

Newsletter No 1 – 2018

Hello and welcome to our much delayed spring newsletter. Hope everyone is OK and getting over the winter illnesses and blues. Will we ever get some sun!

The next Retired Members' meeting will be our AGM and will be held on **Friday 22nd June 2018 at Royal Oak House at 11.00am. Free Lunch after!**

Retired Members Conference Llandudno 10th—11th October 2017.

Report by Chris Wheeldon Retired Members Secretary.

Tuesday morning; registration and networking, Tuesday pm –Workshops. I attended a workshop called '**Protect our Pensions Campaign**' Glyn Jenkins, Unison Pensions Officer from London, went through the main points of work pensions and state pensions. He reminded the meeting that Margaret Thatcher broke the link to average earnings in 1980 and that the CPI does not include housing costs where as the RPI does.

New Pension Regulations 2018— No increases in GMP (Guaranteed Minimum Pension) from the state, but the retirement age will increase. People need 10 qualifying years to get any sort of pension, 30 years for the old state pension and 35 qualifying years for the new state pension introduced in 2016.

Following the pensions workshop there was a meeting of the East Midlands Region 17.00—1800.

Sheena Gordon welcomed everyone including new delegates, and explained which motions we would be supporting, rejecting and supporting with qualifications.

Main Conference Wednesday 11 October in the Conference Centre

The Mayor of Llandudno welcomed everyone with a '**Bora Da**', (good day) and gave a short speech to the conference regarding the good work of trade unions and also the attractions of the local area.

UNISON President Margaret McKee welcomed everyone saying how unions had improved workers lives through fighting for equality, education and fair pay. She asked everyone to stand for a minute's silence to remember Rodney Bickerstaff, former President of NUPE, UNISON and the NPC.

Mrs McKee spoke about her chosen charity which was a drug rehabilitation centre which her son had been in. Conference was stunned when she revealed that he had been murdered in North Belfast some 18 months ago. Throughout the day we voted on every motion and in the Afternoon, Assistant General Secretary Christine McAnea addressed conference with an excellent speech on Unison's achievements, especially defeating the government on the cost charges for tribunals. She also talked about the 'Gig' economy where workers have very few rights and earn on average 1/3rd less pay than other people.

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Chris Fields' view of the Conference

Llandudno is a typical Victorian seaside town and seafront. Our hotel was about 10 minutes walk away from the venue, but unfortunately no lift, so hard for a person who lives in a bungalow! I attended a 'Brexit' workshop about the Repeal Bill. Many charities and organisations are deeply concerned about the **EU Withdrawal Bill**, which is widely considered to be one of the most significant legislative projects ever undertaken in the UK. This Bill has wide-ranging implications for the social and political fabric of the country, as well as human rights, environment, consumer and workers rights, equality, democracy, food, trade and education.

At the Conference there were 32 motions but we only covered 29 as time ran out. All were carried, some with qualifications. We seem to be at a standstill for Pretentious subjects! Next Conference is in Bournemouth 2019. *Chris Fields*

SOS NHS Campaign continues—The ongoing fight to save our NHS

Report by Chris Wheeldon

The NHS, our most cherished institution is under attack from the STPs, (Sustainability and Transformation Plans), underfunding and creeping back-door privatisation.

The latest worry is the Accountable Care Systems (ACS) developing into Accountable Care Organisations, (ACO) a US model seen as the way to implement NHS England's 2014 Five Year Forward View, but are they as some have argued, the first steps towards a new type of privatisation?

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire STP have awarded a £2.7m contract to buy in support from a Subsidiary of US corporation 'Centene' as it embarks on the development of a 'new integrated healthcare model' as one of the eight pioneer Accountable Care Systems. Centene is not a provider of healthcare, but offers advice on integration systems and pathways based on the experience of it's US parent company which provides a

'Portfolio of services to government sponsored healthcare programmes, focussing on under-insured and uninsured individuals' The company employs 30.500 people and turned over \$40.6 billion last year, almost double it's 2015 total of \$22.7bn

Centene in the US aims to save money by avoiding costly readmissions to hospital by the use of 'person centred innovations and technology' to match patients with chronic conditions to specialist pharmaceuticals and make sure they adhere to their treatment.

Some people are already expecting that the company could wind up taking control of the local commissioning budgets. The unelected leadership board for the STP includes no councillors from either council—but it seems a done deal—Watch this space!

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Women Against State Pension Inequality 'WASPI' - The Women who must wait!

U3A—Third Age Matters

Women born in the 1950s feel cheated by a change in the qualifying age for state pensions. In 1995, an Act of Parliament made the qualifying age for a state pension the same for both women and men. The state pension age (SPA) for women rose to 65. These changes have imposed severe hardship on thousands of women. One woman who paid in over 40 years contributions expecting to get her pension at 60 was told that she wouldn't receive it till she was 66. This equates to between £40,000 and £50,000 loss.

WASPI campaigns on behalf of these women and says that these changes have thrown many women's lives into confusion. Women who planned to retire find themselves back in a labour market that is not ready to accept older women. Organisations such as the National Pensions Convention (NPC) and UNISON urge women to join WASPI and take up the issue with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

NPC and TUC campaign to keep the Bus Pass

The Law establishing the Bus Pass ran out on 28/3/18 and on that day NPC delivered a giant version of a tenth birthday card to 10 Downing Street. The Government has removed the provision of the Bus Pass

to be reviewed every 5 years so that it could be reviewed at any time by the Secretary of State.

The concession is currently held by around 8 million of the 11 million pensioners.

The aim is to mobilise these people to show their support for the Bus Pass.

In the East Midlands we have distributed 1000 NPC leaflets including to Age UK Derby and Derbyshire. On Monday 16th April I found myself at Derby Bus Station with Brian Herbertson and others, handing out leaflets and getting people to email their MPs.

You can still use your pass while ever the government is busy with Brexit, Syria, and the Windrush scandal, but it can be up for review at any time.



UKIP and the Brexit Merry-go-round. UKIP have a new leader!

After failing to win any seats at the last election, Paul Nuttall stood down as leader. A new leader, Henry Bolton was elected but didn't last long. Having left his wife for girlfriend Jo Marney, a scandal erupted when she posted vile, racist remarks about Megan Markle, soon to be married to Prince Harry. Yet another leader emerges, London MEP Gerrard Batten pledged to resign next year just after he was elected. He will quit on April 13th 2019. And all the while the Brexit negotiations rumble on!

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Don't be a victim of the Scammers! The latest updates for you

Cold Calls: Treat with care. I'm always suspicious when the phone rings and I go into anti—scam mode. Don't be bullied by a smooth talking salesman, they always try to establish a friendship so just say no thanks and put the phone down!

Action Fraud have received some reports of people receiving calls claiming to be from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). The caller claims that HMRC is filing a lawsuit and needs money to be paid asap. The telephone message requires the callers to 'press 1 to speak to a caseworker in order to make an immediate payment'

HMRC will never send emails or call you about a tax rebate, refund or personal information. HMRC have confirmed this is a scam along with any calls offering a tax refund if the caller provides bank or credit card information.

What is phishing?

Fraudulently sending emails purporting to be from reputable companies in order to trick individuals into revealing personal information, such as passwords and financial information. Phishing can also be carried out over text messages (smishing) and phone calls (vishing).

Links

Don't click on the links in unsolicited emails and texts.

Attachments

Don't open the attachments in unsolicited emails.

Your information

Don't reveal personal or financial information as a result of unsolicited emails, texts or calls.

Derby's Libraries—What's Going On? - Message from Becky Everett

Branch Convenor and Equalities Officer

Hi everyone, Citizens advice moves into Sinfin Library on Monday 14th May,

The phone numbers etc are to remain the same.

Also just to remind you all that Sinfin library closes as a DCC run library on Tuesday 1st May at 5pm, and reopens on May 14th as Citizens Advice Bureau and a Community Managed Library. Derby City Council Website says -

Ten Derby libraries will become community managed by the end of the year as part of the Council's plans to keep them safe from closure. Direct Help and Advice (DHA) will be responsible for running all ten libraries in partnership with Community Action Derby and Citizens Advice. You can expect the same service you're used to, such as book loans and access to computers, but the local charity will also provide vital services right in the hub of your community. This includes legal advice on housing as well as support on benefits and managing debt.

Compiled and edited by Chris Wheeldon, UNISON Retired Members Secretary .

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