



CSPA WEST MERCIA GROUP NEWSLETTER NUMBER 3 - AUTUMN 2022

CSPA West Mercia Group Officers – 2022/23

Chair: Valerie Farmer	01684 569266	valerie.farmer@tiscali.co.uk
Deputy Chair: Malcolm Moore	01531 660457	malcolm.m.a.moore@btinternet.com
Treasurer: Victor Reed	01905 641138	victorandedna@gmail.com
Secretary: David Humphreys (also covers Membership)	01562 631188	dnhumphreys@gmail.com

Welcome to CSPA West Mercia Group

CSPA West Mercia Group was inaugurated at meetings in Worcester and Shrewsbury in late February 2022. The Group has over 900 members residing in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. CSPA has nearly 48,000 members.

Our next West Mercia Group meetings are on **Monday 12 September at 2.00pm at The Quaker Meeting House in Sansome Walk, Worcester, and on Wednesday 14 September 2022 at 1.30pm at Shrewsbury United Reformed Church, Coleham Head.** Everyone is welcome to attend either or both meetings. The Worcester meeting will be preceded by a light pub lunch at the nearby Postal Order.

Our final 2022 meeting takes place at the Quaker Meeting House in Worcester on **Monday 5 December.**

We also plan to have occasional Zoom gatherings. The Zoom link will be sent in good time to people in our email group. **Anyone who hasn't signed up to the email group should send their email address to the Group Secretary.**

If you can't attend one of our meetings but wish us to consider an issue of concern to older people, please contact one of the Group Officers beforehand.

Payment of Civil Service Pensions – MyCSP

MyCSP pays your Civil Service pension. Its contact details are: MyCSP, PO Box 2017, Liverpool, L69 2BU; Phone: 0300 123 6666 (Mon to Fri - 0830 to 1800); Email: contactcentre@mycsp.co.uk; MyCSP website: <http://www.mycsp.co.uk>. For more information about the civil service pension scheme, including “what to expect” guides, the scheme website is: <http://civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk>. That website will also show you how to register for the **Civil Service Pension Portal**, which will give you online access to your pension information.

CSPA National AGM – October 2022

After an absence of 3 years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there will be an in-person CSPA National AGM from 12 to 13 October 2022 at Chesford Grange Hotel, near Kenilworth. The National AGM is the sovereign, democratic, decision-making body of CSPA. It elects the National Officers and Executive Council for the coming year, receives the annual report and statement of accounts, and determines our future policies and priorities.

We decided at the Group meetings in June to submit three motions for discussion at the National AGM. The key points of the three Group motions are set out below.

Our National AGM Motion on Digital Exclusion

Key points - the inexorable move by public authorities to deliver more key services. Unjustified assumptions are being made about the ability of some users to cope. Around 6% of UK households – 1.5m homes – have no internet access. Technology must not be allowed to drive people to the side of their own lives. The growing rarity of person-to-person interactions – including when simply needing seeking advice and information – can exacerbate a sense of isolation among the lonely. The diversity of provision needs to be protected. Alternative options must be maintained for important services. Contactable telephone numbers and staffed public access points should always be available. This will inevitably cost more than a purely digital option. The National AGM accepts that is the price of being fair to those who find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. The Executive Council, in concert with Branches and Groups, must continue to publicise and to support campaigns to ensure that, for people without online access or skills – who tend to be older, poorer and more vulnerable – another social barrier will not have been erected. We also need to lead by example in our own organisation, as the difficulties and distress caused by the new CSPA travel insurance arrangements have painfully highlighted.

Our National AGM Motion on Membership

Key points – the drop in CSPA membership from nearly 70,000 at its peak to currently 48,000 poses an existential threat. The AGM directs the Executive Council to make membership recruitment and retention its **No 1 Priority** and:

- urgently devise, publish and implement an imaginative programme of work, with the required resources, in concert with Branches, Groups and members, so that the benefits and services offered by CSPA membership can reach the widest possible audience throughout 2023
- revisit the 2014 Forward Options Working Party conclusion that there would be a lot to gain from having a single organisation for retired civil servants.

Our National AGM Motion on Public Toilets

Key points – the loss of over 600 public toilets in recent years. The AGM directs the Executive Council, working in concert with the Groups, Branches and members, and with our affiliated organisations, to publicise and support campaigns for:

1. Section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936 to be updated to make it a statutory requirement for local authorities to provide adequate public toilet facilities that are:

- Publicly owned
- Free at the point of need
- Accessible to all
- meet statutory hygiene standards
- protect people's safety and dignity
- staffed by a reputable organisation, or, as a minimum, are inspected on a frequent basis; and
- signposted clearly in the local area.

2. The British Toilet Association's call for a National Toilet Map.

3. "Changing Places" toilets to be installed in all public venues, so that everyone, regardless of their access needs or disability or reliance on the assistance of carers or specialist equipment, can use a hygienic toilet facility with dignity.

4. Local authorities to ensure that public toilets are considered in their needs assessments of older and disabled people and in supporting their independence.

5. Central Government to provide adequate funding to local authorities for the provision of public toilets.

Exclusive CSPA Membership Offers and Services

"The Pensioner" magazine reminds you of CSPA's exclusive offers and services. For example, Hanson Wealth Management can offer advice on **financial planning**. Motor Source is a competitive **car purchase and leasing service**. MyCarNeedsA gives access to over **4000 vetted garages**. CSIS **Home and Motor insurance** and the **CSPA Travel Insurance** scheme are well worth investigation. Prepaid **My Cashback cards** get you between 3% and 15% cashback discounts on purchases from major retailers such as Marks and Spencer, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Boots, Argos, B&Q, Homebase, and Curry's/PC World. The first class, low-cost **audiology and hearing services** provided by Hearing Star are proving increasingly popular among CSPA members. Lyons Davidson - telephone number 01752 300 584 - provide the **free legal advice service**. The solicitors may ask for your CSPA membership number, which is shown on the posted copies of this newsletter. Discounted **English Heritage membership** is now available. There is a new discounted **Lost Luggage Protection scheme**. BC Technologies provide **free computer support**. Some of the offers require an internet connection, but many can still be accessed by phone. Contact the Group Secretary if you need any help.

Your CSPA Group - Use It or Lose It!

West Mercia Group brings together over 900 local CSPA members, with a view to stimulating interest in and support for CSPA aims. We meet at least quarterly in various locations, issue a quarterly Newsletter, and communicate additionally through a 150-strong email group, and through occasional Zoom gatherings. We want everyone to derive maximum benefit from their CSPA membership. Not everyone is able to or wishes to go to meetings in our far-flung area. So, if there are local issues, e.g. bus services, social care, health care, public services such as libraries and public toilets - which you would like us to take an interest in, please contact one of the Group Officers. Our Group activities support CSPA's vital work at national level.

Everyone can extol the virtues of CSPA membership to all our retired civil and public service colleagues. Now we can again go on holiday abroad, the competitive premium of our Travel Insurance Scheme will save them far more than the small annual subscription to join CSPA. A prospective member can download an application form at <https://www.cspa.co.uk/> and Freepost it to CSPA HQ in Croydon. Or call 020 8688 8418 for a membership pack.

If you believe the West Mercia Group can do something differently/better to stimulate local interest and/or attendance at meetings, please tell one of your Group Officers.

Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance West Mercia Group
David Humphreys (Group Secretary) Telephone: 01562 631188 and 07906264335
Email: dnhumphreys@gmail.com