



Charity No: 1043081

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

March 2017 Newsletter

A statement from the Executive Committee of Islington Pensioners Forum

1. Our generation has a responsibility for upholding and developing the principles of social justice for which the post World War II Labour government was elected. We therefore defend our NHS, our public services and the welfare state; we oppose the privatisation of these and we oppose the government's austerity measures.
2. We are concerned that the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, in its Generational Fairness Inquiry Report says that today's young generation (the millennials) "face being the first generation to be poorer than their forebears".
3. This disgraceful situation for young people has been caused by governments making wholesale attacks on our public services, social housing, the welfare state and workplace rights, by property sharks and unscrupulous employers, not by an "economy . . . 'skewed' towards baby boomers and against millennials". The economy is "skewed" towards the rich against the poor!
4. We reject the recommendation that cutting back on the basic state pension (e.g. ending the "triple lock" and pensioner universal benefits) will overcome the problems of the young. The UK state pension is 34th out of 36 OECD countries and we say that our call for a living state pension and defence of universal benefits is standing up for future pensioners -- today's younger generation.
5. **We therefore fully support the Generations United initiative of the National Pensioners Convention and to take this forward we ask the Council to host a meeting between Islington Pensioners Forum and Islington's Young Councillors.**
6. We are equally concerned that thousands of frail elderly and disabled people and their families as well as care workers and local Councils are caught in the Social Care crisis with diminishing services for those means-tested older people in Council care and for those who are self-funders the possibility that they will lose their homes to pay for care.
7. We call for a new model of social care - one that shares the cost across society as a whole, improves access to services as well as standards of care, with improved wages and conditions for social care workers. In other words: a National Care Service free at the point of delivery, paid through general taxation and integrated with the NHS with stringent regulations on the private sector.
8. **We are pleased to announce a meeting jointly called by Islington Council, Islington Pensioners Forum and Islington Unison:**

FOR A POLICY TO SOLVE THE SOCIAL CARE CRISIS!

Public Meeting and Discussion

Council Chamber, Islington Town Hall,

Tuesday 25 April

Refreshments 6 p.m. Meeting starts at 7 p.m.

**Invited speakers to represent the Council, the British Medical Association,
Unison and the National Pensioners Convention**

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Because of my interest in politics, and because I see the gains made by a Labour government after the Second World War being destroyed, I stayed up late on Thursday 23 February to watch the results of the by-elections in Stoke and Copeland.

After months of media-speak that UKIP is overtaking Labour, it was good to see that this did not happen in Stoke. As far as Copeland is concerned, it was no surprise to hear some of the reasons as to how they voted and why many did not vote: Brexit, anti-establishment, the nuclear question regarding jobs, etc. but it was disappointing that threats to the local NHS hospital did not encourage more people to stand up against government cuts.

The other matter that bugged me was the return to the Labour Party leadership issue. Our President Jeremy Corbyn is constantly on the receiving end of the media barrage; it's so unfair and wrong! Let's look at the record.

In 2015 Jeremy spent four months campaigning in the Labour leadership election after Ed Milliband resigned, and he ended up winning with 59.5% of the votes; then, less than a year later another leadership election was forced upon him by what I call "the coup" elements in the Parliamentary Labour Party – so again, months of campaigning – and

again he won with 61.8% of the votes. Now, only two years since the general election which triggered these Labour leadership battles, and with successful Mayoral battles in London and Bristol in the meantime, he has had to deal with these two by-elections.

My mind returns to journalist Paul Mason's papers where he said now that Jeremy had won the first and second leadership battles, with the largest individual vote 'the coup' who opposed Jeremy would not give in – "they will not accept the overwhelming vote that gave him the leadership of the Labour Party".

It is not Jeremy or his closest followers who are helping to destroy the working class vote, it is "the coup" sending their tentacles out to the prominent media and others to make Jeremy's progress all the more trying. It is "the coup" that is doing damage to the Labour Party. It is time they shut up and fell in behind the leader to build an effective opposition to the present declining government.

I know that not every member of our Forum will agree with everything I say about this. However, knowing Jeremy as we do – he is not only our President, but also a member of Islington Pensioners Forum, I am sure that most of you will share my anger at the way he is being treated by members of his own party and by the media.

An NHS desperate for help

STPs (Sustainability and Transformation Plans) are being presented in 44 (footprints) areas of the country and we are told that these plans will transform the NHS and social care for the better. But many local authorities have rejected them and we publish below part of the statement made by Dr. Mark Porter, Chair of the BMA (British Medical Association) Council.

The extent of the capital requirements that will be unfulfilled [by the STPs] show the process was doomed to failure all along owing to inadequate funding and a lack of political will to transform services properly - with politicians and health leaders instead focused on making savings.

From the very beginning this process was carried out in near secrecy by rushed health and social care leaders trying to develop impossible plans for the future while struggling to keep the NHS from the brink of collapse.

The clinicians who are expected to deliver this flawed revolution were not engaged and many staff have had little or no involvement. The BMA has been

saying for some time now that the STP process could have offered a chance to change some of the problems that hang like a millstone around the health service's neck: unnecessary competition, expensive fragmentation and buildings and equipment often unfit for purpose.

The reality, however, is that these plans have become a vehicle for £26bn of covert savings - yet another crippling blow dealt by a Government with a vicious austerity agenda and lacking the gumption to come up with properly funded solutions for a health service in crisis.

There is clearly nowhere near the funding required to carry out these plans and it appears that NHS England and NHS Improvement have probably known that for quite some time.

The STP project is built on the least stable of foundations. These plans are fast becoming completely unworkable and may have been a waste of time and effort in an NHS desperate for help. *(taken from the BMA website)*

HOW DO WE GET CLEANER AIR FOR ALL LONDONERS?

Dear Friends in Islington Pensioners Forum,

I am writing to invite you to join me at a forum for people working towards getting cleaner air for all Londoners. It will be held in

London's Living Room at City Hall, Queen's Walk, SE1 2AA

Tuesday 21 March from 6 pm (for a 6.30 pm start) until 8.30 pm

I have met with Londoners across the capital, including an Islington Pensioners Forum meeting, and all have the same goal - reducing air pollution and helping to build a healthier future for themselves and their communities.

You are invited to attend to meet experts and other campaigners and find out where the Mayor is up to on his air pollution consultation.

Contributors on the question "How do we get clean air for all Londoners" include:

- Simon Birkett (Clean Air in London),
- Professor Frank Kelly (Kings College),
- Alice Monroe (Doctors against Diesel),
- Louise Francis (Mapping for Change)

Hoping that you can join us at this important event.

Best wishes,

Caroline Russell,

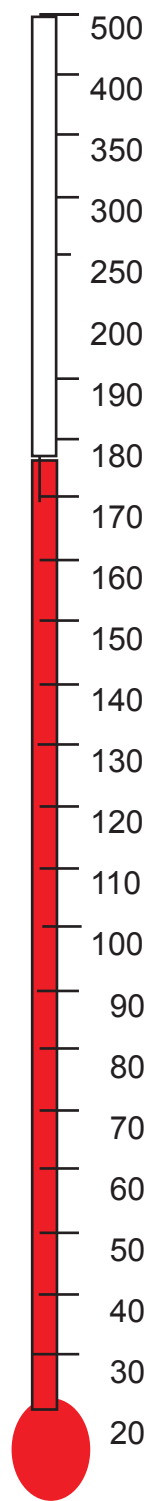
Islington Councillor and Member of the Greater London Assembly

**To book your place, contact: Jessica Badger, Press Officer:
jessica.badger@london.gov.uk 0207 983 4424**

Points from Joel Kominsky's talk to the February Forum on TRANSPORT

- London is the only capital city with no government subsidy for transport, and Transport For London (TfL) -- part of the Mayor of London's responsibilities -- is not allowed to run buses.
 - Instead, following deregulation of London's buses, TfL puts out a tender for routes and often gives the contract to the cheapest bidder.
 - Examples of just a few of the companies concerned: Metroline (is owned by a Singapore Company) Go Ahead (has its headquarters in Newcastle) Tower Transit (is owned by an Australian company) Arriva (is now owned by Deutsche Bank) and Stagecoach (is owned by Sir Brian Souter).
 - There are 8,500 buses on London's roads every day, but the services are gradually being cut.
 - When TfL gets 250 complaints about a route they must deal with them and put questions to the Mayor of London.
 - London Underground is cutting staff and the unions see this as a threat to the safety of passengers and so they are taking strike action to defend safety.
 - Although the 24-hour London Underground is beneficial to London businesses they do not help pay for this, and the service is not expected to break even up to 2013.
 - The Rail Delivery Group (RDG -- previously ATOC -- the Association of Train Operating Companies) is responsible for the senior rail card (now costing £30 a year), the holder of which gets a third off rail travel.
 - The National Pensioners Convention says that pensioners should not have to buy the card; they should be entitled to get a third off rail travel simply by presenting their bus pass, but the government will not agree to this; our rail card is an important source of profit for RDG.
- Joel Kominsky is a member of TSSA & is on the NPC Transport Committee

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



Islington Pensioners Forum works with Healthy Generations which joins with others to hold regular classes and events for the older generation
information: Peter Crockett 0798 2376 info@healthygenerations.org
www.healthygenerations.org.uk

First Tuesday of each month : The Old Fire Station, 84 Mayton Street, N7 6QT 1-2 pm. SING-A-LONG & DANCE free with refreshments for over 60s

Last Tuesday of each month : West Library, Bridgeman Road, N1 1BD 1.30-2.30 pm KEEP-FIT free tea with cake

Every Tuesday : North Library, Manor Gardens, N7 6JX 1.30-2.30 pm KEEP-FIT FOR OVER 50s free

Every Tuesday : Drover's Centre, North Road, N7 9EY 1.30-2.30 pm KEEP-FIT £2

Every Wednesday : Manor Gardens Centre , 6-9 Manor Gardens, N7 6LA 10.30-11.30 am MEDITATION exercise group £5 (ring 020 7607 6444 if you are coming)

Every Wednesday : Andover Community Centre, Andover Estate 55 Corker Walk N7 7RY 11-11.30am OSTEOPOROSIS remedial exercise class £3 for people with or in high risk group for osteoporosis

Every Wednesday : Islington Pensioners Forum, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN COMPUTER CLASS 3-4 pm, free -- help sorting problems for laptops, smartphones & tablets. Lots of information how to protect from scams on phones and computers.

Every Thursday : Manor Gardens Centre, 6-9 Manor Gardens, N7 6LA 6.30-7.30 pm MEDITATION exercise group (ring 020 7607 6444 if you are coming)

Every Thursday : North Library, Manor Gardens, N7 6JX 6.30-7.30 pm KEEP-FIT

Every Thursday : West Library, Bridgeman Road, N1 8BD 5-6 pm KEEP FIT

Every Friday : Hilldrop Community Centre, Community Lane, Hilldrop Road, N7 0JE 4-5 pm COMPUTER CLASS Helping to sort out problems for laptops, smartphones and tablets. How to protect from scams on phones and computers

Every Saturday : West Library, Bridgeman Road, N1 8BD 9.30-10.30 am OSTEOPOROSIS remedial exercise class. For people with or in high risk group for osteoporosis.

Every Saturday : North Library, Manor Gardens, N7 9EY 1.30-2.30 pm OSTEOPOROSIS remedial exercise class

ENERGY SAVING

Councillor Mick O'Sullivan will be at our Forum meeting on Thursday 15th March

This year the major energy suppliers expect to increase their prices by more than 10%.

Already 1 in 5 households in London find it difficult to keep warm at home, and yet between 2012 and 2015, the number of homes receiving energy efficiency help fell by 76%! The numbers of fuel poor households across England equals approximately 11% of all homes, and the figures are expected to worsen given ever-increasing energy costs. It is much higher amongst older person households.

Even though most household energy is provided by major electricity and gas suppliers, people can now access lower prices by switching providers, and accessing more accurate billing through smart meters. Also you can find out more about how pay-as-you-go meters cost you money and many more tips, including steps to reduce heat loss in the home.

* * * * *

Mick will explain what steps you can take to save energy bills while still staying warm and he will also outline some of the grant schemes older people can avail of to save money.

PLEASE BRING YOUR GAS AND ELECTRICITY BILLS TO THE MEETING SO THAT YOU CAN SEE HOW MUCH YOU CAN ACTUALLY SAVE BY SWITCHING.

Quips and Quotes for the Young at Heart

● We spend our time on the run: we get up by the clock, eat and sleep by the clock, get up again, go to work -- and then we retire. And what do they give us? A bloody clock!

Dave Allen

● The trouble with retirement is that you never get a day off.

Abe Lemons, basketball coach (1922-2002)

● My first advice about how not to grow old would be to choose your ancestors carefully.

Bertrand Russell

The following notes are from Forum member, Eric Hill – we ask you to show them to your family, friends and neighbours the more we all become aware of the health and social care crisis, the more we can all join together to stand up for the rights of our frail, elderly friends and their families.

- The UK is the sixth richest country in the world, but there is a crisis in the provision of social care for older people, when there should be proper care to enable them to live out their lives in dignity, either at home or in residential care if this is what they need.

- There should be a free National Care Service, linked to the NHS and funded through general taxation. This is the policy supported by Islington Pensioners Forum.

- According to a five year study by Prestige Nursing+Care the cost for an average single room in a care home is more than double an average pensioner's income. While care costs during 2015/16 rose by 5.2%, pensioners' income only rose by 1.1%. The increase in costs is far higher than the rate of inflation. This means that the shortfall between care costs and pensioner income is increasing year-on-year.

- In the last year alone (2015/16) the shortfall increased by 9%. Alongside a low state pension, private pensions are decreasing and the low interest on savings means that people needing care are losing out, therefore many who own their homes are forced to sell them to pay for a place in a nursing home.

- This is because anyone with savings, including the value of their home amounting to a total of £23,250 must pay all the costs of a nursing home place. In other words they are self-funders, and many must sell their homes to pay for care.

- At the same time government austerity measures mean that Councils are forced to pay less for nursing home places for those on means-tested support for whom the Council is responsible. This is resulting in self-funders being charged more – in some cases 40% more, according to the King's Fund.

- Austerity measures are taking their toll on Council care services: approximately 1.5 million people perform over 50 hours of unpaid care per week; the proportion of GDP the UK spends on social care is amongst the lowest in the OECD with budgets having undergone an overall reduction of over 30% since 2010.

- The human cost is measured in people growing old without the care they need. The number receiving help has fallen by a quarter since 2010. Older people are being admitted to hospital when, with proper care, they could have remained at home; and many are remaining in hospital for longer than necessary because the care crisis means they cannot get care at home.

- A report by the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change reveals that the private care companies are at the heart of the crisis.... dubious financial engineering, tax avoidance and complex business models shift the risks and costs from care home owners to care workers, local authorities and self-funders. There is no doubt that private ownership of social care, with their irresponsible practices, allied to Government cuts are at the heart of the crisis in social care. We demand stringent regulation of the private care sector.

- Theresa May, having initially blocked any discussion on the crisis in social care, has now been forced to address the issue. However, her solution of allowing Councils to raise money through increasing council tax is not the answer and will mean that the provision of social care will become a postcode lottery, as Councils representing poorer areas will find it harder to raise as much cash as those in wealthier areas.

- There is now growing awareness of this crisis – Councils, NHS hospitals, GPs, trade unions and grassroots community organisations are raising their voices, and at the heart of this we pensioners, standing up for those of our generation and their families who are caught up in this crisis, put forward our policy for a tax-funded, free National Care Service, linked to the NHS.

INFORMATION

BINGO every Monday	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 15th March, 10.30 am Committee Room 1, Town Hall	Forum meeting: speaker, Councillor Mick O'Sullivan on saving money on your energy bills (see page four)
Thursday 20th April, 10.30 am Committee Room 1, Town Hall	Forum meeting: speaker, Patrick Jones of the Cripplegate Foundation has been invited
Tuesday 25th April SOCIAL CARE PUBLIC MEETING	COUNCIL CHAMBER, ISLINGTON TOWN HALL refreshments, 6 pm , meeting starts 7 pm (see front page)

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:

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Bank address/post code.....

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From: (your name and address).....

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or hand in at the Forum meeting