



District Meeting

Hackney District NEU



Covid one year on

Over the last year some 50,000 members joined the NEU and there are nearly 4500 new reps, over 70% of them women and many of them black. Our reps and members in Hackney have taken on huge challenges and are growing in confidence. NEU Senior Vice-President **Daniel Kebede** will be reviewing the past year and speaking about the fights we now face and how can we continue to build.



Plus reports from schools including the Leaways strike and the ballot for strike action

Monday 29th March @5pm

All education workers who are members of the NEU are welcome

Agenda

1. Request for Suspensions to Standing Orders
2. Report back from decisions made at previous meeting
3. Fixed business (see above)
4. Secretary's and Officers' report
5. Reports from schools
6. Motions
6. AOB

ZOOM LINK

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.

When: Mar 29, 2021 05:00 PM London

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://neu-org-uk.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMvceCprDIiG9LPc1yvoroXqEMlqwrecNP6>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Minutes of Hackney NEU District Meeting – 1st March 2021

1. Fixed Business: Organising for a Safe Return to School.

Jess Edwards, NEU National Executive, spoke about organising for a safe return, following the government's reckless decision to re-open all schools from 8th March.

Agreed Reps to alert office if serious issues either whole school or individual members

Reps sent resources, including: powerpoint from NEU, NEU Checklist, NEU Recovery plan

2. Nominations for national executive:

Meeting agreed to nominate the following:

- Inner London reps: Jess Edwards, Kirstie Paton, Alex Kenny, James Kerr
- Black Educators: Vik Chechi-Ribeiro
- Support staff: Trish Fay
- Disabled members: Colleen Johnson
- Post-16: Duncan Blackie

3. NEU Conference amendments

Meeting agreed to support the following six motions to go forward to the NEU National Conference:

- a) SEND + Mental Health
- b) Child Poverty
- c) Pay
- d) Diverse and inclusive curriculum
- e) Climate Change
- f) GCSE + A Level

4. Motions:

A. The Silvertown Tunnel and Sustainable Hackney

Hackney NEU notes

In 2019 the mayor of London awarded a PFI contract to build the Silvertown tunnel, despite huge opposition from local residents, environmental groups, CLP's, Labour councils and prominent Labour MP's. The estimated cost of the project has now doubled to £2 billion. The tunnel would worsen air pollution, traffic congestion, carbon emissions and is financially unviable. One impact would be to enable HV's to cross the river into one of London's most polluted areas, passing schools and nurseries where thousands of children play and learn.

Research from the Tyndall Centre shows that London's transport policy is currently incompatible with the rapid decarbonisation required to reach targets aligned with the Paris agreement, and the tunnel would only

make matters worse. TfL will be reliant on high traffic revenue from tolling the Blackwall and Silvertown tunnels to repay PFI financing at a time when reducing car usage is crucial.

HNEU believes

If Labour are truly committed to clean air and tackling climate change there is no justification for the tunnel. TfL is financially vulnerable and this project doesn't make economic sense, especially as TfL would be liable for any shortcomings from tolling. To ensure a just transition, revenue should be prioritised for accessible, affordable and reliable public transport.

HNEU resolves to

Call upon the mayor of London to cancel this project and ask Hackney council and Hackney MP's to publicly support this motion.

CARRIED

B. Opposing the trade union victimisation of Kirstie Paton, NEU Inner London Executive member

1) Hackney NEU notes:

a) The threat of disciplinary action being taken against Kirstie Paton, one of our Inner London members of the National Executive of the NEU. This disciplinary action is being threatened by her school management, part of United Learning (UL).

b) The basis of this disciplinary action is a post made by Kirstie on her NEU National Executive Facebook page in the week before Christmas. In this post she criticised the DfE and United Learning's use of Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs) to run school testing sites using existing school staff, because of health and safety concerns.

c) This post was made at a time when there was extreme pressure on schools to remain open, despite the scientific evidence that schools were acting as key vectors of transmission of the virus, and when numerous medical experts had stated that LFTs were unsuitable for use in schools given the high level of false negatives provided by such tests.

d) This threat of disciplinary action against Kirstie is part of an increasing number of cases across the country where employers are targeting and attempting to silence union reps when they raise health and safety concerns and stand up for members rights in the workplace.

2) Hackney NEU believes that:

a) The threat to discipline Kirstie is a case of trade union victimisation. Trade union representatives are entitled to be spokespersons on school safety She represents thousands of members in Inner London and has supported reps and members in carrying out health and safety checks in their own schools. This threat is an attempt to silence Kirstie, other activists and union reps for trying to make their schools safe and defend workplace conditions for all.

b) It is unacceptable that the victimisation of union reps such as Kirstie should be taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic when the ability of union representatives to speak out about health and safety is even more important than ever.

3) Hackney NEU resolves to:

a) Circulate details of Kirstie's case and campaign to all members of the district, and to encourage members to

write letters to Cath Smith, headteacher at The John Roan School opposing any disciplinary action.

b) Write to United Learning defending Kirstie's right to speak out about health and safety issues as a school rep, Assistant Secretary of Greenwich District, Health and Safety Officer of Greenwich District and as a member of the National Executive. Demand that United Learning withdraw the disciplinary action and inform them that the NEU will not tolerate any attempts by UL to victimise and silence reps in the trust.

c) Call on the National Executive to issue an immediate statement in support of Kirstie, making clear their intention to defend her as a member, union rep, local officer and member of the National Executive.

d) To support a London day of action to demand any disciplinary action be withdrawn and to help build a campaign to defend NEU victimised reps.

CARRIED

C. In memory of Sonia Ellington

Sonia Ellington was an amazing primary school teacher for many years. She worked in many schools across Hackney and Haringey. Sonia contracted Covid whilst on the frontline teaching (Woodberry Down School) and sadly passed away on Christmas Eve. She will be remembered as a strong, happy, hardworking and a very caring woman who had a positive impact on many students and her colleagues.

Hackney NEU agrees to send condolences to the family and to donate £200 towards the fund raising page set up by her daughters, Monique and Alyssea

Hackney NEU agrees to approach the national union to investigate possible manslaughter claims and to ask the national union to collate information re. members who have died in service in the pandemic.

CARRIED as amended.

5. AOB:

Agreed to support activities around 20th March – UN anti-racist day.