

The GMB Retired Members Association Conference was held on Tuesday 17th October 2023 at GMB Mary Turner House, London, NW1 2HD.

Report by delegate Leila Kassam

Delegates were welcomed with refreshments on arrival and invited to take their seat for the start of Conference business.

Derrick Baker MBE JP, RMA chair, opened and welcomed delegates to Conference.

The conference commenced with Reflection and a Minute Silence.

Standing orders committee report accepted.

There were 16 motions. This was the first face to face conference since 2019. Online meetings are not very good as most of the time the system doesn't work. Thanks to Pat Gannon for all the hard work and continuous admin support.

National Secretary's Report. Included Increase of the Energy and Cost of Living Crisis, problems with doctor's appointments and no NHS dental appointments. At this year's 2023 Congress it was a proud moment to carry the National RMA banner within the Banner Parade on the opening of Congress for the first-time making history and thank you to Barbara Plant in assisting to make this history. Sincere thanks to everyone who supported the RMA stall at Congress which made over £1000. Delegates also attended the National Pensions Convention (NPC) in Blackpool. National RMA also look at various campaigns taking place. Sincere thanks to Steve Kemp National Coordinator who came out of a short-lived retirement to look after us.

National Treasurers Report- copy of the report presented to the Conference.
Balance as at 18/09/2023 £54,823.25

Motions on State Pensions and Benefit – Motions 1-7 were carried.

Motions on Cost-of-Living Crisis – Motions 8 & 9 were carried.

Motions on Social Security / Care – Motion 10 was referred. SOC reported that in all industries, everything is in place and legislation is in place. Since 2014 payments have been made for Industrial Injuries. **Motion 11** was referred with qualification. SOC reported GMB cannot prosecute people, only CQC can. It is disgraceful the way in which venerable residents are treated and cannot defend themselves.

Motions General Issues – Motions 12-16 were carried. Note, Bus passes. All regions have their own bus pass, England, Scotland and Wales. A free bus pass was given after The Act of Parliament 1988 so it cannot be taken away. Safety in the workplace, people work beyond retirement, and no one should say you are too old. Reasonable adjustments must be made.

Address to Conference – GMB National President Barbara Plant- Thanks to Pat Gannon, National Committee and Steve Kemp. This has been the first in person conference. Since the last 4 years, colleagues have been greatly missed. 9 regions have been streamlined to 7. Gary Smith elected General Secretary. Make work

better is the motto. Hardships facing retired members is very tough. We have retired members active on campaigns. Dignity, Transport, TV licence, 27% pensioners live below the poverty line. Tory Govt. only think of themselves. An insulting comment was made by Tory MP, for pensioners to work as delivery drivers. GMB member Horace Bolton NE Yorkshire Region turned 100 in July and joined the TU when he started working and has been a member for 84 years. There was a question about having 2 guaranteed seats at congress for retired members from each region – 14 places. (Send motion to congress).

Address to Conference – GMB National Pensions Officer, George Georgiou – Public sector is the largest pension scheme. LGPS is doing well and there is money lying around. It is funded. NHS pensions are not funded. There should be a campaign about pension awareness. GMB sits on all 3 advisory bodies LGPS, NHS and Civil service. Big private sector pensions tend to close. Money Helper gives good advice. My State Pension website is good. Pension issues are political, and the age is always increasing. In 3 years, life expectancy has gone down by one year therefore retirement age should be reduced. There should be a policy to support triple lock. Have dignified pensions. RPI is better than CPI when looking at value of pension. George has a wealth of knowledge on pensions, and pensions are not always one size fits all.

Address to Conference – Retired National Co-ordinator – Steve Kemp Trade Union is there to protect our members. There will be a General Election within next year so there will be issue of RPI and State Pension. In lead up to the election, if Tories maintain the Triple Lock, then Labour will agree. Otherwise, we would have to look down the line. Therefore, General Election is vitally important. Triple lock will be looked at and possibly disbanded. No evidence but coming down the line. The fact is there is a lot of Pension Poverty. Since 2019 there has been an RMA campaign for free TV license, The campaign team were brilliant. Made the govt think. Write to Lucy Powell MP about this. Scotland to re energise it and keep it in focus. Watch the politics! Even radio has cutbacks. Regional radio programs curtailed.

General Issues NPC Transport Working Party taking place on 18th October 2023 with issues about the lack of buses, dangers of e scooters and ticket office closures.

RMA committee going on and making progress during the year. Campaigning is most important and retired members must be in solidarity with campaigns, Retired members put in so much effort. Issues affecting us are Covid enquiry (parties taking place), social care at minimum, low pay rises, issues on housing, fuel poverty and transport.

Vote of Thanks and Close of Conference by RMA chair