

## **Civil Servant Pensioners Alliance**

### **Reading Group**

**December 2025**

### **Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year Everyone**

Just thought I would get that in, as I am not sure when you are receiving this missive.

The Reading Group of the CSPA is still alive and breathing, though only just, as the number of ex Civil Servants attending has dropped dramatically over the past year. I attended the Annual General Meeting of CSPA at Kenilworth, earlier this Autumn, and I was given card votes for 537 members, ie. the total number of CSPA members in the Reading Group area according to CSPA Headquarters. Currently, monthly meetings are attended by less than a dozen regulars. Please contact me if you are really interested in attending our meetings, we can arrange to occupy a larger space – at increased cost if sufficient bodies turn up, my contact details are at the bottom of this note.

During the year those who attend on a regular basis have enjoyed talks by Woodland Trust, a talk on a career as an Agriculture Adviser in East Africa given by a regular attendee, a sanctioned wander through the website relating the history and relationships with similar sites, of Reading Abbey and the rest of the country, a hilarious talk offering a behind the scenes look at events and happenings at Hampton Court Palace and the ubiquitous discussions on life and the weather from our tame Meteorologist.

In April we also enjoyed the company of the Deputy General Secretary, David Luxton, on his now annual trip to Reading, to bring us up-to-date with policies going forward and news from HQ. He was accompanied by the then newly appointed Wessex Region Executive member, John Clarke from Gosport and our friendly local member, the CSPA Pensions Expert, Christine Haswell. This meeting is a very useful event, letting those of us on ground level into HQ thinking going forward. Christine is always ready to assist with any questions on personal pension topics with members and can be contacted via HQ.

You will, I hope, recognise these names from regular Pensioner magazine articles and it is very useful to put names and faces together. Over the recent past this meeting has shrunk in size and it is embarrassing to ask them to come along when there are so very few attending to hear from them.

You will also be aware that Capita are soon to retake the responsibility for Civil Service Pension administration. CSPA staff have been holding regular meetings with the Cabinet Office on this and will maintain vigilance after the mess they made when they held that responsibility previously. If you have any problems contact HQ immediately and I am sure they will respond and attempt to sort out your case.

The next edition of the Pensioner will contain a detailed look at the latest presentation to Members of Parliament by the Later Life Ambitions (LLA) group, on a way forward for pensions – particularly **OURS**.

Following the recent Budget, you will have noticed the freezing of the Income Tax Threshold for an additional three years to 2031. This means that all of us receiving our CS Pension payments, no matter from whence they are paid, will be incurring an enlarged tax burden over that time – unless there is a change of heart before 2031, In the meantime State and CS Pension payments will rise each April as usual, along with the tax paid.

The afore-mentioned CSPA AGM discussed a countrywide consultation amongst members regarding voting for and appointment of Executive members. Watch this space as one meeting may happen right here on your doorstep – if it does, show up and give your opinion.

I have mentioned our meetings being very poorly attended and whilst I take partial blame, I can only write to the people who have given me an email address. I am happy to include you on my mailing list for the New Year programme I am currently thinking about.

Possible talks include the history of the AWE facilities in Berkshire, which have been occupied since the 1950s as nuclear armament research and manufacturing sites, given by the Director of the on-site AWE Education and Museum facilities, the History of Reading Buses and speakers from the University of Reading on topics to be finalised soon.

If you have a particular hobby, interest or passion you would like to talk to like-minded people about, we love to hear from you and invite you to a group meeting.

Whilst I am writing these notes, I am conscious that our funds for room hire, etc. are dwindling and I must encourage you to support the continuation of the Group, by sending an annual subscription of £10 to support our efforts. We meet in the Abbey Baptist Church in Abbey Square, Reading, on the second Monday of each month at 2.00pm.

Cheques can be sent to me at the address below or by BACS payment directly into the Group Lloyds Bank account as follows:-

Civil Service Pensioners Alliance Reading Group, **Sort Code 40 38 04, Account Number 2205867**. Please add an identifier, your name and or your CSPA membership number.

Thanks, and I look forward to welcoming more members in the New Year.

Best Wishes to all from Reading Group Chair

Ian Montgomery

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