



*Wishing all our members, friends  
and supporters the very best for  
Christmas and the New New Year*

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

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Christmas and the New Year should always start in the old-fashioned way: "Goodwill to all people, may you have a better year ahead",

Optimism ought to be the buzz word.

Optimism for the health of those who need help and to people, like us and our families, across the world getting better lives than previous generations.

If only it was that simple!

We are the generation that should make life better for those who follow us, but so far we have failed to make our leaders answer to the many problems of the present world.

Wars, poverty, disruption of many kinds are causing the massive movement of people from their homes, resulting in largescale immigration of people seeking peace and a decent life for themselves and, more particularly, for their children.

This should not be confused with the dispute about the "free movement of people" surrounding the Brexit debates.

I am talking here of the millions of people in refugee camps, drowning at sea or being killed in the cross-fire of armed conflict. Leading figures should be able to solve many of the problems surrounding this

mass migration.

Something to do with who we vote for no doubt?

When we look at Trump in the USA, at the likes of Farage here and Le Pen in France we need to ask the question: "What brings this type of leader into focus?" And we need to look at mass media coverage of events.

Whilst writing this, the headline is of Murdoch buying the rest of Sky, added to the Fox set-up in the USA, throwing us into further right-wing media coverage.

It will be of great interest how 2017 pans out in this caludron of political upheaval. For our part, IPF will try our modest best to campaign against the many injustices.

We are proud that our Forum, now in its 31st year, stands up for peace and social justice, for the rights of minorities, for democracy and equality. We have talked a lot in 2016 about developing unity across the generations and we intend to do as much as possible to make this happen in the year ahead.

So -- with optimism -- in the old-fashioned way, I wish you all season's greetings and look forward to our Forum meeting on 19th January and our "End the Winter Blues" Party on 4th February.



## A good meeting with Jeremy

It was a bit embarrassing when the Leader of the Opposition had to wait an hour for the Islington Pensioners Forum Committee meeting to start on 5 December!

You see, most of us were held up in traffic jams caused by the water main burst at the Angel, but Jeremy simply wound his way through the hold-ups on his bike!

Anyway, in the end we had a very good meeting with questions, answers and discussion on many issues, including pensions, housing, inter-generational solidarity, the importance of the Whittington Hospital campaign, the current crisis in the NHS and social care, building the pensioners' movement etc.

It was really good to be able to have this meeting with our President for he was so busy that he could not take his usual place at our AGM last July when we celebrated our 30th anniversary.

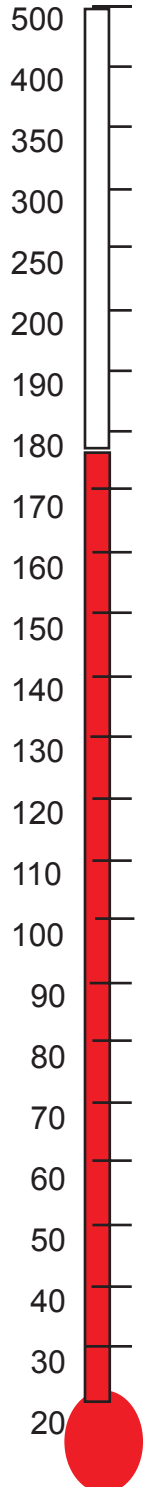
Finally, Jeremy said that he would like "to do this more often" and so we will definitely make another date to take the discussion forward.



***The income from our Christmas Fair stall at St. Mary's Church in Upper Street on Saturday 10 September was £438. Many thanks to all who helped to make and donate goods. This is a welcome contribution towards assisting members to attend the National Pensioners Convention***

***Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool June 2017.***

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.



# Our thanks and our aims

**We take this opportunity to thank Islington Council and Cripplegate Foundation for once again generously financially supporting us so that we can continue to give voice to the widest possible representative group of older people in the borough.**

We aim to be a recognised consultative body for the people in power on all issues affecting older people in the borough, and through our activities to develop older people's self-confidence in being able to make a positive contribution towards society.

An important part of this is to encourage a better understanding of the needs and concerns of older people, and this goes "hand in hand" towards the development of better understanding and mutual respect between older people and younger people.

For that reason, we have asked the Mayor to host a joint meeting between Islington Pensioners Forum and Islington's Young Councillors so that we can take forward the Generations United initiative launched by the National Pensioners Convention.

In the coming year we intend to develop our social activities, the End the Winter Blues Party, the Summer Garden Party, the weekly Monday Bingo and the Wednesday lunch and a chat in our Community Hall, and the IT-Smart Phone sessions. Also at our January

Forum meeting we will discuss proposals for outings during the Spring and Summer.

We have agreed with the Council to be a hub to direct and encourage pensioners to take part in all the other activities that take place throughout the borough and we have a special link to "Healthy Generations" which develops activities under three main headings: Music for People, Well-Being and Connect! all of which are aimed at improving health and reducing isolation.

At the time of writing we have put in a bid to the Council for free use of the Assembly Hall in July for a Summer Festival.

A very big concern for frail elderly and disabled people and their families is the crisis in social care and so we are hoping that together with the Council and care workers we can form bonds between all of us in a big conversation aimed at a better understanding of what is needed to overcome the crisis.

The Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) for health and care services in our area (North Central London) covers five boroughs: Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington, and so we will be getting in touch with the pensioners' Forums and Action Groups in the other boroughs aimed at setting up discussions and joint work on what the STP means for all of us.

Regular reports will be made at the Forum meetings on the third Thursday of each month and we welcome the views of all members.

## IPF officers meet Councillors Richard Watts and Janet Burgess

We thank the leader of the Council, Richard Watts and Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing, Janet Burgess for meeting our officers on 24 November.

Discussion took place on the problems of social care-NHS in Islington and the 1st February 2017 National Dignity Action Day.

As you will see in Pam Zinkin's article on page five there is a big attempt at integration of health and social care under the Sustainability and Transformation Plan, but at a reduced cost. We

consider that real integration can only take place if there is legislation to establish a National Care Service paid through general taxation, properly trained and paid care workers and an end to privatisation. We would like to see the discussion take place in a bigger forum on 1st February 2017, the National Dignity Action Day at an event hosted by the Council, IPF and the Islington Unison branch which organises care workers. The Councillors are considering this, and we will be getting back to them to see if this is possible.

# THE STATE PENSION TRIPLE LOCK

The recommendation of the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee arising from its Intergenerational Fairness Inquiry is that the government should ditch the "triple lock" on the basic state pension. This is the basis on which the pension is increased each year, either in relation to earnings, prices or 2.5% (whichever is highest).

The reasoning for this recommendation is that pensioners are doing well at the expense of younger generations. An article by Tim Montgomery was published in *The Times* on 7 November agreeing with the Select Committee and two letters were published on the following day opposing the recommendation:

### From Steve Webb: Pensions Minister in the Coalition Government and now Director of Policy, Royal London

Sir, It is a mistake to dismiss the triple lock on state pensions as an unaffordable sop to the "grey vote". Most of Britain's pensioners still receive a basic state pension which, at about £119 per week, is one of the lowest in Europe and leaves millions needing means-tested top-ups just to get by. A generously indexed state pension also matters for today's working-age population. Many joined the workforce too late to enjoy the generous final salary pensions of previous generations but have yet to build up substantial pension pots in their own right. For these workers, and for many lower-paid women in particular, the state pension remains a crucial part of retirement provision.

The triple lock was introduced in 2010 to reverse decades of decline in the value of the state pension. That work is not yet finished.

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### From Dot Gibson, General Secretary, National Pensioners Convention

Sir, Tim Mongomerie argues that Theresa May should ditch the triple lock in part because "today's pensioners receive more than the average" but the reality is that from next April the triple lock will give pensioners an increase of just £3 a week. The UK state pension is regarded as 32nd out of 34 OECD countries, and 6.5 million older people have an income of less than £11,000 a year. The National Audit Office has also confirmed that anyone retiring in 2060 - even with the triple lock - will be worse off under the new state pension.

So this phoney conflict between the generations is being used as a smokescreen in order to cut back on the welfare state. The housing crisis was caused not by pensioners but by the decision to sell off council houses, the failure to replace these council houses with affordable homes and by wages being unable to keep up with house-price inflation. This is what needs to be addressed.

# ISLINGTON POLICE ADDRESS THE FORUM

**Policewoman Stacey McGhee** and her team came to the November Forum meeting. We had given them some issues of concern which we hoped they could address, e.g. nuisance calls and scams, the tagging of people with dementia, problems with disability scooters. The four members of the team were in training and each gave a short presentation.

**Gary** spoke about beating scammers. He said that those operating in this area are cunning and manipulative.

- you should not agree to offers or deals,
- never hand over any money
- never give bank details

“Action Fraud” has a web site and if anybody is unsure they should call 101 and explain.

**Catherine** dealt with crime prevention.

- better if your door has two locks
- a timer for lights to come on if you are not there is good
- if you have security alarms, always make sure they are checked and active
- don't leave keys near the front door -- keep them in a secure place
- lock garages and sheds
- keep side gates locked
- best to have low fences and bushes so that there is no place to hide.

**Matt** said that it was important to understand that some people wanting to rob you, pretend to be a meter reader or some other public service agent and so it is always best to ask them to show their ID or make a proper arrangement in advance. A chain on the door is good, because you can check without having to open the door.

If you are unsure you should call the head office of the company they say they are from. You should never keep a large amount of cash in your home or your credit cards in an obvious place.

If you are worried by anti-social behaviour, e.g. shouting, loud music, barking dogs, dog fouling, drug taking etc, you can contact the Council

**Henry** said that when you do report anti-social behaviour you will be contacted within 24 hours, and even if that is not the case, the report is being dealt with.

In relation to mobility scooters, there are two categories, Class 2 with a maximum speed of four mph and Class 3 with a maximum speed of eight mph. The Class 3 type does need to be registered with the DVLA, there is a weight limit and it is fitted with proper brakes, a horn and a mirror -- it can go on the road, but it does not require a test or a licence.

**Stacey** said that there are monthly meetings between the police and the local Council and so IPF could keep in touch so that matters of concern are raised. There was no advice or opinion on the tagging of people with dementia, although police were called in from time to time when somebody was lost or out of touch with relatives.

## USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS:

- Emergency crimes 999
- To report a non-emergency problem 101
- Action Fraud 0300 123 2040
- Islington Council Anti-Social-Behaviour 020 7527 7272 -- 24 hour service

In the discussion it was pointed out that there were regular meetings with young people in schools etc, and it would be good if there was regular contact with older people.

## Quips and Quotes for the Young at Heart

I am getting to an age when I can only enjoy the last sport left. It is called hunting for your spectacles.

Sir Edward Grey, politician and ornithologist (1862-1933)

Old people should not eat healthy foods. They need all the preservatives they can get.

Robert Owen, US magician and comedy writer

If you rest, you rust.

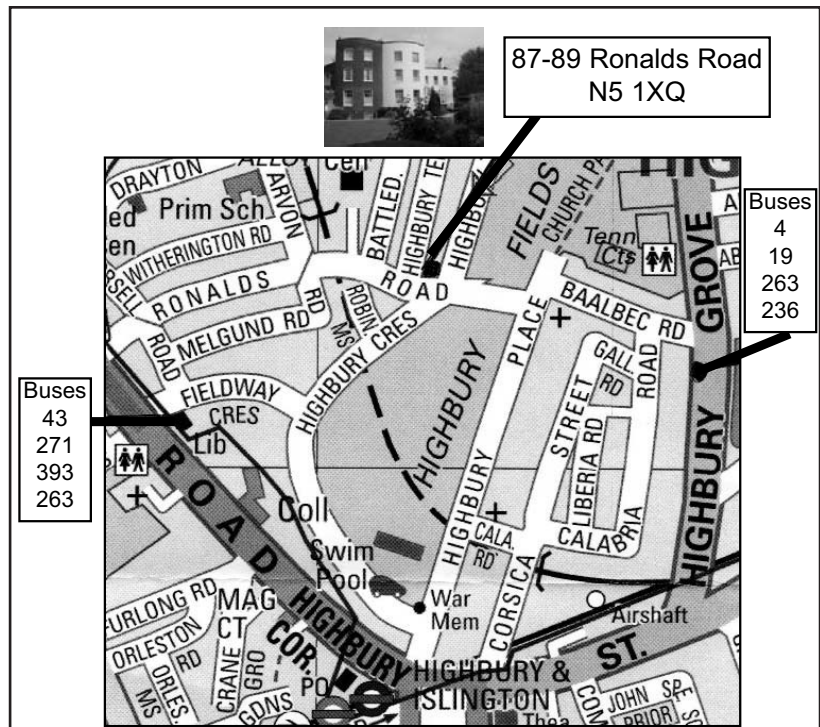
Helen Hayes, US stage and film actress (1900 - 1993)

# End the Winter Blues Party, Saturday 4 February

1-3.30 pm

**The Bungalow,  
HIGHBURY VIEW,  
Garden Gate,  
87-89 Ronalds Rd  
N5 1XQ**

Come and join us. If you want to come but need help, please leave a message with your 'phone number on 020 7226 7687



## MUSEUMS ON PRESCRIPTION

You are invited to take part in a research project being carried out by University College London and Canterbury Christ Church University.

It is a course of ten museum sessions consisting of talks and tours, behind-the-scene visits, object handling, and discussion, and museum-inspired creative activities.

The group will meet at 10.15 am in the Phoenix Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, Phoenix Place, London, WC1X 0DG, and sessions will take place (10.30 am - 12.30 pm) from 20 January to 24 March 2017.

This is for people 65 - 94 years old, who may be feeling lonely and at a loose end, but are able to get to the museums, function in a group, take part in interviews and fill in questionnaires.

**Contact Linda Thomson**

**020 7697 2649**

**[linda.thomson@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:linda.thomson@ucl.ac.uk)**

## Bus Stop Countdown Signs

You may have noticed that some bus stops are now without their electronic display boards giving estimated bus arrival times or perhaps they have stopped working. IPF recently wrote to Transport for London to enquire about this and citing two examples (at Theberton Street and Gillespie Road bus stops), and here is an extract of their reply.

“I’m sorry for the inconvenience this has caused to your members who don’t have another method of receiving live bus arrivals information.

As you can imagine, we sometimes have to temporarily remove Countdown signs so we can repair or update shelters. Depending on the complexity of the work, it can take some time before we put the sign back.

Regarding the areas you’ve described, I’ve been in touch with our Bus Infrastructure and Countdown teams and made them aware of your concerns.

So we can advise on specific bus stops, it would be very helpful if you’re able to provide an identifying number. This can be found on the edge of the shelter roof usually facing the road. Otherwise, we’ll be grateful for the name of the bus stop as it appears on the sign; the point letters to be found on the small, round sign at the top of the pole. Or the SMS code which can be seen on a plate towards the top of the pole.

Thanks again for bringing this matter to our attention.”

IPF will keep an eye on the bus stops we reported, but if you know of others with missing or non-working displays, let us know.

# Our NHS is in serious danger - by Pam Zinkin

Our NHS has been in danger for some time, but at last there is some publicity.

We know a little from our own individual experiences as many of us have had to wait longer to see a GP, or for a Consultant appointment or an operation.

Many ambulances now take a longer time to reach a person in need, and many have to queue for up to two hours to hand over their patient at A&E, where very few departments meet the waiting time limit. Then, after being seen, a patient to be admitted may have to wait hours on a gurney for a bed and when we are ready for home, discharge is delayed as spending on social care has fallen by 17% since 2010. (Kings Fund).

Most of us have nothing but praise for the over-worked nurses and hard working junior doctors that have cared for us. However, the government's response to the shortage of nurses is to take away their bursaries and charge them university fees and to junior doctors to force them to have a contract which they know endangers patient safety.

A lot of this is blamed on us, the ageing population, and whilst it is true that many of us do use the health service more than most younger people, we are not responsible for the chronic under-funding.

Advances in technology and treatments, paying off Private Finance Initiative (PFI) bills (seven times the original cost) the "internal market" (privatisation) and increased payments to pharmaceutical companies are amongst the increasing costs.

For example, last year NHS spending on drugs rose by 8% to £15.5bn and whilst the pharmaceutical industry says they need to make a profit to fund research. The increase of 2,600% in the price of one drug used in epilepsy did provoke comment and a £87million fine.

Two thirds of hospital trusts are in debt which means they pay 3% interest on that debt to the Treasury!

We spend a lower percentage of our GDP on health care than most other developed countries but this is to go down to 6.2% in 2015-16 according to the office of budget responsibility, reported by the Nuffield Trust. (The USA spends 16% of GDP for a divided service).

What is the response to the problems?

Secretive plans -- Sustainability and Transformation

Plans (STPs) initiated by NHS England have been discussed behind closed doors in 44 areas of England (44 footprints) for a year without consultation. These are the latest threat to our health services. Islington Council had made public the draft STP for our area (North Central London) and this was discussed at a meeting in Islington Town Hall on 15 November.

Speakers were leader of Islington Council, Richard Watts, Steven Hitchens from Whittington Hospital, Dr. Richard Jennings, Doctors Jacky Davies and Sue Richards from KONP (Keep our NHS Public) and Dot Gibson of the National Pensioners Convention as well as our two MPs, Jeremy Corbyn and Emily Thornberry.

***“Two thirds of hospital trusts are in debt which means they pay 3% interest on that debt to the Treasury!”***

Theoretically the plan should help health and social services to work together. This sounds fine but it has to be done without any increase in resources!

The main aim is financial sustainability and a number of local authorities are rejecting their STP on the grounds that they 'have no confidence in the financial plan'. So any claims that the plans are about anything than saving money for the underfunded health service are simply not true.

Our footprint is called North Central London (a new location to most of us!)

and has to make savings of £900,000. So all the fine words in the plan about sustainability and transformation for people's better health are just meaningless. In many areas "consolidation" means closing or downgrading A&E departments and in some areas hospitals are threatened. We were assured that the Whittington is safe but in all probability there will be a sell-off of some NHS land and "consolidation" might mean anything.

When hospital closures are threatened many people will demonstrate and MPs of all political parties will join the protests but when the threat is to mental health services or social care there is little response. This has to change but NOT by introducing charges or worse still encouraging a medical insurance scheme.

Whilst it would be good if health and social care worked together in our interests, we should ask our Councillors not to accept the STP as a possible improvement in an integrated service given the failure to fund the NHS and Social Care at an adequate level.

# INFORMATION

Every Monday BINGO 1pm	1pm at IPF Hall, 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 19th January, 10.30 am	Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall, Speaker: Paul Watt on housing and Liz Davies invited.
Saturday 4th February	End the Winter Blues Party, Highbury View, 1-3.30 pm
Thursday 16th February, 10.30 am	Patrick Jones, Cripplegate Foundation and a speaker on Public Transport

**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**

**STANDING ORDER FORM : please send the completed form to:**

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

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