



Nottinghamshire Association of Teachers

Secretary's Annual Report 2015/16

Time to stand down

This will be my last report as Secretary of Nottinghamshire Association of Teachers. Some years ago I made it clear that I would not continue in one of the major local officer positions of the Union once I had retired from full-time teaching, which I will do on August 31. I am therefore making good on that commitment.

I have been Secretary or Joint Secretary of Nottinghamshire NUT since 2006, so it will be a clean 10 years in the role, which is enough for anyone. I certainly never intended to continue until I dropped, as someone once infamously said. I am also standing down from the NEC for the same reasons

I have been an officer of the Union in some capacity since the mid 1980's my first post being President of the Central Notts Association. Since then I have held the posts of Association Secretary, Association Minuting Secretary, Division President, Division Minuting Secretary, Division Learning Representative, Division Newsletter Editor and Division PRO. In the last two years I have also been the National Executive member for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

Most of my time as an officer has been positive and productive, despite the Union facing defeat on so many fronts against successive governments. However, I have been proud to stand up for teachers in every role I have taken on, urging the Union to mobilise for action as the best form of defence, on pay, conditions, the curriculum and the defence of comprehensive education. Nottinghamshire NUT has been in the forefront of calling for the national union to take on the various attacks launched since the 1988 Education Reform Act. In many ways our finest hour came when we continued the boycott of SATs long after the national union had thrown in the towel.

I have always been on the left of the Union and supported the election of the current General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary. I have been motivated by the interests of our members in all that I have done. I do not believe that I have been motivated by personal ambition or any personal antagonism towards anyone in the Union. However, I have certainly taken political positions that have often put me at odds with the leadership of the Union and I strongly believe that union officers must act ethically and honestly in all that they do in executing the affairs of the Union on behalf of members. I have always and will always express my opinion about the policy and management of the union, both at local and national level.

It has therefore been sad and distressing that the years in which the 'left' had its greatest successes electorally, including majority control of the National Executive Committee, have been my most difficult years. It was during this time, following my whistle blowing in 2012 of financial



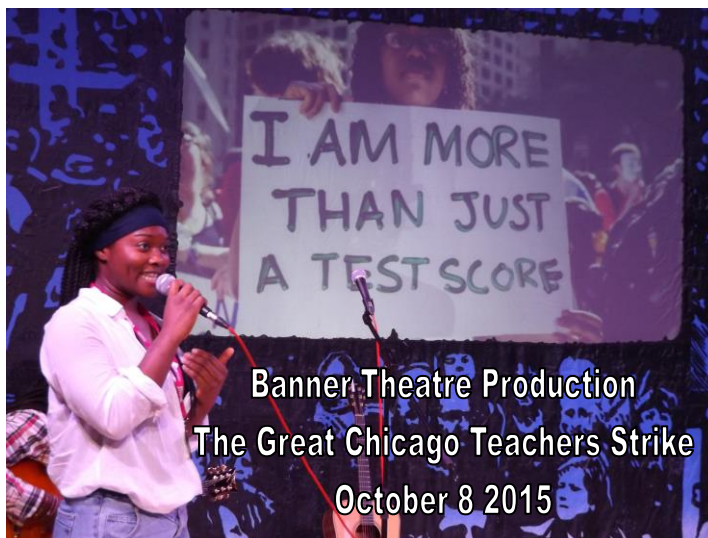
irregularity in our Division, that I was subjected, against the rules of the Union and any rational notions of justice, to 8 disciplinary complaints.

I believe that I have acted completely honestly and in the interests of NUT members in Nottinghamshire for the entire course of my activism, beginning in 1984 when the Miners' Strike awakened what was until then, an armchair trade unionist and socialist.

The years 2012 to 2014 represented a low point for the Union in Nottinghamshire, but my actions in honestly pursuing wrong doing and wrong-doers was motivated by one and the same objective, serving the interests of NUT members, who backed me through our local democratic structures.

The year just gone

It's been an eventful year for teachers, though again not a very positive one. The action on pay, pensions and workload has effectively come to an end, except in individual schools where members have been strong enough to take on management over academisation, workload and bullying. Hopefully, the national strike of NUT members in Sixth Forms on March 15, will lead to a revival in the Union's fortunes at a national level and some successes for all teachers.



Banner Theatre Production
The Great Chicago Teachers Strike
October 8 2015

Since the last AGM a Conservative Government has been returned to power, and in the 9 months of its existence has focussed its attention on education and trade unions very sharply. Two new pieces of legislation will have a severe impact on the ability of trade unions in the education sector to defend members and the service.

The first of these is the Trade Union Bill, which will limit our ability to organise industrial action by raising the balloting thresholds beyond anything we have been able to achieve in recent years. Indeed, my understanding is that the recent ballot for the strike day in all 6th form colleges, which achieved a near 90% yes vote on a 44% turnout, would be close to illegal under the new laws. The Union will need to work out new ways to mobilise more members to vote in future strikes in order



Bilborough College
on strike
March 15 2016

to ensure that we can defend national pay and conditions. This will be particularly important in the light of the second piece of legislation soon to be law, the Education and Adoption Bill.

Despite efforts by the Union to secure amendments, it is clear what the new law will look like. All schools deemed inadequate will become academies and there will be no consultation with parents, the public, unions or students. Not even the Secretary

of State will have the power to intervene in the process. There will be new intervention powers for schools regarded as 'coasting'. A coasting primary is defined as one where fewer than 85% of pupils achieve level 4 or above. A coasting secondary is defined as one where fewer than 60% of pupils are getting 5 A* to C or they fail to meet their Progress 8 target.

Regional Schools

Commissioners will be the main drivers of forced academisation. Failing academies may have their funding agreements terminated and new sponsors brought in. There will be pressure on 'outstanding' academies to collaborate with, or intervene in, other schools and there is likely to be fewer standalone



academies. TUPE rights will remain, so the Union will need to use these rights to ensure no detriment to pay and conditions. The Bill also enhances the Exam Factory approach to education and the Union will have to build a strong campaign if it is to defend any kind of progressive education. In the long term there is the hope that pressure on a changing Labour Party may bring positive results if they win the General Election in 2020.

But hold the press, as yesterday we learned that the Government now plans to go beyond the academy proposals in the Education and Adoption Bill. They intend to academise every school in the land. In the face of all the evidence that academies don't work, lead to mismanagement of schools, undermine the life chances of the most disadvantage pupils and erase the professionalism of teachers, the Government will use the Budget announcement to privatise our entire school system and remove all trace of local democratic control of education. How we respond to this assault is key. I hope it is more than another survey of members.

Following a ballot of members which was conclusive, Nottinghamshire NUT is now organised as a single association division. The Division continues to function tremendously effectively in the interests of members, although it is difficult to escape the feeling that we are all but ignored by the national union and the region.

Our finances continue to flourish and we were able to reduce the local subscription to members from the beginning of 2016. Thanks for the health of our finances must go to **John Illingworth**, who has managed income and expenditure extremely effectively and in a way that makes totally clear how the money of our members is being spent. This approach can be seen again in his latest report. John is standing down as Treasurer and we owe him a tremendous debt of thanks for restoring our finances to such good health and for presenting the accounts in an open and transparent way in line with our agreed financial procedures and resolutions passed in the Division since December 6, 2012. Jen Illingworth will take over as Treasurer from today and I expect little to change in the management of our accounts.

I would also like to thank the other officers and members of the Division who have supported me this last year in the preparation of meetings, in casework and in helping to organise campaigns and activities, such as the excellent Reps Training event in July 2015 and the NQT recruitment in September 2015 and January 2016.

Particular thanks go to **Jane Crich**, whose appetite for work knows no bounds. Her support on casework has been invaluable, not just in taking on difficult cases but in bringing real knowledge and understanding of the law and procedural issues to the work, especially on Health and Safety matters. **Rob Illingworth** is an ever present source of encouragement, a tireless campaigner and a tremendous source of support for members in difficulties.

Jen Illingworth, John Illingworth, Roger Tanner, Shelagh Hubbard, Kalpana Malhotra, Giovanni Russo, Sue Ellis to name but a few, have given their time freely to ensure that all our mailings are in schools on time.

Young Teachers' Meal

For various reasons the Young Teachers Meal did not take place in 2015, largely due to pressures of work. However, I believe that this as an important event and we should step up our efforts to ensure that it is successful in 2016.

Proposal:-

The Division agrees to host a Young Teachers' Meal in the Autumn Term 2016

Reps Training

The July 2015 Reps Training Day at our office was the most successful training we have had for some time. July appears a reasonable time to put on such an event as it is beyond SATs and exams in our schools.

Proposal:-

The Division organises a reps training event in the Summer Term 2016. Topics for the training event be discussed at the Division Committee meeting and brought to the next Division meeting for approval. Provisional date for the Training event would be Wednesday, July 6, 2016.

Student and NQT Recruitment

The Division was present at all the NQT Local Authority Training events in the Autumn and Spring Terms. We arrived first of the Unions on virtually every occasion and I believe made a bigger impact than the other Unions.

As a result of disagreements with the City NUT over the organisation of student recruitment, the Division, for the second year running, was not involved in the recruitment of student teachers at the higher education institutes. Last year I wrote to the Secretary of Nottingham City to seek cooperation on the basis of sharing the dates between the two divisions. I received no reply to any communication on this topic from Nottingham City NUT.

I propose:-

- 1. We continue to attend all NQT Local Authority training events, as well as any put on by other employers where we can get access.***



- 2. Purchase new recruitment materials as required within the budget set by the Treasurer.**
- 3. The incoming joint secretaries write again to the Secretary of Nottingham City NUT with a view to reaching an agreement about student recruitment at HE establishments prior to the Autumn Term 2016.**

Casework

Officers of the Division, particularly Rob Illingworth, Jane Crich and myself have been handling an increasing number of individual cases on behalf of members.

Several new officers have now been trained on National Union courses to carry out casework. We need to use this training to bring more people into active casework on behalf of members.

Proposal:-

The next Division Committee meeting agree a training schedule for new casework officers, including work shadowing of existing casework officers.

Trade Union Facilities Time

Trade Union facilities time has been under threat for many years and the growing number of academies increases the threat substantially. The Division does not have an official representative on the Schools Forum though we are tracking its activities as close as we can. At present only myself and Rob Illingworth take fixed facilities days so, given my change of circumstances, we need to look at this as a matter of urgency.

However, there are some positives here. We have been successful in persuading two Multi Academy Trusts, the East Midlands Trust and the Flying High Trust, to buy into the Local Authority facilities fund. We have also held meetings with officers of the Local Authority in which it was made clear that, at least in the immediate period ahead, we will continue to have a similar level of facilities time, currently about 7 days a week.

Finally, I have been approached by the NUT Regional Secretary, Ian Stevenson, regarding the election of Louise Regan, a Nottinghamshire Head Teacher and NUT member, to the position of Senior Vice President of the Union. Ian was raising the matter of facilities time for Louise Regan when she takes up the post of Senior Vice President at Easter 2016 and National President at Easter 2017. I expressed the view to Ian that, whatever additional facilities arrangements might be made, Nottinghamshire Association of Teachers, would not approve any of our current facilities money being used for purposes other than the release of union officers for the direct representation of trade union members in Nottinghamshire.

I propose that:-

- 1. We send a further letter to all schools in the county regarding de-delegation of the facilities budget and outlining the arguments in favour of supporting a facilities fund held centrally by the Local Authority***
- 2. A Division Committee meeting consider the budget for facilities time from April 30, and then bring proposals back to the next Division meeting in May***
- 3. We make clear to the Local Authority that no monies currently specifically set aside for local trade union facilities be allocated to the release of Louise Regan for her duties as Senior Vice President of the NUT or National President of the NUT***
- 4. We are involved in any negotiations with the Local Authority regarding additional funding for the release time for Louise Regan.***

A data protection issue

Following the decision of our January meeting, the Division mailed, emailed and phone messaged our members in support of our nominated candidate for the NEC, Rob Illingworth. On March 8, 2016, I received an email from Ian Stevenson which read as follows:-

"Dear Liam

Louise Regan has contacted me recently with regard to concerns that her personal data ie her personal email and mobile number is being used by the Nottinghamshire Association even though she has previously requested that the Association do not do so.

She has recently received emails from the Nottingham Association and from the President Giovanni Russo and has also received text messages to her mobile phone.

My advice to Louise was that in the first instance she should contact you before escalating any complaint to the Union or the Information Commissioner. However Louise has for reasons you will be aware stated she is not able to do so.

In the interest of trying to resolve this matter informally I am therefore writing to you to ask you to respond to the above concerns raised by Louise Regan."

I replied to Ian as below:-

"Dear Ian

Thank you for your email. Given the nature of its content, I am referring the matter to a meeting of the Nottinghamshire Association of Teachers.

However, as I understand the situation, the National Union is the data 'owner', whilst those authorised at local level, are merely data 'users'. Members provide data to the Union freely and any member can make changes to their data by contacting the subscriptions department.

Membership data is updated regularly and, as an authorised data 'user', I frequently download the latest database from Hearth. However, as I understand it, I am unable to make changes to a member's data with regard to contact details, addresses etc etc. I believe this can only be done by a member and I think can now be done online.

For information, I have copied the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary and the officers of Nottinghamshire Association of Teachers into this reply.

All best wishes,

Liam"

I propose that:-

- 1. The incoming joint secretaries write to the Membership and Communications Department requesting that they contact Louise Regan regarding the email address and mobile phone number, if any, she wishes to be used for communication from the Union and requesting that the database held centrally is edited in line with Louise Regan's wishes.***
- 2. The data users in the Division should be the Joint Secretaries, the Deputy Secretary and the Membership Secretary.***

Division meetings

Division meetings have been well attended by and large over the last year, and it was heartening to see such a big turnout at the inaugural meeting of the Nottinghamshire Association of Teachers, on January 13, 2016. Over the coming year we should continue to seek out venues that prioritise the accessibility of meetings for members.



I propose we agree the dates as shown on the separate sheet for the year 2016-17.

New Office

The new office has been running for more than a year. It is not an exaggeration to say that moving to the new office has been a tremendous success, in terms of cost and the efficient running of our work.

I propose that we continue to use the office for Division Committee meetings and reps training events.

Communication with members

Throughout the year members have received emails about the activities of the Division as described above, as well as information about our work, campaigns, policies and action. We have increased the number of newsletters sent to schools and by email to members, and it is entirely practical that this should continue into the future.

I make the following proposals.

- 1. The Division produces one two-sided A4 newsletter per schools mailing, which will also be simultaneously emailed to all members with a current email address.***
- 2. The new Facebook group for Nottinghamshire NUT be made an open rather than closed group.***

The functioning of the Division

The Division has been functioning very well over the last year. Our meetings have been well attended, our communication with members has been excellent, we have established negotiating machinery with employers and have conducted effective representation of individual members in casework.

Representation at County Hall and with other employers

The main meeting at County Hall with the Local Authority is now the Staffing Regulations meeting. In these meetings, Jane Crich, Rob Illingworth and I have led the Union side in negotiations over pay and conditions at school level. We have not agreed to all the policies of the Local Authority, such as on Appraisal and Pay, but we have nonetheless been successful in securing changes to such policies in the interests of teachers.

Jane Crich, Rob Illingworth and I have also attended meetings and successfully negotiated some favourable terms with a number of academy groups, including the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership (DALP) East Midlands Education Trust (EMET), the Outwood Grange Academy Trust (OGAT), the Redhill Trust, the Flying High Trust and the Two Counties Trust. Despite the increasing number of employers, I believe we have achieved tremendous progress establishing negotiating machinery and securing facilities arrangements with a number of employers. This work must continue in the coming year and is vital if we are to protect the interests of members in an ever changing educational landscape.

Redundancies

In recent weeks an increasing number of Appendix II redundancy notifications has been received. The implications of this for our members across the county is unclear at this stage. Jane Crich and I have arranged to attend meetings with members and meet management in each of the schools affected.

And finally!

I would like to thank **Giovanni Russo** for chairing meetings over the last year. He has done this with a smile on his face and in an even handed and democratic manner. **Mark Guy** is the incoming President and I wish him well in the chair over the coming year, he has a tough act to follow.

I propose that this Annual Report, along with the Finance Report, is made available to our members in the county.

Liam Conway, March 16th, 2016