



Charity No: 1043081

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

September 2016 Newsletter

WHAT A GREAT GARDEN PARTY!



On 20 August at our garden party, we put all negative thoughts about our knees and hips aside as we watched the agile Amberleigh drummers and clapped along to their rhythms



Kat Fletcher, Islington's Mayor poses with members



Cllr Janet Burgess draws the raffle assisted by Felicia.

MORE ON THE GARDEN PARTY ON PAGE FIVE

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The Labour leadership campaign has enabled us to view the various policies of the candidates, and on page five of this newsletter you will see that Jeremy Corbyn has announced a policy to reverse the Tory cuts to the NHS and social care and go even further: an end to privatisation!

A government led by Jeremy Corbyn would deliver a modern health and social care service that is fully publicly provided and fully publicly funded.

Our "Crisis in Social Care" article on page four shows the urgent necessity for implementation of this policy.

I was therefore pleased to see the words of support given by Lord David Owen, an independent peer in the House of Lords.

He has welcomed the policy saying that for the first time in 14 years the Labour Party has a leader unequivocally committed to re-nationalising and reversing legislation which has created in England "a broken down market-based health care system".

He said that the current system is unrecognisable from that which was introduced in 1948, and "Surely now the whole Labour movement can combine

together, left, right and centre to make this official party policy at this year's autumn conference. This surely must end all Labour's troubled equivocation over a marketised NHS and provide a political route on which party members and supporters can campaign together".

Although Lord Owen now sits as an independent peer in the House of Lords, he was Labour Health Minister between 1974 and 1976 and then Britain's youngest Foreign Secretary, but after the election of left wing leader Michael Foot in 1981 he broke away and formed the Social Democratic Party with Roy Jenkins, Bill Rodgers and Shirley Williams.

Clearly he has not forgotten his original career in the NHS, where he worked as a neurology and psychiatric registrar until 1974 when he gave up medicine and became an MP.

* * * *

My very good friend and comrade, Angela Sinclair was in my mind's eye (smiling from ear to ear) as I wrote this column. A tireless, dedicated campaigner for the NHS, I can say without any doubt that she would have been amongst the first to welcome Jeremy's policy.

ANGELA SINCLAIR-LOUTIT

"Our" Angela died, aged 95, on 18 August 2016 whilst on holiday in France. She was a founding member of Islington Pensioners Forum and our Secretary. She was kind, thoughtful, friendly, straight-talking and resolute. This picture of her on a demonstration is appropriate. She campaigned on all issues of social justice, against war and nuclear weapons, against privatisation and in defence of our NHS. She was a conscientious objector and left her studies at Oxford University to join the Quaker Ambulance Unit at the outset of World War II, working in London during the blitz, then in a camp in Egypt for 6,000 Yugoslav refugees, and driving medical supplies to Belgrade. Raising her three children in Thailand, France and Morocco where her doctor husband, Kenneth was stationed as an adviser to UNICEF, Angela returned to London when they went to university in this country, She immediately threw herself into the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and later into Islington Pensioners Forum and campaigns to defend Whittington Hospital services, and save Finsbury Health Centre. We celebrate Angela's long and principled life and send our condolences to her family, friends and comrades.



Financial Report for year 2015-16

Eric Hill -- Treasurer Islington Pensioners Forum

● Current Financial Situation

At the end of March 2016 we carried forward £13,461. By 6 July 2016 the balance was £9,776. We are currently applying for a further Voluntary and Community Sector Partnership grant and in relation to this we had a meeting with Council officials on 3 August. We are quietly confident that this application will be successful and hopefully we'll get £5,000. We have also applied to the Co-op Local Community Fund for a grant. We should hear the outcome of this in early September.

● Income and expenditure

Over the last five years our income and expenditure have grown significantly. In March 2011 our income was £7,500 and expenditure was £14,416. By March 2016 our income had grown to £29,332 and our expenditure to £26,961. We raised more than £400 at our Christmas Fair. I also intend to approach the local trade union branches to ask them to affiliate to our organisation.

A major expenditure was sending 15 members to the National Pensioners Convention Pensioners' Parliament. This was money well spent and was an enjoyable and educational experience for all who attended.

Latterly we also had a reduction in our expenditure due to Ann reducing her hours from three days to one day a week.

At this point I want to acknowledge and thank Ann for the work and time (often her own time)

that she has put into our local organisation over the past six years. In relation to our financial situation Ann has done a lot of work in increasing our income over the years. Grant applications are complicated and time-consuming to complete and Ann has been very successful in this area.

● Grant applications

As regard future income it is important to continue with our grant applications. However, we need to have specific projects in mind which are beneficial to pensioners. So I ask everyone to give me ideas for this -- any ideas even if you're not sure how appropriate, are welcome. In this regard, it is good to see a very productive Wednesday 1-3 pm lunch and a chat taking place. Everyone is welcome to come along.

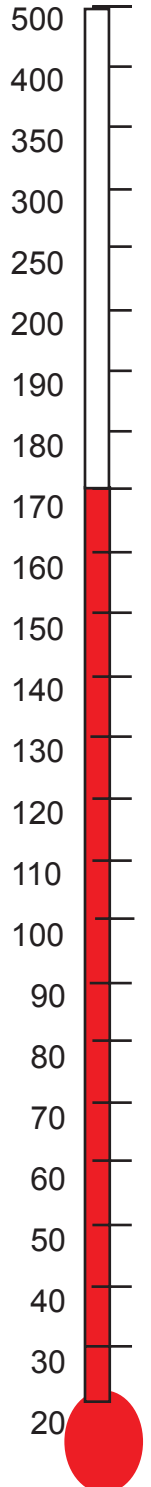
● Membership

We have approximately 400 members, but as you can see not everyone is paying the £5 annual subscription, which started in 2015. We are therefore asking all members to pay this if possible for it makes a lot of difference to our ability to pay for our monthly newsletter to be produced and dispatched.

● The coming year

We are facing a challenging year ahead given that Ann has now left us. However, I and Ann's replacement, Bronwen, along with the committee are already looking at the way forward.

WE DO NEED YOUR £5 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION. SO THANKS TO ALL THOSE MEMBERS WHO HAVE PAID, AND SEE THE FORM ON BACK PAGE FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T.



Got a spare £5m?

On Pavilion Road in Knightsbridge, planners have approved a £200m luxury retirement home on a site that has an underground tunnel linking it to Harrods, less than 100m away!

The seven-storey development of 34 apartments will be among the UK's most expensive retirement homes as part of a growing industry catering for the rich. As well as the tunnel it will also have an in-house spa, a library and private nursing care.

While Singapore-listed City Developments has not yet set prices, homes in Kensington and Chelsea sell for at least £4,000 a square foot, meaning that the smallest homes in this development would cost £5m each.

Meanwhile Battersea Place, a 109-apartment complex for wealthy retirees opened last year at costs of £600,000 to about £3m each apartment. It has a cinema, spa pool and concierge service with service charges of £1,100 a

month. The "extra care" category means that medical services are available when needed by residents who live independently.

No wonder Property advisers, Knight Frank say that "the high-end, extra-care, retirement housing sector is of great interest".

But millions of poorer pensioners are not so fortunate, especially those who find themselves in need of care:

SEE PAGE FOUR. . . .

THE CRISIS IN SOCIAL CARE

According to a five-year study by Prestige Nursing +Care, at £30,926 per year for an average single room, the cost of care is more than double an average pensioner's income of £14,456.

While care costs rose by 5.2% over the past year, pensioners' income rose by 1.1%.

This increase in costs is far higher than the current rate of inflation (0.3%) and the fastest growth since Prestige began collecting data in 2012.

The annual shortfall between care costs and pensioner income amounts to £16,470 (£317 a week) should they need residential care. The shortfall has increased by 9% in the last year alone and it means that the average pensioner's income would now pay for less than six months of care - despite research from Saga showing the average stay in a residential home is 2.5 years.

This state of affairs is of great concern but no surprise to the National Pensioners Convention!

Alongside a low state pension, private pensions are decreasing and the low interest on savings mean that pensioners are losing out and so many are forced to sell their homes to pay for a place in a nursing home.

This is because anyone with savings plus the value of their home amounting to at least £123,250 must pay all the costs of a nursing home. In other words they are self-funders.

Although the 2010 Coalition government agreed a cap of £72,000 (excluding the cost of accommodation and food) on an individual's nursing home payment after which the government would pay, this was ditched by the 2015 Conservative government until after 2020.

“The National Pensioners Convention calls for a free National Care Service, linked to the NHS and funded through general taxation”

Government austerity measures are forcing local Councils to pay less for nursing home places for those who, through means testing, are eligible for Council support. This is resulting in self-funders being charged more - according to the King's fund, in some cases, 40% more.

But cuts to local government funding also mean that many pensioners who are eligible for Council funding and need to be in a care home are instead allocated an extra domiciliary care worker, often with disastrous consequences.

One typical example: “S” needs nursing home care, but because of the costs, the Council is paying for an extra care worker each day. It means that he is alone every night, and getting up in the night to go to the toilet, he has fallen.

So the morning care worker finds him on the floor doubly incontinent and having hurt limbs or head. This results in “S” going into hospital in an ambulance (at a cost to the NHS of around £1,000 and much more if he has to stay in hospital).

The National Pensioners Convention calls for a free National Care Service, linked to the NHS and funded through general taxation.

1st October is the UN Day of Older People

We believe that this is a good time to raise the crisis in social care publicly out on the streets. And so pensioners groups affiliated to the National Pensioners Convention will be organising “pop-up skeletons” all over the country to draw public attention to the crisis in social care.



- At our Forum meeting on 15th September we will decide on the day, time and place for our “pop-up”.

- We will also be arranging for those IPF members who would like to join other London pensioners in a crowd of skeletons outside the Ministry of Health in Whitehall on Friday 29th September for a photo-opportunity. Celebrity speakers have been invited.

A POLICY TO SAVE THE NHS AND SOCIAL CARE!

Jeremy Corbyn and Dianne Abbott (shadow Health Minister) introduced their health and social care policy at a meeting in East London. This would go further than reversing Tory cuts - **it would deliver a modern health and social care service that is fully publicly provided and fully publicly funded.**

Corbyn said: "Health, health financing and health inequality is a matter of paramount national importance. The Labour government I lead will ensure that money goes to patients not contractors, and that our NHS is given the resources to provide a top quality service as part of a program to rebuild and transform Britain so that no-one and no community is left

behind."

A Corbyn-led government would not sign any new contracts under the private finance initiative, under which many new hospitals were built during the previous Labour government meaning multi-million-pound debts to private firms, for years. He would also like to establish a taxpayer-backed fund to buy struggling hospitals out of their existing PFI arrangements.

He would lend his support to a private members' bill, tabled by the Labour backbencher Margaret Greenwood, aimed at strengthening the responsibilities of the health secretary and ending the NHS internal market, and he would reintroduce nurses' bursaries.

AGAIN: WHAT A GREAT GARDEN PARTY!



Photos:

Top: left to right: Felicia, Joyce, Myrna (front) and Supa, who took responsibility for the buffet. Easier said than done! It was busy, warm, and also crucial to the great success of this happy day. Our thanks go to them, without whom we could not have managed.

Below: IPF members enjoying the food, drink and the sunshine! We couldn't believe our luck when we had a sunny afternoon between what was an otherwise stormy day.



We don't have a Forum meeting in August and so it is a good time to have a party! This is our second one in the wonderful garden at Highbury View sheltered housing scheme, and it won't be the last!

There was music all afternoon, and great food donated by members and friends, including Godfrey's butchers at Highbury Barn and Steve Poole of Angel business.

The Amberleigh young drummers were a great hit, as were the jazz musicians (Ikko Evans and company) and of course our own Peter Crockett from Generations Health who opened the party with guitar and song.

Kat Fletcher, Islington's Mayor joined us and also Councillors Janet Burgess and Caroline Russell.

Our thanks go to the "back-room" members who did the shopping, put up the tents, the tables and chairs, hung the bunting and cleared up afterwards. The raffle raised £171.

INFORMATION

Every Monday BINGO 1pm	1pm at IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
Every Wednesday 1 pm	Lunch and a chat, 1 pm in the IPF Hall (address above)
Thursday 15th September 10.30 am	Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall, Speaker: Kat Fletcher, Mayor of Islington
Thursday 20th October 10.30 am	Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall Speaker: Councillor Caroline Russell -- air pollution and health
Thursday 17th November 10.30 am	Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall Speaker: Borough Met Police Commander, Catherine Roper (invited)

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., Monday & Wednesday, 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 **Vice Chair:** Bob Collins

Secretary: Dot Gibson **Assistant Secretary:** Annette Thomas

Treasurer: Eric Hill

Charity No: 1043081

Supported by Cripplegate Foundation & Islington Council



Islington Pensioners Forum £5 annual subscription

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