

August 2026



A word from the Chair – Stuart Tarr



Sirens Calling from the Rocks on the Beach at Portishead – Sailors Beware!

Well, it's been a long hot summer but now, with cooler days before us, perhaps it's time to look ahead to CSPA's Annual General Meeting in Kenilworth on 7/8th October. Martin and I will attend as Secretary and Chair as in previous years but this year Colin, our membership Secretary, Treasurer and Mentor – the latter reflecting his many years' experience attending the AGM, has offered his place to Ann Nash a committee member. Martin's and my expenses will be met centrally by CSPA – Martin's as our delegate, mine because I am standing for one of the five National Executive Council

(NEC) positions – whilst Ann's will be met from group funds due in no small measure to five very generous donations received following the call we made in our May/June newsletter.

As to the AGM itself there are 46 constitutional amendments and conference motions of which arguably the most important is the EC's own composite motion A5 to incorporate the CSPA as a company limited by guarantee followed by arrangements to finalise the winding up of the unincorporated association and agree the articles and rules for the company at the 2027 AGM. As you might imagine there will be quite a lot of intense debate and discussion of this motion before moving on to the rest.

As in previous years the motions are grouped into five main categories: CSPA Business (7); Pensions and Related Matters (17); Health and Social Care (3); Digital Exclusion (5) and General – a sort of catch-all (14). Not unexpectedly pensions and related matters account for the largest category concentrating mainly on Capita's dismal administration of the Civil Service Pension Scheme, preserving the state pensions triple lock guarantee, and addressing the iniquitous freeze on income tax thresholds which will draw the new state pension into the tax net for the first time from April 2027. Bristol, Bath and West has one motion A20 in the pensions section – the retention of the existing Statutory Pension Age and associated Civil Service pension age arrangements – and motion A37 in the general section to investigate and report on the benefits to pensioners of introducing a national Stamp Duty Relief scheme to enable pensioners to downsize to smaller properties thereby freeing-up larger properties to the open market where families might benefit.

There will be more on the AGM arrangements and motions in the September issue of The Pensioner where you will also see the pen pictures of those standing for election to the National Executive Council, mine included, where I am

one of two challenger candidates to the existing NEC members all of whom have expressed a wish to be rolled over for another year. To change, or not to change, that is the question ... So please do give it some thought.

Anyway, having gone on at some length, I'll hand over to Martin and Colin to add their bit, though this latest August/September issue of our quarterly newsletter will likely be shorter than usual. We'll include some feedback from the 7/8th October AGM in our November newsletter.

Secretary's notices – Martin Robertson

Our next meeting will be on 17th September at 11am at our usual location: The Toby Carvery, Almondsbury, BS32 4QB. Please let me or Colin Fender know if you intend to come in person so that we can plan the somewhat limited seating. In the meantime I will try to get the Teams video conferencing up and running reliably in good time to let you know if we can host a Teams session.

Stuart has mentioned his intention to stand again as a candidate for election to the Executive Council at our National AGM in the autumn. This year CSPA members will have the opportunity to vote online for the first time thereby enabling much greater participation in the election process. I hope as many of you as possible will exercise your right. A full list of candidates and details of how to cast your vote will appear in the next 'Pensioner'. We have submitted two motions which have been accepted by the Standing Orders Committee.

It's been a long hot summer. I'm sure some of you will have enjoyed the heat while many others have simply endured it. If any member would like to share their experiences; holidays, days out, air conditioning, please send them to me for inclusion in future editions.

Late news: I watched a short piece this morning (18 August) on the BBC Breakfast show featuring two WASPI campaigners. They are hoping to see our Prime Minister Andy Burnham soon to persuade him of the need to recognise the Parliamentary Ombudsman's recommendation that women born in the 1950's & 60's were unfairly treated when the pension age was raised with little notice causing many WASPI women to lose significantly as they reached pensionable age and beyond. The campaigners noted that Andy Burnham was very supportive of the WASPI movement while he was mayor on Manchester.

Membership Secretary's and Treasurer's Report – Colin Fender

On the membership front, our group strength stood at 1761 members on 30th June 2026 making Bristol, Bath and West the largest single group by some considerable margin in England and Wales, exceeded only by Northern Ireland and Scotland which are organised as large single entity branches without a group structure. This is important because it adds real weight to our voting strength if motions are put to a "card vote" where the total membership of each group and branch is counted to resolve a closely tied "show of hands" vote on the conference floor. And, of course, wherever possible we work closely with our South West regional partner Devon Central and District group which also has a large membership covering all of Devon (Exeter and East Devon, mid and North Devon, Torbay and Plymouth) plus parts of Cornwall and Dorset. Our SW regional representative, Les Calder, who we have nominated for this position again this year, also chairs this group.

Finally, if you would like to donate any amount to group funds, you can do so by cheque to Colin Fender, Honorary Treasurer CSPA Bristol, Bath and West, Flat 304 Stoke Gifford Retirement Village, Edward Parker Road, Bristol BS16 1YF or by bank transfer to Civil Service Pensioners Alliance Bristol, Sort code 52-10-07, Account number 90010841. This will be put to good use to support group participation, as it has this year, and administrative costs.

Finally, if you need to get in touch, our contact details are:

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