

Annual Report for Retired Members 2023

As a member of the Eastern Region Retired Members' Committee this year, there are several issues that we've been discussing that affect our members - for example the triple lock and ticket office closures. As I write this, the latter threat has been lifted, although I'm not optimistic that it won't be brought back in a different form!

We had a local retired members' event at the Fitzwilliam Museum in May. Several members from the branch came along for coffee, cake, a chat and a look round the exhibitions. An event will be organised for next year and an invitation will go to all retired members for whom we have an email address.

Eric Smith and I attended the Retired Members Conference in Edinburgh in early October. We managed to get there and back between rail strikes and flooding! Motions on the agenda were those that all retired members would agree with and, unlike National Conference, there were few people speaking against motions and no-one asking that 'the question be put'. We managed to get through most of the agenda and, apart from one motion that had been badly written, all were carried. Unfortunately two of the motions from our Region on voter ID and living pensions were ruled out of order. I'm sure they'll be amended and resubmitted for next year's conference.

It was Eric's first conference since 2017 and he reported that it was pleasing that retired members and the General Secretary were of one view that concerns around the future direction of the union and the country needed to be addressed. We both found some of the subsidiary issues around conference problematic, including the fact that the conference venue wasn't able to take cash payments for transactions, and there were some issues with the accommodation and the travel company the union uses for rail travel. Feedback has been given.

Next year's Conference will be held in Llandudno from 8 - 9 October. If you're interested in attending please let the Branch know.

I felt that the annual seminar held on 26 October was a great success. The Chair and Secretary, Andrew Coburn and James (Jim) Porter, who many former activists will remember, did a great job of putting together an interesting event, which was attended by Rosie McGregor, our National Retired Members Chair. We had a Labour shadow minister who attended to discuss rural, and other, transport, an update on the situation with WASPI - Women Against State Pension Inequality (www.waspi.co.uk), and a session on Scams. Whilst we've had the latter issue as a topic at previous seminars, the scams have become ever more sophisticated. Even the speakers had been scammed or knew someone who had. Independent Age who attended have a guidance booklet on scams and other advice and guidance on their website (www.independentage.org).

If you're struggling with the cost of living, the union's charity There for You may be able to help. Please contact the Branch Office on **XXXXXXX** for further details.

With the cost of postage, the branch is only able to communicate with our members for whom we don't have an email address on an annual basis. Whilst we have over 300 retired members, we only have email addresses for around 100. If you have an email address but are not receiving email communications you can either go on line to the UNISON website and add your email address , email the Branch at **XXXXXXX** or telephone **XXXXXXX** to update your details.

Sheila Morley
Retired Members' Secretary