



ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community
May 2018 Newsletter

Charity No: 1043081

Councillor Joe Caluori presents the Fair Futures Commission Report to Islington Pensioners Forum

Councillor Joe Caluori, the Council's Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families, addressed our April Forum meeting. We were very pleased that he was able to make time for us since we campaign for "generations united", and welcome the independent report of Islington's Fair Futures Commission.

Joe explained that although for many of the 45,000 children and young people in Islington, it is a great place to grow up, far too many face significant barriers that prevent them from benefitting from the opportunities around them as they face poverty, overcrowding at home and unemployment.

The Commission had been an eye-opener especially when it brought together children, young people, parents, teachers, the voluntary sector, police, health partners and many more to share their experiences and knowledge. Above all they listened to what the young had to say about life in Islington.

Many focussed on growing up, the need for youth clubs

and public space, and people who could help with questions, such as: "where will I live?" "where will I work?" and worries about mental health.

There are often complaints about young people gathering (and making a noise) on street corners or in parks in the warm weather. But the teenagers say that they hear "grownups" laughing, and chinking their glasses in their gardens, and cannot understand why these "grownups" complain about them!

In the discussion we (pensioners) were able to explain that we are a resource in the borough! There is a lot of experience among older people and we want to understand the problems of younger generations. We would welcome the chance to be included in the future work of the Commission to move forward on an inter-generational focus, building bridges and sharing experiences.

Just as we stand up for the rights of pensioners, so we want to be included in standing up for the rights of the young! **(SEE PAGE FIVE)**

COUNCIL CHAMBER PACKED FOR THE COUNCIL ELECTION HUSTINGS

Holloway Prison site development raises the temperature in the audience

A packed Council Chamber heard Islington Council candidates at the hustings on Tuesday 17 April chaired by Eric Gordon, editor of Islington Tribune.

On the panel were: Mike Collins (Conservative, Bunhill Ward), Rod Gonggrip, (Green, St. George's Ward) Ilana Lever (LibDem, St. Mary's ward), Richard Watts (Labour, Council leader).

A question on the development of social housing on the former Holloway prison site raised the temperature in the audience, many heckling as Mike Collins said that the Council should not expect to decide on development — it was up to the Ministry of Justice to get as much as possible for the development contract. He said: "What you are effectively asking for is a cut in the Ministry of Justice budget; a cut in the amount of funds to prisons and legal aid".

Richard Watts said that Labour signs up to the policy put forward by the Islington Homes for All - Axe the Act

campaign: "to keep the land in public ownership and for it to have 70 per cent council housing; but if it does fall into private hands, there should be at least 35 per cent council housing and green space".

Rod Gonggrip said the Green Party was calling for 50 per cent social housing on the site and Ilana Lever said that the LibDems agreed with the campaign's policy and that 65 per cent should be housing for families.

IPF was one of the 11 campaigning organisations sponsoring the event and as such we were able to put a question.

Our EC meeting considered this; we realise that the current Council is trying to maintain services in the face of the £70 million government cuts, with more to come, but we believe that for the future of our children and grandchildren, the country must get back to the principles of the post-war 1945 government, and so we asked

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Firstly, thanks again to all those who have given me their good wishes. Where would we be without support from family, friends and colleagues? My heart goes out to the many who do not have this support.

I also want to let you know that my progress since leaving hospital has been slow, but nonetheless I am better thanks to support from the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Centre in Islington.

Being in hospital for six to seven weeks and now recuperating at home does mean that I have time to reflect and understand about those around me. After all, I am now speaking from inside the health and care system! I am told by the careworkers who visit me on a daily basis that our borough has among the best support of any borough, and for this I am very thankful.

Also, I am now convinced and see even more clearly how important it is to campaign in defence of our NHS and for a National Care System paid through taxation, which is free to all. A few pence on our tax for this would certainly help the many who are left out of the system or are forced to sell their homes to pay for long term care.

This experience and reading the news has centred my attention on the well-known fact that it was the Windrush generation of Caribbean people who enabled this country to set up and develop many of our services following World War II and especially our NHS.

continued from page one HUSTINGS

“Does your party agree with us that Local Government services should not be the source of profit for private investors and that the future of these services should be in-house, direct-labour organisations providing jobs, training and apprenticeships with trade union negotiated contracts setting wages and conditions. If this is your party’s policy, what are your plans for its implementation?”

Councillor Watts said that so far Housing Repairs had been taken back “in-house” and it was Labour’s policy to bring more services back as direct labour or-

So I want to state quite clearly here that I consider the way many “Windrush” pensioners have been treated is a crime! Every day we hear about their loss of jobs, homes and medical treatment, about being prevented from returning home to families after having attended a funeral or wedding back in the Caribbean. It is disgraceful and shameful that this has been going on for such a long time.

Large numbers of my colleagues in the Islington Pensioners Forum and in the wider National Pensioners Convention are from the Windrush generation. Today we work together actively taking part in campaigns on pensions, defence of our health and care services, defence of our bus pass and other basic rights, and we are together in our important “generations united” campaign to support future pensioners for their rights at work and also even younger generations for their rights to apprenticeships, youth clubs and sports facilities.

So I am really pleased to hear that our friends in Tottenham and Wood Green are having a special meeting about the stabbings and shootings among young people (see page five). We, the older generation have a duty of care for these young people and we must do everything we can to find a way forward with them to overcome this terrible situation, and a major way to do this is to stand up against the government cuts to local government funding!

ganisations. A big problem is that a previous administration had set up contracts under Private Finance Initiative schemes and to get out of these before the contract’s renewal date would mean spending huge sums in legal costs.

Other big issues were

- the protest about the proposed contract between Whittington Hospital Trust and Ryhurst, a “sister company” of Rydons being investigated for the alleged lethal cladding on Grenfell Tower, and
- the need for understanding and inclusion of those in our society with disabilities.

What have women’s exercise leggings and ready-made mashed potato got in common?

As part of the Spring Statement on 13 March, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast a drop in inflation from 2.7% to 2% by the end of the year. On the same day, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) also released its “basket of goods” used to calculate inflation. This basket is regularly updated to reflect changes in purchasing patterns, and in accordance with this the ONS announced that Edam cheese and pork pies had been removed from the basket, to be replaced by women’s exercise leggings and ready-made mashed potato.

£1,000 A MONTH FOR “RENT-A-ROOM”

CareRooms, the company developing a controversial “Airbnb for social care” model allowing homeowners to rent spare rooms to recuperating hospital patients is now bidding to launch a new trial in Cambridge.

The company is planning to target those who are ready to leave hospital, but are unable to be discharged because the care they require either at home, or in a care home is not yet available.

This approach would clearly focus on self-funders who could pay, and the hosts would earn up to £1,000 a month for letting out their rooms.

However, the homes would not be regulated by the Care Quality Commission because there would be no element of care being delivered.

The man behind the idea, Paul Gaudin was a former “bagel mogul”, who founded the New York Bagel Company 25 years ago, and started introducing the product into UK stores.

Not only does it highlight the extent of the deep crisis in social care, but also the lengths to which the private sector will go in order to make money out of vulnerable older people and their families.

NPC Campaign! (monthly E-bulletin)

ILL-INFORMED AND AGEING JOURNALISTS!

Interesting to read Jeremy Paxman's view (April Newsletter) on why pensioners should lose their vote after the age of 65.

His complete ignorance of the causes for the country's appalling housing problems is astonishing; he must be one of the very few who are unaware of the real reason: the decision to sell off council housing, which took thousands of rented properties out of circulation.

However this is not the only issue on which he is ill-informed which makes me think he might have an age problem, as do a number of other aged journalists (mostly in their late 60/70s) I have to listen to or watch; equally ill-informed. Perhaps it is time they were pensioned off. They could then join a pensioners' organisation and become as well informed as we all are.

Annette Thomas

SCAMS

it's good that Annette Thomas exposed scams in our newsletter. Now I've got one for you to share.

A Mr. Albert Solis, describing himself as the Head Auditor of Equity Fiance Inc, Texas, USA, wrote to me saying that he had discovered a “floating fund” of eleven million, six hundred thousand dollars left by a man with the same surname as me, but for whom no will or heir had been found; he needed my help to release these funds. I could be his “confidential partner” standing as

“next of kin”, he would be “behind the scene” to “guide” me on how to release the funds and save them from being handed over to the company's shareholders. He would “compensate me with 40% after the transaction!

Maisie Heather

ALLIED HEALTHCARE

Allied Healthcare, owned by the German private equity company Aurelius, says it will go bust unless its creditors agree to a rescue plan.

Aurelius acquired the company from Saga plc in December 2015 for £18million. At that time its Chief Executive, Dirk Markus, said that it was an opportunity to grow and develop the company's market-leading position; it would provide actively managed operational backing to deal with the cuts in local authority funding and the introduction of the living wage. Combined with 10 other successful UK investments this took the annualised sales of Aurelius to over £3bn.

However, less than three years later, pointing to local authority cuts and the living wage, Aurelius seeks an arrangement for a revised schedule of repayments with creditors, including landlords and pension trustees.

Nevertheless the shareholders are doing well. Aurelius has announced that “as a result of **exit activities** and solid operating performance” it will recommend that the dividend (to private shareholders) be substantially increased and “it will be possible to distribute long-term attractive participation dividends for 2018 as well as in the following years”.

So, despite the announcement that there will be no redundancies and no adverse problems for those in care, we must ask the question: will Allied Healthcare be one of Aurelius's “**exit activities**”?

Our concern is for the 13,500 people cared for by the company's 8,700 staff through contracts with 150 local authorities. What is the long term outlook for all of these people?

Dot Gibson

LONDON OYSTER PHOTOCARDS FOR 60+

If you're aged 60 or over, and live in London, you may be eligible for a 60+ London Oyster photocard; this is valid for travel in London on buses, tubes, DLR etc .

(The Freedom Pass which is given at retirement age is also valid for bus travel outside of London)

Full details on TfL website: <https://tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/60-london-oyster> on how to apply online.

It is possible to do it by phone 0343 222 1234

(check call charges of your provider) . Probably best to have access to a computer to find all the ID requirements.

Viv Duckett

Grave and systematic violations

UN finds that cuts to benefits, social care, the legal system and cuts to local authorities have reversed decades of progress to the rights of persons with disabilities in England — Guest contributor, Steve Mitchell, NPC Milton Keynes

In August 2015 it was revealed in the national press that the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was to conduct an inquiry into the impact of the UK Government's policies on the rights of disabled people under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This allows the UN Committee to investigate a State Party for "grave and systematic violations" of the Convention.

The Committee reported on 8th October 2016. It found that UK Government reforms had led to "grave and systematic" violations in respect of changes to Housing Benefit, Personal Independence Payments and social care. The UK Government rejected the findings.

The Committee met again in August 2017. Its final report is a 17-page catalogue of shame. It found cuts to benefits, social care, the legal system and cuts to local authorities have reversed decades of progress.

The UN Committee Chair, Theresia Degener is quoted as saying: "social policies have led to a human catastrophe in your country".

The UK Government in reply, claimed it is a world leader in disability rights; It stands by reforms to the benefit system.

In January 2016 the Court of Appeal in London declared the so called "bedroom tax" unlawful because of its consequences for disabled children.

When the history of our times comes to be written the "bedroom tax" will define this administration just as the hated Household Means Test defined that of the Chamberlain Government in the 1930s

While the UK Government refuses to acknowledge its responsibility there is little hope of any improvement in the lives of the disabled.

The UK is surely turning into a nasty little country.

Joe Hagland visits the Welsh pet cemetery

I saw a TV programme concerning Julie Waters doing train trips around England. Her final stop was at a pet cemetery at Brynford, Holywell, Flintshire, Wales where people can have their pets buried or cremated and I decided to go there to see it for myself.

The headstones on the graves have words on them which are very touching. Some said that having lost a departed loved-one, their pets took over the remaining years of their lives and the words showed their love. . . . and you could feel it all around. This cemetery was new to me, but it was sheer pleasure. There was even a chapel of rest with coffin, candles and piped music.

I will never forget the wonderful outlay and gave my comments in the visitors' book.

There was a lovely restaurant for lunch, tea and cakes served by excellent staff with good manners and understanding. The Welsh clan were indeed great to be with. They sent a car to pick me up and took me back to the station, some six miles, with no charge at all. So I gave a donation. They told me their local newspaper was going to report my visit and to my surprise they rang me about the article and will send me a copy.

So any of you pensioners out there, just love your pets simply because of the wonderful company they bring.

My thanks to Arsene (letter reprinted from Islington Tribune)

It is the end of a glorious era for Arsenal football club, the club I love. Arsene Wenger has transformed Arsenal and English football. I thank him for everything he has done, not just for the club, but for the community I represent, for inspiring countless young people to take up football. Thank you Arsene, for the beautiful football and the wonderful memories. For three Premier League titles, the un-

beaten 2003-4 season and a record-breaking seven FA Cups. I first met him in 1996 when he was moving into Highbury. He was carrying a box full of paperwork, but he took time to talk to my sons and their friends. I remember him talking to youngsters at an Arsenal Community event, telling them how important it is to learn another language. There is the side of Arsene Wenger that lots of people never

get to see. Yes he can be grumpy in interviews, having to answer often ridiculous questions and face criticism from pundits. He sets an example that you can rise above this, and prove you are stronger than your critics. He is one of the finest football managers there has been. And I thank him for that

Arsene, merci beaucoup et au revoir. **Jeremy Corbyn**

Government Cuts and Youth Services

THE FOLLOWING QUOTES ARE FROM *THE GUARDIAN* SIX YEARS AGO:

> **15-year-old Aaron from Haringey.** He was on his bike weaving through harrassed pedestrians. He was out there he said because his local youth club had closed. "I used to go to youth clubs, but now there's nothing to do. We're just out here, getting up to no good. People are intimidated by us."

> **Professor John Pitts**, who had researched gang behaviour for more than 40 years: "The 'annihilation' of youth services, coupled with academies likely to favour middle-class students over disadvantaged children, could further disconnect young people from society and result in more entrenched gangs. Services are not just being taken away from young people, they are being taken from poor young people."

> **Symeon Brown, 22, who helped run a campaign against the cuts:** "How do you create a ghetto? By taking away the very services that people depend upon to live, to better themselves."

SINCE THEN THINGS HAVE GOT WORSE!

- A report shows that at least £39m has been cut from London council youth services in the last 7 years
- Across 22 councils, 800 youth service full-time posts have been removed
- An inquiry into the capital's youth services found that 81 youth clubs and council youth projects have closed their doors since 2011
- There has been a 44% youth service budget cut since 2011, with an average council taking £1.5m out of youth services over this time
- A further £1.2m is due to be cut from 15 councils in 2018/19
- "Many young people would not have ended up homeless or be involved in youth offending if they were able to access youth clubs and support from experienced youth workers at an earlier stage" says Sheilagh O'Connor, CEO of New Horizon Youth Centre
- Andreas Koumi from youth charity Exposure said cuts to its funding has "completely transformed" the way it operates — they can only open their office to young people on one day a week instead of five.

Tottenham and Wood Green Pensioners Group has a special meeting on Tuesday 8th May, 2 p.m. at Tottenham Leisure Centre, 1 Philip Lane, London N15 4JA

on the stabbings and shootings of young people.

Speakers will be youth workers and the police, with David Lammy MP invited

- *We have booked a 15-seater minibus to take members to this meeting*

1.15 p.m. from Islington Town Hall — book now, first come, first served

'phone IPF on 0207 226 7687 (leave your own 'phone number if our 'phone is on "answerphone")

Pam Zinkin reminds us: "Our NHS will celebrate 70 years on July 5th"

There will be a march on June 30th to celebrate and we invite members to make cakes to give to our wonderful NHS staff on July 5th.

Some of us remember the time before the NHS when our families were afraid of being ill because they couldn't afford to pay the doctor or buy medicines.

Now our NHS is under threat and we are becoming frightened again.

We all know about the "winter crisis": the cancelled operations, the huge strain on insufficient staff, the longer waiting times to see GPs.

Our ageing population is often blamed but most of us are OK until we get past 70 (same age as our NHS) and we contribute to our families and communities.

Lots of medical advances have helped but cost more so our NHS always needed to increase funding each

year. Governments know this but instead of financing our health (and social services) adequately they have looked for ways of undermining the NHS.

A plan put forward by Conservative MPs Sir Oliver Letwin and John Redwood in 1988 aimed to get a US-style medical insurance system. To win support for this, they needed to show that the NHS was a broken system. So they set about breaking it!

They got various groups to agree to changing the basis of our NHS: restructuring at management level, creating independent Trusts, increasing the use of joint ventures with the private sector, extending the principle of charging and supporting US-style systems of health credits.

Never has there been a more urgent time in the amazing 70-year history of our NHS to stand up and defend what is ours.

INFORMATION

BINGO every Monday, 1 pm	at the IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
Lunch and a chat on Wednesdays	1 pm in the IPF Hall, address above
IT and Smart Phones on Wednesdays	3.30 p.m in the IPF Hall, address above
Wednesday 2nd May, 11 a.m.	Pensioners' Parliament meeting, with short film and buffet lunch — speaker NPC National Officer Neil Duncan-Jordan (IPF Hall)
Thursday 17th May, 10.30 a.m.	Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall; A Unite London busworker on the London Busworkers' Charter

**The Highbury View GARDEN PARTY will be held on Saturday 9th June at 1 p.m.
We are keeping our fingers crossed for good weather!**

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM (membership £5 a year, cheques payable to IPF)

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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

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

DATA PROTECTION

(this statement is required by law)

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the EU General Data Regulation 2018, organisations must collect, handle and store personal information. These rules apply regardless of whether data is stored electronically, on paper or on other materials. To comply with the law, personal information must be collected and used fairly.

Islington Pensioners Forum stores members and volunteers' postal addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses and we ensure that these are used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed unlawfully. We will never share an individual's data with third parties without the individual's consent unless required to do so by law.