



# NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

Branch invitation to  
affiliate and get involved

**Retired Members Plus** – keeping you  
involved in your union for life

# NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

**“You’re a valued and vital part of our union, you know why solidarity and unity is important and the lessons you’ve learnt from life are as valid in our communities as they ever were at work”**



Sharon Graham, talks with Jack Jones about pensioners' rights

Unite and our legacy unions have always been at the forefront of the fight to defend and advance the interests of pensioners. The BBC in the autumn of 2020 ended the free TV Licence for the over 75's, this action on their part became necessary after the withdrawal of government funding for the maintenance of this universal benefit. This action has had a devastating effect on many older people whose only company and contact with the outside world was their TV and who now cannot afford the licence fee.

We hold the principles and values expressed by Jack Jones, Rodney Bickerstaffe and thousands of others as deeply today as they did. It is only right that after a lifetime of work, paid and often unpaid in the home and wider community, those entering into retirement should do so without fear or insecurity. We believe that our class, whether in work or retirement, deserve their fair share of the wealth our labour produces. Living as we do in the fifth richest nation on our planet, it's not too much to ask that our government provides such security in the form of:

- A pension based on two thirds of average earnings and protected by the triple lock.
- A safe, warm, affordable and secure home

■ Health and social care provisions via our NHS

■ Measures to prevent isolation and exclusion from society, including the provision of universal benefits such as: free access to public transport; prescriptions; the TV licence for the over 75s, digital inclusion programs and access to staffed community support facilities

The fight to preserve pensions, Universal Benefits and the NHS is to ensure that they are preserved for current and future pensioners. If we fail, what will be left in the cupboard by this government for those who retire in the future?

Disgracefully however, over recent years the state pension has lost real value, workplace pension schemes have been closed, pensioner poverty is on the rise, winter deaths have reached their highest number since 1975/6 and universal benefits such as the free TV licence are already being eroded and we must continue to fight for all universal benefits which are currently under attack.

Working with the NPC, Unite and other trade unions work together to protect and advance the interests of retirees. We support its campaigning and political lobbying work and encourage our retired members to get involved at every level of its organisation, from its local and regional branches to its annual pensioners convention. **Now we're asking you to make a small contribution to support the fantastic work of the NPC by affiliating your branch to your local NPC region.**

This is a small charge but will make a real difference to the work the NPC does both regionally and nationally on behalf of those who fought so hard to ensure we didn't have to endure the same levels of hardship they themselves did. We inherited from them our pay, terms and conditions, our NHS and welfare state, free education and our shop stewards organisation. Now they need our help to support them and in doing so supporting us all as we move towards our own retirement in the future. **Please affiliate today.**

We ask that all branches, Workplace, Geographical, National and Retired Members branches should affiliate to their Regional NPC, Regional Committees should also affiliate to the National TUC, make the decision to affiliate at your next meeting.

**Sharon Graham**, General Secretary

## A MESSAGE FROM THE UNITE RETIRED MEMBERS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

**Mike McLoughlin**

Unite Retired Members National Committee, Lay Coordinator.

**“we are asking for your support for those who for generations have supported you and still do on pickets, protests, campaigns and community events across our nations”**

The National Committee have launched this campaign for several reasons, one being that we are now entering very turbulent times. All the indications are that we are all in for a rough ride over the coming period, but in particular it'll be pensioners and those not in work who are likely to pay the biggest price for government failures. From June 2020 the BBC will no longer be able to fund the free TV licence for the over 75s, following the removal of funds from government to maintain it as a universal benefit..

Further, in its latest report on so called 'intergenerational fairness', the House of Lords (who receive in excess of £300 per day in a tax free attendance allowance) have detailed their concerns that we pensioners are too well off. As a consequence, the House of Lords have recommended that the bus pass, pension triple lock, winter fuel allowance, the extra 25p per week that the over 80s receive and the Christmas bonus of £10 should all be removed!

The reality is these are all universal benefits that prop up a very poor state pension and we will not allow them to be taken away without a fight. Nothing



has ever been given to working people, either at work or in retirement. It was a hard fight that saw the introduction by successive Labour governments, of pensions alongside universal benefits. And we all know, often through painful experiences at work, that once hard won benefits are lost they are very difficult to get reinstated.

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) brings together trade unionists and others in retirement to organise and campaign to defend and improve their conditions in retirement. Ever since its formation however, the NPC has basically run on a shoe string budget. The NPC's main source of income is from pensioner groups and trade unions but due to union mergers, alongside government cuts to community organisations, we are now in need of establishing a regular and sufficient income to operate. Hence we are asking for your support for those who for generations have supported you and still do on pickets, protests, campaigns and community events across our nations.

The NPC is an umbrella organisation which has done a great job over the past 40 years in organising hundreds of campaigns and taking up issues with politicians at every level from local and parish councils to government ministers. It is the largest pensioner organisation in the country and represents over a million pensioners. **Regional Committees should actively campaign to encourage branches to affiliate and also seriously consider making an annual donation to the National NPC.**



# NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

**Barry Todman** writes on behalf of The National Pensioners Convention (NPC)

**“if it was vital to have representation when at work, it’s equally important to be represented in retirement”**

The NPC was formed 40 years ago by Jack Jones, former General Secretary of the TGWU. He set it up with the aim of having a pensioners’ organisation which was run by pensioners for pensioners. His view was based on the belief that if it was vital to have representation when at work, it’s equally important to be represented in retirement. Over the years the NPC (which is non-party political), has developed into the largest pensioners’ campaigning organisation in the UK, and it now has a very active national and regional structure.

It is Unite policy to support and work with the NPC and the union affiliates nationally. To do its vital work, the NPC has a small team of part timers based in an office in London. They work tirelessly, in conjunction with the NPC regions and affiliates, on behalf of today’s and tomorrow’s pensioners.



There is no shortage of issues on which they campaign, ranging from;

- Ending pensioner poverty by increasing the basic state pension (currently the lowest state pension in the developed world at 29 per cent of average wages)

- Ensuring that the NHS remains 'free at the point of need' and should not be broken up and privatised. That there should be a National Care Service which also covers home and residential care funded in the same way as the NHS, via taxation
- Ensuring that the concessionary bus pass scheme is maintained and extended, and of course stopping the cuts to local bus services. This also includes our campaign to support rail services and protecting the safety of the passengers with a guard on the train
- Protecting existing pensioner benefits including the winter fuel allowance, and the campaign to retain the over 75s free TV licence. The Government should continue to fund it!!
- Progressing the NPC housing policy as outlined in the latest pamphlet 'Home Sweet Home'. A safe secure warm and affordable home is a human right

There are of course too many issues to mention here that affect older people including; fuel poverty, social isolation and loneliness, but hopefully this short pamphlet can give you an insight into the important role that the NPC plays in seeking a fairer society while you can find out more on the NPC website at [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)

The key to resolving many of these issues is developing the links between current pensioners and working people, via our regional and branch structures. Everything that a pensioner loses out on when something is cut, not only affects them, but also their families and communities as well as those retiring in the future.

The NPC produces a monthly campaign email bulletin, briefing papers and pamphlets.

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The NPC currently relies on its funding via a grant from Age UK alongside affiliations/donations from trade unions such as Unite. Most of the TUC registered trade unions are affiliated and the TUC is also committed to working with the NPC. However, with austerity and union mergers over recent years this has severely affected the NPC's income. Hence this appeal to you directly.

**There are a whole range of ways that Unite branches (both working and retired member branches), and regions can assist.**

## FOUR QUICK THINGS YOU CAN DO!

**First and foremost**, affiliate to the NPC at regional and/or national level. It costs between £25 - £50 a year and is as easy as completing the form on page 9 (opposite) to set up a standing order (cheque if preferable). All donations very much appreciated.





**Secondly and equally important**, develop links with your nearest region of the NPC. There are 14 of them and details can be found on the website. Affiliate, get involved, send delegates and help with local campaigning initiatives.

**Thirdly**, invite a speaker to your branch from your local Unite retired members committee or NPC regional group.

**Fourthly**, make sure that any members in your branch or workplace approaching retirement know about maintaining their union membership in our Retired Members + Sector. It's easy to switch membership from industrial to RM+ just call your local office (details on back page).

<h1>JOIN THE NPC</h1> <p>Pay by cheque, BACS or standing order. Please complete the form, sign it and post to: NPC Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AB.</p> <p>National bodies: Up to 20,000 members £225 Up to 50,000 members £562.50 Up to 100,000 members £1125 Up to 500,000 members £2250 Over 500,000 members £4500</p> <p>Branches of national bodies: Up to £50 (based on size) Local pensioner associations, RMAs and forums: £15 Individual supporters: £10</p>	<h2>STANDING ORDER</h2> <p>Bank name:.....</p> <p>Bank address:.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Account name:.....</p> <p>Account number:.....Sort code:.....</p> <p>Please pay the sum of £                      on the                      day of                      , and on the same day every month/year thereafter unless cancelled or amended by me in writing to the account of the National Pensioners Convention, Unity Trust Bank PLC, Nine Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HB (Acc No: 50678440 / Sort Code: 60-83-01)</p> <p>Your name:.....</p> <p>Your address:.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Postcode:.....</p> <p>Signature:.....Date:.....</p> <p><b>DO NOT SEND TO YOUR BANK - SEND TO THE NPC MARCHMONT COMMUNITY CENTRE, 62 MARCHMONT STREET, LONDON WC1N 1AB</b></p>
<p>Name:.....</p> <p>Address:.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Group (if any):.....</p> <p>Tel:.....</p> <p>Email:.....</p>	

# NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

## Useful contacts

### **Unite Central Office**

128 Theobalds Road,  
Holborn, London  
WC1X 8TN

Tel: 020 7611 2500

[www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org)

### **National Pensioners Convention Marchmont Community Centre**

62 Marchmont Street,  
London WC1N 1AB

Tel: 020 7837 6622

[www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)

### **Scottish Pensioners Forum**

STUC Centre,  
8 Landressy Street,  
Bridgeton,  
Glasgow G40 1BP

Tel: 0141 337 8113

[www.scottishpensioners.org.uk](http://www.scottishpensioners.org.uk)

### **AGE UK**

Crown House,  
27 Old Gloucester Street,  
London WC1N 3AX  
Tel: 0800 678 1602

(confidential helpline)

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

### **WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality)**

International House,  
12 Constance Street,  
London E16 2DQ

Tel: 020 7592 9592

[www.waspi.co.uk](http://www.waspi.co.uk)

### **National Pensioners Convention Wales**

#### **Confensiwn Pensiynwyr Cenedlaethol Cymru**

Mariners House,  
Trident Court, East Moors Road,  
Cardiff CF24 5TD

Telephone: 029 2043 1555





## How do I stay involved in Unite?

You're already a member of Unite so staying active in your union once you've retired is really easy. **You don't have to leave your union and re-join something else – our retired members sector is an integral part of our union.**

Simply call your local office or the appropriate regional office overleaf, tell them you're retiring from work and they'll do the rest. We'll change any direct debit payment or make sure that when your check off payment ends a new direct debit starts. It's as simple as that!

**If you're not a current member of Unite** but want to get involved simply complete a new member application form, either on paper from your local Unite office or the appropriate regional office (overleaf). Alternatively join on-line at [www.unitetheunion.org/join](http://www.unitetheunion.org/join)

If you are having difficulties you can contact us online at [www.unitetheunion.org/contact-us](http://www.unitetheunion.org/contact-us)

**However you join, simply set up a direct debit and that's it, you're in and very welcome!**

# UNITE REGIONAL OFFICES



## Ireland

### ***Belfast Regional Office***

26-34 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 2AA

**tel \*028 90 232381**

(\*04890 when calling from the RoI)

### ***Dublin Office***

Unite House, 55-56 Middle Abbey Street,

Dublin 1

D01 X002

**tel + 353 (0)1 873 4577**

## Scotland

John Smith House, 145/165 West Regent Street,  
Glasgow G2 4RZ

**tel 0141 404 5424**

## North East, Yorkshire and Humberside

55 Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BW

**tel 0113 236 4830**

## North West

Jack Jones House, 2 Churchill Way,  
Liverpool L3 8EF

**tel 0151 559 2004**

## West Midlands

30 Jennens Road,

Birmingham B7 4EH

**tel 0121 643 6221**

## East Midlands

102 Bath Lane, Friars Mill,  
Leicester, LE3 5BJ

**tel 0116 253 2020**

## Wales

1 Cathedral Road, Cardiff CF11 9SD

**tel 02920 394 521**

## London and Eastern

33-37 Moreland Street,  
London EC1V 8BB

**tel 020 8800 4281**

## South West

Tony Benn House,  
Victoria Street,  
Bristol BS1 6AY

**tel 0117 923 0555**

## South East

Unite House,  
Chalvey Road East,  
Slough, Berkshire SL1 2LS

**tel 01753 313 820**

**www.unitetheunion.org**



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