

NPC NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

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Decisions of the Biennial Delegate Conference Southport - 22-23 March 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Every two years the NPC elects its officers and determines its policies on a range of issues.

This report of the 2011 BDC includes the policy decisions, the amended constitution plus the financial report and the report of the work the organisation has carried out since 2009.

Our job now is to turn decisions into action. We will make sure that you receive progress reports and we hope that, in turn, you will find this information useful in helping to build the NPC over the next two years.

Best wishes, yours sincerely,



PRESIDENT



SECRETARY

- This report is being sent on email or by post free of charge to BDC delegates, National Council members and Regional Secretaries.
- It is available on email or by post (£1 including p&p) to other members. Please send requests to above email or with a cheque payable to the NPC at the above address.

Attendance

John Lowe - ACM/AMIE
David Jones - Amicus/Unite
Angela Ley - Amicus/Unite
Philip Wiseman - Amicus/Unite
John Rodd - Amicus/Unite
Ray Jackson - ASLEF
Les Ridings - ATL
David Bumford - BECTU
Phil Hooley - BECTU
Archie Birt - British Transport Pensioners Fed.
Les McDowell - British Transport Pensioners Fed.
John Batstone - COMMUNITY
Mike Lawler - CSPA
Mike Duggan - CSPA
Tony Hall - CSPA/Chair SOC
Sheila Tutty - CSPA
Ernie Purkis - CWU/SOC
Graham Wilson - CWU
Warren Gee - FBU
Sean Starbuck - FBU
Martino Cranch - FNP CISL (GB)
Billy Hinscliff - GMB
Dick Hazell - GMB
Jeff Goddard - NARFF
Graham Alexander - NARPO
Brian Burdus - NARPO (Observer)
Clint Elliot - NARPO
Margaret Morgan - NARPO
Lawrence Wright - NARPO
Mike Bragg - NASUWT
Paul Smith - NASUWT
Derek Barton - NW Pensioners Association
David Brown - NW Pensioners Association
Anne Gorton - NW Pensioners Association
Brian Northey - NW Pensioners Association
Ettie Amos - Northern Region
Maureen Bickle - Northern Region
Syd Ashby - NPC/SOC
Frank Cooper - NPC
Neil Duncan-Jordan - NPC (Staff)
Dot Gibson - NPC
Alison Purshouse - NPC (Staff)
Bob Pinkerton - NPC/SOC
Peter Rayner - NPC
Brian Sturtevant - NPC
Barry Todman - NPC
Tony Constable - NPC Anglia Region
Cliff Horne - NPC Anglia Region
Sam Sirdar - NPC Anglia Region
Christopher Brooks - NPC Anglia Region
Geoff Davis - NPC East Midlands
Mike McLoughlin - NPC East Midlands
Barbara Cork - NPC Eastern Region
Derry Thorpe - NPC Eastern Region
Tony Greville - NPC Greater London Region
Brian Lee - NPC Greater London Region
Shirley Murgraff - NPC Greater London Region
Janet Shapiro - NPC Greater London Region
Peter Ballantyne - NPC Home Counties
Peter Billups - NPC Home Counties
Dennis Brett - NPC Home Counties
Hugh Rafferty - NPC N Ireland
Carson Wilson - NPC N Ireland
Phyllis Preece - NPC Wales
Shirley Whitman - NPC Wales
Don Harper - NPC Wessex
Charles Harkness - NUJ/SOC
Pat Healy - NUJ
Roy Jones - NUJ
Ruth Fawcett - NUT
Brenda Roberts - NUT
Marion Wilson - NUT
George Wiskin - NUT
John Cherrett - PCS
Margaret Galloway - PCS
Trevor Gauntlett - PCS
Peter Wood - PCS
Arthur Bavister - PROSPECT
Peter Gilroy - PROSPECT
Ann Hedgecock - PROSPECT
Stan Kordys - PROSPECT
Glen Burrows - RMT
Tony Donaghey - RMT
Ron Douglas - RMT
Alexandra Barnes - SENPEC
Margaret Wright - SENPEC
Douglas Daniels - South Central & West NPC
Bob Jones - South Central & West NPC
Claude Mickleson - South Central & West NPC
Colin Canham - T&G/Unite
Alan Jackson - T&G/Unite
Bill Moores - T&G/Unite
Alan Sidaway - T&G/Unite
Martin Fawcett - Thames Valley NPC
John Collins - Thames Valley NPC
Douglas Dean - Thames Valley NPC
Terry Pearce - Thames Valley NPC
Brian Mayhew - TSSA
Philip Burgess - UCU
Norman Jemison - UCU
Paul Russell - UCU
Pat Barrett - UNISON
Sheila Crosby - UNISON
Colin Derrig - UNISON
Lillie McNaughton - UNISON
Denis Edgar - USDAW
Pauline Russ - USDAW
Sandra Dean - W Midlands Pensioners Convention
Tom Gray - W Midlands Pensioners Convn/SOC
Beryl Marshall - West Midlands Pensioners Convn
Christopher Smith - W Midlands Pensioners Convn
Peter Meer - Yorks & Humber Pensioners Convn

NPC Report adopted

INTRODUCTION

Since the last BDC, the NPC has lost a number of active members, but none more so than our founder, Jack Jones. The organization he set out to create in 1979 finally took shape in the early 1990s, and since then we have been developing and improving its structure and organization, so that we can now boast a democratic structure with regional representation, and expert working parties assisting with the development of key policies.

During 2009/2010 we set out to strengthen the organisation and its effectiveness through a number of activities:

- Launching a stronger NPC presence inside Parliament, including regular meetings with ministers, officials and MPs
- Taking our campaigns on pensions and health care into Europe
- Raising the NPC's profile in the national media, especially on the BBC's Question Time programme
- Launching a new Supporter's Network open to all
- Producing a series of detailed policy statements on key areas
- Staging public events in every region of the UK
- Building stronger links for joint campaigning with trade unions, voluntary groups and other professional bodies on issues of mutual concern

This report explains how these ideas have been put into practice.

ORGANISATION AND FINANCE

On 1st November 2010 we moved our offices from Ironmonger Row to Walkden House, London NW1. We are very grateful to the TSSA for all their support and assistance in making this possible. This now gives us a central location within easy reach of a number of other organizations who are able to give us support, most notable of which is UNISON and the RMT.

Since 2009 there have been 12 Executive Committee meetings and 4 National Council meetings; regular meetings of our 9 working parties (structure, finance, women, minority elders, trade

union, pensions and income, health, social care, transport) and quarterly discussions amongst the regional secretaries. The Pensioners' Parliament organizing committee has also met regularly throughout this period to ensure the smooth running of our flagship event, and in addition we have staged two residential schools at Barlaston for national and regional officers, two Transport Working Party conferences, two Minority Elders Committee conferences and the trade union retired members' conference. As far as possible the officers have also met in between EC meetings.

During the last 12 months we have also reported to 12 regional conferences/events. This has enabled us to explain the activities and policies of the NPC to a wider audience and start to build a better understanding of what we stand for. Once again we have also begun working to re-establish the NPC in Scotland, Devon and Cornwall. This is essential to ensuring that the Convention is properly represented in every part of the country.

Currently, we have 64 national affiliates, 16 regions with over 400 affiliates, 363 local affiliates and 1,211 individual supporters. Financial statements show an over-spending of £23,034 in 2009 and £4,543 in 2010 meaning that the balance in our deposit account has fallen to £37,634. We have increased the 2011 affiliation fees to assist with the deficit.

Unfortunately we have not yet been able to reach agreement on how we manage the (at present) two kinds of affiliation, (a) national (b) regional, for local forums/action groups and union retired members' branches. The main problem is the differences that exist between the affiliation fees charged by the regions and the relationship between the regions and the national organization. It is necessary for us to find a solution to this confusing situation. We also need to get to grips with developing the NPC as an individual membership organization. Every week there are requests from pensioners who want to join, and, although the £1 supporter's card launched at the 2010 Pensioners' Parliament was a step towards this, it is not adequate. However we now have the SAGE system of accounting, which will make keeping membership records easier. We hope therefore that the BDC will agree to the proposal to conduct a further investigation into this issue and make recommendations.

One of the main reasons that the NPC can "punch above its weight" is because our staff do not stint on

their time and dedication and in this report we take the opportunity to say “thank-you”. This work goes on every day – sometimes unseen, yet it enables the NPC to have a profile and status throughout the country that is beginning to be recognized. Very few other organizations could claim to achieve so much with so few staff.

THE PENSIONERS’ MANIFESTO

Our general election manifesto was launched at a successful meeting in the House of Commons on 21st October 2009 involving representatives from the three main parties and was subsequently sent to all candidates through a system of constituency reps across all the regions. The pressure applied to candidates during the election was an important way of raising pensioner issues up the political agenda, and enabled local groups to start discussing their concerns with their new MPs.

CAMPAIGNING

Since the last BDC, the NPC had carried out its campaigning agenda in a number of ways. This has included a very successful Pensions Day protest in the regions, a Comprehensive Spending Review protest on College Green, and a lobby of parliament following a rally in the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. Alongside the landmark 10 April event in defence of the welfare state and public services, we have also held joint public meetings with the GMB and Action on Elder Abuse to launch our response to the government’s White Paper on Social Care; meetings with director of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and consultations on Equality legislation; participated in the Department of Health’s Dignity in Care Campaign; and played a full role in the UK Advisory Forum on Ageing set up by the Labour government and continued by the Coalition government. On 29 March we will have the first meeting of the NPC Parliamentary Support Group, hosted by Kelvin Hopkins MP.

Much of our work has also involved taking our message out to younger generations, and in particular those who are at work. Through our relationship with the trade union movement, we have participated in the pre-Congress TUC pensions rally each year; had a stall and a fringe meeting during Congress; had a stall and a fringe meeting at the TUC women’s conferences; had stalls at a number of individual trade union conferences, spoken at the TUC’s anti-cuts rally on 19th October 2010, the CWU’s anti-Royal Mail privatization meetings and the PCS’ defence of jobs and pensions meetings; as well as having our regular stand at the Tolpuddle Martyrs

Festival in the summer.

PENSIONERS’ PARLIAMENT

The annual Pensioners’ Parliament in Blackpool continues to be the most important activity of the NPC – offering pensioners and their organizations a chance to find out new information that they can then use in their campaigning, get together, share ideas and build friendships, have their say and discuss ideas on a range of policies. The event always attracts a good set of guest speakers, sometimes ministers, and a number of experts. Every year the organizing committee tries to improve on what has gone before, ensuring that the topics discussed and the way in which the event is structured allow for maximum participation from delegates, as well as giving the NPC an opportunity to get its message across to the key activists in the pensioner movement.

PUBLICATIONS

The NPC continues to produce a regular supply of publications, including:

The Message

20,000 copies of this quarterly newspaper are distributed to all affiliates. The Message contains important information about our campaigns and policies. Although there is a published price of 20p, we only charge postage on bulk copies and leave our affiliates to collect payment at meetings and street stalls if they wish. Over the coming period we must consider how we could do more with this important publication.

Pamphlets

The NPC has a long history of producing popular, well written, affordable campaigning pamphlets.

Over the last period we have issued four pamphlets: 4,000 copies of *The Politics of Pensions*; 1,000 copies of *Coming of Age* (especially for the 2010 Pensioners’ Parliament); 1,000 copies of *The Politics of Ageing*; 2,000 copies of *Who Stole Our Pensions?* by Robert Peston. Income for these up to the end of February 2010 was £5,548 and expenditure £5,450. The value of the copies in stock is £2,489.

There are two pamphlets outstanding in the Politics series: *The Politics of Concessionary Travel* and *The Politics of Social Care* and these will be published during the year.

Campaign! Bulletin

This electronic bulletin is sent out to over 1000 pensioner activists every month and has proved to

be very popular. It is now on its 50th edition. In addition the Women's Working Party and the Minority Elders' Committee also put out regular newsletters to their supporters.

Consultation documents and briefing papers

Throughout the period we have produced a series of briefing papers and responses to government consultations. These have included documents on the Budget and Comprehensive Spending Review, the National Insurance Fund, the change in pension indexation from RPI to CPI, plans to raise the statutory retirement age, the NHS, the funding of social care and the idea of a National Care Service, funding of concessionary travel and general facts and figures regarding older people.

Website

Since the last BDC, a re-design of the NPC's website was undertaken. Special thanks for this must go to Haseeb Hussain. The site remains a very popular place for journalists and the general public to pick up information about the NPC and its activities.

MEETINGS

The NPC is regularly engaged in meetings with officials and representatives of other organizations and bodies. Over the period these have included discussions with the Pensions, Care and Transport Ministers and their shadows, officials from the DWP, along with meetings with individual MPs and trade union general secretaries, and the TUC's Brendan Barber.

We have also had meetings with representatives of Age UK, International Consortium of British Pensioners (re: frozen pensions); Care Quality Commission, National Council for Palliative Care; Action on Elder Abuse; the Post Bank Coalition, Fuel Poverty Charter Campaign, UK Payments Council consultations (re: cheques) and the RPI/CPI co-ordinating group.

NATIONAL PENSIONERS' CENTRE

This charity was set up by Jack Jones and others in 1998. At the 2010 annual general meeting the current officers of the NPC proposed and it was agreed to change the name to the National Pensioners' Education and Welfare Centre, and new trustees were elected, including five from the NPC. One of its first activities is the launch of an annual Jack Jones lecture. The inaugural lecture will be held on 29th March 2011 at Unite's headquarters and, Len McCluskey, the union's general secretary will deliver this. It has been agreed that future lectures will be organised in other parts of the UK. Re-

vitalising this charity is an important development for the NPC and in time will enable us to develop our educational and welfare roles.

EUROPE

The NPC is affiliated to: the Federation of European Retired People's Associations (connected to the European TUC) (FERPA) and are represented on the Executive and Women's Committee. In addition, we are also full members of the AGE European Platform and have experts on a number of committees who attend conferences and submit papers on our behalf.

For the first time in 2010, we participated in a European demonstration organized by the ETUC in opposition to the cuts that are sweeping across Europe. We have also submitted a document in the consultation process on the EU Green Paper on pensions, and discussions are proceeding on proposals for a Europe-wide petition on social care. During this period we have also had regular meetings with our FERPA colleagues from the retired sections of the CGT (France), CGIL (Italy) and CCOO (Spain).

PUBLICITY

In the past, the NPC has been criticized for not achieving sufficient publicity and media coverage for its activities and views. However new computer software and continued effort have enabled us to regularly get our message into the national and regional media. There is a report on page six which shows the efforts we've been making.

In addition, over the past 18 months members have been sending letters to the BBC demanding that the NPC is represented on Question Time. Despite a positive response in the autumn of 2010, an invitation has not materialized. We are now holding a series of demonstrations outside the BBC building on days when the BBC governors hold their meetings, and will continue with this campaign until we are successful.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

As this report was being prepared, the Institute of Economic Affairs issued a paper claiming that the government's austerity measures were falling on young people while pensioners were being spared. The IEA claimed that £16bn a year could be saved by 2015 "if older people shared the cuts burden" by abolishing the winter fuel allowance, the bus pass and the free TV licence to over 75s, and scaling back the rise in the basic state pension and pension credit.

We emphatically condemned this attack on the rights of pensioners, the baseless view that we are being spared the cuts and the attempt to create a division between the young and the old. Similar statements were made following the Coalition government's spending review in October 2010, but this government's policies are a recipe for unfairness to poor people of all generations.

Evidence shows that the richer you are, the longer you live – so making people work longer is a direct attack on the poorest in our society, and it does not recognize the £100bn contribution older people make to the economy every year in unpaid caring, voluntary work and child minding. At the same time, raising the state and other pensions by using the lower Consumer Price Index rather than the Retail Price Index will, over time, increase the number of pensioners living in poverty.

Cuts in the winter fuel allowance, council tax benefits, housing benefit, the disability living allowance for those in residential care and cuts in home care, day centres, wardens in sheltered housing and cuts in bus services will take their toll (and already are) on the quality of life of older people.

Our 2009 BDC correctly identified that government emphasis on the private market was undermining health and social services, leading to cuts in staff and poor standards of training and delivery. At meetings of members in local, regional and RMA organizations throughout the country and at two

Pensioners' Parliaments this opposition to privatization has received overwhelming support, which became even more emphatic when the banks were bailed out with trillions of public money. It meant we could go confidently to the trade unions, with whom we worked on the centenary events during 2008, to propose and reach agreement on an action in defence of the welfare state and public services; and we are proud that a number of representative organizations, including the British Medical Association also joined this initiative. The 10,000-strong march and rally on 10 April 2010 (in the run-up to the general election) was a benchmark, not only for the NPC, but for the entire movement representing people's stand for rights not charity.

Our members grew up, following WWII, when the welfare state, our public services and the NHS were being developed; today's workers and youth are now facing its destruction. This BDC takes place just days before the TUC's anti-cuts march and rally on 26 March.

This will be a historic day, echoing 1945 when millions said: "We're not going back to the poverty and unemployment of the 1930s!" We are joining with others to do everything in our power to ensure a massive turnout for this demonstration. It is our responsibility to be in the forefront of building this cross-generation resistance and defending our welfare state and public services on which so many older people rely.

Officers elected

President: Frank Cooper
Secretary: Dot Gibson
Treasurer: Barry Todman
Vice Presidents: Pat Healy, Norman Jemison,
Peter Rayner, Marion Wilson

Standing Orders Committee: Mary Cook, Barbara Cork, Tom Gray
Tony Hall, Bob Pinkerton, Ernie Purkis

Financial Examiners: John Amos, Susan Ward

Financial Report agreed

NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

Receipts		Payments	
Affiliations	£29,045.00	Salaries, NI, Pensions	£102,504.21
Donations	£19,080.24	Rent, Services	£21,496.89
Individual Supporters	£7,432.00	Printing & Publicity	£7,532.19
National Affiliate Pledges	£42,140.70	Stationary & Photocopying	£4,288.81
Age UK Grants	£50,000.00	BDC 2011	£1,912.50
Publications & Sales	£5,251.30	TUC	£1,397.79
Pensioners Parliament	£16,651.34	Conferences & Meetings	£11,404.19
Rent & Photocopying	£267.00	Pensioners Parliament	£7,245.82
BDC 2011	£425.00	Travel & Subsistence	£9,607.94
Reimbursement of Expenses	£3,087.12	Postage	£5,275.21
Supporters Cards	£1,639.00	Computer Supplies	£3,651.02
Petty Cash	£140.00	Telephone	£901.67
Uncashed Cheques	£250.01	Insurance	£517.74
Total	£175,408.71	Bank & Visa Charges	£217.96
<i>Transfer(D Account)</i>	<i>£10,000.00</i>	Affiliations	£1,054.65
Total	£185,408.71	Campaign Materials	£610.70
<i>B/F 2011 Bank</i>	<i>£3,614.15</i>	Cash Cheque	£140.00
<i>B/F 2011 Cash</i>	<i>£54.24</i>	Sundries (visa)	£74.94
Grand Total	£189,077.10	Sundries (petty cash)	£117.51
		Total	£179,951.74
		C/F 2011 Bank	£9,012.65
		C/F 2011 Cash	£112.71
		Grand Total	£189,077.10

Current Account Reconciliation		
Bank Balance at 31/12/10		£11,143.51
less December Visa Payment	-£639.66	
less Uncashed Cheque 665	-£19.44	
less Uncashed Cheque 689	-£255.00	
less Uncashed Cheque 690	-£28.75	
less Uncashed Cheque 695	-£207.00	
less Uncashed Cheque 696	-£840.00	
less Uncashed Cheque 697	-£141.01	-£2,130.86
Reconciled Bank Balance		£9,012.65

Deposit Account statement

Balance b/f 2009	47,557.99
Interest during 2010	76.29
	47,634.28
Transferred to current a/c	10,000.00
Balance in hand at 31/12/10	37,634.28

Expenditure over Income 2010

Total expenditure	179,951.74
Total income	175,408.71
Excess of exp over inc	4,543.03
Deposit account interest	76.29
	4,466.74

BANK BALANCES

31st December 2010

Current Account	9,012.65
Deposit Account	<u>37,634.28</u>
	46,646.93
Petty Cash balance	<u>112.71</u>
	46,759.64
Excess of exp over inc	<u>4,466.74</u>
	51,226.38

31st December 2009

Current Account	3,614.15
Deposit Account	<u>47,557.99</u>
	51,172.14
Petty Cash balance	54.24
	51,226.38

PETTY CASH ACCOUNT

Receipts

b/f from 2009	54.24
Sale of pamphlets	270.70
Membership subs	25.00
Donations	135.00
Photocopying	47.00
Expenses refunded	97.20
Pensioners Parliament tickets	63.00
Pensioners Parliament stall	191.44
Supporters' Cards	391.00
Cash cheque and visa card	<u>140.00</u>
	1,414.58

Expenditure

Meetings	93.74
Travel	738.55
Stationery	6.45
Expenses	345.62
Miscellaneous	117.51
c/f 2010	<u>112.71</u>
	1,414.58

BALANCE SHEET

Fixed Assets

	2010	2009
Equipment owned at 1st Jan	439	877
Bought during year	1,161	0
Total	<u>1,600</u>	<u>877</u>
less depreciation	219	438
Total	<u>1,381</u>	<u>439</u>

Current assets

	2010	2009
Current account	10,503.85	3,614.15
Deposit account	37,634.28	47,557.99
Cash in hand	112.71	54.24
Paid in advance	BDC 1,487.50	Rent 7,091.46
Stocks of pamphlets	2,466.00	
Loan repayment due	422.10	422.10
Recovery of o'payment		721.00
Total	<u>52,626.34</u>	<u>52,059.98</u>
Current liabilities	4,113.19	0
Assets less liabilities	<u>46,047.15</u>	<u>52,059.98</u>

Thanks

● The BDC expressed thanks to the CSPA for the substantial financial contribution to NPC funds from their members' levy and to Unison and the PCS for financial grants which had enabled the NPC to develop its work in the regions.

● Special thanks were given to Cyril Marshall and Ernie Purkis, who had examined the NPC accounts over a number of years. Their advice and guidance had been gratefully received.

Constitutional, Policy motions & amendments remitted to the Executive Committee

Constitution

RULE 3 MEMBERSHIP

Insert new Clause 3 (c) as follows:

All affiliations and membership to the NPC from local groups, branches and individuals should be submitted through the regional councils. The Executive Committee shall decide the percentage of the affiliation fee that should then be payable to NPC head office.

Policy

1. This BDC believes that means-testing of pensioners needing spectacles and dental care should be abolished and provided free to all in need. We therefore call upon the NPC to campaign towards this end.

2. This BDC recognises the tremendous step taken by the Pensioners' Parliament in 2004 by creating the very first Pensioners' Charter, which has subsequently been adopted by the NPC and most pensioner organisations across the country as the guiding principles and policies of our campaign.

Given that this was at least five years ago, this BDC now believes it is time to re-visit the Pensioners' Charter and calls on the NPC to promote a revised version at the next appropriate Pensioners' Parliament along the following lines:

Every man and woman on reaching state pensionable age will have the right to:

- a basic state pension set above the official poverty level and linked to average earnings, inflation (RPI/CPI) or 2.5% (whichever is greater).
- a warm and comfortable home, with additional assistance towards paying utility bills.
- free health care treatment based on clinical need and an annual comprehensive health check.
- free long-term and social care provided to the highest standards and without the need for means-testing, rationing or a postcode lottery.
- free nationwide travel on all public, local and community transport.
- good quality local services that are funded by the ability to pay rather than property prices.
- free education, access to and participation in leisure and cultural activities.
- goods, services and benefits without age discrimination and legal protection against all forms of elder abuse.
- active engagement and consultation on national and local issues affecting older citizens.
- a decent period of retirement along with advocacy, dignity, respect, social inclusion and fair treatment in all aspects of their lives."

AMENDMENT 1

Delete third paragraph and insert:

"Every man and woman, on reaching state pensionable age, should have the right to:

- a basic state pension set above the official poverty threshold and to annual increases linked to average earnings, inflation (RPI or CPI) or 2.5% (whichever is greater)
- a warm and comfortable home, with additional assistance towards meeting utility bills
- health care treatment, free at the point of delivery and based on clinical need, with an annual comprehensive health check
- long-term and social care, provided free at the point of delivery, set at the highest standards across the UK and properly personalised
- free local & community transport and subsidised national travel

- good quality local services that are funded fairly
- lifelong learning access, tailored to the needs of older people, with appropriate access to and participation in leisure and cultural activities
- provision of goods, services and benefits without age discrimination
- legal protection against all forms of elder abuse
- active engagement in and consultation on national & local issues affecting older citizens
- a decent period of retirement, along with advocacy, dignity, social inclusion, respect and fair treatment in all aspects of their lives"

AMENDMENT 2

Bullet Point 7 add:

"which would include a free TV licence"

Policy Motions carried

PENSIONS AND INCOME

1. This BDC congratulates the Pensions and Income Working Party on its detailed report which was presented to the Executive Committee in January 2011 and endorses its recommendations. However, the subject of the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) should be added to the working party agenda as a matter of urgency.

2. This Biennial Delegate Conference of the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) notes with disgust the Government's attack on occupational pensions both private and public sector by lowering the indexation from RPI to CPI. Lord Hutton's interim report calculates that this amounts to a 15% cut in the value of these pensions. This same change in indexation will also apply to elements of the State Pension from April 2011.

This attack is being carried forward in the employers' current attempt to railroad through changes in the pre-92 universities USS pension scheme. Here indexation will be capped at 5% which will heavily erode the pension if there is even a limited period of high inflation.

The NPC commits itself to campaign to reverse these changes in the indexation of elements of the State Pension and of occupational pensions, and seeks to involve the wider Trade Union movement in this campaign.

3. This Biennial Delegate Conference of the National Pensioners Convention notes that to most of today's pensioners their house is a home which they have spent years making their own. Also as pensioners tend to remain in the family home until they die or move into a care home they do not benefit from increased house values.

Hence, as very few pensioners use their home to supplement their income, this Biennial Delegate Conference calls on the National Pensioners Convention to strongly oppose any move to include the investment value of owning one's home in any arrangement to include housing costs in the basket of goods for the evaluation of any inflation price indices.

4. This BDC of the National Pensioners Convention supports the idea that personal tax allowances between married couples and civil partnerships should be transferable if they so wish, particularly for pensioners on Age Allowances. The Executive Committee is instructed to pursue this matter with the appropriate government department in order to bring about this change in the taxation system.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

5. This Biennial Delegate Conference notes that the Health and Social Care Bill, published on 19 January 2011, shows that responses objecting to the White Paper Liberating the NHS: Equity & Excellence have been ignored. The NPC strongly objected to the proposal to abolish Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and give 80 per cent of NHS commissioning monies to consortia which GPs would be forced to form and which would not be in any way accountable to local people. Public bodies would be abolished and replaced by narrower bodies meeting with press and public excluded, and not required even to consult with public on changes.

We further note that:

1. The NHS has widespread support among the general public which overrides any acceptance of the cuts culture introduced by the Coalition government.
2. The far-reaching changes in the structure of the NHS outlined in the White Paper proposals and the Bill were not included in either the Tory or Lib Dem manifestos nor in the Coalition agreement, which means there is no mandate for them.
3. If the Bill succeeds, it will widen health inequalities between England and other nation states of the UK.
4. GPs will have to buy in the necessary management and financial expertise, probably from private companies, heralding the end of the NHS in England as any more than a fund administered by and spent on private sector providers.
5. Senior PCT staff were expensively trained for World Class Commissioning, and the delivery of more than 120 statutory duties: expertise which will be lost with the abolition of PCTs.
6. Most GPs have expressed alarm at this change, which they see as risky to the NHS in England and potentially dangerous to patients.
7. The Royal College of General Practitioners and the British Medical Association have also opposed the changes.
8. The estimated costs of the reorganisation, ranging between 1.8 and 3 billion, will outweigh any savings.
9. The NHS budget is being cut by the demand for 20 per cent efficiency savings, outweighing the minuscule 0.1 per cent per year increases in funding, contrary to the government's claim that the NHS is being protected from cuts.
10. Hospitals are already announcing substantial staffing cuts, which will mean growing reductions in front line services in the next four years.

This BDC believes that:

- a) the proposed changes to the NHS in England will be widely opposed by the general public, who may be less inclined to resist other cuts;
- b) retaining the PCT commissioning role for three years (with subsequent review) is a viable and much less expensive alternative;
- c) reorganising the PCT Boards so that at least half their members are directly elected, while retaining appropriate representation of health professionals and the general public, would address the long-standing democratic deficit in NHS governance and give patients a proper role.

We therefore demand that the NPC makes opposition to the Bill a key and separate objective of policy including by:

1. pursuing the alternative policy outlined above.
2. declaring complete support for health service professional bodies and trade unions opposing the Bill, including by supporting actions they may take to defend the NHS as a service that is free at the point of delivery and funded by general taxation.
3. to oppose the Bill through its Parliamentary contacts who should be urged to amend it in line with the points outlined above.
4. urging NPC regions and affiliates to initiate or join in local and trade union activities, protests and demonstrations opposing the government's NHS proposals for England.

6. This BDC believes the current social care system is riddled with complexity; uses an unfair system of means-testing to determine payment, perpetuates a postcode lottery of funding and standards; provides little support for family carers and has a distinct lack of personalised services.

In addition there are concerns surrounding the standards and quality of care services, the training, remuneration and employment conditions of the care workforce and the lack of a robust and effective regulation and monitoring of care providers.

This BDC is further concerned by the work of the new Long-term Care Commission, its limited terms of reference and its potential lack of independence and calls on the NPC to campaign, alongside others who share our aims, to influence the commissioners, ministers, politicians and the general public to support the creation of a National Care Service which is funded through general taxation and provides a high quality, comprehensive system of social care that meets national standards and is available to everyone, based on their care needs rather than their income, in line with the policies outlined in the NPC document *Shaping the Future of Care Together*.

7. Conference will be aware that in a White Paper in March 2010 the former Labour Government announced plans to establish a national care service free at the point of need. Decisions on the funding of this proposal were to be delayed until after the May general election of that year.

Conference notes that the new coalition government has scrapped the White Paper and given a commitment to establish a new independent commission to advise on the future funding of long-term care. The Commission are likely to consider a range of ideas including a voluntary insurance scheme and a partnership scheme.

Conference further notes that the United Kingdom has some six million unpaid carers who provide support for most of the elderly and vulnerable members of society at a saving to the state of £87 million a year.

Conference instructs the Executive Committee to urgently press for an immediate improvement in access to respite services for both carers and those receiving care.

These aims to be financed from General Taxation, with no means-testing, rationing or postcode lottery.

8. The Coalition government asks us to forget the past and join their new vision for a 21st century care and support system, but they provide no balance sheet of the old vision and the disastrous policies which are leading to its destruction.

The new vision means transferring risk and responsibility either to the individual who needs social care or to their relatives. They must now take on management roles (wages, income tax, national insurance and manual handling regulations etc) or deal directly with private companies which would provide advice or care for profit.

Expecting some of the most vulnerable older people to take on the responsibility of employers for example, recruitment, dealing with payroll matters, contracts, employment rights and discipline is simply unrealistic. In effect, rather than giving choice to the individual, personal budgets open up the chances of abuse by those who manage the individual's affairs and those organisations who see it as an opportunity to win contracts and make profits.

Local authorities have a regulated workforce and can monitor and enforce the contracts they have with private companies. There are also scrutiny committees where electors can raise their concerns, doubts and opposition. They are democratically accountable through annual elections in which councillors can be removed from office.

This BDC therefore believes that it is essential that local authorities continue to regulate the system of personalised payments.

9. This BDC calls on the NPC to campaign for the introduction of a nationwide Dignity Code in all health and social care settings for all older people that will be adopted by central and local government, health

professionals and other appropriate bodies as a way of upholding their rights and maintaining their personal dignity, within the context of ensuring the health, safety and well being of those older people increasingly less able to care for themselves or to properly conduct their affairs.

This Code must recognise that certain practices and actions are unacceptable to older people, such as:

- Being abusive or disrespectful in any way, ignoring people or assuming they cannot do things for themselves
 - Treating older people as objects or speaking about them in their presence as if they were not there
 - Not respecting the need for privacy
 - Not informing older people of what is happening in a way that they can understand
 - Changing the older person's environment without their permission
 - Intervening or performing care without consent
 - Using unnecessary medication or restraints
 - Failing to take care of an older person's personal appearance
-
- Not allowing older people to speak for themselves, either directly or through the use of a friend, relative or advocate
 - Refusing treatment on the grounds of age

This Code therefore calls for:

- Respect for individuals to make up their own minds, and for their personal wishes as expressed in 'living wills', for implementation when they can no longer express themselves clearly
- Respect for an individual's habits, values, particular cultural background and any needs, linguistic or otherwise
- The use of formal spoken terms of address, unless invited to do otherwise
- Comfort, consideration, inclusion, participation, stimulation and a sense of purpose in all aspects of care
- Care to be adapted to the needs of the individual
- Support for the individual to maintain their hygiene and personal appearance
- Respect for people's homes, living space and privacy
- Concerns to be dealt with thoroughly and the right to complain without fear of retribution
- The provision of advocacy services where appropriate

THE WELFARE STATE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

10. This BDC recognises that the greatest impact of the government's proposed cuts programme will affect the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society, many of whom are pensioners. As those who helped create the welfare state and public services after the Second World War, pensioners have a vital role to play in campaigning for certain key principles of universalism and public provision through taxation, rather than means-testing and privatisation.

This BDC therefore calls on the NPC to:

- Continue to make representations to government and other political parties on those issues that concern older people
- Produce information and research to support campaigning against the cuts which undermine the welfare state and public services for older people
- Hold events and demonstrations where appropriate to highlight our opposition to those proposals which have an adverse impact on older people
- Work with other appropriate organisations that share our aims, like the trade union movement, to build solidarity between the generations
- Promote the NPC's policies as widely as possible across society to ensure the views of older people are not ignored or overlooked from the discussion

11. The National Pensioners Convention deplores the unfairness of the government's cuts in pensions and services to date, and commits itself to work with any groups or organisations which campaign on a non-party political basis, and of course on a non-racist and non-sexist basis, to oppose attacks on the welfare state and public services, including supporting campaigns to save jobs.

This BDC congratulates the leadership of the NPC on its work with trade unions and others in helping to build a broadly based popular resistance to the government's attacks on welfare, pensions and services available to pensioners.

QUALITY OF LIFE

12. This BDC notes that the government has already abandoned the socio-economic duty of the Equality Act passed just before the General Election in 2010. There have also been efforts to water down the age discrimination ban in relation to the provision of health and social care. This BDC therefore instructs the NPC to campaign through its affiliates, the trade union movement and friendly MPs to ensure that the ban is implemented in full as soon as possible.

13. This BDC calls on the National Pensioners Convention to demand the introduction of legislation which protects older people against abuse by bringing in a legal definition as defined under the Children's Act, and invites other organisations to join us in this demand.

DEVELOPING THE NPC

14. Since 2001 the NPC has embarked on a programme of regionalisation to strengthen the internal democracy of the organisation, and raise the profile of the Convention in every part of the country.

The creation of specialist working parties has enabled more people to get involved in a rolling programme of policy development, and the recent launch of the NPC Supporter's Card and affiliate's logo have promoted the idea that individuals can become part of the NPC - either directly or through their affiliated group.

This BDC now believes that these positive developments need further consideration and calls on the structure working party to carry out a feasibility study into the following:

- Creating a national individual membership system to run alongside group affiliation and assessing what rights each would have under such an arrangement
- Simplifying the existing affiliated fee structure, particularly between the regional and national NPC
- Considering how such changes would affect the NPC's existing structure and organisation

The working party should produce a report with recommendations to be considered by the EC before the end of 2011. No final decision shall be taken by the EC until clear recommendations have been considered by regions prior to a debate and vote at a meeting of the National Council.

15. This BDC calls upon the EC or the appropriate sub committee, to examine the feasibility of recording/filming the highlights of the NPC Pensioners' Parliament, with a view to it being made accessible via the NPC website. A recommendation whether to proceed would be made to the first EC meeting in 2012. If agreed this would be applied to the 2012 NPC Pensioners' Parliament.

Support and solidarity

- On 22 March, as delegates gathered for the BDC, there was a government announcement of more cuts in Royal Mail sorting offices and jobs and it was agreed that a message of solidarity would be sent to the Communication Workers Union in support of their stand in defence of jobs and services.

Constitution as amended by 2011 BDC

1. NAME

The name shall be THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION, herein after called the NPC or CONVENTION.

2. OBJECTIVE

To promote the welfare and interests of all United Kingdom pensioners and older people in need, by any means deemed by law to be charitable.

In pursuance of this object the NPC will:

- a. Promote policies beneficial to pensioners, retired and older people.
- b. Encourage the development of educational and other opportunities to enable pensioners, retired and older people to contribute to community activities.
- c. Act as an information resource for pensioners', retired and older people's organisations within the United Kingdom.
- d. Provide a platform where matters of concern can be raised and policies and practices developed, paying attention to the particular needs or problems of pensioners, retired and older people.
- e. Make representations to the Government, Members of Parliament, Members of the European Parliament, Health Authorities, Local Authorities and other statutory and voluntary bodies dealing with matters affecting pensioners, retired and older people.
- f. Act at all times without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, race, belief, disability or sexual orientation.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- a. Application for membership of the NPC shall be open to any organisation of pensioners, retired and older people, subject to acceptance by the National Council. These organisations shall qualify for voting rights under Item 4 b.
- b. Application for membership of the NPC shall also be open to any organisation that supports the aims and objectives of the Convention, subject to acceptance by the National Council, but these organisations shall not qualify for voting rights.

4. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

- a. There shall be a Biennial Delegate Conference which:
 - i. Shall determine NPC policy and constitution.
 - ii. Shall receive a biennial report, to include reports from the regions.
 - iii. Shall elect NPC officers including the President, four Vice Presidents, General Secretary and Treasurer.
 - iv. Shall elect a Standing Orders Committee comprising of 6 members. Honorary officers shall not be permitted to stand for the Standing Orders Committee.

- v. Shall elect 2 independent examiners (auditors) who shall not be members of the Executive Committee.
 - vi. May on the recommendation of the Executive Committee appoint an Honorary Life President who may attend all meetings.
- b.** The basis of delegate representation, each having full voting rights, shall be:
- i. NPC Regions: 1 delegate per 1000 members up to a maximum of 4 delegates
 - ii. National organisations of pensioners, retired and older people: 1 delegate per 10,000 members up to a maximum of 4 delegates.
 - iii. NPC elected officers shall attend the Conference as voting members. Full or part-time NPC employees may attend the Conference as ex-officio, non-voting members.
- c.** There shall be an Executive Committee which:
- i. Shall be comprised of one delegate from each NPC
 - ii. Region and National organisation of pensioners, retired and older people in good standing, plus elected officers.
 - iii. Shall meet every two months.
 - iv. Shall have the power to conduct the general business of the NPC in between meetings of the Biennial Delegate Conference and the National Council.
 - v. Shall report their decisions to the National Council
 - vi. Shall have power to appoint working parties or sub-committees to deal with specific subjects and convene meetings of regional secretaries – all of which shall report to the Executive Committee.
 - vii. Shall determine the number and geographical distribution of NPC regional groups.
 - viii. Shall have power to co-opt to its meetings persons to act in an advisory capacity in respect of matters which such persons possess special knowledge. Such persons shall be without voting rights.
 - viii. Shall pass responsibility to the officers to act on any urgent business in between meetings of the Executive Committee, and who shall report their decisions to the Executive Committee.
 - ix. Shall have the power to recommend the level of affiliation fees and subscriptions, subject to the motion to increase fees being circulated to all national affiliates and NPC Regions at least six weeks prior to the meeting at which it will be debated and also subject to approval at the next National Council meeting following the meeting of the Executive Committee at which it was agreed.
- d.** There shall be a National Council which:
- i. Shall consist of the elected Honorary Officers (President, four Vice-Presidents, General Secretary and Treasurer) and with delegates as set out in clause 4 (b) above.
 - ii. Shall meet at least two times a year.

- iii. Shall deal with any motions for decision in between meetings of the Biennial Delegate Conference.
 - iv. Shall approve the annual audited accounts.
 - v. Shall oversee the work of the Executive Committee and officers.
- e. There shall be a National Pensioners' Parliament which:
- i. Shall take place annually.
 - ii. Shall be open to all pensioners and their organisations.
 - iii. Shall act as a forum for debate which will inform the NPC on matters of policy and organisation, provide opportunities for education and facilitate the exchange of information.
- f. The NPC and its affiliated organisations shall work towards a position where one half of the NPC National Council and Executive Committee members are women and that ethnic minorities are represented on such bodies.

5. MOTIONS

- a. Each NPC Region and National pensioners', retired or older persons affiliate shall be entitled to submit to the Biennial Delegate Conference one motion on policy and one amendment to the constitution. All such motions must be received at the National Office at least 28 days before the Biennial Delegate Conference and circulated to all delegates at least 14 days before the Conference date.
- b. Subsequently, each NPC Region and National pensioners', retired or older persons affiliate shall be entitled to submit one amendment on motions changing the constitution and three amendments on other motions.
- c. The Executive Committee shall also be entitled to submit motions and amendments to the Biennial Delegate Conference.
- d. Each NPC Region, National pensioners', retired or older persons affiliate and the Executive Committee shall also be entitled to submit motions to the National Council for decision (except those changing the constitution which shall be dealt with by the Biennial Delegate Conference). All such motions shall be received at the National Office at least 28 days before the National Council meeting and circulated to all delegates at least 14 days before the date of the meeting.

6. MEETINGS

- a. Fourteen days notice of all normal meetings of the National Council and Executive Committee with their appropriate agendas shall be given by the General Secretary, who will receive and process any proposals for debate.
- b. Draft minutes of the Biennial Delegate Conference, National Council and Executive Committee shall be taken and retained by the National Office and copies circulated to all officers, co-opted personnel and appropriate delegates, each copy to be signed as correct by the elected Chairperson at the next meeting.
- c. A Special Delegate Conference may be called at the discretion of the Executive Committee, the notice of such together with details of the business to be discussed shall be issued to members not less than 28 days before the date of the meeting.

d. Quorums: No meeting shall be held or deliberations exercised in the name of the NPC without a quorum of: National Council – 20 delegates inclusive of elected officers. Executive Committee – 10 delegates inclusive of elected officers.

7. FINANCE

a. The NPC's financial year shall run from the 1st of January to the 31st December, an audited account shall be presented to, and approved by, the first possible meeting of the National Council, except when the Biennial Delegate Conference is held when it will be presented to the conference.

b. The NPC shall have the power to obtain, collect and receive money and funds by means of contributions, donations, subscriptions, deeds of covenant, legacies, grants or other lawful methods. The income of the NPC shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects as set out in clause 2 of this constitution.

c. No portion of funds or income shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of reward to any member or organisation of the National Council unless authorised by the National Council.

d. Payment of out of pocket expenses may be made to any officer or approved representative of the National Council at a rate agreed by the National Council or the Executive Committee.

8. DISSOLUTION

If the National Council, by a two-thirds majority decides at any time notwithstanding the rules applicable to the Biennial Delegate Conference, that on the grounds of expense or otherwise, it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Convention, it shall call a meeting through its elected officers of all associated or affiliated member organisations in good standing who have a right to vote (as set out in rule 4b), giving 21 clear days notice and stating the full terms of the dissolution motion which will give instructions for the disposal of assets held by or in the name of the Convention, provided that any assets remain after all debts and liabilities have been cleared. Such assets shall not be paid or distributed among organisations of the Convention but shall be given or gifted to such bodies with similar objects which exist to promote the well being of retired older people.

9. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

No amendment to this Constitution shall be made except by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those delegates attending and entitled to vote at a Biennial or Special Delegate Conference on a motion submitted in accordance with the rules.