

East Riding NUT Newsletter May 2017

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Theresa May's surprise decision to call a general election was announced just an hour before the NUT General Secretary, Kevin Courtney, spoke to NUT Conference in Cardiff.

This meant that Kevin was in an ideal position to respond and to declare that the NUT intends to do everything we can to make education a key issue in the period before the election. However, this is not just about the election, our aim is to ensure that the next government addresses the crisis in education.

So, the NUT is asking every single member a simple question, "What can you do to promote NUT education policies during this election?"

The NUT has produced a Vote for Education leaflet that clearly sets out the scale of the education cuts and exhorts the public to ask their election candidates to oppose cuts.

1. So, what can you do to help make sure that people are voting for a decent education for all of our children?

We will be holding a Vote for Education stall in Hessle on Saturday 20th May (details below) - please let me know if you would like to join us

If you want to hold an event in your town, please get in touch

Could you take a batch of leaflets to deliver on your street? Please get in touch to arrange delivery/collection of the leaflets you require

Could you give out some leaflets at election events in your town?
If you know parents or governors that may be interested, please let them know

2. Vote for Education Stall

Hessle Square, Saturday 20th May, 10:00 - 14:00

As I was finishing this newsletter, I had a call from regional office telling me that Kevin Courtney may be attending the stall. We are still awaiting confirmation, but there is a very good chance that he will be there. Kevin is a great speaker, and I am sure it will make it a stall to remember!

Please get in touch if you would like to help out, or turn up to show support on the day.

I will confirm Kevin's attendance as soon as I hear anything.

3. Hull: National UK Pride Celebration: Queens Gardens, 22nd July

East Riding NUT are proud to be taking part in this year's National UK Pride event in Hull - it promises to be spectacular. Everyone is welcome to come along to Queens gardens and join the parade. East Riding NUT Officer, Richard Sleight, is helping to organise the festival, and he will be letting members know more about the event soon.

If you are interested in coming along or being involved, you can contact Richard by email: rsleight1985@googlemail.com

4. Collective Youth Festival

As a contribution to the City of Culture celebrations, Hull Trades Council is organising a one-day festival under the banner of Collective Youth. East Riding NUT are proud to be sponsors.

The festival will be held in Queen's gardens on Saturday August 19th, and is scheduled to start at 12.00. The festival will be aimed at young people in Hull and the East Riding, and its main message will be to promote trade unionism and collectivism as an alternative to austerity and cuts. East Riding NUT will have a stall there.

There will be a mixture of local talent, bands and entertainers, together with young speakers from local trade unions. Local schools will also be taking part, and international youth speakers have been invited.

More details to follow.

If you are interested in being a volunteer, please get in touch.

5. Conference 2017

A look at this years conference from two East Riding Delegates.

Starting with our Equalities Officer, and regional representative on the National Organising Forum for Disabled Teachers, Catherine Scarlett.

This conference I was tasked with giving the speech to move the Disabled Teachers' Conference motion, Securing a Future for Disabled Teachers.

The motion calls for the NUT executive to actively promote positive imagery of disabled teachers and their contribution to education; ensure caseworkers are fully trained in the Equality Act, disability awareness, equality and the social model and to use specialist disability discrimination legal services.

I don't think I have ever been so nervous as I was for the conference before I had to make the speech. I rewrote it about ten times before getting up on the platform. It did look as if it was all going to go wrong as soon as I got up there as the lectern didn't really go low enough and the microphone was way above my head. Thanks to Kevin Courtney for dashing over to sort it out.

The beginning of the speech was shamelessly appropriated from the very successful LGBT+ campaigns to encourage people to be 'out and proud', giving some instances of conditions that could cause disability. The NUT has some 300,000 members but only 0.6% have ticked the box on the membership form to identify as 'disabled'. This may be because people associate disability with needing a wheelchair rather than with mental health conditions and hidden disabilities such as chronic illnesses.

I went on to give a couple of examples of harassment that happened to me in my last job and to give an account of the effect it has had on me. When I said about a member of senior management telling me that if I was a horse I'd have been shot, there was a very audible gasp around the hall. I also made the point that training is needed on disability related harassment as it is often more subtle than other forms of harassment and can be difficult to spot.

The closing section of my speech talked about how we are often seen as broken people. We need to notice, talk about and change that prejudice. I implored delegates to take this message back to their schools and associations: that we are normal people who are battling in a broken society.

I was relieved to be given a good reception, especially as I carried on talking for just over a minute once the red light (warning me to stop immediately), came on! More importantly, the motion was carried unanimously and the contents now have to be acted upon by the union.

Jane Hallet works as a supply teacher in the East Riding, and it was her first time at conference.

I really enjoyed my first time at conference. It was a great opportunity to witness many passionate speeches that echoed my own opinions on the state of education today - regarding workload, funding, equality and many other issues. After close of business each day, it was great to discuss the speeches and issues with delegates from the East Riding and elsewhere in the country.

I felt privileged, to be representing other teachers by voting on motions that have the potential to improve the working conditions in education today and in the future.

I would like to thank the NUT for the chance to attend the NUT Conference in Cardiff and hear the many teachers who had the courage to speak out; especially Catherine Scarlett. Her speech moved me (and many others in the room!) to tears. I sincerely hope her words inspire change for the better. I would also like to thank Damian, Cath, Jan and Rich for being such great company.

I would recommend NUT Conference to any teacher who wants to stand up for education, and is interested in seeing how the democratic decision making process of the union works.

We will be discussing the conference in some depth at the OGM.

6. East Riding NUT OGM

Our next OGM will be at The Tiger Inn, Beverley on Saturday 27th May @ 10:00

More details and agenda to follow.

7. Hull and East Riding Stand Up to Racism Gig:

Pearls Cab Ride, Lightspeed Lover and The Onion Club DJ's @ Karadomah 94, June 30th.

I was talking to a friend about a Kevin Courtney speech regarding the recent spike in racism and hate crime, and how this is affecting our students. My friend plays for local funk band Pearls Cab Ride and we started to talk about an awareness/fund raising gig for Hull and East Riding Stand Up to Racism. If you love funk and vintage grooves, and hate racism, it might be for you.

Please email for further details, or go to Hull Box Office for tickets - available soon.

Best Regards, Damian Walenta