

Community saves children's nature reserve

Community has donated £150 to enable pupils at Rockingham Junior and Infant School in Rotherham to rebuild their nature reserve.

The school's nature area had been abandoned because there wasn't enough money to fix the leaking pond. 'Now we can fix the pond lining and start the environmental gardening club again,' says teacher Julie Tunks, who runs the club. 'We've got a lot of wildlife, including frogs and newts in the pond, and it's a fun way for the children to learn how to safeguard the environment.' Community also donated a pair of binoculars to help the children nature watch.

The leaking pond came to the attention of Community admin staff - all keen nature enthusiasts - earlier this year, when they went to make two other donations to the school. Region 3's admin staff raised £100 by not sending Christmas cards or having an office Christmas lunch, which they generously donated for instruments for the after-school music club.

Community also donated £399 to buy health and safety activity packs



Children from Rockingham school celebrate the opening of their new pond with teacher Julie Tunks (left) and Tina Buckley, Community administrator (right)

for the school. 'The packs, produced by the Children's Safety Education Foundation, are very useful and relevant for the children,' says deputy head Andrew Jessop. Through board games, a video, lesson plans, books and posters, the packs aim to educate children about everyday risks such as bullying, internet crime, personal safety, and drugs and alcohol.

Consultation on benefit and subscription proposals

The picture shows General Secretary Michael Leahy with Assistant General Secretary Roy Rickhuss, during a visit to the Corus Steel Packaging and Recycling plant in Trostre, Region 5 this June.

Michael has been undertaking a regional consultation programme to give a talk on the future of Community and hear feedback from members about what they would like to see happening in the union.



The people in the picture, from left to right, are Peter Rees, Keith Davies, Roy Rickhuss, Chris Morris, Alun John and Michael Leahy.

Hospital donation

Community made a donation of £2,600 to Harrowden ward in Kettering hospital in March. The money was used to purchase a non-invasive ventilation machine which will benefit Community members in the area who suffer from respiratory problems associated with working in the steel industry. The money was raised at the annual NEC dinner and dance, and then Community topped it up enough to buy the new machine.



Union welcomes new anti-discrimination laws

Community added its support to help the TUC fight for new laws to end discrimination against gay people in terms of the services and goods they are offered.

From 30 April, new rules as part of the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007, mean it is unlawful to use someone's sexual orientation as an excuse not to provide them with goods and services, ranging from healthcare to hospitality, financial services to transport.

'This means an end to schools excluding children because of their parents' sexual orientation or of hotels refusing gay couples a double room,' explains Community member Andy Harvey, a delegate to the TUC LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights) Committee, which lobbied the government on this issue.

'The regulations were strongly opposed in Parliament by many Conservatives and fundamentalist religious groups, so this is a great victory and Community is proud to have played its part,' adds Andy. 'It's another important step towards creating a society that's equal and free from discrimination on any grounds.'

'Community welcomes membership from all backgrounds - our diversity is our strength, reflecting the communities from which we all come. We also believe that the regulations will further our objective of having public services that meet the needs of all citizens,' adds Joe Mann, Community's equality and political officer.

Ward manager Clare Beattie said: 'We would like to say a big thank you to all the members who gave so generously and to the union itself.'

The picture shows (left to right) Consultant Dr Fayyaz Hussain, Community regional secretary Roy Bennett, ward manager Clare Beattie, sister Jean Addison, NEC member Dougie Fairburn and Michael Leahy, General Secretary.

Learning resource centre opens in Region 7

Community members at Tyco Fire Products in Stockport, Region 7, will be able to take advantage of hundreds of courses now that a new learning resource centre has been set up in their workplace.

The Tyco/Community Learning Partnership Resource Centre was opened in March by Tyco's managing director Peter Noblett and Community's new Deputy General Secretary Peter Crowe, who said: 'A learning centre opens the door to knowledge for our members and gives them the opportunity to take advantage of lifelong learning.'

Community members and other employees at Tyco will be able to use the computers provided by Tyco and other equipment provided by the union to access Learn Direct courses ranging from office and IT skills, to languages and business management.

'If the centre really takes off we will approach the company about expanding and the possibility of providing more computers,' says David Martin, Region 7 senior organiser.



Deputy General Secretary Peter Crowe (centre) opens the new centre with Managing Director of Tyco Fire Products, Peter Noblett (left) and Peter Roberts, Principal of Stockport College (right)

Health and safety courses

Community continued to meet its commitment to ensuring members' health and safety at work by running two courses recently.

Nineteen reps attended the first health and safety training programme and were presented with their certificates by Community vice president (now President), Tracy Clarke. The workshop focused on developing a trade union approach to occupational health issues such as bullying and harassment, alcohol and substance misuse, and work-related stress. Tracy Clarke said: 'It was a great course for the reps; everyone was saying how much they enjoyed themselves and how informative it had been.'

The second seminar, the basic health and safety course, took place in Rotherham and 25 health and safety reps from throughout the UK attended. 'This course looks at the basic organising aspects of health and safety, and is the first in a series of four,' explains Community's national health and safety officer, Rob Sneddon, who runs the course.



Community Health and Safety Officer Rob Sneddon (centre) with delegates from across the UK at the basic health and safety course in Rotherham

'The three health and safety courses that follow are intermediate, advanced and then specialist. This is a great introductory course to get reps started on their training.'

You can bank on us!

Campaigning and lobbying by Community and other unions has persuaded the Government to change the law so that employers will no longer be able to count Bank Holidays as part of the 20 days statutory holiday entitlement. From October this year nearly six million workers will gain an extra four days holiday, and will gain a further four from April 2009.

Commenting on announcement, Community General Secretary Michael Leahy said: 'I know that Community members who work in betting shops will particularly welcome the extra quality time that they will get to spend with their family and friends as a result of this announcement. Betting shop workers - who are predominantly women - work in a stressful environments and need all the rest that they can get.'

Community contributes to Great Wall fundraiser

Community member Jillian Cole from Region 5 and her sisters, walked for six days along the Great Wall of China last September and raised over £12,000 for Cancer Research.

'I was inspired to do it because my sister Rosanna had cancer, but now has the all clear, Cancer Research really helped her,' says Jillian. 'The walk was a very challenging experience and words can't express how I felt when we all completed it, emotional, elated, proud, and humble.'

Region 5 also donated £100 to Jillian, 47, who works as a receptionist for Premier Trade Frames in Caerphilly. 'I want to thank Community for the contribution. It's the generosity of our sponsors that makes the difference.'

Workers' Memorial Day: honouring the dead, protecting the living

'Workers' Memorial Day is an important event for unions,' says Rob Sneddon, Community's health and safety officer. 'The day is held not only to reflect on past tragedies, but it's also a chance to think about how we can improve health and safety in our workplaces.'

Workers' Memorial Day is held annually on 28 April all over the world. Here's what was happening in Community's regions on the day:

Region 1

Ceremonies across the region

Community members and staff attended flower-laying ceremonies at the Bathgate Sports Centre, Dean Castle Country Park, Kilmarnock, and the Commemoration Workers' Memorial Garden in Edinburgh.

A Workers' Memorial Day seminar was held for staff from Community and other unions.

Region 2

The best yet

Region 2 once again held a well-attended health and safety seminar to commemorate Workers' Memorial Day.

The theme was working at height. Other topics covered included substance abuse, trade union health and safety history and rescues at sea.

Richard Green, Community NEC member and secretary of the local health and safety committee said: 'Our events are going from strength to strength and this seminar was definitely the best yet. It was such a privilege to have so many experts in the room presenting for us.'



Region 3

The picture above shows Region 3's Workers' Memorial Day wreath-laying ceremony taking place outside Rotherham Minster.

The ceremony followed a multi-faith service held at the church and was attended by the deputy mayor and his wife, Councillor Patrick and Mrs Mary Burke, along with MPs, local councillors and community groups.

Region 4

Ceremony around memorial tree

Karl Mills, a Community member and senior health and safety officer for a local authority, presented a health and safety seminar for 24 reps and branch secretaries from across the region.

A service was held around a Workers' Memorial Day tree in the grounds of Halesowen Parish Church. This was attended by senior organiser David Marshall and regional secretary John Marston, as well as Sylvia Heal, MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis.

Region 6

Health and safety stall

Community Region 6 held a stall distributing health and safety information following a commemorative event at the Workers' Memorial Tree in Leicester Town Hall Square.

A non-denominational Workers' Memorial Service was held in the Bishop Street Methodist Church. Members of staff from Community attended the service and provided a floral tribute.

A member drops in to thank his union...



Community member Gordon Brown MP dropped into the May Executive Council meeting following the announcement that he had been elected unopposed as Leader of the Labour Party. Gordon thanked Community for nominating him and praised the union's support for its members and their communities.

Gordon also praised the Union for electing Tracy Clarke as President and Keren Bender as Vice-President, pictured here with Gordon.



Conference Round-Up

Community delegates played a full part in this year's TUC equalities conferences.

Community delegates who stood as candidates for the Black Workers', Women's and Young Members' committees were all successfully elected to represent the union.

Joe Mann, regional secretary for Region 8 and national officer for Community's NLBD section offered his congratulations to the successfully elected members, Freddie Toolaram, Gary Lancaster and Keren Bender - 'We know they will do a first-rate job in representing our members' interests on the TUC equalities committees,' he says.

At the Disability Conference, Gareth Davies was once again successfully elected to the disability committee and Sue Hayward, Community delegate from Region 6, received unanimous support when speaking to the unions on a motion on equal access for all disabilities. Joe Mann also spoke in the emergency debate on supported employment, which continues to be under threat, both in the local authority and voluntary factories, and in Remploy.

Community's resolutions on asylum and migration (for the Black Workers' conference), single staffing (for the Women's conference), and at the Young Members' Conference, the crucial issue of involvement in the 2012 Olympics - were all seriously debated and accepted, with the exception of the latter which was the subject of many supporting amendments.



Women's Conference: (left to right) Heather Meldrum, Claire Main, Tracy Clarke, Sue Southey, Sue Haywood and Rachel Rigby



Disability conference: (left to right) Brian Jackson, Dean Apps, Fraser Queen, Helen Elliot, Robert Mooney, Jitu Depala, Sue Haywood, George Corbett, Kalvin Evans and Jerry Brennan



Black Workers' Conference: (left to right) Rajinda Sagoo, Freddie Toolaram, Champac Pareek, Amarjit Johal, Jitu Depala and A. Patell



Young Members' Conference: (left to right) Luke Smith, Claire Main, Robin Glen, Gemma Tumelty (National President of the National Union of Students), Jacqueline Berry and Garry Lancaster

Something's cooking for Community members at the Domestic Appliance conference

Thursday June 7 saw Community members kick off a two-day Domestic Appliance Sector conference in Scarborough's Palm Court Hotel. 25 delegates (pictured) attended the conference with the numbers swelling to 70 on the Friday night when retiring National Secretary, Tony McCarthy, was treated to a surprise party to mark the end of his service to the union. General Secretary Michael Leahy gave a short speech and presented Tony with a crystal ornament as a memento of his time with Community. Tony was also treated to a new watch, courtesy of the branch secretaries who had clubbed together to buy an extra gift as a token of their appreciation.

David Martin, senior organiser for Region 7, has now taken up the position of secretary for the Domestic Appliance Sector. 'The conference exceeded my expectations,' he said. 'The General Secretary gave a presentation which was well received by delegates and gave



an insight into Community's strategy for growth.

Tony, who has been General Secretary of NUDAGO for 18 years, said: 'I've had a fantastic 18 years and worked with some very, very special people. It's a job I always wanted to do and one that I have thoroughly enjoyed.'

'I think joining Community was the right decision. I see a good future for the partnership, sadly the little, specialist trade unions are suffering from a loss of work, but with Community we have secured NUDAGO's future and we can make a good contribution, helping the union to grow and making sure that members get the services they deserve.'



Gareth Davies is presented with the award by Angela Smith MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Peter Watt, Labour Party General Secretary

Community wins special Labour equality award

Community has received a special award from the Labour Party for effective representation in the equalities field.

The certificate was presented to Gareth Davies, president of Community's National League of the Blind and Disabled (NLBD) section by Angela Smith, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in February. The certificate now has pride of place in General Secretary's office.

'We were given the award because we were seen as being instrumental in bringing about Labour's disability policy at the 1996 conference,' says Gareth. 'The work we've been doing has had long lasting effects. It has contributed to the establishment of the Disability Rights Commission and the Special Educational Needs (Disability) Act 2001. We have also contributed to legislation abolishing the exemption of small businesses from anti-discrimination legislation. Currently we're aiming to get a disability specific directive as part of the EU Anti-Discrimination Directive.'

The campaign to support this directive aims to get one million signatures on its website. To add yours, visit www.1million4disability.eu

Bra-ving the night air

Region 1 administrator, Kathleen Hunter, was among thousands of walkers, including celebrities Lorraine Kelly and Michelle McManus, to don a brightly decorated bra and take to the midnight streets of Edinburgh.

Along with around 10,000 others, Kathleen was participating in the Edinburgh Moon Walk (13 or 26 miles) for charity Walk the Walk, which raises money for Breast Cancer Awareness and Breast Cancer Research.

'I thought it was a great charity to support,' says Kathleen, 'so five friends and I got together to walk as a team. We called ourselves 'the Bosom Buddies!'

The Moonwalk takes place in cities all over the world every year. To find out more, visit www.walkthewalk.org



Tony Blair thanks Community members for their support during his time as Labour Party Leader and Prime Minister during a recent visit to the West Midlands

Setting their SITE high

Community members in Glasgow have set up a new centre to help visually impaired people train for employment.

Robert Mooney, along with 12 other Community members decided to set up the training scheme in order to give visually impaired people the chance to develop skills for work. The centre is called SITE, which stands for Supported Integrated Training for Employment and is based in Glasgow City Council's Sensory Impaired Unit. The team have already helped two Community members into jobs in Glasgow.

'80% of people with a visual impairment are unemployed,' says newly elected NEC member Robert Mooney, who helped set up the centre. 'And that number isn't decreasing, in fact it is rising.'

'Soon we hope to have a specialist training facility which will help visually impaired people to set up their own businesses,' adds Robert.

SITE will have a team of specialist advisers to help with all aspects of careers guidance, from training and development to financial assistance and job searches. The team are also holding events with local employers to raise awareness about the issues facing visually impaired people and to raise money for the organisation.

Anyone who would like to find out more about the scheme should contact Robert Mooney on 0141 287 0800 or email him at rmooney11@hotmail.com

Community recently sponsored a football match which raised nearly £1800 for St Francis Hospice in Essex. The match was sponsored by Community's organising department and was played between Ladbroke's workers and local postmen (pictured). 'This was a great community event which raised a significant sum for a very worthy cause,' says Community's acting head of organising, Lesley-Anne Ure.



Obituary

Region 5 Community member Philip Male sadly passed away this April. Philip worked as a wire drawer at Carrington wire in Cardiff. As president of Carrington South Wales branch from 1995 to 2005, Philip was a stalwart member of the union, of which he had been a member for 48 years.

'Philip was a very happy and entertaining chap,' says Chris Keane, branch secretary at Carrington Wire where Philip worked. 'He was always telling jokes and was popular with everyone.'

Philip was born in 1941. He lived in Riverside in Cardiff and had worked at Carrington Wire for 49 years before retiring last December. He had three children, three grandchildren and one great-grandson.

Have you ever thought of becoming a school governor?

School governors are the most important voluntary workers in education but there can be as many as 40,000 vacancies across England at any one time. Community members can make a real difference to the lives of local children by volunteering to become school governors.

Schools now have the autonomy to run their own budgets, allocate resources and take responsibility for the aims, values and direction of the school. Because of this, and the ever-changing, multicultural, high-tech environment of today, it is crucial that governing bodies are represented by a mix of ages, backgrounds, ethnicity and skills. Research also shows that governors are able to develop their own skills in a range of areas including finance, team work and strategic planning.

A common myth is that school governors need to have children at the school, know about the education system or have specific qualifications to get involved, but the School Governors' One-Stop Shop (SGOSS) is keen to point out that this is not true. Anyone aged 18 or over can apply no matter what job they hold and whether or not they have children. The most important criteria is to want to help local children get the best education possible.

Governing body meetings usually take place once or twice a term but this varies from school to school; the average time spent on governor duties is just six to eight hours per month during term time.

Community is about to start a campaign to encourage members to become school governors, which we will be communicating to branches in the near future.

However, if you are interested in finding out more now, please contact the School Governors' One-Stop Shop on 0870 241 3883, email info@sgoss.org.uk or visit www.sgoss.org.uk