

## DEFEND FORDS PENSIONS!

**S**trike action is looming in Ford as the patience of both workers and pensioners runs out. The car giant is intent on pushing ahead with changing the way in which pensions are increased in retirement to take account of inflation (index-linking) so that they will be based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than the present Retail Price Index (RPI).

Rob Williams, NSSN anti-cuts convener & former Swansea Visteon (ex-Ford) Unite convener

As RPI is generally around 1% greater, pensioners could see their pensions reduced by up to 15% over their retirement. It seems that the Unite and GMB unions were offered a cash lump sum by the company, which the convenors saw as “derisory”. In any case, Ford workers should be demanding that their pensions are left alone as no lump sum will compensate for these losses. Ford are hiding behind government

legislation as an easy way to save themselves a few hundred £million off the deficit but its likely that they’d be back for more. They would like to make greater attacks on the final salary pension which is reported to be in deficit by about £2billion and they’ve just had a two year ‘holiday’ from paying anything in. This isn’t just about the 10,000 working in the plants in the UK but also over 40,000 pensioners.

The latest meeting between the unions and the company was lobbied by Ford pensioners and supported by ex-Ford Visteon pensioners and



*...continued from overleaf*

NSSN supporters, who are involved in a legal battle with Ford about their own pensions. Two years ago, almost to the day, 600 Visteon workers were sacked with 6 minutes notice. They only secured a decent redundancy because of their heroic campaigns of occupations and pickets in Belfast, Basildon and Enfield. However, the pensions of 3,000 present and future pensioners are in doubt because Visteon UK went into administration. Ford broke their promises to these ex-Ford workers, now they want to put their hands in the pockets of Ford workers and pensioners. This from a company who made \$6.6 billion profit last year and can afford to pay its two senior executives almost \$100million a year between them. The unions told the company that a strike ballot will be starting as soon as possible. No doubt many Ford

workers will wonder why they should work overtime at the moment for a company that treats them so badly.

This is a battle that can be won. Ford are hiding behind the laws of a government in crisis. Ford workers should invite their pensioners to attend their mass meetings to explain why their pensions are worth fighting for. They should also link up with public sector unions in a united struggle against any attempt by government and employer alike to attack our pensions. They should time action to coincide with action being considered by public sector unions and attend any protests organised by these workers. Whatever happens, the next meeting in the week beginning April 18th should be met with a mass lobby of Ford workers and pensioners.

### NATIONAL SHOP STEWARDS NETWORK CONFERENCE

- END THE ANTI-UNION LAWS
- FIGHT PENSION ATTACKS
- DEFEND THE NHS

9th July, 11:30am, London.

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