



**Crawley & District Group
Newsletter: Spring 2025**

PRESIDENT: Mike Card CHAIRPERSON: Brian Sturtevant VICE CHAIRPERSON: Derek Williams SECRETARY: Sylvia Sturtevant TREASURER: Vacant SOCIAL SECRETARY: Brian Barton EDITOR: Ralph Groves

Dear Colleague,

CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER

A belated happy new year to all members from the group officers and committee.

General Election 2024 – All Change?

Although it seems a long time ago the General Election brought many changes to our area and as a consequence to the group's campaigning activities. The key constituencies of Crawley, Horsham and Lewes all elected new Members of Parliament (MPs), boundary changes have also meant that many of our members are in different constituencies. This means our committee members and the group officers will have to build up new working relationships with the new MP's so as advise them of our concerns and policies. This work has already started, future newsletters will include updates and progress reports on the group's campaigning activities.

Brian Sturtevant Group Chairperson

OTHER ISSUES OF INTEREST AND CONCERN

Meetings including the Group Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Group meetings will resume at **The Orchard, Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AD**, on Wednesday **12 February** at **1045**. Refreshments are available from 1030. In addition to the usual CSPA updates on local and national issues, this meeting features a talk by David Bickerton, on 'The Last Days Of The Bismark'

The meeting being held on Wednesday 12 March will be the group's AGM and the guest speaker will be the CSPA General Secretary, Sally Tsoukaris. Sally is a good speaker and will be able to update us all the major issues being pursued by the CSPA and the 'Pensions World' generally.

A speaker for the meeting being held on Wednesday 9 April has not yet been fixed but further advice will be provided via the CSPA national website www.cspa.co.uk

As stated above meetings start at 1045 with Coffee and Biscuits available from 1030, meetings finish by 1230 when we normally retire to a local hostelry for some lunch. We hope you will be able

to attend the AGM when the group officers and committee members are elected for the coming year and future group policies are discussed and decided.

At this AGM we will have to decide on the future of the Crawley Group website. This costs in excess of £400 a year and currently apart from the group officers and committee only about 10 other people appear to have visited the website during the year. This is clearly not cost-effective and we could spend members' group subscriptions more cost effectively on other things. So please come along and have your say.

CSPA National AGM 2024 – Crawley Group Motion Calling For The Restoration of the Group Newsletter Competition

You will hopefully have read in the Winter edition of The Pensioner magazine the account of the CSPA National AGM held in Kenilworth on 9/10 October 2024 and noticed the significant role played by the group in many of the debates and therefore in the decision-making processes of the Alliance. This we are proud of but perhaps we are most proud of our role in getting the Group Newsletter Competition re-instated. Prior to the Covid Pandemic many groups eagerly participated in this competition hoping that their group newsletter would win and be awarded the 'Tom Hoyes Silver Salver' engraved with the winning group's name.

Although the award did not represent a fortune nevertheless the silver salver has been regarded as a coveted award won after keen competition between groups. Tom Hoyes was the first paid General Secretary of the Alliance and is fondly remembered for the work he undertook in establishing the CSPA as a force in the 'pensioner movement'.

The Group Newsletter Competition was suspended during the Covid Pandemic and the group felt it should be re-instated from the viewpoint that group newsletters played a very useful role in recruiting new members, keeping members informed of local campaigning activities and generally raising the profile of the local group. A key aspect of the Group Newsletter Competition is to inspire groups to improve their newsletters from a content and presentational viewpoint thereby enhancing the role of the group and the possibility of winning the group newsletter competition.

We wrote to the Alliance's Executive Council suggesting that the competition should be re-instated. This resulted in a very negative response, stressing the costs and staff time involved all for a few groups that produced group newsletters and that there was no intention of proceeding with the Crawley and District Group's suggestion. We were very disappointed and decided to submit a motion to the national CSPA AGM calling for the re-introduction of the competition.

The group's motion was opposed by the General Secretary on behalf of the Executive Council, but the group's delegate Derek Williams in moving the motion pointed out that there were no extra costs involved as the National Constitution made provision for the funding of four newsletters per year for each group and the silver salver cost under £100 the last time one had been purchased. This was hardly likely to put the Alliance into an insolvency situation.

In his right of reply Derek Williams said that staff time involved was minimal but the value of the competition was incalculable. The negative response from the Executive Council dealt a blow to enthusiastic groups that wanted to raise their profiles and improve membership recruitment.

The AGM agreed and carried the motion. We now wait to see how it will be implemented.

Involvement of Members in the CSPA Democratic Processes

As will be seen from the comments made above, regarding the re-instatement of the group newsletter competition to encourage groups to produce such publications with the intention of raising the profile of local groups and to encourage membership recruitment and to improve communications with members, from the content of the General Secretary's report to the national AGM and the report contained in the Winter 2024 edition of The Pensioner magazine, the Executive Council are making clear their intentions to consult individual members, groups and branches regarding the possibility of introducing individual votes for members from 2026 for the posts of national Chairperson, Vice

Chairperson and the five national member positions on the Executive Council. Irrespective of our concerns regarding the group newsletter competition being re-instated, it is clear that the Executive Council is spending a good deal of time and resources in seeking members' views about the proposal to introduce individual membership ballots. It is extremely important that not only the group officers and committee submit views on this proposal but all members are urged to respond to the national survey to ensure your views are taken into account by the Executive Council, whether these are in favour or opposed to such a change.

It is very important that the Executive Council has a clear view from the majority of members to assist them in determining the way forward for the conduct of future national elections. In the meantime we can also hope that the Executive Council

Social Care

Despite the change of Government following the General Election, it is dismaying to note that any positive developments relating to Social Care have been kicked into touch until at least 2028 or later following the recent announcement that a further review is to be undertaken. Despite the recommendations arising from the Dilnot review conducted in 2011, which contained some workable proposals regarding care provision and funding of Social Care, which were kicked into touch by the then Conservative Government it seems that no Government seems prepared to deal with this controversial issue. This is likely to cause the issue of NHS beds being occupied by patients well enough to be sent home or into community care, will continue to cause delays in dealing with emergency cases and other procedures for the foreseeable future.

GROUP OFFICERS' AND COMMITTEE CONTACT POINTS

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GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Renewing membership of the CSPA Crawley and District group or joining the group

Subscriptions for 2025 are £10 per household. There is no limit on the number of members living at the same address. If you wish to subscribe or donate to the Crawley and District Group, please fill in this form and then send it to the Acting Treasurer, Mike Card at the address shown below.

Name:

Address:
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Postcode: Telephone No: Mobile No:.....

Email Address:
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Please return to: **Mike Card, 13 Garden Street, LEWES. East Sussex, BN7 1TJ**

If you would like to subscribe or donate to group funds please enter the amount here:

Subscription to group funds: £

Donation to group funds: £

Total sent to the Treasurer: £

Please send cheques made payable to the **‘Civil Service Pensioners’ Alliance Crawley Group** or use postal orders thank you.