

ECMWF PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION



Annual General Meeting

**Report of the seventeenth AGM of the Pensioners' Association,
held in the ECMWF Council Chamber and by video conferencing,
on Thursday 28th November 2024,
starting at 09:30 UK time**

Annexes

1. Tribute to Astrid Dinshawe
2. Tribute to Keith Fielding
3. Adopted Agenda
4. Financial Accounts

Attendees:

Representing ECMWF

Jens Alfs – Head of Human Resources, Helen Eadie – Payroll Manager, Jan-Jakob Muyls – HR Policy Manager, Florence Rabier – Director General

Representing AAPOCAD

John Parsons - Chair of AAPOCAD

Representing ECMWF Staff Association

Olivier Marsden

ECMWF Pensioners Association Members

In-person Erik Andersson, Joe Antonowicz, Linda Baker, Tony Bakker, Danielle Barnett, Alain Bataille, Helene Blanchonnet, Andy Brady, Christian Breton, John Chambers, Madeleine Cotter, Jens Daabeck, Keith Edwards, Maggie Foster-Moore, Didier Garcon, Helene Garcon, John Greenaway, Jean-Francois Gueganton, Jayne Jardine, Lars Isaksen, Carsten Maass, Stuart Mitchell, Usha Mistry, Brian Norris, Martin Priestnall, Pam Prior, Abdalla Saleh, Deborah Salmond, Lennart Sorth

Online:

David Anderson, Sylvia Baylis, Jean Bidlot, Michaela Eckenberger, Rex Gibson, Erland Kallen, Dominique Marbouty, Martin Miller, Franco Molteni, Jean-Jacques Morcrette, Dieter Niebel, Mike O'Brien, Costas Skantos, Jean-Noel Thepaut, Isabella Weger

Apologies were received from:

Peter Bauer, Mike Connally, Sue Dunning, Hilda Carr, Laura Ferranti, Richard Fisker, Mats Hamrud, Els Kooij-Connally, Dominique Lucas, Denis Mason, Julie Palmer, Tony Stanford

1. Opening of the AGM and welcome

The meeting was chaired by Tony Bakker, Vice-Chair of the ECMWF Pensioners' Association.

Tony welcomed both in-person and on-line attendees and was glad to see so many former colleagues in attendance.

Prior to the meeting we learnt the sad news of the passing of two former colleagues Astrid Dinshawe and Keith Fielding and of Lily Lea, widow of the late Andrew Lea.

A tribute to Astrid was prepared by Maggie and Linda and is attached in Annex I. Astrid was fondly remembered for her beautiful singing voice, which contributed to the enjoyment of many Research Department Christmas Lunches. The tribute to Keith (Appendix II), prepared by Manuel and Costas, spoke of Keith's fondness for golf and the important role he played in the foundation of the MGM (MetApps Golf Masters) Society.

2. Presentation by the Director-General of the programme of activities of the Centre

Florence said how nice it was to see former colleagues both in-person and online and offered a retrospective overview of recent work and progress at ECMWF. She summarized developments from past Council presentations, noting a shift toward one major Integrated Forecasting System (IFS) cycle per year—a slower pace than in the past but one that aligns better with operational efficiency and user needs.

The most recent implementation, IFS cycle 49r1, was launched in November 2023. Its updates reflected improvements in forecast skill and system performance. Attention now turns toward the preparation and procurement of the next high-performance computing (HPC) infrastructure, expected to be delivered around 2027. Four procurement options have been proposed, with a preference leaning toward Option 3B, which balances increased CPU and GPU capacity—essential for machine learning applications—within acceptable budget constraints.

Significant advances have been made in using satellite data to improve forecasting, particularly through collaborations with the European Space Agency (ESA) and EUMETSAT. Florence highlighted the EarthCARE mission (Earth Cloud, Aerosol and Radiation Explorer), which provides new data on radar reflectivity and Doppler velocity. These data, which measure precipitation and particle fall speeds, have already begun enhancing data assimilation processes.

Equally noteworthy is the work on Meteosat Third Generation satellites, particularly the Lightning Imager. These new tools allow for lightning detection and assimilation into forecasting models, offering improvements, especially in convective areas such as the tropics.

ECMWF is preparing for a new high-resolution reanalysis dataset that will succeed ERA5. The upcoming reanalysis will operate at 14 km resolution (an improvement over ERA5's 30 km), fulfilling a long-standing user request. These high-resolution datasets are crucial inputs for machine learning applications, which are growing rapidly in meteorological research.

Improvements are also being made to model bias correction, ocean-atmosphere coupling, and simulation fidelity—components that feed into both conventional and AI-driven forecasting models.

ECMWF has launched its own artificial intelligence forecasting system, dubbed AIFS (Artificial Intelligence Forecasting System). This system includes both deterministic and ensemble versions of forecasts, with ensemble forecasts generated through methods such as diffusion and optimization. AIFS produces results that compare favorably to traditional IFS systems and outperforms them particularly in tropical regions, while maintaining sharpness in its forecasts.

While not yet operational, AIFS is run regularly and is expected to become operational in the near future. Its outputs are evaluated in terms of accuracy, sharpness, and score parity with existing ensemble systems.

To support the development of AI models, ECMWF developed Anemoi—a modular, open-source infrastructure that facilitates training and inference of machine learning models. Member States, including Germany, Norway, Sweden, and others, have adopted Anemoi for their own AI projects.

Germany's DWD transitioned to Anemoi after encountering technical limitations with their proprietary solution. Norway used the framework to implement a stretched-grid AI model that refines resolution over areas of interest. Sweden used a more traditional limited-area modeling approach, but also reported strong results.

There is growing international interest in Anemoi, with Canada, Australia, and the U.S. expressing interest in contributing or adopting the framework, raising questions about expanding access while maintaining Member State priorities.

ECMWF's AIFS is performing well in benchmarks compared to other global AI models. Aurora (developed by Microsoft) stands out as the most accurate, attributed largely to its finer resolution (10 km vs. 25 km for AIFS). This performance gap underscores the importance of securing powerful computing resources, reinforcing the case for expanded HPC infrastructure.

Florence elaborated on the Destination Earth initiative, a collaborative venture between ECMWF and the European Commission aimed at advancing digital twin technology and high-resolution climate modeling.

ECMWF's role includes running high-resolution climate simulations on EuroHPC supercomputers such as Lumi (Finland), MareNostrum5 (Spain), and Leonardo (Italy). These simulations support both control (historical) runs and projections for future decades using multiple model systems (e.g., IFS with different ocean models and ICON).

One of DestinE's unique features is its ability to create storylines of extreme events, which are used to illustrate how contemporary events (e.g., heatwaves, storms) would evolve under future warming scenarios. For instance, a past Paris heatwave with 40.4°C could rise by another 1.4°C in a +2°C world.

These storylines are especially valuable for policymakers and infrastructure planners, helping them understand and prepare for the tangible implications of climate change.

DestinE is also developing a “digital twin” of Earth at 4 km resolution (with regional zooming to 500–750 m resolution), which allows detailed real-time and on-demand simulations of weather and climate events.

The initiative integrates impact models directly, such as renewable energy simulations showing wind speed and turbine power output (example: Belgian offshore wind farms). These models are being designed to respond to forecast-driven triggers, such as severe weather alerts.

Florence reviewed ECMWF's performance in ensemble forecasting, highlighting their lead among global centers. Using metrics like the Continuous Ranked Probability Skill Score (CRPSS), ECMWF remains ahead of other forecasting institutions by approximately 0.5 days in skill.

ECMWF continues to refine its sub-seasonal forecasting capabilities—formerly called “extended range”—which address the so-called “desert of predictability” between weather and seasonal forecasts. Although improvements have been gradual, skill has increased significantly over the past 20 years in this challenging forecast range.

The seasonal forecast for Winter 2023–2024 was mostly successful in predicting warm anomalies in regions like Canada and Australia. However, ECMWF missed a cold anomaly over Scandinavia—a critical region for many Member States. This lapse was acknowledged openly, with a commitment to refine future forecasts.

ECMWF's traditional IFS continues to perform strongly in deterministic forecast skill. However, machine learning models, particularly AIFS and Aurora, are showing substantial gains. In metrics like 500 hPa geopotential height and 2-metre temperature, AIFS performs comparably or better than IFS, especially at longer lead times.

These models' ability to outperform traditional systems in real weather parameters marks a transformative moment for the forecasting community and reinforces the strategic push toward HPC and AI development.

Florence noted that 2024 is projected to become the warmest year on record and likely the first year with global temperatures exceeding +1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Unless an unusual global cooling occurs, this threshold will be crossed, underscoring the urgency of climate mitigation efforts.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), operated by ECMWF, is preparing a comprehensive climate summary for release in January. These updates are essential tools for raising public awareness and driving policy change.

ECMWF continues to invest in professional development and outreach through events, training sessions, and workshops. These events take place across Europe, in collaboration with partners like EUMETSAT and ESA. Florence highlighted sessions in Bonn, Reading, Frascati, and Bologna, among others.

Special visits and high-profile guests, such as former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, have helped raise ECMWF's profile in the scientific and political communities.

Two major infrastructure projects are underway:

1. Bonn Facility: A cornerstone ceremony marked the start of construction, though the project is still in early stages (ground excavation).
2. Reading Facility: Demolition of existing buildings has begun. However, there has been a shift in the timeline, with the original mid-2026 completion date now moved to early 2027.

The German facility is also expected to finish by the end of 2027, setting up a particularly busy year for relocations and coordination.

Florence concluded her presentation by celebrating the extensive scientific progress, growing international collaboration, and continued excellence in forecasting performance. ECMWF is increasingly integrating machine learning into its forecasting operations, exploring the full potential of digital twins, and working with partners across Europe to enhance climate resilience.

While acknowledging the challenges ahead—including facility development, HPC procurement, and missed forecasts—she emphasized the collective achievements and future promise of ECMWF's programs and partnerships. The organization remains at the forefront of forecasting innovation and climate science, guided by data, collaboration, and a clear strategic vision.

3. Presentation by John Parsons – Chair of AAPOCAD

John began by thanking Sylvia and the Committee for the opportunity to address members of the ECMWF Pensioners' Community and said how nice it was to visit ECMWF in his capacity as Chair of AAPOCAD. He had visited in the past for co-ordination meetings when he was a member of staff for the Council of Europe.

John provided some interesting background information:-

- AAPOCAD - the Association of Pensioned Staff of the Co-ordinated Organisations and of their Dependants
- Membership of 3,000; strength in numbers supporting a common goal
- Represents pensioners from six active co-ordinated organisations The Council of Europe, ECMWF, the European Space Agency, NATO, OECD, EUMETSAT
- Represents pensioners from Western European Union which was dissolved in 2011
- 68% of ECMWF pensioners are signed up
- Participates in co-ordination meetings
- Builds relations and works with local organisations ie attending AGMs and making presentations to members
- Has a legal advisor – Gianni Palmieri, one of the leading lights in the law of international organisations, and other experts in the field
- Provides support for Appeals which impact on all pensioners
- Provides support for Appeals relating to an individual when the outcome impacts on matters relating to pensions and pensioners
- Has regional delegates in Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, France, Italy, Turkey, UK and Spain. The position in Germany is vacant at present but should be filled soon
- The President/Chair of local associations has an ex-officio seat on the Governing Board – Sylvia for ECMWF
- Alain Bataille and Jochen Erler are currently ECMWF's elected members
- The Board also has a number of honorary positions, including former Chairs and Vice-Chairs, providing a wealth of experience

Participation in coordination is one of the principal activities of AAPOCAD and it is the only representative association of retirees entitled to sit in co-ordination. This includes being members of the CRP, the Committee of Staff representatives, enabling participation in all the discussions that take place in coordination, including issues which affect only serving staff. Many of the current staff avail themselves of the knowledge and experience of retirees, many of whom spent many years in coordination, like Alain who was active in co-ordination as a staff member and continues through his activities at AAPOCAD.

Appeal Support

One important advantage of AAPOCAD is the ability to co-ordinate efforts against decisions made by co-ordination which impacts across all organisations. An example of this is the lodging of Appeals in 2020-2021, when the system of adjusting our pensions was changed and the Education Allowance was to be progressively eliminated for pensioners. AAPOCAD mobilised its forces and a considerable amount of money, investing in the region of €75,000 to help fight cases. As the issues affected all organisations it was felt that AAPOCAD should meet most of the cost involved and asked only that each organisation make a token contribution of €1 for each of their members. None of the appeals were successful, but it was important that they showed the determination of pensioners to do their utmost to defend their rights and their situation.

AAPOCAD can also support individual appeals in certain organisations, particularly if they relate to the pension scheme. A recent example concerned a Swiss pensioner from the Council

of Europe who availed herself of Article 33 of the pension scheme rules. She moved from Strasbourg to Basel and lived there for a few months before moving back to Strasbourg. She managed to continue drawing her pension on the Swiss scale for about 5 years, until somebody in the organisation or at ISRP woke up to the fact that her pension in Swiss francs was being paid into a French bank account. She brought an appeal because Article 33 says that the choice of scale is irrevocable, but it's only irrevocable apparently, as long as you remain in the country where you've elected to benefit from its salary scale, as you may. The Swiss salary scale is about 60% higher than the French and therefore a pension drawn on the Swiss scale actually meant that she was being paid more than a serving staff member on the same grade. The case was fought nonetheless because of the principle, what is the meaning of the word irrevocable? The Appeal was not upheld.

Providing Help and Support on local issues which impact on members

The governing board earlier this year adopted a set of guidelines, the most important feature of which is that in normal circumstances the case being brought should concern pensioners in more than one organisation, or a group of pensioners in a particular country. At present there is a potential issue with what are called social contributions on pensions in France, and it may well be that at some point there will be a case brought that will merit support from AAPOCAD.

Decoupling of Pensions

Pensions are adjusted automatically on 1st January each year, usually paid with the February payment due to delays in publication of statistical data. Should inflation exceed 6% during the year, the pensions are adjusted the following month. Prior to 2020, the pension scales were calculated using the same method as the salary scales including Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) among other things, to calculate the scale. The pensions were decoupled from this method in January 2020 and are now linked only to inflation in the relevant country. What is interesting is how the pensions have fared since then. AAPOCAD will be following this situation closely in the coming years. The table below shows, in percentage terms, how much more (or less) your 2025 pension is than it would have been if it had continued to be adjusted in line with salaries (as recommended by the CCR):

Advantage pensions	Disadvantage pensions
Belgium 4.3%	France -2.9%
Italy 7.8%	Germany -1.6%
Luxembourg 1.1%	Spain -5.5%
Netherlands 2.6%	Portugal -18.7%
UK 3.8%	Switzerland -3.9%
USA 0.8%	

The salary scale awards for 2025 are set at - United Kingdom 2.8%, Germany 2.7% and Italy **minus** 3.6%. which is the effect of, among other things, purchasing power parities. Italy was the only country with a negative PPP. This is not a good outcome for serving staff in Bologna but it is not the first time that the award has been negative for Italy.

In conclusion, John encouraged all ECMWF pensioners to become members of AAPOCAD as it provides security in numbers and additional support to defend the rights and benefits of its members.

John Parsons left the meeting as he was travelling back to Europe.

4. Adoption of the draft Agenda

The Agenda was adopted without change.

5. Adoption of the Report of the sixteenth AGM, held on 24 November 2023

The Report of the sixteenth AGM was adopted without any changes.

6. Report by the Chair of the Staff Association on activities during the year

Olivier Marsden, Vice-Chair of the Staff Committee, addressed the AGM and informed us of changes to the structure of the Staff Committee due to the increase in head-count within the organisation and the change from being a single site to now having duty stations in three locations. The number of committee members has increased to 10 and they endeavour to have a representative at each location highlighting site-specific issues. The current make up is six members in Reading, three in Bonn and one in Bologna.

The Staff Committee fund various social events including Happy Hours, Board Games Evenings, Whisky and Belgian Beer tasting (not together!), Sports Clubs and Music Events. A recent Music Evening was attended by about 100 people and was held in the now-empty Computer Hall.

The Staff Committee also meet regularly with HR and the Directorate with whom they enjoy a constructive and positive relationship. Issues currently in their remit are:

- Healthcare – particularly relating to Germany and Italy where staff do not have access to the National Health Services
- Diversity, Inclusion, Equality
- Mission and Travel Expenses
- Home Leave Procedures
- Future Buildings – input to design for the layout of offices and meeting rooms for the new buildings at Reading University and Bonn

- Teleworking Policy – currently allowed to work from home 10 days per month with a total of 80 days per year allowed outside the Duty Station country.

The Committee also provides advice and support for individual staff members.

7. Report by the PA President on activities since the last AGM

Sylvia reported on the activities of the Pensioners' Association Committee who met in-person several times during the year, mainly at ECMWF, with many email and WhatsApp exchanges between formal meetings. Items discussed included:

- Setting up new bank accounts – Stuart to report
- Health Insurance Issues
- Pre-retirement seminar – arranged by HR in September 2024 and very well received by staff and recent retirees. The recording will be made available once a secure area to host it has been identified
- Regular meetings between Sylvia and Jens – about every two months
- Assisting individual pensioners with issues relating to healthcare, tax, personal and administrative issues. Although not experts, the Committee are happy to direct pensioners to where the required information may be available
- Social Events – Madeleine reported that a lunch was arranged at the Lyndhurst Pub in Watlington Street, Reading. There were two cinema trips – one to The Biscuit Factory and one to Showcase cinema and also a walk and lunch arranged from Thames Valley Park to The Bull Inn at Sonning. We hope to arrange more regular on-line events to include those not local to the Reading area and also to arrange more in-person events. Madeleine would be very grateful for suggestions on what to arrange.

8. Report on co-ordination by Alain Bataille

Alain provided an update on matters relating to co-ordination during 2024 which mainly related to staff matters as there was little on the table for discussion for pensioners.

There were discussions on minor adjustments to the Basic Family Allowance, Expatriate Child Allowance and no change to the Kilometre Allowance which remains frozen until 2026.

The important discussion of the period was the new Salary Adjustment Method due to come into operation in January 2026.

What remains the same is the period of the method – ie four years plus one year; plus one year. In essence, at the completion of the four years, if a new method is not agreed the method can continue for another two years. The principle also remains of following the pay trends of National Public Services in eight reference countries.

Some changes have been agreed on the Moderation and Exception Clauses. The Moderation Clause (used to smooth both positive and negative peaks has been in place for 10 years at a rate of 2%; this will be increased to 3%. The Exception Clause will be reduced from 3% to 2% and the condition to trigger will be adjusted from eight to six reference countries with negative GDP.

A positive change is that in cases of high inflation a trigger to adjust the scale will be applied automatically rather than the previous method of writing a report, having the report adopted and only then implemented.

An interesting departure from co-ordination was some changes to the rules for staff at OECD and The Council of Europe, both with Headquarters in Paris. The organisations were focussed on reducing staff costs and sought to change the reference city from Brussels to Paris in an effort to neutralise the PPP. Since this change only applies to two organisations the result can be that staff from, for example, ESA working in Paris could be on a different salary scale to those on the same grade and level from OECD and The Council of Europe.

Alain reported that due to the rocketing inflation in Turkiye, the CCR has agreed to change the salary scales in 2025. A grades will get in the region of a 60% increase whilst B grades will get in the region of 50%. This may cause issues for pensions based on last salary as someone retiring in December 2024 could be seriously disadvantaged over those retiring in 2025.

The pension adjustment for the UK for 2025 should be in the region of about 2%, but since the inflation rate is fluctuating, it is difficult to put a firm figure on this.

Alain reported on an interesting Appeal held at ESA in The Netherlands. Due to high inflation, during 2023 pensioners received two adjustments of 6.2% and 6.8%, while staff received a salary adjustment of 7%. In January 2024 there was a negative figure and pensions were reduced by 2%. Three staff members retired towards the end of 2023; they had not received the two pension increases during the year but only the 7% staff increase and yet were subjected to a reduction of their pensions of 2% in January 2024. They took an Appeal against the organisation and won, receiving an increase of 13% to their pension which was then applied to all in a similar situation.

9. Report by the head of HR

9.1. CCR matters: pension adjustments from 1 January 2024, based on the country Consumer Price Index (CPI)

As this matter had already been covered by Alain and John Parsons, Jens did not elaborate on this.

9.2. In-year inflation adjustments to pensions

This was also covered earlier in the meeting so not discussed here.

9.3. Progress with a retirement process and pre-retirement webinar

Jens reported on a pilot 'Preparing for Retirement' seminar which was held in September 2024 and very well received. The feedback received will be used to tweak and improve the seminar. The aim is to improve the experience of staff leading up to retirement, starting the preparation well in advance, providing relevant information and making it easier to access information. HR plans to run the course annually.

The ISRP is working on a new website and there may be an opportunity for ECMWF to publish information there in a secure way such as policy information and pension rules.

9.4. Report on health insurance (Cigna) matters

Jens explained that operating across three sites has changed how Cigna is being used. Staff in Germany and in Italy do not have access to the National Health Services there and are therefore required to use Cigna as a primary health system rather than a supplementary system as in the UK. There has been a 37% increase in claims; 28% increase in the number of reimbursements per person; 29% increase amongst pensioners – pensioners claim 2.8% more than staff; medical inflation, particularly in the UK, has increased dramatically this year and is running at 17%.

Discussions regarding an increase in the contribution rate are ongoing with Cigna and ECMWF are focussed on maintaining the same contribution rate across all three sites.

The increases in ceilings last year were welcomed.

No progress has been made in the provision of long-term care – this is particularly relevant for some member-states where pensioners are not permitted to access the national provision. The Centre is investigating a separate insurance policy for this but there are few players in this market making it difficult to find a suitable product.

10. Treasurer's Report on the Accounts of the PA

Stuart's report focussed on:

Funds Held

The Association operates two funds – one for the general contributions (0.03% contribution rate) and a legal fund (0.3% contribution rate). Pensioners need to opt in to contribute and fees are deducted automatically each month from the pension payroll and paid into a NatWest Community Business Account. The Legal fund was established later than the general fund but as the contribution rate is higher, it has grown more quickly. Contributions are collected in at least four currencies Euro, Sterling, Danish Krone and Swedish Krona and there are some minor discrepancies in the figures as exchange rates fluctuate.

How the Funds are Used

The general fund is used to cover the running costs of the Association including attendance at meetings, travel costs and postage etc. In recent years when travel was restricted there was no expenditure from this account. The legal fund is to support Appeals against decisions of the organisation and to engage professional legal support when needed. The more members, the more power to challenge decisions.

Plans & Progress

The plans for the year were –

- To move the historical funds from the ECMWF system (Cirrus) to the newly created NatWest Community Business account. This has been achieved.
- To change the monthly contributions to pay directly to the NatWest account. Payments are now made in two bundles – the Sterling, Danish Krone and Swedish Krona contributions are converted into Sterling at ECMWF and transferred in Sterling. The Euro contributions are collected in Euro and paid into the NatWest account in Euro where they are converted by the bank.
- Change the audit format. As the funds were held at ECMWF they were required to be audited, which Stefan Eberle has completed at the point of truth. Our thanks to Stefan for completing this.

Balances and Projections

- Monthly Contributions: General Fund £150; Legal Fund £1,350
- 2023 Year End: General Fund: ~£17,000; Legal Fund ~£39,000
- 2024 Projected Year End: General Fund: ~£19,000; Legal Fund ~£55,150
- 2025 Projected Year End: General Fund: £20,672; Legal Fund £72,160

10.1. Legal Fund

Stuart explained that during the coming year discussions will be held regarding the contribution rate for the legal fund. Once we have sufficient funds in this account, assuming there is no expenditure, it may be prudent to reduce the contribution rate to a minimum. It will be important to keep the mechanism for collection in place should the need arise to increase the contributions again. Stuart will produce projections for discussion.

10.2. Adoption of the Accounts

Stuart presented the 2023 audited accounts and a vote was held to adopt the accounts. The accounts were adopted.

11. Report by the President on meetings held in the course of the year

Covered in previous agenda items.

12. AOB

12.1. Reminder of PA Committee elections next year

Elections for the PA Committee are held every two years and need to be held in 2025. Details will be sent in due course.

We discussed plans for the ECMWF's 50th Anniversary celebrations and pensioners will be notified of events taking place in Bonn, Bologna and Reading with the opportunity to attend one event.

The Pensioners' Association would also like to mark the occasion of the 50th Anniversary and asked for any contributions to be sent to the Secretary. Photographs would be especially welcome.

We also discussed renaming the Newsletter to The Barometer and there was no objection to this.

13. Closure of the meeting

The meeting concluded at 12:00 noon.

Annex 1

Tribute to Astrid Dinshawe who passed in 2024

I was so sorry to read of the loss of Astrid Dinshawe, and, as I worked with her for a number of years (in the research dept where Lennart Bengtsson was H.R.) I do have many memories of that time.

When my children started school, I went back to office work, and first met Astrid at Mac Fisheries. We got on well, but Astrid (being German) answered an ECMWF advertisement for a secretary with a knowledge of European languages (she spoke three fluently) to work for the head of research (then Lennart Bengtsson), plus other scientists when required. Eventually Astrid was overwhelmed with work and contacted me to see if i could join her (luckily I had taken my French O Level) and, after being interviewed by Lennart, I happily joined her in Bracknell until the newly built centre was opened in Shinfield. We worked together for several years, but then Lennart became director and he and Astrid went to work on the second floor.

Over the years Astrid worked for many of the centre's best known people, such as Tony Hollingsworth, and was known herself for possessing a lovely soprano voice - to hear her sing 'Silent Night' at the Christmas lunch was truly beautiful.

Sadly I had lost touch with Astrid when she left ECMWF. I thought she may have returned to Germany - she had a charming Indian husband - but, sadly, in retirement they both had accidents which limited their mobility. Although I frequently asked, no one had any recent news of them. I'm sad now to hear that Astrid is no longer with us but will always remember her and the many good times we all had.

Maggie Foster-Moore

Astrid had been working for Lennart Bengtsson in Research for a few years when I joined the Centre in 1978 and she was very welcoming to new staff. After a while, we both joined a group that met at lunchtimes, refreshing our knowledge of the French language. One year, we all went on a weekend trip to Paris and Astrid and I shared a hotel room. We really enjoyed that trip, especially the last meal with impromptu dancing in a restaurant!

When Astrid moved with Lennart to the Director's office, she remained a supportive and helpful colleague. That situation was the same when she returned to Research to work with Tony Hollingsworth.

I remember Astrid had a lovely singing voice which she used at various times, including at the dinners at the end of major conferences or various events in the Centre's restaurant.

Linda Baker

Annex 2

Tribute to Keith Fielding who passed away in 2024 – written by Manuel Fuentes

In memory of our dear friend Keith Fielding

When I arrived at the Centre almost 30 years ago, Keith Fielding was already a member of the Meteorological Applications Section, in charge of the Data Services 'Team', a one-person team.

Keith was always very meticulous, very careful that volumes would be exact to the byte, and always put Data Services customers first. He would go the extra mile in trying to help them, document all the datasets available and procedures for analysts and users.

Keith retired on 30th April 2010, and that was the moment when he focused on one of our shared passions, the game of Golf. Together with a group of friends of the Metapps Section, we created in 2005 a small golf society, the MGM. We shared so many good moments with Keith in Outings playing for the Centre's tournaments like the Paddy O'Sullivan Cup, the Director's Cup, the International, or golf trips within the UK and Europe. We all remember those times when it was either too hot for Keith to continue playing, or that part of the course of which Keith 'had enough' : he would pick the ball, announce a 'blob' and peacefully walk to the next tee as if nothing had happened and try again to see whether the next hole would bring better luck.

We lost contact with Keith few years ago, during Covid. We were fearing the worst and are very sad that it has now been confirmed. Rest in Peace!

These are messages from some friends:

Keith was an honest decent man. Always keen to help and a man you can trust and really on. Excellent colleague.

He was always eager to participate in social events from sports to outings and was really loved. We have been missing him for a while already. God rest his soul.

He was one of the kindest people I remember at the centre. I did not know him well enough to write more, but one observation I made was that he was clearly underestimated because of his quiet ways.

I have known Keith for many years and since our retirement we kept in touch through our MGM golf outings and occasional telephone calls. The last time I heard from him was during Covid-19 lockdown when he was in Manchester and mentioned to come down to Reading as soon as it was possible. Sadly that has never happened. All these years myself and his MGM buddies were trying to find what happened to him but in vain.

Keith was a kind, honest, respectful friend and he will be greatly missed.

Rest in Peace my dear friend.

Annex 3

ECMWF PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION



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**Agenda for the seventeenth AGM of the Pensioners' Association,
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(Coffee on arrival)

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3. Presentation by John Parsons – AAPOCAD (the Association of Pensioned Staff of the Co-ordinated Organisations and of their Dependants)
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5. Adoption of the Report of the sixteenth AGM, held on 24 November 2023
6. Report by the Chair of the Staff Association on activities during the year
7. Report by the PA President on activities since the last AGM
8. Report on co-ordination by Alain Bataille
9. Report by the head of HR
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 - 9.3. Progress with a retirement process and pre-retirement webinar
 - 9.4. Report on health insurance (Cigna) matters
10. Treasurer's Report on the Accounts of the PA
 - 10.1. Legal Fund – Update on current status
 - 10.2. Adoption of the Accounts
11. Report by the President on meetings held in the course of the year
12. AOB
 - 12.1. Reminder of PA Committee elections next year
13. Closure of the meeting

Annex 4

ECMWF Pensioners Association – 2024 AGM

Statement of accounts for year ending 31/12/23

Audit of contributions managed in Cirrus

ECMWF Pensioners Association

		PA account	Legal fees	total		PA account	Legal fees	total
		in local currency	account	in local currency		in GBP	account	in GBP
Opening Balance per 1 January 2023	in GBP	£ 14,123.91	£ 21,628.75	£ 35,752.66		£ 14,123.91	£ 21,628.75	£ 35,752.66
	in EUR	€ 1,002.59	€ 1,535.32	€ 2,537.91		£ 853.72	£ 1,307.34	£ 2,161.06
	in SEK	SEK 1,880.29	SEK 2,879.39	SEK 4,759.68		£ 153.96	£ 235.76	£ 389.72
	in DKK	DKK 115.00	DKK 176.10	DKK 291.10		£ 13.18	£ 20.19	£ 33.37
						£ 15,144.77	£ 23,192.04	£ 38,336.81
2023 Contributions	in GBP	£ 1,465.76	£ 13,191.84	£ 14,657.60		£ 1,465.76	£ 13,191.84	£ 14,657.60
	in EUR	€ 294.52	€ 2,650.66	€ 2,945.18		£ 255.92	£ 2,303.32	£ 2,559.24
	in SEK	SEK 351.67	SEK 3,165.05	SEK 3,516.72		£ 26.56	£ 239.08	£ 265.64
	in DKK	DKK 20.99	DKK 188.89	DKK 209.88		£ 2.44	£ 22.00	£ 24.44
						£ 1,750.69	£ 15,756.23	£ 17,506.92
Closing Balance per 31 December 2023	in GBP	£ 15,589.67	£ 34,820.59	£ 50,410.26		£ 15,589.67	£ 34,820.59	£ 50,410.26
	in EUR	€ 1,297.11	€ 4,185.98	€ 5,483.09		£ 1,109.64	£ 3,610.66	£ 4,720.30
	in SEK	SEK 2,231.96	SEK 6,044.44	SEK 8,276.40		£ 180.52	£ 474.84	£ 655.36
	in DKK	DKK 135.99	DKK 364.99	DKK 500.98		£ 15.63	£ 42.18	£ 57.81
						£ 16,895.46	£ 38,948.27	£ 55,843.73

I confirm that the above amounts have been credited to the ECMWF Pensioners Association accounts, and that as of 31st December 2023 the total balance of £55,843.73 agrees with the total shown for the Pensioner Association accounts held within the Centre's accounting system.

Stefan Eberle 25/11/2024
Stefan Eberle, Head of Internal Audit

For information: Amounts transferred to the PA's NatWest account on 12 August 2024

in GBP	£ 15,589.67	£ 34,820.59	£ 50,410.26	£ 15,589.67	£ 34,820.59	£ 50,410.26
in EUR	€ 1,297.11	€ 4,185.98	€ 5,483.09			
in SEK	SEK 2,231.96	SEK 6,044.44	SEK 8,276.40	£ 173.97	£ 471.13	£ 645.10
in DKK	DKK 135.99	DKK 364.99	DKK 500.98	£ 15.06	£ 40.41	£ 55.47
				£ 15,778.70	£ 35,332.13	£ 51,110.83

Consolidated accounts deposited in NatWest account

Cirrus accounts			
	PA fund	Legal fund	Total

2023 opening balances	£15,144.77	£23,192.04	£38,336.81
2023 contributions GBP	£1,494.76	£13,452.92	£14,947.68
2023 contributions EUR (converted)	£255.92	£2,303.32	£2,559.24
2023 closing balance	£16,895.46	£38,948.27	£55,843.73
(ECMWF EUR FX rate 0.8689)			
Transfer to NatWest acct			
GBP contributions	£15,778.70	£35,332.13	£51,110.83
EUR	€1,297.11	€4,185.98	€5,483.09
EUR -> GBP	£1,079.05	£3,482.25	£4,561.30
Payments received NatWest account			
GBP	£51,110.83		
EUR	£4,561.30		
FX rate	0.831885		
2023 closing balances	£16,857.75	£38,814.38	£55,672.13

Note: Due to the difference in GBP/EUR exchange rates used by ECMWF to calculate GBP value of funds for FY 2023 versus rate applied by NatWest when funds deposited (cells highlighted in green and blue), there is a difference between the ECMWF audited figures and the consolidated funds statement.



27th November 2024

Stuart Mitchell, PA Treasurer