

Doreen Watson and I (Ian Lorimer) travelled to London at the end of January to attend the Retired Members Conference on behalf of the Retired Members Section of the Lancs & Cumbria Branch of the CWU. Copied below is a report of the Conference and reproduced with the kind permission of its author

Angela Bottomley

Section Secretary, Retired members, Greater Manchester.

**RETIRED MEMBERS CONFERENCE**  
**LONDON 31<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY 2018**

Chair, Beryl Shepherd, opened Conference and welcomed all delegates. She thanked everyone for all the hard work done by retired members and all the valuable experience employed by all.

Dave Ward, GS (General Secretary) unfortunately was not able to attend as he had been called away to discuss with the NEC, the agreement which had been reached on the ongoing dispute with Royal Mail, The 4 Pillars.

Conference started with motions on national issues.

Motion 1 was moved by Tony Kearns, SDGS, (Senior Deputy General Secretary) on behalf of the RMAC (Retired Members Advisory Committee) which discussed the rising costs of fuel prices and the effect this has on vulnerable people, of which there are many retired people. Figures have proved that approx. 285 vulnerable people a day die in the 4 month winter period. The choice is, 'Heat or Eat'. The motion asks for the RMAC to work with the NEC, (National Executive Council), to campaign with other interested parties to carry out programmes to improve heating standards in homes and to get the Power Companies to make the cost of pre-payment meters in line with direct debit payments.

Your branch supported the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Motion 2 was moved by Jake Kharadi on behalf of the North West Regional Retired Members Committee. This motion calls on the RMAC to raise awareness of the heating and poor insulation in houses and to establish a Fuel Poverty Commission and also for an increase in the winter fuel allowance.

Your branch supported this motion and it was carried.

Motion 3 was moved by Judy Griffiths from Coventry branch. Conference notes the major crisis in the NHS and recognises that pensioners are massively affected by the cuts. Conference therefore calls on the RMAC in conjunction

with the NEC to organise a National Demonstration, calling for an end to privatisation in health and social care and bring it all back into public ownership. Your branch supported this motion and it was carried unanimously.

Motion 4 was moved by the RMAC. Conference instructs the RMAC to work with other organisations to monitor the progress on the Green Paper, announced by the Secretary of State and Minister for Cabinet to publish a paper on care and support for older people. This Green Paper should set out plans for how the Govt. proposes to improve the care and support for older people. This was carried unanimously.

Motion 5 was moved by Midland Regional Retired Members Committee. Conference instructs the RMAC to enter dialogue with the NEC to put on hold the additional paragraph to the Model Branch Constitution until a report is issued to branches. This concerns the voting rights of retired members in branch elections which was passed at General Conference 2017. There was opposition to this motion but it was carried with your branch supporting it.

Motion 6 was moved by Midland No 1. Conference instructs the RMAC to request the NEC explain why Motion 35 which was carried at General Conference 2017 has not been complied with. This was carried unanimously.

Composite Motion 7 was moved by South East No 5 and seconded by South East Regional Retired Members Committee. Conference agrees that the CWU Retired member's website is not fit for purpose and now has less information than it previously had. Therefore the RMAC is instructed to work with the NEC and the Communications Dept. to restore these facilities and make the website more fit for purpose. Your branch supported this motion and it was carried.

Motion 8 was moved by Phil Duffy from Greater Merseyside and South West Lancashire. Conference agrees that the timing of the Retired Members Conference is not being held at the best time of year. The RMAC is therefore instructed to work with the NEC to seek a venue for the Conference to be held in autumn in time for the next Conference. This was carried unanimously.

Motion 9 was moved by South East Wales. Conference recognises that the weekend course 'Retired Members Weekend' is no longer fit for purpose and instructs the RMAC in conjunction with the NEC to review the contents of this course. This was carried unanimously.

Tony Kearns, SDGS, spoke about all the motions discussed at this year's Conference and acknowledged the difficulties faced by retired people today, including health care, the NHS and heating to name a few. He thanked the retired members for all the help and advice given over the last 12 months. He spoke about the possibility of yet another General Election in the next 12 months and how we need to work to make things better for working class people, the old, disabled and the vulnerable. He mentioned the attacks by this Govt. on Trade Unions and how they will possibly use Brexit to attack worker's rights, pay terms and conditions. He spoke about trade unions needing to work together and support each other in disputes which should make for a better society.

Beryl Shepherd, Chair, closed Conference by thanking all delegates for their contributions.

Motions 1 & 5 were voted to go to General Conference 2018.

Angela Bottomley  
Section Secretary, Retired members, Greater Manchester.