

PENSIONS BRIEF

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL GRID ELECTRICITY GROUP OF THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY PENSION SCHEME

WELCOME

TO THE LATEST ISSUE OF *PENSIONS BRIEF*



Since March this year, each and every one of us has had our lives subjected to unprecedented constraints owing to the impact of coronavirus. This has imposed many restrictions to the way we live our lives as we try to contain the spread of the virus, to help protect the NHS, and to shield those who are particularly vulnerable. Even as things begin to adjust, it has been, and continues to be, an extremely worrying and unsettling time.

The Group Trustee and our support teams are acutely aware of the members who are reliant on us for both safeguarding the pension investments and for making sure that pensions are paid accurately and on time – please be assured this remains our number one priority.

While lockdown has meant rapidly adapting to a new way of working, fortunately the Group Trustee and its support teams are all able to work from home, we're holding Group Trustee Board and sub-committee meetings by video and teleconference, and for the most part we've been able to carry on with business as usual, albeit remotely and 'virtually'.

There are a few changes to the way RPMI would ask you to contact them during the pandemic. These are set out in the panel below.

Meanwhile National Grid's operational teams, National Grid ESO, and those in Capital Delivery continue to work to keep energy flowing across the UK. Our thanks to all our key workers for their continued dedication to the business, and to the country as a whole.

I sincerely hope that each and every one of you is staying safe and coping well under the circumstances. If you have been directly affected by coronavirus or suffered the loss of a loved one during this time, our thoughts are with you.

Keep well and stay safe.

Jon Carlton

Chair of the Group Trustee

Contacting RPMI during the COVID-19 pandemic

- If you need to contact RPMI, please try to do so by email if possible (enquiries@rpmico.uk), rather than by phoning them.
- Please be aware that a response to queries may not be provided as quickly as usual due to current constraints on normal operations.
- There is a Q&A on the Group website which provides more information: www.ngeg.nationalgridpensions.com

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GROUP PENSIONS NEWS

Safeguarding your Group benefits

This article is specifically aimed at contributing and deferred members who are eligible to commence payment of their Group benefits or who are close to their Normal Pension Age.

In 2015, the Government introduced changes designed to give members of pension schemes greater flexibility in how they use their pension savings to provide for their retirement. As a result, there are different options available to members when choosing how to access their Group benefits.

While for most members, retaining their benefits within the Group is the best approach, it is important for those wishing to consider their options outside the Group that they receive impartial, independent financial advice (IFA).

The Group Trustee has agreed that members who are interested in exploring their options outside the

Group should have access to dedicated independent financial advice to help them make informed decisions – and, as far as possible, to help prevent anyone from receiving or acting on inappropriate or fraudulent financial advice. The Group Trustee has set up a working group including the Company, to put these arrangements in place.

The IFA service, which will be available later in the year, is specifically aimed at members who are eligible to commence payment of their Group benefits or who are close to their Normal Pension Age (usually age 63), and may wish to review their benefit options.

The IFA service is therefore not available if you have already retired from the Group or if you are a beneficiary (dependant) in receipt of a Group pension.

Access to the IFA will be rolled out to eligible members in phases during the second half of 2020. We will provide more detail in the December edition of *Pensions brief* and on the Group website in due course.

New to the Group website?

If you are new to the website and have not yet registered, to log in you will need:

- Your National Insurance (NI) number. You will only need your NI number the first time you come to register – once registered, you will only be asked for your username and password on subsequent visits
- An email account
- A username – this is a name you come up with yourself. It could be your email address or any other name of six characters or more that you will remember – you will be asked for it each time you log in
- A password – a secure word using six or more letters and numerals that you will need to remember when you come to log in each time.

You can reset your password at any time via the login page using the information you have previously provided to register, or by contacting Web Support at: ngegsupport@wordshop.co.uk.

The Group website is password-protected for NGE Group members' use only.



Group valuation 2019

The Group's latest funding valuation as at 31 March 2019 is expected to be finalised by the end of June 2020.

Since the valuation date, the coronavirus outbreak has led to considerable uncertainty in the global economy, which in turn has had a significant impact on financial markets.

The Group is well protected by the current investment strategy, which has been designed to be well diversified and to make the Group resilient to severe market conditions.

The Group Trustee and their advisers are closely monitoring the Group's funding level and the ability of National Grid to support the Group, however, no immediate actions are required.

Once the valuation process has been concluded, we'll update you on the results via a special *Valuation Update* due to be issued in September.

Requesting a transfer

If you're an active or deferred member who is considering transferring your benefits out of the Group, please read this first.

The Pensions Regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority, and the Money and Pensions Service have, together, released a statement to pension scheme members in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The message is to stay calm and not rush to make financial decisions during this time of financial uncertainty.

The industry has fears that the impact of the pandemic on global markets and pension scheme members' personal finances may make members more vulnerable to scams or making a decision that could damage their long-term interests.

At the end of April, the Pensions Regulator instructed pension schemes to issue a letter to any member requesting a transfer quotation. If you request a transfer quote from RPMI, you will receive a copy of this letter. Here are the main points to be aware of:

- Since the COVID-19 outbreak began, stock markets have fallen dramatically and are likely to remain volatile and fluctuate for some time, whilst your Group pension remains a safe, long-term investment for your retirement
- The Pensions Regulator has stressed that transferring out of a defined benefit (DB) pension scheme, such as the Group, into a different type of pension arrangement is unlikely to be in members' best long-term interests
- Transferring out of the Group is a serious and irrevocable decision
- Before making any decisions about your Group pension, you should always seek independent financial advice.

For more information visit: www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk



GROUP PENSIONS NEWS continued

Communications survey results

Back in January we issued a communications survey to contributing, deferred and pensioner members. In total, 1,183 of you responded. Your feedback was very enlightening. Thank you if you took part.

We last surveyed members back in 2016 and it was interesting to see how your views have changed over the past four years – particularly around how you receive information about the Group, and what’s useful for you to know about your benefits. This is useful as the Group Trustee considers its future communications strategy and ways we can enhance the content of the Group website.

The latest results showed many of you are keen to access more information online – so long as this is balanced with having access to people to talk to and the usual dedicated telephone helpline.

Contributing and deferred members called for more information about the retirement process, and about your retirement options within and outside of the Group.

From pensioners there was a general call for online payslips and the ability to securely update certain aspects of their pension record online. Some members want to be given the option to go online, but some prefer to continue receiving paper newsletters.

Pensions brief is generally well received and covers relevant topics.

The Communications Committee will consider the findings in more detail and come up with some recommendations in July. All comments and feedback will be considered with ideas and suggestions split between those that:

- › We can action quickly and effectively
- › Need time, cost, resources and an action plan to fulfil
- › Are reliant on systems functionality currently not in place
- › Can’t realistically be achieved for reasons of cost or feasibility.

We’ll keep you posted on our plan of action and let you know as more information becomes available to access online.

This is what you said...

CONTRIBUTING AND DEFERRED MEMBER COMMENTS

“My overriding requirements at my age as I approach retirement, are what are my benefits and what are my options?”

“I need to know more about the retirement process. What happens? When should I enquire? Or am I contacted? How long does it take?”

“I need advice and access to information, I am due to retire soon.”

“Having left the Company, I could do with a list of contacts, especially where to find out my options and payment amounts.”

“Good to be asked for our opinions. Newsletters are an interesting read. Thanks!”

“More online content such as videos would be useful.”

“I appreciate deferred members now being sent *Pensions brief*. Thank you.”

PENSIONER COMMENTS

“Please have someone available and reliably informed when members telephone for information and advice.”

“I’d like to receive the Group newsletter and my pension payslips by email or online.”

“I am very conscious that as I get older, a time will come when I no longer use the internet, so I don’t want to rely on it now.”

“It would be useful if the website would allow me to access my pension payment history – back copies of payslips and P60s.”

What's available on the Group website?

The Group website acts as a 'virtual booklet' for Group members.

Available at www.ngeg.nationalgridpensions.com, you will need to register as a member to access the site. We'd really encourage you to do so.

The site holds generic information about the Group and its benefits structure. It doesn't contain any personal information relating to your pension or benefits.

- Regular news updates
- Generic information about pension benefits with the Group
- Forms and documents to download
- Information about AVCs
- Information about the Group Trustee and how the Group is managed
- Group funding information
- Contact details for RPMI who administer your pensions, and other useful numbers and links
- Contact details for the Retired Employee Associations (REA).

There are plans to enhance the content of the website over the next 12 months.

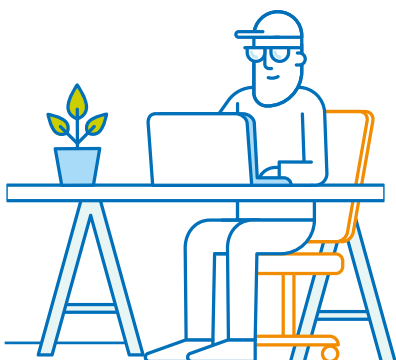
Email notification service

Provides useful, topical updates to you in real time between newsletters

Register with the Group website and we'll automatically email you when the site is updated or new information becomes available.

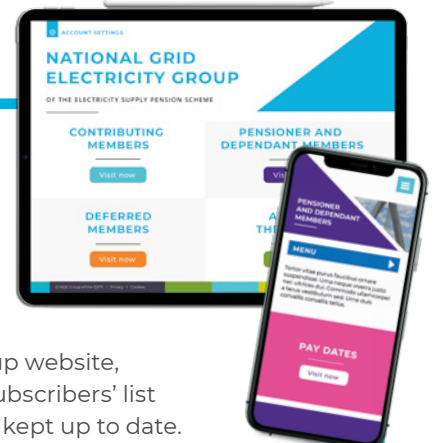
Don't worry, we won't fill your inbox with irrelevant information! We'll simply let you know as and when new information is available for you to view online.

If you find later you don't wish to receive emails from the Group, you can opt out by clicking the 'Unsubscribe' button on the bottom of each email.



Stay informed

Email has proved to be a useful way to keep you quickly updated during the pandemic. If you register with the Group website, we'll add you to the subscribers' list and make sure you're kept up to date. For more information on how to sign up, please see page 2.



Future plans

Member self-service

RPMI has plans to roll out a secure web portal which will allow members to view and update aspects of their own pension records online. The new service is currently in development. Timescales for going live are now likely to be delayed due to COVID-19. Register with the Group website and email notification service, and we'll keep you updated. More information on this will also feature in future issues of *Pensions brief*.

New-look *Pensions brief* next year

From 2021, you'll notice a new-look *Pensions brief*. We're updating our pension brand and moving to a new layout for the newsletter. We're also looking to develop digital newsletters with interactive features for those who would prefer to go paperless and have more access to information online.

Helping the environment

This is also one way the Group Trustee can reduce the Group's impact on the environment. Over the course of a year, we use a staggering 265,600 sheets of paper when we post out the two newsletters to all members in paper form. That equates to over 26 trees*. While we use recycled and recyclable paper to print *Pensions brief*, we can significantly improve the Group's carbon footprint by providing more choice as to how you receive the information we send you. Plus it helps manage Group costs by reducing printing and postage.

Don't worry, we'll still post you a copy of *Pensions brief* if you prefer. More information on how to opt for online options will be shared with you next year.

* Based on a standard pine tree with 45ft of usable trunk and a diameter of eight inches producing around 10,000 sheets of paper. The newsletter goes out twice a year to 8,300 members, and is on average 16 pages. This doesn't include envelopes or inserts.

GROUP PENSIONS NEWS continued

Group Trustee 2019/20 key priorities

Governance & effectiveness

The Group Trustee sees good governance as essential to an effective and efficient Board, paramount in managing the pension scheme, and a key priority for future years. During 2019/20, the Board took a number of steps to ensure its governance framework remained robust. These included:

- Reviewing and improving the Group Trustee Directors' training plan, ensuring compliance with the Pensions Regulator's requirements
- Building on the feedback from the Group Trustee's advisers
- Considering its long-term objectives and corresponding strategies.

COVID-19 has impacted everyone, including the Group Trustee Board, which has had to adapt how it conducts its trusteeship of the Group whilst ensuring compliance with legislative, scheme and regulatory requirements.

Risk management

The Group Trustee has been progressing and implementing its new approach to risk, which focuses on the top five issues that could potentially impact the Group.

The Group believes a strong governance framework with integrated risk management is vital to running a pension scheme appropriately, and to meet the trusteeship standards set out by the Pensions Regulator. To this end, the Group Trustee has implemented a risk-based agenda for its quarterly Board meetings and appointed an internal auditor to review key processes and controls within the Group, and to help the Group Trustee develop as an effective Board.

Member experience

The Group Trustee and Committee believe it is important to effectively engage with all members of the Group to ensure they are aware of their pension benefits, the Group's funding position, and that the necessary information is available to all. This includes utilising the Group website to keep members updated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meet the Trustees 2020

We had hoped to hold a face-to-face event with members this year to provide feedback on the valuation results and answer your questions. As an 'in person' event is unlikely to go ahead now due to the coronavirus, the Group Trustee is considering other options, including whether to hold an alternative event online, and if so, what might work best for the members. Register with the Group website at www.ngeg.nationalgridpensions.com and we'll let you know by email how to take part if an alternative event is planned.



Investment & funding

Throughout the year, the Investment Committee has worked with the Group's advisers and the Company to progress the 2019 actuarial valuation, assess the Company covenant and devise an appropriate long-term approach to funding for the Group. A strategy and timetable were also developed. The results of the valuation as at 31 March 2019, once formalised, will be published on the Group website and in a *Valuation Update*, which will go out to members in September.

Distribution of death benefits

This article is aimed at contributing and deferred members, and those pensioners who have retired from the Group within the last five years.

The Expression of Wish form indicates who you would wish payment of your benefits to be made to in the event of your death. You should review this form regularly to check it continues to apply to your personal circumstances, and complete a new form if changes are needed. You can download this form from the Group website. Once completed, you will need to send it to RPMI at their offices in Coventry. If you have not completed an Expression of Wish form, please do so at: www.ngeg.nationalgridpensions.com

While the Group Trustee are not legally bound to pay the lump sum to a nominated beneficiary, they will take account of your circumstances and wishes at the time.

There is no need to complete an Expression of Wish form if you have been retired from the Scheme for more than five years or if you are in receipt of a dependant's pension.

Your spouse or registered civil partner will automatically receive a dependant's pension in the event of your death (even if you are separated but not divorced). If you are not married, or do not have a registered civil partner, a pension may be paid to a person who is financially dependent or inter-dependent with you, e.g. your partner.

If you're not married or in a civil partnership, you can complete a 'Nomination form' to nominate

someone who is financially dependent on you to receive the dependant's pension paid in the event of your death. This form can also be downloaded from the Group website. The payment of benefits to financial dependants is also at the discretion of the Group Trustee.

Electricity Supply Pension Scheme AGM

Whether the event this year will go ahead as a face-to-face event is currently unclear. Should circumstances permit, the Scheme AGM will be held on 23 November 2020 at the offices of Eversheds Sutherland: 1 Wood Street, London EC2V 7WS.

The purpose of the Scheme AGM is to receive:

- The Scheme annual report and financial statements
- The auditors' report
- The report of the Scheme Trustee
- To conduct any general business including the consideration of any Resolutions proposed by members.

Group members are reminded that they have up to 28 days before the date of the Scheme AGM to submit a written resolution to the Scheme Secretary. Rules surrounding the submission of the resolution are available from Trustee Services.

More information on the event and how it will take place will be made available on the Group website nearer the time.

Changes to tax relief for pension savings

An update for contributing members or anyone who pays contributions into a pension arrangement.

A pension is one of the most tax-efficient ways to save, but there are some limits as to how much you can save.

The Annual Allowance (AA) is the total amount you can save into your pension(s) in a year before being subject to extra tax. For most people, this is currently £40,000. If you have unused allowance from the last three years, you could save more than £40,000 without paying additional tax.

If you exceed the AA, RPMI will send you a Pension Savings Statement in October. Different rules apply if you have a 'threshold income' of more than £200,000 or 'adjusted income' of more than £240,000.

The Lifetime Allowance (LTA) is the total amount you can take from all your pension schemes in your lifetime before being subject to extra tax. For the 2020/21 tax year, it is £1,073,100 and is likely to increase in line with inflation as measured by the Consumer Prices Index at the end of the current tax year.

Details about how much of your AA and LTA you have used are included in your annual benefit statement.

Threshold income is the value of your taxable income from all sources (e.g. earnings, benefits in kind, savings interest, dividends, rental income) but excluding the value of any pension savings. However, if you pay your contributions through Flexible Pension Savings, you must add those contributions in when you calculate threshold income.

Adjusted income is the value of taxable income from the same sources but including the value of any pension savings.

THE WORK OF A GROUP TRUSTEE: DARREN PETTIFER



Name: Darren Pettifer

Appointed Trustee Director: Head of Regulatory Finance

No. of years as a Group Trustee: Three – Darren started just after the 2017 valuation was agreed.

Why did you become a Trustee?

Towards the end of my previous role in NG, I was looking for a way to develop my corporate finance knowledge and Board level experience. An opportunity came up to become an NGE Trustee and it was a good fit with what I was looking for.

Which aspects of being a GT Director do you most enjoy/is the most personally fulfilling?

I am strategic by nature and like to see how everything all fits together, so I enjoy it when we talk about long-term strategy and where we are heading. When you add in a financial aspect to this I enjoy it even more. This means the discussions we have in the Investment Committee on where we should invest, why, and how we set an investment strategy to aim for self-sufficiency, are where I get the most fulfilment.

“I am strategic by nature and like to see how everything all fits together”

Which do you find the most challenging?

The legalese that can sometimes be involved...our advisers are great and cut through much of this but it usually takes me a while to make sure I fully understand and don't miss anything important in legal discussions that are heavier on detail. The history and memory of other Group Trustees is helpful here but I can't rely on that and need to understand these aspects myself, so I tend to concentrate on this when I'm reading up ahead of Group Trustee Board meetings.

Which committees do you sit on? What does this involve and what skills/experience do you bring?

I sit on the Investment Committee, which involves setting and implementing the Group's investment strategy, monitoring funding and investment risks, and undertaking the triannual valuations. As a finance professional, I bring my day-job skills to the committee, but I also bring my strategic nature and ability to 'ask the next question' during discussions. In areas such as Company covenant, and National Grid developments, I can also bring an internal perspective. This helps identify what we need to worry about, and what we don't.

What qualities are best needed for the Trustee role?

Willingness to understand, provide comfort in giving your perspective, listening to others, and the ability to ask sensible questions

What are the primary issues that the Board faces today?

At this present time, it's hard to look past COVID-19 for the first answer to this question. There has been some impact from the pandemic in terms of short-term investment returns and ensuring business continuity, but at this time the impact has been much less than other pension schemes. We have a good investment strategy which is resilient to short-term shocks, the current covenant with the Company is strong, and I am pleased to say our administration has also proven resilient. As for other primary focus areas, I would say finalising the latest valuation and delivering improvements to member services.

What are your hopes for the Group in the future?

As the Group matures and there are fewer contributing members, and we get closer to full funding on a technical provisions basis, we need to set out clear longer-term strategies. On the investment side, the Group Trustee has done some thinking around this, and I hope we determine a clear glide path for how the Group and the Trustee Board will develop, as we move towards a different phase of the Group.

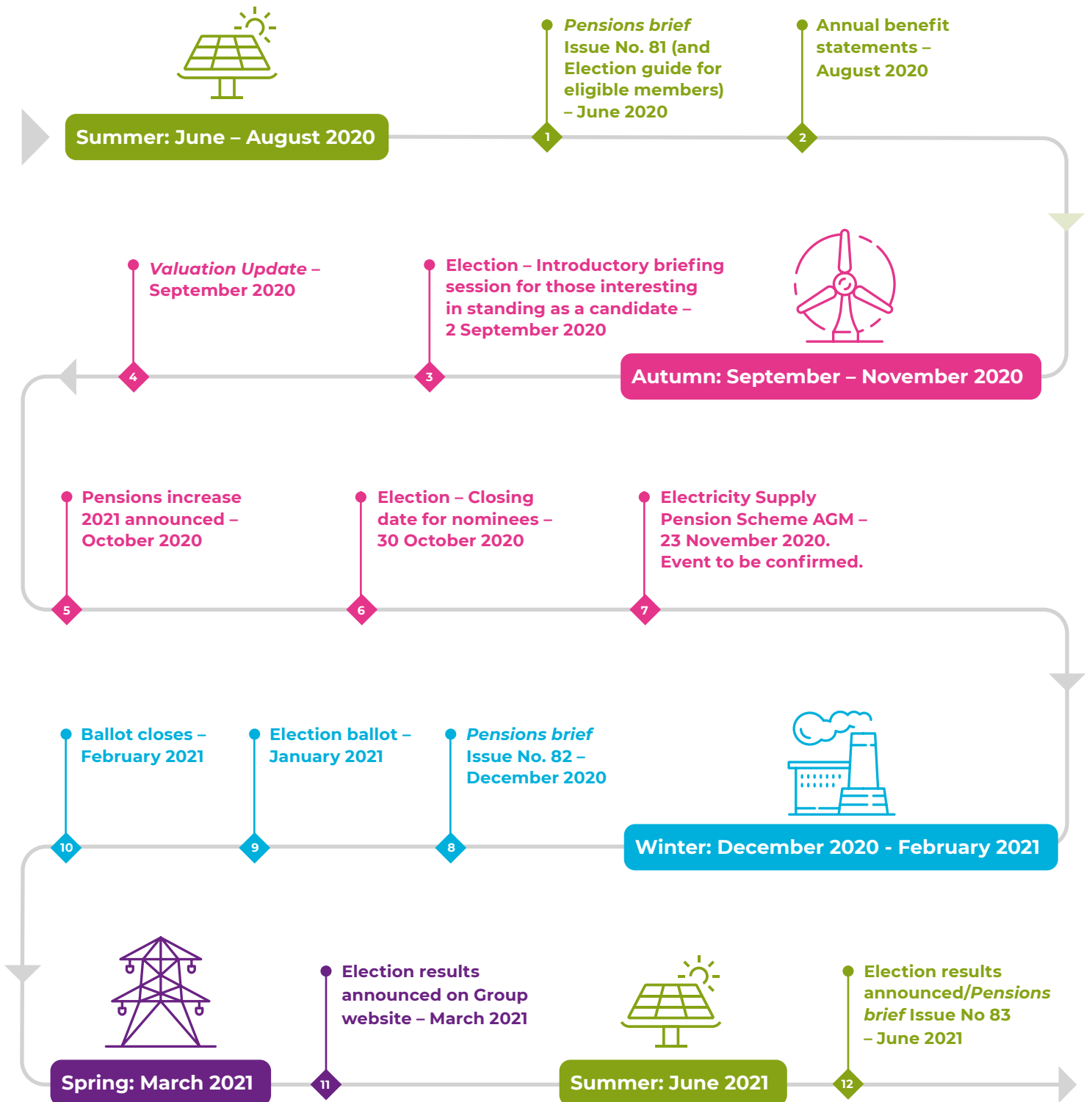
What are your interests outside of work and being a GT?

I have two children, 9 and 7, so I mostly spend time with the family (particularly during lockdown!) We are all pretty active, so it tends to involve running, walking, football and, for the kids at least, cycling. Pre-lockdown I coached my son's football team which was incredibly rewarding so hopefully we can get back to that in the new season.

Group Trustee elections

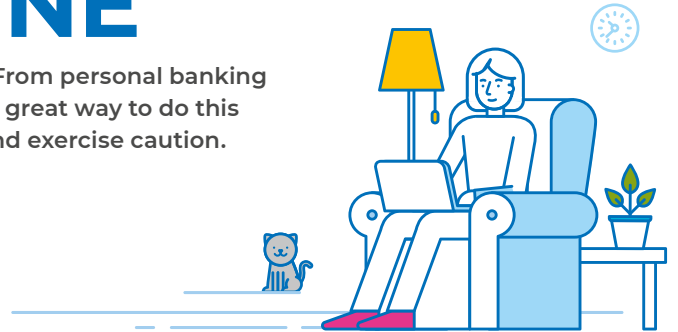
The Group Trustee is inviting contributing and pensioner members to get involved in the management and operation of the Group and to stand as an Elected Trustee. The ballot will take place in early 2021. More information including how to register your interest will be available on the Group website in due course.

GROUP CALENDAR OF EVENTS



10 TOP TIPS FOR PROTECTING YOURSELF ONLINE

It's never been easier or more convenient to use online services. From personal banking and paying bills, to shopping and playing games, the internet is a great way to do this so long as you are aware of the potential threat of online fraud, and exercise caution. Here are a few steps to help you stay safe and secure online:



1 Use email wisely

We all need to be careful when sharing personal data by email – whether it is our own or that of others. This includes any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, National Insurance number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, and any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual.

Be careful about the information you send and never send personal data about yourself, or anyone else, without anonymising the information first, or by providing the information as a password-protected attachment, or by encrypting the email.

It's very easy to dial an incorrect number when telephoning and it is just as easy to mistype an address when sending an email. Used incorrectly, it is very easy to accidentally expose your personal data to others.

2 Create strong passwords

Make it difficult for hackers to crack your password. Create smart passwords by incorporating capital letters, numbers and special characters, and using more than six characters. Don't use information that can be easily guessed (such as birth dates, family names, pet's names etc.)

3 Be careful what you download

Even if you have installed antivirus software, carelessly downloading email attachments can cause problems. Never open an email attachment from someone you don't know, and be wary of forwarded attachments from people you do know. They may include unwittingly advanced malicious code.

4 Lock down your social media accounts

It's all too easy to overshare personal data online via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. If you have a social media account, make sure your privacy settings are up to date and you are not unintentionally oversharing your personal data.

5 Be wary of using public Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi has become more common and available in public areas. A public Wi-Fi network is inherently less secure than your personal one because you don't know who set it up, or who else is connecting to it. If you can, stick to as few public Wi-Fi networks as possible and make sure you only use well-known networks.

6 Watch out for phishing scams

These are emails that attempt to trick you into opening malicious attachments which could lead to fraudsters stealing your personal information, email logins and passwords, and banking details. They can often look genuine and professional and can be very convincing. Recent cases include scams linked to coronavirus which claim to be from the World Health Organisation and HMRC. Don't click on the links or attachments in suspicious emails, and never respond to unsolicited messages that ask for your personal or financial details. Never share your passwords or PIN with anyone.

7 Be wary of unsolicited phone calls

Never respond to callers who telephone you unannounced and ask for your personal or financial details.

8 Shred as you go!

Shred any paperwork which you no longer require if it features yours or someone else's personal information.

9 Protect your devices from the latest threats

Always install the latest software and app updates to protect your devices from the latest threats, and update your antivirus and spyware detection tools frequently. For information on how to update your devices, please visit: www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/securing-your-devices

10 Take care when shopping online

Be sure that the website uses secure technology. Always verify that the web address begins with https and check to see if a tiny locked padlock symbol appears at the bottom right of the checkout screen, or that there is a statement on the checkout screen stating that the pages are secure with a security technology vendor. For more information on how to shop online safely, please visit: www.actionfraud.police.uk/shoponlinesafely

For more information on how to stay safe online, visit www.getsafeonline.org

COMPANY NEWS

Keeping the lights on in London

Meet James Watson, Lead Advanced Commissioning Engineer in London. As well as keeping the electricity flowing to the London area, James is used to running regular practice drills to get ready to cope in a crisis, and this has long been part of his team's day job.



Powering the capital

We've got 36 electricity substations in the London area, mostly within the M25. There are roughly nine million people in London who rely on us for their daily energy, and we provide power via the distribution networks of UK Power Networks and Scottish & Southern (SEPD), plus direct connections to Network Rail, Crossrail and High Speed 1 (the Channel Tunnel rail link).

The demand in the 'London Power Network' area (Central London) is around 5 GW, which is roughly 10% of the total for England and Wales. When you add in the other areas we supply, you can take it to around 7 GW – that's equivalent to nearly three million kettles all boiling together. It's also equal to three-and-a-half huge coal-fired power stations or 10 very large offshore wind farms.

Future-proofing London's energy system

I'm part of a team of 99 Advanced Commissioning Engineers (ACEs) nationwide. Put simply, we switch things on and make sure the power stays running. As the Lead ACE for London, I'm essentially in charge of turning on new equipment for our capital. My team's job is replacing

existing infrastructure – the physical equipment that keeps the network running and which is at the end of its useful life. We also add new capacity or, in other words, we ensure there's enough electricity to future-proof the city's power network, ready for net zero.

That's what I normally do – my 'business as usual' job – but now we're dealing with the coronavirus crisis we've adopted a more resilient approach, safeguarding our key staff and gearing up to respond to any critical faults that might arise during this time.

The fault fixers

A big part of my team's job is making sure London's communities remain connected to the energy they need for their daily lives. This means that any faults or urgent defects that could interrupt that supply take precedence over our day-to-day work. If one of these faults occurs, everyone from the Operations manager down, drops what they're doing and fixes the problem. It's part of our culture to keep the lights on, and maintaining the integrity of the network in a safe way always comes first.

Prepared for everything

One of the reasons we're coping so well now is because, even under normal circumstances, we take the resilience of the network very, very seriously. Over the past decade, there has been increasing emphasis on this and our attention to detail about it has prepared us to cope with a crisis like coronavirus. We've run regular exercises on various rare, but credible, scenarios, such as: terrorist and cyberattacks, a commercial passenger plane crashing on a substation, protests and flooding. They've been really good practice and, even though we knew

they weren't the real thing, they helped us get into the right mindset.

If someone was to ask me now how robust the network is, I'd say, 'your power is in the safest possible hands'.

Keeping the power network reliable

Our power system is one of the most reliable in the world, but it's always at its strongest when it's intact. That means as much of the network as possible transmitting energy rather than out of service being maintained or extended. We will always balance network resilience with the external environment when deciding what outages to take and when. This is no different during the current pandemic.

Preventing blackouts

Between the power stations and the nation's homes are networks of wires that deliver electricity. When the wires break, it's the job of engineers like me to fix them. Because, put simply, as we have multiple wires it means your power supply never needs to be interrupted. When, for example, lightning strikes these wires and the electric energy leaks out, we have to quickly stop the current flowing. After a few seconds, we switch it back on again. These automatic systems are important to ensure that as many of our wires stay working as possible. This is one of the ways we avoid blackouts.

Guarding our people

We will always put the safety and wellbeing of our people first. We're taking the necessary precautions to safeguard them against possible infection, to maintain our ability to deliver priority work, and to respond rapidly and effectively to any issues that may arise with the network.

BYGONE DAYS

The Great Storm of 1987

On Friday 16 October 1987, severe weather tore through the south of England. The Great Storm, as it is now known, took 18 lives, destroyed 15 million trees, and left thousands of people without power for several days.



Tony with his dog Jessie

Tony Malins, who was National Control Manager at the time, has written an account of the drama of that night and its aftermath, using his own personal notes, archive material, and contributions from Ken Mandle, then Station Manager at Kingsnorth Power Station, and John Chamberlin, one of the CEEB's Transmission Area Engineers. On the night of the storm it called for exceptional courage, measured risk taking and astute judgement by everyone involved to save the day.

In this edited extract, we find Tony heading towards the M1 in the dead of night, trying to make it from his home in Hertfordshire to National Control at Park Street on London's South Bank, to set up the emergency control communications, support the shift control staff, and organise backup systems. Electricity in most of the south of England was out. The wind was ferocious, hellishly noisy and brutally strong, and there was all manner of debris flying about – fence panels, dustbins, scaffolding, and trees and branches down blocking roads. It was also pitch black due to no street lighting.

"Having bulldozed a tree out of the way with my car, battled my way along the A5, and been turned back by a police car, I eventually made it to the M1 and came up the slipway to meet the inside lane. I could see some street lights – this was encouraging! I was immediately blown onto the hard shoulder with two wheels on the grass verge. The force of that gust of wind was immense. I wrenched the steering over to get back onto the carriageway, holding the wheel to steer against the wind. Determined to make it into London, I drove on, but very slowly and in low gear. Then, within a mile as I passed Junction 7, all motorway lighting went out, leaving me in complete darkness with only my headlights to focus on the road ahead. My heart sank; no lights meant things were not good. And now the rain started lashing down, the wind blowing even harder and shaking the car about like it was on a rollercoaster!

Since my fright on entering the motorway, I'd been steering a course as straight as I could, hoping that I would not come across another vehicle while fighting against the wind and rain. But I could now see that I was approaching my first bridge. As I went under, the car shot across into and beyond the fast lane. I was just able to save the car from hitting the barrier but, as I came out of the protection of the bridge, the wind hit the car again

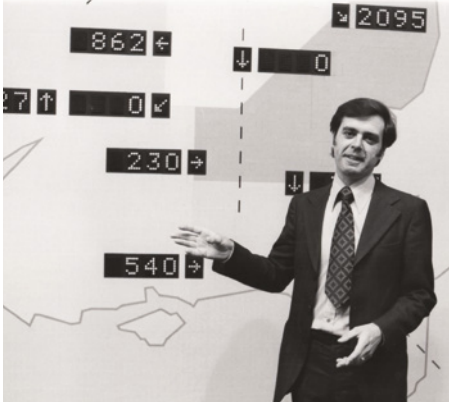
and I ended up back on the hard shoulder. I could no longer hear the car engine or radio because of the noise of the wind. It was then that I realised I had put myself in a life-threatening situation, but what to do? Determinedly, I carried on, in the pitch black and on the deserted carriageway. At the next bridge, I was ready for the wind effect, steering hard to the left as I went under and then right again, just before I was re-exposed to the wind. Even then, I was swept from one side of the carriageway to the other, swerving across all three lanes. I fought the wind like this for nearly 20 miles before reaching my exit at Junction 2.

I reached the Control Room just after 5am. As expected, it was busy, with normal room lighting dimmed. The only noise was the whisper of the air conditioning and soft alarms, accompanied by many flashing lights on the screens and the wall animated diagram, the low murmur of voices on the phones and the hum of the backup diesel generators in the distance – but very calm and controlled.

Immediately, I could see London and much of the South East was shut down and overhead transmission circuits were continually tripping and re-closing. I was briefed by my Senior Shift Control Engineer and became immediately immersed in the crisis as, now, there



Wakehurst Place, West Sussex, the country estate of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, was devastated by the Great Storm. Twenty thousand trees were lost, almost 60% of its collection. More than 13,000 trees have been re-planted since 1987. Photograph courtesy of T Malins.



A week after the event, Tony provided an update to officials on the measures the industry took to restore power.

was little prospect of getting supplies restored to London and the South East until the storm had passed by. By the time I arrived, emergency procedures, known as Operations Memoranda, had already been triggered.

At around 6am, Cecil Parkinson, the then Energy Secretary, arrived and I briefed him on the situation. Soon after, Sir Walter Marshall, CEBG Chairman, arrived and I joined their discussion on how to inform the public with a ministerial statement. By this time, some supplies had been restored, although, this was intermittent.

By 8am, a BBC News team arrived to interview Sir Walter Marshall. At around 11am, I spoke on camera to the BBC and later ITV, giving them updates on the restoration programme. At 1pm, I was interviewed live on BBC Radio 'World at One' from their mobile radio taxi outside. It was a hectic day which, for me, only finished when I left Park Street at about 10.30pm and finally arrived home at 11.15pm, very tired indeed!"

In the full article, Tony explains how the storm impacted the network and describes the almost heroic efforts to keep the lights on, including restarting Kingsnorth Power Station from scratch, and the equally heroic efforts out in the field to restore the damaged transmission system. If you would like to read the full story in PDF format, please email Helen Taylor at: helen.taylor1@nationalgrid.com

Joe Hirst's story, featured previously in Pensions brief, will continue in the December issue.

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REA ACTIVITIES



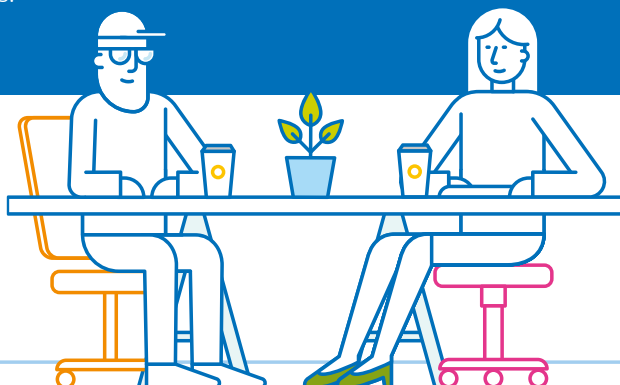
A visit to HMS Royal Naval Dockyard, Portsmouth

On Friday 13 March, just prior to government restrictions on movement, 16 members of the National Grid Control Centre (NGCC) REA were treated to a 'ship-side' visit inside HMS Royal Naval Dockyard, Portsmouth.

Following security checks, our host, a serving RN Captain, led us past the longest Victorian rope factory in England en route to the Map Briefing facility, and a presentation on the history of the dockyard and the extensive preparations necessary to accommodate the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers.

A tour of the Electrical Control Room covering site electrical distribution and generation followed. We were kindly invited to take lunch in the Edwardian Officers' Mess, which was full of history of previous conflicts. A minibus tour around the entire base gave us a close-up view of both ships and facilities used to support not only those ships at sea but also those on base maintenance, including HMS Queen Elizabeth, which was in port! The day was capped off by a private boat tour around Portsmouth's inner harbour, offering yet a further perspective of the Base. Overall an exceptional tour, fully enjoyed in the sunshine by all of us.

Mike Evans, Secretary



Saving the past for the future

Mick Joy, former project manager with Gridcom based at Littlebrook, is on a mission. He's gathering research material into the history of the ESI Control Centres and is looking for contributions. He has set up an independent website at www.grid-by-gones.org and is actively looking for relevant content.

His plan is to develop an archive covering the heritage of the industry by collating information based on contributions from former colleagues. Dave Gunning, former telecoms engineer, has provided the starting point by sharing his personal archive of information, and some of the REAs have donated images from the past – Dave Thornley (Roseneath and Becca Hall) and Dave Fowler (Becca Hall) have both kindly provided photos. Richard Smith, former telecoms engineer at Brookmead, also has an archive of the TTC (Telecomms Technical Committee) information to share.

If you are interested in helping preserve and share the history of the industry, and have any relevant information you'd like to share with Mick to help develop the website, please contact him at: mick.joy@talktalk.net

WITH REGRET

We are sorry to inform you of the death of the following National Grid Electricity Group members.
Our condolences to their families and friends.

- BAILEY** David Thomas, Leicester, Pensioner, aged 77
BAILEY Roy James, Alton, Pensioner, aged 97
BALL Stanley Charles, Ashton-under-Lyne, Pensioner, aged 84
BARRETT Irene, Bolton, Dependant, aged 83
BATHURST Patricia Elizabeth, Bromsgrove, Dependant, aged 94
BAXTER Charles James William, Peterborough, Pensioner, aged 91
BIRD Jean Marion, Liss, Dependant, aged 89
BLABER Ronald Charles George, Exmouth, Pensioner, aged 93
BRADBROOK Robert Edward, Spalding, Pensioner, aged 83
BREWIN Pamela Mary, Ash Vale, Dependant, aged 81
BRODY Eileen, Bedford, Dependant, aged 81
BROOKES Margaret Mary, Beckenham, Pensioner, aged 96
BURNS Wendy Joice, Wetherby, Dependant, aged 76
BURT Edwin George, Taunton, Pensioner, aged 88
CALVER Bertram Kenneth, St Albans, Pensioner, aged 92
CAMPLING Bernard John Arthur, Bristol, Pensioner, aged 88
CASTLE-PUTLAND Jean Margaret, Leyton, Pensioner, aged 84
CHAPPELL Enid Elsie, Horley, Dependant, aged 99
CHRISTIAN James Stuart Anthony, Pontefract, Pensioner, aged 81
CLARKE Joseph Ronald, Morden, Pensioner, aged 89
COLLISS Joan Olive, Southampton, Dependant, aged 82
CROSBY Terence William, Hockley, Pensioner, aged 82
DARLINGTON John Gavin, South Milford, Pensioner, aged 71
DAVIES Clive, Halesowen, Pensioner, aged 91
DILLOW John Warren, Merrow, Pensioner, aged 93
DINES C B, Waltham Abbey, Dependant, aged 85
DIXON David, Doncaster, Pensioner, aged 73
DOUGLAS James, Houghton-le-Spring, Pensioner, aged 78
DRIFFILL Harry Seaton, Shipley, Pensioner, aged 82
DUTTON Betty Isabel Pamela, Tadworth, Dependant, aged 89
ELLAMS Ronald Edward, Ellesmere Port, Pensioner, aged 83
ELMS D L, Cardiff, Dependant, aged 98
ELSWORTH Kenneth George, Orpington, Pensioner, aged 92
EYRE Barbara Violet, Hammersmith, Dependant, aged 89
FRISTON Gerald Charles, Epsom, Pensioner, aged 87
FULLER V M, St. Albans, Dependant, aged 95
GEORGESON Matthew, Dartford, Pensioner, aged 97
GIBSON S J, Rye, Dependant, aged 83
GIBSON Peter Jay, Winscombe, Pensioner, aged 74
GREGSON Norman, Blackpool, Pensioner, aged 89
HACKNEY Harry, Doncaster, Pensioner, aged 89
HARKNESS Marion Ellen, Reading, Dependant, aged 87
HAWKINS Trudy, Stoke-on-Trent, Dependant, aged 87
HAYDEN Violet Georgina, Southminster, Dependant, aged 93
HEATH Kathleen Mary, Ventnor, Dependant, aged 80
HERBERTSON Jean Margaret, Cheltenham, Dependant, aged 91
HICKMOTT May Hilda, Bexhill-on-Sea, Dependant, aged 90
HILBERY Richard James, Rochford, Pensioner, aged 73
HILES Arnold, Cheadle, Dependant, aged 92
HILL David Crawford, Sheerness, Pensioner, aged 66
HINE Terence Charles, Tavistock, Devon, Pensioner, aged 65
HING Peter Reginald William, Bedford, Pensioner, aged 79
HOPLEY Joyce, Wolverhampton, Dependant, aged 96
HOUSE Maud, London, Pensioner, aged 91
HOWE Ronald Anderson, Tadcaster, Pensioner, aged 92
HOWROYD Denis Charles, Little Chalfont, Pensioner, aged 89
HUMPHRIES M E, Eltham, Dependant, aged 83
HURST Henry Arthur, Witham, Pensioner, aged 94
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LUBICH M, Bexhill-on-Sea, Pensioner, aged 94
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MAGNESS Albert, Carmathen, Pensioner, aged 90
MANIFOLD Robert Peter, Chester, Pensioner, aged 90
MANSFIELD Sheila Myra, Carmathen, Dependant, aged 81
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PARLANE Jennie, Clywd, Dependant, aged 87
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ROBINSON Leslie Charles, Northampton, Pensioner, aged 90
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ROSS Ronald, Longfield, Pensioner, aged 85
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SMITH John Pearson James, Abingdon, Pensioner, aged 76
SMITH Alan, Ferrybridge, Pensioner, aged 76
SMITH Colin William, Ashbourne, Pensioner, aged 75
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SUMMERFIELD D, Benfleet, Dependant, aged 96
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TACKLEY Pansy Beatrice, Alton, Dependant, aged 93
TANNER Alan Charles, Chelmsford, Pensioner, aged 85
TAYLOR George William, Castleford, Pensioner, aged 82
TAYLOR Michael John, Warfield, Pensioner, aged 93
THOMAS Margaret Enid, Deeside, Dependant, aged 84
THOMAS C M, Ipswich, Dependant, aged 96
THOMPSON Jane Duprey, Wetherby, Dependant, aged 88
THORP Robert, Gillingham, Pensioner, aged 87

TIMBRELL Graham William, Preston, Pensioner, aged 74
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TREHEARN Barbara Ann, St Davids, Dependant, aged 87
TYLER Joan Clara, Tamworth, Dependant, aged 96
TYLER Ronald, Glasgow, Pensioner, aged 82
USHER Kenneth, St. Helens, Pensioner, aged 79
VAUGHAN Mavis Maureen, Epsom, Dependant, aged 86
VICKERS Frank, Workington, Pensioner, aged 89
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WHITING Graham, Caerleon, Pensioner, aged 87
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WILLIAMS David Albert, Barnard Castle, Pensioner, aged 79
WILLIAMS Rex Terence, Newport, Pensioner, aged 83
YOUNG Derek William George, Coventry, Pensioner, aged 59

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The Money and Pensions Service

This is a government service that offers free and impartial guidance about workplace and personal pensions. It combines the services previously provided by Pension Wise, the Money Advice Service and the Pensions Advisory Service. It provides free guidance to anyone aged over 50 with DC pension savings. Find out about your options and book an appointment on 0800 138 3944.

It also provides free and impartial advice about general financial issues. You can use the online tools and calculators to help you keep track of your finances and plan ahead. You can phone them about this on 0800 138 1677 or send a WhatsApp message to +44 7701 342744.

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