

newspaper

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Union ethics commitment gains plaudits



The union's Public Relations and Communications Council (PRCC) held its annual out-of-London meeting in Leeds last month, followed by an open debate and networking event.

Chaired by Leeds & Wakefield member Phil Morcom, the council organises an event outside the capital each year to promote the benefits of union membership for PR

professionals and students.

The debate, entitled 'Should I Say That? Ethical PR' was held at the Brewery Tap in Leeds city centre and was attended by council members, local members and non-member guests.

Phil chaired the discussion by the panel, which comprised of international PR adviser Stuart Bruce, an elected member of the national council of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) and a Fellow

of the CIPR; Fiona Swarbrick, the NUJ's national organiser for PR and Communications; and PR agency director and chair of Leeds & Wakefield branch, Natasha Wright.

Phil commented: "By using some real life examples of ethical PR quandaries, we sparked some fascinating and engaging debate. The discussions highlighted the need of PR professionals to access the advice and support offered by

union membership in the face of day-to-day situations which can often have no easy answer and may put jobs at risk.

"We were really pleased to welcome non-members and answer their specific questions about how NUJ membership can benefit them.

"The PRCC always enjoys its events in Leeds and once again we were given a fantastic welcome."

'Snooper's Charter?' lecture



L-R: Sir David Omand GCB, Debbie Cavaldoro (PR & Comms branch Chair), Michelle Stanistreet (General Secretary, NUJ)

NUJ members who attended a lecture about the Investigatory Powers (IP) Bill heard from a former Home Office Permanent Secretary and from the NUJ General Secretary Michelle Stanistreet.

The lecture by Professor Sir David Omand GCB, entitled, "How Safe Are Your Communications? Placing Secret Intelligence Gathering Under the Rule of Law", was held at King's College, London at the end of June.

Michelle Stanistreet, gave a robust analysis of the impact of the IP Bill on the work of journalists and debated the issues with Sir David, before they both took questions from the floor.

The talk, organised by the NUJ's PR and Communications branch, was chaired by Debbie Cavaldoro, the branch chair, who said: "It was a very successful evening and I was delighted that so many NUJ members took the opportunity to attend the talk."

Branch meetings are on second Tuesday of the month.

Branch committee 2016

The branch committee for 2016 consists of:

Chair: Debbie Cavaldoro

Vice-Chair: Monica Foot / Mick Holder (job share)

Branch Secretary: Mark Whitehead

Assistant Secretary: Sian Jones

Equality Officer: Carmel McHenry

Treasurer: Carmel McHenry

Welfare Officer: Debbie Cavaldoro

Newsletter Editor: Lisa Browne

DM convener: Debbie Cavaldoro

Recruitment and Retention: Mark Whitehead

Web: Mick Holder

E-Mail:
Please help build branch database by sending your e-mail address to: nujpr@googlemail.com

Auditors: Anita Halpin, Charles Harkness and/or Eddie Barret (tbc)

Don't forget!

Let the NUJ have your e-mail address so we can save on postage by e-mailing you the branch newsletter.

@NUJ_PRmembers on Twitter

We are on Twitter!, Follow us on @NUJ_PRmembers for updates on all things NUJ and PR.

Weekly council newspapers are no more

Jeremy Gardner

East End Life, published by Tower Hamlets council, and weekly for most of its 23 years printed its last edition in May. Greenwich ended weekly production in June.

This is the outcome of a five-year war of attrition waged by Conservative secretaries of state that included a code, directives and then legislation. The former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sir Eric Pickles, liked his soundbites and called council newspapers "apparatchik printing presses powered by taxpayer pennies". In 2011 he introduced a code of recommended practice that said local authorities should not produce publications

that seek to emulate commercial newspapers in style or content. They should not be issued more frequently than quarterly.

Faced with local authorities determined to keep the presses rolling, the code was given legal strength with the 2014 Local Audit and Accountability Act. Greenwich council cabinet voted to challenge the order, arguing that fewer publications would lead to increased advertising costs as they would have to place statutory notices in other papers. Greenwich's refusal led to the High Court. In January, shortly before the hearing was due to, the council decided not to spend more money on legal fees and accepted

the paper would end as a weekly.

In Tower Hamlets, 'East End Life' began 23 years ago and was the brainchild of former BBC broadcaster and NUJ activist Vincent Hanna, who was brought in to advise the then Liberal-Democrat council. His advice was that the weekly paper could be a way of changing perceptions about the borough, at a time when it was known for decline and allegations of racism. In the years since then, staff on East End Life have run a highly professional operation through different political leaderships and used the annual residents' survey as one measure of the paper's effectiveness and usefulness.

A review of the council's communications showed the paper remained the most popular channel for local people to find out about the local area and issues. Given the stated intention of the newly-elected Mayor to abide by the legislation, inevitably, the conclusion was that the paper should be phased out. Staff are now producing the quarterly 'Our East End' as well as improved digital communications. Hackney, Newham and Waltham Forest continue to publish fortnightly.



Trade unionists support tenants protest at landlord's house

Members of the PR and Communications branch, via the affiliated Waltham Forest Trades Council (WFTC), offered support to tenants facing eviction in Walthamstow.

Tenants of the social housing flats on the Butterfields estate visited the landlords' home to complain about the eviction threat. The landlords' family listened to the tenants' complaints and accepted letters from the tenants and WFTC.



Butterfields estate residents



Waltham Forest Trades Council supports Butterfields residents