



Charity No: 1043081

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

November/December 2015 Newsletter



All hands on board for the IPF Christmas Stall Islington Green in December



Dear Members,

We can now confirm that we will have a stall for three days at the Islington Green Christmas Fair (contact office for details). But don't get worried -- the stall will have a roof and will be heated!

Some knitted goods have been trickling in during the year, and now we need to take stock, do the packing and pricing and build up our stock of goods. So please get cracking and put your thinking-caps on; so some more knitting or open up your sewing machine, or make Christmas cards, but also look out suitable goods for the stall.. . for instance some nice toiletries?

We have lots of ideas for things to do. So this will be an item on the agenda of our Forum meeting, and we have dedicated sessions with lunch provided on Wednesdays 28th October, 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th November, and 2nd, 6th December 12.30 pm at the IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN

*Many thanks to one and all,
George Durack CHAIR, Dot Gibson SECRETARY
On behalf of the Executive Committee*

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Housing in and around London is a property-owners' paradise, it has allowed:

- those with the means to own property, to sell and rent out at exorbitant sums of money;
- the very wealthy to buy a vast amount of London prime property (which is often left empty) and to sell for massive profit later.

This is the result of the present Government's policy, allowing tax incentives to those with cash to jump into the housing crisis in and around London.

We have become the world's most expensive city regarding property, we are being led up the garden path, when our Prime Minister shouts from the rostrum "everyone should own their own home"!

This is crazy nonsense!

Germany have a 60% renting population, and they are not a backward nation. Statistics tell us that 90% of Berlin's population rent their homes, at a far smaller fraction of their total income.

Although we should not begrudge those who wish to own their homes, the main objection should be the use of taxes to subsidise the already haves.

We are constantly told that the economy is the most

important issue; above all it wins and loses elections (if it did, the last one).

The large financial interchange over property owning and renting, certainly in this country, is mainly responsible for the economic collapse and probably the deficit. When will someone resolve this massive property confidence trick?

"We have become the world's most expensive city regarding property"

PS After writing the above I read last week's report in the Islington Tribune where our housing chief Cllr Murray reported that several of the main Housing Associations which own thousands of homes across London have agreed the right-to-buy deal "without hesitation" which has left local authorities,

I quote, "high and dry" where they voluntarily accepted the deal proposed by the Government to accept Thatcher's flagship policy of the right to buy.

Cllr Murray said Councils will be forced to sell "high value" properties to compensate housing associations for the heavily discounted sales of up to £103,900 per property in London.

Like many more people, I live in a Housing Association property and have always liked the thought that when and if I leave, another family will be able to rent.

VOICE OF THE DAILY MIRROR : Thursday 1st October 2015

Burning questions

WANT TO AIR YOUR VIEWS? Although not a specifically pensioners' issue, a number of our members are talking about their concerns over Trident, and so we thought that the *Daily Mirror* editorial comment below would be of interest, and might provoke your thoughts which we could publish in subsequent issues of the Newsletter.

Who are the dangerous politicians: those who would incinerate millions of innocent people with a weapon of mass destruction or those who would not?

The row over Jeremy Corbyn's admission he could not press a button to unleash mass slaughter goes to the heart of the debate about nuclear bombs and the plan to spend £100 billion on Son of Trident.

That is a fortune when the Tories are slashing the living standards of working families.

Cheaper nuclear options to Trident exist and money

saved could be invested in soldiers, warplanes and ships - all of which the Tories have sacked, scrapped or sunk.

But when the overwhelming majority of the world's nations do not have them, do we really want what many regard as an immoral Armageddon weapon?

And if the greatest threat to our security are suicidal Islamists, how will it deter fanatical bombers who want to die anyway?

Let's not be afraid of this debate.

A great day on 1st October Older People's Day!

16 of us turned up to take part in our Campaign Stall at the end of Providence Place, and Steve Poole again generously provided cakes, so we were able to serve tea/coffee and cake to the shoppers, office and shop workers as well as talk to them about the issues set out in our leaflets.

Over 140 signed the petition, many of them young people, who are concerned that they will have to work longer, pay more and eventually get less pension.

. . . . It may have been the Older People's Day, but it became the day of generations united!

SLOWLY BUT SURELY OUR £5 MEMBERS ARE CREEPING UP THE GUAGE! PLEASE KEEP IT UP. . . WE NEED THIS TO MAINTAIN OUR NEWSLETTER. SEE PAGE 6. . .

4th November 2015

PENSIONERS LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT

Meet at 11 am at Highbury and Islington Station. We can get the Victoria line to Vauxhall and then the 87 bus to the Houses of Parliament.

If you prefer to make your own way, then the details for the lobby are:

● assemble at 11.30 a.m. Old Palace Yard (opposite House of Lords) for speeches and photos and

● meet in the House of Commons, Committee Room 14 from 1-3pm

Speakers: Kelvin Hopkins MP, Nick Thomas Symonds MP (shadow Pensions Minister), Mark Serwotka (general secretary PCS) Neel Radia (chair National Association of Care Catering), Rebecca Winson (GMB young member), Jan Shortt (NPC vice chair) Dot Gibson(NPC gen sec)

An increasing amount of evidence shows how beneficial public transport can be!

Over the last few years, public transport and travel concessions for older people have been under attack.

In many areas, particularly rural districts, services have been reduced or withdrawn and everywhere community transport schemes are being slashed.

The new government is set to continue cuts in spending across all departments, including transport. Yet an increasing amount of evidence shows how beneficial public transport can be.

For example, a recent survey of 3,000 pensioners found that 45% of bus pass use enabled older people to contribute directly into their local economy through shopping, banking, eating out and visiting museums and other facilities.

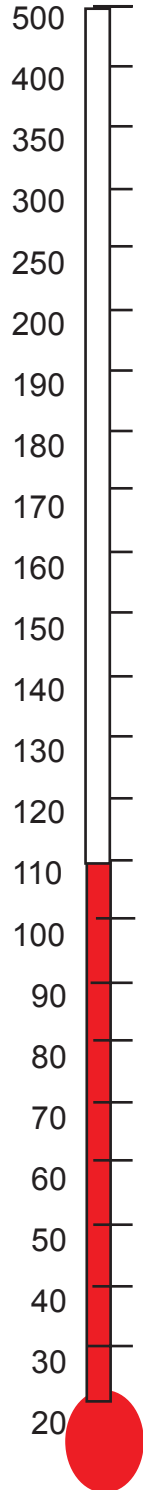
A further 24% of bus travel is used to carry

out voluntary work and unpaid caring, whilst the remaining 30% of travel is used to stay healthy (visiting swimming baths/keep-fit classes etc.), avoid isolation and improve well-being (visiting friends and family).

By doing so this is indirectly reducing the demand on and cost of social support.

Likewise, findings carried out by researchers from the School of Public Health at Imperial College found that older people who take advantage of their right to free bus travel are more likely to walk and take exercise.

The research project concluded that the benefits for older people who use buses include better mobility and strength and a lower risk of heart disease, falls and broken bones.



Islington Council opens up Town Hall for donations for refugees and migrants in Calais

Islington Town Hall has opened its doors to donations of clothes, tents and other items to help support people living in camps in Calais.

The Council has received an outpouring of concern from Islington residents and is working with humanitarian charity CalAid to collect much-needed supplies for the refugees and migrants living in appalling conditions in these camps. See the list below:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Shoes – trainers, hiking shoes or wellies (UK 7-9 EU 41 to 43) | Jeans (Size 28 to 32) |
| Tents - (and covers and tarpaulin) | Blankets |
| Jackets - only small and medium sized | Sleeping bags |
| Travelling Bags | Soap & Shampoo |
| Socks | Toothbrushes & Toothpaste |
| Candles or any other lighting implement | Pants |
| Belts | Pots & Pans |
| Track suit trousers | Woolly hats |

The donation point is at the Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD from 8am to 8pm seven days a week.

Perhaps you could bring to the meeting on 19th November, and we can all deliver together

FUTURE OF THE NHS IN ISLINGTON

*A meeting organised by Islington Keep Our NHS Public (KONP)
with the support of the Leader of the Council, Richard Watts*

Thursday 10th December 7pm - 9pm Islington Town Hall

Invited speakers:

- **JOHN LISTER** : What is happening to the NHS
- **RICHARD WATTS** : Islington Council - challenges
- A patient's experience (mental health)
- **PROF SUE RICHARDS** : KONP's campaign to stop privatisation of out-of-hours services
- **DR TOM McANEA** : GP's federation and action to defend Islington's primary care
- **SHIRLEY FRANKLIN** : Whittington hospital campaign
- **JEREMY CORBYN** : the development of Labour Party policy

audience questions and participation

TRANSLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP -- TTIP

John Hilary, Executive Director of War on Want addressed our October Forum meeting

John asked everybody at the beginning of the meeting to put their hands right up if they knew all about TTIP, halfway up if they knew something about it and not to put their hands up if they knew nothing about it. Most had their hands halfway up.

He asked this question because he has been in the forefront of gathering information and spreading the word about the “deadly secret” discussions and negotiations between the EU and the USA on TTIP, and he wondered how many had heard about TTIP and the campaign against it.

He said that this is a charter for deregulation, an attack on jobs, an end to democracy!

Meetings between European Union and US representatives take place every two months; the eleventh will be held in Miami in November 2015.

These meetings are behind closed doors and there is a 30-year ban on all the key documents. Yet, if implemented TTIP will affect millions of people in both Europe and the USA.

MEPs have only just started being allowed to view the documents, but only in a special room and they must hand over their mobile ‘phones, be accompanied by a “minder” and they are not allowed to write down more than six words consecutively!

President Obama and the big corporations in Europe and the USA wanted to get the negotiations over by the end of this year, but this has been prevented, for despite all the secrecy, there is an enormous uprising against this treaty. Now they aim to complete by the end of Obama’s presidency in 2016.

We are told that the UK economy would be £10 billion better off – every family would be richer by £500. So why the opposition?

These claims are bogus!

In “buried” footnote 148 on page 173 we find that at least 1m workers will lose their jobs. Even Ken Clarke MP said he had no faith in the EU Commissioners and didn’t trust their figures except for the job losses.

Under the treaty US standards would be imposed on Europe, and European corporations only want to benefit their shareholders. The main threats are:

- **Deregulation:** an attack on labour standards (i.e. under US law there are no rights to holidays or time off during pregnancy) and food regulations (i.e. under US law growth hormones are used in cattle and 70% of all food is “modified” – carcinogenic, causing cancer). All EU safety-guards would be lost.

- **Privatisation:** the treaty would lock in privatisation for ever! A government would not be able to take

back into public ownership any privatised service or industry.

- **New powers to corporations:** a new court for foreign business, outside of a country’s judicial system, would elevate corporations above governments. The “investor-state dispute settlement” (ISDS) would allow corporations to sue elected governments if their future profits are threatened.

ISDS is already included in a previous EU-Canada deal – the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). This has already caused considerable damage to public policy and democracy:

Slovakia decided to re-nationalise its health system and was successfully sued by a Dutch company at a cost of €22m; in a case over water and timber rights **Canada** had to pay \$122m to the Canadian paper company AbitibiBowater; **Argentina** was forced to pay \$550m to settle five companies’ claims related to that

country’s decision to unpeg its currency from the US dollar in 2002. There are many more examples.

Clearly our members were shocked by John’s report and asked a number of questions. We are certainly worried about the future for our children and grandchildren.

But John said that there is now a big and wide coalition against TTIP throughout Europe; 3.75 million people had signed the petition, and there is opposition among MEPs and MPs. It could be defeated!

“TTIP is a charter for deregulation, an attack on jobs, an end to democracy”

“there is now a big and wide coalition against TTIP throughout Europe...It could be defeated!”

Millions of pensioners hit by low inflation despite “triple lock”

Britain’s biggest pensioners’ organisation, the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) has warned that millions of older people will be hit by the latest inflation figures, which show the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September at – 0.1%.

Traditionally, the September inflation figure is used to calculate the following April’s increase in pensions and benefits.

Whilst the basic state pension of £115.95 a week will therefore rise in line with the “triple lock” guarantee by at least 2.5%, the state second pension and millions of occupational pensions that are tied to the CPI will effectively be frozen. The only increase that pensioners will therefore receive next April is around £2.90 a week for those on a full basic state pension, with many women getting around just £1.75.

The decision by the Coalition government in 2010 to switch from the Retail Price Index to CPI has already had a serious effect on pensioner incomes. For example, the figures in the box show the difference in the last five years of £1,353 between an RPI and CPI linked pension pot of £10,000:

	RPI	CPI
2010	£10,000	£10,000
2011	£10,460	£10,310
2012	£11,046	£10,846
2013	£11,333	£11,085
2014	£11,696	£11,384
2015	£11,965	£11,521
	£66,499	£65,146

And so we can see that the previous government’s decision to change the way in which inflation is measured continues to have a dramatic effect on older people’s income.

Whilst the 2.5% guarantee of the triple lock is welcome, it still only gives pensioners less than £3 a week extra and the fact that the state second pension and most occupational pensions are tied to CPI means that next year millions of older people are going to struggle with the rising costs of living.

The reality is that our state pension is so low that 2.5% of nothing is still nothing!

TaxPayers' Alliance apologises for cynical and offensive remarks about pensioners

Alex Wild, research director of the TaxPayers' Alliance, lived to regret his cynical and offensive remarks about pensioners.

Speaking at a fringe meeting at the Conservative Party conference he advised that the government could cut older people’s benefits, such as the winter fuel allowance, because many of those affected might not be around at the next general election or would forget which party had taken the benefit away.

Later he publicly apologised for these remarks.

However, this does little to retract from his organisation’s constant attacks on pensioners saying that the old are doing OK whilst the younger generation is bearing the brunt of government cuts.

Completely “overlooking” the closures of day centres, the ending of meals on wheels and the cuts in many bus services in rural areas, all of which leave older people isolated and lonely, the TaxPayers' Alliance is often represented on news programmes upholding their divisive views.

Wild also suggested that younger people would support making their grandparents worse off.

It’s all part of the phoney generation war and ageist nonsense that he and others promote.

In his efforts to show off in front of the Tory conference delegates with his “clever” advice, he doesn’t stop to consider the fact that the winter fuel allowance is essential because every year tens of thousands of older people die from the cold, and taking away the winter fuel allowance would just make things worse -- but perhaps that’s what he wants?

Families care about each other; grandparents often take care of their young grandchildren during school holidays and help out their teenage grandchildren. And grandchildren are concerned at the health and safety of their grandparents.

It is sad that Mr. Wild doesn’t seem to have that experience. However, he may have issued an apology, but he can be sure that pensioners will not forget his remarks in a hurry.

We thought you might like to see this!

ANGLIA REGION PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION

Dear Editor,

I was surprised to see the news item on the newly announced East Norfolk Coast Path project in the Lowestoft Journal recently as it was not strictly Lowestoft news. It stretches from Sea Palling in the north to Hopton via Winterton-on-Sea, Gt. Yarmouth & Gorleston in the south. However, it gives me the opportunity to say what a good idea this is for the health and well-being of all ages to be able to walk this new way once it has materialised. All generations including mine should find the proposed path a wonderful resource; an attraction in beautiful natural surroundings, good for spotting seals in winter, as many can testify. It is not just good for locals but for visiting hikers and tourists alike that would stimulate the local economy once well-known.

There is one fly in the ointment however, and that is the policy by Great Yarmouth Borough Council to close 12 of the Boroughs 22 public toilets including the one at Winterton-on-Sea, unless alternative means can be found by the parish council or local businesses to run them. This example of austerity cuts is said to save the council £140,000 a year by the closure of 12 toilets – we do not think this is acceptable to anyone visiting the area, yet alone pensioners who cannot easily find a bush or tree on the sand dunes near Winterton to squat behind! So who will use the footpath in winter – maybe only people who take their own buckets and spades or possibly a commode!

The situation at Winterton is now that the toilets there remain open while the Dunes Cafe remains open and then locked by them at closing time because they now are cleaning them instead of a council employee. This means that in the winter months when they only open at weekends around the middle of the day, the toilets in question remain closed during the week.

Our members think this is a retrograde step and that these toilets in particular should be retained open every day in daylight hours all year by the Borough as a valued public service. It should not be hived off to a willing local business who have no choice but to accept the deal as they have no toilets of their own, and neither do the local coast-watch

WE POO POO PUBLIC TOILET CLOSURES DUE TO COST CUTTING

**COME AND JOIN US ON THE
ANGLIA REGION PENSIONERS ASSN.
(National Pensioners Convention)
RALLY AND PHOTO-SHOOT
at the car park & toilets near
DUNES CAFE, BEACH ROAD
WINTERTON-ON-SEA
EAST NORFOLK COAST, NR29 4AJ**
Bring your own spade, bucket or commode

To Wee or not to Wee, that is the question



SATURDAY 7th NOVEMBER, HIGH NOON

station also situated there. We have visited this beautiful area on one of our mystery minibus trips before, and intend to do so again on Saturday 7 November, this time asking our members to rally there and bring a bucket or commode for a photo-opportunity at high noon to highlight the situation. Maybe locals can rally there with us on that day – if so they might bring something else in lieu!

Yours truly,

Christopher J. Brooks

Chairman,

Anglia Region Pensioners Association.

INFORMATION

Every Monday BINGO	1pm at IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
Wednesday 4th November	MEET at 11 am at Highbury & Islington Station (train to Vauxhall and 87 bus to Houses of Parliament) see advert below
Wednesday 11th November HELPING WITH OUR FUND-RAISING CHRISTMAS SALE Also Wednesday 25th November	Bring your ideas and anything you have made/collected for our Christmas Sale at 12.30 pm to the IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN -- <i>we need to start wrapping and pricing. So your help is needed</i>
FORUM Thursday 19th November	10.30 a.m. Islington Town Hall, Upper Street. SPEAKER: Bob Archer, Greece Solidarity Campaign
FORUM Thursday 21st January	Eric Hill, Unison Ethical Care Charter and NPC Dignity Code

This is a two-month Newsletter for November and December, so we take this opportunity to say SEASON'S GREETINGS to one and all. We go forward to the NEW YEAR with great enthusiasm and optimism.....and we are looking forward to our annual BEAT THE WINTER BLUES PARTY DETAILS IN THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER



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
- Office 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 **Treasurer:** Eric Hill

Charity No: 1043081 We are supported by the Cripplegate Foundation and Islington Council

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Signed..... **Date**.....