



## **Crawley & District Group**

**Newsletter: Autumn 2025**

### **GROUP OFFICERS:**

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

## **WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN 2025 GROUP NEWSLETTER**

### **Chairman's Corner**

The parched lawns of summer have given way to the soggy flowerbeds of Autumn. The rain was very welcome though, saved me having to carry cans of water, because of the hosepipe ban, to keep the flowers alive. As a consequence all the flowers have grown and burst into a blaze of colour which has brightened up our world.

The group has been meeting throughout summer with some interesting speakers, we also hosted the Southern Regional meeting and it was good to meet friends from the Eastbourne and Worthing groups and share experiences with them and get some helpful advice.

The group has submitted four motions for debate at the Alliance's national Annual General Meeting (AGM) and you can see them in the agenda that came with the Autumn edition of The Pensioner magazine. Sadly we will not be able to participate because of sickness, holidays, and other demands on members, so we will have no delegates at the AGM. Fortunately other groups have kindly volunteered to move our motions for us. Therefore we have been writing speeches for them and wishing them well. I will be going in my capacity as National President but cannot represent the group. We are looking for more members to come to group meetings so that they in due course can represent the group in the future. Come along and try us, we are a friendly bunch and end up in the pub afterwards for lunch.

We have an interesting programme of meetings for the Autumn see below especially interesting will be the talk about the Chagossian community, 3000 of whom made Crawley their home after they were expelled from the Chagos Islands by the British Government when they handed over the islands for a US base. I personally am looking forward to that presentation so come and join me.

We will also have our traditional Christmas celebrations but if you cannot join us have a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year

**Brian Sturtevant, Group Chair**

## GROUP WEBSITE

The group no longer hosts a group website as it was proving too expensive and very few members visited it. The group therefore will update members on group activities on the CSPA national website: [www.cspa.co.uk](http://www.cspa.co.uk)

## GROUP MEETINGS, GUEST SPEAKERS, AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE REMAINDER OF 2025

**15 October** Guest speaker, Luke Boucher from Crawley Community Action – Social Prescribing, linking individuals with non-clinical, community based services and activities to address health related, social, emotional and practical needs improving overall wellbeing

**12 November** Guest speaker Jemmy Simon Crawley Chagossion Community, Jemmy Simon, the community liaison officer will explain the history and hopes and fears of the Islanders that were forced from their homes when Britain bought the islands located in the Indian Ocean in the 1960s.

**10 December** Christmas Quiz followed by the group's Christmas Lunch at Goff's Manor, Old Horsham Road, Crawley, RH11 8PE. Please notify the group Chairman, Brian Sturtevant if you wish to come to the Christmas Lunch.

NB: Group meetings are held at The Orchard, Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AD, which is 200 yards south of the main level crossing. Meetings commence at 10.30am with coffee and biscuits and finish by 12.30pm when we usually adjourn to a local hostelry for lunch.

## CAMPAIGN ISSUES AND UPDATES

### Contact with the MP for Horsham

The level of contact with the Member of Parliament for Horsham elected at the 2024 General Election, the Liberal Democrat MP, John Milne has been relatively minimal according to group Vice-Chair, Derek Williams when compared to the former MP Jeremy Quinn from the Conservatives. This has meant that local campaigning activity has been relatively low as a consequence. John Milne MP has recently issued an apology to the group Vice-chair citing the complications of recruiting new staff to service his office and the sheer volume of emails being received from constituents at the rate of a new email every two minutes. In an email sent to Derek Williams towards mid-September, John Milne MP advised that he had successfully established a team to assist him and that he was now holding face to face surgeries twice month or dealing with urgent casework via the phone or internet appointments as appropriate. Derek Williams has also subscribed to John Milne's weekly newsletter which can be found at his website [johnmilne.org.uk/newsletter](http://johnmilne.org.uk/newsletter) for any member interested in obtaining copies of this publication. It is to be hoped that replies will be available on the issues that have been raised by the group officers with John Milne MP.

## **Social Care and the recommendations of the Dilnot Report**

Of particular concern has been the lack of progress in implementing the Dilnot Report recommendations into Social Care from 2011, which is a sad reflection on successive Governments failing to grasp the nettle and dealing with the increasing pressures with regard to the issue of social care provision and the consequence of an aging population. A motion on this issue has been tabled for discussion at the Alliance's national AGM being held on in October. Further updates will be issued in due course.

## **Banking Hubs using Post Office Branches and Sub Post Offices**

With the continuing closure of bank branches due to the fall off in the numbers conjunction with the Posy of bank customers using local branches and seeming to rely more on internet banking provisions, the provision of banking services for those without access to the internet and also local businesses requiring local physical banking services has been causing a good deal of concern.

In an attempt to address this issue, LINK the UK's cash access and ATM network in association with the Post Office has so far set up 50 Banking Hubs out of 121 that have so far been announced by LINK. Most if not all of the major high street banks are supporting this initiative. There is a proposal to setup a banking Hub in East Grinstead expected to be available by March 2026 and another in Uckfield. The grounds to set up a banking hub is currently assessed by Link which independently reviews the situation using community based criteria taking into account transport links, the number of shops and the level of deprivation likely following the closure of bank branches. A decision to set up a banking hub are delivered by Cash Access UK following a recommendation from Link. Each participating bank will ensure that it has staff in each hub on a rota basis. The basic services each hub will provide are as follows:

- paying in cash (notes and coins) and cheques
- withdrawing cash (notes and coins)
- checking account balances
- paying utility bills
- topping up gas and electricity meter keys
- accessing change-giving services (for registered businesses)

Also being able to talk to a community banker from your bank on the day your bank is in attendance in the hub where a private space will be provided to enable you to discuss more complicated banking enquiries such as payments and transfers, managing your account and how to use online banking.

Hubs will be open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm providing a counter operated by the

Post Office where cash services can be accessed whenever the hub is open and whoever you bank with.

The provision of banking hubs may hopefully ensure that everyone requiring counter services and access to basic banking facilities will be enabled to continue to use such services with minimal problems. The information contained in this item is based upon an article prepared by Stephen Fallowell taken from an item published by the Argus newspaper.

## **GROUP OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CONTACT POINTS**

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