

CAMBRIDGE & DISTRICT GROUP
November 2023

Dear Member

The next quarterly meeting of the Cambridge & District group will be held on **Tuesday 12 December at 2.00 pm** in the Gray Room at St John the Evangelist Church, Hills Road, Cambridge. Wine, non-alcoholic drinks and mince pies will be served after the business part of the meeting, and we look forward to welcoming as many members as possible for a pre-Christmas get-together.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the September 2023 meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Reports: (a) Chair
(b) Treasurer
(c) Secretary
5. Report from the AGM (SD)
6. Plans for 2024 – social events etc
7. Any other business
8. Date of next meeting

Wine and mince pies!

Would Committee members please note that there will be a short meeting prior to the main meeting – starting at 1.30 pm.

Yours sincerely

Sue Davies

Secretary, Cambridge & District Group

Notes from the Committee



The season of Christmas cheer – or at least Christmas marketing – is already upon us. In time-honoured tradition, wine and mince pies will be served at our meeting on Tuesday December 12, so we hope you will be able to join us, and perhaps catch up with some old friends.

A few notes from this year's CSPA AGM are set out below, and there will be an opportunity to ask questions at the December meeting. Group circular 944, published on 20 October, sets out the decisions on all of the motions – by the time you read this newsletter, this should be available on the CSPA website. (A small number of hard copies of the circular, and copies of the speakers' slide presentations, will be available at the meeting). Incidentally, if you have not yet logged into the new CSPA website, do take a look – it really is much improved!

We will also be discussing what we want to do in 2024. Do you want social events? Do you want speakers at meetings? Do you want local campaigns and, if so, what about? Please let us know your thoughts, either at the meeting or by contacting any of the group officers.

And finally – the committee would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

A view from the 2023 AGM

The CSPA's 2023 AGM took place on 11 and 12 October at the Chesford Grange hotel near Kenilworth. The shrinking membership of the Alliance was evident from the fact that there were fewer delegates and observers than in previous years and – a new development – a sprinkling of individual voting members who do not have a local group. Perhaps as a result, all of the business was completed in good time, with no motions guillotined.

On a purely local note, the motion from Cambridge, which called on the Executive Council (EC) to campaign for increased funding for social work with the elderly (and which was composited with a similar motion from Inner London, dealing with social care more generally) was carried unanimously; and our group Chair, Sue Hennah-Barham, was returned unopposed as the Eastern Regional Representative on the EC.

As always, most motions were uncontroversial. In particular, motion A4, dealing with the review of group and regional structure, which we thought might excite controversy –

particularly over the proposal to set up regional forums of local volunteers – was passed without opposition. The EC came in for criticism, however, over recruitment strategy. Motion A7, proposed by the EC, which set out an overall strategy to attract new members, was subjected to criticism by several delegates who felt the EC was not doing enough. A proposal for it to be remitted back to the EC was carried, by 25 votes to 18. This left the way clear for West Mercia's motion, which accused the EC of not having prepared a viable workplan, to be debated: it went to a card vote (the only one of the AGM) but was defeated.

Punctuating the debates, there were presentations by Mike Lawler, the CSPA Secretary for Organisation, on "Organisation and Recruitment;" on The Lifeboat Fund; by George Stanbury from Independent Age on the campaign for a commissioner for older people; and by Stella Humphreys from the Cabinet Office on the McCloud Remedy programme. A brief note from the latter is below.

Sue Davies (Cambridge & District delegate)

McCloud Remedy: do you need to take action?

The first thing to say is that if, like me, you've read a lot about the "McCloud remedy" over the last few years but are a bit confused about what is involved, your first port of call is the Civil Service Pension Scheme website (<https://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/>), where there is a wealth of information and FAQs. A good place to start is their excellent podcast on the subject, at <https://omny.fm/shows/civil-service-pensions-podcast/2015-remedy-mccloud-explained>.

To recap on basics: when the Government reformed public service pensions in 2015, members above a certain age were allowed to stay in their old (legacy) scheme rather than move to Alpha. A case brought by Victoria McCloud, claiming this discriminated against younger members, was upheld in the Court of Appeal. It was decided to remedy the discrimination by giving all members a choice of receiving benefits from either their legacy scheme or from Alpha for the seven-year period from 1 April 2015 (when the reforms were implemented) to 31 March 2022 (when everyone was switched to Alpha). This is called the remedy period.

Those affected by the 2015 Remedy are those who were members, or eligible to be members, of a public service pension scheme on 31 March 2012 (when the pension reforms were announced) and were also members for a period between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, with the two periods being continuous or treated as continuous. This includes people who retired after 1 April 2015, so if for example you were a scheme member on 31 March 2012, and carried on being one until you retired in 2018, you would be affected. It also applies if you are receiving a pension from a deceased spouse who satisfied the condition. There is a tool on the Civil Service Pension Scheme website to check whether you are affected.

The regulations to bring the remedy into force with effect from 1 October 2023 have now been laid in Parliament. Affected members who have already retired will in due course receive a Remediable Service Statement (RSS). These will give full information about the choice to be made between a legacy scheme and the Alpha scheme, with a form to complete to record your choice. The statements will go out between spring 2024 and April 2025, with priority given to those who have taken ill-health retirement. Once you have made your choice, any additional pension that accrues to you as a result will be paid to you with interest. Modelling suggests that the sums involved will be quite small in most cases!

Unfortunately, scammers have got into the act and there are websites that promise to secure you the appropriate remedy payment, for a fee. The Cabinet Office emphasises that you need do nothing until you receive your RSS, and that the remedy will be implemented free of charge.

So, the answer to the question, “do you need to take action”? is both yes and no. Do look at the website to see whether, or how, you are affected, and help is available to answer any questions you may have. But you don't, at present, need to do anything else.

Sue Davies

Paying 2024 Group Subscriptions

Please think about making a £3 voluntary subscription to the Group. 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.

You can of course pay your subscription by cheque or in cash. Cheques should be sent to the Treasurer.

GROUP CONTACTS

Chair

Susan Hennah-Barham	17 Four Acres, Fenstanton, Cambs, PE28 9QF 07722 523485 sennaseven@gmail.com
---------------------	---

Secretary

Sue Davies	60 The Butts, Soham, Ely, Cambs CB7 5AW 01353 624579 sue.davies@folly.org.uk
------------	--

Treasurer

Patrick King	12 Chapel Street, Exning, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7HA 01638 578344 patandjenking@btinternet.com
--------------	---