**Old Grey Matter – May 2023**

**68 is too late Campai**gn

At a campaign rally held earlier this month, Jan Shortt, general secretary of the National Pensioners Convention, said: “Workers of today are the pensioners of tomorrow. Raising the retirement age when the health of the nation is at its worst is unacceptable. It would show a lack of commitment by Government to tackle issues that impact adversely on older people. We’ve got 2.1m pensioners living in poverty – and that figure is steadily rising, as pensioners struggle with the cost of living. We’ve got failing health and care services. These are all the fault of the government and their policy decisions, so it’s up to them to do something about it.” Jan called on the government to ‘sit round the table’ to have a national conversation about the future of pensions.

John Trickett MP speaking at the Westminster demonstration said: “I am absolutely opposed to any rise in the state pension age. People in my constituency are living shorter healthy lives, they should not be working longer.” Life expectancy is no longer rising steadily and healthy life expectancy is well below the state pension age. The average healthy life expectancy for men in England is 63.1 years; for women it is 63.8 years.

Caren Evans, Unite National Officer for retired members commented: “The government needs to make it absolutely clear that they will abandon their plans to increase the state pension age and not just postpone it – this is what we’re fighting for. By the time most people are in their early 60s, their health starts to deteriorate,” she said. “They’ve been paying into their pension for years – and this government just wants people to work until they drop. It’s not right.”

Eileen Cawley of the Scottish Pensioners’ Forum said “We all need to work together. We have to fight cuts to our welfare state and challenge Westminster at every turn. It is also vital that more young people get involved in the campaign against state pension rises. Pensioners today don’t actually have to campaign on the state pension age any longer because they’ve got their pension – they’re doing it for the younger generations. And the younger generations are beginning to understand this as we work together more closely. Our fight is their fight.”

Christopher J. Brooks, Chair,

Suffolk, & Anglia Region,

Pensioners Associations(NPC).