

Retired Members Group RoundUp



Important information for Prospect retired members
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You're not forgotten

THIS **ROUNDUP** is primarily for those Prospect Retired Members who are postal-dependent, and follows the previous **RoundUp** sent out in September 2023. The RMG's main communication with members is a **Retired Members Bulletin** sent out by email roughly every alternate month.

However, members without an email address known to Prospect are not forgotten. With the kind permission of the National Executive

Committee, this publication:

- provides a summary of the news you have missed over the past 12 months;
- provides details of Area Annual General Meetings and local contacts;
- encourages you to provide **membership@prospect.org.uk** with an email address, so that you can receive all the communications from Prospect & the RMG that you should be getting.

New location for London Headquarters

DURING THIS year Prospect has moved from New Prospect House near Waterloo Station to its new London Headquarters near Victoria Station. It is at 100 Rochester Row, London SW1P 1JP, a left-hand turning from Vauxhall Bridge Road. One benefit to the RMG is that there will be space for its Annual General Meeting with no restriction on observers (except for having to pay their own expenses).



Don't miss out! Register your email

With more information being circulated digitally, it is increasingly important to register your email address with us to ensure you receive regular updates.

If you are registered on our website, you can amend your own details at <https://members.prospect.org.uk/member/details>.

Alternatively, you can phone our member contact centre: **0300 600 1878** or email **membership@prospect.org.uk** but please include at least three of these personal details to enable identification: full name, date of birth, home postcode, telephone number, membership number.



2024 RMG Annual Delegate Conference

THE 2024 RMG ADC was held in the Union Jack Club on 23 January. Unusually there were two contested elections. **Andrew Ruffhead** was re-elected as Group Vice-President and **Bob Avery** was elected to the vacant position on the Group's Standing Orders Committee. **David Harding** was re-elected unopposed as Group President.

Conference passed two motions for the RMG to present at Prospect's National Conference. (*For more details see report on 2024 Prospect National Conference.*)

Conference carried two rule-

change motions to prevent a Group leadership crisis. If either Presidential post receives no nomination by the deadline, the Group Secretary will have discretion to reopen nominations for the post. If the President is unable to continue at some stage between ADCs, the Vice-President will become President; other than that, the National Committee will elect an Area Representative to fill an Officership that becomes vacant between ADCs.

Conference passed two motions on pensions. One called for new issues of index-linked National

Savings certificates for senior citizens, so that people over 60 will be able to fully protect modest savings against future inflation. (This has been referred to the NEC's Pensions Advisory Sub-Committee.) The other noted the danger of tax bill demands arising from State Pensions rising above the £242-a-week tax threshold, and pensioners possibly receiving additional tax demands from HMRC the following year. The NC was instructed to raise our concerns through the National Pensioners' Convention.

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■ National Conference; below inset: Don't Panic! was the message coming from the Standing Orders Committee

2024 Prospect National Conference

THE 2024 Prospect Biennial National Conference (BNC) was attended by 12 RMG delegates as well as several RMG members among the Conference helpers. It was held at Birmingham's International Convention Centre (ICC) from 08-11 June 2024.

David Harding moved Motion 69 on behalf of the RMG. This called for renationalisation of the failing English Water Companies, which were said to be more interested in profit than preventing pollution of English waters. The National Executive Committee (NEC) opposed the motion on the grounds that it was outside the scope of the union. A compromise was reached when the UK Intellectual Property Office branch suggested remittal, and delegates agreed. This puts the onus on RMG officers to urge the NEC to take forward the spirit of the motion in some way.

Andrew Ruffhead moved rule-change Motion 73 on behalf of the RMG. This



■ **Harding**



■ **Ruffhead**



■ **Butler**

called for wider card votes for RMG delegates at the BNC. The existing provision for a requested card vote only gives it to RMG delegates if the issue is Retired Member subscriptions. Even then our vote is restricted to 25% of our membership. The proposed change didn't get to a vote because a "next business" motion was carried immediately after two prejudicial speeches opposing Retired Members in a trade union. Our delegates left the session in protest, but were welcomed back for the next session by a Conference clearly wishing to retain Retired Members.

To put things into perspective, the rule-change

would probably have been defeated because the NEC opposed it. The way forward is dialogue with the NEC to find out what widening of the RMG card vote would be acceptable for 2026. The NC remains committed to gradual improvement in our voting rights.

Fran Butler, along with David and Andrew, spoke on other motions including several that were carried. These covered issues varying from conference matters (flexibility, turnout) to pressures on workers (homeworking, work-related stress). In general, the RMG delegates were happy to support working colleagues on clearcut employment issues (eg opposing pay increases being linked to headcount reductions or changes in terms & conditions).

The RMG delegates were firmly behind Motions 98 and 99. Both wanted the mileage rate payable for Union Business travel to be increased. Both were passed, despite the NEC favouring remission.

PHOTOS: PROSPECT/NICK LINSDELL

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Another resolution called on the NEC to increase Working Members' awareness of Retired Membership (including advice to sections/branches, and leaflets/emails about benefits). It has been referred to the NEC's Committee for Organisation, Recruitment and Education (CORE). Recent online updates from Prospect have given a plug for the RMG.

Conference also carried a motion wanting members advised on the impending change from Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). It also called for pressure on telecoms providers to pay the transition costs & compensation for excessive disruption. The NEC referred it to the RMG Secretary to issue guidance to members and ensure the appropriate representations are made.

The NC supported the achievable part of a guillotined motion on digital exclusion, (whereby the emergence of a cashless society leaves behind pensioners & other vulnerable people who rely on cash). The NC was instructed to support campaign groups lobbying the Government to introduce legislation "to protect the status of cash as a legal tender and as a widely accepted means of payment in the UK".

Conference remitted two motions on Climate Change. **John Attree** explained that the NC supported some of the recommendations, namely the establishment:

- a national programme to improve the insulation of homes;
- district heating schemes using heat pumps in built-up areas;
- a network of public chargers for electric vehicles throughout the UK.

RMG Reorganisation

COVID HIT the Retired Members Group hard and some Areas struggled to get restarted. The South East Midlands Area actually disbanded because it ran out of activists willing to run it. After a lot of work by NC members, particularly Arthur Bavister, the South East Midlands

members were re-allocated to neighbouring Areas on the basis of postcode. The postcodes covered by the remaining Areas are given in the list of forthcoming Area meetings. These are defaults and members are free to request a move to a different Area.

Winter Fuel Payments

ONE ISSUE which has galvanised trade unions and pensioners' groups alike is the winter fuel payment for pensioners. Up till now it has been a universal benefit. However, the Government decided to discontinue it except for those on pension credit. All but 1.5 million of the 11.4 million receiving the benefit will lose it this Winter. The rationale is that it would continue to be paid to those who need it most. Those opposing the measure point out the hardship it will cause for millions who are not eligible for pension credit as well as the number of pensioners who are eligible but don't claim it.

At the Trades Union Congress, Prospect supported a motion opposing the Government's drastic limitation of the benefit. Both the RMG and Prospect are likely to continue support for the campaign.

2025 RMG Annual Delegate Conference

THE 2025 Group ADC is going to be held on Thursday 20 February at Rochester Row. Hopefully, the Area AGMs will produce a good set of motions, with clear instructions for the NC. There is no Prospect National Conference in 2025, but motions can still instruct the NC to raise issues with the NEC (or indeed with other appropriate bodies such as the National Pensioners' Convention).

To make sure all Areas are represented, the NC is looking

to propose a rule-change to enable unexpected vacancies to be filled. The addition is likely to be worded as follows: "If an Area Representative's post is or becomes vacant between Group ADCs, the post is filled by the Deputy Area Representative. If there is no Deputy, an Area General Meeting may elect an Area Representative to serve until the next ADC. A Deputy Area Representative may be elected by such a meeting."



UPCOMING MEETINGS & AGMS

IN GENERAL, Retired Members are welcome to attend an AGM in another Area, although only members in that Area may vote.

Where AGM details are incomplete or not yet available, further information should be sent out nearer the event. In all cases, a local point-of-contact is listed.

Where Zoom/Teams joining details are not shown, members with known email addresses should receive them in AGM invitations from their Area.

● **D309 Scotland North** (ZE, KW, IV, AB, PH, DD, FK7 upwards, KY, PA20 upwards): Wed 23 Oct on Teams, commencing at 11:00. Local POC John Taylor, 07949 313281, eljo73@icloud.com
Joining details:
Link: <https://bit.ly/D309AGM24>
Meeting ID: 327 131 783 742
Passcode: 9i4FLs

● **D310 Scotland South** (G, KA, ML, EH, TD, DG, FK 1-6, PA1-19): Thurs 17 Oct at The Skye Room, Festival Business Centre, Govan, Glasgow (Hybrid) commencing at 12:00. Lunch available prior to proceedings. Local POC: Graeme Walker, 07790 739127, southscotrmg@btinternet.com

● **D311 Wales** (SY17-SY25, SA, LD, CF, NP): Fri 15 Nov in the Unite Building (Suite 4), 1 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, starting at 11:00 (Hybrid). Refreshments from 10:30. Local POC Graham Clarkson, 07887 952688, grahamclarkson188@btinternet.com

● **D312 Northern Ireland:**
Wed 23 Oct, at Corr's Corner Hotel, Newtownabbey, assembling at 13:00. Includes lunch. Local POC: Peter Hedgcock, 02890 628848, hedgcock241@btinternet.com

● **D313 North West** (CA, LA, BB, PR, FY): Thurs 17 Oct, at the County Hotel, Carnforth, Lancs, commencing at 10:30. Local POC Fran Butler, 07306 367210, fran_butler@blueyonder.co.uk

● **D314 North East** (NE, DH, SR, DL, TS): Wed 23 Oct at The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, Newcastle upon Tyne, commencing 13:00. Local POC Mike Dixon, 07922 471448, dixon4474@gmail.com

● **D315 Yorkshire** (BD, HG, YO, LS, HX, HD, WF, S, DN, HU): Thurs 31 Oct at Brax Social Club, Main Rd, Drax, Selby YO8 8PJ commencing at 12:00. Guest Speaker FTO Mike Macdonald. Local POC George Betke, 01977 675501, georgebetke@talktalk.net

● **D316 Cheshire, Manchester, Merseyside, Deeside, North Shropshire & North Wales** (CMMDN) (L, CH, WN, BL, WA, MCW, SK, OL, LL, SY1-SY5, SY10-SY16): Thurs 17 Oct at the National Waterways {Boat} Museum, Ellesmere Port, Wirral CH65 4FW (Hybrid), commencing 13:00. (Tea and Coffee from 12:30.) Guest Speaker Grp VP Andrew Ruffhead. Local POC John Wright, 07597 366966, jkeithwright@gmail.com

● **D317 East Anglia** (EN, NR, IP, PE, CB, CO, CM, LU, RM, SG, SS, IG, MK except MK18): Wed 20 Nov at the Red Lion Hotel, Whittlesford, Cambridge, commencing at 13:00. Guest Speaker Grp VP Andrew Ruffhead. Local POC David Mills, 07973 617769, d.n.mills.69@gmail.com

● **D318 East Midlands** (NG, LN, LE, NN, DE, CV): Thurs 11 Oct at Lutterworth Office, 4 Central Park, Lutterworth LE17 4PN, starting at 11:00 (Hybrid). Local POC Tom Smyth, 01476 400504, smyth.tom004@gmail.com

● **D319 West Midlands** (ST, TF, WV, WS, DY, B, WR, HR, SY6-SY9): Sometime in November at Lutterworth Office, 4 Central Park, Lutterworth LE17 4PN. Probably hybrid. Local POC Tim King, 07511 899872, tking999888@gmail.com

● **D320 South West Midlands** (GL, OX, MK18) Not yet arranged. Local POC Steve Phillips, 07894 084894, steve_h_phillips@yahoo.co.uk

● **D321 Central Southern** (PO, SO): Tues 5 Nov at the Maritime Club, 75-80 Queens Street, Portsmouth, Hants, PO1 3HS, starting at 11:00. Local POC David Robinson, 07484 279060, gospordave5@gmail.com

● **D323 London Central** (HA, UB, NW, WC, WD, TW, SW, KT, SM, W, N, E, EC, SE, CR, BR): Wed 6 Nov at 100 Rochester Row, starting at 11:00. (Hybrid) Local POC: Ireen Goulding, 07939 201857, ireen.goulding@gmail.com

● **D324 Thames Valley** (AL, HP, RG, SL, GU): Wed 13 Nov at the Reading International Solidarity Centre, 35-39 London Street, Reading at 10:30. Tea & coffee will be available from 10:00. Guest Speaker Grp VP Andrew Ruffhead. Local POC Arthur Bavister, 07484 254304 or 01635 46947, a.bavister@btinternet.com

● **D325 South East England** (BN, TN, CT, DA, ME, RH): Tues 15 Oct at 100 Rochester Row, starting at 11:00 (Hybrid). Guest Speaker Grp VP Andrew Ruffhead. Local POC Bryan Puxley, 07979 500522, bryanpuxley@gmail.com

● **D326 Avon Valley** (BS, SN, BA, SP): Provisionally Wed 16 Oct via Zoom/Teams (Bristol Office) at 12:00. Local POC Julian Hayhurst, 07812 492595, jhayhurst11@icloud.com

● **D327 Southern** (TA, DT, BH): Thurs 24 Oct at Lyme Regis Guildhall Council Chamber, Bridge Street, Lyme Regis, 10:30-13:30 (Hybrid). Local POC Adrian Francis, 01278 428376, Adrian.gee.francis@gmail.com

● **D328 South West** (TR, PL, EX, TQ): Wed 6 Nov at the Falstaff Inn, 75 Clittaford Road, Southway, Plymouth PL6 6DT, commencing at 14:00. Local POC Steve Barber, 07977 932892, steve.barber@btinternet.com