

## Helen M Stokes – ELECTION ADDRESS



I am standing as Branch Secretary for Lincolnshire UNISON 2022-23

I have been employed at Lincolnshire County Council for over 40 years and have always been active in my union, initially Nalgo, and then UNISON. I've held many roles and positions including Branch Chair, Assistant Branch Secretary, Communications officer, Learning Rep, Steward and have been active at regional and national level representing Lincolnshire members.

Since being elected as your Branch Secretary in March 2012 I have campaigned and negotiated locally, regionally, and nationally for the benefit of all our members.

Lincolnshire UNISON continues to evolve and change to meet the needs of our members. Working from Home these last 2 years has meant for many that our working practices have changed to meet our support to members. Teams, Zoom and socially distanced meetings are now the norm and here to stay, whilst we all try to remain positive looking to the future when we can meet face to face again.

The pandemic and its aftermath will bring more issues to the table, and we need a strong presence to be able to fight for the best outcomes for all our members.

I continuously innovate and research to bring new and modern ideas, practices, and skills to respond to our members needs. I have continued to represent your views and have opposed changes that would be detrimental to your work life and have been vocal in supporting detrimental attacks in the workplace.

Employees continue to appreciate the benefits of being in a union – not only in supporting them in the bad times but to offer other benefits including superb learning opportunities that are now delivered online, news and views on the work environment, health and safety, legal advice for personal issues alongside the insurance benefits and free Wills service. UNISON Welfare has supported members both financially in difficult times and offering advice and support as and when needed.

The role of Branch Secretary to such a large branch is a solid commitment to the members. Alongside my duties as the Branch Secretary – including attending meetings, job evaluation and advice, consultative meetings across the county and at region. I am the Lincolnshire delegate to various regional committees, and I am the regional delegate to the East Midlands Local Government forum and meet quarterly with elected councillors from the region and other trade unions.

The public sector continues to bear the brunt of the pandemic. I can offer the strong leadership and support to members required in these challenging times.

Many thanks for your continued support, *Helen*