

## **In this issue**

Pension increases

Advisory Panel – call for nominations

Introducing the team

Win with our word search

Useful contacts

# Welcome

**Welcome to the first edition of *The Scribe*, the newsletter designed exclusively for retired members of the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund. Since issuing a copy of *The Quill* to retired members in 2008 it has become clear that an entirely different and separately identifiable newsletter would be a better way of informing you about current pension issues.**

2008/9 has been an eventful year for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) with the implementation of new scheme regulations from 1 April 2008 and the ongoing reports in the news about the financial downturn in the markets plunging us into uncertain times. So it is good to know that your

Local Government pension is safe. Read more about this on page 12.

In this opening issue you can meet the administration team who are responsible for looking after your pension on page 8, enabling you to put a face to the name! We have also included the latest news on the pensions increase award on page 3 which is payable from April 2009 and you could be in with a chance of winning a £25 gift voucher for Marks & Spencer by entering our Spring word search competition on page 11.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of *The Scribe*. If you would like to know more about any of the issues covered please do not hesitate to contact the Pension Team – we will be happy to help.

Our details can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

Councillor John Lenton  
*Chairman, Berkshire Pension Fund and  
Berkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panels*



# Pension increases

Your Berkshire pension is increased annually in line with the Retail Prices Index (RPI). The 2009 increase applies from Monday 6 April 2009 and is based on the RPI as at September 2008 which was 5%. If your pension began before 21 April 2008, you will receive the full 5% increase.

A separate letter detailing how the increase affects your own pension is enclosed with this newsletter. If your pension began on or after 22 April 2008, you will receive a proportionate increase in line with the following table.

From	To	Percentage increase
Pensions commencing before 22 April 2008	21 April 2008	5.00%
22 April 2008	21 May 2008	4.58%
22 May 2008	21 June 2008	4.17%
22 June 2008	21 July 2008	3.75%
22 July 2008	21 August 2008	3.33%
22 August 2008	21 September 2008	2.92%
22 September 2008	21 October 2008	2.50%
22 October 2008	21 November 2008	2.08%
22 November 2008	21 December 2008	1.67%
22 December 2008	21 January 2009	1.25%
22 January 2009	21 February 2009	0.83%
22 February 2009	21 March 2009	0.42%

**Please note:** If you are a retired member under age 55 you will not receive an increase on your pension until your 55th birthday, unless you retired through ill-health.

## Important changes to your pensions increase letter

With effect from April 2010, we are planning to combine your own personal pensions increase information with your Spring 2010 edition of *The Scribe* newsletter. This will mean that you will have your own personalised version of *The Scribe* newsletter, containing your individual pension figures for the 2010/2011 tax year.

# A note about Guaranteed Minimum Pensions (GMPs)



## **What is a GMP?**

The GMP (Guaranteed Minimum Pension) is the minimum amount of pension that would have been paid by the State pension\*, had you not been contracted-out as a member of the LGPS. A GMP becomes payable from State Pension Age and is split into two elements: pre-6 April 1988, and post-5 April 1988. The GMP is not an additional amount to the benefits paid by the LGPS but forms part of those benefits

## **How did I get an entitlement to a GMP?**

Any person who was a member of the Scheme between 6 April 1978 and 5 April 1997 who paid full-rate, contracted-out National Insurance contributions will have a GMP entitlement, providing that they are entitled to a State pension in their own right.

## **How are GMP increases calculated?**

All increases due on the pre-6 April 1988 GMP are paid by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) as part of the State benefit. The Berkshire Pension Fund pays increases up to a maximum of 3% on the post-5 April 1988 GMP. Where pensions increases are over 3% the balance is paid by the DWP.

*\*now called the State Second Pension or S2P, but previously called the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme or SERPS*

# Pension pay dates for your diary...

Your pension payments are made to your bank or building society account on the last working day of every month with the exception of December when payment is made before Christmas.

The payment dates for 2009 / 2010 are:

---

Thursday, 30 April 2009

---

Friday, 29 May 2009

---

Tuesday, 30 June 2009

---

Friday, 31 July 2009

---

Friday, 28 August 2009

---

Wednesday, 30 September 2009

---

Friday, 30 October 2009

---

Monday, 30 November 2009

---

Tuesday, 22 December 2009

---

Friday, 29 January 2010

---

Friday, 26 February 2010

---

Wednesday, 31 March 2010

---



## A note about payslips and P60s...

You will only receive a payslip in the months where your net pay varies by 50 pence or more from the previous month. Normally, therefore, you will receive a payslip in April and May as a result of the pensions increase being applied to your pension and/or a new tax code being issued on your behalf by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). You will also receive a P60 each year setting out your pay and tax details for the whole year. We will be issuing your P60 for 2009 before 31 May, in accordance with HMRC regulations.

# Living overseas

**If you have retired and live abroad, you may find it more convenient to have your pension paid into your local bank account, rather than your UK bank account.**

The Bank of Scotland provides a service through the Transcontinental Automated Payment Service (TAPS), by which you can request to have your pension paid into an account in your country of residence.

If you choose to have your pension paid through TAPS, and the facility is available in your country of residence, the Bank of Scotland will automatically credit your pension to your personal bank account in your local currency.

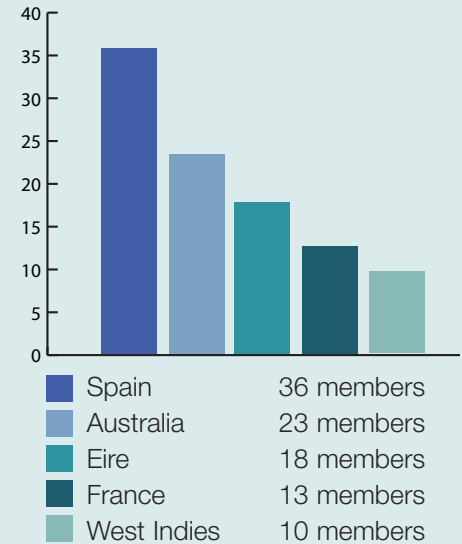
However, please note that not all countries are able to offer the TAPS facility and if your pension is paid through TAPS your monthly payment may vary due to the exchange rate. All administration charges for this service will be met by the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund. For further information on the TAPS service please contact the Pension Team on 0118 955 9001 or email [info@berkshirerpensions.org.uk](mailto:info@berkshirerpensions.org.uk)

## Contacting us from overseas

To contact the Berkshire Pension Fund from overseas, the dial code you need to use is +44 followed by 118 955 9001.

Alternatively you can email us at [info@berkshirerpensions.org.uk](mailto:info@berkshirerpensions.org.uk)

The Berkshire Pension Fund currently pays over 230 pensions into overseas bank accounts. Our records show that the five most popular places to retire are:



# Pension Fund Advisory Panel

## Call for nominations

In our Autumn 2008 issue of *The Quill* we reported that the Berkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel resolved to increase its members by including two representatives from the broader membership of the Fund. We invited Scheme members to complete a questionnaire to canvas views on how you would like these representatives selected.

Following an analysis of the questionnaire results, it has been agreed that there should be two representatives added to the Advisory Panel, one active and one retired or deferred Fund member. The panel representatives will be self-nominated and a maximum of four candidates will be short-listed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Pension Fund Advisory Panel. Details of the short-listed candidates will be included in the Autumn 2009 issue of *The Scribe*.

Nominations are now open and will close on **31 July 2009**. If you would like to be considered for a place on the Berkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel please complete the tear-off slip opposite. Please also attach a summary on a separate page explaining why you think you should be considered for the role (maximum 250 words). If you would like further information on the role of the Advisory Panel or on the nomination process, please contact Nick Greenwood, Pension Fund Manager, on 01628 796701 or email [nick.greenwood@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:nick.greenwood@rbwm.gov.uk)

## SELF-NOMINATION FOR MEMBER REPRESENTATION OF THE BERKSHIRE PENSION FUND ADVISORY PANEL

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Former employer \_\_\_\_\_

Nominations must be received by 31 July 2009. Please return this form to Joanne Brazier, Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund, 3rd Floor, Thames Tower, 37-45 Station Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 1LX. Remember to include a separate sheet explaining why you think you should be considered for member representation of the Pension Fund Advisory Panel (maximum 250 words).





# Your award-winning Fund

We are delighted to announce that the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund won the Best Defined Benefit Communications (public) award at the **Pension Scheme of the Year Awards 2008**, held on Thursday 11 September 2008. The award recognises the new communications strategy which the Fund introduced in early 2008, which included the launch of our brand new website and a complete overhaul of our scheme literature to coincide with



the new-look LGPS Regulations which took effect on 1 April 2008.

We were also nominated in three categories at the **Financial Times Pensions and Investment UK Scheme Communications Awards 2008**, held on Friday 5 December 2008. These awards recognise the crucial role of communications in the efficient running of occupational pension schemes.

The Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund was nominated for our scheme guides and factsheets, magazine and website. We were highly commended in both the Scheme Booklet and Magazine categories.

**Kevin Taylor (centre) accepts the communications award from Richard Lockwood of Morgan Stanley and Michael Portillo.**

# Introducing the team...

We thought you might like to meet the Pension Team who are responsible for looking after your pension.

The team is led by Kevin Taylor, Pension Administration Manager and his deputy Sandy Rice. Between us we have over 160 years of pension experience, ensuring that your pension is in safe hands. The longest serving member of the team is Sandy Rice with just over 27 years of pension service under her belt.

If you would like to speak to us to discuss your pension or have any general queries about the LGPS please do not hesitate to contact us on 0845 6027237 or email [info@berkshirepensions.org.uk](mailto:info@berkshirepensions.org.uk) – we will be happy to help!



*Back row (L-R) Val Kirby, Joanne Brazier, Philip Boyton, Rachael Granger, Alison Grover.  
Middle row (L-R) Jane Young, Vicky Harverson, Annette Keating, Maria Richards.  
Front row (L-R) Sandy Rice, Kevin Taylor.*

# Pension Fair and Annual Meeting 2008

**The Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund's Pension Fair and annual meeting were held on Thursday 23 October 2008 at Reading Town Hall.**

The meeting was chaired by Councillor John Lenton, Chairman of the Berkshire Pension Panel and Berkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel. A number of short presentations were delivered by Nick Greenwood, Pension Fund Manager, Kevin Taylor, Pension Administration Manager, and Graham Muir, Actuary to the Fund.

Both events were open to all members of the Berkshire Pension Fund and were very well attended.

Representatives from the Prudential and the Department for Work and Pensions also joined the

administrators from the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund, providing further information on Additional Voluntary Contributions and State Pension benefits.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those members who attended these events. We look forward to hosting the next event in 2009.

## Tell us what you think

We would welcome your views on *The Scribe* or about the service we provide in general, so please feel free to contact us (see back cover for contact details).

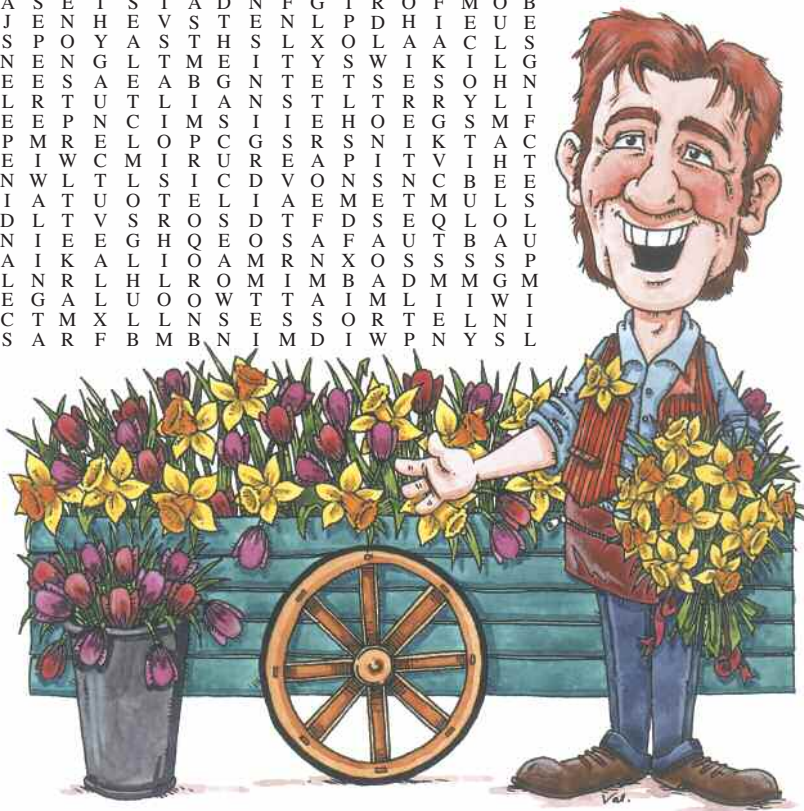
### *A date for your diary*

*The Berkshire Pension Fair and Annual Meeting for 2009 will be held on Thursday 12 November at Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell.*



# Spring competition

<b>Blooms</b>	A	S	E	I	S	I	A	D	N	F	G	L	T	R	O	F	M	O	B
<b>Bouquet</b>	J	S	P	O	Y	A	S	T	H	E	S	I	N	L	X	P	O	L	A
<b>Bucket</b>	N	E	N	G	A	L	T	M	E	G	A	N	T	S	T	W	I	K	I
<b>Bulbs</b>	L	E	R	T	U	N	C	L	I	M	S	I	E	T	H	O	E	S	R
<b>Catkins</b>	P	M	R	E	L	O	P	C	R	E	S	I	R	A	P	S	I	N	I
<b>Celandine</b>	E	N	W	I	L	T	O	S	I	U	C	R	D	V	A	O	N	T	N
<b>Crocuses</b>	I	A	T	T	O	R	E	L	S	E	I	A	V	E	M	E	T	M	B
<b>Daffodils</b>	D	L	T	V	G	H	O	E	D	T	S	F	D	S	E	Q	L	O	L
<b>Daisies</b>	N	I	K	E	A	L	I	R	O	O	E	A	M	R	N	X	O	S	S
<b>Flowers</b>	A	I	R	L	H	L	O	R	O	M	I	M	A	B	A	D	M	M	G
<b>Market</b>	E	G	A	L	L	O	L	O	N	S	T	S	O	I	M	T	L	E	I
<b>Petals</b>	C	T	M	X	L	L	O	N	S	E	S	O	I	R	T	E	N	I	L
<b>Primroses</b>	S	A	R	F	B	L	M	B	N	S	I	M	D	I	W	P	N	Y	S
<b>Shoots</b>																			
<b>Spring</b>																			
<b>Stallholder</b>																			
<b>Tulips</b>																			
<b>Violets</b>																			



For a chance to win a £25 Marks & Spencer gift voucher kindly donated by our publishers, Wordshop, why not have a go at our Spring competition word search.

Please send your entry to Joanne Brazier, Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund, 3rd Floor, Thames Tower, 37-45 Station Road, Reading, RG1 1LX. Please send your entry to us by 31 May 2009. The winner will be drawn at random from the correct entries received. Good luck!

Surname

First name

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr)

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

# Reply to recent press comment on LGPS investment risk

**The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead notes recent press comment (in particular Channel 4 on 9 March 2009 and BBC Radio 5 on 11 March) regarding investment risk taken by the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The Royal Borough is the administering authority for the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund and takes the view that all risks within the pension fund should be managed, including investment risk.**

Looking specifically at investment risk, the Royal Borough commissioned a detailed asset allocation study in March 2008 and in May 2008 the Pension Fund Panel agreed an asset diversification program to reduce the Fund's exposure to equities. Sadly, as a public sector fund we are required

by the European Union to follow an unduly bureaucratic public tender process to select investment managers. This process was started in June 2008 and will be completed by the end of March 2009.

Currently the Fund has 63% in equities (listed and private equity). It is proposed that the Fund's allocation to equities be reduced as diversification is implemented.

Diversification will be achieved by investing across a number of different asset classes where, historically, returns have not been linked to equity stockmarket movements. The Royal Borough notes that over the last six months virtually all 'risky' assets have fallen in response to the global financial crisis triggered by the US sub-prime mortgage problems.



The Fund currently has no investment in hedge funds as until recently the Fund was not satisfied that it could achieve satisfactory visibility of underlying holdings and hence effective risk management.

The LGPS remains open to new members and offers Local Authority employees an inflation-linked pension linked to their final salary. Consequently, any investment strategy must have an emphasis on investment in assets whose returns in the long run are expected to match inflation. Investment in index-linked gilts is not attractive at current levels due to their low yields; indeed to do so would require Local Authorities' contributions to the Scheme to rise to unacceptably high levels.

Investment risk is not, however, the only risk faced by Local Authorities in managing their pension funds; a recent survey of pension funds identified longevity as a major issue. The Royal Borough is pleased to confirm that it is in advance discussions regarding a possible

longevity risk management solution and will undertake a detailed cost/benefit analysis on the proposed solution over the next few months.

Other risks faced by the LGPS include interest rates and inflation, and again the Royal Borough is investigating ways of managing and mitigating these risks.

**For further information please contact:**

**Cllr John Lenton,  
Chairman Pension Fund and  
Pension Fund Advisory Panels,  
01784 482001**

**Nick Greenwood,  
Pension Fund Manager,  
01628 796701**

## Annual Report and Accounts

**The Fund's 2007/2008 Annual Report and Accounts, which contains detailed information on the investments and performance of the Fund, has been published. The report is available via our website at [www.berkshirepensions.org.uk/annual\\_accounts\\_and\\_reports.htm](http://www.berkshirepensions.org.uk/annual_accounts_and_reports.htm)**

Alternatively you can request a hard copy to be posted to you by contacting the Pension Team on 0845 6027237 or email [info@berkshirepensions.org.uk](mailto:info@berkshirepensions.org.uk)

# Useful contacts

You may find these contacts for external organisations within the pensions industry useful:

**The Pension Service** - offering advice on your State Pension

**Telephone:** 0845 606 0265

**Website:** [www.thepensionservice.gov.uk](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk)

**The Pension Tracing Service** - a free service for tracing old or lost pensions

**Telephone:** 0845 6002 537

**Website:** [www.thepensionservice.gov.uk](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk)

**Direct Gov** - offering public service information

**Website:** [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

**Age Concern**

**Telephone:** 0800 009966

**Website:** [www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk)

**Age Concern Berkshire**

**Telephone:** 0118 9594242

**Website:** [www.ageconcernberkshire.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernberkshire.org.uk)

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** - offering advice for pensioners and people planning their retirement

**Website:** [www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/penret/](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/penret/)

**Local Authority contacts in Berkshire**

**Bracknell Forest Borough Council**

**Telephone:** 01344 352000

**Website:** [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

**Reading Borough Council**

**Telephone:** 0118 9390900

**Website:** [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk)

**Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**

**Telephone:** 01628 683800

**Website:** [www.rbwm.gov.uk](http://www.rbwm.gov.uk)

**Slough Borough Council**

**Telephone:** 01753 475111

**Website:** [www.slough.gov.uk](http://www.slough.gov.uk)

**West Berkshire Council**

**Telephone:** 01635 42400

**Website:** [www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

**Wokingham Borough Council**

**Telephone:** 0118 9746000

**Website:** [www.wokingham.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk)

# Keep in touch

## Changing your address

If you change address, name and/or partnership status, please notify the Pension Team immediately. If you are changing address we can accept an email as a suitable notification, providing that both the old and new address details are supplied. Address details can also be amended over the telephone once a number of security checks have been undertaken.

If you are changing your name and/or partnership status we will require sight of the appropriate documentation (photocopied documents are acceptable).

## Changing your bank details

Unfortunately, for security reasons, we are unable to accept notifications of bank changes over the phone or by email. Therefore please confirm the new details in writing to:

Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund, 3rd Floor,  
Thames Tower, 37-45 Station Road, Reading,  
Berkshire RG1 1LX.



## Tax office information

If you have a query about your tax code or tax payments, contact the tax office on 0845 3667830 (overseas members should dial +44 292 0501290). You need to quote the Berkshire Pension Fund's PAYE Reference Number (070 / R5200) and your National Insurance number. Or, you can write to them at:

HM Revenue and Customs, Devon Area,  
Longbrook House, New North Road,  
Exeter EX4 4UD

# Contact us

We hope you enjoyed reading this first issue of *The Scribe*. If you have any queries or comments about the articles in this newsletter, please contact the Pension Team:

Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund, 3rd Floor, Thames Tower, 37-45 Station Road, Reading RG1 1LX

Helpdesk: 0845 602 7237

Overseas telephone number: +44 118 955 9001

(telephone lines are open Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:00pm)

Fax: 0118 950 2672

Email: [info@berkshirepensions.org.uk](mailto:info@berkshirepensions.org.uk)

If you would prefer to visit us in person to discuss your pension, you are welcome to call in to our office Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

Please note that our '0845' helpdesk number is now a free-call number from BT landlines.

*The Scribe is printed on ClaroSilk, an elemental chlorine-free (ECF) paper sourced from certified, sustainably managed forests.*



If you would like this newsletter in large print, audio or Braille format please contact Joanne Brazier on 0118 955 9009 or email [joanne.brazier@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.brazier@rbwm.gov.uk)

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is the administering authority to the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund.