

Meeting Agenda & Newsletter

September 2022

Sheffield & District Group Quarterly Members' Meeting – 2 pm, Thursday 15 September 2022

All members are invited to the Members' Meeting of the CSPA Sheffield & District Group commencing at **2 pm on Thursday 15 September 2022**, to be held at the Quaker Meeting House, Church Street, Sheffield S1 2EW.

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies. – Chair
2. Discussion of National AGM Motions, Nominations
3. Reports - Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary
4. Other Group-related Issues
5. Regional Update
6. National Issues
7. Any Other Business (*to be notified to the Chair or Secretary before the meeting starts*).

Forthcoming Meetings

Group Members' Meetings have been arranged for the following dates in 2022/23, at the Quaker Meeting House, Sheffield:

Thursday 15 December, Thursday 16 March, Thursday 17 June,
Thursday 14 September, Thursday 14 December.

The **Group Executive Committee** will meet (via Zoom) on:
Thursday 27 October, Thursday 2 February, Thursday 4 May,
Thursday 3 August, Thursday 26 October.

Sheffield & District Committee Members

Group Chair:

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Membership Secretary:

Linda Woollen
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Committee Members:

Andy Aitchison
Steve Anderson
Les Priestley
Judith Roe (Organiser)
Beryl Wardley (Social Secretary)

Sheffield & District Group

NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the September 2022 Group Newsletter

In these uncertain times, it's with much regret that I need to publish this Newsletter ahead of knowing who the new Prime Minister will be and the likely implications for our Members.

However, the challenges we all face are already crystal clear and, by the time we meet on the 15th, the approach of the new Administration should be clearer. The National AGM next month will be key to setting the tone for our response to new challenges to our Members' well being

The September meeting will be your opportunity to raise any comments, questions, observations or information you would like to share with other Group members. For more information, please contact **John Houghton**, Group Secretary, - my contact details are shown at the bottom of this page.

Moving forward together

Sheffield & District Group has a proud history of activity, representing all Members in our area. The reports by Andy Aitchison and Mike Buckley in this edition highlight the high number of issues we are facing that could be detrimental to all of us.

We know a number of Groups depend on 1 or 2 activists to survive, some meetings are poorly attended and some Groups are effectively defunct. There is now talk of abandoning Groups and organising Members on a Regional basis.

I believe we need to fully support Mike's assertion that a Regional focus would mean accepting the demise of Groups, and the road to eventual oblivion.

BUT we do need your help. Please do come to Members' meetings when you can, and play your part in protecting your pension.

Please don't forget that **CSPA** is the **only** campaign organisation whose primary focus is Civil Service pensioners.

John Houghton

Sheffield & District Group welcomes new member:

Mrs P L Williams

Please help us to Recruit New Members

We no longer have ready access to people in the Civil and Public Services who are approaching retirement. We need everyone's help to make them aware of the services and social inclusion we offer.

Do you know somebody, eligible to be a CSPA member, who hasn't joined yet? If so, please tell them about us,

Sheffield & District Group provides regular opportunities to catch up, socialise, meet new people and discuss issues of importance. We have interesting talks from guest speakers and arrange social events. We participate fully in the work of CSPA, campaigning on our behalf, on issues of local and national significance. So, why not invite them to join us?

John Jarvis

It is with much sadness that we learned that CSPA Administration Secretary, John Jarvis passed away on 16 July. We offer our heartfelt condolences to John's family and close friends

Group Update

Quarterly Members' Meeting - Thursday 15 September - What's the meeting about?

- We'll be deciding how our delegates should vote on key motions at the CSPA National AGM, next month..
- Group Officers will update you about what we're doing on your behalf and you'll get the chance to have your say.
- You'll get an update on what CSPA is doing to improve its services for you.
- You can share any issues or concerns with other Members and the Group Committee
- As ever,, it's a great opportunity to meet up with other CSPA Members in a safe and friendly environment. Coffee and biscuits will be available from 1.30 until the meeting starts at 2pm.

CSPA North East Regional Representative Andy Aitchison reports back from the Yorkshire and Humber Pensioners Convention

The latest quarterly meeting of the Yorkshire and Humber Branch of the National Pensioners Convention took place on Thursday 21st July at Worsborough Bridge Miners Welfare Club.

The meeting was pretty well attended and the guest speaker was Heather Blakey from Unite Community Yorkshire and Humber. She gave a very good overview of the benefits and purposes of the organisation, which is in essence a union for the unwaged - i.e unemployed, unpaid carers, volunteers, students and retired people. There are lots of ways to get involved and a great range of free education courses available. The resources of the Unite Union are available to members.

After a short Q&A taken by Heather Blakey, the branch officers gave their reports. Former Secretary Paul Russell (now Chair) said he was looking forward to taking more of a back seat. New Secretary Fran Postlethwaite advised the meeting that NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt has announced a closer relationship with the Unite union for campaigning purposes. There will also be a move to produce regional newsletters to publish local information about campaigning. Some NPC working parties still have vacancies and volunteers were sought. Fran has been reviewing the Y&H NPC postal address list and has slimmed it down to 28 with most members now receiving info via e-mail only, which saves the branch money. Treasurer Jill Ainsworth advised that the current balance of Y&HNPC was a healthy £6894. Most recent expenses related to placards for a rally in Leeds. Offers were sought from local affiliated groups to host future quarterly meetings.

There then followed a report on the recent Cost of Living rallies in London and Leeds. These appeared to have gone well with good speakers and plenty of support. A branch motion regarding train ticket office closures and station staffing was then discussed in detail. Increasing problems are being encountered as a result of the closures, particularly in regard to assistance for elderly and disabled passengers. It was agreed that it needs to be an NPC national issue. It was suggested that someone from RMT union should be invited to the next quarterly meeting. After a number of local affiliated group reports the meeting was closed.

The next meeting of YHPC will be at 11am on Thursday 20th October at the Priory Centre in York.

A venue and date have finally been set for the 1-day NPC Annual Convention which will replace the usual 3-day gathering for this year. It will take place between 10am and 4.30pm on Wednesday 21st September in Birmingham at the Council House Banqueting Suite. Places must be registered in advance via NPC Head Office and tickets will cost £5. I am hoping to attend myself as a representative of CSPA.

As usual I send warmest greetings to you all at Sheffield Group and I hope to see some of you at the December meeting.

Regional and National Issues

CSPA Northeast Regional Meeting – 7 July 2022, Group Chair, Mike Buckley, reports

Andy Aitchison, Northeast Regional Representative and Deputy General Secretary, David Luxton led the meeting.

In his presentation, David Luxton highlighted that this meeting was one of the first face to face meetings since 2019 – as a membership organisation CSPA had been hit hard by lockdown and the inability of members to meet. The pandemic exposed the fact that CSPA systems – especially those around new members joining - were dependent on HQ being open. It wasn't. CSPA now recognised the need to modernise, whilst being mindful of the Digital Exclusion agenda. He expected a new website to be up around early August.

This year is of course the 70th anniversary of CSPA, founded to defend the value of Civil Service Pensions. Sue Gray (Civil Servant leading on ethics investigations!) has been invited to the Gala Dinner being held at this year's AGM.

Civil Service Pensions increases properly uprated by the September rate of CPI are likely to be 10%. He noted that pensioners' opportunities to increase their income once retired were very limited. He pointed out that the State Pension Triple Lock, in principle aimed to bring the value of the State Pension closer to earnings, had the earnings link always been kept, State Pension would now be some £70 per week higher. David wondered whether Government would actually honour either promise this year. We need to look at the rate of inflation that pensioners experience. Energy prices had already hit hard, with a further large increase in the Energy Cap expected this year.

These issues will continue to be the focus of CSPA's current campaigning activity.

Moving to membership levels, David told us that generally CSPA is not replacing the inevitable loss of members. We had only 10% of retired Civil Servants in members (measured against the numbers in receipt of a Civil Service Pension). CSPA was trying to get a flag on the MyCSP website, and had taken Stands at previous Civil, Service Live events though the cost was now prohibitive.

'McCloud' – the remedy of the age discriminatory basis of Pension Reform back in 2015. Over 600 people had attended the webinars run by CSPA with the Cabinet Office. A Pensions Case Manager had been appointed.

Some headway was being made against the removal of survivor benefits on remarriage (applies to those who retired before 2002).

David saw a growing problem of poor attendance at and closure of Groups. Too many Groups are reliant on one or two activists. Would it be better to focus on the Region as the hub?

David reviewed the Travel Insurance 'mess'. CSPA is now in very promising talks with the Civil Service Insurance Society. A new offer may well launch in September.

RECRUITMENT. Picked out in capitals as this was a really good, focussed discussion about the prime need to Recruit. To focus on the Region would be to accept the demise of Groups, and the road to eventual oblivion. Actively seeking to recruit new members must become a key focus of activity at all levels in CSPA.

Mike Buckley

The Charity for Civil Servants - There to help you when you need it most

Some of you may remember this as the Benevolent Fund and many of us donated to it before retirement. It is there to support past and present civil servants. They will listen without judgement and provide practical and emotional support. The Charity helps people in many ways including: direct financial assistance, advice on money matters, advice and resources to help with mental health issues, tools and information to support carers. Many of us are feeling the pressure with rising costs and unexpected crises may hit us at any time don't struggle on alone if you feel you need some extra help contact them on their free confidential helpline 0800 056 2424 or by email help@foryourbyyou.org.uk.
