

A DECENT RETIREMENT FOR ALL



June 2024

Retired Members Manifesto and General Election Campaign

Member-led nationally coordinated plan

The Retired Members National Coordinating Committee have launched a Retired Members' Manifesto for this 2024 election year. Supported by the organising team, this manifesto was developed with input from retired members across the UK and Ireland and including input from those who attended the Eastbourne training school in March.

The final manifesto was voted through alongside a campaign plan for implementation at a Retired Members' National Coordinating Committee meeting on 30th May.



National campaign embedded locally

The organising element of the national campaign was by retired members branches with the organising team support focused on 6 target sites which were geographically dispersed, within large and active branches, and in marginals constituencies. These were:

- Glasgow North
- Heyward & Middleton North
- Leeds South West and Morley
- Bristol Central
- Bridgend
- Stockton



These branches also secured a further democratic mandate by voting through local campaigns in their branch meetings.

No more begging bowl politics: Pressuring politicians using community power

Our aim was to secure commitments on key retirement issues from all politicians seeking election in this general election year. It was important for us to demonstrate widespread and active support from constituents and to secure public commitments from parliamentary candidates, thereby upping the pressure on political leaders.

Retired members in Unite have a wealth of untapped power. They have a lifetime of experience and deep, rooted connections with key institutions and individuals where they live. We have used this with the organising method to work towards the collective aims of Retired Members nationally and the union as a whole.

The campaign aimed to have three strands:

	Activity in top target constituencies	Support for branches elsewhere
Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leafleting/canvassing• Hustings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printing leaflets & campaign materials• Guidance on how to hold hustings
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Polling• Advertising – press, billboards• Videos for social media• Local press, radio & TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Polling• Advertising (potentially)• Press releases
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manifesto• Lobby Gill Furniss & Rachel Reeves	

The campaign aimed to culminate in a non-selective (neutral) hustings in each of the target seats. Non-selective hustings treat all candidates equally. All candidates must be invited, asked the same questions, and given the same amount of time to respond. The hustings cannot then back a particular candidate or treat any favourably after the event. According to the [Electoral Commission](#), a non-selective hustings is also unregulated and carries no legal spending restrictions.

Snap election called

Rishi Sunak called a surprise snap election on 24 May, with an election date of 4th July. In response we drastically reduced the timelines and focused on rapidly arranging hustings. Branch committees made the decision whether they had the time and capacity to turn around a hustings within 5 weeks.

Emergency phone calls were held with the committees of each of the target seats in order to make a decision and a plan for the general election.

Case study: Hustings in Glasgow North – community power holding politicians to account!

- **Campaign meetings** held on zoom with anyone from the branch who wanted to get involved. There were 8 activists on this campaign committee.
- **Mapped the local community** of Glasgow North – focusing on important community institutions. The members mapped 24 different organisations - from women's centres to community hubs - using their knowledge of the community.
- **Community outreach.** The activists divvied up the 24 institutions in Glasgow North based on their existing relationships with them and contacted them via in person meetings, phone calls, and emails. They also leafleted the locations and put up posters.



- **Phone banking.** In the week prior to the hustings, the campaign committee called around 80 retired members who resided in Glasgow North and invited them to the hustings.
- **Politicians held accountable.** 5 political parties attended the hustings: Labour, SNP, Lib Dems, Tory, and Greens. The members took charge of inviting the candidates and following up with them. Some of the members already knew the candidates as they lived locally and could build on that relationship. All parties knew they had to turn up as any winner will be reliant on the votes of older people.
- **Packed out hall.** Over 80 people from across the community attended the hustings at the local Woodside Hall. The event was expertly chaired by a retired member. The agenda and questions were agreed beforehand by the campaign committee.



Public meeting: everyone welcome! Hold politicians to account in Glasgow North



Politicians rely on our votes to get elected, but they've taken us for granted for too long.

If parliamentary candidates don't agree to our demands, they won't get our support.

We are organising public meetings across the country to hold all politicians to account.

Come to the public meeting in Glasgow North!

> Tuesday 18th June, 7pm – 8.30pm

> Mid-Hall in the Woodside Halls

> 30 Glenfarg Street, Glasgow, G20 7QE



Support the campaign! Attend the meeting!

Scan the QR code to get involved or email

aidan.harper@unitetheunion.org



In order to promote retired members' manifesto and the hustings in Heywood and Middleton, Greater Manchester Retired members went out into their community in order to speak to key local institutions.

- Unite For A Workers' Econo...** - 13/06/2024
Busy day speaking to Heywood residents at Heady Hill Community Centre.
- Heywood & Middleton's retirees are holding non-selective hustings for our issues.
- Details: 25 June 2.30pm. Back O'th Moss Community Centre.
- See you there @elsieblundell @laurabeth_t @CF4HMN



Retired Members in Heywood and Middleton North actively reached out to the local community to get them involved in the campaign.

Retired Members Campaign Video

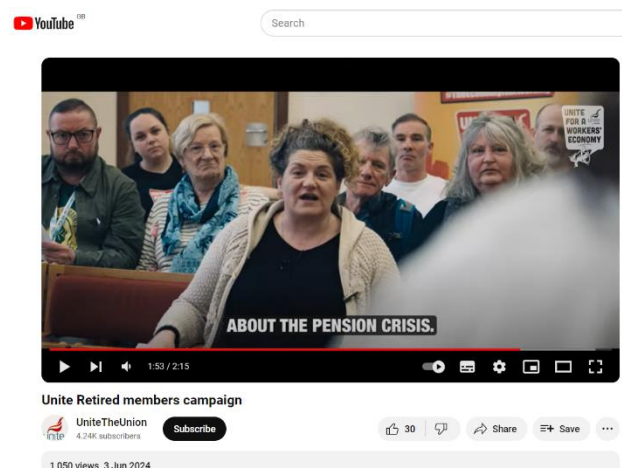
A campaign video was put together with the support of the organising team and an external video-maker and Unite members across many sectors – construction, health and hospitality. The aim of the video was to promote the campaign and the hustings, get people signed up to the campaign, and to influence the narrative around pensioners' issues in the UK.

All of the people in the video are Unite members, whether retired or still working.

Facebook video: 59,000 views and nearly 400 shares.

YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiRFoaPwwE>



Promoting the campaign:

- **Mass email:** a campaign email was sent out to 40,000 retired members' email addresses with a link to the manifesto online, the video, and an outline of the campaign.
- **Printing manifestos:** physical copies were sent to every regional office. More manifestos and leaflets were available upon request.

Engaging activists

- **Signing up activists to the campaign via surveys.** 167 people signed up via a JotForm survey to get more involved in the campaign. The JotForm survey was sent out alongside the mass email, and was also accessible through a QR code on the promotional leaflets and the online video.
- **Spreading the campaign through smaller actions.** An email was sent to all activists who signed up via the JotForm survey encouraging them to take a variety of smaller actions to promote the retired members manifesto.

A screenshot of a JotForm survey titled 'Pensioners and workers general election campaign'. The form has an orange header with the text 'Fill Form'. The main text of the survey reads: 'Politicians rely on our votes to get elected. But they have taken us for granted for too long. We hold ALL politicians to account and force them to listen to workers and pensioners. This survey is run by Unite the Union (you do not need to be a Unite member to take part). All your responses will be confidential. Join Unite here: https://www.uniteunion.org/members/tb-join'. There are three questions with input fields: 'What is your postcode? Hear more about what is happening in your area. *', 'Are you up for attending a campaign meeting in your constituency? *', and 'Are you willing to help in this campaign? *'. Each question has a 'Please Select' dropdown menu.



Unite Retired Members Manifesto campaign has been rolling on well. The hard work of activists like yourself are making your issues a priority nationally and locally.

Actions you and your branch can take in order to build the campaign:

1) **Email all parliamentary candidates** where you are asking them to support the [Retired Members Manifesto](#). I have attached PDF's with the manifesto and a leaflet too. You can find the contact details of your local candidates using this website and clicking on each candidate where they have contact details: <https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/>

2) **Attend local hustings** and raise questions about the manifesto. Bring copies of the leaflet and manifesto to put into the hands of candidates. *If you want copies of the manifesto and leaflet for your branch reply to this email with your address and quantities and I'll get them posted right away.*

3) **Raise the issues in the manifesto on the doorstep** when canvassers come knocking. *If you want copies of the manifesto and leaflet for your branch reply to this email with your address and quantities and I'll get them posted right away.*

4) **Share the Retired Members Video** on social media e.g. Facebook, in whatsapp groups, and via email with as many people as you can. Link to the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIRFoaaPwwE>

Finally, please see some action shots from last night's highly successful Glasgow North Retired Members hustings. There were over 80 people in attendance holding all candidates to account.

In solidarity,

Media

- GB News: <https://www.gbnews.com/money/state-pension-age-reduced-65-retirement>
- Daily Express: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1909542/state-pension-slashed-65-new-manifesto-pledge>
- iNews on Glasgow Hustings: [Waspi women demand next Prime Minister acts on compensation in first 100 days \(inews.co.uk\)](#)