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# Leicestershire & Rutland Group

## Newsletter No. 43 (June 2025)

Hello to all CSPA members in Leicestershire and Rutland.

### Group Annual General Meeting

Your local group held it's AGM at the British Legion Club, Oadby on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March in which a new committee was elected. The abridged minutes of the AGM are as follows (a full copy can be provided on request);

#### 1. Chair's Welcome and Apologies Received

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and began with the sad announcement of the passing of Ziggy Robb, former committee member, on 3rd March 2025. Ziggy had been elected to the committee since 2007 and will be greatly missed.

Apologies were received from Liz Ellis, Margaret Bagur, Ahmad Khwaja and Ron Bryan. 12 members in total were in attendance.

#### 2. Minutes of AGM 2024 & Matters Arising

The minutes of last year's AGM were agreed as correct; there were no matters arising.

#### 3. Guest Speaker Geoff Harris Toastmaster

Geoff Harris, a Toastmaster and Public Speaker, was our Guest Speaker. He gave an amusing and entertaining talk on his work as a Toastmaster. A Toastmaster is an Old British profession, and Geoff introduced the subject by giving us a brief history of the profession.

#### 4. Chair's Report

Rob Jameson commenced by thanking the Committee for their support throughout the previous year.

There has been a change in the way CSPA members vote for national representatives. Currently a 'block vote' system is in operation where each Group sends a representative to the national AGM and votes on behalf of all that Group's members. The change will be to 'one person, one vote'. The reason for this is that many Groups are now defunct and so people within that area of the country effectively have no vote. Groups have supported this change although Rob personally felt it was not a 'big deal' as elections now are rarely contested.

Locally, Rob commented that Leicestershire & Rutland Group were looking to return to four meetings a year but that of course would lead to more guest speakers and therefore more costs. Our Group's sole source of income is through donations from local members. Although funds are not exhausted, our money is going down. A donation

of £5 each year helps from members but of course any wanting to pay more is most welcome.

The Budget and Spring Statement plus a change of President in the USA all threaten CSPA member's future prosperity. We are acutely aware that it is the CSPA's role to protect members' interests. An increase in CS Pensions next month will be at 1.7% whilst the Triple-Lock ensures a 4.1% rise in the State Pension.

#### 5a. Treasurer's Report

Rob Jameson read out the following report prepared by Liz Ellis;

My apologies for not being able to give this report in person, but sadly I am attending a dear friend's funeral on 31st.

Copies of the audited accounts should be available for AGM attendees. The balance at the bank at 31/12/24, our financial year end was £853.27. Balance at the bank on 26/03/25 stands at £898.27.

Local subs on the face of it are down £100 in the year to 31.12.24 compared to 31.12.23, but this has been partly exacerbated by £45 of cash receipts received during the year not being banked until 2025 due to my increasing limited mobility during 2024 restricting my ability to physically get somewhere to pay it in. Those cheques will appear in the accounts to December 2025. The reduction in members subs does need to be kept a close eye on, as if the decline continues it will give us a problem in future years if not addressed.

Overall, our bank balance at 31/12/24 was £54 down on that at 31/12/23, which when taking account of the £45 paid into the bank after the year end does indicate that we are just about maintaining our finances at present.

Both auditors, Caroline Stark and Margaret Bagur have indicated their willingness to stand again as auditors.

#### 5b. Secretary's Report

##### i. Group data

CSPA membership stands at 34,190 of which 11,000 are not in a Group.

2,831 members 'lost' in the last 12 months (of which 64% are deceased). 517 new members gained (the majority joining online).

L&R Group: 295 members. Three new members since last AGM. 19 members lost of which seven are deceased.

##### ii. CSPA Financial Reports;

CSPA achieved a gross profit of £7,353 at the end of the last calendar year against a budgeted profit of £1,370. A good financial performance, which was boosted by an increase in the value of our investments. The move to new premises last year (PCS offices at Clapham Junction) led to additional expenditure in November with the purchase of new office furniture and the installation of the required power supply and broadband with the appropriate security protection. Expenditure on the new premises was £11,461 which will be met from our significant investment projects fund (held in a 32-day notice account) which stood at £176k at the start of 2025.

The budget for 2025-26 was considered by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 27th March and will be agreed at EC meeting in April. Income from subscriptions is expected to fall by 3% whilst income from charges to attend AGM will reduce as fewer guests are expected this year. T&S expenses are expected to rise by 3% due regulated rail fares and railcards increasing by over 4%)

AGM charges to Groups were not increased last year despite hotel rates increasing slightly from 2023. The rates are increasing again this year; the Treasurer does not feel that this increase can be absorbed once more. It is therefore being recommended to the

EC that the charge for sponsored reps be increased to £72 for one night (£120 for two nights). Other Group reps. And observers be increased to £160 for one night.

iii. CSPA Meeting with The Cabinet Office on 28 January 2025

Capita to take over administration of the Civil Service Pensions Scheme from December 2025 – (first announced on 20/11/2023). Some members have raised concerns that Capita will be taking over the administration of the Civil Service pension scheme from MyCSP on 8 December 2025, at the end of a two-year transition period.

Capita were in the headlines a few years ago for being responsible for a significant data breach; and had lost a re-bid for running the Teachers' pension scheme, so questions had been raised by members about their suitability to take over the Civil Service pension scheme. There had been a long Cabinet Office competitive procurement process started in 2018 but delayed by the McCloud judgment in 2019. My CSP contract was due to expire in December 2023 but was extended by 2 years to 2025.

The Cabinet Office briefed CSPA during the process on their determination to deliver "transformational change" to improve the overall experience for all 1.6 million CS Pension Scheme members; Cabinet Office told us that Capita "had the strongest bid" and "innovative use of new AI technology" but stressed to us that in the meantime MyCSP must deliver "Business As Usual" during the two-year transition.

We are engaging with the Cabinet Office on that transition and future service delivery through our regular update meetings and have been promised a meeting with Capita officials in the next few months, ahead of them taking over the administration from 8 December.

In our most recent quarterly meeting with the Cabinet Office on 28 January, they accepted that there are problems with the quality of service currently being provided by MyCSP (our pension administrators) They pointed to a 40% increase in calls coming into the MyCSP contact centre since this time last year. They have also been dealing with an uptake in retirements, partial retirements and the complications around Remedy choices. The main concern however is the handling of incoming calls to the contact centre, with the average caller seeing a 27-minute wait before their call is picked up. A recovery plan has been implemented including additional staffing.

In terms of the transition of pension administration to CAPITA, because it entails a large transfer of complex, personal data to a new data management system securely, the transition process hasn't been all plain sailing. However, the handover remains on-track for December.

## 6. Election of Group Officers, Committee and Auditors

No existing Group officers had expressed an unwillingness to remain in office, whilst no member had put themselves forward to join the Committee. Except for Ziggy Robb, the Committee were therefore elected to remain in office for the coming year;

Rob Jameson – Chair	<a href="mailto:jamesonrobert1947@gmail.com">jamesonrobert1947@gmail.com</a> 0116 259 2680
Liz Ellis – Treasurer	<a href="mailto:lizellis450@icloud.com">lizellis450@icloud.com</a> 0116 269 2399
Simon Connolly – Vice Chair	<a href="mailto:simon1connolly@yahoo.co.uk">simon1connolly@yahoo.co.uk</a> 0116 271 8641
Kevin Billson – Secretary	<a href="mailto:kevinbillson@ntlworld.com">kevinbillson@ntlworld.com</a> 07827 320 413
Haydn Starkie – Minutes Secretary	<a href="mailto:haydn.starkie@btinternet.com">haydn.starkie@btinternet.com</a> 0116 269 3072
Eamon Furey – Committee	<a href="mailto:eamon.furey@ntlworld.com">eamon.furey@ntlworld.com</a> 0116 273 7425
Philip Coomes – Committee	<a href="mailto:coomes.philip@outlook.com">coomes.philip@outlook.com</a> 0116 271 8030
Margaret Bagur – Committee	<a href="mailto:margaretmmb@hotmail.co.uk">margaretmmb@hotmail.co.uk</a> 0116 319 5140
Ahmad Khawaja - Committee	<a href="mailto:ahmadkhawaja@yahoo.com">ahmadkhawaja@yahoo.com</a> 07879 470 584

## 8. Any Other Business

Philip Coomes volunteered to represent the Group at the Midlands meeting with Rob Jameson also attending if able to on the day (18th June).

## Group Meeting

Our next meeting is set for **Wednesday 2nd July at 2pm**, Once again at the **Royal British Legion Club, 4A Wigston Road, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5QA**. The club has its own (free) carpark. There is a regular bus service from Leicester. Tea and coffee will be available from 1:30 p.m.

We will be welcoming a guest speaker to the meeting; **Les Priestley** was elected Chair of the CSPA Executive Council at the AGM last year.

## Request For Voluntary Contributions

Liz Ellis, on behalf of the Group, would like to thank all local members who have made voluntary contributions of £5 or more to pay for our meeting venue, refreshments and the costs of our guest speakers. We have no other source of income and so to keep the Group going we would ask members to send a cheque payable to 'CSPA Leicestershire & Rutland District' to Group Treasurer Liz Ellis at 7, The Hall, Queniborough Hall Drive, Queniborough, Leicester LE7 3DZ or alternatively those that would like to pay their local subscription by bank transfer, they are very welcome to do so, using the following details - Sort code 01 06 34: Account Number 50681567: Account Name: Civil Service Pensioners Association. Please email me at [lizellis450@icloud.com](mailto:lizellis450@icloud.com) confirming that the payment has been made.

## CSPA Member Benefits

As a CSPA member, you are entitled to a wide range of membership benefits, including free initial legal advice; exclusive discounts on cruises; travel insurance, shopping discounts; free help and support on any computer problems; and much more.

For the most up-to-date information on our campaign activity, latest member benefits, plus regularly updated news items visit the membership section of the website at [www.cspa.co.uk](http://www.cspa.co.uk)

Further information can also be gained by email to [enquiries@cspa.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cspa.co.uk) or telephone on **020 8688 8418**

That's all for now in our Spring Newsletter. We hope to see as many members as possible at our Summer Meeting on July 2nd, don't forget to put it in your diaries.