

Senior Reporter

News from the 60+ Council

NUJ
NATIONAL UNION
OF
JOURNALISTS

Summer 2026

What next for the NPC?

NO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the National Pensioners' Convention, now a Company Limited by Guarantee, is likely before early 2027, according to Jan Shortt, general secretary and director.

In a recent letter to the NUJ and other affiliates, she warned: "It now needs to complete the transition from an unincorporated association by establishing our own democratic structures. The aim is to make these as close as possible to the previous structure whilst taking the opportunity to embed equality, diversity and inclusion."

Attached were revised proposals* for the company's structure compiled by NPC's joint finance and structure working Parties and approved by the directors.

Shortt said: "The next step is for these proposals to be considered by a Conference

of Interested Parties, provisionally time-tabled for the autumn. Attendees will be invited to submit motions for discussion.

"The directors have given a commitment in 'Moving Forward' that in setting up the democratic structure they will implement the decisions of the conference. An EGM will be arranged to elect directors and amend the articles of association as necessary."

No details of dates or venues have been given, nor invoices for affiliation fees for this year issued.

Affiliates were reminded: "The NPC was originally established because of the need for a unified campaigning organisation that could represent retired workers, and that need still exists today."

**Moving Forward: The Next Steps*

JENNY SIMS

Digital poverty: 25-year milestone marked



Baroness Armstrong, chair of the government's Digital Action Committee, giving the keynote address at the Digital Poverty Alliance's 25th Anniversary event at the Royal Institution. She stressed the need to raise public awareness of the free help available to people without digital skills or equipment to access the internet. Photograph © Pete Jones

ENDING DIGITAL POVERTY is achievable, the Digital Poverty Alliance claimed at its 25th Anniversary event which launched its National Delivery Action Plan (NDAP). Attendees were encouraged to sign up to the plan and the DPA's charter.

"Digital poverty affects how people manage money, apply for work, access healthcare, complete schoolwork, use public services and stay informed," Stephen Bethel, chair of trustees, pointed out in the plan's foreword. He said the DPA was helping deliver the public-sector device donation pilot. But "digital poverty requires

commitment, accountability and services designed around ... people most likely to be left behind."

Around 97 per cent of adults in the UK are now online, but 23 per cent of the population struggle with online services.

Elizabeth Anderson, DPA chief executive officer, said: "For 25 years we have been building and proving what it takes to end digital poverty." But though it was as important today as it was then to connect people with technology, it was also important that choice was not taken away.

JENNY SIMS

Ofcom approves STV cuts

Regulator Ofcom has approved plans by a leading broadcaster to cut its north of Scotland news programme.

This is despite opposition from groups representing older people, many of whom are especially reliant on TV for their news.

STV said the move was part of its efforts to save £2.5million by next year.

All its news programmes will now be presented from Glasgow and viewers in both central and northern Scotland would see the same stories most of the time. However, at least a third of the main 6pm programme will be different in each of the two regions.

There was also opposition to the plans from the Scottish government, other senior politicians as well as the NUJ. (See: <https://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/nuj-slams-ofcom-decision-approve-stv-cuts-local-news.html>).

WASPI update

WASPI CAMPAIGNERS are heading for the law courts in the next stage of their fight with the UK government. This is part of their continued support of the 3.5 million women born in the 1950s who claim they were not properly informed about changes to their state pension age.

Despite the parliamentary ombudsman finding the Department for Work and Pensions guilty of maladministration and ordering compensation to be paid more than two years ago, the government continues to reject this.

A spokesperson for WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality) told Senior Reporter last month (June) that "WASPI is now pursuing a fresh judicial review to challenge this decision and hold the government to account, raising more than £100,000 in just a few weeks through our Crowd justice appeal.

"Our supporters from all over the country have given what they can in an effort to force ministers to think again and come to the right decision.

"With preparation for our High Court battle under way, and a forthcoming change of Prime Minister, there is so much at stake."

Meanwhile, campaigners have received further backing from the Scottish Pensioners' Forum, a long-term supporter of their cause.

At its annual conference in Glasgow on June 16, delegates unanimously backed a motion which will see delivery of a message of support and solidarity, plus encouraging forum affiliates and members to raise awareness of the campaign, including sending the e-action letter on the Waspi website (<https://waspi.co.uk/>) to their local MP.

DEREK FORREST

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Welcome to the latest edition of Senior Reporter, which has been produced by editorial team members Jenny Vaughan, Derek Forrest, Nicoletta Flessati, Jenny Sims and Jim Symons.

We welcome articles (250 words max.) and letters (150 words max.) for publication. They should be sent to: derekforrest@gmail.com

About the NUJ 60+ Council: <https://bit.ly/3021u5o>

'Put on your shoes and not your slippers'



RETIREED JOURNALISM LECTURER
Ronnie Bergman has proved that humour doesn't have an age limit.

Ronnie, 75, who lives in Glasgow, swapped the classroom for the stage after signing up for a stand-up comedy course. It led to him performing a five-minute set at the city's Social Hub in front of an audience of more than 100 as part of "The Old Ones Are the Best", a new showcase at this year's Glasgow International Comedy Festival.

The event was the finale of a four-week course for older Glaswegians, created by the Social Hub in partnership with Age Scotland and the festival.

"I heard they were looking for volunteers so I thought, 'Why not?' However, standing up in front of complete strangers

and trying to make them laugh is very different from having a conversation," Ronnie told Senior Reporter.

His routine's topic at the Social Hub certainly came out of the dark-humour drawer – prostate cancer. "I discovered I had this, but I eventually got the all-clear."

Age Scotland supported the initiative after research found one in 10 older people in Scotland experience chronic loneliness, with organisers hoping the project will help bring people together through humour and shared experiences.

Ronnie, who retired a decade ago, spent

around 20 years lecturing in broadcast journalism, helping train generations of reporters and producers at what became the University of the West of Scotland.

"Before lecturing I worked in the production department at Radio Clyde. I was involved with coverage of the Lockerbie air disaster – a unique experience and one I certainly wouldn't want to repeat."

Ronnie said his attitude to life as a senior citizen these days can be summed up with a quote from legendary Scottish journalist and broadcaster Arthur Montford: "When you retire, remember to put on your shoes and not your slippers."

DEREK FORREST



Ronnie Bergman performs his five-minute set at Glasgow's Social Hub

Photographs with thanks to Ronnie Bergman

Keep an eye on your eyes!

I THOUGHT IT WAS A CATARACT.

The sight in my left eye was blurred and distorted. I wasn't really worried, but my annual eye test was due, so I went along.

I was wrong about the cataract. A cataract develops fogginess slowly and its routine treatment is surprisingly painless. This is different. A black blob was covering most of my vision in my left eye. It was getting worse.

The eye treatment centre at my local hospital told me a "bleed" had formed across my retina – the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. It was caused by "wet" age-related macular degeneration (AMD): an abnormal growth of blood vessels at the back of the eye which can begin to bleed.

Wet AMD can be controlled, but not cured. Stopping the bleeding is the first, urgent step. And after a series of injections into my left eye, some of the sight there has been saved.

Wet AMD can progress in weeks or even days. So as well as attending routine eye tests it's important to pay immediate attention to possible early symptoms – such as blurry and/or distorted vision. Don't, as I did, put off getting advice and hope "it's nothing".

The NHS website covers both "wet" AMD and the slower-moving but untreatable "dry" counterpart.

See: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/age-related-macular-degeneration-amd/getting-diagnosed/>

JENNY VAUGHAN

OU free course on ageism

TACKLING AGEISM is a key part of the NUJ 60+ Council's remit – so we are happy to publicise this free course, open to everyone.

Launched by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales and developed in collaboration with the Open University, it's designed to recognise and challenge ageism. It draws on a wide range of evidence and older people's lived experience to help participants understand the scale of ageism and its impact on individuals and society more widely.

As well as growing knowledge and understanding, including about key legislation such as the Equality Act designed to protect people against discrimination, the course offers practical information about how to take action against ageism and gives links to other helpful resources.

Older People's Commissioner for Wales, Rhian Bowen-Davies, said "Ageism remains one of the most persistent and overlooked forms of discrimination within society, impacting on the ways that older people are viewed, treated and valued.

"Ageism means that growing older is often viewed only in negative terms, presented as something to be feared and associated with decline and dependence. This reinforces ageist attitudes and discrimination, limiting the opportunities available to us as we grow older and creating barriers to living and ageing well."

See: <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/society-politics-law/ageism-and-age-discrimination?active-tab=description-tab>

Have your say

THE SENIOR REPORTER'S EDITORIAL team strives to produce a publication featuring items of interest to the union's older members.

We have our own ideas, of course, but feel it's about time we asked readers for their thoughts and opinions.

The team is keen to find out what you want (and don't want) from the Senior Reporter.

Perhaps you would like to see more articles about age discrimination in the workplace and what is being done and could be done to tackle it.

Particularly for the NUJ's growing freelance membership, the topic of pensions could feature more often.

Others may feel older workers are being disadvantaged when it comes to learning opportunities in a digital world and that the Senior Reporter should play its part in highlighting this.

Maybe readers want us to include more signposting/links in stories so they can access further information about subjects which interest them.

Please let us have your suggestions. All you have to do is email them to derekcforrest@gmail.com

DEREK FORREST

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