

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING 2024

The 27th Annual Meeting of the Teesside Group will be held on Thursday 14th March 2024 at St Mary's Centre 82 – 90 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough at 2pm. We aim to finish by 3.30 pm.

If you want to put forward items for discussion at the AGM or if you want to nominate someone for an elected position at Group and/or at National level, please put them in writing to reach me at the address on this notice by the 28th February 2024. This also applies to any motions for submission to the national Annual General Meeting in October. The Agenda for the AGM is below.

Now this is where in time honoured tradition I ask you to pay a voluntary subscription towards the running of our group. However, the group's expenses have reduced significantly. We now use online communications wherever possible and also we haven't had a second delegate to the national AGM recently. This means we have sufficient funds on hand to meet our needs for the time being. So, we are not asking for any contributions this year.

The key issue the group is facing is the decline in numbers attending our meetings. We appreciate that most members are happy with their membership and the knowledge that the CSPA continues to defend their pensions and to campaign on key issues. And also of course the Alliance is there for support if any issues arise regarding payment of individual pensions. We do though still have over 150 members in the TS area. However, we need people to do the key jobs and keep the show on the road. We're none of us getting any younger! The three or four stalwarts will keep pressing on, but it would be nice to see some new faces. We really do need help to keep the group going.

The key piece of good news is that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his autumn statement confirmed the Government's commitment to the State Pensions 'Triple Lock' following petitions and sustained campaigning on the part of the CSPA and other organisations lobbying on behalf of pensioners. This means that from April 2024 the new state pension will be increased by 8.5% to £221.20 per week, which is equivalent to up to £900 or more a year for pensioners (note – it is currently £203.85 per week). The new State Pension was introduced from 6 April 2016 for those reaching State Pension Age (SPA) after that date (note – rates in payment will differ dependent on National Insurance contributions). For those who reached

their SPA before April 2016, the 'old' or 'basic' State Pension applies. The basic SP is currently £156.20 per week, which is obviously much less than the 'new' SP, but many pre-2016 pensioners also receive the 2nd State Pension (formerly known as SERPS) based on their earnings and NI record. The legacy second State Pension is not subject to the Triple Lock, so increases in line with CPI inflation, and the CSPA continues to campaign for a closer alignment of the two State Pension rates. The basic rate at which income tax becomes payable has been frozen since April 2021, and the Autumn Statement said that it will remain frozen until 2028! This effectively drags more and more pensioners into the 20% tax bracket, especially after the 2023/24 increases of 10.1% to the State Pension and Civil Service pension were implemented. This alone has resulted in 770,000 more over 65s paying tax on part of their State Pension this year, according to HMRC. In 2010, HMRC figures suggest that 4.5 million over 65s were subject to income tax, whilst figures for 2023 indicate that 8.5 million over 65s now pay income tax. The CSPA has been lobbying with partners in other pensioner organisations for the freeze to be lifted and for tax thresholds to be uprated annually in line with the CPI increases. CSPA has submitted a motion to the National Pensioners' Convention (NPC) Conference in this regard. All public sector pensions, including the Civil Service pension, are index-linked to inflation, with increases since 2011 being based on the preceding September Consumer Price Index (CPI). The anticipated increase from the 8th April 2024 will therefore be 6.7%, based on the ONS announcement on 18th October 2023 of the September figure for the CPI. The full increase only applies to pensions that have been in payment for a full year on the 8th April 2024, so those who have more recently retired will see their increases applied pro rata.

The Cabinet Office Pensions team has confirmed to CSPA that Capita Business Services Ltd (Capita) have been awarded the contract to administer the Civil Service Pension Scheme from December 2025, following a long procurement selection process. The current service provider, MyCSP, will continue to administer the scheme during the two-year transitional period to December 2025. The new contact will run from December 2025 for seven years to 2032, with the option to extend it by a further period of up to three years. At a meeting with CSPA officers on the 28th November, the Cabinet Office pensions team confirmed their commitment "to develop their transition and transformation plans for delivering an effective service" for the 1.5 million members of the Civil Service Pension Scheme, and to continue active engagement with CSPA and other stakeholders during the two-year transition to their service transformation. Capita will be responsible for delivering employer and member services; pensions payroll; as well as administrative support for the Civil Service Injury Benefit Scheme; Compensation Scheme; and related finance and accounting services.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting if possible, but if not, we extend our good wishes and appreciation for your continued support. We will be in the meeting room by 1-30 with tea, coffee and biscuits so please feel free to drop in early for a chat.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN BUTLER Group Secretary

AGENDA FOR 27th AGM on 14th March 2024

- **Welcome from the Chair**
- **Apologies for absence**
- **Minutes of 2023 AGM**
- **Matters arising**
- **Annual Report**
- **Financial Report and Financial Statement to 31 December 2023**
- **Membership Report**
- **Election of Group Officers, Committee members, Auditor and delegate to National AGM**
- **Nominations to the National Executive Council and other National posts (if any)**
- **Motions and Any other business**

Minutes of the 26th Annual General Meeting of the Teesside Group held on Thursday 16th March 2023 at St Mary's Centre, 82 – 90 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough at 2pm.

Present

Ken Bellamy, John Butler, Marjorie Bellamy, Christine Foxton, Linda Fordy, Keith Yallop, and David Barry.

Apologies

Betty Hocking, Jim Doherty and Maurice Wilkinson. Maurice also gave his belated apologies for last December's meeting.

Welcome

The meeting opened with Ken Bellamy welcoming all members to the AGM. The meeting had been postponed from its original date because of the adverse weather forecast that day. Ken apologised for any inconvenience this may have caused but members present supported the decision.

Minutes of the AGM 2022

These were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Annual Report

John Butler gave a verbal report. John said the main thing from his point of view was that the group was still active and providing a service to members. He was distributing group circulars electronically to those members who provided email details.

Some business matters required to be dealt with at this meeting. The first was the election of an additional woman member of the EC. Three members had been nominated across the Alliance. After some discussion it was agreed that the Group's vote would be cast for Pam Lynn.

Secondly following a remitted motion from last year's AGM in Coventry a working party had been set up to consider a possible move to a regional structure. A report with recommendations had been circulated. This rejected wholesale change but suggested that different solutions might be adopted in different areas and that groups might for example look to incorporating any neighbouring area where the group had ceased to function. A lively discussion took place in which it was generally felt that a regional structure would not work. No reform should be adopted which impacted the viability of existing groups. However, setting up a regional organisation might be appropriate in any area where groups had ceased to function. It should though be possible for local groups to amalgamate or expand on a voluntary basis. It was agreed that John would draft a response for approval by the officers.

Andy Aitchison had recently organised a zoom meeting for regional members which Ken, Keith and John had attended. There had been a broad discussion on a range of issues facing the CSPA. The face to face regional meeting would be at Darlington on the 8th June. Members present indicated they may wish to attend. The date clashed with the group's next meeting. Ken suggested the group meeting be moved to the following week the 15th and this was agreed.

John informed the meeting that it had been formally announced by the Cabinet Office that civil service pensions would be increased by 10.1% on the 10th April in line with CPI inflation.

The meeting thanked John for his report.

Financial report

Christine Foxton had provided a balance sheet and report for the year up to 31 December 2022, showing items of income and expenditure. The report had been audited by Marjorie. A total of 49 members had contributed £221 to Group funds. Added to the brought forward balance on 01/01/2022 of £739.61 this gave a total of £960.61. Expenditure amounted to £86 leaving a cash balance of £29.47 and bank balance of £845.14 total £874.61.

Following acceptance at this AGM a copy of the report would be forwarded to HQ Treasurer Mike Sparham. In the current year 28 members have contribute £104 so far.

The meeting approved the £25 annual subscription to the NPC.

In conclusion Ken on behalf of the Group thanked Christine for her report and her work as Treasurer.

Membership Secretary's report

Keith reported there were ongoing problems with the membership database at HQ although it was hoped these would be resolved shortly. The most recent figure was 160 members from last November.

Election of Group Officers and Committee members.

John reported that he had received no nominations from the general membership, but Ken had submitted a proposal that all postholders be renominated. John had seconded this. John indicated that for the record he would formally nominate Ken as chair. These being the only nominations the following were declared elected. Chair Ken Bellamy, Secretary John Butler, Treasurer Christine Foxton, Membership Secretary Keith Yallop, Auditor/scrutineer Marjorie Bellamy and as committee members David Barry and Jim Doherty. John Butler was nominated as national AGM Delegate and Ken Bellamy as observer. Keith Yallop was elected as NPC delegate. The group accepted the nominations of Don Makepeace as Chair of the Alliance, Linda Ridgers-Waite as Deputy Chair and Les Priestley as an EC member. Keith Yallop was nominated for the Standing Orders Committee and Andy Aitchison as regional Executive Committee representative.

Motions

A motion had been proposed by Ken for submission to the national AGM:

After years of savage public expenditure cuts most public and local authority services are now devastated with many essential services failing to reach even basic service standards due to inadequate staffing and resources. Often essential personal services are curtailed or disbanded causing anxiety/distress to many and particularly to the elderly or disadvantaged.

The EC is urged to press the Government to recognise and speedily address the staffing and resource needs of all public services along with adequate LA resourcing in order to urgently restore the high standards of public and local authority services that are urgently needed.

The motion was agreed to by the meeting after a short debate.

Any Other Business

There was no other business and Ken closed the meeting at 3.20pm.