

Bath and District Group Newsletter

Issue 34

August 2022



To maintain purchasing power of our pensions

A Message from the Chairman

Alf Riley



WELCOME TO A NEW SEASON AND A NEW VENUE

As we begin a new season, circumstances have necessitated a review of the arrangements that have been in place since our existence.

CHANGE OF VENUE We were recently notified that the **CURC Bath** is closing its site, and so we have arranged for our meetings to take place at **The Hare and Hounds** at the top of Lansdown Rd. **Park & Ride Bus No. 31 runs from Milsom St. every 15 minutes** with convenient stops and pickups. We hope the new, more salubrious surroundings will tempt more of you to attend the meetings.



With so few attending recent meetings, there will only be 4 for 22/23 as follows:

September 20th; December 20th;

AGM March 21st; June 20th.

Usual times 2.30pm – 4pm

It is hoped to arrange a **Christmas Lunch on the 13th December**, most likely at The Hare and Hounds, but this will depend on numbers. Would anyone interested please contact our Treasurer, leaving names, telephone numbers/email addresses.

Our members will be aware of the economic difficulties the country, and indeed the world, is facing, and the upheaval taking place within our own political spheres. It is therefore extremely important that the work of the CSPA continues to focus on the things that matter most to us, and for this they rely on the support and feedback from groups such as ours. For your committee to provide that support, we in turn rely on those of our able and mobile members to take an active part by attending meetings and voicing their opinions and concerns.

President: Brian Robertson 3 Glencairn Court Pulteney Road BATH BA2 4HB 01225 313 813 brianrobertson816@gmail.com

Chairman: Alf Riley 22 Flowers Yard Chippenham SN15 3BN

01249 463 629 rly347@aol.com

Treasurer: Julian Hardenberg 27 Newbridge Road BATH BA1 3HE

01225 333 617 julian.hardenberg@btinternet.com



It was with great sadness that we learned of the death in March of **Neil Anderson**, another stalwart of our group. Neil, who was 93, joined the Scientific Civil Service in 1951, and worked for the Admiralty (later MOD) in Greenock, with a brief spell of detached duty in Teddington. He had later spells in Portland and Central London before being posted to Bath in 1970. After spells in the old Pulteney Street offices Endsleigh and Foxhill, he was posted to AMTE

Teddington in 1979, spending his final nine years commuting weekly between Teddington and his home in Bath where he settled permanently on his retirement. I first met up with Neil when I attended my first Bath meeting in 2007 and found him to be an extremely likeable, amiable and knowledgeable person who cared deeply for our group. His roles with us included Secretary and Chairman.

He attended meetings as often as he could, despite health and mobility difficulties, and I was able to thank him personally for all he had done for the group when he told me at our November 2019 meeting that he would be unable to attend any further meetings. Thanks are due to his daughter for providing such a comprehensive pen picture of Neil's MOD career.

BRIAN DANCEY Brian, another stalwart we recently lost, was another of our long serving members who, despite struggling with health and mobility problems, also made incredible efforts to attend our meetings and help keep our narratives focused. He arrived with his walking frame and his Carer with a determination that earned our admiration, and both he and Neil will be greatly missed.

CSPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will take place on the **12/13th October in Coventry**, and I will be attending as the Bath delegate, with our Treasurer Julian as Observer. Last year's was conducted as a ZOOM meeting but this year's it is hoped will be a fully staffed face to face meeting with around 200 delegates and observers from the CSPA groups. As delegate my role is to vote on your behalf at each of the many motions that will be put to them, and so we will hold a Bath committee meeting at the end of August to decide how the delegate should vote.

This is another reason why members should take advantage of the opportunity to express their opinions at our meetings to ensure the vote is representative of the views held at the local level.

At our own AGM in March, the members who attended were able to have extremely useful discussions with guest speakers **General Secretary Lisa Ray** and **Policy, Projects and Campaigns Manager Nicola Crichton**. We value these meetings very highly, but with few people attending we are unable to bring in outside speakers. I therefore urge all those who are able to attend please do so. If we can muster at least 15 from the 800 or so of our members, we will be able to bring in guest speakers of the calibre we were accustomed to before the pandemic.

CSPA SOUTH WEST REGIONAL MEETING

In June, our Treasurer Julian was our representative at the above meeting in Exeter, which was hosted by Les Calder with Deputy General Secretary David Luxton the Guest HQ Speaker.

David gave an update on CSPA priority campaigns and a new CSPA Programme. Discussions centred around Group issues and how HQ can assist in re-starting groups; Organisation, Recruitment and Membership Benefits, and Constitutional Amendments for October's planned full AGM. Following helpful feedback from two of our members and others concerning their difficulties in communicating with the Travel insurance broker Townergate, Julian was able to convey these to David which led to an Article in The Pensioner explaining what went wrong with the online application process. Current arrangements with Townergate are now being reviewed and you will be kept informed of any changes through our Newsletter and The Pensioner.

HQ RETIREMENTS

Two long serving members of HQ staff, Darlene Vendryes (Office Manager) and Linda Smith (Minute Secretary), retired in June. Most of my HQ communication was with Darlene, who was extremely helpful in making appropriate changes to our Bath personnel register, whilst also ensuring our Newsletters were sent out in accordance with our own timescales. I was able to show our appreciation by sending her a card passing on the best wishes of our group on her well earned retirement.

PENSIONS OVERPAYMENT CASE SUCCESS

CSPA officers John Jarvis and David Luxton recently highlighted the help and support individual members can expect when, thanks to their assistance following negotiations with the Cabinet office over a number of months, the Cabinet Office agreed to write off an overpayment of £27,000 which had been made to a CSPA member. It is with much sadness we learned that John passed away recently, and he will be greatly missed by all those who knew him.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

The CSPA has long been at the forefront of campaigns with Age UK, NPC and Later Life Ambitions to assist people on low incomes through the cost of living crisis, and some of the resulting financial packages are now coming through. Whilst the Chancellor also re-stated his commitment to the Triple Lock returning next year, pressure will continue to be maintained to ensure a change in Prime Minister, and possible change in Chancellor, does not affect this commitment.

NEW CSPA WEBSITE

The new website is now up and running at www.cspa.co.uk and it contains all you need to know about the campaigns and activities the CSPA is involved with, together with membership details including online applications.

CURRENT CSPA CAMPAIGNS

As our members are aware, the CSPA is celebrating 70 years of working to preserve the pensions of Civil Service pensioners. Below is a list of the campaigns the CSPA is currently engaged in:

- 1 A basic state pension set above the official poverty level and linked to a triple lock mechanism ie the best of increases in **inflation, average earnings or 2.5%**;
- 2 Retention of the Winter Fuel Allowance, free Bus Pass, TV Licence for over 75s and free prescriptions
- 3 An improved, sustainably funded National Health Service, with treatment based on clinical need and free at the point of delivery
- 4 Good quality, fairly funded and sustainable long-term care, community care, services to assist living at home, and improved benefits for Carers
- 5 Good public transport with concessionary bus passes which can also be used as a senior railcard for older people throughout the UK
- 6 The maintenance of a universal postal service at a uniform tariff; the retention of a network of local post offices and Banks' and an alternative way of accessing services for those not online, and
- 7 The right to consultation and active engagement on national and local issues affecting older people.

PENSIONS PORTAL

Civil Service pensioners are being encouraged to register for the **Pension Portal**. This is a quick and easy way to access your Pension increase information and P60s in one place. For those still to register, guidance may be obtained at <https://members.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/>

COST OF LIVING INCREASES – E NEWSLETTER

For latest information on CSPA actions to oppose various cost of living increases to members, campaigns are shared regularly through the enewsletter. Those wishing to receive it please send your email address to enquiries@cspa.co.uk

NEXT MEETING

Please do your best to attend our first meeting of the new season at The Hare and Hounds, Lansdown Rd Bath at 2.30pm – 4pm. September 20th. The active support of our members is vital to enable Bath & District to feed into the CSPA information streams so our views are properly represented. **Alf Riley**