



## **VERY BEST WISHES TO ALL OUR MEMBERS FOR 2024**

Whilst taking this opportunity to pass on our best wishes to all our members for a happy and peaceful 2024, notwithstanding the turbulence and uncertainty that exists around the world in general and the UK in particular at the present time, it is with sadness that I have to announce that CSPA Bath & District will be closing in June, June 18th being the date of the final meeting with the final Newsletter to be issued shortly afterwards.

We are extremely grateful for all the support we have received over the years, and recognise that with their declining years our members regret no longer being able to provide the active support necessary to maintain our group's status within the CSPA. Page 2 provides further detail concerning the steps we will take to bring our activities to a close.

Our next meeting is our AGM on the 21<sup>st</sup> March when Les Calder, the SW Regional Representative, will again be our Speaker. Les has kindly agreed to provide an update on progress being made to re-shape the CSPA, the ultimate aim being to regionalise the groups under the auspices of the Regional Representative. Further details on Page 2.

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## **CLOSURE OF BATH & DISTRICT**

This was considered at the beginning of the season when an ageing membership and a lack of new members caused a major re-think among the committee as to whether it was going to be possible to continue as normal. The problem is being felt throughout the CSPA, and the option to regionalise surviving groups has been at the top of the agenda since the 2022 AGM. CSPA General Circular 943 provided details as to the steps to take when a decision to close has been taken, and this decision will be taken formally at our March AGM when the current committee will resign.

***Assuming there are no volunteers providing proposals, seconders and names and details of nominees to any member of the committee prior at least 4 weeks to the AGM in accordance with the Constitution, the closure procedure will then commence.***

The Deputy General Secretary and National Treasurer will be formally notified of the decision, which will allow appropriate steps to be taken to update the membership system; maintain contact with the members affected; liaise with our Treasurer and explore potential options with remaining volunteers. I will provide a final Group Report for inclusion in the Summer Pensioner, usually issued around May/June, and will produce the final Newsletter following the June meeting. It will contain any updates that are available concerning the new structure following Les Calder's visit as our Guest Speaker at our AGM in March. Hopefully there will be more information on how it is expected to work in practice, in advance of General Circulars being issued in the fullness of time once the procedures and processes have been finally constructed, formally agreed and established.

## **CSPA AGM**

This was held in October with myself and our Treasurer Julian Hardenberg attending. Much of the discussions centred around the proposed new arrangements to deal with the crisis currently being experienced by the CSPA. Our own Motion emphasised the need to recruit new, young IT trained retirees, seeking to introduce a scheme whereby the current regional representatives, assisted by one or more of the local Group officers, arranged meetings with retirees at local sites to inform them of the services and benefits the CSPA provides, whilst persuading them to join to take advantage of all the CSPA has to offer. The intention was of course to bring it in line with the proposed new regionalised structure currently taking shape, someone from the Executive Council leading the team in order to raise the profile. However, it received little enthusiasm, inexplicably the perception being that it was a "group thing" and was remitted for further discussion.

Group Circular 944 contained the AGM election results, with the Chair Linda Ridgers-Waite, Vice Chair Don Makepeace and the South West Regional Representative Les Calder being elected to the EC, all elected unopposed, being some of the more notable results.

## CHRISTMAS LUNCH

This was held on the 12<sup>th</sup> December at the Boathouse Bath and was enjoyed by all.



Sylvia Cliffe

Brian Robertson

Julian Hardenberg



Helena Hreczuk-Hirst

Audrey Robertson

Iris Hardenberg

Irene Murdoch

## NPC CAMPAIGN

Their campaign sheet highlighted the return of the Blackpool Annual Convention for the first time since before the pandemic with the headline **Back Stronger Than Ever**. The decision to close hundreds of rail ticket offices energised massive support to call for this decision to be overturned, and in October the Government announced a U – Turn on the basis that the proposals “do not meet the high thresholds set by ministers.”

Other campaigns included a call on No. 10 to end BBC cuts, NPC General Secretary Jan Shortt attending the Scottish Parliament for the launch of a Private Members’ Bill to establish a

Commissioner for Older People, and the need to highlight the hidden income lost to unpaid carers through having to look after loved ones, many being pushed into poverty.

## SCAMS TO LOOK OUT FOR

**Fake Charity Appeal**; **Phishing** scams e.g. sketchy emails or messages written as though they are from legitimate companies or even friends; **Technology Support** scams where IT scammers offer assistance in order to get into your devices and data; **Investment Fraud** e.g. schemes that offer high returns that turn out to be fraudulent, and **Romance** scams, where people create false online profiles to build romantic relationships with the intention of asking for money once your confidence has been secured.

## ACTIONS TO TAKE

**Takefive-stopfraud.org.uk** for financial advice and support to stop fraud

**Action Fraud** Victims of fraud, scams or online crime (cybercrime) can report it to **Action Fraud (0300 123 2040 M – F 8am to 8pm)**.

**Victim Support** Receive free and confidential support from Victim Support if you've been affected by a scam. Their free support line is open 24/7 **0808 1689 111**.

**Your Bank** If you've noticed any unusual activity on your bank account, call the centralised number **159** or the phone number on the back of your bank card. If you lost money your bank may but not always be able to reimburse you but could cancel your current card and send a new one.

## REMAINING MEMBERS' MEETINGS

The Bath & District 2023/4 AGM will take place on **Tuesday the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2.30pm – 4pm** at The **Hare and Hounds Bath** when the South West Regional Representative Les Calder will again be our Guest Speaker. He will provide an update on the CSPA regionalisation plans once resignation procedures have taken place by the current committee, to take effect at the end of the 2023/24 season. A formal statement will then be made to close Bath & District in accordance with current Constitutional procedures.

The final Members' meeting will take place on Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2.30pm – 4pm The Hare and Hounds Bath, and a condensed final Newsletter issued as soon as practical thereafter.

## FINAL NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all our committee members for their support and much valued advice during these difficult times, and to all those who've gone before us, many of whom sadly are no longer with us. Finally, to thank all our members who have stayed with us throughout and are no longer able to provide the active support we need to continue the fine work the CSPA undertakes. We have tried various methods to attract the younger, zestful IT trained retirees to take our place, but it is a different Civil Service from the one many of us joined, and sadly we have been unsuccessful. CSPA Bath & District appears to have run its course after many years providing a much -appreciated service to our members. As Robert Falcon Scott wrote in his last note after his unsuccessful bid to arrive at the South Pole first: "It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write more."