signed new recognition agreements with Pathfinder Law, Cross Keys Homes and the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority. Bringing thousands of employees under collective bargaining and the protection of Unison.

What we stand for:

UNISON must be a member-led union – We believe this means that elected members should run our union, not appointed full-time officials. We want to work with all our paid officials, but it is members and their elected representatives must be the real leaders.

We need to be an organising, not a servicing, union – we cannot solve all of our members' problems on a one-by-one basis. Members will always need individual support, but the focus should be on collective action. **UNISON must be a vibrant, democratic, fighting and organising union.**

The pay crisis – UNISON must end the scourge of low pay. UNISON has failed to adequately fight poverty pay, and years of below-inflation pay deals. But this is changing in local pay disputes, where real pay increases are being won. Now we need to deliver on national pay negotiations. We cannot simply approach pay negotiations the way that UNISON's leadership has done in the past.

We must continue to **support our members who want to take industrial action**, whether that be to defend jobs and terms and conditions, or to win fair pay deals. Resources must be there to support branches in the ballot process, ensure members receive the financial support needed when striking, and publicising our wins when they happen.

UNISON's finances – We need **full disclosure and transparency on how members' money is spent..** We must continue the review UNISON's large property estate and where appropriate, free up resources for organising.

We believe that UNISON should play a **positive but challenging role in the Labour Party and with the Labour Government.** UNISON resources and influence should be used to promote the removal of anti-trade union laws, public delivery of public services and a green new deal that tackles the climate emergency through the creation of green, well-paid, union jobs. We should promote UNISON policy on public funding and social welfare, not accepting austerity as inevitable.

Equalities in UNISON are central to our vision. We must do more to make equality a reality throughout UNISON, not just its NEC but at all tiers of our union, including within its staffing. We often have good policies but are too often too timid in promoting them.

Legal advice – We must **review UNISON's main legal services contract** and particularly the difficulties Branch Secretaries have accessing timely employment law advice.

We must end once and for all the punitive culture of disciplinary action and where investigations take far too long. We need a fair, consistent and robust complaints procedure across all parts of the union.

What has been achieved in the last 18 months

- Embedding the Organising to Win Strategy. Voted for overwhelmingly by conference the NEC has driven this forward, despite reticence in some areas.
- Delivering a comprehensive Staffing review, with scrutiny of, and increased lay control over recruitment. This ensures that staffing resources are dedicated to members priorities like Organising to Win and legal support
- The highest growth in membership since UNISON was formed; a net increase of 40,000 members in 2024 alone.
- Our Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Chair of International Committee have ensured we are a visible presence on the platforms of demonstrations opposing the ongoing war on Palestine.
- Instrumental in, and advocates for, Year of LGBT+ Worker, following on from Year of Black Worker in 2023. This has led to many initiatives opposing discrimination and highlighting our work, including the roll out of Trans Ally Training.
- Proposed and strengthened the motions to NDC which was then passed by you, to including a £15ph min wage in our campaigns which is now TUC policy!
- £15/hr minimum wage implemented for all UNISON staff, leading by example.
- Additional Staff resources allocated to Case web, providing better experiences for branches.
- Establishment of a UNISON Black Staff Network, as part of our wider commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Strike pay increased to £50 a day, and now payable from Day 1 of action.
- Banned gambling adverts in UNISON publications.

- Ensured contracts are in line with ethical values (including Liverpool Conference Centre and HR EAP provider).
- Oversight of Branch Support and Organising Fund rollout, putting extra resources into organising at a local level
- Instrumental in pushing for better support where Branches employ their own staff. And continuing to push for Branch Employed Staff training programmes.
- £1 million Energy Support Fund.
- Overnight subsistence rates increased, to facilitate greater involvement of low paid activists.
- Commenced development of new Member Engagement Programme responding to demands that branches and activists need - the tools to organise members when campaigning or in ballot periods.
- Significant investment in digital project (part of Member Engagement Programme).
- Took the abortion rights motion to TUC Conference where it was passed.

We are confident that the ideas we support will build on the progress made over the last 3.5 years. We urge all UNISON branches to nominate Time for Real Change candidates in these NEC elections and continue the campaign for real change in UNISON.

Solidarity

Molly and Rob