



Charity No: 1043081

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

November 2017 Newsletter



Seasons greetings to all our friends from all of us at Islington Pensioners Forum

Pensioners' lobby of parliament



The 14-strong IPF delegation at the National Pensioners Convention parliamentary Lobby on 18 October.

Islington Pensioners Forum CHRISTMAS SALE

Looking for that ultimate hand-crafted Christmas present? **Look no further!**

St Mary's Church Christmas Fair
Saturday 9 December 10am-4pm



Come to Islington Pensioners Forum



Saturday 10 February 1pm
Highbury View Sheltered Housing, 87-89
Ronalds Rd, N5 1 XQ (see map page 6)

A huge thank-you from Islington Pensioners Forum to Angela Sinclair

This is to say a big thank-you to Angela Sinclair, our friend and former secretary, who died last year. Among all the donations left to all the charities and community organisations that she championed, Islington Pensioners Forum has received £200 - which we plan to put to the very best use..

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The odd days of autumn sunshine are always welcome if only to make people feel better, with the tendency to put aside the troubles going on around us. I sound like a government minister trying to butter us up, before giving the bad news in the forthcoming budget! Not at all surprising when many of the problems at home have found their way into headlines. For instance:

- **“British pensions among the worst in the developed world”** with a breakdown of the serious problem, comparing 50-year-old women in 12 major world cities with the UK on one of the lowest pensions when they retire. This information was followed by the FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) stating that a survey of 13,000 people found that 31% of UK adults have no private pension

provision and will have to rely entirely on the basic state pension.

- **“Public asked to take in NHS patient lodgers”**. £50 a night for putting up people in a spare room when they are recuperating – no previous experience needed!

You only need to provide three microwave meals a day plus drinks! This scheme is aimed at tackling the problems of hospital and social care capacity with millions of bed days lost in hospitals every year through delays – lack of staff and social care places, feared to get worse with the Brexit discussions leaving the free movement of people in doubt.

- **“Housing crisis: we will borrow to invest in new homes says Sajid Javid”**. An astonishing and welcome revelation from the Conservative Minister of

Communities and Local Government after his party has held to ridicule Labour's policy to borrow to build homes. **But don't hold your breath,**

The Chancellor Philip Hammond was asked if he could confirm that this was government policy and he said “No”. And the Prime Minister's spokesman refused to respond to Javid's suggestions, saying he would not comment on “Budget speculation”.

Even just these three news items show that we have lots of issues to campaign on.

So I use this column to say a big thank-you to one and all for your support and participation, and I look forward for us working together in 2018 standing up for today's and tomorrow's pensioners!

Encouraging words . . .

John Muir, Islington Council's Voluntary and Community Services Development Manager, spoke at our October Forum meeting. He explained that in 2016 Islington launched the voluntary/community sector strategy to assist and enable people to live well and to be connected to their neighbours.

There are four aspects:

- Keeping well
- Belonging
- Jobs and money
- Interventions

John's team acts in a community-minded way to change the way people can know what is going on in the borough and their relationship with the volun-

tary sector is at the heart of this development.

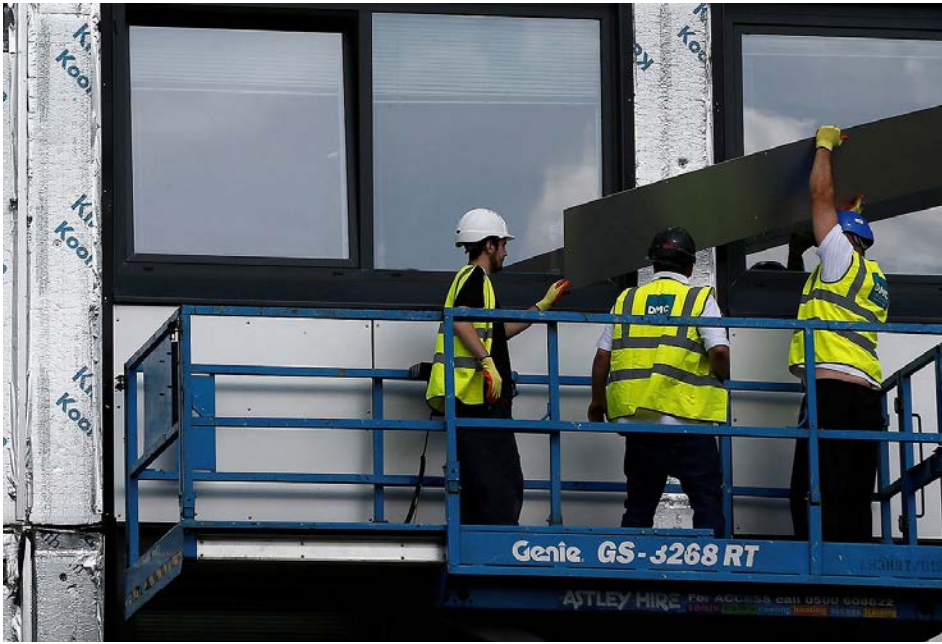
Islington puts £41m into partnership working with the voluntary sector, particularly Voluntary Action Islington and a network of community hubs. Islington Pensioners Forum is one of these. He said they encourage community organisations to have a voice, to lobby, campaign and challenge on a friendly, convivial basis – an active contribution to the borough giving rise to active citizen participation.

They aim to maximise the use of their community premises throughout the borough (some are only 30% used) and he was really pleased that as a commu-

nity hub for older people Islington Pensioners Forum in co-operation with the Healthy Generations charity had received a Lottery grant to produce a database of the borough's activities for older people which would be easily available.

Naturally there were questions to John about the Council's decision to close the Sotheby Mews Day Centre. The Save Sotheby Mews Campaign had put their case at a Council meeting in September.

John said information about the services currently provided at Sotheby and the proposed services at the Roundhouse Community Centre when it re-opens in Spring 2018 are being looked into and the Council's response is due mid-November.



Whittington's "secret" deal with "cladding" company

Steven Hitchens, Chair of the Whittington NHS Trust has told us that information about the hospital's estates contract is commercially confidential! But the NHS is public property, so why this secrecy?

However, we now know that this contract has been awarded (over public heads!) to a company called Ryhurst, too new to have published accounts, with a head office at Rydon House,

RN18 5DW.

This is not a random choice of address because Ryhurst was set up as a health and social care subsidiary of Rydon, which has numerous contracts in the housing market.

It is especially known for fitting the cladding on Grenfell Tower, part of the central line of investigation in the police inquiry into the deaths of at least 80 people on 14 June.

Making energy bills affordable!

Angelic Energy is owned by Islington Council. It is a not-for-profit energy provider bringing low cost gas and electricity to Londoners. The aim is simple: to save you money on your energy bills. Fuel poverty affects so many people, and so one of the best ways to support people is to help them save money on their energy bills.

Angelic Energy has pricing terms that are easy to understand, there are no hidden charges and they make switching as

easy as possible – walking you through the entire process – as easy as 1,2,3!

Angelic Energy will help residents get a fairer deal by offering them an alternative to the big energy providers. They don't pay dividends to shareholders or bonuses to directors, they're just interested in getting the best deals for the customers!

So if this is the kind of energy company that you'd like to join please visit www.angelicenergy.co.uk and find out more.

Damage to people or damage to business?

Following the Grenfell fire, the London Borough of Camden evacuated hundreds of families from its Chalcots estate towers when it emerged that they were clad in flammable aluminium polyethylene-filled sheeting under a £150 million Private Finance Initiative contract with Rydon.

Camden Council leader, Georgia Gould, said:

"We thought we were dealing with reputable companies and we feel let down. . .

". . .the cladding does not satisfy our independent laboratory testing or the high standards we set for contractors".

But Rydon's chief executive, Robert Bond, is understood to have told Gould in a letter that:

"Given the seriousness of these allegations, I have no choice but to refer this matter to our legal advisers and to seek recourse from the council for the damage inflicted on our business".

All the signs are that this will be a bad winter for flu.

If you are over 65, have a long-term health condition or care for someone, GET YOUR FREE FLU JAB FROM YOUR GP SURGERY

Save Finsbury Park Post Office



Keep Finsbury Park Post Office, 290 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2AB, open and fit for purpose

The Finsbury Park Post Office is under threat of being downsized into the corner of a store. In the 'consultation' period, the petition needs to reach 2000 signatures to trigger a debate in full Council Meeting.

We all know that Crown Post Office provides important services that feed into the social and economic vitality of the area it serves. Here are a few reminders why we need to keep it viable and serving our community:

1. There is massive regeneration and development of Finsbury Park: our Post Office should be expanding rather than reduced within a franchise.

2. Franchises depend on profit;

franchise takeovers of Post Offices show a track record of low pay and conditions; high staff turnover; less experienced staff; long queues; people becoming irritated.

3. Big picture is that Crown Post Offices process 40% of financial services mail so are a crucial component of London's economy. Track record of franchises is loss of experienced staff who are able to deal swiftly and efficiently with complex queries so business users suffer loss of time and money.

4. With a strategy of downgrading services, Post Office Limited's own branding to serve the 'heart of the community' would appear to be a nonsense! Could those highly paid PO Ltd Board executives have signed up to such a policy without researching implications for Finsbury Park? We have massive development! Rapid population growth! Increasing demand!

5. A franchise will lose experienced staff who provide a patient, knowledgeable and polite service. Our PO is used by local businesses, hard-working families; small traders, disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, (including people with issues of mild dementia; people whose first language is not English, people with disabilities, people with hearing or sight loss).

6. Finsbury Park Post Office serves an area of super-diversity. We need a commitment to promoting social cohesion. The strategic planning policy of National and local government (we have three bordering London boroughs - Hackney, Islington and Haringey) has made this commitment. Reducing Finsbury Park Post Office service by squeezing it into the corner of a store would undermine opportunities for social cohesion.

7. Downsizing to franchise of our PO would erode choice, limit access across our whole community, impact negatively on social cohesion and serve no-one's best interests.

SIGN THE 38 DEGREES PETITION
Finsbury Park Post Office Petition
<https://goo.gl/22SEoc>

Do you know what's happening to our National Health Service?

'The NHS is in a crisis . . . that has been created by political decisions'. **Professor Stephen Hawking.**

We're standing on a precipice. The NHS has been severely damaged by underfunding and privatisation. Yet there are plans for further cuts.

In the North Central London health care area -covering Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington - there are plans to cut:

• **£900m from health care each year by 2021.**

• **£247m from social care over the same period.**

These cuts are sold as Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP) which claim to make it easier to get care in hospital and at home. The reality is totally different

If you are a senior citizen:

- You will be discouraged from calling an ambulance or using A&E if you fall or feel ill.

- You may have to wait longer for a hip or knee operation or not get one at all. Priority will go to emergency or life-threatening conditions.

If you need hospital or GP services:

- Hospitals and GP services are being rationalised and centralised. You may have to travel further to use them.

- GPs will be encouraged to cut down on hospital referrals.

- Many areas of health care are being contracted out to private providers who put profit before public interest.

But, across the country campaigners are working together to defeat the cuts, as you can see from the important **Health Campaigns Together conference to be held on 4 November.**

Also every council leader in the North Central London STP area rejects the plans and IPF joins other pensioner groups in our area to defend our NHS.

HEALTH CAMPAIGNS TOGETHER

Campaigners conference Fighting back to win!

**Saturday
November 4
11am to 4pm**

Hammersmith Town Hall
London W6 9LE

Speakers include

SARA GORTON

Head of Health UNISON

Dr CHAAND NAGPAUL

BMA Chair of Council

SARAH COOK Unite

Council leaders **STEVE COWAN**

Hammersmith & Fulham

JULIAN BELL Ealing

KEN LOACH

award-winning film director

JOHN LISTER

Editor *Health Campaigns Together*

PLUS Local campaigners



Open for stalls and registration from 10am
Lunch provided for pre-booked tickets

**KEEP OUR NHS PUBLIC
CAMPAIGNS TO BRING
THE NHS BACK FROM
THE BRINK.**

Contact us at:
keepournhspublic.org

INFORMATION

| | |
|--|---|
| Bingo every Monday 1.00 pm | 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 16 November, 10.30am Committee Room 1, Town Hall | Forum meeting: Liz Davies (Lawyer) will speak on housing. THERE WILL BE NO FORUM MEETING IN DECEMBER |

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@islingtonpensionersforum.org

● 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.org

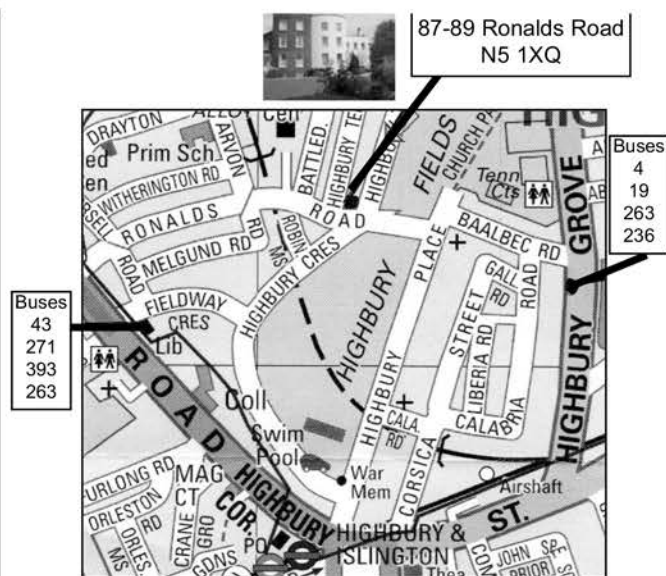
Presidents: Jeremy Corbyn MP & Lord Smith of Finsbury

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