

SCOTTISH PENSIONERS' FORUM

Annual Report 2018-2019

Established 1992



CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1992



Chairperson's Foreword

In my first term as Chairperson, it has proved yet another busy year for the Forum. I haven't travelled the length and breadth of the country (yet), but I recently spoke at meetings in Edinburgh and Inverness, mainly discussing the issue of loneliness and isolation, with other meetings being planned for the Western Isles, Fort William and Aberdeen over the coming months.

A recent newspaper article stated that loneliness was as harmful as diabetes and it went on to describe how being lonely can be as bad for someone's health as having long-term illnesses such as diabetes or high blood pressure. An important factor in trying to counteract this is the ability to get out and about, whether to go shopping, or to visit friends and family, or having a wee trip to the seaside or into the country. However for this to happen what is needed is a decent transport system, one that runs in the evenings as well as during the day. The Executive Committee were pleased that the SPF's campaign to help save the concessionary travel scheme for those aged 60+ was successful; however we believe that it is important to have our buses re-regulated and concessionary travel to be extended to include rail and ferry travel too.

The SPF has continued to represent our members and older people on the Scottish Government's Older People's Strategic Action Forum and have also held several meetings with Christina McKelvie, Minister for Equalities and Older People. We continue to serve on the Cross Party Groups for Older People, Age and Ageing and Funerals and Bereavement.

Recently the SPF secured funding from the Scottish Government to carry out some research on Bullying and Harassment in An Ageing Workforce and the results of our survey, which we conducted with help from Scottish Hazards, was included in the recently published Scottish Government's Older People's Framework. Our Executive Committee were astonished at the number of responses received in such a short space of time (just under 500) thus showing that more investigative work needs to be done in this area to safeguard older workers. This special report will be referred to in more detail elsewhere in our publication.

It is at this point that I would like to say thank you to Eileen Cawley, our administrator, for all the work she does on our behalf but most importantly I would like to thank all of our members, our Executive Committee and all other local pensioner forums/fora for their tireless work in continuing to fight for the rights of older people in Scotland. Without your continued support, we would be unable to carry out our work throughout the year to ensure the voices of older people are heard,

Maureen

Maureen Gardner, Chairperson

SPF ANNUAL CONFERENCE, GLASGOW 2018



The SPF Annual Conference took place on Tuesday 5th June 2018 at Glasgow City Chambers with over 140 delegates in attendance. Guest speakers on the day were Jeanne Freeman MSP, Minister for Social Security and Older People, Richard Leonard MSP, Leader of the Scottish Labour Party and Jack O'Neill, STUC Youth Committee.

Formal business on the day included the election of the Executive and Standing Orders Committee for 2018/2019, the SPF's work on loneliness and isolation in older people and a discussion on the need for intergenerational solidarity.

Motions to conference seen an endorsement from delegates that the SPF would challenge and campaign for the removal of VAT on gas, electricity and other sources of heating and a commitment that the SPF would work with the STUC, Trade Union Councils, The Poverty Alliance, other anti-poverty groups, and the National Pensioners Convention to redouble their efforts to help eliminate poverty.

Our thanks go to Glasgow City Council for their hospitality for the event and to our delegates, who travelled across Scotland to join with us on the day.

Executive Committee 2018-2019

Helen Biggins	Individual Member	
John Boyle	Co-opted	
Jim Bradley	Individual Member	
Surjit Chowdhary	Mel Milaap/Central Gurdwhara	Treasurer
Pauline Frazer	Individual Member	
Maureen Gardner	STUC-Unite	Chairperson
David Gavin	CWU	
Sam Gibson	Individual Member	
Rose Jackson	STUC-UNISON	Vice Chair
Bill Martin	Johnstone Seniors Forum	
Allan MacKenzie	STUC - PCS	
John McAllion	Dundee Pensioners' Forum	
Christine McGiveron	Individual Member	
John McGiveron	Civil Service Pens Alliance	Minute Secretary
Elinor McKenzie	Individual Member	Vice Chair
Alex Morrison	East Kilbride Seniors Forum	
Jeanette Pieper	Age Scotland	
William Quigley	GMB	
Rosemary Smith	Individual Member	
Alan Spinks	National Fed of Occup. Pensioners	
John Taylor	STUC - Prospect	
Colin Wakeling	NASUWT	
William Welsh	RMT	
June Whitelaw	STUC – USDAW	Assistant Secretary

OUR WORK THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Hands off Our Bus Pass - Campaigning At It's Best



The SPF launched its campaign “Hands Off Our Bus Pass” in November 2017 which we took around the country and for which we received support from our affiliates and MSP’s, in particular Unite Glasgow Retired Members’ Branch, who had also launched a similar campaign.

After numerous meetings over a period of 18 months we were delighted when Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Michael Matheson MSP announced in August 2018 that no changes would be made and stated:-

“The bus pass is a benefit that many people enjoy and use as part of their daily lives and I’m delighted that this government will expand the scheme to include companions of eligible disabled children aged under five.

“The concessionary travel scheme enables independence, accessibility and social inclusivity. We have listened closely to the many respondents who feel that the free bus pass should remain available to all from the age of 60 and concluded that we should not change the age of eligibility. We will also continue to explore options to provide free bus travel for Modern Apprentices, while keeping the scheme under review and maintaining a balanced budget.

“At a time when we are investing and encouraging more people to use Scotland’s many excellent bus services, this government will do all it can to ensure as many people as possible consider the many benefits of bus travel. The £250m we spend every year on the bus pass and support for services is a substantial part of this effort.

“It is right that we explore and ensure the sustainability of National Concessionary Travel Scheme and I am grateful to all those who took part in the consultation process and helped inform the future scope of Scotland’s bus pass.”

The SPF wishes to thank all members and friends who responded to the Concessionary Travel Scheme consultation or otherwise supported our campaign

Consultation on the Free TV Licence for Over 75s



In February 2019, the SPF launched a campaign calling for BBC leaders to initiate further talks with the UK government asking them to take back financial responsibility for the free TV licence for the over 75s.

As well as drafting a letter to the BBC Director General, Tony Hall, and launching an online campaign, the SPF organised a protest at the BBC Headquarters, Pacific Quay, Glasgow, which was formally supported by Unite Glasgow Retired Members Branch, Dundee Pensioners' Forum, Civil Service Pensioners Alliance Scotland and NASUWT RMA as well as many other local pensioners groups. After the demonstration, the protesters were invited in to meet with Ian Small, Head of Public Policy and Corporate Affairs for BBC Scotland which led to a lengthy, respectful discussion on the matter.

The SPF have also maintained a strong media presence to highlight the issue with SPF Chair, Maureen Gardner, speaking on both Scotland Tonight and RT News to defend the SPF's position for the retention of the concession for older pensioners.

Open Letter to Tony Hall, Director General of the BBC

Dear Tony

The organisation that you head is currently consulting on the possible removal of the free television licence for people aged over 75

Pensioners are being expected to pay what amounts to a new tax to plug the gap left by the removal of Government funding for this concession, and the BBC World Service, following your acceptance of a renewed Charter at a time when the operations of the Corporation were under considerable critical scrutiny.

Your consultation document repeats tired suggestions that younger generations are being expected to subsidise the old, It claims that pensioners are living longer and are better off than ever before. This is not the case. Life expectancy in the UK has stopped improving. Over 300,000 more pensioners are living in poverty now than 5 years ago.

The UK state pension is the lowest in the developed world. If our pensioners received a living pension, concessions such as the free TV licence would be unnecessary.

The free TV licence is not a luxury. Please think again. Scottish Pensioners' Forum.

A BBC spokesperson, speaking on the consultation, said a decision would be expected in June. The SPF asks all supporters, individual members and affiliated groups to lobby MP's for the reversal of this cut to pensioner benefits by the government. It also seeks support for an Age UK on-line petition which aims to safeguard the TV licence concession. You can add your support via <http://ageuk.org.uk/tvpetition>

Bullying and Harassment in An Ageing Workforce

The Scottish Pensioners Forum recently received funding through the Scottish Government's Older People's Strategic Action Forum to carry out some specific research on workplace bullying in the over 55+ age group. .

Our decision to concentrate our research in this area was taken after looking into a UK wide study undertaken by the TUC, it was found that 34% of women are more likely to be bullied at work in comparison to 23% of men and overall 29% of employees aged 55 and over have identified as being bullied at work.

Taking into consideration the effect of workplace bullying, a survey for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development showed that 46% of people say that bullying has an adverse effect on their mental and physical health, with 22% having to take time off work as a result of being bullied.

The SPF felt that this was an important area in which to carry out research as pension ages continue to rise and more and more older people find themselves still in work. We felt that as well as the adverse effects that bullying and poor mental health has on the individual, this continuous practice could undoubtedly put a strain on welfare and mental health costs in Scotland.

For our work, the SPF enlisted the help of Scottish Hazards to help devise a survey which went out in February 2019. The survey ran for 3 weeks and during this time we received 492 online responses with many other workers completing the form in paper format.

After the survey closed, the SPF held an event in Glasgow calling for trade union participation and also held a fringe event at the STUC Congress in Dundee to highlight the issue and to discuss survey findings.

Finally, our research took the form of a report which was fed back to the Scottish Government and was included within their publication **A Fairer Scotland for Older People: A Framework for Action**. The publication was launched by Minister for Older People and Equalities, Christina McKelvie MSP and Christine Grahame MSP in April 2019 at which we were in attendance.



The SPF also held a parliamentary reception in May 2019, hosted by Sandra White MSP, Convenor of the Cross Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing to highlight our report and to speak on the everyday work of the SPF. Those in attendance included older people's organisations, trade unions, representatives from the Older People's Strategic Action Forum, civil servants and the Church of Scotland.



A copy of the report can be found here at <http://www.scottishpensioners.org.uk/files/Bullying%20Final.pdf>

CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1992

UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS



To mark UN International Day of Older Persons, the SPF held its yearly demonstration outside the Scottish Parliament. Over 50 affiliates and friends from across Scotland brought their banners along to show their support on the day.



The theme for 2018 was "Celebrating Older People's Champions" and the 70th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Speakers included Maureen Gardner (SPF Chair); Rose Jackson (SPF Vice Chair); John McAllion (Dundee Pensioners' Forum); Neil Findlay MSP; John Mason MSP and Alex Rowley MSP.

A message of solidarity from the STUC Youth Committee was delivered by Sarah Wiktorski who called on young and old to campaign together to bring about common change which was reaffirmed by a statement from SPF chair, Maureen Gardner.



The SPF fully supports young workers: Why shouldn't they have a decent job; why shouldn't they have stated hours of work; why shouldn't they have contracts of employment? We totally oppose the condition of Zero Hours Contracts and will campaign vigorously on this.

Maureen Gardner, SPF Chair

Sandra White MSP, Convenor of the Cross Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing also lodged a motion in support of the event.

Motion Number: S5M-14106 Lodged by Sandra White MSP for Glasgow Kelvin

That the Parliament recognises 1 October 2018 as UN International Day of Older Persons; understands that this resolution 45/106, was passed by the UN General Assembly on 17 December 1990, which declared 1 October the International Day of Older Persons; notes the contribution and dedication that older people have made and continue to make to help safeguard welfare rights during the last 70 years in policymaking; campaigning and in wider society, and supports the theme for this year's celebration, Celebrating Older People's Champions

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SPF OUTREACH WORK TO HELP TACKLE LONELINESS AND ISOLATION



Over the past year, the Scottish Pensioners' Forum has continued to work on the issue of loneliness and isolation and have once again been travelling across Scotland to hear your views.



With help from the volunteers on our Executive Committee, our affiliates and trade union retired members' branches we have held meetings in Galashiels, Prestwick and Edinburgh.

As this work forms part of a 3 year Scottish Government funded project we will continue to work with the STUC equalities committees, older people's organisations, trade unions, trades councils and retired trade union branches and in 2019/2020 we will be travelling to the Western Isles, Fort William and Aberdeen with our work.



Glasgow Equal Pay Strike

The Scottish Pensioners' Forum were happy to support the Glasgow Equal Pay campaign and demonstrated alongside over 8,000 workers as they marched through the streets of Glasgow in October 2018.

The Executive Committee of the SPF issued a message of solidarity to the striking workers in support of their cause.



Message of Solidarity from the SPF

The Scottish Pensioners' Forum, would like to send a message of solidarity to the 8,000 workers who are having to strike over equal pay,

Our members believe that it is only right that workers should be paid for the job that they do and that there should be no discrimination or disparity in pay on the basis of gender, as has been the case for many years.

We hope to continue working with trade unions who represent the striking workers to ensure that older people are cared for in the manner they deserve and by workers who are being paid fairly and honestly for the work that they do.

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OUT AND ABOUT

In addition to the work highlighted in this publication and our recent newsletters, the volunteers, and staff, of the SPF Executive Committee have attended various conferences and events throughout 2018/2019 and listed below is just some of the work carried out by them:-

- NPC Pensioners' Parliament
- STUC Youth Conference, Glasgow
- Age Scotland Parliamentary Reception
- SOPA Parliamentary Reception
- Glasgow's Golden Generation AGM
- Holyrood Conference on Health and Social Care
- Conference on Capitalising on our Ageing Workforce
- UN Older People's Day, Glasgow
- STUC Black Workers' Conference
- Age Scotland Regional Assembly
- Cross Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing
- Cross Party Group on Funerals and Bereavement
- Older People's Strategic Action Forum
- STUC Women's Conference, Dundee
- Scotland Policy Conference: Next Steps for Social Security Reform in Scotland
- Scotland Policy Conference: Changing Policy to Tackle Poverty
- Westminster Employment Forum: Next Steps for UK Pension Funds
- Poverty Alliance 8th Annual Conference
- STUC Disabled Workers' Conference
- Scottish Funeral Poverty Working Group
- CSPA Annual Conference
- STUC Congress Dundee.
- SPF Outreach meetings Galashiels, Prestwick, Glasgow
- Meeting with Christina McKelvie MSP
- SPF Parliamentary Reception
- Age Scotland Conference, Glasgow
- STUC LGBT Conference (Workshop Facilitator)
- STUC Equalities Conference: Mental Health Awareness (Speaker)



We also continue to issue press releases and give comment to press articles and local and national radio on issues of interest and concern for older people in Scotland.

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SPF MEMBERSHIP

Our members are very important to us and their commitment allows us to carry out the work that we have been doing over the past 28 years. Through our membership we represent over 270,000 older people across Scotland

We presently have 3 categories of membership of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum and new members are always welcome. These categories of membership are as follows:

- Individual Pensioner Members
- Other Individual Members
- Organisations and Local Forums

We thank you for your continued support to the work we carry out on your behalf



CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE SINCE 1992

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT As at 31st March 2019

INCOME AS AT 31st March 2019

<u>MEMBERSHIP FEES</u>		<u>1217.50</u>
<u>DONATIONS</u>		<u>618.35</u>
<u>GENERATED INCOME</u>		
Conference Fees	400.00	
Scottish Government	37000.00	<u>37,400.00</u>
<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>		<u>39,235.85</u>

EXPENDITURE AS AT 31st March 2019

<u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u>		
Volunteer Expenses/Catering	1291.69	<u>1291.69</u>
<u>POSTAGE/PRINTING/OFFICE</u>		
Publications	1271.05	
Postage	1410.59	<u>2681.64</u>
<u>CAMPAIGNS AND OUTREACH</u>		<u>3076.85</u>
<u>MISCELLANEOUS</u>		
Remuneration	20.00	
Watson & Co Audit Fees	600.00	
Rent/Rates	1414.99	
Petty Cash Float	145.07	
Survey Fees	35.00	
Parking Charges	21.82	<u>2236.66</u>
<u>SALARY</u>		
Salary and Pension	28,467.79	<u>28,467.79</u>
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u>		<u>37,754.63</u>

Balance		
As at 31/03/18	21,098.52	
Add:		
Income	39,235.85	
Less:		
Expenditure	37,754.63	
Year End Balance		<u>22,579.74</u>

Audited and verified by Watson & Co. Chartered Accountants on 14th May 2019



**Scottish
Pensioners'
Forum**

Join the Scottish Pensioners' Forum

Application forms can be requested from:

**Scottish Pensioners' Forum,
333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow
G3 6NG**

Telephone 0141 337 8113

Funded by The Scottish Government

