

Leicestershire & Rutland Group Newsletter No. 47

Welcome to the **Summer** Newsletter which brings you up to date with what's been happening in our Group.

Group AGM



Our AGM took place on **Wednesday 15th April**. We welcomed **Jonathan Safir** as guest Speaker; CSPA's newly appointed Deputy General Secretary. He reported that the two months since his appointment had been very busy. His presentation covered some of the issues affecting pensioners, particularly Civil

Service pensioners.

Jonathan reported an increase in the Civil Service pension of 3.8%. This was seen as welcome news after last year's 1.7% increase; the average Civil Service pension being £10,478. He also commented on the State Pension increase of 4.8%, although not everyone will receive the full amount. He added that the Triple Lock on state pensions will be retained until the end of this parliament. The State Pension age is set to rise from 66 to 67 over the next two years. This age rise is expected to save the Treasury around £10B per year. Pension age is expected to rise to 68 by 2046 or possibly earlier. With inflation increasing from the 3% it has been steady at for the last

few years and Income Tax thresholds being frozen, Jonathan speculated that there would be more pensioners living in poverty.

With regard to the cost-of-living, Jonathan reported that food prices were expected to see steep rises and household energy costs were expected to rise by 15-18% at the next price cap. Household water bills could rise by 5.4% although CSPA is supporting Independent Age in its campaign for a social tariff on water bills. Council Tax is expected to rise by 4.99%, the maximum allowed without a referendum. Properties valued at over £2M will see increased property surcharges on their Council Tax.

Jonathan mentioned that the CSPA is campaigning on behalf of pensioners affected by the transfer of Civil Service pension administration from MyCSP to Capita. This has resulted in serious issues with some new pensioners of being paid their pensions, not being able to contact Capita and disruption to the payment of widows' and death in Service pensions. At the time of the meeting, it had been reported that there were 86,000 cases outstanding while working on implementing the McCloud remedy had paused. Also, people have been unable to log into the Pensions Portal. There had been a security breach in the portal, but this had been quickly rectified by taking all benefit statements offline. Since February, a HMRC surge team, along with the Cabinet Office, has been sent in to implement a recovery plan for Capita. It was expected that all of Capita's contractual services would be fully up and running by the end of March, but this had not been achieved.

Other issues affecting CSPA members that Jonathan commented on included the digital switchover on telephone lines (with 83% of switchover already complete), English local elections (although they do not affect Leicestershire & Rutland), the Later Life Ambitions budget for later life based upon the pensioners' manifesto, access to cash and fair banking services for older people and social media pressure.

Chair's Report

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

Rob commented on the changing level of attendance at Group meetings since Leicestershire & Rutland Group's formation in 2010. Originally anything between 30 and 40 members could be expected to attend the AGM. Now in 2026 with 281 members living across the two counties, we are struggling to approach double figures in terms of attendance. Rob felt that drop-off in meeting attendance and membership was due initially to MyCSP declining to include CSPA literature in correspondence with newly retired civil servants preventing awareness of our existence. This was compounded by the Covid pandemic in which people grew out of the habit of face-to-face meeting attendance and numbers have simply not recovered since then. We now have Capita as pension administrators, and they have led to a growth of CSPA membership again but for all the wrong reasons. Rob concluded by saying that looking to the future we need to become more adept at recruiting younger members and what he described as 'activists' or else there will be no one to replace him as chair after 17 years in post and approaching his 80th birthday.

Can we have your views on future Leicestershire & Rutland Group meetings?

There are currently 276 CSPA members in Leicestershire & Rutland, however just **seven** of us attended the Group AGM. If we met at a venue in the city centre or somewhere other than Oadby,

would you be more likely to attend? We would also appreciate your views on the timing of meetings; would a morning meeting be preferable to the current 2pm start time? Finally, we'd like your views on guest speakers. What sort of speakers would you like at our meeting, or would you prefer no speaker at all and for the meetings to be debates and briefings on core CSPA issues? **Your feedback on these issues would be most welcome.**

Liz Ellis: Treasurers Report

The balance at the bank at 31/12/25, our financial year end was £746.37, this is £106.37 down on the previous year. Balance at the bank on 12/04/26 stands at £686.37. Our committee and the CSPA National Treasurer have agreed that we can now operate with 1 auditor, which we have done for the 2025 financial year.

I am including here comparative figures for the last 4 years so that you can easily see the trends in our regular expenditure and income streams.

Income	2022	2023	2024	2025	Areas of note
Local subs	£190	£201	£101 }	£158}	X
Donations	-	-	£5 }	£33 }	
Expenses					
Expenses /T&S	-	£29.29	-	£25.9	
Room Hire	£10	£20	£60	£60	X
Speakers Fees	£100	-	£50	£120	X
AGM Expenses	£68	-	£70	£72	

I have excluded the Xmas lunch transactions, shown on the accounts as disbursements, as they reflect straight in and out equal transactions.

Local subs in 2025 include £45 of cash receipts received during 2024 but not banked until 2025 due to my increasing limited mobility during 2024. Taking account of this, if we compare the trend in local subs income combined with other donations received over the 2 years 2024 and 2025 they are roughly level, however we do need to keep a close eye on this, as if the decline continues it will give us a problem in future years if not addressed.

Room hire charges have remained stable for the past couple of years thanks to Simon (Connolly's) continued involvement with the Royal British Legion, but we must be realistic and this could well increase during 2026. Similarly, the level of speaker's fees that we pay restricts us in terms of the speakers we can afford, and we have been lucky in finding 2 good speakers who are prepared both to present to small groups, and who adjust their charges depending on the size of the audience. We may not be so lucky in the future as we search for new speakers. Increases in both expenditure streams will have an adverse effect on our finances even assuming our level of subscriptions/donations remains stable.

Local Subscriptions Are Now Due!

if members would like to pay their local subscription/ donations 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

confirming that the payment has been made. A donation of £5 will be very much appreciated to continue to fund the work of the Group.

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 and so the following were therefore elected to remain in office for the coming year;

Chair: Rob Jameson - 0116 259 2680 - Jamesonrobert1947@gmail.com

Vice Chair: Simon Connolly - 0116 271 8641 - Simon1connolly@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer: Liz Ellis - 0116 269 2399 - lizellis450@icloud.com

Secretary: Kevin Billson – 07827 320 413 - kevinbillson@ntlworld.com

Minutes Secretary: Haydn Starkie - 0116 269 3072 - haydn.starkie@btinternet.com

Committee: Philip Coomes - 0116 271 8030 - Coomes.philip@outlook.com

Committee: Margaret Bagur - 0116 319 5140 - margaretmmb@hotmail.co.uk

Committee: Eamon Furey - 0116 273 7425 - eamon.furey@ntlworld

Committee: Ahmad Khwaja – 07879 470584 - ahmadkhwaja@yahoo.com



Date of next meeting: Wednesday 15th July 1.30pm for a 2pm start at the Royal British Legion Club, 4A Wigston Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5QA.

All CSPA members are welcome to attend. Further details can be gained from;

Kevin Billson, Secretary 07827 320 413, Kevinbillson@ntlworld.com