Sheffield, Lincoln & Districts Group

Winter 2026

Newsletter



It's time to enjoy ourselves. Please join us at our Christmas Social on 17th December to welcome the visit of our new General Secretary,Josie Irwin, if you can. Don't miss out on a chance to meet a great person at a great event



Protecting what you've earned, since 1952

CSPA
CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONERS' ALLIANCE

Sheffield, Lincoln & Districts Group

Welcome to the December Edition of the Group Newsletter

Please join us at our next Meeting - 2 p.m. on Thursday 17th December 2026

Firstly, 2 key messages

- It's not often you get the opportunity to meet CSPA's General Secretary, hear the latest news and discuss what you want from CSPA. Josie Irwin has kindly agreed to join us at our December Social Gathering. So please come along to welcome her at Sheffield Cathedral on the 17th of December - the Agenda and more information are provided in this Newsletter.

- If you live in or around Doncaster, do join us for a cuppa and a social chat on Thursday 11th February, from 11am. Please see Page 5 for further details.



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December 2026 Group Meeting

Please do join us at our next Meeting on Thursday 17th December 2026

Meet and hear the latest news from our new General Secretary, Josie Irwin.
We'll gather, socially from1.30 pm. The meeting will start at 2 pm.
There's usually plenty of room and a friendly, inclusive atmosphere.

What's on the Agenda?

1. Welcome & Introductions (Chair).
2. Apologies.
3. National AGM Report.
4. Address by Josie Irwin + Q & A
5. Social Break, Quiz & Raffle,
6. Other key issues.
7. Any other Business



Your Guide to Sheffield, Lincoln & Districts Group's June Meeting

- **When**:
  Thursday, 17th December 2026.
- **Where**:
  The Hilton Room, Sheffield Cathedral, Church St, Sheffield S1 1HA
  (please contact the Group Secretary if you need directions).
- **Why**:
  This is our socially-focussed meeting of the year, featuring: a raffle & a quiz with quality prizes; a social break with mince pies; all along with a great opportunity to meet, listen to and discuss issues with our new General Secretary, Josie Irwin.
- **Who**:
  Most importantly, **YOU**.
  (Please let the Group Secretary know if you would like to contribute to any items on the Agenda, but are unable to attend).

Forthcoming Meeting: Group AGM - Thursday 18th March 2027, 2pm

- **This will be our keynote meeting to review this year and discuss plans for future years,**
- **We'll also review our finances, activity, organisation and membership.**
- **AND we'll have an opportunity to meet old and new friends and colleagues.**
- **Please join us if you can, it will be well worth it.**



Our December Meeting guest CSPA General Secretary, Josie Irwin, has provided us with a pen-picture of herself and her experience on the CSPA website.

I'm sure you'll want to know more about Josie before we meet her on 17th December, so I've copied it here for you.

My name is Josie Irwin. I'm delighted to be your new General Secretary. I'd like to pay tribute to Sally Tsoukaris for her leadership, particularly her work to address the treatment of civil service pensioners by Capita. Sally has also been very helpful preparing me for my new role. Best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

Everyone who at work should be able to look forward to a decent retirement. Civil servants have devoted their working lives to public service should be paid the pensions they have saved. But too many of today's pensioners face financial insecurity, healthcare burdens and social isolation. And debate about intergenerational fairness feels weighted against older people, often unjustly stereotyped as leading lives of luxury while their children struggle.

I am excited to bring to my new job many years' experience on behalf of public services staff. I was the chief negotiator for the Royal College of Nursing for over 25 years and led national pay negotiations as Staff Side Secretary of the NHS Staff Council for 14 NHS trade unions, 2004 to 2018.

More recently, I was National Women's Officer for Unison, and from 2022 Head of the union's Equality Unit. My job was to ensure equality remained central to Unison's operations, and to drive up participation of disadvantaged groups in the union. I have also been responsible for encouraging Unison's 170,000 retired members to take part in union campaigns.

I am proud of campaigns on the winter fuel allowance, personal independence payments, maternity rights and sexual harassment, and of increasing the number of retired members involved in the union.

Outside work, I have experience as a London borough councillor and as a charity and pension fund trustee. I am a keen walker, enjoy yoga and opera and am a longstanding member of Chelsea Football Club.

I look forward to meeting many of you in the coming months.

A message from our Group Chair – Mike Buckley

Retirement is one of the big changes in life (they say). They also say Change is as good as a Rest. My question is, where's the Rest?? Being as busy as ever, at least I am doing what I choose to do, rather than what my employment obliged.



CSPA activity is of course at the heart of what I do now. Making sure we actually engage with members, are available to them, enable them to feel CSPA is in their corner, are effective at what we do. Like a trade union really - though perhaps without some of the extra curricular activities! But for any membership based and membership led organisation organising and recruiting is crucial. That is why our Group focusses on our own state of health here and how we can improve it at each of our meetings. Our recent visit to Lincoln was well received (if not in person): we are planning to go to Doncaster in the New Year (details in this Newsletter - if you are able do join us). Our area is so beautifully varied - do let us know if we should come out to your patch.

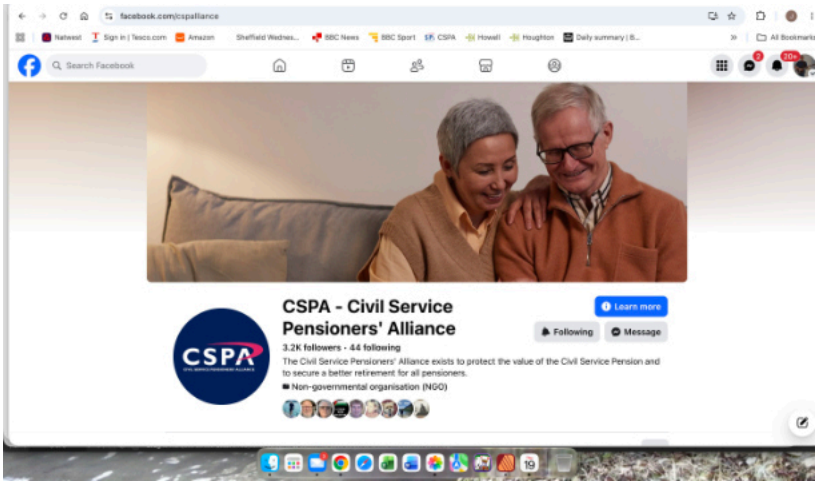
Protecting What You've Earned is our lifeblood as an organisation. There is a long way to go on the pensions admin 'debacle', but hopefully not too rash to suggest we might now be in the second half of this dreadful mess. Looking forward, messages from Ministers suggest bringing the admin back in house is on the agenda. Let's not rush though: the last (and only I think?) two transitions resulted in chaos!

I'm looking forward to our December Group meeting - and not just for the mince pies. If you are not able to join us, you will miss our new General Secretary.

And my best wishes for Christmas and New Year!

Mike

Did you know that CSPA has a Facebook Page?



Well, we do. You can find it at https://www.facebook.com/cspalliance

It provides news, information, advice and comments on a wide range of activities on our behalf and space for member comments or questions.

It's a really useful resource. Well worth looking at

1. Key Action Points from our September Meeting – 19th September 2026



- The main meeting focus was on the motions to be discussed at the CSPA National AGM and ensuring that we maximise our efforts to garner support for our nominees in the all-member ballot to elect members of the national Executive Committee. A report on the AGM is provided on Page 6.
- The meeting also discussed how we can better include and represent members distant from the core in Sheffield. The Group Executive Committee considered this issue further at our meeting on 29th October - please see the Report below.



We warmly welcome 3 new CSPA members to our Group.

Mr P Hancock, Mrs A Pritchard-Creasey, Mrs J Oxley Thornton.

We hope you all enjoy your membership, Please do participate in our Group activities

2. Group Executive Committee Meeting (29th October 2026) Action Points



The Group Executive Committee met, via Zoom, on 29th September to discuss issues to be included in the December Members' meeting the AGM Agenda, Elections, and other important issues.

- AGM Motions

  The Secretary reported that most motions went as members wanted at our September meeting, but the defeat of our motion, seeking to widen Group Subscribers leaves us with an issue to pursue.

  The Committee agreed that we just can't lie down and accept reliance on a few people subscribing. It isn't viable in the short, medium or long term, if we are to retain our active structure. It's the activity of our Group that amplifies this unfairness. It seemed to be the issue of central funding that undermined our arguments. We now need to find a new way to present the case for providing a sustainable funding structure to spread the cost across all members, which in our case would cost everyone 17p per month, or £2 per year., Which surely represents great value for money. Responses behind the scenes from some other Groups showed we are not alone in experiencing this problem.

  The first step will be a presentation of this unfair scenario in the Winter Newsletter, followed by a big sell in the AGM edition. We will then consider how we can take this up nationally.

- Elections

  The Committee welcomed announcements of the successful election of all our candidates at the AGM.

- Social Gatherings for members not living in or near,Sheffield

  The Committee agreed that, unless winter weather dictates otherwise, we will host a social meeting for all members living in and around Doncaster at the Doncaster Museum Coffee Shop from 11am on Thursday 11th February 2027.- please see details below:

An important message for Doncaster & District Members



The Group Executive Committee invites you to join us for a cuppa in Doncaster Museum Coffee Shop, on Thursday 11th February from 11am.

Unless British weather prevents us, Sheffield, Lincoln & Districts Group Committee Members welcome all members in the Doncaster area to join us from 11am, on Thursday 11th February, in Cafe1910 at Danum Gallery, Library and Museum, Danum Gallery, Library and Museum, Waterdale, Chequer Road, Doncaster, DN1 3BZ - about a 15 minute walk from Doncaster Railway Station.

Group Reports

Secretarial Report

A Secretarial Report and briefing will be provided at the December Meeting. It will be circulated to email registered members shortly before the meeting.



Membership Update

This quarter, 3 new members within our Group area have joined CSPA. Overall membership remains stable.

Financial status

We still have around £2,800 in the bank, easily enough to breathe for a couple of years.



We don't want to keep holding out the begging bowl BUT, In our our Summer Newsletter, we emphasised that we received subscriptions and donations from only 13 of around 700 members, amounting to £180. This situation has not improved.

Our motion to the CSPA National AGM to explore how the Executive Council might promote more evenly spread funding support for Groups, was unsuccessful. We now need to find alternative ways to deliver wider, and fairer funding to enable the Group to continue and extend support for all members throughout our area.



CSPA National AGM Delegate Report

Group Secretary, John Houghton reports back from the October 26 AGM in Kenilworth.



Firstly, a big thank you to Treasurer, Linda Garner for her company and support, representing the Group at the AGM. Secondly, congratulations to National Chair, Les Priestley for superb chairing of the event, in his usual firm but caring way, and new General Secretary, Josie Irwin for demonstrably getting, immediately, to grips with the key issues facing all members. Finally, congratulations to our Group Chair Mike Buckley for achieving a deserved 2nd place in the national ballot to elect Executive Committee Members, and to all our successful nominees from other Groups

Overview

Unlike the past 2 years, the AGM was a really friendly event ,without any overtones. It was good to catch up with old friends and meet new colleagues.

Motions

Most went as we expected, but the defeat of our motion, seeking to widen Group Subscribers leaves us with an issue to pursue - please see the Group Committee Action Points.

We moved or seconded 3 motions and intervened on 2 more - In particular on Social Care (an issue that we have led for several years) to emphasise that announced Government initiatives on Social Care don't include accommodation costs (almost a given expense for people with serious dementia), which are a key element affecting our members financial and health wellbeing, and a key feature of the Dilnot Report. Given our standing policy, we should not willingly accede to any change which doesn't seek to address this key issue.

Sheffield & District Group Representatives

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Judith Roe (Organiser)

Beryl Wardley

Martin Hodgson

Group Auditors

Brenda Pinhorn

Judith Roe

Please remember that we're here to represent your interests as a CSPA member.

If you need any help or advice, please contact the Group Secretary, or another officer. We'll do our best to set you in the right direction,



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Representing and reflecting your views within CSPA and protecting your interests locally and regionally.

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