



Charity No: 1043081

# ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

## November 2016 Newsletter

### Which? **SUCCESS!**

Bosses will face fines of up to £500,000 when their company is caught bombarding people with nuisance calls.

The government has taken action against cold calling bosses because of the Which? "Calling Time on Nuisance Calls" campaign. Which? says: "it's thanks to our 400,000 supporters who helped to achieve this massive victory. It is a huge step forward against nuisance calls".

Bosses of cold calling firms could face **£500,000 fines**

# TAKE THAT!



if caught **BOMBARDING** people with nuisance calls

## AXE THE HOUSING ACT. . AXE THE HOUSING ACT . . AXE THE HOUSING ACT

### Glyn Robbins spoke at our October Forum.

He told us that: The Housing Act, which was passed on 12th May is a massive threat to our community. It could:

- Push up rents and waiting lists
- End permanent secure tenancies
- Break up families and estates
- Let private developers make even more profit

**If you are a Council tenant** and you have a household income above £40,000, your rent will go up under what the Tories call "Pay to Stay". For every £1 above that

limit, your rent will rise by 15p. So if two people on the tenancy have a joint income of £50,000 and are paying rent of £650 a month, this will go up to £800 a month - a 15% Tenant Tax! Also new Council tenants will no longer get secure tenancies and the right to pass on tenancies to children will be restricted.

**If you are a Housing Association tenant**, you are likely to be subject to the "Pay to Stay/Tenants Tax" in the same way as Council tenants. The right to buy will be extended to Housing Association tenants, but with discounts paid for by local Councils. It will be easier for

Housing Associations to switch from social to private and market housing.

**If you are a leaseholder**, the combined effects of the Act and spending cuts will mean higher service charges. As more Council homes are sold off and implementing the Act brings higher administrative costs, you will be asked to foot some of the bill. Also, there's the added danger if your estate is ear-marked for "regeneration". There are already examples of families being forced out, but unable to afford to move back and being offered a fraction of the value of their home as compensation.

But Islington is fighting back! Hundreds of local people are involved in the national campaign to AXE THE HOUSING ACT, and both Islington MPs are supporting the campaign. Also, Councillor Richard Watts, Leader of Islington Council says: **"We don't ask our tenants how much they earn - it's none of our business - and we haven't valued our council homes - they are not for sale!"**

- Next "Axe the Housing Act" meeting, 7pm, 16th November at 222 Upper Street
- Demo outside Parliament from noon on 22nd November (day of the government's Autumn Statement)
- Get involved: Call Glyn Robbins on 07411 557097 or email [ikthb1@virginmedia.com](mailto:ikthb1@virginmedia.com)

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Having watched a lecture by film director Michael Moore in Ohio, USA, on Channel 4, 29 October, I was impressed by the down-to-earth Moore, who covered a wide area, which included our own Brexit. He certainly silenced the audience into deeper thoughts and brought them to his side of thinking, when he described the dislike of the established political leadership.

This is important, because the so-called "blue-collar" workers in Ohio have been turning to Trump in opposition to those they blame for the loss of 5 million US jobs and 7 million homes as factories closed and the work was "exported" to Mexico for cheap labour under the North Atlantic Trade Agreement.

Moore went on to talk about Hilary Clinton, as a young student travelling to Estonia and bringing back to America the better way women and child-birth were treated in Estonia at that time than they were treated in the USA, where the birth rates were shocking for poorer people.

Moore directed "Sicko" the 2007 film about the private American health care system, comparing it to

our NHS. Moore said: Hilary Clinton brought this information back, but the US government did not listen to her appeal for free medical treatment.

It is for this reason that I am drawing further attention to our government's clearly defined reasons to attack the NHS; bit by bit they are taking us back into the grip of the privatisation of our hospital and care services. Unless we listen and learn from others' mistakes and say NO to the government to any further private franchises within our NHS, we will be letting down those who follow us.

Just as the workers in Ohio look for political alternatives to overcome unemployment, homelessness and the health and care crisis, so today we can see the effect on working class communities of the closures of manufacturing industries in this country and the need to defend our NHS against privatisation.

Michael Moore confronted these big problems for workers. He did far more than talk about the forthcoming US election, he highlighted many of our problems, which are clearly ignored by our government.

## We need guards on trains!

### REPORT

by the Transport Committee of the  
National Pensioners Convention  
August 2016

### Three Pensioners on a Southern Rail Journey

National Pensioners Convention  
Walkden House,  
10 Melton Street,  
NW1 2EJ  
Email: [info@npcuk.org](mailto:info@npcuk.org)  
Web: [www.npcuk.org](http://www.npcuk.org)



Against the background that the evidence of research from both the Department of Transport and Passenger Focus that "older people and disabled people value the presence of staff above all" a day was planned to test the practicalities of travel within the Southern Rail network of an older passenger with so-called "normal" ageing problems, a wheelchair user and a blind person.

The NPC thought that this was particularly important because the dispute between the RMT (rail union) and Southern Trains over guards on trains has been dominated and widely reported in the media as a problem for commuters when their journeys are disrupted by strikes but older and disabled people are being sidelined in the media.

We believe that if a train runs Driver Only Operations to an unstaffed station with a passenger who is unable to exit the train unassisted, then an offence will be committed under the Equality Act 2010 in that it will be a "provision, criterion or practice" that puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. This needs to be understood and acted upon both by the Office of Rail and Road and the Department of Transport, who are also bound by the public sector duties of the Act.

# Stay Well this Winter

Cold weather can be very harmful, especially for people aged 65 and older: it weakens the immune system, increases blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes and chest infections. For those with longterm health conditions such as COPD, bronchitis, emphysema, diabetes or heart and kidney disease, cold weather and winter illnesses like flu can make these existing health problems far worse.

There are a number of things you can do to prepare against cold weather:

- At the first sign of a cough or cold, **get immediate advice from your pharmacist** before it gets more serious.
- **Speak to your pharmacist about medicines** you should have in stock over winter.
- **Pick up prescription medications before the Christmas holidays start** as many GPs and pharmacies will close over these holidays.
- It is important to keep warm in winter, so

heat your home to at least 18 degrees C (65 degrees F), if you can; you might prefer your living room to be slightly warmer. Keeping warm, both inside and outdoors, can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems, such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression.

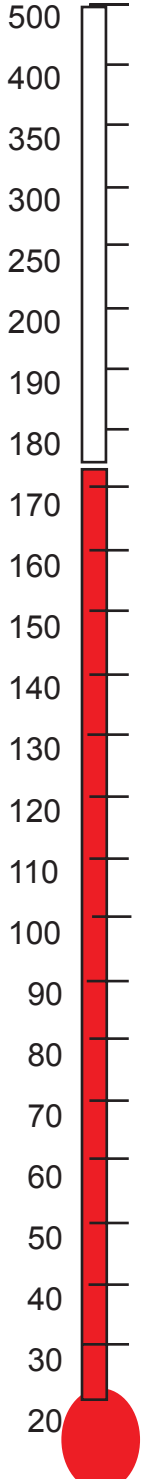
● **Make sure you get your flu jab.** The free flu vaccination is particularly important for those who are at increased risk from the effects of flu, including people aged 65 and over with longterm health conditions. Check if you are eligible at [www.nhs.uk/staywell](http://www.nhs.uk/staywell)

If you're eligible for the free flu vaccine, get it now by seeing your GP or pharmacist. Most pharmacists in Islington offer a walk-in service.

● If you do need help over the holiday period when your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed, **call NHS 111** or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

● **Keep an eye on elderly neighbours or relatives**

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.



Islington Council is offering a **free Well Winter Check**. From grants for heating and insulation and benefit checks to fire safety checks and falls prevention; they can help you to have a safe, warm and well winter. If you're over 60 or have a long term health condition or disability you can access up to 30 services with one call. For a free Well Winter Check call 0800 953 1221 or visit [www.Islington.gov.uk/wellwinter](http://www.Islington.gov.uk/wellwinter)

**NHS £900m cut!** STOP THE SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PLANS (STPs)

## ISLINGTON KEEP OUR NHS PUBLIC SAVE OUR NHS FROM NEW CUTS

Islington Town Hall, Upper Street,  
7.30 - 9.00 pm Tuesday 15 November

Speakers include top local NHS leaders, Leader of Islington Council and national and local campaigners. Have your say and make your voice heard about these major cuts

# Consultation to Review the Closure of Transport for London ticket offices

## Submission on behalf of London Region of the National Pensioners Convention

I am writing on behalf of the London Region of the National Pensioners Convention (which has membership in all the London Boroughs) in respect of the current consultation to review the closure of TFL ticket offices. At our recent executive meeting, it was agreed that we should contact you with an explanation of our concerns.

1. It is unfortunate that currently a large percentage of pensioners do not have access to the online questionnaires or to the internet, and as a result many will not even know of the consultation.
2. I did go on to the internet and completed the survey but was concerned at the limited options available. For example it asked what station you travel to. Not as in my case which mainlines do you usually travel to, i.e. London Bridge and Euston, or Victoria and Euston?
3. As we understand it most, if not all, ticket offices have been removed which will unfortunately make it more difficult to get them reinstated. As a matter of interest how many of the former ticket office staff left as a consequence rather than being allocated to other roles?
4. As pensioners we did join in a number of protests against the closures as we believed that older people would suffer as a consequence. It really is beneficial to be able to speak to a human being rather than fight with a machine.
5. Many pensioners will have a variety of disabilities which may make it difficult to use a machine, and as a consequence will simply decide to stay at home for

a quiet life, rather than challenge a robot. What happens when the machine breaks down etc? This will mean even greater loneliness and isolation which is one of the biggest problems facing older people today. There is plenty of research that proves that most older and disabled people value the presence of staff. Without feeling able to travel, older people will remain at home and become more of a cost to the NHS and other agencies.

6. The other major concern is safety, especially as there is increasing fraud related to new technology. How long will it be before the fraudsters find a way of conning older people via scams on machines? If it happens to banks, why would ticket machines be exempt?

7. Whilst we hear that staff will be reallocated to float around the machines to assist members of the public, I came through London Bridge last Wednesday afternoon and didn't see a single member of staff in the appropriate area.

8. In summary, we feel we have been "hung out to dry", and would welcome a return to manned (or womaned) ticket offices, and hope you will consider these comments as being the views of the many pensioners we represent.

We look forward to hearing a positive outcome of your consultation, and please do not hesitate to contact me further should you feel it necessary.

Yours sincerely,

**Barry Todman** Chair LR NPC

### Quips and Quotes for the Young at Heart

*Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late*

Benjamin Franklin, US diplomat, politician and printer (1706-1790)

*And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years.*

Abraham Lincoln, former US president (1809-1865)

*Life is a moderately good play with a badly written third act.*

Truman Capote, US writer and playwright (1924-1984)

As we go to press, there are 13 representatives of Islington Pensioners Forum going to the National Pensioners Convention LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT on Wednesday 2 November.

Speakers at the meeting in the House of Commons Committee Room 14 will be:

Ian Blackford MP (SNP)

Dot Gibson (NPC)

Richard Harrington MP (Pensions' Minister)

John McDonnell MP (Shadow Chancellor)

Heather Wakefield (Unison)

Dave Ward (CWU)

There will be a report at the Forum on Thursday 17th November.



**POLLUTION**

**9,500 Londoners die every single year from diseases caused or exacerbated by air pollution! And 40,000 people die countrywide. Only six of the 43 areas in the UK are within EU limits of pollution. The rest are illegal and harming our health**

Councillor Caroline Russell gave us the above horrifying figures at our October Forum meeting, adding that even young people are in danger of dying on high pollution days, especially as many schools are on busy roads. School playgrounds in Old Street have twice the legal limit of pollution.

Caroline passed around the meeting some cuttings from roadside trees and everybody was amazed to see how much soot was on the leaves. But it is not the soot which is the most dangerous. The danger comes from the millions of tiny particles that get into the bloodstream and lungs causing lung disease, heart problems and cancer.

The main problem is diesel fuel. Tiny particles are suspended in the exhaust fumes, and also come from the brakes and the wear and tear of tyres. It is a toxic soup!

People might think that those on bikes in the middle of traffic are in the most danger, but this is not so. In fact those who walk and ride bikes are much better off than those in cars, vans and even buses where the toxic soup is drawn in with the air conditioning systems whilst there are so many vehicles on the road.

There is measuring equipment but it is expensive. Nevertheless people can get together in communities to put up measuring tubes, and where this is being done people are up-loading the results on the internet.

Client Earth have a legal case in the Royal Courts of Justice about the government's failure to clean up our air.

Soon after his election London's Mayor, Sadiq Khan did a "soft" consultation and 15,000 people responded. The Mayor wants us all to achieve healthy streets with bike lanes, green-man lights, trees and seats etc. to help people to do a bit more walking, a bit more cycling and to use public transport instead of their cars.

In response to questions, Caroline said that the new cycle super-highways are moving more people around London and they are much safer than bikes on pavements. She agreed that instead of schools on busy roads having mesh wire around them, it would be better if they had trees and hedges. She thought the Mayor would finance such changes.

Caroline said that she would keep us informed of any actions being taken that we could participate in.

## The London Mayor's OLDER PEOPLE'S ADVISORY FORUM

**Monday 28 November 2-4 pm**

The main agenda items will be

- A City for all Londoners
- The development of Sadiq Khan's equality framework

We must let City Hall security know those who are attending, and so we will decide this at the executive committee meeting on 7th November and make a report for discussion at the Forum meeting on 17th November so that our representatives know what members want them to raise at this Advisory Forum.

Remembering Angela Loutit-Sinclair  
3.30 pm on Saturday 3 December 2016  
Church of St. Thomas the Apostle,  
St. Thomas Road, N4 2QP

David, Stephan and Jessica warmly invite you to a memorial gathering, with speeches, readings, music, slides and film in honour of our mother, Angela.

Afterwards drinks, tea, coffee and snacks will be served at the Islington Ecology Centre (Gillespie Park Nature Reserve) 191 Drayton Park, N5 1PH

If you would like to take part in this memorial gathering, please let Islington Pensioners Forum know by 17th November as the family must make arrangements according to the numbers attending.

IPF: 020 7226 7687 (there is an answer 'phone)

# 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 17th November, 10.30 am	Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall, Speaker: A representative of the The Met Police, Islington and a report/preparation for the Mayor's Older People's Advisory Forum (see page 4)
<u>NO FORUM MEETING IN DECEMBER</u>	<u>CHRISTMAS FAIR IN DECEMBER DETAILS AT NOV. FORUM</u>
Thursday 19th January, 10.30 am	Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall, details in Dec. Newsletter

**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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or hand in at the Forum meeting