

SCOTTISH SENIORS

Campaigning for a better deal for older people since 1992



Newsletter of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum Issue 37/February 2015

MEETING WITH SHONA ROBISON MSP, NOVEMBER 2014

Recently, members of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum Executive Committee met with Shona Robison, Minister for older people's rights, at Holyrood to discuss various issues affecting older people in Scotland.



The SPF highlighted the growing concerns of many older people in that their interests were being deemed inconsequential in relation to other demographics in Scotland. The agenda for the day reflected this and included the Scottish Older People's Assembly, pensions and benefits, fuel poverty, support for campaigns on issues affecting older people, TTIP and the role of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum, and other organisations, at grassroots level.

A discussion over the format of the Scottish Older People's Assembly took place with Ms Robison indicating that it was preferable, and often simpler, to deal with one single point of

contact when considering older people's issues, stating that she was in regular contact with representatives of the SOPA committee. The SPF commended

the work carried out by the SOPA committee in organising the annual assembly and welcomed the opportunity to work with them on this. However as the SPF has been operating since 1992, alongside trade unions and other older people's organisations for older people in Scotland, and, as such, has been acting as the umbrella organisation for this cause, they felt that their input should still be considered within the decision making process. The SPF also asked that consideration be given to a pensioners' parliament event, similar to that being undertaken by the NPC in Blackpool each year. Ms Robison agreed that there was definitely a need for more interaction and acknowledged that the SPF was a respected organisation and indicated that she would be happy

to work with them when considering older people's issues.

The SPF highlighted the concerns over cleanliness in hospitals and SPF Chairperson, Jeanette Pieper, cited an establishment in South Lanarkshire as an example whereby the cleanliness, and other important standards, were reported as being well below acceptable levels. The SPF asked whether the government were aware of this problem and what was being done to combat this. Ms Robison indicated that she was unaware of the report but that she was happy that these issues were being brought to the fore. Ms. Robison remarked that a similar establishment in Dundee had received a detrimental report and measures were swiftly put in place to alleviate these problems, with favourable results. Ms Robison indicated that once she had considered the latest reports she would arrange for any information on the actions to be taken to be sent to the SPF for their consideration. There was a lengthy discussion on health care for older people and one of the main issues was discharge from hospital directly into care homes and the concerns surrounding the ethics of some organisations involved in this type of care. It was agreed that there has always been a mixture of public and privately run care homes however

standards are falling with unqualified staff being called upon to deliver dementia and other specialist care. John McAllion of the SPF called for a National Care Service for older people in order to meet their needs.

Other issues discussed included:-

- Fuel poverty and the need for energy companies to pass on the benefits of falling fuel prices to the consumer.
- The Home Heating Scheme and the criterion for eligibility.
- The adaptation of the CSPA manifesto 'Later Life Ambitions' for pensioners in Scotland.
- Forced closure of day centres for older people due to escalating daily charges, with particular discussion taking place on those utilised by ethnic minorities.
- TTIP and its effects on the NHS.
- State pension above the poverty level.
- Suitably adapted transport to meet the demands of disabled people, an issue which would be included at the SNP conference in June.

Since this meeting, Ms Robison has been appointed as Cabinet Minister for Health and we have scheduled a meeting with Alex Neil MSP, the new Minister for Older People's Rights in February.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

GENERAL ELECTION HUSTINGS

The SPF will be holding a general election Hustings on **Tuesday 7th April 2015** at the Renfield Centre, 260 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4HZ at 11am. Representatives from all main political parties have been invited to attend and the event is open to all SPF members and affiliated organisations as well as the general public.



It is also our intention to hold an evening Hustings and more information on this will be made available over the coming months.

STUC CONGRESS 2015

The SPF will have an information stall at the STUC Congress 2015 which takes place at **Ayr Racecourse** on **20th-22nd April 2015** and we hope to meet as many of you as possible. We will also be holding a fringe meeting at this event and details will be made available prior to the event.



SPF 24th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 24th Annual Conference of the Scottish Pensioners Forum will take place on **Tuesday 9th June 2015** at the **Palace Theatre, Kilmarnock**.



The event is open to all SPF members and affiliated organisations and guest speakers have yet to be confirmed. We hope that you can come along and celebrate another successful year for the SPF.

PENSIONERS' PARLIAMENT

Delegates from the SPF will be attending the NPC Pensioners' Parliament which takes place from 16-18 June 2015 at the Winter Gardens in Blackpool. Once again we hope to hold a fringe meeting at this event however arrangements are still at a preliminary stage and will be made available over the coming months.



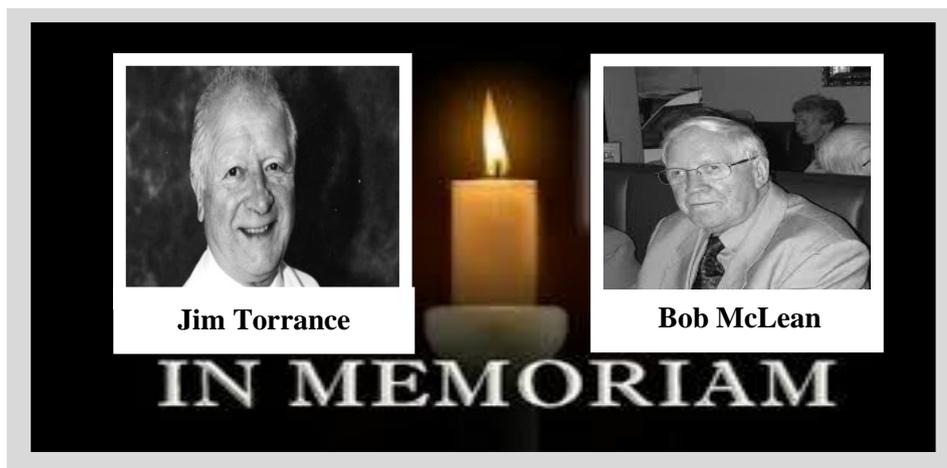
WITH OUR DEEPEST CONDOLENCES

It is with deep regret that we inform our membership of the passing of two of our former Executive Committee members, Jim Torrance and Bob McLean.

Jim, who represented the Scottish TUC on the SPF Executive Committee for many years, was a lifelong trade unionist and campaigner and was actively involved in many civic bodies in Dundee, including Dundee Trades Union Council and Dundee Pensioners Forum.

Bob, one of our founding members and who represented CWU Glasgow and Motherwell branch on the SPF Executive Committee, was recently the focus of an article in our quarterly newsletter and this only serves as a sentiment to how highly regarded he still was to our organisation, long after his retirement.

We would like to convey our condolences, on behalf of our membership, to their family and friends. Their expertise, and valuable input will be sadly missed by our organisation and their legacy of fighting for justice for older people will carry on through our work.



Join the Scottish Pensioners' Forum

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