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Nationalise Energy and Mail

Conference Demands Action



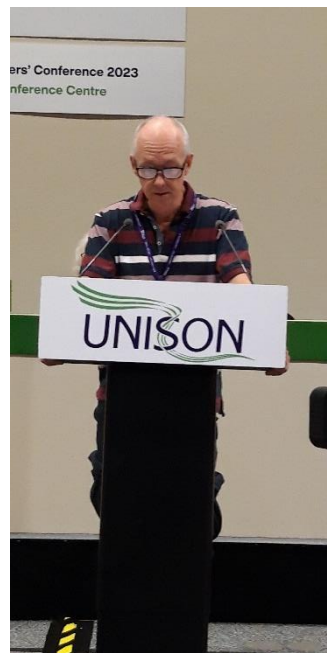
The National Retired Members Conference condemned rip-off energy prices and shoddy postal services and demanded both essential services be brought back under public ownership. Both motions from the North West Region exposed the way in which privatisation has allowed massive profits to be made by billionaire owners while service users facing extortionate prices and poor service. The motions were passed overwhelmingly by delegates from across the country.



The Conference this year was held in Edinburgh on 3/4 October at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC). As usual, there was a varied and interesting set of motions for discussion. The two mentioned above from your NW committee were proposed by Mary Whitby whilst Dave Read on the Energy Utilities and Albert Hartley on Royal Mail seconded the motions.

Two others were submitted by your NW Committee, on the Ethical Care Charter and Communicating with Retired Members but were not allowed onto the Agenda as being beyond the remit of Conference. You can be sure that we will be looking to submit them again next year. Obviously we will alter the wording and hope to have a positive result.

In all, there were 24 motions plus an emergency motion, but unfortunately, despite the afternoon speaking times reduction, Conference echoed the situation of many previous ones in not having enough time for the whole agenda. This meant that two worthwhile motions were not given an airing, which was unfortunate and underlines comments made previously about the need for more Conference time. [cont. page 2]





Despite the above problem, we were able to discuss a wide variety of items ranging from Pensioner poverty, through Justice for the Windrush generation to GP and pharmacy services.

The final event of the Conference was a speech by Christina McAnea, Unison General Secretary which was both



inspiring and thought provoking. Christina was keen to stress how well respected in the union is the Retired Members section, and she left us in no doubt of the depth of her commitment.

Altogether this was, as always, a very interesting Conference and if you've never been you really should think about attending!



Thanks to Tony for his explanation of the role of the different groups at the Regional Delegates Meeting. Our representative on the National Retired Members, Michelle, was full flow during Conference. And last but not least, thanks to Margie, Margaret, Linda and Dave for the wonderful leaflet. We hope to repeat it next year and include a meeting point for North West delegates on Tuesday night.

What a shame that our Chair, Roger, and Committee Member, Linda, were not able to go to Conference because of ill health. Our chats during Conference highlighted that we need to do some training on writing motions. Maybe it is something that we could open out to branches.



Tories Not Wanted

Protest March at Tory Conference

Retired Members joined the demonstration against the Tories in Manchester.

We were there to show our solidarity with Unison members and other trade unions.



Although poor weather had affected attendance protesters were determined to make themselves heard.

The anger of 13 years of Tory austerity and the Cost of Living crisis was clearly felt.



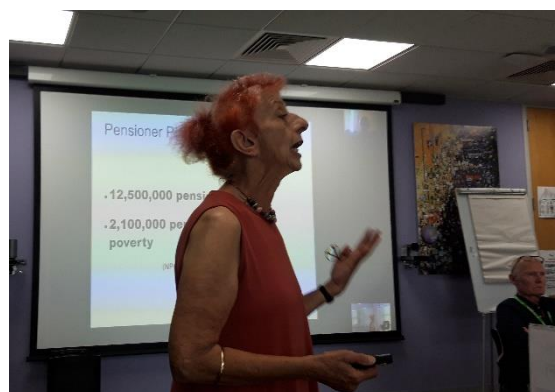


NW Retired Members Open Day Success

The Regional Retired Members Committee organised an *Open Day*, for all Retired Members in the North West Region on 6th September, which was a highly successful event with thirty four members in attendance.

Issues discussed included *What do Retired Members Bring to the Union?*, *the Campaign on the Cost of Living*, and the prioritisation process in respect of items on the Agenda of the approaching Annual Retired Members Conference in Edinburgh. We were assisted in this latter subject by Tony Smith, a member of the Retired Members Conference Standing Orders Committee.

Members of the Committee Albert Hartley and Chrissi Bassue introduced the members attending to *Silver Voices* and *Independent Age* respectively, two independent campaigning organisations specialising in the needs of older people.



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Of those attending the *Open Day*, twenty-seven returned completed Feedback Forms, which were overwhelmingly positive.

The Retired Members Committee wants the Retired Members section to be an asset to the union, particularly helping Branches in times of stress such as Industrial Action, and the *Open Day* gave a big boost to this aim.

Some of the issues raised at the Open Day...

It should be about what Retired Members Can Do

Retired members articulated their frustrations about the constant references to what retired members can't do. It should be what retired members can do. There also needs to be clarity about their role in the union structure. The rule book says that Retired Members Officer form part of a branch's Executive Committee. Other references contradict this.

Sort out pensions

One of the top issues was pensions. The disparity between the new and old state pensions. The lack of consistency of applying the rise as worked out by the triple lock on all pension benefits. The position of WASPI women who have lost out by thousands. There was calls to keep the triple lock or increase it to a quadruple lock. The National Pensions Convention is campaigning against the rise in the age for the state pension to 68 years.



Thank you all for the positive feedback from Retired members who attended the open meeting and Members of the Regional Committee after my update on Independent Age and their campaign for an older peoples Commissioner for England and Scotland.

Please ring Independent Age on - 0800 319 6789 to discuss any aspect of your life that you are concerned about.

Chrissi V Bassue- Regional Retired Member 's Committee.

Organising and Developing Retired Members Group

More guidance is needed to help and develop Retired Members Groups. The issue of digital exclusion arose during the discussion. One delegate only had a phone to try and organise the Retired Members. Her branch was 50 miles away. It was suggested that she should approach the branch about providing equipment. There would be other members (low paid workers) who are digitally excluded. The branch needs a policy to ensure its officers and representatives are digitally included. There were calls for better IT systems to enable Retired Members Officers to contact retired members.

The Shingles anomaly

Have you ever had Shingles? If you have, you won't need me to tell you how painful and debilitating it can be.

I'm lucky in that my answer would be 'No' but I've known several people who have and I can assure you it's no laughing matter. This is the reason that I took a Shingles protection vaccination when it was offered by my GP practice a few years ago.

Now it's come to my attention that the NHS are issuing the following letter information on their Shingles website.

"From 1 September 2023, you're eligible for the shingles vaccine when you turn 65. You'll be offered 2 doses of the vaccine. These are given between 6 and 12 months apart. Your GP should contact you to make an appointment to have your shingles vaccine. Contact your GP surgery if you think you're eligible for the shingles vaccine and you've not been contacted about it.

You'll remain eligible until your 80th birthday.

If you turned 65 before 1 September 2023, you'll be eligible for the shingles vaccine when you turn 70."

Clearly this is strange advice since it effectively means you are not eligible for the vaccination if you turned 65 before 1 September 2023 until you are 70, whereas you would be eligible if you turned 65 after 1 September 2023! This is despite the fact that older people are more vulnerable.

If you fall within this 65 to 70 'deprived' group it might be a good idea to investigate the current situation.

There is now a petition to Parliament which can be accessed here....
[Shingles Petition to Parliament](#)

Future Dates:

The Regional AGM will be held on Tuesday 23 January starting at 11.00am at Regional Office.

2024 National Retired Members Conference will be held on 8 and 9 October in Llandudno.