

Group Meetings: take place on the last Tuesday of the month (except July, August and December) at 2pm, at the Girl Guide Hut, Marion Hill House, Tadworth Avenue, New Malden, KT3 6DJ.

Business Secretary: Marion Williams, sopapop@btinternet.com

Membership/Treasurer: Clive Scammell, 125 Windsor Avenue, Cheam, Sutton SM3 9RX, tel: 0208 644 5493, clivescammell@sky.com

The Committee writes:

Geoff Paul 1937-2026



Some very sad news. Geoff Paul, our Group President and former Chair passed away after a long illness on 6 July 2026. Geoff occupied the role of chair for over ten years. The picture shows Geoff receiving his certificate of merit in September 2019; recognising his years of service, dedication and commitment to the Group and CSPA. He continued to attend group meetings after he stood down and was made honorary President of the Group. Geoff was a very good bell ringer which he did for 70 years. He also travelled the world with his wife Maggie, visiting 99 countries. Long standing group members will recall the entertaining talks that Geoff and Maggie gave about their travels around the world. He had not been able to attend meetings in recent years. Our condolences go to Maggie. David, John and Clive represented the Group at Geoff's remembrance of life ceremony on 30 July 2026.

Kingston and District Group

52 CSPA national members have taken up Group subscription in 2026, compared to 69 in 2025. This is a small percentage (8.7%) of the 597 people who are CSPA national members in the Kingston & District catchment area.

Take up of Group membership is declining year on year. If the fall in members continues to follow the present trend the Group will no longer be viable and will have to close. We run a tight budget but this limits the activity that we can undertake. We need more national members to join the Group if we are to survive; both people and resources. Attending 1 or 2 meetings a year will help.

To put this into context the 10 to 12 people who regularly attend Group meetings, vote on issues that affect all 597 national members. Hardly a true representation of the Kingston members.

If you are not a Group member, but would like to join, membership will be £5.00 for the remainder of the year. Membership for a full year from Jan to Dec is £10 per person, per annum.

Payment can be made by bank transfer

Account name: CSPA Kingston & District Group

Account no: 56475826

Sort code: 23-05-80

Or a cheque made payable to CSPA Kingston & District Group. Send to The Treasurer at the address in the header to this newsletter.

Meetings

The Group is on its summer recess and will reconvene on 29th September. So far this year we have had excellent talks on the wildlife along the river Wandle, the history of the world according to movies, a Q&A session with the London Regional Representative and a summer picnic in the grounds of the hall.

After the September meeting the Group will meet on October 27th and November 24th. There will be a Christmas lunch in December.

The Group will not be represented at the CSPA AGM in October. We have nominated David Owen for re-election to the role of London Regional Representative. David has done a lot of work to rescue closed Groups including the Merger of parts Epsom to both Kingston and Croydon.

News

Capita - Civil Service Pension scheme.

Problems continue with Capita failing to meet the June deadline for addressing the huge backlog in outstanding cases. PAC/PACAC met on 8 July to Review Capita's Performance. The session focused on Capita's failure to deliver acceptable service levels, the scale of unresolved pension and bereavement cases, the Cabinet Office's response, and the longer-term question of whether the service should be brought back in-house.

Members from both Committees expressed significant concern about the continued impact on pension scheme members and bereaved families and questioned both the Cabinet Office and Capita on accountability, recovery plans and the future delivery of the Scheme.

The Cabinet Office outlined the actions it had taken since January, including deploying the Taskforce recovery team and 140 additional staff. Capita's has failed to deliver the technology and automation promised during procurement. Cabinet Office officials said they had received assurances that systems would be ready, but technology and data issues emerged following transition and played a major role in creating the current backlog. Independent auditors and Remedial Advisers have now been appointed to scrutinise Capita's recovery plans, data, technology and operational processes. The Committees making clear that confidence will only be restored through demonstrable

improvements in delivery and the reduction of the substantial backlog facing scheme members.

Richard Vianello, the newly appointed Director of Civil Service Pensions at the Cabinet Office, will be leading work to improve the service going forwards. His latest Taskforce Update #13 23 July. Richard has received Capita's rectification plan, and agreed the appointment of an independent remediation advisor. They are going through the detail of Capita's proposals, and assessing whether the underpinning assumptions and actions/mitigations will deliver as expected. Updates will be published on CS pensions website.

Other news

Following several articles in the media saying that the Triple Lock and Civil Service pensions are no longer affordable both CSPA General Secretary and Later Life Ambitions have written to the press to defend both. More recently, some press articles have widened the focus of their articles to the wider public sector eg police, NHS, Armed Forces .

Prime Minister Burnham has been in the spotlight since his election. He is not a fan of the Triple lock system but he has agreed to honour the party manifesto which should mean that it is safe until the next election. The PM has been implementing changes to help with the cost of living:

Removal of VAT on electricity charges from October.

Fixed £2 national bus fare; excludes London where it is £1.75 or free depending on age

End homelessness on streets.

Fix Social Care. Something that the Group and CSPA has campaigned for for many years. The PM has asked Baroness Casey - who is carrying out a review of social care - to bring forward her report by a year. She will now set out her recommendations in 2027. The review will also look at the question of how to pay for any reforms.

Take care in the hot weather and enjoy the summer. Look forward to seeing some of you in September.