



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Record of decisions

RECORD OF DECISIONS

The 67th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Civil Services Pensioners' Alliance was held at the Chesford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth from 2.00pm to 5.00pm on Wednesday 9 October and 9.15am to 3.00pm on Thursday 10 October 2019.

In the Chair: Brian Sturtevant

Present: Vice-Chairman, Secretary Administration, Secretary Organisation, 14 members of the Executive Council (EC), three tellers, five scrutineers, the General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, National Treasurer, three members of the Standing Orders Committee and the minutes secretary. 88 Branch and Group representatives recorded, together with EC members, HQ staff, sponsored representatives, guests and observers. The total number in attendance was 167.

Unavoidably absent: The Chairman referred to the delegate list which showed absences and added that apologies had been received from Marilyn Balderstone, Stockport Group.

1. Opening of the AGM by the Town Deputy Mayor of Kenilworth

The Chairman commenced proceedings and welcomed delegates, sponsored representatives and guests to the 67th AGM. He introduced Councillor Richard Dickson, the Town Deputy Mayor, provided background details of his work and civic history, and invited him to formally open the AGM.

Councillor Dickson thanked the Chairman for his introduction and said that it was a pleasure to have the Alliance AGM for a second year at the Chesford Grange Hotel. He was pleased to welcome delegates and guests to Kenilworth as it had a huge amount to offer visitors. He said that Kenilworth was a special place to live, although it had its challenges, with a quarter of its residents over the age of 65. He spoke about the shortage of suitable properties for older people, saying that action was required to build more retirement villages.



Deputy Mayor of Kenilworth Councillor Richard Dickson

After twenty years working in the financial sector, he had then moved on to work in the not-for-profit sector and latterly had worked for Coventry University since 2017. The Deputy Mayor spoke about his work in the not-for-profit sector and his awareness of the need for organisations to work collaboratively to seek ways of doing things for the greater good of the community. He was aware of the work of the Alliance, with others, to achieve improvements on vital issues such as health care.

Finally, the Deputy Mayor said that he hoped that an end would be brought to the whole Brexit situation to enable concentration to be given to the many social issues that required attention.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Mayor for opening the AGM and took pleasure in presenting him with a cheque for his chosen charity. After expressing his appreciation, the Deputy Mayor advised that funds would be given to a local community centre that provided activities for a lot of older people in the area. He expressed his best wishes for a successful AGM.

2. Chairman's welcome and opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed familiar faces and new delegates to the 67th AGM and second visit to the Chesford Grange Hotel in Kenilworth. He extended a special welcome to guests, which



Delegates attending the AGM

included LLA partners, and to the new General Secretary, Lisa Ray, the first Alliance female GS, who had already demonstrated her leadership and commitment. He said that the previous GS, Mike Duggan, had shown new levels of organisation and commitment and was sure that Lisa would continue this. The Chairman spoke of new innovations she had introduced: the 'ideas wall' in the foyer and a special breakout meeting of female delegates at the close of business. A welcome was also given to the new Assistant General Secretary, David Luxton, who had already demonstrated his enthusiasm and dynamism since taking up his post.

The Chairman advised that apologies for absence had been received from two EC members, Anne Bryant and Dave Brown. Dave Brown had indicated that he wished to stand down from EC duties, as well as Jeff Prout and Martin Allwright. He thanked the outgoing EC members for their valued contribution and hoped that they would continue to participate in Alliance affairs in the future.

The Chairman advised of a change in proceedings in that there would be no election for the North West Regional Representative. Unfortunately, Paul Heaney was experiencing serious medical issues and had, as a result, stood down. Harry Brett was therefore elected unopposed. The Chairman expressed his very

best wishes to Paul and looked forward to seeing him in action at the 2020 AGM.

In his general address to the AGM, the Chairman stated that little progress had been made in Parliament over the past year due to Ministers' preoccupation with Brexit. He said that this would be covered in more detail by the GS in her presentation of the Annual Report. The Chairman spoke of the importance of campaigning on issues and the need for members' support. The EC needed support to get on with what needed to be done and would be able to lead the Alliance if it received the full backing of members. With the likelihood of a general election coming up, the Alliance needed to be ready for it.

On a more light hearted note, the Chairman said that his team, Crystal Palace, had experienced a very good season and was level with Chelsea. He was sorry that he had not been able to share this information when Mike Duggan had been GS! He concluded that the season ahead for the Alliance would also be fruitful. The Chairman advised the AGM voting strengths as advised by the scrutineers.

Total groups and branches present: **57**

Total card vote: **35,687**

Two thirds majority: **23,791**

3. Appointment of tellers and scrutineers

The appointment of tellers comprising John Amos (Senior), Mike Duggan, Rodney Champ and Pat Groves was **agreed**. Also **agreed** was the appointment of scrutineers comprising Darlene Vendryes (Senior), Marion McAuliffe, Sandra Roberts and Sylvia Sturtevant.

4. Report of the Standing Orders Committee (SOC)

The Chairman of the SOC, Roy Lewis, moved adoption of the SOC report and supplementary reports 1 and 2, and firstly apologised for the delay in the circulation of supplementary report 2. He said that the SOC had established the potential of 24 debates on motions and to get through these in the time available he asked delegates to exercise self-discipline and follow



Executive Council members preparing for the AGM

the customary timings for debate. Roy advised that the SOC would perhaps have to adjust the length of moving speeches in order to get through business, but, if necessary, the Chairman would be advised of any adjustment in timings.

Roy apologised to the Aldershot & District Group for not making it clear why its constitutional amendment was 'X' marked and explained the reasoning behind this. He pointed out the minor amendments to placings and markings in the SOC report and also referred to the changed marking of motion D50 to A50 received from the Northern Ireland Branch.

Roy explained some of the conduct of business at the AGM and concluded by requesting that Groups and Branches needed to alert CSPA head office if they intended to discuss the movement of reference backs or emergency motions on their committee so that necessary timetable adjustments could be made.

Alan Edgar moved reference back on motion X2 on behalf of Aldershot & District, stating that the Group had proposed this straightforward motion with the intent of aiding recruitment, making the Alliance more attractive to new members. Roy opposed on the grounds previously explained. On being put to a vote, the reference back was **lost**.

Alan Edgar, Aldershot & District, moved a further reference back on motion X42, and pointed out that it was important that climate

change be discussed at the AGM. Although sympathetic, Roy stated that the SOC opposed the reference back on the grounds that it was overly ambitious for an organisation such as the Alliance, with limited income and resources.

A vote was taken on the reference back, and it was **lost**.

The AGM then **agreed** the adoption of the SOC report.

5. Adoption of the Report of the Annual General Meeting held on 10 and 11 October 2018

The adoption of the report of the AGM held on 10 and 11 October 2018 was **agreed**.

6. Any matters arising

There were no matters arising.

7. Presentations of 2018 Annual Report and 2018 Statement of Accounts

The General Secretary (GS), Lisa Ray, on behalf of the EC, said that she was proud to move adoption of the 2018 annual report, which had been circulated as a supplement to the 2019 Summer edition of *The Pensioner*.

The GS spoke about the tumultuous political period experienced since she had been appointed GS in November 2018, with a new prime minister and seemingly a new era with regard to the type of behaviour deemed as acceptable in government. Despite these unusual conditions, the Alliance had steered a steady path to ensure that the interests of its members and older people were protected. She went on to highlight the core activities of the Alliance over the past year and looked to the future, focusing on where the EC needed to head.

Much of the progress on securing improvements had been hampered by the political situation being dominated by Brexit. Despite this, the Alliance continued to lobby with its partners on the continuation of the European Health Insurance Card, reciprocal pensions and healthcare arrangements and the rights of EU workers in the health and social care sectors. The EC would also consider future work with Age Platform Europe.



General Secretary Lisa Ray moves adoption of the Annual Report

The GS said that despite these difficult circumstances, the Alliance continued to progress issues on behalf of members and the annual report indicated the sheer amount of work the EC, Officers, Groups, Branches and members had achieved. She thanked everyone who had contributed to another successful year. She spoke about the work that had taken place on civil service pensions and said that the team at Alliance headquarters comprising David Luxton, John Jarvis and herself had continued to develop a good working relationship with the Cabinet Office. She was pleased to welcome Dominic Rowley from the CO to the AGM.

The GS referred to the recent guaranteed minimum pensions exercise and said this had required head office putting in extra staff resources to deal with the level of enquiries.

Further concern to members had been in relation to letters being received from MyCSP following a framework assurance review checking that pensions were correct. The GS also spoke about a proposed campaign on widows' pensions for life and in post-retirement marriages.

Turning to the state pension, the GS stated that the Alliance had joined with colleagues in the Public Service Pensioners' Council and Later Life Ambitions (LLA) to stress that the government could not make any increase to state pension age without first looking at life expectancy.

The GS said that fruitful work continued with LLA partners and was pleased to welcome Steve Edwards, National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO), and Malcolm Booth, National Federation of Occupational Pensioners (NFOP), to the AGM. She outlined the issues dealt with by LLA, the most recent of which was the updating of policy positions in readiness for the upcoming general election. The LLA also dealt with intergenerational fairness and social care amongst other issues.

Addressing the future of the Alliance, the GS was pleased to report that with its finances and recruitment, the period since the last AGM had been one of consolidation, stability and steady progress, with members being well served by the excellent team at head office.

She spoke about the work of the Deputy General Secretary (DGS) and O&R Committee, which had resulted in the production of the 'Way Forward' report to be presented to the AGM that afternoon. The report was an ongoing process and feedback to the O&R Committee was welcomed. She also mentioned the excellent membership benefits negotiated by the DGS.

The GS welcomed David Luxton to the head office team, and said that he had hit the ground running since joining the Alliance and had worked tirelessly with John Jarvis to provide an excellent service to members experiencing problems with civil service pensions.

Head office had expanded its communications with a regular emailed newsletter, together with a twitter account and a Facebook page. The administrative team had continued to ensure that the needs of Groups, Branches and members were met efficiently and speedily.

The GS mentioned the National Treasurer, who had continued to provide an efficient service and handover of accounting duties to BM Howarth Ltd on behalf of the Alliance. With her excellent financial management, the Alliance looked set to deliver a surplus in the 2019 accounts. The GS thanked the talented and dedicated head office team for its support over the last year.

Thanks, and welcomes were extended to friends, guests, partners and benefactors for their attendance at the AGM. Also, the GS thanked the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretaries

Administration & Organisation, Regional Representatives, EC members and the health and pension advisers for their helpful contributions to the work of the Alliance over the last year. This period had been a particularly busy time for elected representatives, who had worked hard on members' behalf.

The GS acknowledged the hard task undertaken by the SOC in putting together the business of the AGM and thanks were extended.

The GS summed up her presentation and said the Alliance had continued to build on relations with the Cabinet Office and MyCSP and had worked with NARPO, NFOP, Age UK, CSiS and many other important organisations.

Head office had experienced a major change in staff, but despite this had continued to provide a high standard of service to members and to press on with campaigns in an unpredictable political and economic time.

On a final note, the GS reminded women delegates of the informal reception after the close of business. As the first Alliance female GS, she wanted to encourage more women to come forward to stand for the EC. She also referred to the ideas wall, which gave members a chance to have their say about the future of the Alliance.

The GS then commended the 2018 Annual Report for approval.

The NT, Christine Alderson, presented the financial report and statement of accounts for the year ending 31 December 2018 for her 19th consecutive year.

For the benefit of new attendees, the NT provided background information of the way the Alliance managed its accounts, stating that in its 65 years of existence it had mostly relied on cashbook accounting with elected auditors.

Over the past five years, the organisation had moved from elected auditors to a full professional audit and had been subject to Corporation and VAT compliance checks, which had confirmed the integrity of the Alliance financial records.

The NT went on to explain that the first full professional audit had taken place at year end 2017. The EC had agreed that financial statements would be audited every four years with an annual review in intervening years.



David Humphreys commends the Working Party report to delegates

The NT was pleased to report that the Alliance had achieved a surplus of £73,000+ and pointed that this had been achieved with the annual donation received from the Scotland Branch and several generous donations from the Northern Ireland Branch totalling £32,000.

The EC continued to be grateful to the Northern Ireland and Scotland branches for their annual donations to central funds over the years. The NT also expressed gratitude for all individual donations made, normally through pensions, and to the Civil Service Insurance Society, that had once again funded £6,000 in sponsorship of the AGM. This generous donation had enabled the EC to continue to sponsor one additional representative from Groups and Branches.

The NT turned her attention to income, stating that dividends from the Aberdeen Multi-Manager Fund, both historical and that received in 2018, had been recorded in the accounts to 31 December 2018. She pointed out that subscription income from members in England, Wales and Overseas had fallen from 2017 levels, which reflected a change in the VAT apportionment calculation and a reduction in membership levels.

Explaining the depreciation figure of £9,481 shown in the annual report, the NT said that this had previously been provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets less the residual value of each asset over its economic life. In 2018, the EC had reviewed the net book value

of its fixed assets and determined that these should have a £nil netbook value. In the future, small items of equipment purchased costing less than £500 would continue to be written off at the end of the year and items costing over £500 would be depreciated using the straight-line method to write off the asset over its useful economical life.

The NT spoke about the current financial situation, stating that the first eight months had looked promising, with day to day income and expenditure of around £60,000. Although a lower figure than the previous year, it reflected the downturn in donations received.

She was pleased to point out that overall expenditure, compared with a similar period in 2018, was down by approximately £12,000. Taking all this into account, there was positive news on the expenditure front.

The NT then spoke about the decision to restructure the NT's role and explained that the reasons were two-fold. Firstly, she advised that she had decided to reduce her hours of work to two days a week and her 'hands on' input and secondly, she referred to the Accountants' recommendation, after reviewing the accounts, that there should be a segregation of duties in that payment run proposals should be made by one individual, with the authorisation of payment made by at least one other individual. The NT had previously undertaken these roles.

As a result, the EC had agreed that the Alliance's Accountants would be invited to undertake book-keeping duties on a day to day basis, with the NT still maintaining responsibility for monitoring internal controls, bank payment runs, reporting to the Finance and F&GPC Committees and presenting year end accounts to the AGM. Book-keeping duties had been handed over to the Accountants in August 2019. The Accountants had confirmed that their independence would not be compromised in undertaking accounting and book-keeping duties as these duties would be carried out by staff in separate offices.

The NT concluded her presentation by stating that both political and financial external developments led to uncertainty regarding risks that could affect the future direction of the Alliance. However, based on the position

achieved in 2018 and the first eight months of 2019, there were good grounds for optimism.

She felt confident that, with the checks and balances that had been put in place, members could be as certain as possible that the Alliance remained on a sound financial footing as it approached the new decade.

8. Adoption of 2018 Annual Report and 2018 Statement of Accounts

The AGM agreed to adopt the 2018 Annual Report and Statement of Accounts.

9. Introduction of new candidates and election results

The Chairman introduced the three new candidates elected to serve on the Executive Council 2019/2020: Andy Aitchison, North East Region; Harry Brett, North West Region; and Greg Mountain, Southern Region. All other candidates had been elected unopposed. He asked that the newly elected EC members stand to identify themselves and welcomed them to the EC, stating that they had a lot of work ahead.

Part 3: Motions

SECTION A: ALLIANCE BUSINESS

1. Constitutional amendments

Motion A1

Appendix 2, Discipline Rule 11, Administrative Procedures. This AGM agrees to insert Appendix 2, Discipline Rule 11, Administrative Procedures, as set out in GC 887 in the Constitution at Appendix 2.

Ralph Groves moved the motion on behalf of the EC and said that it had arisen from work required following the carriage of motion A2 at the previous year's AGM. He spoke about the disciplinary procedures and GDPR regulations with which the Alliance needed to be compliant. Ralph said that the Alliance needed to have a set of rules that were fully operative. Without this constitutional amendment Rule 11 could not be

operated. The motion was seconded formally.

Harry Brett, Manchester, spoke in opposition to the motion, voicing concern that a member facing disciplinary procedures should have the right to go to the AGM rather than it being a decision of the EC. However, there should be the right of appeal to the AGM against suspension.

In his right of reply, Ralph stated that it was difficult to know whether this provision was required and reminded that 2021 was a constitutional year and further changes could be made if required.

A vote was taken on the motion, which clearly indicated a 2/3 majority, and it was **carried**.

1. Other Alliance business

2.1. Special debate on organisation and recruitment

Presentation: Mike Lawler on Organisation and Recruitment

Mike Lawler (Secretary Organisation) started his presentation by indicating the change from the usual powerpoint slide format to a video recording. The presentation indicated the structure of the Alliance, which comprised 90 Groups in England, whose interests were managed by elected Regional Representatives, and three autonomous Branches in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Malta. The EC, comprising the Regional Representatives, Branch Secretaries and National Executive Council members met four times a year, with a number of sub-committees meeting regularly.

The AGM learned that the membership figure as at the end of 2018 stood at 51,653 and noted that the recruitment figure was 1,370, with 1,722 members lost, producing a minus figure of 352. The erosion in membership over the past ten years had been largely due to government policies, resulting in diminished career prospects within the civil service. Compliments were extended to the Northern Ireland Branch, which had exceeded expectations by continuing to recruit a high level of members.

In his presentation, Mike spoke about the work of the Recruitment Working Party, which called upon Groups and Branches to give recruitment a higher priority in the future. He spoke further



Mike Lawler moves the furniture as delegates watch his presentation

about recruitment initiatives, stating that further advice would be issued.

The continuing fruitful work with LLA partners was highlighted and with other organisations such as Napo and the Retired Prison Governors' Association were being pursued. Efforts to improve membership benefits continued, with members now being able to enjoy travel insurance, competitive insurance rates with CSiS, computer advice, Hearing Star, MyCarNeedsA, Motor Source, Mycashback and free legal advice.

Members were also kept updated with Alliance matters and news through the quarterly editions of *The Pensioner* and regular newsletters. The Secretary (Administration) had also assisted many members with their personal cases on pension issues. Mike referred to the amount of information that could be obtained by members via the CSPA website and that additional media outlets such as Facebook and twitter.

A matter that would require attention in the forthcoming year was the question of Group constitutions as it was not clear how many Groups had these in place. Mike pointed out that the Regional Representatives would be tasked to review the situation in their Regions.

In closing the presentation, a special thank-you was extended to the DGS, Ralph Groves for his hard work and dedication to detail in recruitment and organisation matters. Thanks were also given to the retiring Regional Representatives for their services.

Mike hoped that delegates enjoyed his presentations and thanked them for listening.

Presentation: David Humphreys - Report of the Working Party on Group Structures and Coverage, The Way Forward

David Humphreys presented the Report of the Working Party (WP) on Group Structures and Coverage. He firstly thanked fellow members of the working party for their hard work, particularly mentioning the Secretary, Ralph Groves.

Referring to the 12 recommendations made, David stated that he intended to make three general points.

- Firstly, it was not the intention of the WP to make wholesale changes to the current structure. Groups would remain at the centre of the Alliance, but with more work undertaken to arrest decline.
- David said the 12 WP recommendations offered a flexible menu of practical options, supported by advice, guidance and training. Changes would be led by Regional Representations and their Groups.
- Finally, it was important to note that the WP report was not set in stone. The three National EC members would complete the Regional Boundaries Review and Groups would be asked to provide feedback for consideration by a meeting of the O&R Committee and Regional Representatives on 20 February 2020. This work would operate alongside strategic work commissioned by the GS, about where the Alliance saw itself by 2025.

David stated that Groups should study the report in order to make the most of it, concentrating on using all of the six communications available, ie four quarterly newsletters and two reports in *The Pensioner*.

Members should also be encouraged to sign up to an email list in order to receive additional communications.

Finally, he urged that Groups assist Regional Representatives to review the position of every closed Group in their area, giving consideration to either setting up virtual groups or coming up with practicable merger proposals.

David concluded his presentation of the WP report.



DGS Ralph Groves presenting the Group Newsletter First Prize to Dr Stuart Smith, Buckinghamshire Group

Motion A3 Working Party on Group Structures and Coverage Report 'The Way Forward'. This AGM welcomes the production of the Working Party Report on Group Structures and Coverage and endorses its recommendations.

David Humphreys formally moved motion A3 on behalf of the Executive Council, stating that Groups could add to the WP report if required as it was a dynamic document. The EC was pleased to do what it could to help Groups move forward.

The motion was seconded formally, with support from Brian Barton, Crawley & District, who extended congratulations to the working party for its excellent and well written report. He mentioned that Mike Card, who had drafted much of the blue book, had also praised the report. The motion was also supported by Paul Heaney, Liverpool & District. David Fisher, Coventry & Warwickshire, recognised that a lot of work had gone into the report and had many positive points but he wished to point out constructive criticisms. He went on to set out various points that needed to be taken up before acceptance and urged the EC to make further investigations. Richard West, Norfolk, also supported the motion.

In his right of reply, David Humphreys, said that in response to a point raised on training, he was

happy to take that point into consideration. In respect of the further points raised, he asked that the opposing Group feed these comments to the scheduled meeting of the O&R Committee and Regional Representatives on 20 February 2020.

The Chairman called for a vote on the motion and it was **carried** overwhelmingly.

1. Other Alliance business (general)

Motion A6

This Annual General Meeting believes that preparation for retirement is essential and that pre-retirement training plays a vital part. The timing and content on offer to future Civil Service pensioners is inconsistent across Government Departments and Agencies.

This AGM agrees that:

- **Key elements of pre-retirement training include preparation for, and understanding of, the financial and emotional impact.**
- **Whilst some information can be provided through online or electronic means, face-to-face discussion and advice is the more effective means of retirement preparation.**
- **Where practicable, this training must be provided up to a year, and no less than one month, before retirement.**
- **The financial element must include budget planning, how and when Civil Service and State Pensions are calculated, paid and updated; and options for financial advice and effective use of lump sum payments.**
- **The emotional element must include professionally facilitated group discussion - lasting not less than one third of the training time - of the impact and the significant change of life that retirement represents, and that sufficient time is needed to make plans and become adjusted to the change.**
- **A representative of the CSPA be invited to address the attendees.**

This AGM agrees that the Executive Council undertakes all feasible and practical steps to achieve the above.

Ted Euers, on behalf of Newcastle upon Tyne, commenting that this was his first AGM, said



Peggy Brandon, Wirral Group, waiting to say her piece to the AGM

that the motion was self-explanatory. The Group did not expect to achieve all points mentioned in the motion as many would need to be pursued through trade unions but it was felt that it was a way to ensure that the Alliance could attend seminars more regularly and aid recruitment.

The motion was seconded by Keith Coggins, Birmingham, who referred to the lack of co-operation from the Civil Service Retirement Fellowship experienced by his Group. He said that a proper established line on who could attend seminars should be established with the Cabinet Office. Derek Williams also supported on behalf of Crawley & District.

Frank Edwards offered qualified support for the motion on behalf of the EC and said that the Alliance had met with problems around lack of notice, venue and change in providers. There was dialogue underway with the CS Retirement Fellowship and the matter was being pursued with the Cabinet Office as part of raising awareness of the trusted partners. He spoke about the problems presented by GDPR and the annual mailshot but concluded by stating that although the EC would continue to press for direct access to seminars it was largely for the trade unions to pursue.

Peggy Brandon, Wirral, moved opposition, stating that much of the terms of the motion related to serving civil servants. It was for the trade unions to take the matter forward and therefore Alliance funds should not be used.

In his right of reply, Ted said that in his moving speech he had addressed the trade union aspect. The motion had emanated from retired members in a Group meeting, many of whom did not have the opportunity to attend pre-retirement courses. The Chairman took a vote on the motion and it was **carried**.

Motion A7

AGMs provide Groups and Branches the opportunity to share CSPA Policy and to set out their views. It is therefore regrettable that at the 2018 AGM, motions had to be guillotined because of the shortage of time to hear them. To reduce the risk of this happening at future AGMs, the EC is instructed to reduce the number of guest speakers and/or the time allowed for them from that allowed in past AGMs. In addition EC speakers are asked to avoid contributing to debates on motions which are not opposed and where it is not essential to record an EC view.

Speaking on behalf of Twickenham & District, Michael Peacock, said that the motion was self-explanatory, pointing out that his Group's motion had been guillotined the previous year. Time was precious and although not wishing to inhibit guest speakers, adequate allowances should be made to enable Group motions to be debated. Derek Williams, Crawley & District, seconded the motion and said that although guest speakers should have their say, time was important and motions should be allocated sufficient time to allow them to be heard.

Offering qualified support on behalf of the EC, John Jarvis said that there was sympathy for the terms of the motion as the importance of all motions being debated was recognised. The qualification was that the Standing Orders Committee ran AGM business not the EC. The EC was conscious of the need to make the AGM interesting, providing speakers with the opportunity to offer information about their organisations but it was also aware of what happened in 2018 and would try to ensure that the AGM was run efficiently on behalf of members.

The motion was put to a vote and **carried**.

Presentation: Flavia Gapper and Marie McNeil, Charity for Civil Servants (CfCS)

The Chairman invited Flavia and Marie to make a presentation on behalf of CfCS. Flavia thanked the AGM for the invitation, stating that many delegates had probably helped the Charity in some way or other.

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Marie went on to state that the Charity's vision was a lifelong community of people offering effective support for lives that had taken a turn for the worse. She gave facts and figures on the work undertaken in 2018 such as financial support and debt and budgeting advice.

Assistance was also provided by the Charity in areas such as dementia.

Marie gave an example of a personal case where valuable assistance had been provided to someone whose husband had suffered with dementia and subsequently died, stating that the Charity had been able to meet funeral expenses and had given financial advice.

She pointed out that the Charity looked at individuals and their personal needs, with no judgement. Savings did not prevent assistance being provided.

Marie outlined key facts about the civil service community served, which included serving civil servants, those retired and dependents.

The Charity was not membership based and CSPA members were eligible for assistance. A wide range of services provided included financial and debt advice, support for carers as well as well-being and mental health support.

Marie concluded her presentation by stating that the Charity looked for donations and volunteers, stating that she would like to see a lot more retired civil servants offer their services. She welcomed feedback and said that she and Flavia were available on their stall to answer any queries.

The Chairman thanked the CfCS representatives for their informative presentation, adding that a member of his own Group had received assistance from the Charity.

SECTION B: PENSIONS AND RELATED MATTERS

1. State pensions

2. Public service pensions

Motion A10

Public sector pension improvements due under the cost cap mechanism agreed as part of the reforms to Public Sector pensions with the Coalition government to keep taxpayer costs within 2 percentage points above and below a base line level have been paused. As a result of public sector pay restraint and lower than expected mortality improvements, the cost of public sector pension schemes has fallen significantly since the base line for the cost cap mechanism was established which should have resulted in improvements in the value of the Civil Service pension scheme of around 20% from April 2019. This AGM instructs the Executive Council to give its full support to Civil Service unions' demands that the Government complies with its agreement to implement the cost cap mechanism proposed to manage unexpected risks and keep taxpayers costs within affordable bounds.

The motion from South Beds & Harpenden was moved by Stephen Lewis, who said that it was not about the improvement of pensions of existing members but future pensions of civil servants and the public sector. He gave details of the current system which led to the need for the motion and called upon the EC to give full support to CS trade unions to introduce cost capping measures without further delay.

The motion was seconded formally. Ahmad Khwaja, Southend on Sea & District, spoke in support of the motion, providing an explanation of the cost capping measures.

On behalf of the EC, David Luxton asked the Group to remit the motion. He stated that cost caps, designed to limit the employers' pension costs, had been agreed in March 2012. The civil service pension valuation in 2016 had shown a reduction in the cost-cap which led to negotiations on improvements to the scheme. He explained that there had been a significant legal judgement in 2018 (McCloud) and, as a result, the Cabinet Office had made it clear that



Three new EC members, Andy Aitcheson, Harry Brett, Greg Mountain

the cost to the civil service would be high. There was also very little chance of achieving pension improvements given the high court decision.

He asked that the Group remit the motion in order that the Alliance could continue with discussions with the Cabinet Office without being tied to an unrealistic mandate.

The Group agreed to remit the motion and remittance was agreed by the AGM.

3. Associated pension matters

3.1. Universal pensioner benefits

Comprehensive Motion A11

This AGM notes that the stated intention of the BBC, to replace from June 2020 the existing scheme of TV licence waiver for those aged 75 or more with a scheme restricting TV licence waiver to persons of 75 or older who are in receipt of Pension Credit, has caused alarm and objection among pensioners. The DWPs estimates are that only 6 in 10 of those eligible for Pension Credit actually claim it.

An age-related benefit granted by a previous administration to recompense for UK State pension level being the lowest among developed countries (according to OECD figures) should not be the responsibility of a public broadcasting service.

This AGM instructs the Executive to campaign with other organisations such as Later Life

Ambitions, Age UK and the NPC, to press the Government to take back from the BBC, responsibility for the policy and management of the non means-tested scheme for a free TV licence fee for all persons aged 75 or more. The Executive are also asked to encourage Groups and Branches to lobby Local MPs and Candidates from the major political parties, for the Government to take back responsibility for the TV licence concession.

Harry Brett moved the motion on behalf of Manchester & District and said the BBC should not have been delegated with responsibility for administering TV licences for over 75s through pension credit. From information sourced it appeared that over 3.5 million pensioners would have to pay for their licence. Many over the age of 75 with a disability could lose their TV licence if they had to pay. He urged Groups to write to their MPs, pointing out that this change would be a crucial factor in a future general election. The government should be urged to take back responsibility for the licence.

Robert Burns, Inner London, seconded the motion, stating that the move of responsibility to the BBC was an attack by the government. Increased number of people claiming pension credit would increase costs to the government.

Speaking on behalf of the EC to support the motion, Aileen Haskell stated it was recognised that many over the age of 75 were isolated and lonely and that all pensioners would not be able to claim pension credit. She said the EC would continue to work with partner organisations and encouraged Groups and Branches to campaign for this decision to be reversed.

On being put to a vote, the motion was **carried**.

SECTION C: INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS

Comprehensive Motion A17

This AGM notes the publication of the report of the House of Lords Committee on Intergenerational Fairness and Provision which considers the long-term implications on Government policy on intergenerational

fairness. Whilst recognising that some younger people are struggling to find secure employment and housing, this AGM is concerned at the potentially damaging recommendations made by the report in new tax and spending policy, including replacing the triple lock for state pensions with an increase in line with earnings, phasing out of the free TV licence based on age, and the increase in qualifying age for Free Bus Passes and Winter Fuel Payments to 5 years beyond state pension age.

This AGM instructs the EC to work closely with other pensioner organisations, including Later Life Ambitions, and the Public Service Pensioners' Council to challenge this report and campaign against these short sighted recommendations. In addition, the EC should regularly report back to members, action taken on any Government proposals as a result of this report.

This AGM agrees that the proposals in the report are unlikely to improve housing and employment prospects for younger generations, lead to increased poverty for both current and future pensioners and a rolling back of the welfare state.

David Luxton, on behalf of the EC, moved the motion stating that the intergenerational contract between generations was funded from current working people, a long-held acceptance which was being increasingly challenged. Baby boomers were being accused of 'never having it so good' at the expense of millennials. Referring to the House of Lords report, David said the Alliance was campaigning with its LLA partners and the NPC to challenge its findings to preserve pensioner benefits, including the triple lock.

The motion was seconded by Keith Coggins, Birmingham & District, who said that pensioners were taking the blame when many of the difficulties experienced by younger people were as a result of Government policy such as the introduction of zero hours contracts. The Alliance needed to campaign vigorously to maintain pensioner benefits.

Gerald Griffen, Inner London, also spoke in support of the motion.

On a vote being taken, the motion was **carried**.

Motion A23

This AGM deplors the ignorance and prejudice displayed by the House of Lords Select Committee on Intergenerational Fairness when publicising the outcome of its deliberations in April 2019 and expresses its deep concern regarding the misleading information released into the public domain about the financial position of older people relative to that of younger people, in particular ignoring the fact that some 50% of pensioners do not pay income tax because their income is less than £12,500 per annum. The AGM notes that the Select Committee also failed to make any reference to the fact that state pension provision in relation to average earnings in the UK is the lowest of any developed country at 29% according to the OECD, and similarly failed to make any mention of the fact that for three decades increases in the state pension were linked to price inflation rather than wage inflation thus denying pensioners any share of the prosperity enjoyed by the majority in regular work.

This AGM reiterates that the juxtaposition of the interests of young workers and older people is a false dichotomy and abhors attempts to set one generation against another.

Accordingly this AGM instructs the EC to work constructively with campaigning groups/organisations representing the legitimate concerns of younger people in the interests of intergenerational co-operation and harmony.

In moving the motion on behalf of West Yorkshire, Paul Laxton, said that many points of the motion had been covered in the previous debate on Comprehensive Motion A17. He went on to point out that had pensions not been linked to average earnings, rather than increases in prices, current pensioners would have seen their annual pensions increased by over £2,000 per annum. Paul referred to the many pensioners who did not pay tax as their income was less than £12,000 pa. The motion was seconded formally.

Mike Sparham, on behalf of the EC, offered qualified support. He referred to the House of Lords report, stating that it was not the most researched piece of work. To state that one

generation was being disadvantaged by another was untrue. Mike pointed out that the NPC had produced an excellent briefing, which was available on their website. He spoke about the work the Alliance was undertaking with various organisations. The qualification was with the last sentence of motion - the instruction to work with campaign groups for younger people - when the Alliance would find it difficult to work on behalf of younger people and deciding what were their legitimate concerns.

A vote was taken on the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Presentation - Paul Evans, Director NHS Support Federation

The Chairman introduced Paul Evans, Director of the NHS Support Federation, to the AGM. Paul expressed thanks for the invitation, and said his organisation was working with the Alliance on a number of issues within the NHS and the support was greatly appreciated. He spoke about the uncertainty that the Brexit negotiations had caused within the NHS and its possible impact. There were concerns about staffing levels, with over 16,000 EU nationals working in the NHS leading to uncertainty about their future and the impact of them possibly leaving.

Paul went on to talk about the work of the Federation, pointing out that it was an independent organisation, not linked to any political party, that worked alongside organisations and trade unions. He said that evidence gathered from different sources would enable a most powerful case to be made in order to protect the NHS. He spoke about the connection that people had with the NHS, most of whom had relied on it at some stage in their life. It was an integral part of society but over the past few years there had been growing doubt about its survival. The situation was dangerous in that more people being prepared to pay for health provision could weaken the NHS.

He referred to the way that the NHS was currently surviving, stating that it was by asking staff to work harder and asking patients to take bigger risks. Patients were waiting longer for treatment. Paul explained why the NHS was in crisis. Much was due to working too close to the



Keith Coggins from Birmingham Group earnestly making his point

edge, with lack of resources and understaffing. There were fewer GPs available to deal with the rise in patients. The government was making progress in training new GPs but this was countered by resignations and retirement.

Paul wound up his presentation by stating that there were positives. The NHS was one of the best systems in the world. To protect the NHS, everyone needed to stay involved and he looked forward to working with the Alliance in the future.

The Chairman thanked Paul for his excellent presentation.

SECTION D: SOCIAL CARE

Motion A25

Increasingly, companies supplying care and health services are privately owned. Because such companies reply on generating profits for shareholders they are run as businesses which can be subject to risks and are liable to fail or be taken over by other conglomerates or hedge funds. For recipients of services or those local authorities contracting them as providers, there is uncertainty of who owns the company and also whether commercial decisions will cause the company to be taken over and closed if seen

as a liability. Care homes have been known to close at short notice requiring the workers and residents of those homes to transfer or face different kinds of care. When this happens and accountability and redress is sought it is often difficult to trace those who may be responsible for the business.

We therefore ask the Executive Council to urge the Government to legislate to require companies who bid for contracts to be transparent about their structure and accountable to the recipients of their services. Transparency and accountability should be built into all service agreements and subject to scrutiny by reliable auditors.

The motion was moved by Sylvia Smith, Lewisham, East Southwark & District, who said that the government was struggling to put together robust plans for social care. She referred to the varied levels of care provision and the problem of local authorities withdrawing funds due to cuts in local funding. Sylvia spoke about the high percentage of private companies running care homes and said that there was a risk of many of these becoming insolvent over the next few years, causing great difficulty for residents and families. The motion was seconded by Keith Coggins, Birmingham & District, who spoke about the failure of the government in pursuing the Social Care Bill and that pressure was needed to get this progressed.

Gerald Griffen, Inner London, spoke in opposition. Although agreeing with the basic terms of the motion, his Group disagreed with the solution as it was impossible to work through a web of companies to find out who was responsible for individual homes. The care home system did not need to be patched up, the current system should be abandoned and care homes put back into council ownership.

Tony Hall offered support on behalf of the EC and said that there was a need for the care system to be completely reorganised. He spoke about his own personal experiences in trying to access care. A new Care Act was required, which would include the removal of profit motive. Tony said that members should raise the issue with local MPs and local authorities to get

support for fighting for improvements in the system and to put pressure on the government to produce the green paper and get it converted to a white paper in order to improve standards of care.

There was no right of reply and the Chairman called for a vote and the motion was **carried**.

Composite Motion A26

This AGM is very concerned that yet another year has gone by without publication of the promised Green Paper on Social Care. Funding is a major problem in ensuring that there is a sustainable and accessible Social Care System of a good standard.

This AGM urges the Executive Council to continue working with other organisations such as AGE UK, the NPC and Later Life Ambitions, to put concerted pressure on the Government to resolve this disgraceful state of affairs.

The Chancellor must be lobbied to ensure that sufficient funding is made available to provide a good standard of support those people needing assistance, including family carers, so that they can enjoy later life and participate in society.

Charlie Cochrane presented the motion on behalf of the EC, stating that the position was not about social care packages, but focused on the need of government to provide a comprehensive social care policy and adequate funding. The publication of the green paper was still awaited and it was feared that action on social care and its funding would be put on the back shelf because it was too difficult to solve. The EC would use the forthcoming general election to inspire political parties to come up with proposals for funding.

Harry Brett, Manchester, seconded the motion. He highlighted facts obtained from Age UK regarding social care and spoke about the number of older people losing their homes and savings in order to access care. Harry said that social care was on the brink of collapse and action needed to be taken by the government. Support was given by Stephen Lewis, South Beds & Harpenden, and Bill Hodgson, Bolton.

On being put to a vote, the motion was **carried**.

Motion A29

Large areas of the country and in particular rural parts are turning into care deserts where it is impossible to find care home places for vulnerable older people. Pensioners are forced to live in care homes miles from their families and in some areas shortages are so bad that the only available beds are in those homes rated inadequately by regulations.

This Annual General Meeting instructs Government to address these shortages within its long awaited Green Paper but also now with an immediate cash injection to alleviate the situation.

The motion was moved by Les Caldwell, East Devon, who referred to the recent report produced by Age UK on the provision of care homes. He referred to the difficulties of people being placed in inadequate homes, miles away from their families, and highlighted the poorer regions that were mostly affected. The motion was seconded formally.

Offering support on behalf of the EC, Jean Hardiman-Smith said that many homes were in a fragile position with the risk of collapse over the next year. She referred to the lack of adequate funding and its affect, which led to acute shortage of NHS beds. Jean went on to outline the work being done by the EC, alongside like-minded bodies, to seek improvements to the situation. The Chairman called for a vote, upon which the motion was **carried**.

Presentation: Simon Hewett-Avison, Assistant Director of Service Delivery, Independent Age

The Chairman invited Simon Hewitt-Avison, Assistant Director of Service Delivery of Independent Age (IA) to make his presentation to the AGM. Simon thanked the Chairman for the invitation and made his presentation with the aid of powerpoint slides. He firstly referred to the mission of his organisation, stating that it was to advise and support older people and their families on care and support, money and benefits and health and mobility. He had been very interested to hear the motions on social care debated and the concerns raised.



SOC members Roy Lewis, Keith Yallop and Eileen Turner

Simon then gave an introduction to IA, saying that it had been in existence for 150 years, having previously operated under the title UK Beneficent Association. He explained that IA's goals included health and care, happiness, financial security and fighting ageism and said that the organisation had refocused its affairs to maximise its impact as a charity. He then detailed work undertaken on each of the goal headings. He talked about telephone friendly schemes, operated by volunteers, to keep in regular contact with callers. There was also a face-to-face friendly scheme, which gave time to listen to older people through visits. Simon added that the organisation welcomed volunteers and advised that if people were interested they should contact him on his stall.

Simon spoke about IA's campaigning around entitlement to pension credit as so many pensioners had not claimed. IA's aim was to make the UK the best place in the world to grow older. Loneliness was also being addressed and Simon indicated statistics shown on the slides which led to enormous costs to both to individuals and the health and care system. He said that a major part of the IA's recent campaigning was around loneliness and isolation.

In finalising his presentation, Simon wanted to finish on a positive note and said that IA was working hard to change perceptions on ageing. More positive language needed to be used to promote positive ageing.

The Chairman thanked Simon for his presentation.

Comprehensive Motion A30

The unacceptably long political disarray relating to social care funding and organisational capacity has led to the point of collapse in services in some areas and unsatisfactory crisis throughout the country. Urgent fundamental remedy is essential to avoid impeding the related services in the NHS and hinder progress on the recent 10 year NHS plan to alleviate existing pressures and problems with health services.

It is now evident that social care demands must be positively and urgently addressed to establish sound organisation and funding arrangements with direct Government accountabilities and responsibilities. A parallel or integrated national service with the NHS within the Department of Health and Social Care is required to provide continuity and consistency of high service standards of care and avert duplication of costs and competing demands on funding and managements processes.

This AGM calls for an end to the underfunding of social care and for this to be rectified by a combination of revenue raising measures, clamping down on tax avoidance, and a realignment of government priorities. This AGM accepts the case for age specific and posthumous revenue raising measures in the interests of intergenerational fairness.

The EC is urged to press the Government strongly not only to properly assess and provide resourcing to overcome the current crisis in social care services, but also to urgently pursue the progressive development of sound Government organisational accountability structures and resourcing arrangements to ensure consistently high standards of social care alongside the NHS.

Speaking on behalf of Teesside, John Butler pointed out the clear links between adult social care provided by local authorities and health care provided by the NHS, acknowledged by the government from the appointment of a Secretary of State for both areas. There was a need to maintain high social care standards alongside the needs of the young and vulnerable. The motion sought a parallel or integrated

service and an accountable service to cover all care needs.

The motion was seconded by Derek Williams, Crawley & District, who said that its terms related to Composite Motion 26 and the urgent need for the production of a white paper on care. Support was also given on behalf of West Yorkshire by Paul Luxton.

Robert Burns spoke against the motion, stating that Inner London accepted many of the motion's points but took exception to the reference to age specific and posthumous revenue in motion A33. Care costs needed to be shared across the whole country and not by the older generation.

Sheila Betts, West Wales, said that she was fed up with motions concentrating purely on England. She spoke about the situation in Wales, which had devolved responsibility for health and social care and would have liked the devolved areas to be included in the motion. The Chairman assured Sheila that if a national policy was agreed it was the responsibility for the devolved areas to pursue with their devolved governments.

Lisa Ray offered support for the motion on behalf of the EC, saying that it was Alliance policy that funding should come from a number of streams, with a fair balance in what is paid by the individual and what is paid by the state. She spoke about the ideas that had come from various think tanks, whilst keeping a fair balance between the generations. She also spoke about the work by Age UK on holistic care.

After the mover waived his right of reply, a vote was taken and the motion was **carried**.

SECTION E: HEALTH

Composite Motion A35

Given the year on year loss of doctors to general practices, NHS England need to ensure the 2014 ratio of 0.58 full time equivalent general practitioner doctor per 1,000 patients is maintained and the Executive Council are instructed to write to the Secretary of State for Health to gain assurances that funding and resources will be available to achieve this by



Lisa Ray, outlines her strategy to the meeting of Women delegates

2020 together with the additional 5,000 extra doctors promised.

Clive Roberts moved the motion on behalf of East Devon and said that since 2015 there had been a regression in services due to the shortage of medical staff and doctors, together with closures of local services, resulting in difficulty in accessing medical services. He urged the EC to press the Health Minister to provide the necessary resources to fulfil the pledge to meet the needs of surgeries and hospitals.

The motion was seconded by Stan Kordys, Clacton & District, who pointed out that the closure, at the current rate, of clinics and surgeries would lead to further deterioration in services and to the privatisation of medical care.

On behalf of the EC, Les Priestley gave full support to the motion saying many of his points had been covered by the mover and seconder. Les spoke about the presentation made by Paul Evans of the NHS Support Federation and said that the EC looked forward to working closely with the Federation in the future. On a vote being taken, the motion was **carried** unanimously.

Motion A37

This AGM notes that impending changes to services delivery in the NHS will lead to drastic worsening of the services used by pensioners. It notes that the creation of Primary Care

Networks will form the basis for embryonic America-Style integrated health companies ready for quick privatisation.

It asks the EC to investigate and report back, noting that the impact will be greatest on Pensioners as heavy users of NHS services.

It also calls upon it to, if it is considered justified, to liaise with other concerned bodies to seek change to these proposals.

The motion was moved by Gerald Griffen, Inner London, who said that it was about stopping the creeping privatisation in the NHS, and spoke about some London surgeries seeming to be specialising in various conditions, thereby creating satellite clinics. The motion was seconded by Alan Edgar, Aldershot & District, who also spoke about creeping privatisation. He went on to explain the Stop the WOS campaign in his area, which was supported the NPC and various trade unions. Dr Stuart Smith, Buckinghamshire also supported the motion with reservation.

Jean Hardiman-Smith, on behalf of the EC, offered qualified support, saying it very complex issue that needed to be considered in more detail. She spoke about rising costs in health care, worsened by a new international trade deal.

Peggy Brandon, Wirral, moved a point of order as the speaker was not speaking to the motion.

The Chairman called for a vote, and the motion was **carried**.

Motion A38

This AGM affirms its support for the Alzheimer's Society campaign for a £2.4 billion Dementia Fund, to sit within the NHS. The funding would be used, via individuals Personal Health Budgets, to support their health needs either in the community or in residential care, eliminating the so-called Dementia Penalty - the additional costs of care incurred as a direct result of their medical condition. This AGM instructs the EC to include the establishment of an NHS Dementia Fund within its campaigning on social care.

Patrick King, Cambridge & District, moved the motion and said that a great many people



Chairman Brian calls the AGM to order

living with dementia were being failed by the existing system. He said that those afflicted with the disease did not necessarily need medical treatment although they faced many costs to support their condition. The aim of a dementia fund was to create a level playing field. The motion was seconded formally.

Colin Fender said that the EC offered full support for the motion, which formed part of a wider social care campaign already supported by the Alliance. It was time that dementia sufferers were treated the same as others with medical conditions.

On being put to a vote, the motion was **carried**.

Motion A39

This Annual General Meeting recognises that there is no age-related provision for discounted NHS dental treatment. Pensioners on low and limited income, not eligible for the many benefits which would give access to discounts or even free treatment, may find the charges unaffordable. Some treatments can cost several hundreds of pounds. This can discourage treatment, perhaps creating more serious tooth and gum disease at a time of our lives when most have other age-related health problems to deal with. We ask that this AGM recognises the need for discounted NHS dental treatment to maintain the oral health of pensioners.

The motion was moved by Michael Kirby, Scotland Branch, who stated that dentistry was one of the few treatments in the NHS that people had to pay for. Although there was provision for

those on benefits, there was nothing available for pensioners on a low income. The result of this was poor oral health. In seconding the motion Derek Williams, Crawley & District, said he had looked further into dentistry provision on the website and found that it was a minefield, with information not being clear. He also referred to the implications for the NHS if people did not get adequate dental care.

On behalf of the EC, Jeff Prout offered qualified support. Whilst not disagreeing with the sentiments behind the motion, consideration had to be given about which issues to take forward. The motion did not specify the level of discount and the terms did not make it easy to take the issue forward in order to get other organisations on side. The EC did see merit in the motion but needed to look further into the qualification points. The Chairman called for a vote and the motion was **carried**.

SECTION F: GENERAL

1. Environment 2. Social exclusion

Motion A43

This AGM notes that the UK seems to be drifting towards being a cashless society. This would disadvantage millions of people, especially older people with health problems or not able to use online services. Having easy access to your money and being able to manage your own financial affairs is a basic right which all older people should have.

The Executive Council is therefore instructed to campaign with others to insist that the ATM closure programme is halted immediately and the government legislates to protect the right of all citizens to access cash and pay for goods and services by cash if they wish.

The motion was moved by Brian Barton, Crawley & District, who said that it was self-explanatory. He gave some background into the reasons for tabling the motion and said that the move to a cashless society was not acceptable to all the public. More access to cash, particularly in rural areas, was needed. The motion was second by

Michael Kirby, Scotland Branch, who spoke about the reduction in cash machines across the UK and the difficulties experienced by individuals with bank and cashpoint closures.

Tony Damoglou supported the motion on behalf of the EC, stating that it was in line with Alliance policy. He said similar problems also related to Northern Ireland and spoke about the difficulties experienced in his own village due to closure. A vote was taken on the motion, and it was **carried**.

Motion A44

This Annual General Meeting deplores the continuing pressure put on pensioners by the Department of Work and Pensioners to complete forms to relinquish pension benefit currently paid via the Post Office Card Account (POCA). A recent form from the Department practically demands the recipient to give up the POCA and fails to imply an option of continuing to receive benefit in this way.

The Executive Council is asked by the Annual General Meeting to approach the Minister of this Pensions Department to register our concerns regarding the wording and pressure of this correspondence and assurance that the POCA will continue to be paid to 2021 and some commitment beyond this date.

The motion was moved on behalf of East Devon by Les Calder, who said that with the high number of bank closures, it was important to preserve the Post Office Card Account. He referred to the reduction in PostOffice services leading to online banking and more pensions being paid into these accounts. The Post Office was a secure and government funded organisation and action should be taken to maintain this facility beyond 2021. Pensioners should not feel pressurised to change from POCA. The motion was seconded formally.

Martin Allwright offered support on behalf of the EC, and agreed that the termination of POCA facilities at the same time as many Post Office closures was not a satisfactory situation. He said that the EC acknowledged that its involvement in maintaining this facility was necessary.

A vote was taken on the motion and it was **carried** unanimously.



Assistant General Secretary David Luxton makes points to delegates

3. Transport

Motion A46

This AGM notes the Government has followed the call of the House of Commons and agreed to address the climate change emergency by committing to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This CSPA AGM, in welcoming this development, supports the concept of reduced greenhouse gases in our environment. In particular we are anxious to see an urgent reduction in vehicle emissions to help improve the health of the nation. To achieve this aim, increased use of public transport will be an important element in meeting the House of Commons objective. We note in recent years that cash strapped local authorities have radically reduced the level of support and subsidy they provide to public transport. Our members are concerned that reduced financial support for rural public transport, combined with the House of Lords attack on the pensioner bus pass appears to be a strategy to increase the number of private vehicle journeys undertaken by pensioners.

We instruct the EC to work with our LLA partners to welcome the move to reduce emissions and campaign forcefully to remind government and politicians that pensioners can make a valuable contribution to vehicle emission reductions provided there is a viable public transport service alternative and that free bus travel for pensioners continues.

On behalf of Sheffield & District, Andy Aitchison stated that the motion covered two ways of addressing the climate changes, firstly in proposing achievements in reducing vehicle emissions and secondly, by ensuring the availability of public transport, particularly in rural areas. The Group asked the EC to welcome the move to reduce emissions by 2050 and to campaign for adequate funding for public transport and free bus travel for pensioners.

Harry Brett seconded the motion on behalf of Manchester and explained that local proposals were being developed to deregulate and offer franchises. The motion was also supported by Derek Williams, Crawley & District.

Speaking on behalf of the EC, Mike Lawler offered wholehearted support for the motion. He detailed out the work undertaken on this matter by LLA and set out four action points which confirmed that all policy items being pursued complied with the terms of the motion.

On a vote being taken, the motion was **carried**.

Motion A47

This AGM instructs the Executive Council to support Community Transport Schemes across the UK and object to Ministers if the “not-for-profit community transport” sector is required to have a costly operator’s licence and their volunteers a public vehicle driving licence. These potential changes will have a huge impact on communities if community transport operations are shackled by unnecessary and costly regulations which will cause volunteer drivers to leave.

In moving the motion Peter Statham, Bristol, gave background details and said the proposal for the requirement of an operator’s licence would have a great impact on community schemes due to the lack of public transport operators. The motion was seconded by Geoffrey Ferguson, Plymouth & District, who highlighted the implications for local community services. Michael Kirby, Scotland Branch, also supported the motion. John McGiveron, on behalf of the EC, offered qualified support and, as a result, waived his speech.

The motion was **carried** upon a vote being taken.

4. Council tax

Motion A49

This AGM instructs the Executive Council to support the Local Government Association in its call for a change in the regressive formulae used for Council Tax charges, in particular as it affects the very elderly and predominately widow population across the UK who currently only get 25% reduction in charges. This AGM instructs the EC to press for an increase in the council tax support for single persons to rise to 50%.

Peter Statham, Bristol, moved the motion stating that although council tax payments affected all generations, it concentrated on pensioners. UK pensions did not meet the standards of EU countries and many pensioners were poor and lived below the poverty line. The motion not only covered affordability, it also dealt with fairness. The motion was seconded formally and Greg Mountain, Crawley & District, spoke to oppose the motion, who said that it was not appropriate for the EC to be instructed to pursue its terms without evidence of the impact on local authorities who were struggling.

Offering qualified support on behalf of the EC, Les Priestley stated that as an ex-tax inspector he was aware that property taxation was a very complex issue. The principle of the motion was correct but it had been demonstrated that every property tax regime had been unfair and regressive. However, the current system did not meet property values, the EC would keep an eye on this, intervene where necessary and continue to work alongside a local government association.

The Chairman put the motion to a vote and it was **carried**.

5. Age discrimination

Motion A50

This AGM is concerned that the Equality Act of 2010 only applies to Great Britain and that no equivalent legislation to outlaw Age Discrimination in the provision of Goods, Facilities and Services exists in Northern Ireland. As a result CSPA members living in Northern Ireland are disadvantaged. The EC is requested press Government to have legislation brought forward which would extend the



Treasurer Christine Alderson and Minutes Secretary Linda Smith

provisions of the 2010 Act to Northern Ireland insofar as it covers Age Discrimination in the provision of Goods, Facilities and Services.

Jim Lilley spoke to the motion on behalf of the Northern Ireland Branch by firstly thanking the SOC for reconsidering the marking of its motion. He said that the terms of the motion dealt with fairness and equality. He pointed out that Northern Ireland was not covered by the 2010 Equality Act. He asked that the EC lobby the government to extend its terms to Northern Ireland. The motion was seconded by Keith Coggins, Birmingham, who said that it was wrong that one region of the United Kingdom had been deprived of the provisions of the 2010 Act. Everyone in the UK needed to enjoy the same treatment.

On behalf of the EC, Lisa Ray spoke in support of the motion and said that in 2005 the Alliance drafted a motion to Age Platform Europe which was accepted by the EU Commission. She said that the Alliance had lobbied hard for the EU directive to be implemented. Action would be taken by the EC to assist colleagues in the Northern Ireland Branch to ensure that older people in their country were treated equally.

Following a vote, the motion was **carried** unanimously.

6. General policy Presentation: Tristan Westgate, Connect Public Affairs

Tristan thanked the AGM for the invitation to speak and went on to make his presentation

using PowerPoint slides, which would explain how Connect worked as an organisation and worked and provide information about the LLA partnership.

He firstly explained what Connect did, how its aims were achieved and how it worked. He said that the LLA comprised three partners, CSPA, NARPO and NAPO, representing a quarter of a million pensioners and campaigned nationally, regionally and locally. Connect supported the LLA campaigns with a dedicated and knowledgeable team of staff.

Tristan spoke about the LLA campaign objectives which included a solution to the social care crisis, intergenerational fairness, protecting TV licences, fairer pensions, provision of suitable housing, transport and ensuring that Brexit worked for everyone. He explained the methods used to support these campaign issues and said that it used all available opportunities open to engage with the government. Tristan gave an example of work on the defence of TV licence, which included engaging with Ministers and Shadow Ministers, as well as strategising with Age UK. Looking to the future, Tristan said that Connect would keep all the issues important to members at the top of the political agenda.

The Chairman thanked Tristan for his very concise presentation.

Presentation: Jan Shortt, General Secretary, National Pensioners Convention (NPC)

The Chairman introduced Jan Shortt from the NPC to address the AGM. Jan thanked the AGM for her invitation, stating that it was useful for her to see how things worked in different organisations. She went on to thank those Alliance members who worked with the NPC on various working parties for their input and working with NPC activities. She explained the working parties of the NPC and the new ones recently introduced - housing, including the Home Sweet Home campaign, digital inclusion/exclusion and an LGBT working party.

Jan said that the last year had been challenging for the NPC due to staff changes but was pleased to say that there was now a brilliant team of staff in place and officers who worked well together.

She said that the current political situation had caused some disruption to the work of the NPC resulting in the usual lobby of Parliament not taking place. In the event of a general election, she said that the NPC was looking at updating the pensions manifesto from 2017. This was being considered by officers and, once agreed, would be relaunched.

One of the significant NPC campaigns was the retention of the TV licence for over 75s and Jan spoke about the lobby of the House of Commons that had taken place. She had maintained contact with the Chair of the BBC and explained the measures the BBC had put in place in respect of staffing to handle the change.

Jan said the NPC was looking at a group of people that the NPC was most concerned about and this was pensioners who were just a little above the pension credit level, many of whom could find themselves in poverty. She also spoke about the various other campaigns and activities that the NPC was involved in, which included a robust response to the House of Lords report on intergenerational fairness.

In concluding her presentation, Jan reiterated her thanks to the Alliance for its support and looked to forward to seeing its delegation at the 2020 Pensioners Convention in Southport.

The Chairman thanked Jan for her comprehensive report on NPC activities.



Chairman Brian Sturtevant and Vice Chairman Don Makepeace

Vote of Thanks

At the conclusion of AGM business, Don Makepeace gave a vote of thanks and firstly mentioned the hotel, The Chesford Grange, stating that for a second year it had offered an excellent service. He went on to thank the following:

- St John's Ambulance staff
- The audio-visual engineer
- Guest speakers: Flavia Gapper and Marie McNeil (CfCS), Paul Evans (NHS Support Federation), Simon Hewett-Avison (Independent Age), Tristan Westgate (Connect Public Affairs) and Jan Shortt (NPC)
- Exhibitors: CSiS, CfCS, Towergate Health & Protection, BC Technologies, Affinity Resolutions, The Lifeboat Fund/RNLI, Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, Independent Age. Don added that it was very good of these organisations to bring their stalls to the AGM
- Guests from NFOP, PCS Arms, Square 7 Media, NARPO, Affinity Connect, Cabinet Office, Affinity Resolutions
- Scrutineers, Tellers and the Standing Orders Committee
- Head Office Team: Darlene, Marion, Sandra, Linda and Betty
- Head Office officials: Lisa who was building on the work of Mike Duggan and had already introduced new initiatives such as the women's delegate meeting held the previous day; Ralph for continuing to produce an excellent quality magazine and work on recruitment and membership benefits; and David who was attending his first AGM and had joined with vast pension experience
- The National Treasurer
- The Chairman for his excellent leadership - much of Brian's extra work on behalf of the Alliance went unnoticed
- He also thanked the EC for all their hard work especially the three EC members who were standing down
- Delegates, who all worked to achieve one end on behalf of the Alliance - for this, delegates should congratulate themselves

Finally, Don thanked everyone in attendance and wished them a good year ahead.

Close of the AGM

The Chairman thanked Don for his work as Vice-Chairman and gave personal thanks to the SOC for their assistance in running the AGM as well the assistance given by the sound engineer.

He thanked delegates and guests for their attendance at the AGM and wished everyone a safe journey home. He formally closed the 2019 AGM at 2.40 pm.