

# Scotland Branch Newsletter

Issue 11



**TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH OUR MEMBERS**

## Statement from the Branch Chairman

Hello everyone. I hope this finds you well, staying safe and enjoying some time away on long-awaited holidays.

It is sad to report that the Edinburgh Group has now closed and Glasgow is the only functioning group in Scotland. As our membership continues on a downward trend,

I would ask you all to consider encouraging any colleagues and friends who may be eligible to join us.

It is more important than ever in these changing times that we have a decent sized membership to retain a voice within government to campaign on behalf of all retired pensioners.



## Our new Branch Vice Chair

This position has remained vacant for some time now, but we are pleased to announce that Wilson Macdonald, who has been a member since his retirement from the Ministry of Defence in 2004, applied after attending the Branch AGM in March. He was interviewed by Branch officers and the administrator at a face-to-face meeting in May and they unanimously agreed to offer him the position. He has kindly accepted.

We look forward to working with Wilson and hope that members give him a warm welcome when he meets you.

## Membership matters

Michael Kirby, Membership Secretary (details at the bottom of the page), is the man to contact regarding any alterations to be made to your personal data held on the Scotland Branch section of the CSPA database – change of address, email or telephone number – or for any other membership matters you require assistance with.



## Group update

Glasgow & District is now the only functioning group in Scotland. Its future meetings and activities are open to all Scotland Branch members, regardless of where you live. A warm welcome awaits you.

Meetings have been reduced from seven to four this year, held as usual in the Renfield Centre, 260 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4JP from 1.30pm.

With the traditional summer break in July and August, the next meeting

will be Thursday 1 September. The following meeting, the last before the Christmas lunch, is scheduled for 3 November, with a visit from representatives of the Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity. This is a popular event as Christmas cards and gifts not available on the high street will be available to purchase.

Please contact Michael Kirby, Group Chair, or Cherry Dolan, Group Secretary, for more information (for contact details, see the June issue of *The Pensioner*). If you'd like to attend virtually, please contact Michael.

# Supporting the Royal Hospital for Children Glasgow



The Royal Hospital for Children Glasgow opened in 2015 and more than 173,000 children are treated there each year. Run by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, it is the largest children's hospital in Scotland, with 216 rooms and 244 paediatric beds. The Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity supports it with donations from members of the public and businesses.

Its aim is to provide the best care with the latest equipment and technology. The Charity helps to buy medical equipment, playrooms and toys and games for the children through fundraising. It also provides

funds for the families who need to stay at the hospital with their children, and there are family rooms available for this.

Teddy Hospital helps the children learn about the procedures they may face through play. There is even a scale working model of an MRI scanner for children to use on teddy bears, showing them how it works and the sounds it makes.

***The Charity raises funds to buy medical equipment, playrooms, toys and games***

An interactive technology area helps keep children occupied while they wait for their appointments and there is a quiet room for those with autism who need a break from the noise of all the activities.

At the far end of the hospital, away from the hustle and bustle, is the Sanctuary, which provides a haven for families who have experienced a bereavement. It is a non-faith area and open to all.

Described as "the jewel in the crown" is the hospital's 44-seat medi-cinema, which has space in the front for hospital beds and wheelchairs.

The Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity paid £250,000 towards the cost of installing the cinema and pays towards its upkeep. It also buys in the latest children's films, advertises film showings on the wards and will show a film even if only one child wishes to see it.

To ensure that children do not miss out on education while they are in hospital, especially if they are in long term, teachers come in to give out and check homework.

Once a child reaches the age of 16, they begin the transition to the main Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, connected to the children's hospital, to which they will transfer at 18.

A board of professionals meets and decides which causes the Charity will support and raise funds for on an annual basis.

## Branch website – coming soon!

Branch officers are sorry to report that there still has been no progress in updating our website, which we had hoped would have been completed by now.

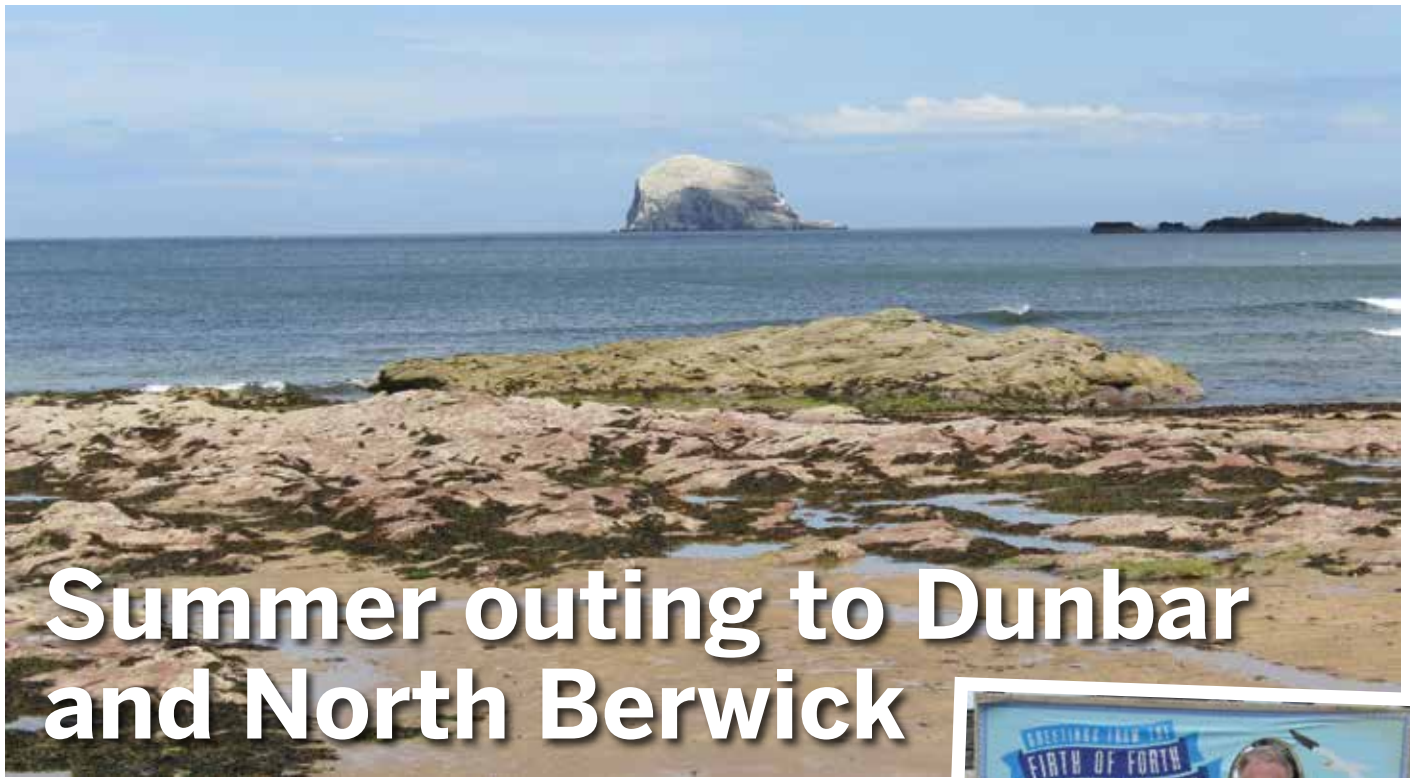
However, at a Zoom meeting on 20 June with CSPA headquarters, Policy, Projects and Campaigns Manager Nicola Crichton reassured

us that despite the project suffering glitches and taking much longer than anticipated, the new Branch website, with the assistance of the technical team at BC Technologies, would have an interim solution launched by the end of June. We hope as you read this that this has been achieved.

HQ are keen that the completed

Scotland website complements the Alliance's national website. But as the national website is not yet ready to go live, this is causing a knock-on delay for Scotland.

Members should be assured that Scotland Branch officers are continuing to monitor the situation to ensure that we have our website up and running as soon as is achievable.



# Summer outing to Dunbar and North Berwick

On 9 June, after a gap of three years, the long-awaited group outing to Dunbar and North Berwick took place. Although a few members were unable to attend due to last-minute travel disruption, 15 people took part.

The weather was favourable and the sun came out as we arrived in Dunbar. We stayed there for an hour and a half, which gave everyone time to explore and find a tearoom or go to a restaurant for an early lunch.

Like the last outing, back in 2019, members were able to choose where they ate and where they went. This was easier than trying to

accommodate everyone's tastes.

The coach then took the scenic coastal route to North Berwick, where we stayed for another hour and a half.

The sun was out but everyone returned to the coach on time for the journey home. The coach arrived back in Glasgow on schedule, allowing people to make their travel connections home.

An enjoyable day was had by all after such a long time without being able to travel anywhere. A special thanks should go to the coach driver, who negotiated the country lanes and twisty roads expertly!



Two group members pose for a photo

## Update on Assisted Dying Bill

We reported in a previous newsletter that Orkney MSP Liam McArthur was presenting an Assisted Dying Bill for consideration by the Scottish Parliament.

Responses to the proposed Bill were invited from the public. In fact more published responses were received for this than for any other Bill in the history of the parliament. More than 10,000 people/bodies responded. A summary will be

published later this year, and there will also be a free vote held in Holyrood.

The Bill covers adults who are both terminally ill and mentally competent. CSPA Scotland Branch has not taken a view on this emotive and divisive subject, but has given members

*The consultation received more responses than any other Bill in the history of the parliament*

information to help them reach their own decision. If you feel strongly either way, make your views known to your MSP before the vote takes place.

A similar Bill is going through the UK Parliament, sponsored by Baroness Meacher. At the National Pensioners Convention Annual Convention webinar on 21 June, Dr Jacky Davis from Dignity in Dying gave an explanation of the Bill. For more details, visit [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org).

# BT digital switchover

The UK's BT analogue phone system is scheduled to switch to a digital-only service by 2025. This is a digital voice system and requires the internet or suitable cable connection.

The switchover had already commenced in some areas, but was suspended as BT had underestimated the disruptive impact the upgrade would have.

Despite initial concerns, work has restarted. But there have been

serious consequences, as those who have emergency alarm systems have been left without any phone service for emergencies.

There are many phone providers across the UK that are involved in this work and they have yet to say what their plans are.

At this time, we can only advise everyone to contact their provider to request advice on what their plans are and what impact the switchover will have on you.



## Paper £20 and £50 notes – time to spend!

This is a reminder that the old-style £20 and £50 notes will be withdrawn from circulation on 30 September and will no longer be legal tender. So please spend any you may have or deposit them at home into a bank or Post Office account.

The new higher security polymer £50 note, depicting Alan Turing, the famous scientist who worked on code-breaking at Bletchley Park, is already in circulation.



## SP Energy Networks Priority Services Register

In the event of a power cut, our teams work around the clock to restore your electricity as quickly as possible.

To enquire about being placed on this register telephone **0330 1010 167**

Any feedback regarding this newsletter would be very much appreciated.



**Remember:** do not leave *The Pensioner* magazine in doctors' or dentists' surgeries or any public places as it contains names and addresses of Alliance officers.

The CSPA is committed to ensuring that your information and privacy are protected.