



Charity No: 10453081

# ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

## June 2015 Newsletter

# "Islington Giving"

**Kristina Glenn, Director of Cripplegate Foundation speaks at our May meeting**

We were really pleased to have guest speaker, Kristina Glen, Director of Cripplegate Foundation.

Cripplegate has been helping poor people since 1500 when it was founded with an initial donation of £40, but Kristina is its first woman director.

There was financial help, apprenticeships as well as donations of shoes and clothes; but this kind of assistance ended after the Second World War when legislation brought in the welfare state.

Today the charity is only Islington-based on the following declaration:

*"We transform lives for people in Islington. We're independent and trusted. The money we give improves lives for local people building a better future for us all."*

Kristina thanked Islington Pensioners Forum for all its work over the years bringing old people together; the charity was pleased to be able to assist with this work.

She said "Islington can be deceptive – there are big differences between the rich and poor parts of the borough – this inequality has grown over recent years with people in some areas needing to use food banks while on Upper Street others will pay £4 for a single cup of coffee!

And so in 2010 a consortium of charities including Cripplegate launched "Islington Giving" tackling poverty and creating opportunity in a divided bor-

ough where rich and poor residents live side by side; Islington:

- has the second highest level of child poverty in London, with 15,000 children living in families where nobody works;
- has the highest level of depression in England and the shortest life expectancy of men in London;
- has 18,000 residents with no formal qualifications and the least open space in England.

As well as Cripplegate, "Islington Giving" involves: the Richard Cloudesley's Charity the Morris Charitable Trust the Breadsticks Foundation, the City Bridge Trust and the "family of 50 projects!"

The six trusts and foundations work together to magnify their impact, tackling poverty, confronting isolation and investing in young people.

Local businesses are invited to make a difference in the borough and achievements so far are impressive:

- £3.5m of grants in 3.5 years,
- over 1,500 volunteers, and programmes brokering new partnerships between funders, business and residents;
- also, "Islington Giving-Big" bringing skilled volunteers, mentoring and jobs.

Kristina gave us an insight into the historic and current work of Cripplegate Foundation. Our thanks for the help they give us.

*Dear Friends,*

### **Annual subscription £5**

*Please don't forget that there is a cost to producing the monthly Newsletter and posting it to lots of those who cannot receive it on email so the £5 annual subscription is really important.*

*We have received this from under 50 members so far this year, so please make sure that you ensure that you pay yours -- remember it is less than 50p a month! You can give it in at the office, or at the monthly meeting, or you can post a cheque or set up a Bank Standing Order (see form on back)*

*Best wishes,*

*Dot Gibson - SECRETARY*

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

What a remarkable result the election produced, which clearly most people did not expect.

Most of us were fooled into believing it would be a close call. How could the polls be that wrong?

We expected the Labour Party to lose seats to the SNP in Scotland, which they did. The Lib Dems were decimated, resulting in their votes being evenly spread mainly between Tory and Labour; the surprise was the number of votes, around 3.8 million, for UKIP, although they never produced the seats.

Trying to understand what this mish-mash will eventually turn up is another mystery and wild guess. The Tories will be able to rule without much interference, so expect them to move quickly on their manifesto, while the many new MPs are trying to unpack and understand the strange rules and the system.

We know the forthcoming attractions do not look good for pensioners, unemployed people and those with low wages. Let us hope the opposition MPs will be on their toes, and understand what is being thrown at them, not like the opposition leading up to the election.

It was the Labour Party's big mistake when they allowed and did very little to expose the myth that the recession was entirely their fault. They should have

shouted much louder clearly emphasising that the bankers and a world recession were to blame. This allowed the opposing parties, through the media to force this into people's minds -- the biggest con-trick of the campaign.

The public believed it, we now have the result. The "economy", a simple word that was used to defeat a major political party, every country in the world needs a balanced economy. 'What's new?'

I even laugh at the other simple word that is embedded in people's minds -- "deficit". Good gracious! We were vastly in debt after the last war and I do believe that this debt was paid off only recently.

So the Labour Party through Ed Balls was right when saying the deficit could have been paid off much slower. Where were the voices to shout much louder on this matter?

All this is in the past, many prominent well known people have lost their seats, or resigned. A vast change is taking place politically.

We all have to rethink this change, but the one thing that will not change is the need to campaign about fairness, care and all issues that affect those at the financial low end of society.

Those at the top end will always save their own skin, irrespective of the economy or the deficit.

## GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS

### ISLINGTON NORTH

Labour	Jeremy Corbyn	29,659
Conservative	Alex Burghart	8,465
Green	Caroline Russell	5,043
Liberal Democrat	Julian Gregory	3,984
UKIP	Greg Clough	1,971
SPGB	Bill Martin	112

### ISLINGTON SOUTH & FINSBURY

Labour	Emily Thornberry	22,547
Conservative	Mark Lim	9,839
Liberal Democrat	Terry Stacy	4,829
UKIP	Pete Muswell	3,375
Green	Charlie Kiss	3,371
Canabis is safer than Alcohol	Jay Kirton	309

## ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM SUMMER GARDEN PARTY

SATURDAY 11 JULY FROM 1 p.m. at Highbury View

Entrance: Garden Gate, 87-89 Ronalds Road, N5 1XQ...

COME ALONG AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

ENJOY FOOD, DRINK, MUSIC AND RELAX IN THIS LOVELY GARDEN

# GPs Out-of-hours services

**PUBLIC OR PRIVATE? PUBLIC OR PRIVATE? PUBLIC OR PRIVATE? PUBLIC OR PRIVATE?**

At a meeting of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) the NHS 111 number and the Out-of-Hours Service were on the agenda.

The CCG is offering a contract for a service to cover five boroughs: Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Islington and Haringey and they have already stated that the combined GP surgeries are not big enough to take this on.

Firstly – the Act says that the GPs are responsible, but nothing could be further from the truth!

By law there should be a consultation process, but the CCG decides who it will consult; as a result only 200 people were included and they say that pensioners were included in this. But how many and what questions? Our Forum was never consulted!

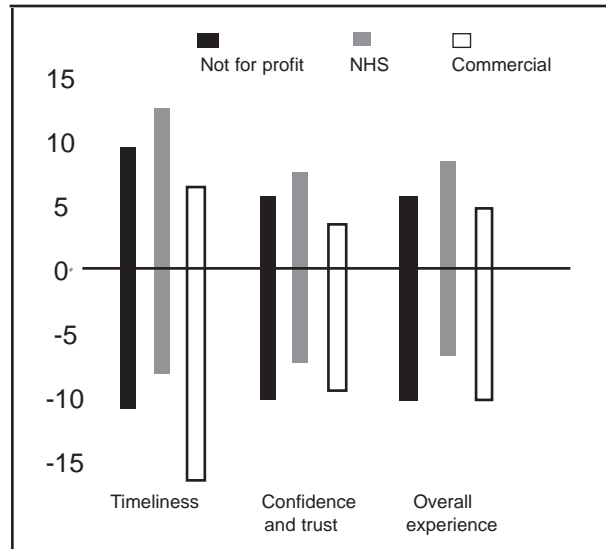
The Islington Keep Our NHS Public presented a 700-strong petition to the CCG, calling for the Out-of-Hours service to be with the GPs and not in the hands of a private company.

There is an urgency because they will have the five-borough contract drawn up by July.

REPORT BY  
PAM ZINKIN

Camden Keep Our NHS Public is seeking to sue the CCG for lack of consultation.

The British Medical Journal reported a consultation of 900,000 Out-of-hours service users, who rated the NHS better than commercial services in every way.



## LETTER: Fixed-term Parliaments - A Good Idea?

The Fixed-term Parliaments Act (FTPA) was introduced by the Coalition government in 2011 to protect the incumbents by setting the period between elections at five years, and fixing the date for the next poll half a decade in advance. The Act substantially changes the rules of politics.

Until 2010, Prime Ministers could call an election when they chose, and if a government fell, we quickly had a general election. The FTPA changes some of these basic principles. Aspects of the Act could raise big constitutional questions in the midst of a major political drama.

Under the FTPA, Parliament's fixed five-year term can only be truncated in two ways.

- if more than two thirds of all MPs vote to call an election, and

- if a specific motion of no confidence is passed and nobody else forms a new government and wins a vote of confidence within 14 days.

Previously, a PM losing a vote of confidence would either resign immediately, handing power to a successor; or stay in as a sort of caretaker government while a second election was held.

The FTPA has big implications for our parliamentarians and party leaderships; and we will only learn how it works when tested in a real situation.

That real situation may be with us soon!

**Peter Crockett**



Oh what a lovely day we all had at Highbury View Sheltered Housing in their garden on 9 May to celebrate the seventieth anniversary of V.E. Day. There was a large selection of food and drink, and the entertainment was excellent. We had the Pearly King and Prince of Finsbury who got us all singing the old songs and three lovely young ladies who were listed as the "Andrew Sisters" who got some of us dancing and doing a barn dance. Our thanks to all those who helped to make it such a wonderful afternoon. **Maisie & Trev.**

## Our officers were made very welcome by Islington Unison's Retired Members' Group

It was with great pleasure that George and Dot attended (as visitors) an Islington Unison Retired Members' Group meeting; we were made very welcome (including partaking of their great buffet!) and were given the opportunity to give them information about the Forum and the National Pensioners Convention. In return Eric Hill the Islington Unison Retired Members' secretary came to our committee meeting.

Unison's Retired Members had their national conference in October 2014 and from Eric's report of this we can see that their thinking is along the same lines as ours on pensions, benefits and care of older people. The following points were made in Eric's much longer report of the conference:

**"Pensions:** The SE region submission included a good outline of how pensions were introduced just over 100 years ago on the basis that income is the biggest determinant of our health. Now employers and government are cutting costs with cheaper pension schemes. The state pension isn't a grace and favour benefit but paid for by contributions. Robber barons are attempting to shift the blame for the economic crisis from the bankers to ordinary people. Conference noted that there continued to be discrimination in both the state and occupational pensions for many of our retired members and women pensioners continued to receive a much smaller pension, on average, than men.

**"Benefits and Incomes:** There were motions on the Winter Fuel Allowance. Conference was appalled that in Britain 31,000 pensioners died of cold-related diseases which could be avoided if they had sufficient money to pay for gas, electricity etc. to keep warm... Conference called upon the union's National Executive Committee to campaign urgently for an increase in the Winter Fuel Allowance to £700 for the over 80's households and £500 for under 80's

households as well as building a campaign to get energy companies to reduce their prices and curb their huge profits.

**"Bus passes:** Conference [agreed it was necessary] to campaign hard to keep them and [realised that] pensioners' ability to get on local transport at no cost is fundamental to living in a democracy but this is now seriously under threat. [For instance] in Somerset 60 communities have no transport. This means isolation and vulnerability for pensioners. One of the main benefits of the bus pass is social

inclusion which contributes to keeping well both physically and mentally. . . . contact with families and friends engaging with community-related activities. The abolition of rural bus services is a cynical and despicable act of meanness. A Nottingham delegate spoke of zero bus services after 6.30 p.m.

**"Care of Older People:** [the discussion on this issue was

passionate, with many personal experiences]. Speakers from the West Midlands talked of commissioning group denials of privatisation when all the area's care homes are privately run. Many carers are relatives and unpaid. A delegate described the emotional trauma of a 30-year marriage partner no longer able to recognise his wife. Good quality care should be provided by staff who are not exploited. Conference was concerned that the principal aim driving the government's approach to integration [of health and social care services] is not service quality but that pooling budgets will save money and its analysis that integration is quite compatible with competition. [Conference agreed] to seek the backing of the whole union and other relevant bodies in mounting a major campaign aimed at improving payments and other help for carers so that the union's retired members and all other elderly people needing care can have their needs met without their carers being exploited."



The Retired Members Group is committed to uniting the generations



**See page five for the full story!**



Jeremy Corbyn MP, speaking with (from left to right) Phil Phillips, lifelong friend, presiding, George Durack, Neil Duncan-Jordan (national officer of the NPC), Rodney Bickerstaffe (formerly general secretary of Unison and president of the NPC) and Alison Purshouse (NPC office manager)

## Joe Harris Remembered. . . . .

Over 60 family, friends and comrades packed into the hall at the Italian Centre in Canonbury Road on Sunday 11 May to celebrate the life of Joe Harris, previous chair of IPF, and secretary of the NPC.

It was a great occasion with speeches, music and wine! All against the backdrop of Ed Hall's historic banner celebrating 100 years of the state pension. Joe wrote the book "Paupers' Progress" especially for the centenary. He was instrumental in highlighting the fact that "after 100 years, it's a national disgrace that at least 2.5 million older people are still living below the official poverty line. . ."

Joe, widely respected for his intellect and campaigning spirit had left every speaker with an interesting and often amusing story to tell about him.

## Well, that takes the biscuit!



**Playtime for Seniors . . . on 27 May Eddie Zissler took us through our paces, and the result was a batch of really delicious biscuits. We're going to have another go at the first "Playtime" in July (the 8th) to make some biscuits for our Garden Party (see page two), and before that more "Playtime" days in June: 10 and 24**

### There are lots of other things to do:

**Tuesday 2nd June:** Old Fire Station, Mayton Street, N7: 1.00 p.m. DANCE

**Every Tuesday:** 2, 9,16,23 & 30th: Drover's, North Road: 1.30 p.m. EXERCISE CLASS

**Every Thursday:** 4,11,18 & 25th: North Library, Manor Gardens, N7 KEEP FIT £3 - check for times

**Every Friday:** 5,12,19 & 26th: Hilldrop Comm'y Centre, Hildrop Road, N7 4.00 p.m. COMPUTER CLASS

**Tuesday 30th June:** West Library, Bridgeman Road, N7 2.00-4.00 p.m. TEA DANCE

# INFORMATION

Every Monday BINGO	At the IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN Ring Ann for more information 020 7226 7687
Every Wednesday Meditation	Meditation with Marie 11.30 am to 12.30 pm
Thursday 18th June <b>FORUM MEETING</b>	10.30 am to 12.30 pm Islington Town Hall. Speaker: <i>(to be announced)</i>
Wednesday 10th and Wednesday 24th June <b>PLAY-TIME FOR SENIORS</b>	1.00 p.m. At the IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN Things to do, food to eat, and have a chat with friends. . . . .
Saturday 11th July <b>GARDEN PARTY</b>	From 1.00 p.m. The garden at Highbury View. Entrance: Garden Gate 87-89 Ronalds Road, N5 1XQ. Come along and bring your friends and family Food, drink, music. . . . .

**We want to hear from you.**

- Write to Islington Pensioners Forum, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
- Call us on: 020 7226 7687 Email us at: ipf@talktalkbusiness.net
- Our office is open from 10.30 a.m. -- 2.30 p.m., Tuesday to Thursday, but please call first.
- Sign up for our online newsletter on our website: www.islingtonpensionersforum.co.uk

**Presidents:** Jeremy Corbyn MP & Lord Smith of Finsbury **Chair:** George Durack **Secretary:** Dot Gibson  
Charity No: 10453081 We are supported by the Cripplegate Foundation and Islington Council

## Annual subscription to Islington Pensioners Forum £5 Send a cheque or pay by cash or use this Standing Order Form

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Islington Pensioners Forum, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN

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From: (your name and address).....

Please pay the sum of £..... on the ..... day of ..... (month and year) and then yearly thereafter

From my account: Name.....account number.....

To Islington Pensioners Forum, account number 50014279, Co-op Bank, sort code: 08-90-33

Signed..... Date.....