



CAMBRIDGE & DISTRICT GROUP

February 2023

Dear

The next quarterly meeting of the Cambridge & District group will be held on Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 2.00 pm at St John the Evangelist Church, Hills Road, Cambridge. Please note that the meeting will be upstairs in the Gray Room, not the Wilkinson Room.

This will be our AGM, at which we are required to elect officers and committee members for the coming year. Nominations for the posts of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are requested, as well as for a Deputy Chair, accounts examiner and up to 6 committee posts. Nominations can be sent in advance to me or the Chair, or can be made at the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last meeting (June 2022)
3. Matters arising from the minutes (if any)
4. Reports: (a) Chair (b) Treasurer (c) Secretary
5. Election of group officers – Chair, Secretary and Treasurer
6. Election of Committee
7. Appointment of Deputy Chair
8. Appointment of accounts examiner
9. Any other business
10. Date of next meeting

After the business part of the meeting, refreshments will be served.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Sue Davies

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NEWSLETTER – February 2023

Notes from the Committee

By the time you read this, we hope that signs of spring may be apparent! In a similar way, the last few months appear to have been a quiet time for the CSPA, but change has been bubbling away beneath the surface. Those members who are online may already have noticed one change – the new CSPA website. There is more about this below.

Much more controversy is likely to surround a potential change that is being debated. At last October's AGM, motion A17 called on the National Executive Council "to consider disbandment of the Group structure in England and Wales and move to Regional representation". The motion was remitted to the EC, on the understanding that a working party with local Group involvement would be set up to consider options for change. Our Chair, and Regional Representative, Sue Hennah-Barham, is a member of this working party, which held its first meeting on 10 January. There will be a wider consultation with groups and branches during March and early April, and it is hoped to circulate proposals in May.

The reason behind all this is, of course, the overall decline in CSPA membership and, more particularly, the lack of active members to keep groups going. Numbers of local groups have closed. Our neighbouring groups, in Peterborough and Suffolk, are in trouble. We in Cambridge are in a slightly better position: most notably, we were able to revive the "Christmas" lunch, and a small but happy group enjoyed a very nice meal at the Red Lion gastropub in Soham on 13 January. We should not, however, be under any illusions. The group's future is bleak unless more members are willing to play an active role. As it is, we haven't held a full meeting since June, the September meeting not being quorate and the December meeting being cancelled because of the bad weather.

It is therefore important that you come along to the AGM in March. If you are willing to serve on the committee, all the better – very little work is involved! (Because of a clash of dates at the church, the meeting will be upstairs – if that creates problems for anyone, please contact one of the officers). And please, if you are in touch with former work colleagues, whether they are about to retire, already retired or have been retired for many years but have never joined the CSPA, do sing the praises of CSPA to them. They can now join via the website. Notwithstanding the increase in subscriptions, it's worth the money for the member benefits alone.

GROUP CONTACTS

Chair

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Treasurer

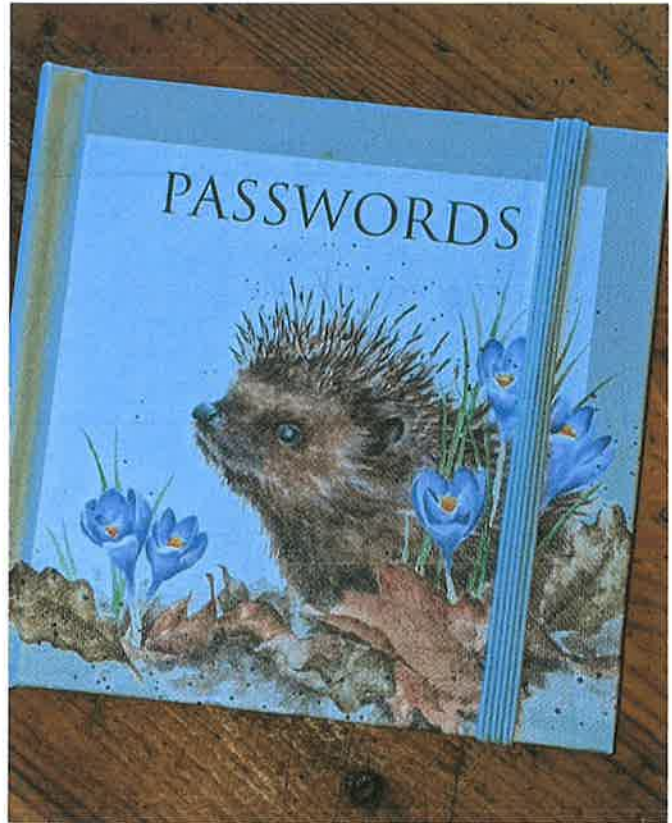
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The new CSPA website

The first thing to say about the new, improved CSPA website is we now have another password to remember! (I'm afraid I gave up a while back and now write down my passwords) If you are accessing the members' area for the first time since the website changed, you will need to set a password, rather than the old, insecure system of logging in with your membership number and surname. This is straightforward if the CSPA has an email address on file for you – there are clear instructions on the login screen. If it does not hold an up-to-date email address for you, however, you will need to contact HQ to ensure the website recognises you as a CSPA member.

Once you can access everything, I'm sure you will agree that the layout and look of the site is much clearer and cleaner. In particular, it is much easier to find details of all the various member benefits, as well as news on CSPA activities and monthly updates from General Secretary Lisa Ray. You can even read Cambridge newsletters online, as well as those from other groups in the region, by going to the "Regions" section, although since when I clicked on Peterborough I got the Plymouth newsletter there are, perhaps, a few bugs to iron out.

Sue Davies



Paying 2023 subscriptions

A big thank you to all our members who have set up a Standing Order to pay a £3 voluntary subscription to the Group! Although we emphasise this is voluntary, it really does help to pay our running expenses.

We recommend payment by Standing Order, which should be set for 15 January. The group's banking details are:

Bank - Barclays, Cambridge branch,
Sort code - 20-17-19,
Account number 60130990.

The standing order reference should be CSPACAM~~your name~~, with your name as the suffix and no other characters or spaces.

If you set up a standing order now, you can instruct your bank to make the first payment immediately, and the next on 15 January 2024. Alternatively, you can of course pay your 2023 subscription by cheque or in cash. Cheques should be sent to the Treasurer at the address given elsewhere in this newsletter.

Subscriptions paid by annual direct debit

The majority of members pay their subscription by direct deduction from pension. If this is you, nothing has changed: subscriptions are being taken at the new rate from 1 January. If, however, you pay by annual direct debit, you need to be aware that subscriptions are (or were) taken via the Lloyds Bank Tele debit service, which closed at the end of January, and Lloyds have advised the CSPA to move to their Pay and Collect Online System. The transition is likely to be complicated, and staff are under pressure. This means that, if your annual payment was due in January or February, it could be affected.

Under the new system, collection of payments must be triggered by the CSPA and not by Lloyds, and this will only be done twice a month. This means that, for many direct debit payers, the payment date will be changed. The Direct Debit guarantee requires the CSPA to notify payers of any change in collection arrangements, and this will be done via the next issue of *The Pensioner*, on 1 March 2023. In the meantime, direct debits must be taken on their present due date, which will be difficult, although staff will do their best. If you have any questions, please contact enquiries@cspa.co.uk, or phone the office.