

TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH OUR MEMBERS

## Statement from the branch chair



Hello everyone. The branch AGM was held on Thursday 25 April in the Maldron Hotel, 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow G2 3BW.

The new venue proved to be a huge success. CSPA General Secretary Sally Tsoukaris kindly travelled from the Northern Ireland AGM the previous day to be our guest speaker, and she enjoyed the hospitality of the hotel for her necessary overnight stay.

Her speech was very interesting and informative regarding the work of the CSPA nationally.

Nicky Kidd from BC Technologies, our IT consultants in Dunoon, told members of the help and advice they offer on the phone or by email, free of charge. They have a full-

page advertisement in each edition of *The Pensioner* magazine.

Robert Cranston from Thompsons Solicitors was also at the AGM and he informed members about the initial free legal advice the firm offers with a maximum 30-minute telephone call.

Both firms will be advertising these services on a seasonal basis in future branch newsletters. When contacting BC Technologies or Thompsons, you are required to confirm your membership number.

**Members are reminded we have a new branch website at [www.cspascotland.org.uk](http://www.cspascotland.org.uk)**



### Summer outing

On 12 June, the Newton Mearns Community Wee Red Bus left the King's Theatre in Glasgow at 11am, taking 12 members to visit The Kelpies, Callendar House and the Falkirk Wheel (above). A good day out was enjoyed by all.

### Members meetings: venue and times



Branch officers have negotiated a favourable room hire arrangement for members meetings in The Griffin public house, 266 Bath Street, Glasgow. The meetings begin at 1.30pm and can be accessed either through the bar or via a door on Elmbank Street.

Any members wishing to use the facilities of The Griffin are free to do so either prior to or after the meetings. The venue opens at 11am.

### Meeting dates for your diary

- Thursday 12 September
- Thursday 7 November
- Christmas Lunch – Thursday 12 December, Maldron Hotel, Glasgow, commencing 12 noon, with access from 11.30am

### Free legal help

A free legal advice service from Thompsons Solicitors is one of the benefits available to Scotland Branch members. For details and assistance, please email [advicecentre@thompsons-scotland.co.uk](mailto:advicecentre@thompsons-scotland.co.uk) or call 0800 801 299.

Consultation is for a maximum of 30 minutes and members must provide their membership number prior to advice.

As there is a new membership database, please contact Michael Kirby, who can verify your up-to-date membership number – his contact details can be found at the bottom of this newsletter.



# Smart meters: your questions answered

## Are smart meters compulsory in Scotland?

There is no legal obligation to have a smart meter installed. However, Scottish Power supports the government-mandated programme and aims to install smart meters in all customers' homes to help customers get the benefits of a smart meter.

## Will smart meters become compulsory?

Smart meters are not compulsory and it is up to you whether you get one installed. You will likely be offered one by your supplier if you don't already have one, but you are well within your rights to refuse.

## What are the downsides of having a smart meter?

You may have problems getting one fitted, and not all homes want them. Many people have refused over concerns about the amount of insight they give energy suppliers. There are also worries about smart meters being targeted by hackers.

## Is it a good idea to have a smart meter installed?

Smart meters can detect people's

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**Smart meters are not compulsory – it's up to you to get one installed**

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energy usage more accurately. As a result, energy suppliers could suggest more accurate energy tariffs. Another positive is that smart meters could save you money. They do this by identifying when it's cheapest to use energy.

## Can I legally refuse to have a smart meter installed?

You don't have to accept a smart meter if you don't want one. If your supplier tells you that you must have one installed, please contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133. However, if you refuse a smart meter, you might find it harder to access more favourable tariffs.

Source: non-sponsored Google search engine

# Voting in the 2024 general election

To vote in the election on 4 July, you'll need acceptable photo ID, so check you have one of the following:

- UK or Northern Ireland photocard driving licence (full or provisional)
- Driving licence issued by an EU country, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Isle of Man or any of the Channel Islands
- UK passport
- Passport issued by an EU country, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or a Commonwealth country
- Post Office PASS card
- Blue Badge
- Disabled person's bus pass
- Biometric residence permit (BRP)
- Armed Forces Veteran ID card (MOD Form 90)
- National identity card issued by the EU, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein
- Voter Authority Certificate
- Anonymous elector's document
- Scottish National Entitlement Card.

You can still use your photo ID if it's out of date, but the photo needs to look like you and the name must be the same name you registered

with to vote. If you don't have an accepted form of photo ID or you're not sure your photo ID still looks like you, you can apply for a free voter ID document known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

You can apply for this at [www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate](http://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate) or you can

## You'll need an acceptable photo ID to vote in the general election on 4 July

complete a paper application form and send this to the electoral services team at your local council. To find their contact details visit [electoralcommission.org.uk/voter](http://electoralcommission.org.uk/voter)

If you have registered to vote by post, you don't need any photo ID. If you are not already registered, the deadline to do so is 19 June.

For more information on which forms of photo ID will be accepted, visit [www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id) or call their helpline: 0800 328 0280.



## Eye care at home

If you or someone you know cannot leave home unaccompanied due to a physical or mental illness or disability, there's good news: Specsavers can visit you.

Their mobile opticians can provide a free NHS-funded eye test – subject to you meeting the qualifying criteria – all from the comfort of your own home.

To find out if you qualify or to book a visit, call 0800 198 1135 or go to [specsavers.co.uk/home-eye-tests](http://specsavers.co.uk/home-eye-tests).

## Special notice: mailing lists

Apologies to any Scotland Branch members who have not received previous copies of the branch newsletter or *The Pensioner* magazine. Members reading this notice who know of anyone in this position, please ask them to contact either Michael Kirby or head office on 020 868 8418 to report it, giving your name, address and, if known, your membership number as the branch officers are not responsible for the distribution listings taken from the national database.





# BT postpones UK landline switch-off

BT has confirmed that it plans to postpone the switch-over of all copper landlines to a digital network until 2027 – 13 months later than originally planned. The revised timeline follows

a number of issues with the telecare emergency alarms on which 1.8 million vulnerable people in the UK rely. The government was forced to step in after alarms failed

on the new telephone lines. BT will now start to contact customers who are identified as vulnerable or with additional needs about the switch from spring 2025 at the earliest.



## Keeping your details up to date

Membership secretary Michael Kirby (details at the bottom of this page) is the man to contact if you need to make changes to your personal data held on the Scotland Branch section of the CSPA database – change of address, email, phone number or any other membership matter you require assistance with.



## 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 – phone 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.