

Welcome to the latest edition of our Newsletter, now in a revised format.

The Group Committee is only too aware that our Newsletters, distributed through CSPA HQ, are our only means of communicating with members for whom we do not have email addresses.

Recent changes mean we need to reconfigure how we present news, information to you. The new hard-copy versions need to be unified documents in standard "Word" format, which does reduce the overall space available to us.

The Group Committee is anxious to ensure that nobody is digitally excluded as a result of these changes, so our first priority will be to continue to provide you with all key information in the new format.

However, this may mean we can no longer provide the standard of production members have come to expect over many years. We still need to get to grips with the impact of photos and other inserts on the integrity of future editions.

To reduce costs and to maximise the information we provide for you, we have decided to continue our established "pdf" format for the Newsletter in an extended electronic edition, that we can distribute to members who have opted to receive it in that format. This will contain picture references, and additional information that we cannot fit into the hard copy edition. Additionally, we will send it directly to you, as soon as it is cleared by the Group Committee

I will be sending the current full edition for publication on the CSPA website, but there is usually a time-lag in getting this done. I will also upload it to our Group Facebook Page(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1883174215397106/>) so you can access it there if you want to.

Better still, why not join our members who have already signed up for the email edition, so we can get news & information to you quickly and cheaply, within a guaranteed timescale.

If you want to try the new E-Newsletter, please contact our Membership Secretary, Linda Woollen (lindawoollen54@gmail.com), and give her your email address.

John Houghton (Group Secretary)

Definitely a date for your diary

Sheffield & District Group Members' Meeting & Social

2 pm, Thursday 14 December 2023

New venue: **The Hilton room. Sheffield Cathedral**

Directions: Enter through the main entrance and across the back of the Cathedral past the cafe and turn left. The Hilton room is on right at the end of the corridor.

We'll have to work hard to equal the good time we had last year. The December meeting is very much a social event, with a quiz, a raffle, mince pies, and good company. We'll be working hard over the next couple of months to make sure you have a good time. We really hope you can join us, *and perhaps even win a prize in the quiz or raffle!*

Please do come along if you can. Tea, coffee and good company are available from 1.30 pm

Agenda:

1. Welcome by Group Chair, Mike Buckley
2. Report back from the National CSPA AGM
3. Social interval for refreshments
4. Quiz - *not for the faint hearted*
5. Raffle - *worthwhile prizes guaranteed*
6. Reports and other Group issues:
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Membership Secretary
 - Social Events
 - Members' Quarterly Meetings
7. Sustaining the future of our Group
8. Any other business (*notified to the Chair, or Secretary before the meeting*)

Further information will be available at the meeting to update you on any items we could not fit into this issue.

Next Meeting – Thursday 14 March 2024, from 2pm (AGM)

An important message about ensuring we have sufficient funds to sustain our Group next year.

Are you tired of people talking about “gold-plated pensions”. As Civil Service Pensioners, we know the truth. Unless we have some other independent income, we are dependent on the money we receive from CSP and DWP. For most of us it's not

even “tin-plated”. We don’t have the options and alternatives available to younger people. So, it makes good sense to do all we can to protect our income.

That’s why CSPA is so important to us all, with it’s understanding of, and focus on our priorities as Civil Service Pensioners. If we want to ensure that CSPA continues to provide that support, we need to face up to some key issues.

It has become very clear, from the latest membership data, that CSPA must take urgent action to rebuild and involve our membership. We are viewed as an exceptionally active Group, with respected Officers and Committee Members. However, even our total membership has reduced significantly since 2019. We need to work hard to sustain our Group and continue as effective representatives of you interests.

Despite what many people think, we receive no core funding from CSPA. Everything we do is dependent on the Group subscriptions and donations we receive from you. During Covid, we suspended our annual subscription. When we resumed full activity last year, despite the loyal financial support from many members, the money we received dropped dramatically.

If this continues next year, we won’t even be able to afford decent accessible rooms for quarterly meetings. It would really help us if you can subscribe to the Group next year. With member donations, it would provide the means to secure our future.

Watch out for more information in the next Group Newsletter.

Please help us to help you Subscribe £2 to Sheffield & District Group in 2024

Mike Buckley records key moments from his first experience as a Representative at this year’s CSPA National AGM.

A pleasant steady journey in excellent company saw us arrive in (very) good time for the AGM. Used it well by catching up with colleagues already known and meeting new ones. I also got time to make some notes for my speech seconding our motion on Regions and Groups. Surely wouldn't be time wasted?

First though the Deputy Mayor of Kenilworth Town Council welcomed us with an informative potted history of the place. My favourite of the fascinating facts is that Kenilworth was the first place potatoes brought back by Raleigh were grown.

Getting the AGM proper under way, Chair, **Linda Ridgers-Waite** encouraged us to 'strive mightily' in debate but to 'eat and drink as friends'. Good counsel.

We noted the Card Vote numbers, appointed Tellers and Scrutineers, adopted the reports of the Standing Orders Committee (who do their best to ensure we have a business-like orderly structure to the meeting), then settled in for **Sally Tsoukaris'** presentation of the Annual Report.

A few short notes can't do justice to an excellent review of the year. The successes, the work that still needs doing, and the significant changes faced during the year. More

'McCloud Remedy' webinars are planned; CSPA will be campaigning for the State Pension Triple Lock to be included in all parties' election manifestoes.

With a plain language explanation from Treasurer **Mike Sparham**, we adopted the Statements of Accounts for 2021 (the audit has now been formally concluded satisfactorily) and 2022 - very straightforward. My takeaway is the continuing need to raise funds and recruit members.

Mike Lawler reported on Organisation and Recruitment, in his last year of 15 as Secretary for this area. Mike and I shared a friendly laugh later at his expense, noting that when he started we had 60000 members and we now have 43000. We watched an excellent video about the CSPA recently produced. I must find out how more of us can see it.

Then we came to our Group's motion on the Regions and Groups - we would be seconding the Executive. Anticipating opposition, I reserved the opportunity to speak after opposers so I could help rebut. No Opposition, nothing else said, went through on the nod! All the work on my speech wasted!

Our **Linda Woollen** therefore made Sheffield Group's first contribution by moving our motion on improving ways local Groups can keep in touch with members. Carried without opposition (in Latin 'nem con') of course.

Couple of presentations by the Lifeboat Fund - quite distinct from the RNLI; and Cabinet Office - setting out all the materials they have, and are developing around 'McCloud'

We heard about the Independent Age campaign for a Commissioner for Older People. Really good. We hope to bring a speaker to a Sheffield Group meeting.

John Houghton did an excellent job moving our motion on health and social care. Really matters. Nem Con of course, but needs saying.

Then I got to speak! **Teesside** had a motion about restoring local public services, so badly run down in recent (13) years. Went through, though I think it will take more than a CSPA motion to get this addressed.

And we finished in good time without any motions not being heard due to lack of time.

Our own **Les Priestley** moved a suitably witty, sincere, and formal Vote of Thanks. Surprised when he singled out Sheffield Group for thanks - it does seem that we make a welcome, real and positive impact!

Mike Buckley