

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE Informed

issue 43 June 2023

Jess Hurd



DM 2023

An action-packed weekend set the NUJ's agenda, celebrated the union's victories and paid tribute to those we have lost

Delegate Meeting 2023 opened with a minute's silence for journalists killed in 2022 and this year.

Delegates held cards, each with the name of one of the 73 journalists who lost their lives while doing their job.

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, said the union's tribute included a commitment to campaign for the right of journalists everywhere to hold the powerful to account without fear of persecution.

The previous DM was held online because of the pandemic, so getting together in London at the TUC's Congress centre was a cause for celebration, as was taking stock of the union's huge successes during the past two years.

Michelle Stanistreet told conference there had been "plenty of victories and achievements that exemplify the NUJ's vim and vigour - the organising work,

the recruitment, the industrial battles with many notable victories and definite collective gains". She paid tribute to the 1,200 journalists involved in the strike at Reach, which inspired a new generation of activists and resulted in significant pay rises for the lowest paid. Battles continue there with yet more redundancies at the newspaper group.

Michelle saluted the action at the BBC in England and Northern Ireland where members have been fighting to stop cuts in local radio which undermine the corporation's service to local communities.

From picket line to court room, Michelle described one victory featuring one of the three newly awarded Members of Honour, Chris Mullin (see page 10) when the union's successful case allowed him to protect his source. Delegates heard the union had also made legal challenges to

the government's Snooper's Charter, changes to the Official Secrets Act which would make journalists spies and on hostile trade union legislation.

The general secretary said that without a "a secure, financially confident union" none of this industrial, legal and campaigning work could continue. This set the scene for a lively debate on a national executive council (NEC) motion calling for a subscriptions' increase of about 5 per cent (depending on salary) for this year and next. Some delegates argued that low-paid media workers would struggle to afford an increase. But Chris Frost, NEC finance committee member, argued that, unpalatable as it may be, the union needed the rise to fulfil its functions. Another motion brought in a discount for under-25s. **The new rates.**

It was a packed weekend. John McDonnell, secretary of the NUJ's Parliamentary Group, spoke about the government's threats to journalists' rights and press freedom, the group's support of the union's journalists' safety work and its international efforts. He had visited Julian Assange in Belmarsh prison and attended Reach and BBC picket lines.

Dominique Davies, the niece of Dom Phillips, the environment journalist killed with his colleague Bruno Pereira in Brazil, also spoke (see page 12) and there was an exhibition in memory of the men at DM. The meeting also gave a sad goodbye to others from the union who had died since the previous DM.

The main business of DM - determining policy and creating campaigns to increase diversity in the media, improve media workers' pay, especially freelance rates, protect quality journalism, keep journalists safe, safeguard the industry against the threat of AI, and show international solidarity - succeeded in setting out the future work of the NUJ. A round-up of conference decisions starts on page six.

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Séamus Says



After the Covid-enforced break from in-person conferences it was good to be back in Congress House for DM 2023.

There was a somewhat surreal atmosphere in London. In the run-up to the Coronation many of the streets around Bloomsbury were bedecked with bunting, shop windows proudly displayed royal memorabilia and images of King Charles III seemed to pop up in the most unlikely places.

However, inside the conference hall it was NUJ business as usual, with plenty of heated debates, divided opinions, and a good measure of consensus on the key challenges facing journalists and journalism.

It was great to meet so many first time delegates as well as renewing acquaintances with long serving activists from across the union.

The opening pictorial tributes to those who had died since our last gathering, were a poignant reminder of the union's rich legacy and of the responsibility shared by us, who have inherited the NUJ's proud traditions. The diversity of that legacy was reflected in the member of honour tributes to Chris Mullin, John Lister, and Chris Wheal.

When our history is updated labour historians will record DM 2023 as the conference when NUJ delegates voted to delete the traditional chapel titles from the Rule Book.

The deletion of the titles Father and Mother of the chapel will provide an interesting footnote but of far greater significance to working journalists was the sense of urgency with which delegates debated late notice motions on Artificial Intelligence.

It is a measure of the speed with which AI has developed over the past few months that the full impact was not felt when the NEC and branches were drafting motions for DM 2023. The ethical and practical implications of AI and the threat to the very future of journalism will be a defining issue of 2023.

The issue of how journalists report on issues of sex and gender led to a fractious debate on Motion 38. On the face of it Motion 38, supported by the NEC,

appeared non-controversial, asking the union to *consider* issuing a statement on the right of journalists "to discuss all sides of the debate on sex and gender identity including trans rights and gender critical viewpoints."

In the debate opponents of the motion chose to focus on the issue of Trans rights, with the implication that by reporting gender critical comments journalists stand accused of questioning those rights. That was certainly not the intention of the tabling branch, Bristol, or the NEC.

"At a time when debate has become polarised, clear, and ethical reporting is more important than ever, values that have been core and central to the NUJ's Conduct of Conduct throughout the union's history."

Motion 38 was defeated but this does not mean that the union's policy has changed. The right to report, consistent with the NUJ Code of Conduct remains the cornerstone of union policy.

As the General Secretary wrote in a statement responding to media reports on the DM debate,

"At a time when debate has become polarised, clear, and ethical reporting is more important than ever, values that have been core and central to the NUJ's Conduct of Conduct throughout the union's history.

Journalists accurately reporting any matter of public interest are entitled to the protection of the NUJ and the NUJ's NEC will always have regard to the primacy of the Code of Conduct."

The full statement may be found on **Statement from Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary**



The Ethics Council has already committed to reviewing and updating the union's LGBT+ reporting guidelines, which already clearly vindicate the right of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people to fair, accurate and inclusive reporting of their life stories and concerns.

The NUJ is equally clear that media outlets have a leading role in creating a climate of open public discourse that is free of toxicity.

It is important that chapels, branches, and members engage in the Ethics Council consultation process. It is clear that members are committed to striking the right balance on issues of public importance in the context of the Code of Conduct. The proposed review will afford an opportunity for a more nuanced debate than was possible within the constraints of a time limited DM debate.

DM's decision to accept an increase in membership subscriptions secured the future of the union at a time when there is an increasing demand for our services.

Financial security, strong corporate governance and procedural rules and regulations provide a framework for any union's activities but it is the commitment of our members which drives the movement.

The recent strike at BBC Northern Ireland was a shining example of how committed, hardworking chapels can achieve results.

It can be argued that the spark was lit by our chapel at BBC Radio Foyle, motivated by the attack on local based services in the Northwest of Ireland but it was the united action of our three BBC chapels in Belfast and Derry which effectively closed down services on count day, following Northern Ireland's local elections.

Journalists love elections and it was painful for members to deny viewers access to election results but the response showed a clear understanding of the motivation for the strike.

The strike followed a major public campaign and negotiations on a range

of issues central to the working lives of BBC employees in Northern Ireland. Real progress has already been delivered.

No employees are now at risk of redundancy in BBC Radio Foyle through negotiated redeployment.

A clear structure has been put in place to resolve outstanding issues. Having suspended planned work to rule the NUJ chapel officers met with senior management, accompanied by officials, and this work continues apace. There is still much to be done and the work to rule mandate remains if needed.

The values which informed the strike in Northern Ireland are at the heart of our dispute on local radio in England.

Digital First is a mantra which ignores many of the core principles of public service broadcasting.

Accessible, universal independent public service broadcasting must remain a priority, an obsession with platforms at the expense of editorial excellence has no place in public service broadcasting.

Update

BBC strikes continue

More action in England and Northern Ireland over cuts in local radio



The dispute with the BBC and cuts and changes to scheduling in programming in local radio has intensified with journalists in England announcing a 48-hour strike and members in Northern Ireland staging a walk out to disrupt the reporting of the local election results.

The strike in England will be on Wednesday 7 June and Thursday 8 June. There will also be a lobby and rally in support of local radio in Parliament on

Wednesday 7 June. In Northern Ireland, members picketed in Derry and Belfast on Friday 5 May significantly disrupting radio and TV news coverage of the local elections. Adam Smyth, director of BBC Northern Ireland, was forced to read a news bulletin. The strikers won huge support from the local community, and broadcaster Eamonn Holmes joined the picket in Belfast. Cakes were delivered to the picket line and drivers honked in solidarity. The NUJ was sent **messages of support** from across the union, the

Irish Congress of Trade Unions and Belfast Trades Union Council. Picket line pictures can be seen on the **NUJ website**.

The union is concerned about staff shortages in Northern Ireland and a dramatic reduction in BBC Radio Foyle's morning news service. Séamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, said the NUJ wanted to continue negotiations with the BBC and the NUJ's priority was the maintenance of public service broadcasting.

At BBC Local, while some concessions were made in talks brokered by the arbitrator Acas, NUJ reps said they did not go far enough to provide a proper service for the 5.7m loyal local radio listeners. The vote to carry on the dispute, including the work to rule, was overwhelming. The journalists on strike will be from local radio, regional TV and online in England. A no confidence vote in the BBC Local senior management was carried.

Paul Siegert, NUJ national broadcasting organiser, said the fight was "about the heart of the BBC's public service remit", adding: "Local radio is not expensive in relative terms and we believe that the BBC could easily solve this dispute."

The campaign has been supported by petitions from the National Federation of the Blind of the UK and National Pensioners Convention.

Carole Cadwalladr

The union has expressed dismay at a decision by the UK Court of Appeal that will create a chilling impact on journalists and media freedom. Journalist Carole Cadwalladr has been ordered to pay 60 per cent of multimillionaire Arron Banks' costs, totalling more than £1m in libel damages from a TED talk she delivered

in 2019. **Support for Carole.**

Writing awards

The Orwell Society and NUJ Young Journalist's Awards winners have been **announced**, with an opinion piece addressing the complex challenges of maintaining a Welsh identity in modern Britain, and a review of Oscar-winning movie *Women Talking*

scooping the top prizes worth £1500 each. It was a record year for entries.

Local journalism

Michelle Stanistreet said of the government's response to an MPs' report on sustainability of local journalism: "Local journalism lies at the heart of communities who value its relevant, insightful content.

For several years, we have called for measures allowing publishers to receive fair reward for the editorial content published by large platforms with little gain for those who produce it." The NUJ will monitor the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill to ensure it properly checks the power of the tech giants. **Find out more.**

DM2023

NUJ's new top team

Natasha Hirst is the NUJ's president and Gerry Curran and Fran McNulty are joint vice-presidents. John Barsby continues as honorary treasurer

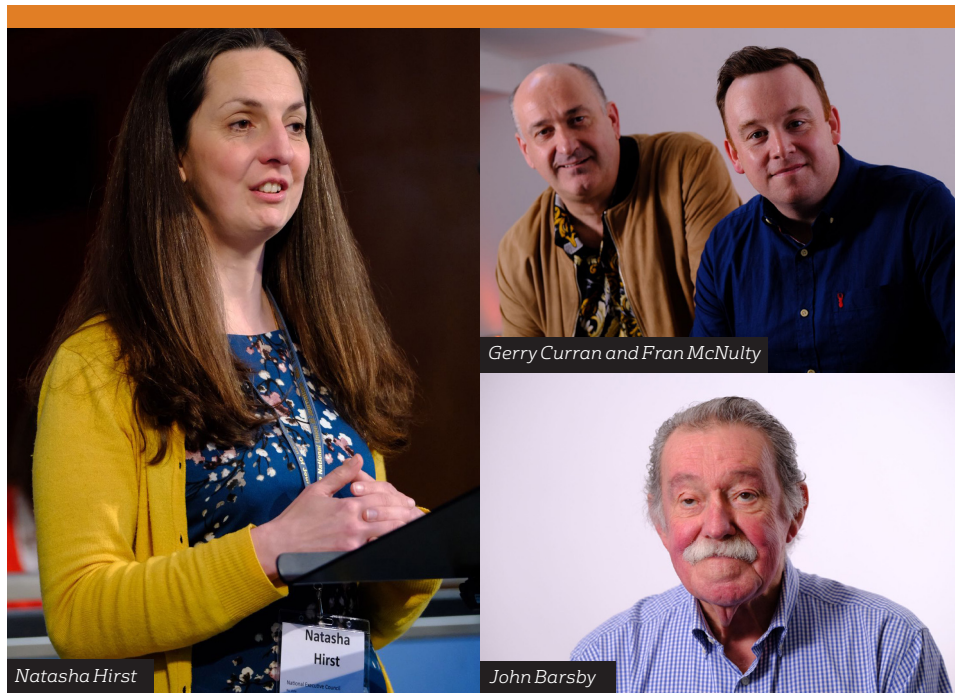
Natasha Hirst has been a super-active and energetic NUJ member as chair of the equality, photographers' and development councils and on the Welsh Executive Council and Disabled Members' Council.

She is a regular speaker at NUJ events and always keen to spread the word among students and young members, visiting journalism colleges and organising online get-togethers with the union's newest members.

She spoke to many motions during DM2023, including one to ensure the union would encourage employers to adopt domestic abuse policies. "Nine years ago," she told delegates, "I was living in a women's refuge and was unable to work for almost three years. It was the NUJ which helped me to rebuild my life and get my career back on track. Becoming an NUJ activist gave me a voice and provided opportunities to make a real difference for myself and others."

She first became active in the NUS disabled students' campaign while at university and served as NUS Wales president 2003-04. She was an equality officer for Wales TUC and now specialises in social justice, political and campaigns photography and is the chair of Disability Arts Cymru. She is deaf and neurodivergent and was educated in mainstream schools, learning British Sign Language as an adult.

Fran McNulty is an award-winning journalist and has been an active member of the NUJ for almost 20 years. He is a presenter and reporter for Prime Time, the flagship programme of Irish national broadcaster Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ). He has also worked in radio and has reported all over the world, from South Africa to Palestine, and he has covered stories as varied as papal conclaves and



illicit crack dens. Fran's stories focus on social justice issues and the poverty and deprivation in some communities.

He has held numerous officer roles in the union at RTÉ and sits on the Industrial Relations Tribunal, the station's disputes resolution tribunal, and is a member of the Irish Executive Council and an active recruiter for the union. He said: "As NUJ vice-president, I aim to build on the work of the union in promoting the importance of press freedom."

Gerry Curran is media relations adviser to the Courts Service in Ireland, and to five Chief Justices. He has a taste for colourful shirts and is a well-regarded and prominent figure in the media industry after starting a career in broadcasting 30 years' ago. In the past 25 years he has served on local, branch, Irish and NUJ-wide committees in a variety of capacities. He said: "I feel energised at

the possibilities of change, in the world, in my work, and in our union. This is where I think the 'in it together' approach of the NUJ can best use my talents and efforts to harness various sources of energy in the union towards our common goals."

Former president **John Barsby** was re-elected unopposed as the NUJ's honorary treasurer. John is a former BBC journalist and long-serving member of the national executive council.

One of Natasha's first tasks was to give a warm thanks to **Pierre Vicary**, the outgoing president. He said of his 55-year career as a journalist, he had been very honoured to be the NUJ president and one of the highlights had been addressing a meeting in Derry in support of Radio Foyle. As a night worker at the World Service, he had campaigned for better conditions for those working anti-social hours.



DM motions round-up

DM was back in person this year in London. It was a busy agenda featuring 108 motions and 7 composites.

Subscriptions

Conference agreed a subscription increase of around five per cent in July and the same increase next year. The national executive council's motion highlighted that NUJ subscription rates had remained static for seven years, while prices have increased by 13.4 per cent in the same period.

Chris Frost speaking on behalf of the NEC, said that while it might seem 'unpalatable', the union needed to increase subs to fulfil its functions. He acknowledged that members were facing difficult times and that was why the rise in subs would be substantially below the inflation rate.

Conference also passed a motion instructing the NEC to amend the rules to allow applicants under the age of 25 joining for the first time; asylum seeker members switching to refugee member status and temporary members to pay a membership fee of one third of

the grade one rate for their first year of membership.

A special conference will be held in the autumn to discuss accommodating journalists on low pay. The subs' rise required a two-thirds majority, but DM voted to change this to a simple majority from next DM. **Table of increases and debate.**

Mothers and Fathers of Chapel

Delegates voted narrowly to abolish the titles Mother of Chapel and Father of Chapel from the union's rule book. Behrang Tajdin, of the Equality Council, said it would be "a small step towards making the NUJ even more inclusive".

Séamus Dooley, assistant general secretary, argued titles with a century's history should not be discarded. If people preferred to be called a rep or chapel chair, that was already possible.

Artificial intelligence

NEC member, Tim Dawson, opened a debate on AI saying the potential implications for the NUJ were enormous in terms of copyright, the ethical production of images, the propagation of misinformation and replacement of visual creatives. DM supported the need for regulation at national and international levels, including support for an EU directive on algorithmic systems at work.

The NUJ will continue to work with the TUC's AI working group and educate members on the dangers of AI. DM instructed the NEC to campaign on the risks and challenges of AI, demand employers do not use AI in staff surveillance, monitoring, work allocation or appraisal without explicit collective agreement and transparency.

All DM2023 pictures are © Jess Hurd.

For a fuller account of conference debates go to the [NUJ website](http://www.nuj.org.uk).

Broadcasting

Just after DM, BBC members announced further strikes and a return to work to rule in England over schedule changes to local radio and in Northern Ireland over cuts at Radio Foyle.

DM delegates were told the dispute was about sticking up for the 5.7m loyal UK listeners of local radio who would be cheated of a proper service by the BBC's plans. There were emotional speeches describing how local radio members were made to re-apply for their jobs, in some instances given 60 seconds timed by a stopwatch to explain why they should not be sacked. The BBC News Channel and BBC World were shut and replaced by a new rolling news service, with many job losses. The World Service's budget was slashed by £28.5m per year with almost one in five posts axed, the BBC Persian and BBC Arabic radio stations closed and more language services moved to digital-only.

The union will call on the BBC to conduct a full equality audit following a Black Members' Council motion which revealed large numbers of black and minority ethnic staff were leaving the corporation.

The only good news was the government's U-turn on the privatisation of Channel 4.

Equality

Delegates heard how an Asian journalist at the BBC found herself passed over for promotion by less experienced white colleagues until the NUJ intervened, and a 2022 TUC survey revealed more than 120,000 of the UK workforce had quit their jobs because of racism. Conference agreed the union would lobby for mandatory ethnic minority pay gap reporting and for the industry to set up robust anti-racism policies.

Following Baroness Casey's review of behaviour in the Metropolitan Police Service, the union will meet the Met to discuss concerns about the safety of

women and other discriminated groups.

A Disabled Members' Council motion put in train a campaign to highlight and improve the accessibility of visual digital journalism, including infographics, for those with sight impairment.

The union will continue its support of the TUC Long Covid Support Employment Group and help increase reps' and employers' understanding of the condition.

DM agreed to a call by wheelchair tennis player and reporter, Gemma Stephenson, to lobby sport governing bodies to allow more online coverage of events so disabled journalists can report on them.

The 60+ Council's Jenny Vaughan said a "toxic cocktail of sexism and ageism" was pushing women out of work and the union's campaign against ageist discrimination will continue".

The Equality Council's constitution will be changed to include a seat for a member aged 30 or under.

A network to promote Irish language journalism and support journalists working in minority languages will be set up.



Media freedom

Supporting protection of sources, freedom of information and media plurality all featured in the media freedom debate. The union will continue to work with organisations supporting press diversification.

Motions paid tribute to NUJ member and ex-MP, Chris Mullin, for his principled stand in the defence of his sources in the Birmingham pub bombings case.

A motion condemning the use of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) to stifle legitimate reporting and debate was carried.

Conference heard parts of the media were prioritising page views over quality journalism, which skewed news values and replaced local news with generic content. The union will continue to campaign for quality journalism and challenge these practices.

DM instructed the union to work with the IFJ in its global effort to protect journalists' rights under the Human Rights Act and the European Convention.

The Ethics Council raised concerns about palace restrictions on the use of video clips from Queen Elizabeth II's funeral. Deborah Hobson, for the NEC, said it was an attempt by the establishment to constrain the freedom of broadcast media.

DM motions round-up

Safety of journalists

The union's work to protect and promote journalists' safety will continue and the NUJ is to consider the establishment of a press freedom tracker that monitors and reports violations in real time (including arrests of journalists, seizure of equipment, assaults and police interrogation).

Conference heard that broadcast journalists were being verbally and physically attacked while on jobs and the misogyny of online abuse was highlighted by Derry & North West branch. Delegates commended the excellent work conducted by the union to build relationships with the police, judiciary and the security industry, but called for urgent action to address continued problems encountered by reporters and photographers.

The union is working to have proceedings dropped and equipment returned to Ernest M, a French publisher arrested by the UK police on his way to the London Book Fair. "This happened in London's Olympia, not Beijing," said Anna Hervé, NEC books member.

The NUJ's health and safety committee will urge the Health and Safety Executive to record work-related suicides and support work-safety pressure group, the Hazards Campaign.

The union will also step up its attempts to get justice for the murdered Sunday World journalist, Martin O'Hagan.

Wages and conditions

The company-wide strike at Reach was one of the NUJ's finest hours, delegates heard, particularly in increasing minimum rates by between 14 and 44 per cent. It had boosted recruitment and offered a blueprint for organising other disputes. The bad news, relayed in a late-notice motion, was yet another redundancy round at the UK's biggest regional publisher.

An Equality Council motion called for a campaign to require employers to disclose salary ranges in job advertisements to stop people having to negotiate their pay at job interviews. This also discriminated against women and black and minority ethnic workers.

Conference was told that many companies were forcing people to work from home. While this suited some members, others complained that it meant they were picking up the costs of heating.

The pernicious use of digital "hits" to measure journalists' performance was causing stress and favouring celebrity stories over quality of reporting, and the DM agreed it would do all it could to resist this practice.

A World Service motion called for improved conditions for night workers because anti-social hours contributed to ill health and depression.

A campaign to promote diversity and tackle low starting salaries in publishing will be spearheaded by the Black Members' Council, Disabled Members' Council and Magazines and Books

Industrial Council in conjunction with Oxford branch.

Delegates instructed the union to mount a Pay Up for Freelance Journalism campaign to reverse the drastic decline in freelance earnings and to make major efforts to include pay rises for freelancers in all agreements with media employers.

In the run up to DM, the news broke that BuzzFeed was closing its news operation and Vice Media Group was filing for bankruptcy and seeking a buyer. These digital news organisations were once seen as the future of news, with BuzzFeed developing from producing cheeky listicles to Pulitzer-prize winning stories. But after a decade the bubble has burst. A motion from London Independent Broadcasting and New Media (now renamed the London Digital Media Branch) said the economic strategy of high debt and huge profitability had been exposed as a failure. The motion expressed solidarity with those who have lost their jobs and the union has now been tasked to investigate new funding models for journalism.

News recovery plan

Initiatives promoting public interest journalism and broadcasting were discussed. Delegates were told how the union's News Recovery Plan recommendations, including a levy on the tech giants to reboot the media industry, had been used to great effect in discussions with the Welsh, Scottish and Irish governments.

A Welsh working group recommended an institute to promote Welsh media. Martin Shipton, of the Welsh Executive Council, said this was needed because Books Council Wales had given grants to Newsquest to help set up a Welsh-language news service which closed after a few months.

A Scottish working group's report led to the launch of the Scottish Public Interest Journalism Institute. David Gow, Glasgow branch, said it would act as a champion of Scottish journalism where investment was desperately needed

Ethics

Motions on media intrusion into grief, fake news and on reporting poverty were debated. An Ethics Council motion passed by delegates noted concern about the lack of specialist guidance alongside court cases involving rape or sexual assault, particularly in reporting on

trans-identified defendants, and the council was told to seek specialist advice and create guidelines.

- The guidance on reporting on poverty will continue to be promoted.
- The importance of the union's code of conduct in combating fake news was highlighted by Gareth Simkins from the Public Relations and Communications Committee.

so the media could cover democratic institutions and reflect Scottish culture.

Siobhán Holliman, Irish Executive Council, said the Irish government needed to make the recommendations of the Future of Media Commission a reality and said there was concern the recommendation on public service broadcasting, which desperately needs funding, had been put back.

Government policies

A raft of government bills and legislation were putting in danger journalists' rights, delegates heard. Natasha Hirst, for the NEC, called the National Security Bill a hostile attack on journalism and said the introduction of a public interest defence was vital.

Christina Zaba, of the New Media Industrial Council, said the Online Safety Bill would compromise journalists' end-to-end-encryption of messages.

A Black Members' Council motion, amended by South Yorkshire branch, urged the NUJ to oppose the "terrible anti-refugee bill" and plans to deport refugees to Rwanda.

The union will work with its Parliamentary Group to oppose these laws, and organisations such the Refugee Council to speak out against abuses of basic human rights.

A Continental European Council motion calling for a campaign to persuade politicians to defeat the UK's Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) bill, which may put many British workers' rights at risk, was carried.

Recruitment and retention

The NUJ will create a recruitment working group following a motion from London Independent Broadcasting and New Media branch. It will include representation from areas where increases in remote working are making traditional approaches to recruitment and organisation more difficult.

The union will also fund research into the characteristics of the estimated 180,000 media workers in the UK to help with recruitment strategies.

Ireland

Delegates voted on motions about bogus self-employment, using money saved by zero-rated VAT on newspapers to support journalists, and to back the recommendations of the High Level Working Group on Collective Bargaining.

Jim Aughney from Dublin branch said the savings on VAT were going into the companies' pockets rather than journalism.



DM 2023

Members of Honour 2023

Chris Mullin, John Lister and Chris Wheal were announced as Members of Honour and delegates watched a video of colleagues who shared memories and recounted the achievements of the three men

It was after the first DM session that delegates were able to toast the three Members of Honour while watching the video, introduced by NUJ president Pierre Vicary.

Chris Mullin is a former Labour Party minister, renowned political diarist of the Tony Blair years and investigative journalist responsible for securing the release of the Birmingham Six. Last year, together with the NUJ, he saw off an attempt by West Midlands Police to reveal his source. In her report to conference, Michelle Stanistreet described standing outside the Old Bailey with Chris and his lawyers to celebrate winning his right not to hand over material used in his reports which led to the release of the six Irishmen wrongly imprisoned for the 1974 bombs set off in two pubs in Birmingham killing 21 people and injuring many more.

Gareth Peirce, a former journalist, now a solicitor and human rights activist, worked with him on the Birmingham Six case. "How lucky those six men were," she said. "And what a comrade he is." She praised him as a brilliant journalist and writer, and his skills as politician.

Chris Frost, chair of the NUJ's Ethics Council, said Chris Mullin had been a highly ethical journalist making sure he got good sources and was accurate and truthful – and that he protected his sources in one of the most important stories of our times.

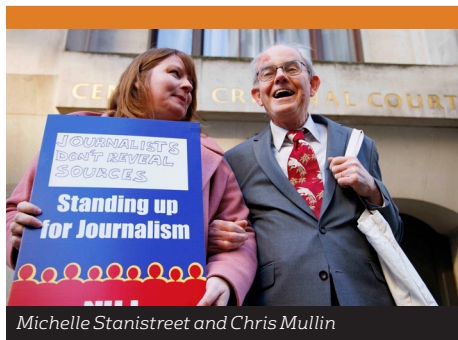
Delegates at DM would have spotted Dr John Lister sitting on the platform, in his 24-year role on the NUJ's Standing Orders Committee (SOC) which springs into action in the run up to DM to ensure motions are in order and receive a full and fair debate. His day job is as a



Dr John Lister



Chris Wheal



Michelle Stanistreet and Chris Mullin

Watch the video here



NUJ

senior lecturer in journalism and health journalism at Coventry University and he is a founder member of Keep Our NHS Public campaign. To mark the 60th anniversary of the National Health Service he wrote the hugely respected *The NHS After 60: for Patients or Profits?*

His SOC colleague Pauline Norris recalls first meeting him as a Brian May lookalike with a curly mop of hair. She praised his crossword puzzle mind and good sense of humour. Anna Wagstaff spoke of his contribution to Oxford branch – providing a cheerful and steady hand during the tough times including Wapping and the three-year strike at Robert Maxwell's Pergamon Press.

David recalled the "highest point" and the greatest challenge of his work on SOC as putting on the successful DM 2021 as an online event during the pandemic: "It went according to plan, we finished the agenda, nobody died, so we were pleased with that," he said.

Chris Wheal is an award-winning freelance journalist and trainer. Spurred by his experience following a car accident, he was determined to raise funds to help journalists in need and created a charity that eventually became NUJ Extra. The charity came into its own under his stewardship during the pandemic, offering a lifeline to members in financial difficulties after losing their jobs or shifts because of lockdowns, cuts or ill-health. Chris was also a member of the board of the Broadcast Journalism Training Council.

Broadcaster Ushma Rose gave an emotional testimony to the huge help Chris and the charity gave her in a time of need. "He helped me and my family get our lives back," she said.

DM2023

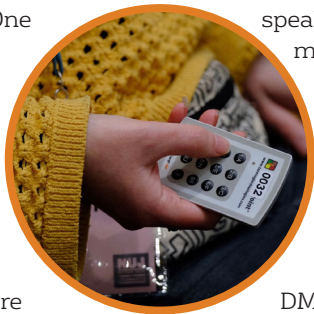
DM Peeps

It was good for everyone to be meeting back in person, to have a drink together, enjoy the social side of conference and a trip to London

Oooh! It reminds me of Strictly Come Dancing, said one delegate.

But much more exciting. One of the innovations carried over from the online DM was digital voting, with each delegate making decisions on motions and amendments via a voting pad, and the results were shown on the conference screens in real time. For Pierre Vicary, NUJ president and chair of the proceedings, it was the equivalent of having his own video assistant referee. Say goodbye to having to count waving hands, and the drama of locked doors and card votes.

Everyone knows that announcing yourself as a first-time speaker will earn you a clap and hopefully a more sympathetic ear from



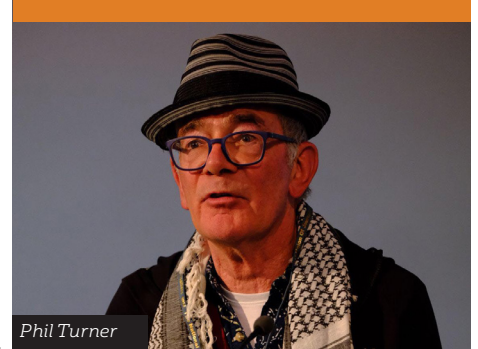
conference. For baby Leo it was more of a first-time gurgler – as he came to the speakers' podium strapped to his mother. Possibly the youngest to be blooded on the Delegate Meeting stage, he seemed to take the proceedings in his stride. And he wasn't the only one caught having a quick snooze.

For those sartorially minded, DM2023 was the year of the hat. Phil Turner, South Yorkshire branch, and Tony Adams, representing the Black Members' Council, were both noted sporting jaunty titfers. Even London Magazine's Alan Gibson was spotted being snapped by the conference photographer Jess Hurd in a trilby.

For next year's DM, we'll be back up north in Blackpool, so don't forget to pack your buckets and spades.



Tony Adams



Phil Turner

Cheers to charity

Member of Honour Chris Wheal was bowing out as chair of trustees of the union's welfare charity NUJ extra, and as part of his swansong he hosted the famous DM raffle in aid of NUJ Extra and the George Viner Memorial Fund which provides bursaries for black and minority ethnic journalism students.

Among the prizes were original cartoons by Kipper Williams, chocolates, book tokens, but mainly bottles of booze. As ever delegates and branches were very generous and £3,600 was raised in donations and pledges.



International

Tribute to Dom Phillips

Dominique Davies, niece of the environmental journalist, Dom Phillips, who was murdered in Brazil, spoke to conference.

Last year, Dom and indigenous activist Bruno Pereira were killed in the Amazon while carrying out research for Phillips' book about sustainable development in a region where criminal activity is damaging the environment.

Dominique said: "Their story is not just one of two men killed in the forest. It is one of the rights of the rainforest, and the protection and preservation of indigenous peoples and culture." There was some hope, she added, reflecting on the progress President Lula had made in protecting the environment in



comparison to his predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro. Delegates were able to view an exhibition, previously held in the union's London headquarters, which highlighted remaining issues, including illegal fishing, mining and deforestation.

Global solidarity

Conference agreed to support journalists around the world who are being persecuted

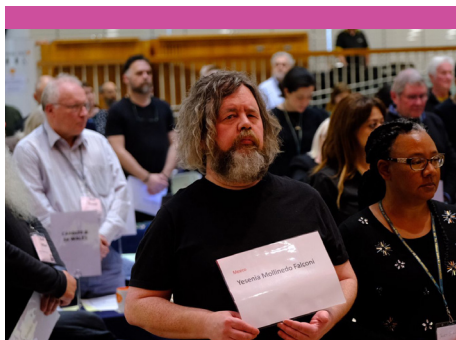
Jim Boumelha, chair of the NUJ's Policy Committee and International Federation of Journalists' treasurer, opened a series of DM debates about solidarity for journalists worldwide.

The IFJ's solidarity fund received €123,000 and distributed €63,000 of this through affiliates, the Afghanistan National Journalists' Union and Afghan Independent Journalists Association. It also paid small grants directly to at least 172 journalists and their families. Journalists reporting on the Ukraine war were provided with first-aid kits, safety equipment and emergency accommodation. Conference instructed the NEC to continue its annual contribution to the IFJ's international safety fund.

Conference paid tribute to killed journalists. Johny Cassidy (pictured), BBC London, held up the name of Yesenia Mollinedo Falconi, a Mexican journalist

shot dead with a colleague in May last year. She had covered alleged abuses of power at the Cosoleacaque mayor's office, Veracruz.

An NEC motion raised concerns about the fate of journalists in Hong Kong under the draconian National Security Law and conference agreed to work with our sister union in Hong Kong and offer support to journalists relocating from Hong Kong to the UK. Conference agreed to support



journalists in Turkey and Syria following the earthquake.

Jim Boumelha also spoke to a motion concerning legal representations to the International Criminal Court over the killings of Palestinian journalists, including Muath Amarnah, Nedal Eshtayeh, Ahmad Abu Hussein, Yaser Murtaja and Shireen Abu Akleh killed by Israeli soldiers. Shireen and her colleague, Ali Samoudi who survived the attack, were wearing protective vests marked Press.

Ben Cooper, Nottingham branch, urged the union to send the strongest possible protest to the Russian embassy over the arrest and detention of Wall Street Journal journalist, Evan Gershkovich, in March on charges of espionage – strongly denied by the newspaper and the US State Department.

Conference agreed the union would continue to support Iranian journalists under attack from the Iranian authorities at the BBC Persian Service and Iran International – noting at least 15 kidnapping and assassination attempts had been foiled by UK security services. The union will continue to campaign for the freedom of journalists jailed in Iran.