

2017 – NOT A YEAR TO REMEMBER FONDLY

At the start of the year there was much anticipation and hope for 2017. There was hope that the campaigning the Branch had put so much effort into would keep the Tories from taking control at County Hall. However, our warnings were not heeded by some and the Branch's worse fears came to fruition.

In May, the Tories scraped a majority and unashamedly the previous Tory Leader Geoff Driver, now with a CBE and police bail for witness intimidation and perverting the course of justice, took the Council Leader role once again. He didn't take long to start wielding the axe.

Amidst threats to axe UNISON's Facility Time before the election, now elected, he carried out his vindictive threat and removed the union's facilities. That is not just a swipe at the unions, it's a swipe at you, an employee.

The emboldened but vulnerable Council Leader then set about removing the top officers at the Council on the premise that an independent report about the Council's finances commissioned by the previous administration, advised that the most senior management posts should be removed as soon as possible. It was, as



they say, 'fake news'!

More recently, the Leader decided that it would make good sense to attack the lowest paid 5,800 staff in the Council and remove the Foundation Living Wage. UNISON and others voiced fierce opposition to this very publicly and thankfully it resulted in the Cabinet backing down.

The Cabinet did not back down with the proposal to slash £11m from the staffing budget and threats to reduce staff annual leave and sick pay.

The Council is in denial about the finances. The Council will run out of

money next year and it will not be able to set a legal budget. The answer is simple; UNISON calls on the Leader to ask his own Government for some more money. They've done it in leafy Surrey and affluent Oxfordshire, so why can't they bail out Lancashire? Driver has so far rejected this call and you may question as to where is Lancashire in the Northern Powerhouse, compared to the devolution in Greater Manchester and Merseyside region.

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AGM

**Lancashire UNISON
Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 8th March at 4pm
Savoy Suite, Exchange
County Hall
Preston
PR1 0LD**

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Our thoughts are especially with the many members who have to work over the this period. So whenever you get the chance to celebrate, the team at Lancashire UNISON wish you A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR.

