



Councillor Janet Burgess, Eric Gordon (*Editor, Islington Tribune*), Heather Wakefield (*Unison National Officer*), Dot Gibson (*Deputy Secretary National Pensioners Convention*) and George Durack (*Chair of Islington Pensioners Forum*) at the Social Care meeting on 25 April 2017. The announcement of the General Election cut across our decision to launch a borough-wide consultation on overcoming the crisis in social care. Therefore at a packed meeting in the Council Chamber, Islington Town Hall, we launched a simple and straightforward petition (see below)

- **The government must provide councils with enough funding for them to be able to carry out their duty of care!**
- **Nobody should have to lose their home to pay for care!**
- **Social Care should be shared across community; it should be tax-funded with individuals and their employers paying 1% additional tax to fund these services so that they are free to all, like the NHS.**
- **We call on all political parties to support this policy.**

We are enclosing a copy of the petition form when posting this newsletter, hoping that you will collect signatures from your family, friends and neighbours.

It can also be accessed on line:

[www.islingtonpensionersforum.co.uk](http://www.islingtonpensionersforum.co.uk)

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The general election on 8th June will need to be on all voters' minds and Mrs. May tells us that uppermost in our thoughts should be Brexit and that she is the one and only fit person to deal with the negotiations on behalf of the nation.

So I got to wondering what was uppermost in the mind of a 65-year-old man who came into our office recently asking for assistance. He had to write a letter appealing against a decision that he is no longer eligible for the mobility part of his Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and so his weekly income had gone down by about £50 a week.

Now this man suffers from post-polio syndrome. He had polio as a baby and had always had weak muscles on the right side of his body, but now in his advancing years these muscles are deteriorating and he cannot properly use his right arm and his right leg. This, together with severe arthritis means that he has serious mobility problems.

Being a proud man, when he was instructed to attend a Department of Work and Pensions assessment interview, he got himself ready, took his painkillers and, using his crutches, made his way to their offices by bus.

He was then informed that because he had "planned and carried out a journey on public transport" he had lost points and therefore lost money.

It is worth knowing that the PIP assessments are carried out for the DWP by a company called MAX-IMUS. This is an American, for-profit, privatising company based in Reston, Virginia with 13,000 employees and a reported annual revenue of \$1.7 billion in fiscal year 2014. It has government contracts in the United States, Australia, Canada, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom

I think that uppermost in the mind of our 65-year-old claimant is how on earth he is going to manage his life when his income is cut by £50 a week! And there are thousands of such people in the same situation.

But Mrs. May and her cabinet are avoiding discussion on such "details"! This despite the fact

that she keeps banging on about creating a more equal society.

We will be told over and over again, that a stronger mandate is needed by the present Conservative Party to go through Brexit.

Rubbish! The only reason Theresa May wants a landslide is for her Brexit result to be agreed in the House of Commons. But the EU 27 countries have already said that the number of MPs in the House of Commons for each party will make no difference to the discussions about to take place over the next two years.

By announcing this sudden election when Theresa May had said emphatically there would be no general election until 2020, she is unmasked as having told a lie to the British people. No doubt we will hear many more lies, in any attempt to get votes.

The issues at the heart of this election are health, care, housing, education, pollution, pensions, jobs and wages; how to make improvements in this country.

My politics are very clear about some issues, and in particular the way the present government has widened the gap between the wealthy and the poor.

The rich companies have had a reduction in their corporation tax, but at the same time benefits have been removed from the poorest and disabled people in our society; the modest £30 a week has been taken away from the poorest students who wished to move into further education; local authorities have been deprived of funding yet are expected to continue to carry out their duty of care.

I am very clear about what is needed in this country to solve much of the inequality: remove from the wealthy through tax that which has been stolen through unfair means and stowed away in tax havens, and so properly fund our NHS and Welfare State.

I am sure you will not be surprised that on 8th June I will be voting for Jeremy Corbyn, president of our Islington Pensioners Forum.

**For information:** We published in the April Newsletter an article entitled "Understanding the 'Triple Lock'" However some of our members found it difficult to understand, and so we hope that this further explanation will help. Each year the basic state pension is increased based on the "triple lock": i.e. whichever of the following is the highest:

**(a) 2.5%**

**(b) the Consumer Price Index**

**(c) average earnings.**

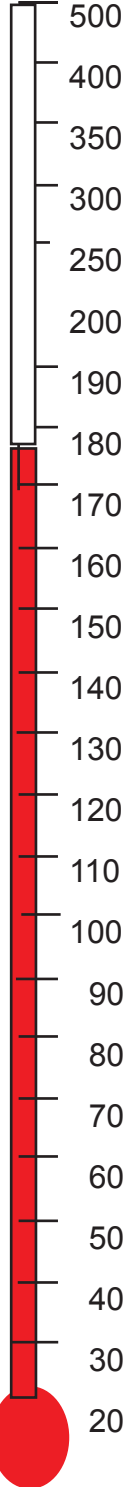
Those who consider that pensioners are too well-off want to get rid of the 2.5%. They do not acknowledge that since the Thatcher government broke the link of the basic state pension with earnings and before the addition of this 2.5%, the pension was reduced by around £70 a week.





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

On 19 April, our team delivered our thanks to Co-op members and staff for the £4,255.95 donation from the Co-op's community funding. Among other things, we are now making arrangements to get the necessary equipment to show films in our hall at Providence Place.



## ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM IS A HUB FOR PENSIONERS IN THE BOROUGH

Islington Council, supported by Cripplegate Foundation has made funding available to Islington Pensioners Forum for this and the next two years so that we can be a hub to assist older people in the borough to know about and access the various activities and events specially held to help them to socialise and make friends.

We were really pleased therefore that Patrick Jones of the Cripplegate Foundation and Bronwen Handyside, our support worker (with many years of experience in the voluntary sector) addressed our 20th April Forum meeting on Community Funding.

Both referred to the long history of charitable and voluntary work, the changes that took

place with the welfare state following the Second World War, and the current situation with the drastic austerity measures of the current government.

It is sometimes a fine line between the professional service providers and the unpaid volunteers. Both speakers explained that volunteers could not and should not replace professional workers paid to do the work, but volunteers are very important to help people from "falling through the net". Therefore, as the hub, Islington Pensioners Forum is applying for funding to work with the charity, Healthy Generations to produce a booklet setting out the social activities and events throughout the borough.

**YOU ARE INVITED TO Highbury View Tenants' Garden Party**  
**ON SATURDAY 27 MAY AT 1 pm**  
**Entrance Highbury View, Garden Gate,**  
**87-89 Ronalds Rd, N5 1XQ (map on back page)**  
**Join us for a friendly afternoon with music, buffet and lots of chance for a chat and a laugh (big screen TV if you want to watch the cup final!)**

## Citizen Science checks the quality of Islington's air

At our Forum meeting in October 2016, Councillor Caroline Russell spoke on "Air pollution and health". We were shocked and concerned that children in some of the borough's schools on main roads were in terrible danger of suffering critical health conditions caused by traffic pollution, but there is only one measurement point in the borough, outside Metropolitan University.

This is a report sent to us by **Roderik Gongrip** of Citizen Science, of work carried out by 18 volunteers who presented themselves to participate in a project to measure nitrogen dioxide in Islington's streets. This is done using diffusion tubes which are placed in the street for two to three weeks and then analysed.

It is this kind of grassroots action that will drive the changes we need, and some of the participants were happy to share why they volunteered for this important action.

**Frances Bradley** said: "Living in London and having brought up a family in Zone 2, air pollution is an issue of great concern to me. I wanted to know what the level of pollution is on the street where I live as traffic-wise it's pretty quiet."

**Paul Elliot** said: "I was interested in the level of traffic pollution in Islington because I live just off Junction Road and have long suspected that this thoroughfare is the source of considerable traffic pollution."

**Sylvie Lachman** said: "We care about air pollution and were interested in participating. My son suffered quite badly from asthma when he was two years old. We also have eczema and hay fever in the family which tends to be worse when pollutants are bound to the allergens."

The greatest problem is with nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), a pollutant that inflames the lungs, stunting their growth and increasing the risk of respiratory diseases such as asthma and lung cancer.

In London alone because of air pollution an additional 10,000 persons per year are estimated to die and average life expectancy in London may be 16 months less.

There are two common benchmarks for air quality. The World Health Organisation states a

concentration of 20 micrograms of NO<sub>2</sub> per cubic meter (ug/m<sup>3</sup>) is the limit for 'healthy' air; the EU gives as a legal limit a concentration of 40.

Of the 16 locations in Islington that yielded test results, only two returned a 'legal' result with concentrations of 37 and exactly 40. The 14 other sites all broke legal limits; Pentonville Road measured an appalling concentration of 118 ug/m<sup>3</sup>; poisonous air.

**Fast disappearing pockets of barely legal air is all that remains in Islington. Action is clearly needed and it is needed urgently.**



# MoveMe. . .MoveMe

**Every Tuesday (free)**

**25 April to 15 August**

**14.15 - 5.30**

***Dance like you never knew you could***

Holloway Neighbourhood Group,  
Old Fire Station Community Centre  
84 Mayton Street,  
London, N7 6QT

**Public Event**

**Wednesday 19 July**

**6-8 pm**

**Islington Assembly Hall,  
Upper Street, London, N1**

As part of our programme you are also invited to this very special intergenerational event where you can socialise with friends, family, neighbours and passers-by. Everyone of any age or ability can get involved. Be a spectator or join in the fun, take centre stage and show off your new moves.

# A letter to Islington Council. . . . .

Dear Friends,

I am one of 165 people regularly attending Southeby Centre -- people with dignity; retired, but not retired from life! We are people between 60 and 100 years old who suffer from health conditions, respiratory and mental problems, depression and mobility problems. We care about our health and want to be happy. That's why we come to Southeby Centre.

We understand that the Council is trying to balance services under the extreme pressure of government cuts, and for this reason you are developing a new Round House Centre in Ronalds Road so that we and people from other day centres facing closure can all go to this one place. However, according to the information we have received, the new building is not going to have provision for the services we need, and we users of the day centres were not consulted.

It appears that the Round House is too small to provide all the activities we need: bowling, art classes, Yoga, Pilates, Sumita, music, dance, singing, bingo, exercises for men and women, line dancing, hair dressing, beauty therapy, IT classes, lunches. What we need is a place big enough and with enough staff to cover all these activities.

Also, what about transport? How are our 165 people and the people from other day centres going to get from their homes to the Round House? Whichever way you need to travel, there is no public transport access to the Round House.

I wonder if the Council realises how hurt and upset we feel, how worried we are that we will lose contact with our friends. Everybody knows about the health dangers of loneliness. Without the services provided by our day centres, we could all be lonely and stressed.

Of course, the Council can tick the box -- they can say that they are providing a new, custom-built centre in the borough, but is it really going to be enough? Please talk to us! Please understand us!

Yours sincerely,

*Irma L. Gomez*

80 years old, a user of Southeby Centre for many years and a member of the Committee

## Pensioners Manifesto 2017

Following the surprise announcement that the General Election will be held on 8th June, the NPC has produced a six-point Pensioners' Manifesto based on existing policies and campaigns, standing up for both today's and tomorrow's pensioners:

1. A state pension set above the official poverty level, at around £200 a week and linked to the triple lock of the higher of earnings, prices or 2.5%
2. Greater funding for the NHS, an end to privatisation in the health service and a national social care system funded from general taxation that is free at the point of delivery without means-testing.
3. Maintenance of universal pensioner benefits such as free bus travel, a £500 winter fuel allowance, free prescriptions and a free TV licence for over 75s.
4. More homes that are both affordable and suitable for everyone, whilst recognising the specific barriers to downsizing that older people face.
5. New legal protection for older people from all forms of elder abuse to ensure dignity and raise standards of care.
6. A Brexit deal that safeguards the payment of pensions, the EU health insurance card and the rights of those UK pensioners living abroad.

There are a whole host of other very important issues with which the NPC has been involved and could be raised during the election campaign and these are listed on the Manifesto Briefing Paper.

For more information visit: [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)



# 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 18th May, 10.30 am Committee Room 1, Town Hall	Forum meeting: A speaker from the Co-op plus round-table discussion
Saturday 27th May, 1 pm	GARDEN PARTY AT HIGHBURY VIEW -- music, buffet and good company (Also a big screen TV if you want to watch the Cup Final)

**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

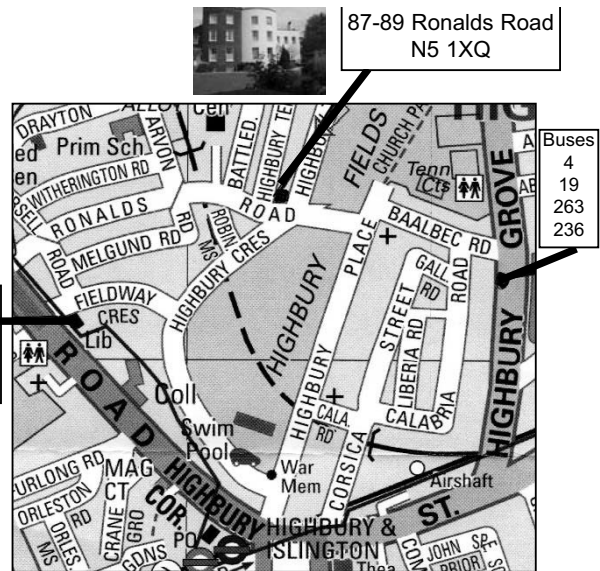
**Presidents:** Jeremy Corbyn MP & Lord Smith of Finsbury

**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 £5 annual subscription**

Name:.....

Address:.....

Telephone: .....

Email:.....

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

Cheque payable to:  
"Islington Pensioners Forum"  
Send to: IPF 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN  
or hand in at the Forum meeting