



Retired Life

**The Newsletter for
UNISON SW Retired Members'
March 2022**



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Welcome from the Chair

By Ann Price

Hello everyone

My name is Ann Price and I am honoured to have been elected as Chair of South West Retired Members Committee for a second year.

Last year was not easy due to COVID and everything having to be virtual, but we were able to hold meetings via zoom and I feel we continued to represent retired members well.

We are very fortunate to have Rosie Macgregor (who is the Chair of the National Committee) on our Committee and so I feel we are well represented. Rosie's reports are excellent and shows how much work is being done on our behalf, but it is up to all of us to keep lobbying MPs, highlighting all the negative problems affecting pensioners e.g. rising fuel prices, proposed discontinuing of the bus passes, taking away the free TV licences for over 75yrs, the removal of NHS dental services, the cost of personal care, etc.

All of which greatly affect pensioners, not to mention the effect it can have on their mental health.

We have to keep fighting this government and indeed any future governments to make our voices heard. As a Committee we will continue to do this on your behalf.

Thank you for your support now and in the future.

Ann
Chair, UNISON
South West Retired Members' Committee

Covid is blamed by the Government and media for the difficulties of the last years. We have over 150 000 dead including many loved ones, seen worker and job shortages, and live with an NHS in crisis and a damaged economy.

But now the Government claims Covid is on the retreat, so some other cause is lurking: is it Brexit? Food prices and shortages should make us wonder: we know that we buy less for far more cost in January 2022 than in January 2021. In addition, we face imminent rises in fuel and heating costs and tax increases are expected soon to pay for government emergency expenditure.

All those unfulfilled Brexit promises! We are even warned that Brexit has barely started, with benefits expected about 50 years from now (Jacob Rees-Mogg). Producers are finding it tricky to access their main export markets, and difficult to obtain essential just-in-time components for factories. Fresh foods from Europe are delayed or abandoned because of all the Brexit paperwork and blockages at ports and airports.

We left the European Single Market/Customs Union in January 2021. Since then, our economy has not recovered as well as other EU economies: they also have Covid but no shortages. We may have to choose between heating and food. UK inflation has rocketed over the official 5% and is rising. Our pensions and savings will buy less and less. Local services too will take a hit, with higher costs and hardship.

Economists expect GDP to reach pre-crisis levels by mid-2022 in the EU area, while Britain (excluding Northern Ireland which has done well with full access to the Single Market) will not be recovering so well. Is it any wonder that our Government wants to remove the N.I. Protocol to avoid embarrassing comparisons with the rest of Britain?

Write to your MP: let him/her know YOU don't want to pay the price for this extreme doctrinaire Brexit. Ask to restore British access to the Single Market and Customs Union – like N Ireland.

Commodos to the left of us commodos to the right - Or in praise of the NHS

By Angela Harrington

I consider myself one of the lucky ones - not since tonsil removal at the age of ten had I been in hospital. However, complications set in recently and I was admitted to hospital with blood clots on the lungs. From the start with the ambulance crew and the flashing lights to arriving at the Royal United Hospital Bath, I was treated with care and consideration. Finally admitted to the cardiac ward around 11pm - there was a spare bed.

If you can enjoy hospital, then I did. The auxiliary staff were mainly Polish who would rush in around 6.30am, waving arms with cheerful greetings to which the patients responded with equal cheer. Visitors were not allowed and the delightful Irish lady next to me had not seen family for two months. But there was what I imagine was a kind of DUNKIRK spirit and we did our best to keep each other cheerful and entertained.

At some point my bed was needed for a true cardiac case and I was moved at midnight to another ward with all my stuff piled on the bed, more the look of a refugee and wheeled into a ward with the toilet in front of me, you cannot imagine the relief to be self-contained and say goodbye to those commodos which have to be summoned every time by very busy and patient staff every hour of the day.

I was there two days before being ambulated home. A hospital bed has been provided to help the breathing and as I left, I was given a bag with tea, soup, bread, milk and cheese. You have to lose all sense of dignity when truly ill, but such is the kindness and treatment that you cease to notice. What you do notice is how dependent we are on staff from abroad. How long will that last? At some point home will beckon and then where will the NHS be?

Tribute to David Kippest

By Rosie MacGregor

I want to pay tribute to a former Chair of the National Retired Members Committee.

David Kippest from West Midlands passed away on 19 January from a heart attack.

I remember David with great respect and his contribution as an activist in our union has been immense. He was someone that many have called “a true gentleman” and so he was, always thoughtful, dependable and trustworthy.

David was Chair of UNISON’s National Retired Members Committee when I was still a working member. I remember fondly that there were a couple of occasions when, as South West Regional Convenor, I spoke against him at National Delegate Conferences but he always took our occasional differences and failures to agree in good part.

When I joined the National Retired Members Committee some 7 years ago, I admired his expert knowledge of UNISON’s policies and the priorities we have in retirement. David always spoke with great commitment and authority and his words were always carefully chosen and well measured.

When he decided to stand down from the Committee, I was surprised that he suggested that I might be an appropriate successor. He has been a hard act to follow.

I knew his health had not been good, but it still came as a shock to learn of his death.

My condolences to his widow Ann, who many will also remember as another key activist in UNISON.

A New Member of the Committee - Says Hello

By Honey Foskett

My name is Honey Foskett.

On 30th July 2021, I retired from Local Government employment having been with West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council and a member of UNISON since September 1999.

Like you, I have chosen to maintain my UNISON membership post retirement.

I am now privileged to represent our Branch’s retired members on the SW Regional Retired Members Committee and to represent the Committee on the SW Regional Welfare Committee.

I am looking forward to working on your behalf with my more experienced Committee colleagues on how best to deal with issues affecting retired members.

My first steps have been to establish contact with retired members in my own Branch.

I will work to create a local information network to keep retired members informed and up to date on UNISON activities and services.

I would very much like to create an opportunity for retired members in my local area to meet up on a social footing as and when our members feel that is appropriate.

I know that Covid has impacted significantly on my own retirement plans. I sincerely hope that you have been able to find a way to navigate through the restrictions and can now look forward to enjoying your usual retirement routines.

If you have any particular concerns or would like information on how to access UNISON Retired Member services then please do get in touch with your Regional Retired Members Committee, either through your Branch Secretary or through Regional Office.

Retired Members' Virtual Conference 2022

Our next National Retired Members Conference takes place on the **18 & 19 October 2022 in Telford.**

We hope many retired members in the South West will feel encouraged to attend.

You will meet other UNISON retired members and make important policy decisions.

Talk to your branch if you are interested in attending.

The timetable for the Conference is as follows:

Motions and Amendments to be submitted by 12.00 noon Weds 29 June 2022

Completed delegate application forms to be submitted by July 2022

Preliminary Agenda to be published 20 July 2022

Annual Report to be circulated August 2022

Amendments to motions to be submitted by 24 August 2022

Final Agenda to be submitted on 21 September 2022

Emergency Motions to be submitted by 11 October 2022

Conference Discussion Groups
Tuesday 18 October 2022

Motion based Conference Wednesday
19 October 2022

Dates for your Diary

South West Retired Members'

Seminar and AGM

November 2022
Venue – to be confirmed

Who's Who

SW Retired Members' Committee - Elected November 2021

Ann Price
Chair
Central Bristol Health
Priceann25@gmail.com

Rosie Macgregor
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Wiltshire Branch
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Please do get in touch with any of us if there's anything you would like to raise.