

### Our THANKS to Co-op Members

George, Eric and Dot with Roger Haley, Manager of Islington's North Road Co-op on Wednesday 18 January.

Islington Pensioners Forum is one of the community organisations chosen by the Co-op to receive funding from the sale of the Co-op's own products and carrier bags. This funding "slot" ends at the end of April, but we know that our part of the funding is already over £2,000!

So we went along to say "thank-you" to Co-op members, and to give out leaflets with information about the purpose and activities of Islington Pensioners Forum. We also asked shoppers to join the Co-op (for £1) if they were not already members. Roger has invited us to have a campaign stall in April and we hope that we can have a good crowd there



### END THE WINTER BLUES PARTY Saturday 4 February 1 - 3.30 PM

The Bungalow, Highbury View,  
Garden Gate 87-89 Ronalds Road,  
N5 1XQ

*If you need help to get there, please  
leave a message with YOUR PHONE  
NUMBER on 020 7226 7687*

We thank Councillor Raphael Andrews of Clerkenwell Ward for the generous donation of £250 from the VCS fund to help our party go with a swing!

### The Great Pay-as-You-Go Rip-Off

How do you save money on your mobile phone (smartphone), landline and broadband?

One example happened this January in the Wednesday afternoon computer class at Islington Pensioner's Forum.

One of our users has an old style mobile phone with pay as you go. First red flag was when she said they kept offering her £15 or £20 free if she topped up NOW! and she now had £40 in credit on her phone. . . . .View this with great suspicion!

Here's how it works: When you ask for 'pay as you go' most operators have two types. The one called

*/continued on page four'*

# CHAIRMAN’S NOTES

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At our Forum January meeting, listening to Dr. Paul Watt give an excellent lecture on the history of social housing, it was possible to understand just what we have lost over the years, and how really difficult it is for young people today to get a place to call home, especially as there is no proper regulation of the private rental market. The Forum has traditionally supported the housing campaigns, but Paul gave us a real insight into the background of the current housing crisis. He gave an example of a couple with two children, who were relocated from East London into temporary accommodation (a studio flat, including kitchen, plus bathroom) in an area a long way from their family and friends, or deemed to have purposely made themselves homeless, which would mean they would be removed from the housing list. (see below)

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I am writing this following the Donald J. Trupp inauguration ceremony as President of the United States of America. More than enough has been said about Trump, who comes over as a billionaire bully, but although he didn't get more votes than Hilary Clinton, the US electoral system has given him the most powerful job in the world! He has already started the process for doing away with "Obama-care" which ensures that millions of poor people have the right to health care, and there is the threat that a trade deal with the UK will include further inroads into our NHS by US companies; also although he promised jobs for those made redundant when their jobs were "exported" to low-pay regions of the world (e.g. Mexico) he is already attacking rights to proper

wages and conditions in the US! So. . . watch this space!

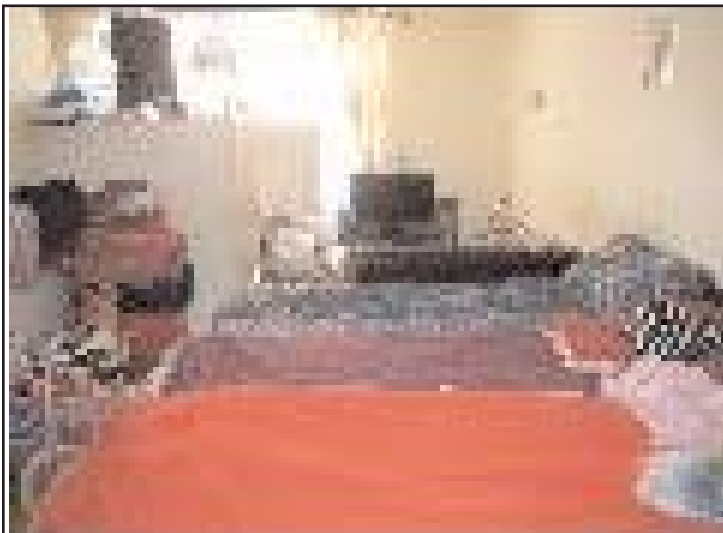
.....

Another interesting revelation of present-day news is the decision of Surrey County Council to have a referendum on the proposal to increase their council tax by 15 per cent to pay for social care. Who would have thought of this happening? A Conservative-controlled council taking the fight to its own government? Steady on! What is this? Surrey is not known for its support of social housing and other publicly-provided services, but the leader of the Council came on the news saying that they had a duty of care and couldn't carry out their responsibilities after having £90+ millions of cuts in government grants.

The problems of social care and the NHS have really hit rock-bottom -- the government cannot find a scapegoat to blame and now the crisis is provoking in-fighting among Conservatives. Perhaps Berkshire and Westminster councils will be next? Now I am being cynical! For years every government has kicked this problem into the long grass. It is now time to have a National Care System linked to the NHS, free at the point of delivery and paid through taxation.

What that means in practice should be the subject of a national conversation, and research shows that most people want such a system.

Millions of frail elderly and disabled people are being denied care through means-testing, and home owners are being forced to sell their homes to pay for care.



**Photo: Paul Watt (2015)**

Parents and two young children live in a one-room studio flat in Welwyn Garden City – this type of housing is being used as temporary accommodation for Londoners who are increasingly being moved outside the capital by London councils.

The picture shows three beds (for Mum and the two children -- Dad sleeps on the floor) in the only living area.

**More from Paul Watt on page five. . .**



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

These pictures are a little reminder that Islington Pensioners Forum is both a campaigning and a social group. . . . the top picture is of members at our garden party and the bottom picture is of members taking part as skeletons in the National Pensioners Convention demonstration at the Department of Health, saying "People are dying of neglect.... do something soon about the crisis in social care!"

Those joining over the past two years have all paid the £5 annual subscription and many "old" members have also paid, but we continue to send around 350 newsletters to "old members" who have not paid because we value their years of support.

Reports of our activities are published each month in our Newsletter and members are asked to pay the £5 annual subscription towards the £8 cost of its production and postage..

However, we are publishing this reminder that we are now in a new year and the annual subscription is due. So, unless you paid or joined at the end of 2016, we hope you will pay this year's £5 by cheque, payable to "Islington Pensioners Forum" or by cash. to: IPF, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN

Many thanks

## British Telecom crackdown on nuisance calls

In our October 2016 newsletter, we published a letter from Tania Banyard, British Telecom Network Controlled Calling Specialist, which said that there would be a new service to deal with tele-sales and other nuisance calls.

**This new FREE service called "BT Call Protect" was launched on 24 January; it will divert a whopping 30 million calls a week to junk voicemail.**

This is really good news as the average British person receives four nuisance calls a week and unsurprisingly 60 per cent find this really stressful.

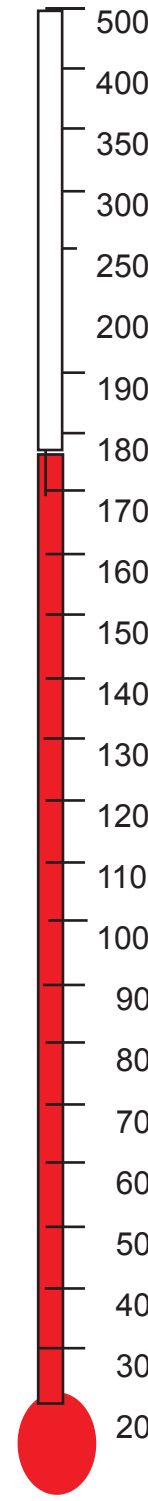
John Petter, chief executive of BT Consumer, said: "We're declaring war on the companies that regularly pester our customers with nuisance calls on subjects such as PPI and per-

sonal accident claims. . . . with our new technology we can identify and tackle huge numbers of those calls in the network and also give our customers control over the calls they receive. . ."

● **BT Call Protect** proactively monitors nuisance calls and automatically prevents them from getting through to your phone by sending them directly to a junk voicemail. BT Blacklist which will automatically send them to your junk voicemail.

● **BT Call Protect** makes it very simple to divert nuisance calls. If you receive a nuisance call, hang up the phone, dial 1572 and follow the simple instructions to add to your Personal Blacklist.

● For more information log onto [www.bt.com/callprotect](http://www.bt.com/callprotect).



## SOCIAL CARE IS AT THE TOP OF THE POLITICAL AGENDA!

In the December/January Newsletter we reported a meeting which our officers had with Councillor Richard Watts, leader of Islington Council and Councillor Janet Burgess, deputy leader.

**Arising from that discussion, Janet Burgess has booked the Council chamber for 6 p.m. on Tuesday 25th April for a public meeting on SOCIAL CARE.**

Arrangements and campaigning for this important meeting will be discussed with Janet at our next Executive Committee meeting on Monday 6th February and we will give a full report at our next Forum meeting on Thursday 16th February.

We have already invited Heather Wakefield, the Unison national organiser responsible for care workers, to speak, and Eric Hill (our Treasurer and a member of the Islington branch of Unison) is discussing the meeting with the officers and members of that branch. We are also hoping that a representative of the British Medical Association will speak.

Social Care is at the top of the political agenda.:Jeremy Corbyn raised questions at Prime Minister's Question Time; there are calls for cross-

party talks; new campaign groups are being set up and there are various suggestions about the way social care should be funded. Andy Burnham MP (Labour) favours a tax on property after death; Norman Lamb MP (LibDem) favours a dedicated health and social care tax. Meanwhile Simon Stevens, Head of the NHS has suggested that the triple lock on the state pension and the free bus pass should be scrapped to pay for care services!

All of them know that time is running out. . . . as our photo (page 3) shows, people are dying whilst the politicians are dithering! It is very important that we - organised and campaigning pensioners - take up the fight on behalf of frail elderly and disabled pensioners and their families. The 25th April meeting in the Town Hall (Council Chamber) is therefore very important.

In the meantime, **on Saturday 4th March there is a demonstration in London on the NHS and Social Care**; the National Pensioners Convention is asking members to join this demo (dressed as skeletons), Please let us know if you want to join in. We will discuss it at our Forum meeting on 18th February.

### Quips and Quotes for the Young at Heart

● I used to have a sign over my computer that read: "Old dogs can learn new tricks", but lately I sometimes ask myself how many more new tricks I want to learn. Wouldn't it just be easier to be outdated?

**Ram Dass, US professor of psychology, researcher and writer**

● As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say, I just watch what they do.

**Andrew Carnegie, Scottish-born US industrialist and philanthropist (1835-1919)**

● If old people were to mobilise en masse they would constitute a formidable fighting force, as anyone who has ever had the temerity to try to board a bus ahead of a little old lady with an umbrella well knows.

**Vera Forrester (1932-2015) Supervisor, NE Georgia Medical Centre**

*Continued from page one/*

### **The Great Pay-As-You-Go Rip Off**

'Pay As You Go' often has high pence per minute and text charges. In her case it was 30p and 14p respectively. Her operator also has their "Pay as You Go Classic" which charges 5p and 5p respectively. Nice trick. "The customer didn't ask me for 'Pay As You Go Classic' your Honour!"

That's why they love to give you 'free' minutes. If they give you £30 extra credit they are only giving you 100 minutes. If you bought £30 worth at 5p a minute you'd be getting 600 minutes.

Always ask what different types of PAYG the operator has and which one is the cheapest. Ignore them if they start talking about all the extra money they'll give you when you top up or laugh like a drain and say, "No thanks. I want the 4 or 5p a minute PAYG please!"

Next month we'll talk about how to work out how many minutes a month you use on your phone and how to get the best deal for you.

***Peter Crockett***

Co-ordinator, Healthy Generations

[www.healthygenerations.org.uk](http://www.healthygenerations.org.uk)

Registered Charity 1128902

0798 114 2376

# Housing provision is in a mess. . . . it is a disgrace. . . . and it was a long time coming. .

**PAUL WATT**, Reader in Urban Studies at Birkbeck College in the Department of Geography, spoke at our January Forum meeting.

Paul's talk was so full of researched information, accompanied by a really accessible powerpoint presentation that it is not possible to do it justice in a few short paragraphs! However, here goes. . . .

Homes for working class people were built in Inner London; unlike in Paris, where such housing was developed on the outskirts of the city.

However, although much of the social housing remains, stock transfer has cut the numbers of such homes. This took place

according to the Green Paper (2000) put forward under the Labour government by John Prescott, and this, in addition to the sale of council housing under Margaret Thatcher's government, meant the loss of social housing.

With the aim of lowering public sector borrowing, the then Chancellor, Gordon Brown, welcomed Housing Associations because their borrowing for housing development is not included in public borrowing whereas local authority borrowing is included.

At best, this was a short-sighted move, which undermined the gains of previous Labour govern-

ments (especially the 1945 government) under which there were huge developments in public housing.

*The number of households living in temporary accommodation in London has grown by 50 per cent from 2011-2016..*

Housing Associations are much closer to market pressures and as the Coalition government (2010) cut housing grants, the HAs had to have more private loans.

All this has meant the shrinkage of social housing, and now people are forced into the private rented market, where rents are three times more than the rents in social housing. Also, around a third of the homes transferred out of social housing by the "right to buy" has been sold on to private landlords, and we have gone back to the situation that existed in the nineteenth century. . . . a deregulated landlord class.

London is one of the most unequal cities on the planet! The number of households living in temporary accommodation in London has grown by 50 per cent from 2011-2016.. Once homes are removed from the social housing stock they are lost to that sector of society for whom they were built!

The current government is now forcing local authorities to sell council homes and hand over the proceeds to Housing Associations, which are increasingly turning into big business away from their original social purpose.

As Paul said: "Housing provision is in a mess. . . . It is a disgrace. . . and it was a long time coming." Understanding the history of social housing is important for the housing campaigns, and we were very pleased to be given this insight by Paul's presentation.

Watt, P. (2013) "It's not for us": regeneration, the 2012 Olympics and the gentrification of East London', *City* 17(1): 99-118.  
**Available:**  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13604813.2012.754190>

Housing tenure in London for households, 1961-2011						
Tenure	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
LA rented %	18.2	24.9	30.7	23.3	17.1	13.5
LA rented N	484,992	659,020	769,996	644,510	516,242	439,727
HA rented %	-	-	4.1	5.6	9.1	10.6
HA rented N	-	-	102,430	154,657	274,129	346,266
Social Rented %	18.2	24.9	34.8	28.9	26.2	24.1
Social Rented N	484,992	659,020	872,426	799,167	790,371	785,993
Private rented %	42.4	34.1	15.1	12.2	14.3	25.1
Private rented N	1,128,090	904,219	378,860	337,911	432,482	819,085
Owner occup'd %	36.3	40.4	48.6	57.2	56.5	49.5
Owner occup'd N	964,934	1,069,465	1,217,559	1,579,177	1,704,719	1,618,315
Other %	3.0	0.6	1.5	1.6	2.9	1.3
Other N	80,150	17,120	36,429	44,874	88,425	42,780
Total N	2,658,166	2,649,825	2,505,274	2,761,129	3,015,997	3,266,173

**Source:** Census (Watt & Minton, 2016, page 208)  
**Note:** Social Rented is Local Authority and Housing Association combined  
**LA** - Local Authority    **HA** - Housing Association

# INFORMATION

BINGO . .cancelled until March . . . .	The Monday Bingo sessions will resume in March
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)
Saturday 4th February	End the Winter Blues Party, Highbury View, 1-3.30 pm
Thursday 16th February, 10.30 am Committee Room 1, Town Hall.	Forum meeting: speaker, Patrick Jones, Cripplegate Foundation and a speaker on Public Transport
Thursday 15th March, 10.30 am Committee Room 1, Town Hall	Forum meeting: speaker, Councillor Mick O'Sullivan on the Council's energy saving programme

**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

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  
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.....

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or hand in at the Forum meeting