



Charity No: 1043081

## ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community  
**February 2018 Newsletter**

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# Come to our **END THE WINTER BLUES PARTY** 1 pm on Saturday 10th February 2018 Highbury View Sheltered Housing, Garden Gate at **87-89 Ronalds Road, N5 1XQ**

*Highbury View is at the Highbury Fields end of Ronalds Road and there is no bus stop close by. We know that some of our members have walking difficulties, and so we will arrange help. But please let us know your name, address and telephone number if you need this help so that we can make the arrangements.*

*'Phone on Dot's number: 0207 226 7226*



**One satisfied customer modelling his new jumper**

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## **We make £527 on our Christmas Fair stall!**

Our thanks go to members who contributed; this year we were really pleased to have lots of crochet and knitted goods, hand-made fudge and a very popular Christmas card produced "in-house" from a photograph of Highbury Fields in the snow. Now we are starting to build up stocks for the 2018 Christmas Fair, and there are requests for us to start a knitting-circle. A number of customers remembered us from the previous Fair and said they were pleased we were at St. Mary's again. We sold our knitted scarves for £8 and also our knitted hats; some customers were amazed at this price, saying that these were being offered for sale at £25 at other fairs. Producing these is very straightforward, so let us know if you are interested in taking part in a knitting circle, and/or have any other craft ideas.

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

To have large firms like Carillion soaking up £billions of tax payers' cash to carry out public services and building, especially in the last two years, is of great concern. Carillion's troubles were known to government and so allowing them to have a further contract for about £2bn is even worse. The Minister responsible should stand down!

Carillion like others is responsible for many services that should be in-house.. Outsourcing (privatization) has gone too far; this collapse is costing workers' jobs and pensions; also many small firms are in grave financial troubles.

The NHS and care are massive subjects that cannot be spoken about with a few words; the public are crying out for answers. Yet every time the demand is made for more finances the government simply says: "We have already put more than enough into these services."

We were asked to respond to LBC Radio last week to

a question on air, about the withdrawal of the fuel allowance from better off pensioners, my home 'phone number was used at about 4pm, I gave what I believed to be the view of most of IPF members: a clear NO! giving the reason that universal pensioner benefits should not be up for grabs. Where would they put the red line? It would be an administrative nightmare to select who should forfeit their allowance, once the government went down this road. What other allowances would come under the knife? The bus pass?

I pointed out that the reason why successive governments decided on universal benefits was simply because of the appallingly low state pension. To be 33<sup>rd</sup> out of 35 nations in the level of the basic state pension is disgraceful for a wealthy country like ours.

See the masthead on this newsletter: IPF is the voice of Islington's older community! Let's go forward in 2018 and continue to stand up for pensioners' rights.

## Babylon Health should not be supported by pensioners, warns Pam Zinkin

I was surprised to see the article about Babylon in the last newsletter (Dec-Jan, page 3 "Medical Advice on your Smart 'Phone"). It was not made clear that Babylon Health is NOT something pensioners should support.

Babylon says you can see NHS GPs when you need them, wherever you are. This is not accurate!

They have about six clinics, but none of them are in North London. You can get online advice quickly and they say that anyone can switch their registered NHS GP practice to them and they will be happy to give guidance based on a person's specific circumstances.

However, they say that there are some patient conditions and characteristics for which their service may not be appropriate, and a list of patients is advised not to register with the service:

- Women who are or may be pregnant
- Adults with a safeguarding need
- People living with complex mental health conditions
- People with complex physical, psychological and social needs
- People living with dementia
- OLDER PEOPLE with CONDITIONS RELATED to FRAILTY
- People requiring end of life care
- Parents of children who are on the 'child at risk' protection register
- People with learning difficulties
- People with drug dependence

Conventional GPs are not permitted to refuse to register patients using factors of these kinds.

### OPPOSITION TO ACCOUNTABLE CARE ORGANISATIONS IN THE NHS

The High Court on Friday 26 January granted permission to Professor Stephen Hawking, Dr Colin Hutchinson, Professor Allyson Pollock, Professor Sue Richards and Dr Graham Winyard to bring a judicial review against the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Jeremy Hunt, and NHS England to challenge the introduction of Accountable Care Organisations (ACOs) into the NHS. The Legal Action was begun on the grounds that without an Act of Parliament the introduction of ACOs would be unlawful, that the principles which require decisions about our NHS to be clear and transparent have been breached, and that there should be proper consultation.

**NHS NEWS...NHS NEWS...NHS NEWS...NHS NEWS...NHS NEWS...NHS NEWS...NHS**

There is so much happening to our NHS that it is hard to keep up. We are not informed nor consulted on a massive top down reorganisation.

The latest one, following the Sustainable and Transformation Plans (STPs) are ACOs. This stands for **accountable care organisations** - an American idea which may sound good as it is local, and could theoretically integrate health and social care. But how can they work when both services are dangerously underfunded? Social care is means tested (an individual pays for this on the basis of their income, savings and the value of their home). So the question is: does this mean social care will be free on the same terms as the NHS or does it mean the NHS services will be means tested like social care? None of this has been debated in Parliament.

*ACOs would be non-NHS bodies which would hold the contract for allocating resources for most of the health and adult social care provision for the population in a defined area.*

*They would have a single long contract to commission and provide health and social care for an entire region.*

*They would be allowed to sub-contract all services.*

*Their accountability for spending our NHS money would be under commercial contracts, not statutes.*

*They would increase the scope for private and foreign companies to become involved in our health care.*

**I asked 20 people I met in Holloway Road if they knew about them. Not one person did.** Hardly surprising since until a crowd-funded court case there were no plans for public consultation. The chair of the commons Select Committee (Sarah Wollaston, Conservative) also asked for a pause in their implementation.

As it stands ACOs would be able to decide what care is free and what has to be paid for. The ACOs would be paid more if they 'save' money. This scheme is not in our interests and we need to ask for all information and oppose this wherever we can. It is opposed by most doctors who still believe that the NHS is for service not for profit.

**Pam Zinkin**

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## **INTERESTING SPEAKERS AT THE FIRST FORUM MEETING IN 2018**

● Nina Byrd spoke at our January Forum. Straight from university, Nina is a "breath of fresh air" in the National Pensioners Convention (NPC), where she has joined the team as the Assistant National Officer. Already she is making a difference to our older people's organisation with new innovative digital and social media methods. She spoke about the importance of the NPC and particularly about the 2018 Pensioners' Parliament. This year we have a 49-seater coach shared between IPF and the Tottenham and Wood Green pensioners' group to go to Blackpool (11-15 June) and Nina wants some help to produce a video. We are inviting her to come to our next Forum meeting (15th February), hoping that some members who have attended the Parliament in Blackpool in previous years and/or are going this year will help her with this.

● Jen Cronin from Fossil Free Islington also spoke to us, about the campaign for a greener programme towards saving the planet. She emphasised the need to persuade investors to concentrate on wind, solar etc rather than fossil fuel and reminded everyone about the need to change over to energy supplies from Angelic (the Islington Council-led fuel company) which is also there to help relieve poverty. She asked members to check where their private and occupational pension funds were invested and urged them to try to change them. There was considerable interest, questions and discussion; it was agreed that IPF would write to our MPs, Cllrs Richard Watts and Andy Hull. We agreed that Generations United should include fossil divestment in its campaigns. **PLEASE SIGN THE ONLINE PETITION** <http://campaigns.gofossilfree.org/petitions/islington-council-divest-from-fossil-fuels>

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### **ANGELIC ENERGY**

Islington Council launched London's first municipally-owned energy company for more than a century. The money is not lining the pockets of city fat-cats! For Angelic is a not-for-profit company with all revenue made being reinvested back into the company. You can get more information about switching to Angelic on:

[www.angelicenergy.co.uk](http://www.angelicenergy.co.uk)  
or call free on 0800 169 0220

### **ROSEMARY TANKARD**

Our condolences go to the family of Rosemary Tankard who died on 6th January. Our older members will warmly remember that Rosemary worked with Islington Pensioners Forum as an administrator for a number of years. A memorial service was held on 23rd January at St. Michael's Church, Highgate.

The information below, from Eric Hill, our Treasurer was published in the Dec/Jan newsletter, but we thought another reminder in the first newsletter of 2018 would not go amiss. . . . .

Letter to members from our Treasurer, Eric

## IPF annual subscriptions

Over this last year I have been approached by members asking when their subscription is due for renewal. Members renew their subscription during the year with their next year's renewal due a year after their previous payment. For example: if a member renewed their subscription in June 2016 then their next renewal would be due in June 2017. This created a problem for that member if s/he can't recall when they last paid. The committee therefore decided to make renewal payments more straightforward.

From 2018 all renewals should be paid in January or February with the following year's renewal due in January or February 2019. Anyone who joins the Forum after February 2018 will renew the following January or February. There will however be a cut-off point at the end of October 2018. Anyone who joins in November or December 2018 will not need to renew until January or February 2020.

## A reminder. . . . .

Dear Members,

In April this year the letter in the box (left) was sent to all members regarding the annual subscription. We have reprinted it to remind you of the new arrangements.

This is also a reminder to everyone to pay their annual subscription. Over the last three years, since the subscription was started, only one in four members have paid.

This is therefore a "thank-you" to those who have paid and a plea to those who haven't, to do so.

Your membership is valued by the Committee but a regular financial stream is also important to enable the Forum to continue its work.

Best wishes,

Eric Hill TREASURER

Please send your £5 annual subscription to:

IPF, 1a Providence Court,  
Providence Place, N1 0RN

Or hand it in at a Forum meeting. Cheques payable to "Islington Pensioners Forum"

## Do you get the over-80 25p?

A number of years ago older people, over the age of 80 were given an extra 25p a week in their pension. This payment was based on the price of a bag of coal at that time. But as time went by this has been considered to be an insult to these older people. So much so that one Scottish pensioner stuck the 25p in coins on a sheet of paper and sent it back to the Department of Work and Pensions every week.

While we would not recommend this action, some of our members donate their 25p and so we are asking whether others would like to do the same to be given to an appropriate organisation or activity.

Any ideas?

**One in five are unpaid carers :** The number of over-65s acting as a carer for a relative has topped two million for the first time, according to charity Age UK. Figures show that 2.29m people of retirement age in England provided care in the year 2015/16 - 16 per cent higher than the 1.83m who did the same five years earlier. This suggests that more than one in five over-65s acted as a carer at some point during the year, and they provided 54m hours of unpaid care in England in 2016. Last year the Office of National Statistics (ONS) calculated that it would cost £56.9bn to replace these unpaid carers with paid workers. The ONS also found that by the age of 65, women were more likely to spend 2.6 of their remaining years as unpaid carers and 65-year-old men 2.7 years. Analysis shows that the value of unpaid care easily outweighs the amounts spent on formal social care. The latest figures show that NHS England spent £1.7bn on social care in 2015-16 while Wales spent £1.4bn. Scotland spent £2.9bn in 2013-14 according to the latest available figures. (Reprinted from the National Pensioners Convention CAMPAIGN NEWS JANUARY 2018)

## DIGNITY IN CARE AWARDS : ISLINGTON COUNCIL 1 FEBRUARY 2018

Four of us from IPF were privileged to join Councillor Janet Burgess, the Mayor, Councillor Una O'Halloran and council staff at the magnificent annual Islington Dignity in Care awards on 1st February. Care Workers were joined by frail elderly and disabled people and we heard the touching, appreciative expressions of love and affection which those in care and their families had said about the Care Workers they had nominated for the awards. Councillor Burgess said that decisions for the awards were not easy — there were 70 nominations, but only one winner in each category. Make no mistake our Care Workers are the unsung heroes, helping people to maintain their dignity at times of extreme difficulty, going the “extra mile” to overcome stress and worry with a smile and good humour. This is easily the best event of Islington Council’s year and it is no surprise that the Council bases the awards on the National Pensioners Convention’s Dignity Code and observes Unison’s Ethical Care Charter in care employment practices.



**APRIL 2018 MARKS TEN YEARS SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL CONCESSIONARY BUS PASS. . . . . WE SHOULD USE THE OCCASION TO LET THE PUBLIC KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS. . . . . SO WE WILL COME UP WITH SOME PROPOSALS FOR OUR FEBRUARY FORUM MEETING . . . . . AND IF YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS, PLEASE LET US KNOW.**

## What is Lendlease?

News of problems arising with private companies, Carillion and now Capita, is drawing our attention to that sector of the private market which has Public Private Partnership contracts to provide public services in a multitude of areas from care to prisons, education to transport. So we think you will be interested in the following:

Lendlease is a global property developer and construction company based in Australia, with 12,000 employees working on four continents (Australia, North America, Europe and Asia). Its main speciality is large-scale “urbanisation” developments, often involving contracts with city authorities.

In the US, Lendlease is one of Donald Trump’s favourite building partners, responsible for the Trump Tower buildings in New York, Washington and Chicago. It is also well known for having paid up \$56 million in

“the largest construction fraud settlement in New York City’s history” in 2012; and for the deaths of two fire-fighters in the Deutsche Bank Tower fire. In both cases, Lendlease signed “non prosecution agreements” and avoided criminal charges

In the UK, Lendlease is now in the news as the private partner in the £2bn Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) partnership with Haringey Council in North London.

This follows on from its extremely profitable deal to gentrify the Elephant & Castle area with Southwark Council. For example, in the “One The Elephant” tower, LendLease made a £70 million profit on a site bought from Southwark for just £6.6 million – after councillors it wined and dined agreed to zero affordable housing in the block. Lendlease also built the new Wrexham mega-prison in North Wales – Europe’s second largest.

# INFORMATION

BINGO every Monday	1 pm at 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
Lunch and a chat on Wednesdays	1 pm in the IPF Hall, address above
Alternate Wednesdays (from 7 February)	3.30 p.m in the IPF Hall, address above IT and Smart'phone classes
Saturday 10th February, 1 p.m.	"End the Winter Blues" party Highbury View Sheltered Housing, 87-89 Ronalds Road, N5 1XQ
Thursday 15th February 10.30 a.m.	Islington Pensioners Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall

## ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN

Telephone: 0207 226 7687

Email: [ipf@islingtonpensionersforum.org](mailto:ipf@islingtonpensionersforum.org)

Charity Number: 1043081

Supported by Cripplegate Foundation, the Big Lottery and Islington Council

**Office opens from 10.30 a.m.- 2.30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, but please call first.**

Sign up for our online Newsletter on our website: [www.islingtonpensionersforum.org](http://www.islingtonpensionersforum.org)

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

**Joint Chairs:** George Durack, Bob Collins

**Secretary:** Dot Gibson    **Assistant Secretary:** Annette Thomas    **Treasurer:** Eric Hill

**Committee members:** Frances Bradley, Joyce Herron, Supa Kusumratana, David Milner, Blanche Woodbridge, Pam Zinkin, Eddie Zissler

*Dear all,*

*We hope that you have found the Newsletters interesting during 2017 we would like to have your news and views, poems, recipes, photographs and any other items of interest for publication in future issues. Please also let us know whether you have any special subjects on which you would like us to invite speakers to Forum meetings.*

*We would like to set up a sub-committee to discuss and arrange outings – theatre, coach and boat trips etc. – so please think about taking part.*

*Best Wishes and Season's Greetings      Dot Gibson (Secretary)*

*Office telephone: 0207 226 7687      Home telephone: 0207 226 7226*