

GROUP CIRCULAR 969

**To: Branches, Groups (3 copies)
Executive Council**

May 2025

(Copies to members of the Standing Orders Committee for information)

Dear Colleague

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025 – MOTIONS, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND NOMINATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in the Chesford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, on Wednesday 8 and Thursday 9 October 2025. The precise times for the start and finish of the AGM will be advised after the Standing Orders Committee has had time to consider the number of Motions submitted and the order of business for the AGM.

The usual procedures for arranging hotel accommodation for the AGM will apply again, so there will be no need for Branches or Groups to book accommodation for their representatives. More information will be given in the relevant Group Circular, to be issued towards the end of July 2025, giving details of AGM charges, and requesting Branches & Groups provide details of their delegates and sponsored representatives (observers) in order that CSPA HQ can make all the required bookings direct with the hotel.

Branches & Groups are therefore invited to submit Motions and Constitutional Amendments for debate at the AGM and Nominations for the posts of elected Officers and Executive Committee members.

Guidance on the wording of Motions, Constitutional Amendments and the Nomination and Election procedures is provided in the latest version of the *Advice to Groups in England and Wales* booklet (Revised May 2017).

Please see also the *Guidance on the Wording and Length of Motions to the AGM* included as Appendix 1 hereafter.

The Standing Orders Committee have added that, ideally, motions should be kept brief and deal with one subject only, specifying the action to be taken.

Branches and Groups are strongly advised to read all the advice before submitting Motions, Amendments and making Nominations. Also please note that all Motions must relate to issues of primary and direct concern to pensioners - Rule 2 applies.

If, in any doubt about aspects of proposed Motions, particularly about the provisions of Rule 2, Branches and Groups should, in advance of formal submission for the AGM, seek appropriate advice about the wording and subject of Motions from one of the officers at CSPA HQ.

The deadline for receipt of Motions, Nominations and Constitutional Amendments at the Headquarters offices in London is 12.00 noon, Friday 4 July 2025

First class post can often take several days to reach HQ, which should be borne in mind when posting, whereas, next day delivery can only be guaranteed by paying an extra fee at the Post Office.

The enclosed forms (1 copy of each) should be used to submit Motions (YELLOW) Nominations (GREEN) and Constitutional Amendments (BLUE) and they should be signed by both the Chair and Secretary of the Group or Branch in accordance with Rule 7(e) (iii) of the Rules & Constitution.

Please note that if you email digital copies of the completed forms in advance of posting them, they will be noted, but we will still require paper copies, duly signed by the Group/Branch Chair and Secretary, to be received by the closing date of 4th July 2025. These can be posted separately. HQ will process the forms to submit the information to the SOC once both have been received.

MOTIONS

The Standing Orders Committee advise that they will be flexible when applying the relevant regulations. However, if any Branch or Group wants advice on how to word a Motion, or whether a particular marking is likely to apply, please do not hesitate to contact CSPA HQ. The EC would much prefer that Branches and Groups consult about wording to avoid falling foul of the Standing Orders and to ensure that their members' views are aired at the AGM.

In order to encourage constructive debate and focus CSPA resources on priority issues, motions on the CSPA's top priorities would be particularly welcome. The following issues continue to affect our members and older people more generally:

- Pensions and Pensioner Entitlements,
- The Cost-of-Living Crisis,
- Health and Social Care Services,
- Financial and Digital Exclusion,
- Housing and Related Issues,

- Accessible Public Transport,
- Commissioners for Older People and Ageing

The 2024 Annual Report, soon to be published, will also provide details of the progress on these policy areas over the past year. The latest version of the 2024 AGM Workplan is also available for members to view or download on the website.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The Constitution, Rule 12, allows for proposed amendments to the CSPA Rules and Constitution to be considered by the AGM.

Groups and Branches may wish to alert the Executive Council to any proposed changes to the Constitution that they are considering, so that constructive dialogue can take place between the Group and Executive Council (EC) before the terms of any planned Constitutional Amendments are *set in stone*. The Executive Council (EC) will then be able to let the Group or Branch know, at an early stage, whether it is likely to support the Constitutional Amendment, or if, perhaps, some rewording would make it more acceptable to the EC.

In any event, Groups and Branches will still be entitled to pursue whatever Constitutional Amendments they wish. However, by availing themselves of this opportunity, Groups and Branches may make the process more mutually productive for all concerned. Any correspondence on such matters should be directed by post, to CSPA HQ; by email, to david.luxton@cspa.co.uk, or by telephone on 020 8688 8418 (office).

NOMINATIONS

It would help HQ if Branches and Groups could check with all nominees that they are willing to stand for the posts they intend to nominate them for.

The General Secretary has, to date, **not** received notification from any members of the Executive Council that they do not wish to stand for re-election at the 2025 AGM.

Please note that the following posts on the Executive Council are currently vacant:
Representative for Groups in Wales

We would especially welcome nominations for women and people from other under-represented groups and would encourage them to come forward to help the Executive Council better reflect the CSPA membership.

NOMINATIONS, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND MOTIONS FROM CSPA MEMBERS IN 'NO GROUP' AREAS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

CSPA Groups and Branches submit motions and suggest rule amendments on their members' behalf, as well as nominating to Executive Council positions. Individual CSPA members can also attend the AGM and submit motions for debate, suggest

rule amendments and make nominations to Executive Council positions (Rule 7(e)). Motions and nominations submitted by members not covered by Branches or Groups must be seconded by another member (Rule 7(e)(iii)). Further information in this regard is to be communicated to all members in the next issue of The Pensioner.

CONCLUSION

Should you have any questions or need clarifications about any aspect of the contents of this Group Circular, please do not hesitate to contact me, either by phone - **020 8688 8418** (office) - or by email - sally.tsoukaris@cspa.co.uk

Yours sincerely

Sally Tsoukaris

**General Secretary
Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance**

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APPENDIX 1 – GUIDANCE ON THE WORDING AND LENGTH OF MOTIONS TO THE AGM

1. General guidance on the wording of a policy motion

A policy motion to the AGM is a formal proposal suggesting a specific course of action or policy stance on an issue.

- Motions should deal with only one subject,
- Motions should be positive in their intent,
- Motions should be worded clearly and unambiguously,
- Motions should be concise (with no unnecessary detail),
- Motions should specify the action required by the Executive Council, or a specific instruction on a change or position to take.

If these simple guidelines are followed, the AGM agenda is much easier to compile and follow. The most frequent mistake encountered by the SOC is that a motion is only a statement e.g.

“This AGM agrees that NHS waiting lists are too long.”

This would be ruled out of order by the SOC and not debated. However, if the motion said:

“This AGM agrees that NHS waiting lists are too long and instructs the Executive Council to make representations to the Secretary of State for Health to ensure urgent steps are taken to reduce them.”

This version is positive in intent and gives a clear instruction and would be accepted for debate by the SOC.

2. Structure of a Good Motion

Use a simple, direct format such as: *“This AGM believes that...”*

Then follow on with a clear action or position such as: “*...instructs the EC to seek a firm commitment from the Government to maintain the state pension triple-lock for the duration of this Parliament...*”

- Avoid background information, just state the policy or position that is sought by the motion,
- Any pre-amble should be kept to a minimum. The context is for the mover’s speech at the AGM.

3. Tips to Keep it Brief and Effective

- Use strong meaningful verbs such as: “implement”, “support”, “oppose”, “resist”,
- Avoid vague terms,
- Avoid long justifications for the motion, just state the policy sought,
- Be specific when needed, e.g., “This review is to be completed in sufficient time to allow consultation before final decisions are to be taken at next year’s AGM...”,
- Consider what the EC would realistically be able to achieve by the motion and whether it is relevant to our remit. For example, a motion calling on CSPA to “*protect pensioners from climate change*” may be deemed too broad and/or beyond CSPA’s remit.

4. Test for Brevity & Clarity

- Can someone understand the aim of the motion without extra context?
- Can it fit into a single, clear and unambiguous sentence?
- Is the proposed action or stance obvious from the wording of the motion?
- Is the proposed action capable of being progressed? (noting that we cannot direct the actions of external bodies).

5. Guidance on the wording of a Constitutional Amendment motion

- A Constitutional Amendment motion is different from a policy motion, requiring a two-thirds majority to be passed, and must contain a specific proposed amendment to an existing Rule in the National Rules and Constitution; or propose a new Rule in the relevant section of the Rules and Constitution.
- Constitutional Amendments that are not specific about the wording of the Rule to be amended, or which include commentary about the reason for the proposed amendment, are likely to be ruled Out of Order by the Standing Orders Committee and not debated.
- Constitutional Amendments which conflict with other Rules that are not covered by the motion are also likely to be marked Out of Order by the Standing Orders Committee.

An example of a Constitutional Amendment in the correct format would be as follows:

“Rule 3(a) delete first line and insert “pensioners who are in receipt of pension benefits or are entitled to receive deferred pension benefits;”

Rule 3 (b) delete in first line: “and former”

Whereas had the motion simply said:

“We call on the EC to change the Rules on membership eligibility as to allow into membership anyone with a deferred Civil Service pension”

The motion would be ruled Out of Order by the Standing Orders Committee as the EC does not have the authority to change any Rule without a decision of the AGM, and the motion was not proposing a specific amendment to the Rules.

6. Categorisation of Motions by the Standing Orders Committee

Groups also need to bear in mind Rule 7(d)(iii) of the Rules and Constitution:

The Standing Orders Committee shall for Annual General Meetings allocate to each motion a prefix as follows: -

“A” – indicating that the motion requires a decision.

“B” – indicating that the motion is in line with existing Alliance policy and is accepted without debate.

“C” – indicating that the motion would reverse Alliance policy determined at the previous year’s Annual Meeting or Special Meeting in that year and is not for debate.

“D” – indicating that the motion could be dealt with by correspondence and is not for debate.

“X” – indicating that the motion is out of order.

If Group officers need any advice or help before submitting a policy motion or constitutional amendment then please contact the Deputy General Secretary, David Luxton: david.luxton@cspa.co.uk, preferably well before the deadline for submitting motions to the AGM.