



ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

July 2017 Newsletter

Charity No: 1043081

Dear Members,

Our Forum meeting on 20th July, 10.30 am in Committee Room 1, Islington Town Hall is our **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**, when we review the last year, look forward to the next 12 months and elect our committee (see enclosed form for nominating members for the committee).

We have invited Jeremy Corbyn (our president) to this meeting, but we are sure that all our members will understand if he is unable to attend. We are pleased to say that our new Mayor, Councillor Una O'Halloran will be coming at around 11.30 am and we have a special request to her to host a meeting of Forum members with the young councillors to take forward our Generations United campaign.

Please make every effort to come to this important meeting.

Best wishes,

Chair, George Durack **Vice Chair**, Bob Collins

Secretary, Dot Gibson **Assistant Secretary**, Annette Thomas

Treasurer, Eric Hill

Committee Members: Pam Zinkin, Supa Kusmrata, David Milner, Eddie Zissler, Blanche Woodbridge, Joyce Herron, Felicia Puddicombe, Frances Bradley (co-opted member)

NB Please note that Felicia is not able to take part on the Committee in the next year as she will be out of the country for an extended period.

PENSIONERS' PARLIAMENT - report by Irma Gomez

A delegation of eight attended the Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool (6-8 June). It was held at the Winter Gardens, a beautiful building just at the city centre, 100 metres from the sea, at the back of the famous Blackpool Tower.

The speakers gave up to date information; there were first class professionals on the benefits system, Social Security, Housing, Pensions, Brexit and older people; the NHS and Social Care, public transport and the needs of older passengers, the future of local pensioner groups.

Dot Gibson, who had stepped down as General Secretary of the National Pensioners Convention

got a very warm standing ovation at the conference. We felt very proud as members of the IPF.

The accommodation was opposite the Winter Gardens, five star service, we travelled both ways in a very comfortable train, and of course it was English weather.

The conference closed with the best party ever. Tina Turner and Neil Diamond (lookalikes) and good disco music: Tom Jones, Michael Jackson and the Beatles. We danced from 7.30pm – 11.30pm.

A special mention to Supa and Myrna for taking care of everybody.

So now for the 2018 Pensioners' Parliament (12-14 June 2018). It will cost £150 each (with £50 on top paid by the Forum) and if you start paying now, it will be easier. Supa collected the payments for this year's Pensioners' Parliament and we hope she will do so for the next. So, let's double our delegation!

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

A good article by Owen Jones in *The Guardian* summed up our Prime Minister in her true light where he displayed her great deception about the economy, immigration and the chaotic misnomer over payment for care.

Many people had been fooled into believing Mrs May was their saviour, but now she is clinging to Number 10 by her fingertips hoping we will all forget her blunders.

It is a bad time for the population. Although unable to include many of her policies in the Queen's Speech - such as grammar schools, fox hunting and pensioners' issues, ending the state pension triple lock, means-testing the Winter Fuel Allowance and the so-called dementia tax - **austerity measures are still in full-swing.**

Local Councils are still under extreme pressure to provide vital services under the impact of the austerity measures; and the cuts to police, fire and health services are starkly revealed at this time of turmoil with terrorist attacks in Manchester and London and that dreadful fire at Grenfell Tower.

Of course Theresa May did not set fire to the building, but the government she leads must be accountable for imposing and encouraging cuts to all the vital services leading to a culture of privatisation and the outsourcing of these services opting for the cheapest contract.

During the Brexit campaign and again in the general election campaign many of those interviewed spoke of their concern and anger at not being listened to. . . . then the fire! By ignoring the many concerns and reminders about safety and fire risk by the residents, those responsible for the maintenance and renovation of Grenfell Tower are under scrutiny for the terrible death and destruction.

No wonder the Prime Minister avoided facing the victims of this disaster and other local people, and no wonder they jeered and chased her.

So now we hear the words "We must do so-and-so in future to prevent this ever happening again"! How many times have we heard those words?

Looking into the background of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, we find that in 2013 this Council together with Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham Councils entered into a tri-borough 10-year "Total Facilities Management" (TFM) contract with private company, Amey Inc.

According to the web site:

The TFM initiative aligns the delivery of facilities management services across these three boroughs. Combined, the three councils cover an area of 5,000 hectares, with an estate of nearly 2,000 buildings comprising 1.2 million square feet. The TFM contract includes (amongst others) building management, building security, cleaning, repairs and maintenance, statutory compliance including health and safety and environmental legislation.

The main driver for TFM is to reduce costs and protect frontline services. Each of the three councils is expected to save over 2m a year (equivalent of more than 34 per cent saving over current costs) through operational efficiency.

"Reduce costs and protect frontline services"! How many times have we heard this contradictory statement made by those who tell us they are the "strong and stable" whilst "we" are the ignorant and uneducated? (published)

The police are now investigating charges of manslaughter. My question is:

Will the elected government and council tell us that private company Amey Inc. is responsible because, encouraged by the government, the council handed over to that company the responsibility for "statutory compliance including health and safety and environmental legislation" and for "repairs and maintenance" of the council's buildings?

Stand up for PEOPLE NOT PROFIT!

HOPE AND SOLIDARITY OVER HATRED AND DIVISION

It was a pleasure to join so many others in a community get-together on 17 June inspired by Jo Cox and hosted by the Muslim Education House in Finsbury Park. We returned home with such a warm feeling of friendship and optimism. It was therefore a great shock to wake up two days later to find that our Muslim friends had suffered a terrible attack, leaving one dead and nine others wounded. And so we returned to the Muslim Education Centre -- this time delivering a message of hope and solidarity from Islington Pensioners Forum and we saw for ourselves that we were part of a constant flow of friendship from neighbours of all ages and faiths delivering messages and floral tributes. The 17 June community get-together had triumphed over hatred and division! Let us continue to build on this.

Annette Thomas and Pam Zinkin

(published in Islington Tribune 23.6.17)

WRIGGLE TO THE RHYTHM! SAT. 1st JULY

eat
drink
and be
merry!

**FREE GARDEN
PARTY**

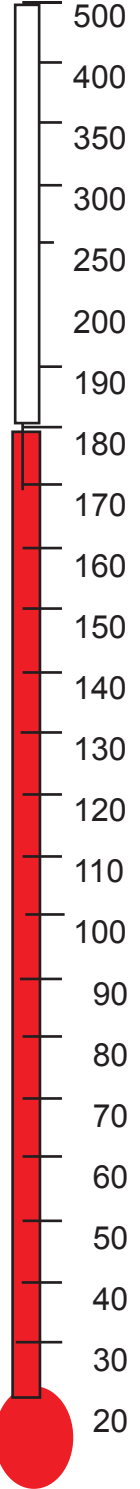
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Our
£5
annual
sub is
less
than
10p
a
week!



**Highbury View:
entrance to garden
87-89 Ronalds
Road N3 1XQ**

see
map
on
back
page



Riverboat trip on Tuesday 12th September,
Westminster Pier to Kew Gardens (and back!), Cost £10.
We will be taking bookings at our meeting on 20 July, and will have an
application form in our August Newsletter.....



Islington Citizens Advice Bureau

Speakers from Islington CAB addressed our June meeting asking members to consider becoming one of their volunteers. There are lots of different roles, but a need for older people who are more able to understand and assist other older people. The CAB deals with issues such as loan sharks, welfare reforms, disability reforms, housing disrepair and anti-social behaviour. Volunteers can be trained to carry out a number of different jobs such as the advice line, receptionist, helping people with form-filling, campaigning and research. We expect to have more information in our next newsletter.

Letter to Finsbury Park Muslim Education Centre

Dear Friends,

As part of the older community in the borough, we realise that we have a special responsibility to build strong and lasting friendship and a single voice against all those who try to impose hatred and division among us.

It was fitting that last Saturday the gathering to build solidarity one year on from the murder of Jo Cox was hosted by you and then it was with such sorrow that we saw a violent act of hatred perpetrated against you.

We enclose a small token of our friendship, hoping that it can be used to assist those who have been injured and their families.

However, we believe that the main issue for all of us is to understand each other, and so we would be very pleased if we could arrange a gathering between us in the near future.

Best wishes, your sincerely,

Dot Gibson

SECRETARY, ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

Never again, yet again?

The following items have been received from Judy Downey, Chair of the Relatives & Residents Association for Quality of Life of Older People in Care. . . . www.relres.org

16 June 2017: The unbearable tragedy in North Kensington has inevitably brought with it reminders of the Rosepark care home fire in Scotland. Due to negligence in fire safety management, 14 elderly dependent residents needlessly lost their lives in 2004. As a result of the subsequent inquiry, both the Scottish and Welsh devolved administrations now demand that all new and refurbished care homes must have sprinkler systems installed.

“While Scotland has clearly responded well to the Rosepark fire by requiring that all new care homes are provided with sprinkler systems, England has behaved as if the Rosepark care home was located in Papua New Guinea and the fire there had no relevance to the safety of some of the most vulnerable people in the country”... [Dave Sibert, IRMPadvisor, Fire Brigades' Union - September 2016, Safety & Health Practitioner online]

He went on to state that: “There has been piecemeal implementation of some measures, but there was no coherent common response by Government, fire and rescue services or the wider fire sector.”

see also: <https://www.shponline.co.uk/five-care-home-operators-that-lived-to-regret-their-fire-safety-negligence/>

20 June 2017: Last night's 'Dispatches' about BUPA care homes on Channel 4 made tough viewing. Heartbreaking depictions of residents being treated without care, compassion or competence were harrowing to watch. The homes featured have had unsatisfactory CQC reports again and again. Whatever enforcement action has been undertaken has clearly failed the residents of Crawfords Walk and Perry Lock miserably.

Failures of regulation are very much at the top of commentators' agendas at present. Care home residents form a dependent population, more reliant than most on effective regulation to protect them from

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Information from the National Pensioners Convention Post Election Briefing

Ministers

The government has appointed Guy Opperman, the MP for Hexham as the new Pensions' Minister replacing Richard Harrington. The NPC has already requested a meeting with the new minister and will report back shortly.

The situation in social care is more complicated. The former care minister, David Mowat (who suggested families needed to do more to provide care for their loved ones) lost his seat in the election, but the government has yet to appoint his successor. Moreover, in Theresa May's first period as Prime Minister she downgraded the role from Minister of State to Under Secretary of State. Given the crisis in social care, the issue should really now be dealt with at Cabinet level.

Policies

As a result of the Conservative party failing to get an overall majority in the general election, and having to rely on the Democratic Unionist Party for support, it now seems likely that a number of proposals in their election manifesto will be dropped. For example, the plan to remove the triple lock from the state pension in 2020 and to means-test the winter fuel allowance away from up to 10 million pensioners now seems unlikely to happen.

However, in the Queen's Speech on 21 June it was announced that over the next few months the government would consult on the future funding of social care. On the same day, Damian Green MP, the deputy Prime Minister told the media there would be a cap on the amount of money that people would have to pay for their care – but declined to say what that might be.

Most political commentators point to the bungled Conservative manifesto pledge on social care, and the fact that ministers were only told of the plans 24 hours before they were published, as one of the main reasons the party lost support. Nevertheless, campaigners are concerned that this consultation

must not allow the government to introduce this discredited and unpopular policy through the backdoor. Either a consultation is open – or the government has already made up its mind what it wants to do, and is simply going through the motions.

The NPC will take a leading role in this issue and continue to press the case for a tax-funded social care system.

Opposition

As far as the information currently available, Labour has retained Alex Cunningham as shadow pensions' minister and Barbara Keeley as shadow care minister. The NPC will be seeking meetings with them as soon as possible.

General Election voting figures

The polling company YouGov has released some data on how the different age groups voted at the 2017 general election. Using a sample of just over 50,000 people they found that age seems to be the new dividing line in British politics. The starkest evidence of this is to note that, amongst first time voters (those aged 18 and 19), Labour was 47 percentage points ahead. Amongst those aged over 70, the Conservatives had a lead of 50 percentage points.

The NPC is concerned that, as with other voting figures, some politicians, think-tanks and media pundits will try to use this as the basis of intergenerational conflict. The NPC must continue to build support for its Generations United campaign, that links the age groups in support of the welfare state and public services.

The Pensioners' Manifesto

The NPC's six point manifesto will now form the basis of our campaigning priorities over the next period. It is vital that every new MP is sent a copy so that they are aware of our case. Electronic copies are available to download from the NPC website www.npcuk.org or Islington Pensioners Forum has hard copies.

[continued from page 4/](#)

harm. This means that there must be systems in place to ensure that there is proper oversight and that inspectors operate with sufficient expertise and rigour. However, our Helpline reveals that there continue to be too many breaches of regulation and care home residents remain vulnerable to these failures.

Light touch regulation has gone too far. The R&RA was dismayed by the weakening of the Regulations in relation to emergency procedures for care homes and argued for their reinstatement. Unless the Regulations are strong and unambiguous, some of those managing homes will inevitably cut corners and worse, as shown last night. This means that both inspectorates and commissioners must be seen to understand their importance and ensure that they are taken seriously.

INFORMATION

BINGO every Monday, 1pm	1 pm at 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
Every Wednesday 1.00 pm	Lunch and a chat, in the IPF Hall (address above)
Every Wednesday 3 pm - 4 pm	IT and Smart Phones -- learn how to use them! Sessions by "Healthy Generations" and IPF in the IPF Hall (address above)
Thursday 20 July, 10.30 am Committee Room 1, Town Hall	Annual General Meeting of Islington Pensioners Forum (see page 1)
Saturday 1st July 2017, 1pm	GARDEN PARTY AT HIGHBURY VIEW -- jazz, buffet, good company in this wonderful garden (see map below for directions)

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 phone first.
- Sign up for our online newsletter on our website: www.islingtonpensionersforum.co.uk

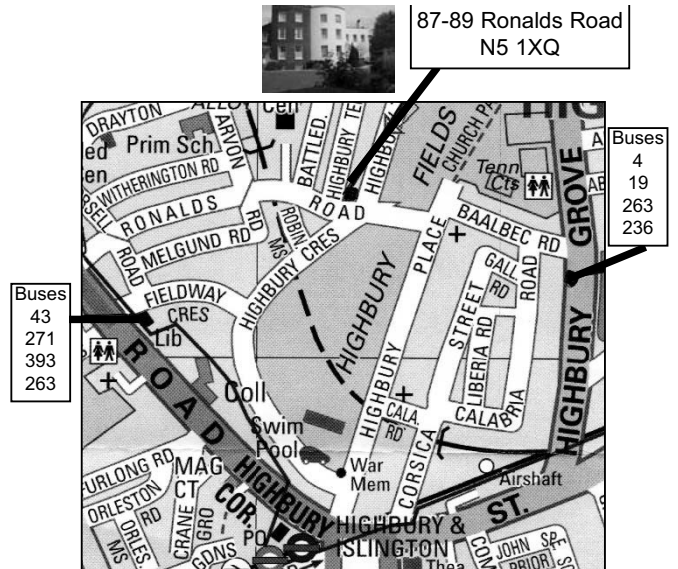
Presidents: Jeremy Corbyn MP & Lord Smith of Finsbury

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

STANDING ORDER FORM : please send the completed form to:

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

To: The Manager.....Bank (Sort Code / /)

Bank address/post code.....

.....

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.....

Islington Pensioners Forum £5 annual subscription

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Enclosed: £5 cash/cheque
Plus donation? £.....

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