

PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONERS' COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONERS' COUNCIL, HELD ON TUESDAY, 14 MAY 2019 AT 1.30 PM IN ROOM 8, HAMILTON HOUSE, MABLEDON PLACE, LONDON WC1H 9BD

Present:

Brian Sturtevant (Chair)	Civil Service Pensioners` Alliance
David Luxton (General Secretary)	“ “ “ “
Steve Edwards (Treasurer)	National Association of Retired Police Officers
Julia Grier	Civil Service Pensioners` Alliance
Lisa Ray	“ “ “ “
Don Makepeace	“ “ “ “
Pat Ashworth	Foreign and Commonwealth Office Association
Neil Marshall	Forces Pension Society
David King	MOD Police Retired Officers' Association
Kate Atkinson	National Association of Head Teachers Francis
Brian Burdus	National Association of Retired Police Officers
Nick Kirby	National Union of Teachers
John Augoustis	Prospect
Andrew Ruffhead	“
Stephen Grounds	Retired HMT England & Wales
David Brown	Retired Police Officers' Association (Scotland)
Brendan McGlone	Retired Teachers' Association – Northern Ireland
Philip Burgess	University and College Union
Norman Jemison	“ “ “ “

Secretariat:

Linda Smith	Minutes Secretary (CSPA)
Keith Mills	Independent Examiner

The Chairman opened the 2019 Annual General Meeting by welcoming all delegates to the Meeting, and extended a special welcome to Keith Mills who had again audited the accounts as Independent Examiner as required under the constitution. He went on to outline a few procedural points to accommodate the guest speaker Jack Dromey MP who would be arriving at 2pm.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman announced that apologies for absence had been received from:

Carole Regan (Vice Chair)	National Education Union
John McGiveron	Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance
Brian Herbertson	PCS Associate & Retired Members` Association
Irene Bates	Scottish Retired Teachers' Association
Malcolm Booth	National Federation of Occupational Pensioners
Alan Bilyard	BBC Pensioners` Association

The Chairman advised that Carole Regan had recently undergone major surgery and on behalf of the AGM he would send on best wishes for successful treatment and a speedy recovery. He gave a brief introduction to the Executive Committee officers.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, 15 May 2018 were **agreed** as a true record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. ACCOUNTS

a) Consideration and approval of audit accounts

The Treasurer referred to the copy of the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019 (attached to the AGM notice as **Annex B**), which had been audited by the Independent Examiner, Keith Mills. The accounts had been found in good order and he thanked Keith for his assistance.

The Treasurer spoke about the state of the Alliance's finances, saying that he was concerned about its future sustainability. Keith Mills also expressed concerns about the future and said that annual income would need to match expenditure, which was not currently the case, particularly in respect of secretarial services. He mentioned the number of affiliated organisations that had not paid fees for several years.

The Chairman thanked Keith Mills for his contribution and advised that the Executive Committee had agreed to look at subscriptions in order to report back to the 2020 AGM.

b) Appointment of Independent Examiner

The AGM **agreed** that Keith Mills, with his agreement, be appointed for a further year to serve as Independent Examiner to examine the balance sheet and accounts for 2019/20.

(c) Increase in Subscription Rates

The Treasurer reported that the previously agreed subscription increase of 2.4% had been implemented and asked the AGM to note the figures as set out in the AGM Agenda. He agreed with Keith Mills about future finances and the fact that many affiliates were not paying for services provided. He added that the future level of subscriptions would be under review by the EC with a report back with recommendations to the 2020 AGM.

(d) Age Platform (Europe)

The Treasurer reported on PSPC's future membership of Age Platform (Europe) and stated that, due to the uncertainty regarding the Brexit negotiations, UK constituents being unclear about their position and the fact that expenses would perhaps not be subsidized by the EU

for any future meeting expenses, the EC had agreed to recommend that the affiliation fee for 2019/20 not be paid. He therefore proposed that the AGM agree this recommendation, adding that the situation be reviewed once matters were clearer. This was **agreed**. The Chairman added that the CSPA had decided to renew its subscription and would therefore be sending a delegate (David Luxton) to the Age Platform (Europe) General Assembly and Annual Conference in June, who would be able to report back to PSPC.

5. GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

The GS presented detailed report (attached as **Annex C** to the AGM agenda), stating that it was a privilege and pleasure to make his presentation as newly appointed General Secretary, particularly as he had always taken a keen interest in the activities of PSPC as Secretary of the Retired Members' Group of Prospect union.

He referred to his report and spoke to the numerous individual items it covered, a major issue of which was the threat to universal pensioner benefits, particularly in the light of the reports by the Resolution Foundation and the House of Lords Select Committee on intergenerational fairness. The GS said that benefits such as the phasing out of free TV licences for the over 75s, and the possibility of bus passes and the winter fuel allowance being withdrawn or restricted would need to be opposed. He added that the PSPC was campaigning against the withdrawal of the free TV licences for the over-75`s along with other pensioner organisations. He added that the EC had acknowledged that the problems facing younger people needed to be addressed, but not to the detriment of pensioners. He said making pensioners poorer as recommended by the recent House of Lords Select Committee report "Tackling Intergenerational Unfairness" would do nothing to address the housing, employment insecurity, and other challenges facing younger people.

The GS thanks the officers for the support he had received on taking on the role in mid-February. He concluded that that he looked forward to his new role, working on behalf of the PSPC to advance the interests of all public sector pensioners. .

The Chairman said that special thanks should be extended to the outgoing General Secretary, Lisa Ray, for all her hard work and looked forward to working with the new GS.

6. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The AGM **noted** that no constitutional had been submitted for debate. It was further **noted** that the EC would look at a constitutional amendment in relation to subscriptions, which would amend the wording in order to avoid the need to submit an amendment following changes to subscription rates each time. The EC would formulate an appropriate motion for consideration at the 2020 AGM.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2016-17

It was **noted** that the following officers had been elected unopposed:

Chair	Brian Sturtevant (CSPA)
Vice-Chair	Carole Regan (NEU)
General Secretary	David Luxton (CSPA)
Treasurer	Steve Edwards (NARPO)

The AGM **agreed** all those elected should serve on the EC for 2019/2020. The Chairman extended congratulations to all those newly re-elected.

8. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2016-17

It was **noted** that the following officers had elected to serve on the EC:

Philip Burgess (UCU)
Brian Burduss (NARPO)
Lisa Ray (CSPA)
Nick Kirby (NEU)
Major General Neil Marshall OBE (FPS)
Andrew Ruffhead (Prospect)

The AGM **agreed** all those elected should serve on the EC for 2019/20. The Chairman extended congratulations to all those newly elected or re-elected. The next meeting of the Executive Committee would be held on **Tuesday 13 August 2019** commencing at 11am (in room G3, New Prospect House, 8 Leake Street, London SE1 7NN).

9. GUEST SPEAKER

The Chairman welcomed Jack Dromey MP, Shadow Minister for Pensions, who had accepted an invitation to address the AGM as guest speaker. Jack thanked the Chairman and said that it was pleasing to see so many familiar faces from trade unions that he had worked along with over the years. He said that in the past he had fought on a whole raft of issues in defence of pensions in the civil service; public sector, and local government pension schemes and set out examples of these, which included when he chaired policy committee discussions in 2004/2006 which led to the establishment of the Turner Commission.

Jack then looked forward and outlined a number of upcoming issues including a new Pensions Bill which was due to be introduced into Parliament in June, which he was due to discuss with the Pensions minister Guy Oppenheim MP later that afternoon. There were three key elements in the draft Bill: Firstly, acting on the Defined Benefits Pensions White Paper proposals to punish “bad bosses” who rob people of their pensions, as had happened in BHS and Carillion, by giving greater powers to The Pensions Regulator. He described the pension scheme failures as collective monumental failure affecting thousands of workers. Secondly the Bill would introduce the `Pensions Dashboard` to enable workers to find out more easily what they have accrued as pension benefits in DC Schemes; and thirdly, the Bill would introduce the concept of Collective Defined Contribution schemes building on the continental example of DC pension schemes, as had been introduced through collective negotiations in Royal Mail. This would affect around 140,000 workers and would provide much higher employer contributions and could be upto 40% better than traditional DC schemes plus the benefits of a collective fund and proper governance arrangements.

He went on to speak comprehensively about a number of important issues including intergenerational fairness, which not only affected pensions but also related to the crisis in the housing market; the State Pension triple-lock, the WASPI campaign, social care, Brexit and universal pensioner benefits.

Jack then took questions from the floor on the break of the earnings link for State Pensions in 1980 and its damaging consequences; on the the Labour Party policy document “Dignity

and Security in Older Age”; and defending good Defined Benefit schemes. He said that increasingly unions were having to focus effort in defending the pension achievements gained in the past rather than making progress and gaining further benefits for the future.

The Chairman thanked Jack for taking time out from his extremely busy timetable to talk to the AGM. It was much appreciated.

10. PSPC ADMINISTRATION

The AGM **noted** that there had been a smooth transition from the outgoing General Secretary, Lisa Ray, to the new General Secretary, David Luxton, with administrative support from Linda Smith and Marion McAuliffe. It was further **noted** that the PSPC website would be updated with important information and policy.

11. POLICY

The following motion was proposed by CSPA:

“This AGM is concerned that the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has changed the principle underpinning the next review of SPa from future generations spending up to a third of adult life over State Pension Age to up to 32%.

The Government Actuary’s Department estimate this would result in a higher SPa for millions of people with SPa increasing to 69 from April 2042 rather than April 2055 and to 70 for anyone born after April 1986. The Secretary of State has ignored the independent reviewer John Cridland’s recommendation to use the principle of up to 32.87% as being both fair and balanced. This does not comply with the Government’s commitment of protecting each generation fairly.

This Annual General Meeting endorses the following framework of approaches to guide future PSPC campaign activities on the issue of SPa:

- that the PSPC accepts the gradual increase in SPa to 68, as set out in the original Turner Commission proposals*
- that the PSPC will campaign against any proposals to bring forward the increase in the SPa to 68 from between 2044 and 2046, as set out in current legislation*
- that the PSPC will oppose any future changes to the arrangements for SPa that are not accompanied by, at least, 15 years notice*
- that the PSPC will continue to support the WASPI campaign for compensation due to the detriment inflicted by the Pensions Act 2011*
- that the PSPC can foresee no justification for any increases in SPa beyond 68”*

Lisa Ray moved the motion on behalf of CSPA and referred to Motion 2 carried at the 2018 AGM regarding Government acceptance of recommendations of the Cridland Review of State Pension age (Spa) and said that the EC had considered it worthwhile to bring forward PSPC policy. The motion accepted the gradual increase to age 68 but pointed out that the PSPC would campaign against any proposals to bring forward that age. The motion was seconded by Julia Grier, CSPA. David Brown, RPOAS referred to bullet point 3, stating that it should be more forceful. Lisa Ray replied that this point could be emphasised more emphatically.

There being no further debate, the motion was put to a vote and **carried** unanimously.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business for the AGM to consider.

13. DATE OF 2018 AGM

The Chairman stated that the EC had discussed the date for 2020 AGM and had agreed that **12 May 2020** seemed to be suitable, subject to the availability of appropriate accommodation. The date would be confirmed at the next meeting of the PSPC Executive Committee.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting and thanked all officers, committee members and delegates for their attendance, as well as acknowledging the support received from the secretariat at CSPA Headquarters.

The meeting closed at 2.55 pm.