



*Spring 2025,  
Norfolk Norfolk and Suffolk Group Newsletter*

**Dear Member,**

Welcome to the Spring, 2025, edition of the CSPA Norfolk and Suffolk Group Newsletter. As I write this the weather is feeling very springlike, but the garden is in need of a good rain.

Our next Group meeting will be on Wednesday, 28 May, 2025, at 2 pm, at Chapel Field Road Methodist Church, Norwich, NR2 1SD; (please note this is a change of date from that previously stated).

Our guest speaker will be Glenda Tooke, who has raised funds over many years for a wide range of causes.

At this meeting we will also agree those we wish to be nominated as Chair, Vice-chair and members of the CSPA EC. We can also propose motions from the Group to be included in the CSPA AGM agenda.

Full details of the Group meeting and agenda are shown on page 4 of this Newsletter.

I am sorry to have to let you know that due to failing health, Neville Jarvis has had to stand down from being a member of our Group Committee. We were pleased to welcome Neville to the Committee when we were joined by the Members of the former Suffolk Group. We will miss having a Suffolk Member on our Committee and send our Best wishes to Neville and his wife.

Richard

## **Audio Version of the Pensioner**

CSPA has made arrangements to have audio copies of each issue of the Pensioner for those who cannot easily read the print edition. Each issue will now be available on a memory stick, which will be mailed in a returnable wallet to each recipient. There will be no charge to Members receiving the audio version and no postage to pay. Members should return the memory stick by replacing it in the wallet and turning over the address label and posting the wallet in time for the following issue. If you would like to receive the Pensioner in audio form, please contact our Membership Secretary, Margaret Noble.

Thank you

## **Centre For Ageing Better**

The Centre for Ageing Better has published their annual report which reveals that many of us are living into our seventies, eighties, nineties and beyond, in decent health, working for longer and supporting our communities through volunteering and caring. The report also highlights that this positive picture is unfortunately unobtainable for many, such as those who are living in poor housing, in poverty and poor health, and who are isolated from their communities and society. Regional differences in how we age accumulate over many years and can be evidenced across health, employment, financial security and the state of our homes, with 2.3 million older people in England living in homes that have an adverse effect on their health. Relative pensioner poverty rates also vary across England, with the highest rates being found in Yorkshire and the Humber (20%), five percentage points higher than in the East Midlands and the South West.

## **LLA Meetings with MPs**

On 11 March 2025, the GS, DGS and NARPO's DEO, Steve Willcock, met with the Chair of the influential House of Commons Work & Pensions Committee, Debbie Abrahams MP, to discuss the CSPA and LLA policy priorities.

During a very positive meeting, we were invited to submit late evidence to the Committee's current Inquiry into 'Pensioner Poverty the Challenges and Mitigations' and we have since done so as part of Later Life Ambitions.

As part of the discussion, we also touched on issues raised within the Later Life Ambitions (LLA), Care and Support Alliance (CSA) and Carer Poverty Coalition Spending Review Submissions, the future of the Triple-Lock and the next stage of the Pension Review, at which point we were able to emphasise the importance of a link between the level of the State Pension and the true cost of living decently in retirement.

Debbie Abrahams has asked several parliamentary questions about the impact of changes to Winter Fuel Payments on pensioner poverty, and her detailed letter on this

topic, dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and addressed to Liz Kendall MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has been published on the UK Parliament's website.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025, the GS, DGS and NFOP's CEO, Eamonn Donaghy, had a good meeting with Wendy Chamberlain MP in her office in Portcullis House

It was encouraging to hear her support key issues for the LLA, and our more in-depth discussion on access to cash and bank closures – which are matters of particular concern to her – is briefly outlined below.

- Wendy Chamberlain voiced concerns about the LINK processes behind bank closures. She is particularly interested to see whether the 12-week deadline for a new service will be effective, or even consistently fulfilled.
- Her constituency (North East Fife) is classed as urban – but is in fact rural - and is severely affected by bank closures. The area also has an above average proportion of the population in later life.
- Wendy agreed to speak to the Treasury about the issue of bank closures and access to cash to attempt to clarify their plans and processes around this.
- On points made about Digital Exclusion, Wendy offered to contact COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) regarding the LLA and NPC's work with the LGA to ensure that face-to-face options are always made available by local authorities.
- We were of a common understanding that the issue of bank closures is not simply about access to cash, as there are wider social implications around community and engagement for older people.
- Many services are being passed on to post offices, but many of these are closing too – and the Horizon scandal has not helped with trust in these institutions. There must be more consideration around this point when bank closures are being planned (or have happened).
- With many banks being replaced by pop-up services (floating banking hubs), these must be just as effective in fulfilling people's banking needs as bank branches were, or they will not prove to be a meaningful replacement for these services.

## **Changes Of Personal Details, etc.**

If you change your address or other details, please remember to let the Group Membership Secretary, Margaret Noble, know. Please also contact Margaret in the event of the death of a CSPA member to avoid the distress of unwanted mailings.

If you have an email address to which we could send future Group Newsletters, please also let Margaret know. This would save the cost of postage.

**The next meeting of the Norfolk and Suffolk Group will be held on  
Wednesday, 28 May, 2025, starting at 2.00pm,**  
at Chapel Field Road Methodist Church, Norwich, NR2 1SD

Tea/coffee will be provided

Our guest speaker will be Glenda Tookey, of Holly Farm in the village of Rollesby, near Great Yarmouth. She has raised money for good causes as close as the village hall and as far away as Romania and was awarded the British Empire Medal for services to the community.

## **AGENDA**

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 26 February, 2025.
3. Matters arising
4. Secretary's Report
5. Treasurer's Report.
6. Nomination of Chair, Vice-chair and Members of CSPA EC.
7. Motions for the CSPA AGM agenda in October, 2025.
8. Open Forum
9. Any other business
10. Date and venue of next Group Meeting; Wednesday, 10 September, 2025, at Chapel Field Road Methodist Church, Norwich, NR2 1SD.

Following meetings:

Wednesday, 26 November, 2025

## **Our Current Committee Members Are:-**

Chair:	Richard West	01603 423144	<a href="mailto:richard.west08@gmail.com">richard.west08@gmail.com</a>
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Treasurer:	Fred Crooks	01359 342716	<a href="mailto:fred.crooks550@gmail.com">fred.crooks550@gmail.com</a>
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	Derek Land	01508 520532	<a href="mailto:derek.land@electramail.co.uk">derek.land@electramail.co.uk</a>
Delegate	John Thompson	01502 581481	<a href="mailto:johntommo6@btinternet.com">johntommo6@btinternet.com</a>

Please note change of email for Margaret Noble