

# "Beyond Parsimony"

## Bulletin No. 21



## BP AGM: Urgent Request

### Bulletin highlights

- BP's Annual General Meeting - **Request**
- Legal Response
- New Parliamentary Debate - **Request**
- Select Committee cites BP Pensioners
- New video for social media
- Leafleting BP Staff
- Membership continues to grow

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## Welcome to Bulletin 21

We hope you had a good Easter.

The Campaign continues to power along and as you will read, much has happened in recent weeks - and the weeks ahead look to be extremely busy too.

After waiting patiently, the responses to our legal letters came in. Work is underway.

**On the political front, the Select Committee delivered its report to the Government with important recommendations informed by BPPG evidence; Alistair Carmichael, MP secured a second Parliamentary debate on DB pensions tabled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> May – this time a whole 3 hours; and Nick Coleman is leading the preparation of the BPPG response to a Government consultation which has important implications for how companies might be allowed to extract surplus from pension funds.**

**On the communications front, all this activity allows us to show journalists the campaign is alive and kicking and enables the social media team to generate new materials to keep the online campaign fresh including a new video.**

In this bulletin, **we have two ‘asks’ for your help** – submitting questions to BP’s AGM if you are a shareholder – and contacting your local MP to alert them to the Westminster debate on May 2.

As always – we are grateful for the help of all our members in achieving the Campaign objectives.

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## **BP AGM - Your Urgent Help Needed**

### **Submit Questions**

**BP’s AGM is being held at BP’s offices, south-west of London, at Sunbury at 11am on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April.** The venue is an odd choice given the poor public transport connections to the site – a choice made even stranger by the decision not to offer a web link to the Meeting this year. You will draw your own conclusions from that.

You will recall that we submitted a Top 8 questions to BP’s Information Session in February with great success. **If you are a BP shareholder, we need your help this time to undertake a similar exercise for the AGM.**

As a BP shareholder - the AGM provides you with two opportunities to pose important questions to the BP Board without leaving the comfort of your home.

To make this easy, we have prepared a **new set of key questions** which we need you to submit. Please take a look at the attached document or click [here](#) for the steps you need to follow to do this.

BP has undertaken to provide answers to all written questions submitted **before 5pm on 18<sup>th</sup> April.**

**So there are 7 days in which to get the pensions questions in.**

When you have submitted, please let us know by email at [contact@bppensionergroup.org](mailto:contact@bppensionergroup.org) so that we can keep score on the number of requests sent in to BP.



### **Attending the AGM in person**

If you are planning to attend the AGM in person, would you be willing to pose a question in the room?

We are looking for BPPG members to help ask a question on the day. If so – please contact Phil Clarke at [pjejclarke@outlook.com](mailto:pjejclarke@outlook.com).

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# Our Legal Case

The Easter break is over and our internal and external legal experts are back and busy examining the responses received from Linklaters (for the Trustee) and Herbert Smith Freehills (for BP). **The SG is arranging to sign confidentiality agreements with both sets of solicitors so that ‘bundles’ of Trustee and BP documents can be provided to named individuals including our legal advisers.**

We will be back in touch with all our members as soon as we have decided our next steps. This may involve a new round of fundraising. We ask for your continued patience and understanding while we ensure we adopt the right legal approach to achieving the campaign objectives.

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## New Debate in the House of Commons

**We are delighted that Alistair Carmichael, MP for Orkney & Shetland has secured a second Parliamentary debate on issues arising around Defined Benefit pensions.** His application was signed by 14 fellow MPs and the Debate has been tabled for 3 hours in the main chamber of the House of Commons on 2<sup>nd</sup> May. A big thank you to those of our members who urged their MP to support this application.

While such debates tend to be lightly attended – and this date clashes with the local council elections – it does not detract from the opportunity for the issue to be given a proper airing, and for the Ministerial department to respond by speaking into the debate. This is all captured and shared on the public record.

**It would be extremely helpful if all our members could let their local MP know about the debate in case they can attend – the council elections are only in England and Wales - or simply to be aware that our issue is getting a proper airing in Parliament.**

This was Alistair’s oral submission to the Committee who considered the merits of awarding a debate:

*“This is an issue of growing importance. I first became aware of it because I have a lot of BP pensioners in my constituency; BP administered the Sullom Voe oil terminal for many years. Once I started talking about it, people started getting in touch with me to say that Shell is doing the same thing, and now I hear that KPMG is doing the same thing. The Select Committee is doing an investigation on this, and I understand that we might even see something from it in the not-too-distant future... There is an issue around the way in which these pensions are administered and regulated, and it will only become more common. I declare an interest: until 2011 the parliamentary pension fund was a defined-benefit scheme, at which point we moved to a career average scheme. People with defined-benefit schemes generally thought that they were set pretty well for the future and a secure time. They are now finding that they are not, in blatant contradiction of some of the material that was distributed by the employers at the point when they were encouraged to pay into these funds. Those are the issues that we wish to ventilate. As I say, it is a significant and growing issue.”*

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## New Video on Social Media

**Members of the SM team have been busy producing a video which captures the principal messages of the campaign.** It forms part of a regular ‘drumbeat’ of messaging by a relatively small group of members on social media channels that are used regularly by BP and seen by a significant audience. You can see the video by clicking [here](#). Please take the opportunity to share it, repost it, comment or ‘Like’ it on social media channels like LinkedIn and Facebook.

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# Leaflet drop at HQ and Sunbury

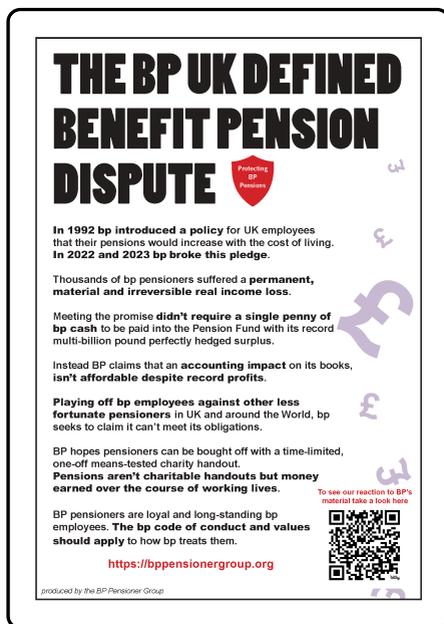
In Bulletin 20, we mentioned our concern that BP leaders have sought to curtail staff discussion of the UK pension issue and that BP's internal communications provide disingenuous and misleading accounts of the dispute to staff.

At 07.30 on Thursday 21st March – a team of leafleteers greeted BP staff arriving at 1 St James Square and at BP's Sunbury campus and supplied them with this leaflet (*click [here](#) or on image below to download*).

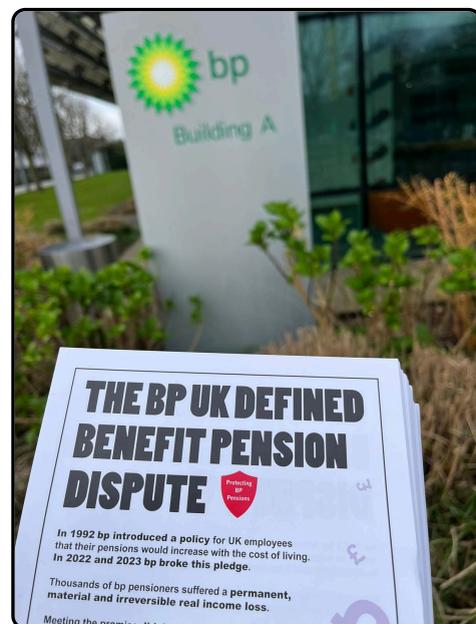
All went smoothly – our leafleteers were carefully briefed – although there was an objection by SJS security when a photograph was taken to record the event for posterity.



BP HQ - St James Square



BPPG Leaflet



BP - Sunbury Campus

A big thank you to everyone who worked on leaflet content, design, recruitment of leafleteers and the 500 or so who donated a tenner which has not only funded the leaflets but helped us pay for other campaign costs such as the software licence that gets this bulletin to nearly 3000 people.

## A Letter to BP's Company Secretary

In our last bulletin, we shared a letter to BP's Company Secretary asking him to supply details that support the serious allegations made at BP's 'Information Session' in February that some pension fund members had harassed, attacked and even "issued physical threats against employees and their families."

Regrettably, the response we received was unable to provide any evidence or identify any individuals - which was surprising given how forcefully the allegations were made by senior executives.

We will of course act if any of our members falls short of the behaviours that we all expect of each other.

**New Members keep arriving!**

Thanks to your efforts in contacting former BP colleagues and friends, we're approaching the 2,900 mark. The **big milestone of 3,000** is in sight.

Thank you to everyone who made the introductions!

If you are newly joined – please take the opportunity to look at your contact book, connections on LinkedIn, Facebook etc and send them the excellent information about the Campaign available [here](#) .



Protecting  
BP  
Pensions



#### WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN THE CAMPAIGN?

- **Strength in numbers**
- **Stay informed**
- **Share your ideas and suggestions**

HOW TO JOIN: <https://bppensionergroup.org/join>

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Don't forget all the documents mentioned in the bulletin are in [The Library](#) as well as all the previous bulletins if you've missed out.

[click to access all Bulletins](#)

You can [download](#) a set of 'business cards' to hand out at any BP events you are attending or other celebrations, birthday or retirement parties etc!

## Next Bulletin

The rest of April and into May and June are set to be busy months for the campaign with a **focus** on **reviewing** the response to the legal letters, **maintaining** pressure on BP leadership at the AGM, **continued** media & social media action and the member-get-member **initiative**. **We will seek to keep you fully informed by bulletin or email.**

Did you receive this bulletin from an ex-colleague, friend etc? Would you like to become a member of the BPPG and receive future bulletins & important news about the campaign? Follow this link to join

<https://bppensionergroup.org/join/>

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## Social Media & WhatsApp groups

You may not be an active user of social media but if you have ideas for useful themes or would like to get involved then please contact the SM team at [social@bppensionergroup.org](mailto:social@bppensionergroup.org) .

There are a few different ways you can stay in touch with the campaign, as well as this Bulletin and our two WhatsApp groups (to join click buttons below), another way to stay in touch is via social media on the [BPPG LinkedIn Group](#) with around 770 members and on [BPPG Facebook Group](#) with around 670 members. Links to these groups can be found at the end of every Bulletin.

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If you haven't signed up to one of the WhatsApp groups yet - follow the links below and join the melee or just get the critical info!

Join 'Chat' WhatsApp

Join 'Info' WhatsApp

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## Key Questions & Answers

To help you answer any questions here is an updated key Campaign information guide - "[Member get Member Initiative Questions & Answers](#)"

Feel free to cut and paste it into any of your emails, social media comments and letters!

Click to view Q&As

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Thanks for getting involved and supporting the campaign.  
You can contact the Steering Group at [contact@bppensionergroup.org](mailto:contact@bppensionergroup.org).



BP Pensioner Group



BP Pensioner Group

[contact@bppensionergroup.org](mailto:contact@bppensionergroup.org)

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