

CPF MEMBERS FORUM

www.cpfmembersforum.com

PRESS RELEASE 16 (December 2020)

2020 Report Card

In 2018 a group of local government pensioners from Cheshire Pension Fund formed their own CPF Members Forum - totally independent from CPF.

This is our 2020 end of year report.

Further details are available on our website www.cpfmembersforum.com which also gives more supporting and background details, links and dates.

2020 has certainly been “different” with the COVID pandemic impact on work, people and the lockdowns. We do not deny that. We realise how working practices and options have had to change. We are very appreciative of the efforts of everyone who has kept the system functioning.

But other organisations operate on-line. We are concerned that as we begin 2021, our pension fund has never asked us for an email address, does not offer an AGM to the 100,000 members, does not offer website discussion webpages, and generally sees communication as one-way only.

We all expect retail, councils, services, and banks to consult and communicate with us by online web-based methods.

For 2020 our two major concerns were the consultations (before the impact of COVID), and the role of Pension Board in overseeing these. At the end of 2020 we also found the Annual Report “Cut and Paste” Communication Strategy

Questions about CPF 2020 Consultations on the FSS and ISS/RIP

- The 2020 consultation on Responsible Investment Policy attracted just 8 responses.
- This could be because 100,000 CPF members were not informed of this important consultation through our payslips, Cheshire Chat or the post.

The Pensions Board and 2019 / 2020 Consultations

- The details and timing of the consultation on the Responsible Investment Policy were not on the agenda of the Pension Board meetings beforehand.
- The employers Funding Strategy consultation was also not on the agendas in late 2019 and early 2020.

Email addresses for 100,000 members of CPF

- CPF has never asked its 100,000 members for an email address.
- It has no quick way of informing members about consultations, or anything.
- Our councils and other government departments all consult via emails, and use webforms to seek views on drafts, and consultations.

The revised CPF website launched in 2020

- The CPF website was relaunched in January 2020.

- CPF called it the “personalisation of the members journey” and “default channel”.
- But the website does not offer member-only discussion pages.

Cheshire Chat, on-line (March 2020)

- Cheshire Chat was publicised in our payslips in March 2020
- Page 8 stated that the Responsible Investment consultation had finished, when it was still open, which may have discouraged member involvement and interest.
- The results of the members survey on page 11 show support for an AGM, and other improvements by the fund.

Members Annual General Meeting

- Other LGPS funds hold an AGM for members.
- Many other meetings were online in 2020, resulting from COVID changes

Climate Emergencies declared by all four CPF councils

- We urge elected councillors in CWAC, Cheshire East, Warrington and Halton to ask our £6billion fund to support divestment to reach Net Zero.
- Many current investments are counter-productive to council services
- In December 2020 produced a Climate Change Strategy that does not mention divestment.

“Cut and Paste” Communication Strategy

- The 2019 / 2020 Annual Report was published on 1 December 2020
- This is for the financial year BEFORE the impact of COVID
- The Communications Strategy is “Cut and Paste” from 2018 / 2019

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Cheshire Pension Fund www.cheshirepensionfund.org has over 100,000 members, from 300 councils and organisations in the four councils of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Warrington, and Halton, as well as local housing associations, academies, parish councils, police staff, and school staff.

Part of all Council Tax goes into the fund as the Employers Contribution.

Our **CPF MEMBERS FORUM** www.cpfmembersforum.com queries why CPF still have investments in areas such as fracking, oil and gas, properties mostly in the rest of England, payday loan companies, tobacco, gambling, gaming, and the “Big Six” companies that avoid UK Corporation Tax by clever accounting practices.

To give us a stronger voice with the fund, we ask all pensioners of Cheshire Pension Fund, to join our independent CPF Members Forum. It is free, confidential, and has no commitment. (Current employees paying in to the fund are also welcome – its their pension and their future one day).

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