

Ragged Staff

WARWICKSHIRE
pension fund

lgps

For retired members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) | **Spring 2022**

➤ First word

by **Vicky Jenks** | Pensions Admin Delivery Lead



one, so that you can receive an email which will allow you to view your monthly payslip. If you are unable to receive an e-payslip you will be able to opt out and still receive a paper copy.

The cost to the fund to produce paper payslips is £70,000 per year and produces 1 tonne of Co2. A reduction in this will contribute towards the Council's target of becoming net zero by 2030.

Thank you to those of you that have contributed to the content of the newsletter, please keep sending in your articles, poems, and recipes to pensions@warwickshire.gov.uk

Welcome to the Spring 2022 edition of Ragged Staff.

The first part of this year seems to have flown by and it is with great relief that we have seen the lifting of the restrictions put in place to help deal with Covid-19. It is starting to feel like we are returning to some kind of normality. As you may be aware I joined the Pensions team in July 2020, as the Administration Delivery Lead. Neil Buxton, who had been working as a Technical & Governance Officer for the pension fund and who was the previous Pensions Manager has now retired after 47 years of service! We wish him all the best for a long and happy retirement.

As a fund we are concerned over the recent cost of living increases and how this will affect those of you in receipt of a pension from us. For those on low incomes you may be eligible to apply for Pension Credit from the government, we have provided details on how you can check your eligibility for this later in the newsletter. Nearly 1 million eligible pensioner households (single people or couples) are not receiving Pension Credit payments they may be entitled to.

From September 2022, we will be moving to online e-payslips and will no longer be producing paper payslips. We will be contacting all pensioners to ask for an email address, if we do not already hold

➤ Fund Update

by **Victoria Moffett**
Pensions and Investments Manager

I'd like to start with a big thank you for the Team – both old and new – for making this year such a success. We've motored through plenty of material and with some luck on our side, the Fund is in a stronger position again than it was last year. This progress has spanned across administration, funding, governance and investments. So, thank you to all involved for your continued contributions.

We're really conscious that there's a need to maintain a robust service and create opportunities for positive future developments. To this end we've worked closely with our advisors, consultants and many officers across the Council to check that our direction of travel continues to look strong. You'll see in our June 2022 Investment Strategy Statement that there have been some asset allocation decisions which we hope will futureproof the fund against rising inflation, at least to some extent. Whilst nothing is guaranteed, we are at least committed to managing risk and monitoring the risks that we cannot control.

Another workstream that's developed over the past year is around carbon metrics and stewardship. We're interested in the carbon output of the Fund's underlying investments and monitoring how those change over time. We've also increased scrutiny of how asset managers vote on behalf of the stocks that they hold in our name. It's interesting to see more activity around good governance and appropriate decarbonisation transition pathways. Expect to read some more developments in this sphere over the next year!

Another area to draw your attention to is our effective collaboration with 10 other LGPS funds as part of the Border to Coast Pensions Partnership. If you'd like to read more about how we're accessing economies through scale do look at their website: <https://www.bordertocoast.org.uk/>

I hope that you are enjoying being a Local Government Pension Scheme member as much as we are enjoying looking after it.

Best wishes,

Victoria
Lead Commissioner Pensions and Investments (FIA CERA)

➤ Pensions Increases 2022

This years 'Cost of Living' increase to pensions is 3.1 % which is payable from 11th April 2022. The full increase is only payable if your pension began on or before 21st April 2021.

If your pension began after this date a smaller increase will apply as shown in the table below.

The increase applies to the pensions of all widows, civil partners and children, those who retired on health grounds and all pensioners over the age of 55.

If you have any questions about the amount of increase payable, please contact Warwickshire Pension Fund. **Email: pensions@warwickshire.gov.uk**

From		To	%
8-Mar-21	>	26-Apr-21	1.0310
27-Apr-21	>	26-May-21	1.0284
27-May-21	>	26-Jun-21	1.0258
27-Jun-21	>	26-Jul-21	1.0233
27-Jul-21	>	26-Aug-21	1.0207
27-Aug-21	>	26-Sep-21	1.0181
27-Sep-21	>	26-Oct-21	1.0155
27-Oct-21	>	26-Nov-21	1.0129
27-Nov-21	>	26-Dec-21	1.0103
27-Dec-21	>	26-Jan-22	1.0078
27-Jan-22	>	26-Feb-22	1.0052
27-Feb-22	>	26-Mar-22	1.0026

➤ Payment Dates

Please find below payment dates for your pension payment.

Fri	29/04/2022	Wed	31/08/2022	Fri	30/12/2022
Tue	31/05/2022	Fri	30/09/2022	Tue	31/01/2023
Thu	30/06/2022	Mon	31/10/2022	Tue	28/02/2023
Fri	29/07/2022	Wed	30/11/2022	Fri	31/03/2023

➤ Pennies from Heaven



In 2006, Warwickshire County Council launched an initiative called Pennies from Heaven, where current employees and retirees have the option to donate the pennies from their salaries each month to the pre-nominated charities.

In 2022, our employees won the Platinum Award for the donations and our retirees won the Bronze Award – AMAZING!

Here's what our pre-nominated charities have to say:

| Myton Hospices

"We're really delighted that Warwickshire County Council staff are being given this fantastic award which provides much needed recognition for their valuable support to The Myton Hospices. The Pennies from Heaven scheme is such an easy and simple way for individuals to support their chosen charity. We couldn't continue to provide our services to the people of Coventry and Warwickshire without the support of the local community and organisations like Warwickshire County Council who have raised an incredible amount for Myton through such an effective way of giving."

| Mary Ann Evans Hospice

"Mary Ann Evans Hospice are delighted to be one of the nominated charities in this scheme. Pennies from Heaven is a fabulous system and such a good fundraiser, we can see that the pennies really do add up as our charity has greatly benefited. I am sure it gives a feel-good factor to the donors. We are grateful to all the staff and pensioners from Warwickshire County Council for their continued support, their regular donations really do make a difference towards the care we are able to provide in the community."

What is the Pennies from Heaven scheme?

This scheme invites you to round down your pay to the nearest pound and donate the pennies to our nominated charities. Deductions will be made by our Payroll Services and the scheme administered by an organisation called "Pennies from Heaven". This means the most you would donate every pay period is 99p!

Did you know...

Pennies from Heaven is open to retired WCC employees with a local government pension.

Which Charities do we currently support with all the donations?

The chosen charities since 2006 have been:

1. Mary Ann Evans Hospice
2. The Myton Hospices

These Warwickshire based hospices provide specialised care for people with life limiting illnesses. Both have now received over £195,000 each in donations from our current employees and our retirees!

Will all my donations go to the charities?

Pennies from Heaven charge a small administration fee of 7%, therefore, £0.93 in every £1 will be split equally between the two charities.

How can I join the scheme?

Please complete the Pennies from Heaven form by copying the address below into your web browser or scanning the QR code with your camera on your mobile device.

<https://www.penniesfromheaven.co.uk/signup/>



Gift Aid...

The charities may be able to gift aid your donations, adding 28p for every pound donated when you sign up and agree to the Terms & Conditions on the form. Please take your time to read these when you are entering your information.

Do participants in the scheme have the opportunity to nominate additional or new charities to receive our donations?

Yes, a 5-year nomination cycle takes place with participants having the opportunity to nominate Charities that fall under the following criteria: 'A local charity that supports either the environment, our community, its residents or families of Warwickshire'

All nominated charities that receive more than 5 votes will be taken forwards for a balloting process. Each participant in the scheme (retiree and current employee) will receive one vote for their chosen charity.

The top 3 (starting from the next cycle process 2023) will become the new nominated charities receiving an equal split of all donations. This process will be repeated every 5 years.

Need further information?

Contact:

mariemccloy@warwickshire.gov.uk

Charity Websites

(you will need to type these addresses into your browser):

<https://www.mytonhospice.org/>

<https://www.maryannevans.org.uk/>

➤ Poets Corner

The Alphabet Gang by Kathleen Tuck

*Lessons were learned,
Gold stars were earned,
Books stored away,
Ready for the next day.*

*The alphabet strewn on the floor,
Not wanted no more.
Much to the teacher's dismay,
Left in disarray.*

*Children ready to go,
As they headed towards the door.
Guardians waiting at the gate,
Lest they be late.*

*Strolling on by, eating his pie,
Caretaker in red pullover,
Ventures over, at night,
To check out the site.*

*With the moon's light,
Shining on classrooms bright,
Shadows on the wall,
Makes him stall.*

*On hearing a sound,
He looks all around.
Scans high and low,
And walks very slow.
What a brave fellow!*

*With torch in his hand,
Sam has a plan.
To 'catch as catch can',
Any fleeing human!*

*But, from behind a closed door,
And arising off the floor,
With an almighty clang,
The alphabet sprang,*

*Taken by surprise,
At the sight before his eyes,
Running around his feet,
Were letters in hasty retreat.*

*Mumbling, jumbling,
Stumbling and tumbling,
They came through the door,
In an uproar!*



*Well, I do declare, said the old man,
It is the Alphabet Gang!*

*Please let us continue,
Cried a small u,
We need to exchange,
To re-arrange.*

*For should we not appear,
There will be many a tear,
In the classroom tomorrow,
Sorrow will follow.*

*Whereupon Sam, stood aside,
Lest they collide.
Watching letters big and small,
Run to the Assembly Hall.*

*A said to B,
Have you seen C, D, and E?*

*No, said F,
But I could ask G, H, I and J,
Should they come this way!*

*Meanwhile, K, L, M, N and O,
Stood quietly by the door,
In case, P, Q, R, S and T,
Thought to hide and flee!*

*When U, V, W, X and Y,
Gave out a cry, and said:
"Where is dear, old Z?"*

Send us your poems.

If you would like to see your poems published in future editions of Ragged Staff, please email: pensions@warwickshire.gov.uk.

➤ Contracted-out pension equivalent (COPE)

Warwickshire Pension Fund has received quite a few calls about the letter many members approaching state pension age have received from HMRC, which tells them to contact us. Hopefully the information below will provide you with some clarification.



While those individuals who were Contracted-Out may not be entitled to the full amount of the new State Pension, they will instead receive some of their pension income through a different route. In most cases, their occupational or personal pension scheme(s) should include an amount that is at least equivalent to the additional State Pension they would have got if they hadn't been contracted-out. This is known as the COPE amount.

The COPE amount is now included on State Pension statements. However, the COPE is an estimated figure and has no direct relation to the benefits paid by individual pension schemes, including the LGPS.

If you look at your own State Pension forecast, it states what your State Pension is likely to be when you reach State Pension Age and then what your COPE amount is separately. The COPE figure is only an estimated figure and is not actually deducted from the State Pension. Since 5 April 2016 an individual's National Insurance record issued to calculate their starting amount and then each year from then on, they build up an entitlement to the new State Pension.

The COPE is a single figure covering all of an individual's contracted-out membership, so where a member has had contracted-out membership in more than one pension scheme (or more than one pension fund), it is possible that a person's LGPS pension will appear lower than the COPE.

As part of the changes to the State Pension introduced in April 2016 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) introduced a term called Contracted-Out Pension Equivalent (COPE).

COPE is an estimated amount for those who were previously 'contracted-out' of the additional State Pension to see how National Insurance (NI) contributions paid before 6 April 2016 will contribute to their overall pension income.

Members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) were 'contracted out' of the additional State Pension and so paid lower National Insurance contributions. To take into account that LGPS members have paid less into the NI system, the amount of State Pension they'll get directly from the Government will be lower than that received by people with similar earnings who were not contracted-out and paid in more.

➤ What is a guaranteed minimum pension?



The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) was a “contracted-out” Pension Scheme. This means that you paid a lower amount of National Insurance contributions than someone doing exactly the same job as you, but who wasn’t paying into the LGPS. This is because you were only paying for your Basic State Pension and not paying for the Additional State Pension (between 6 April 1978 and 5 April 1997 this was called The State Earnings Related Pension Scheme or SERPS).

If you were a member of the scheme between 6 April 1978 and 5 April 1997 and attained State Pension Age before 6 April 2016, Warwickshire Pension Fund must guarantee that when you attain State Pension Age your local government pension is at least equal to the Additional Pension you would have received with the State Retirement Pension if you had been in SERPS. This rate is known as the Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP).

You may have been notified of this amount by HM Revenue and Customs under the title Contracted Out Deduction. Most of the time, the pension we pay is larger than the GMP, but in a very few cases (especially where a member did a lot of non-contractual overtime) the GMP may be larger than Warwickshire Pension Fund’s payment. If the GMP is larger, then Warwickshire Pension Fund will increase the pension we pay to match the rate of the GMP. A GMP consists of two elements, one in respect of any scheme membership between 6 April 1978 and 5 April 1988 (Pre 1988), the other in respect of any scheme membership between 6 April 1988 and 5 April 1997 (Post 1988).

The GMP is paid as part of your pension benefits, not as an addition. The application of GMP to your pension benefits means that Pensions Increase (inflation proofing) will be added to your pension benefits in a slightly different manner.

Warwickshire Pension Fund is responsible for full Pensions Increase on the Pension excluding the GMP elements and is responsible for a maximum of 3% Pensions Increase on the part of your GMP which accrued after 6 April 1988. Any Pensions Increase above 3% on the Post 1988 GMP and the whole of the Pre 1988 GMP is the responsibility of the State and will be paid to you as part of your State Pension benefits.

When you receive your first payslip after the application of a GMP or, if you are already over State Pension Age, your next payslip in April, you will see that your pension can be broken down into up to 3 Allowances:

1. Ordinary basic pension

This is the starting rate of your pension.

2. Pensions increase

This is the pensions increase that applies to the part of your pension that is not GMP.

3. Post 88 GMP PI

This is the Pensions Increase payable on the part of your GMP that accrued after 1988 (limited to 3% per year).

Warwickshire Pension Fund, like all Local Authority Pension Funds have recently completed a GMP reconciliation, which is a **process used to ensure the scheme records agree with those of the National Insurance Contribution Office (NICO, part of HMRC)**. This enables a scheme to consider its data as clean and entirely reliable.

Any pension payments that were identified as being incorrect, will have to be adjusted by the Fund as under the law we have to pay the correct pension once any error has been discovered.

➤ Health Watch Warwickshire - Get in Touch?

Are you a Carer, or someone who provides help for a friend, relative or neighbour who couldn't manage without you?

If yes, then [Healthwatch Warwickshire](#) want to hear from you about what support you need for YOUR own mental and physical health and wellbeing.

For more information, please visit our website: www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk or contact us on 01926 422823.

➤ Ragged Staff Newsletter Going Digital

As part of improving the accessibility of our service to you, reducing our environmental impact and reducing the overall costs of running Warwickshire Pension Fund, we are planning to cut down on our use of paper communications and instead have the Ragged Staff uploaded electronically to our Member Self Service Portal from 2023.

You will receive a letter from us later in 2022 with details on how to log into the Member Self Service website.

We appreciate that some members will prefer to continue to receive the newsletter via post, so we will give you the opportunity to opt out of the use of electronic communications if you wish. Please email pensions@warwickshire.gov.uk if you prefer to continue receiving paper communications.

➤ Applying for Pension Credit

Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with your living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income.

Pension Credit can also help with housing costs such as ground rent or service charges. To check if you are eligible or to make a claim, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit>

➤ Have You Moved Address?

It is important that you keep us updated with any changes to your home address.

We will automatically suspend any pension for any members whose pay advise slip is returned to us marked gone away until you have contacted us. We are unable to take change of address over the phone as we protect the data we hold for you.

Any change of address needs to be made in writing to the address or email address shown in the 'Contacting us' section.

Contacting Us

There are various ways you can contact our office.

Write to us at:

Warwickshire Pension Fund,
Warwickshire County Council,
Shire Hall,
Warwick CV34 4RL

Articles or feedback about communications:

Email: pensions@warwickshire.gov.uk

Payroll Queries:

Email: hrandpayroll@warwickshire.gov.uk

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➤ Inside Midland Red

by Ashley Wakelin

Midland Red swept across the Midlands over most of the 20th Century – with their 8,000 staff and 2,000 strong fleet of buses and coaches, many designed and built at their factory in Birmingham, they soon became known to most as “The friendly Midland Red”.

I enjoyed a lifetime in the bus industry, and realising that it had dramatically changed from the calmer 1960s to the stresses and realities of modern times, I decided to put pen to paper to recall the story of my passion for, and work-life with, the country's once biggest independent bus company.

Some of the colleagues that I worked with in the early days were at retirement age when I was just 18 years old. These industry professionals, whether drivers and conductors, engineers or managers, told me their stories of life with Midland Red in the 1930s and beyond, and how the job and the vehicles had changed over the years. It is interesting that they all thought that the job was better in the earlier days, and that in turn has become true for me, now that I am looking back over my career.

Agnes was one of the lady bus cleaners working in Birmingham, who worked nights from 1924. When I met her in 1969 she told me that the job was hard, but it was more enjoyable in the earlier years. She and her fellow cleaners spent hours on hands and knees polishing the brass floor treads, door handles, and side runners on Midland Red's early charabancs, while singing hymns at 3am and getting into trouble when the neighbours living near the garage complained about the noise keeping them awake!

Those early charabancs developed through the thirties into stately luxury tourers, and by the late fifties

had evolved into 85+mph motorway expresses, tearing down the outside lane of the M1. Timetabled journeys from Birmingham to London took 5hrs 29mins in the 1950s, but with Midland Red's motorway expresses it was reduced to an astonishing 2hrs 15mins!

There are lots of other engineering achievements covered in the book too, including a look at the “Birmingham Routemaster” which of course is known to us Midland Red fans as the D9.

But it was the Midland Red spirit which got into the blood of many of its employees, and was the career choice of sometimes two or three generations of a family.

Midland Red was no ordinary bus company. They designed and built their own vehicles from 1923 until 1970. They had an operating territory of over 12,000 square miles of the Midlands, and operated daily coach services and coach cruise holidays over the length and breadth of the United Kingdom; and they had an enviable reputation for speed, reliability, comfort and service which over the years gave them their reputation of “The friendly Midland Red”.

Many of the management were ex-military and the company was run along similar lines, but then an organisation of 8,000 staff, with its headquarters and Central Works in Birmingham, and 35 garages spread across the Midlands, operating services while building and maintaining a fleet of almost 2000 vehicles had to be well oiled!

Midland Red played a big part in the lives of the people of the Midlands for most of the twentieth century, and still retains a fiercely loyal following of enthusiasts, which is why it is important that stories of “The Red”, such as those in this

book, should be retold for future generations.

When I retired, I realised that my own working life with Midland Red from office lad, conductor and driver, and into management had accumulated a number of escapades, and entertaining and sometimes shocking stories that were worthy of recalling.

“INSIDE MIDLAND RED” brings them to life again, along with some of the history of how Midland Red grew from humble beginnings into a company of empire-like proportions. Whether you are new to Midland Red, or a seasoned enthusiast you should find some interesting stories and pictures that you can return to when you need a Midland Red fix!

INSIDE MIDLAND RED is a hardback book, part historical, part autobiographical, by author Ashley Wakelin. Typeset by Stephen from Prestset and proudly printed in Gt Britain, it has 128 quality pages with over 250 colour and black and white images, some not previously published, and is available at £35 plus £4.95 UK mainland p&p online from www.midlandred.co.uk

