

# SCOTTISH SENIORS

Campaigning for a better deal for older people since 1992



Newsletter of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum Issue 39/Sept 2015

## SPF ANNUAL CONFERENCE, KILMARNOCK 2015

The SPF Annual Conference took place on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at the Grand Hall of the Palace Theatre in Kilmarnock with over 118 delegates registered to attend. Jeanette Pieper, SPF Chairperson, invited Councillor Cook of East Ayrshire Council to deliver the Civic Welcome and all delegates were warmly welcomed to the proceedings and best wishes conveyed to the SPF for a successful conference.

All SPF formal business was conducted in the morning session, with motions to conference and changes to the constitution presented and considered, the presentation of year end accounts and their formal adoption by conference, the SPF Treasurers' Report, the election of the Standing Orders Committee for year 2015/2016 by conference delegates and formal notice of the elected SPF Executive Committee for the year 2015/2016 given.



Tim Weir of Thompson's Solicitors, addressing delegates on the importance of safeguarding their finances through proper wills and power of attorney, which would ensure their wishes were taken into consideration in later life. Tim was also available to speak to, and advise, delegates during the break.

The afternoon session began with guest speaker, Rosemary Byrne, Irvine Seniors Forum, who delivered a heartfelt speech on the need for more direct action and campaigning to ensure older people's voices were heard and Rosemary encouraged delegates to get behind the SPF to ensure that more work was done, at grass roots level, to secure the rights of older people.

Her speech was followed by a light hearted and comical speech by Provost Jim Todd of East Ayrshire Council, who had come along to welcome the main speaker of the

day. Provost Todd's short talk on his unique approach to how he undertook the formal everyday business holding office entailed was met with much laughter from the floor.



The morning session concluded with guest speaker,



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The main speaker of the day, who kindly stepped in at short notice, was Ken Macintosh MSP, Labour spokesperson on Communities. Mr Macintosh had, only the previous week, declared his candidacy for the Scottish Labour leadership election and was delivering the first policy announcement of his campaign.

Mr Macintosh spoke firstly on the valuable contribution older people make to society and pledged to campaign on the abolition of the 'care tax', a charge implemented by local authorities for non residential care services which has put more than 14,000 older people in Scotland in debt. Mr Macintosh went on to highlight the issues of loneliness and isolation and how these can often have a devastating impact on the wellbeing of



older people. He remarked that more must be done by the Scottish Government to safeguard the essential public services needed to ensure older people maintained a healthy and secure lifestyle in later life.

Mr Macintosh then went on to inform delegates that during the first few years of devolution, all MSP's and political parties had worked together collectively to deliver two of the most liberating policies for older people in Scotland, the concessionary travel card and free personal care, and

by working together again, in the future, more could be done to secure better services and benefits for older people.

Finally, Mr Macintosh engaged in a short question and answer session from the floor before conference was formally closed

**A full conference report will be made available in our Annual Report 2015/2016**

## TTIP: SPF CONFERENCE MOTION PASSED

At our Annual Conference a motion was put forward by GMB Retired Member's Scotland, worded as follows:-

*The Scottish Pensioners' Forum is alarmed at the impact of TTIP on public services in Scotland and the direct challenge to elected democracy that it represents. This is a particular concern to Scotland's pensioners who are reliant on good quality publicly owned and therefore accountable public services.*

*We therefore call on parties to not only seek exemption from the NHS from TTIP but to go further and refuse to become a signatory to any agreement which diminishes democracy, ushers in privatisation and gives private corporations more power than elected governments.*



This motion was passed by our conference and the Scottish Pensioners' Forum is now the only national older people's organisation in Scotland with a clear mandate on TTIP. We hope to engage in talks with other like minded affiliates and organisations on a campaign strategy to take forward over the coming months.

**If you are interested in discussing this further, please get in touch**

# **SPF ELECTED OFFICE BEARERS 2015/2016**

As always, our Executive Committee members are elected each year at our annual conference and are made up of representatives from local forums, faith groups, ethnic minority groups, affiliated organisations and individual members. At the first meeting of the new Executive Committee in July 2015, the following members were elected as office bearers for the year 2015/2016:-

**Chairperson: Rose Jackson (STUC Unison Scotland)**  
**Vice Chair: Jim Bradley (Individual Pensioner Member)**  
**Vice Chair: Jeanette Pieper (East Kilbride Seniors Forum)**  
**Treasurer: Surjit Chowdhary (Central Gurdwara Singh Sabha)**  
**Secretary: Grahame Smith (STUC General Secretary)**  
**Asst. Secretary: Robert Lockhart (Clydebank TUC)**

## **OUT AND ABOUT**

Over the past few months, the SPF have been in attendance at several conferences and events including the NPC Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool, the Glasgow Older People's Welfare Association AGM, where we delivered the Vote of Thanks, as well as several Holyrood Conferences on the health and social care needs of older people.



Our information stall has also been at several events throughout Scotland: the UNISON Scotland Retired Members conference in Glasgow; STUC LGBT conference in Clydebank; Young Workers Conference in Glasgow; the EIS Annual Conference in Perth and the SOPA reception in Edinburgh.



Our programme of work over the coming months will also see us speaking at the Disabled Workers conference in Clydebank and our stall will also be at the STUC Black Workers conference in Glasgow and the STUC Women's conference in Dundee. If you see us, please come along and say hello.



If you have any forthcoming events you would like us to attend with our information stall, please get in touch. We would be more than happy to come along.

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The Scottish Pensioners Forum are always interested to know what our affiliates are getting up to in their local areas, whether it be campaigning on local issues within their communities or on a larger scale, we're keen to know what you're doing on behalf of older people.



If there is something you would like us to include in our next newsletter, for example a certain forthcoming event or a particular issue you are campaigning on, please get in touch with us to have your say.

We hope to include as many articles as possible in our future publications to make sure older people's voices are heard. We can be contacted with any articles through e-mail on [spf@stuc.org.uk](mailto:spf@stuc.org.uk)

If you prefer, we are also on social media: On Facebook, Scottish Pensioners Forum and Twitter @ScotPensForum so get in touch.

## **Join the Scottish Pensioners' Forum** **Campaigning for a better deal for older people since 1992**

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