

City Comment: CWU makes wrong call on BT pay strike

CARTOON caricatures of unions leaders – barons! militants! – don't do much for the national debate. Generally they are neither, they are just trying to do the best for their members in the most trying circumstances.

Cliches about fat cat CEOs are barely any better.

[Philip Jansen](#) at [BT](#) is – you'll be shocked – a well-paid guy who was already very rich before he arrived at the telecom giant in 2019.

If the unions leading a two-day strike that starts tomorrow think he is some sort of Dickensian meanie trying to boost profits on the back of struggling staff they have missed their man.

He would be delighted to pay the workers more, much more, if he could justify it, but he has to think about next year and the year after that.

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One sort of suspects that Andy Kerr, the telecoms official at the [CWU](#), knows this and secretly thinks the BT pay rise to its staff is decent and uncomplicated.

With talks on a deal stalling last April BT decided to go ahead and just pay everybody an extra £1500 a year.

That might cover the coming increase in their energy bills. Moreover, they are already getting the money even while they down tools.

It's an important point of principle that they be allowed to withdraw their labour if they feel aggrieved, but one wonders if they might come to regret it.

There are surely worse places to work than BT and if the [strikes](#) have a genuine impact, well, that means the company will have fewer customers. Which means it needs fewer staff.

The CWU should rethink this one.