CSPA WEST MERCIA GROUP NEWSLETTER
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CSPA WEST MERCIA GROUP OFFICERS – 2026/27

Chair: Malcolm Moore - 01531660457 - malcolm.m.a.moore@btinternet.com
Vice Chair: Brian Parks - 07798905922 - baparks@btinternet.com
Treasurer: Helen Connelly - 01905 830451 - helenfconnelly12@gmail.com
Secretary: David Humphreys - 01562 631188 - dnhumphreys@gmail.com (David also covers Membership matters)

WEST MERCIA GROUP

CSPA West Mercia Group began life in February 2022, following the merger of the Hereford & Worcester Group with the closed Shropshire Group. We have about 700 members living in the Three Counties. CSPA nationally has about 32,000 members. Our quarterly Group meetings – held in March (AGM), June, September, and December in various venues – are run as informally as possible and last no more than 2 hours. Meetings end with tea and biscuits. The meeting dates and venues are set at the December meeting.

150 or so of our Group members have joined our email group, which means they receive occasional emails from our Group Secretary on subjects of interest to older people, including advance copies of our meeting papers. Please contact David Humphreys if you wish to join the email group. Our remaining quarterly Group meeting in 2026 is:

- **Monday 7 December 2026, 2pm-4pm, at Quaker Meeting House, 1 Sansome Walk, Worcester, WR1 1UG (near Worcester Foregate Street Station).**

The Group Officers will meet beforehand from noonish at The Crown in Broad Street, Worcester for a light lunch. You are welcome to join us.

YOUR CIVIL SERVICE PENSION

Capita Plc was contracted by Cabinet Office from 1 December 2025 to administer the Civil Service Pension Scheme for the next 10 years. Its contact details are Capita Pensions Solutions, PO Box 713, Darlington, DL1 9JZ; Phone: 0300 123 6666 (Mon-Fri: 0800-1800). Information about our pension scheme is available at: https://civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk, including various "what to expect" guides. The Civil Service Pension Portal gives online access to your pension information and provides an online contact form. If you experience any problems with your pension, which Capita cannot resolve, please contact the Group Secretary for initial advice. More complicated matters are dealt with by David Luxton, the Pensions & Personal Case Manager at CSPA HQ.

Towards the end of its contract in 2025, the previous contractor (MyCSP) increasingly experienced problems delivering its service to the standards expected by the Cabinet Office. CSPA was in close contact with the Cabinet Office to help ensure that the transition from MyCSP to Capita went seamlessly. Unfortunately, there were problems with the new contract from the outset, partly caused by the backlog of work handed over by MyCSP, including the large amount of work arising from the McLeod judgement. CSPA has been in contact with Capita and the Cabinet Office about the wholly unacceptable situation. Capita/Cabinet Office issue regular updates about their efforts to tackle the backlog and restore normal service Capita failed in its pledge to restore normal service by the end of June 2026, and Cabinet Office has imposed further corrective measures, including financial penalties, to achieve normal service by the end of September 2026. That target was also failed by Capita. More recently, the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee decided to launch a new enquiry into the ongoing issues affecting the administration of our pension scheme. CSPA nationally will submit a formal response to the enquiry on behalf of all our members -https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/127/public-accounts-committee/news/218722/civil-service-pensions-crisis-public-accounts-committee-launches-new-inquiry/.

CSPA NATIONAL AGM 2026

CSPA National AGM 2026 was held in early October in Kenilworth. Our delegate was our Group Chair, Malcolm Moore. CSPA HQ circular GC 996, which will be shared with our email group and which is available on the national website, summarised the outcome of the national elections, motions, and presentations. A supplement will be issued with "The Pensioner" magazine.

Malcolm Moore reports: "The National AGM was well attended by most of the active Groups in England & Wales, and the Branches in Scotland and Northern Ireland, plus several members appointed from areas where there are no active Groups.

This was the first year of the experiment of electing certain Executive Council members by a postal ballot in an attempt to broaden their democratic mandate. Out of around 31K CPSA members, only 2084 members actually voted (6.6%), which was rather disappointing.

The key motions carried were:

- **Agreement in principle that CSPA should incorporate as a company limited by guarantee, with detailed proposals to be put to the 2027 National AGM**

- **A call for a service-wide review of improvements to eliminate the shortcomings in Civil Service Pension administration; continued CSPA engagement with the Cabinet Office, Civil Service Pension Board, and The Pension Regulator; and a campaign to bring the administration of the scheme back in-house.**
- **A commitment from the Cabinet Office to complete the long-delayed McCloud Remedy work by March 2027**
- **Urgent delivery of a National Care Service**
- **Expansion of banking hubs in local communities, in the light of continuing bank and post office closures**
- **A campaign to ensure that the State Pension maintains its value relative to earnings, currently 35% of average earnings.**

I duly moved our own motion on the Capita fiasco. Unfortunately it did not gather sufficient support to be carried. Several Groups criticised it on the irrelevant grounds that it was too long, and there was some unwillingness to accept our implied criticism of the effectiveness of the NEC's dealings with Cabinet Office in the run-up to the award of the contract to Capita. I also spoke in support of the motion on banking hubs, which reflected one we previously put to the AGM".

LATER LIFE AMBITIONS (LLA) COMPAIGNS

"Later Life Ambitions" (LLA) represents the 160,000 members of the CSPA, the National Federation of Occupational Pensioners (NFOP), and the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO). Its manifesto - https://www.laterlifeambitions.co.uk/manifesto - was launched at a Westminster Parliamentary event in November 2023 and sets out 6 aims for a better future for the 11 million older people in the UK. LLA recently published its "Budget for Later Life" - https://www.laterlifeambitions.co.uk/copy-of-our-manifesto - seeking to:

- **Protect the State Pension**
- **Reduce the tax on pensions**
- **Tackle the gender pension gap**
- **Support older people in the workplace**
- **Introduce a minimum income guarantee**
- **Widen access to public transport**
- **Make housing safe, secure, and accessible**
- **Support health and social care**

Follow this link for the LLA response to the Autumn 2026 Budget - https://www.laterlifeambitions.co.uk/post/lla-response-to-the-autumn-budget

THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION (NPC)

CSPA is affiliated to the National Pensioners Convention (NPC), the largest pensioners organisation in the UK. NPC campaigns for the welfare and interests of pensioners and older people, as a way of securing dignity, respect, and financial security in retirement. It organises rallies, lobbies of MPs, and makes submissions to Government on relevant issues. https://www.npcuk.org/

NPC was formerly an unincorporated association, like CSPA, but has changed its status into a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. It is now working at pace on practical ways to structure

the company to reflect its essential democratic nature. The various NPC working parties continue to operate and to issue regular newsletters.

West Mercia Group is affiliated to the West Midlands Pensioners Convention (WMPC). We attend its monthly meetings in Birmingham. WMPC's informative website is at https://wmpc.org.uk. WMPC Facebook page is at https://www.facebook.com/groups/7125023377569919

CSPA MEMBERSHIP SERVICES AND BENEFITS

Many services and benefits are available to CSPA members. These can be found in the Members Area of the CSPA national website - https://www.cspa.co.uk/ and are usually featured in "The Pensioner" magazine. Some of the services and benefits are accessed online, but many can also be accessed by phone. The Group Secretary will help with access if you encounter a problem. The services and member benefits on offer have recently been revamped, so check them out!

CSPA – "PROTECTING WHAT YOU'VE EARNED"

West Mercia Group supports the CSPA's national objects:

- **To maintain and improve the purchasing power of all pensions from Civil Service and related schemes.**
- **To initiate and participate in action which will benefit pensioners.**
- **To promote the economic and social well-being of pensioners.**

We meet quarterly in various locations in the Three Counties, issues a quarterly Newsletter, communicate additionally through our email group, and hope to offer occasional Zoom gatherings. Not everyone can attend meetings in our far-flung area. So, if there are local concerns - e.g. bus services, adult social care, health care, libraries, and public toilets - please contact a Group Officer.

We rely on volunteers to keep West Mercia Group going. Without "new blood" our long-term future cannot be assured. If you have some spare time to help us, we can put it to good use!

CSPA is a membership organisation. Please spread the good news about CSPA to all your retired civil and public service contacts. The discounted cost of our CSIS travel insurance may well save them more than the CSPA annual subscription. Prospective members can download an application form from the national website https://www.cspa.co.uk/ and post it free to CSPA HQ; or call 020 8688 8418 for a membership pack; or join easily and quickly online.

CSPA has a Facebook page - https://www.facebook.com/cspalliance. The Winter 2026 issue of "The Pensioner" magazine should come through your letterbox in late November. If you do not receive it, please contact the Group Secretary. The Pensioner magazine is also published online on the national website - https://www.cspa.co.uk - if you want to look at previous issues.