



Charity No: 1043081

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community
July 2018 Newsletter

OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IS ON THURSDAY 19 JULY 2018, 10.30 a.m.

Committee Room 1, Islington Town Hall

The meeting will receive the Annual Report and Financial Report, and carry out the election of the committee. This will be followed by a buffet.

We are expecting our President, Jeremy Corbyn MP to be in attendance.

AN INVITATION TO ISLINGTON'S PENSIONERS

Dear Friends,

You are cordially invited to the above meeting as visitors to 'get a taste' of Islington Pensioners Forum.

*Just because we are no longer at work doesn't mean that we cannot raise our voices and stand up for today's and tomorrow's pensioners. But we need to be organised to make our voices heard that's the purpose of Islington Pensioners Forum and we join with pensioners all over the country in the **National Pensioners Convention**. Our basic demands are:*

- *A living state pension*
- *A free National Care Service*
- *Continuation of our Freedom Pass*
- *Defence of our NHS and public services*

Also we campaign for "generations united" — for the rights of young people to free education, proper apprenticeships, secure jobs and homes and a safe environment.

Best wishes,

*George Durack and Bob Collins (joint chairs) Dot Gibson (secretary)
Annette Thomas (assistant secretary) Eric Hill (treasurer)*

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

When it comes to health and social care, Mrs May continually gives the evasive answer: "we have put and we are putting money into the system", and of course eventually, last month with the media and the public's outcry reaching screaming pitch at the continuing crisis, she was forced to announce that £20.5 billion would be put in by 2023/24.

But what does it mean? The King's Fund says that "the sums promised do not represent a bonanza for the NHS and remain lower than the 4 per cent a year called for" by experts in the field, and the government will apply five tests to its plans, the first of which is "improving productivity and efficiency". In my experience this means CUTS!

The NHS must now come up with a plan for the autumn, setting out what it will do for the money, and the first part of this plan has now been announced. You guessed! CUTS in 17 NHS procedures, including for varicose veins, haemorrhoids and trigger finger.

Without doing a bit of research, most of us don't know

FROM "THE VOICE" (paper of CWU retired members)

George Durack got an unusually public and totally surprising get-well-soon message from his union's annual conference when Jeremy Corbyn concluded his keynote speech with a heartfelt message that brought cheers from the Communication Workers Union delegates.

"I've learned a lot from lots of people in my life and one of those people is one of your members" the Labour leader began."George Durack, who is aged 93, has been in hospital, has just come out and is getting well. Can I send him a get well and good luck message from you all?" The answer was a resounding "yes" — leading into a standing ovation.

...NHS Matters....NHS Matters....NHS Matters....NHS Matters

How many of us remember 5 July 1948? I do. It was the launch of the NHS. The best health service in the world as I was told outside the Whittington hospital by an Indian gentleman.

But our NHS has always been under attack. As it reaches its 70th birthday it is being undermined more than ever.

Although the government says it will put more money into the health service we can't replace the 40 000 experienced nurses and 10 000 doctors so easily. So we celebrate but have to try to understand what is happening so that we can protect OUR NHS.

That's very difficult as the changes by NHS England are complex and rapid. The alphabet jumble includes STPs, footprints, ACS, ACO. ICS, ICOs, POLCE. We agree that health and social care should work together for us, but these acronyms are really about cost cutting and rationing.

Islington has to plan financial savings with four other boroughs, not of our choosing and with no consultation.

(the King's Fund explains) that Mrs. May's £20.5 billion:

- does not include spending on training and the public health grant to local authorities.

(*The Green Paper on local government social care spending has been delayed until the autumn.*)

- but it does include the running costs of the Department of Health and the Care Quality Commission.

Why are these arms-length bodies included? Because they have been cut over the years.

Why? To increase the NHS budget!

Talk about "robbing Peter to pay Paul"!

My thanks to Pam Zinkin whose regular reports in our newsletter keep us up to scratch with NHS information and campaigns.

I was sorry not to be able to join the NHS 70th anniversary demonstration on 30 June, but I was definitely there in spirit!

By Pam Zinkin

It's called NCL (North Central London). Did you know that's where you now live?

If you are feeling confused and that nothing we can do will stop this government taking us into an American-style health service there is some hope. The NHS reinstatement Bill will be introduced by Eleanor Smith MP for Wolverhampton on July 11th.

This is now being supported by the present Shadow Health Secretary, John Ashworth MP, so it may be opposition party policy. The legal case against Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care is still ongoing.

The House of Commons Health Select Committee on 11th June strongly criticised the way STPs (sustainability and transformation partnerships) were introduced, with excessive secrecy, topdown and an unrealistic and damaging time scale.

I think those of us who remember health care before the NHS have a special obligation to do everything we can to save our NHS and never give up.



PENSIONERS' PARLIAMENT 2018 IN BLACKPOOL

Frances Bradley kicked off the discussion at the June Forum meeting with a report of the National Pensioners' Convention Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool during the week 11-15 June.

The above picture taken in front of the Gresham Hotel just before we got on our homeward-bound coach shows most of the delegation from North London. There were 18 from Islington Pensioners' Forum and 21 from the Tottenham and Wood Green Pensioners' Action Group.

On day one (Tuesday 12 June) we marched, with pensioners from all over the UK, accompanied by a jazz band, and carrying the above banner plus our groups' banners, from the famous Blackpool Tower to the Winter Gardens where the Parliament was held.

The first session was a rally with greetings from the Mayor of Blackpool and speakers on social care and care workers, transport and safety on trains, the miners' pension fund problems.

A fringe meeting organised by the PCS union followed this, dealing with DWP office closures, benefits sanctions and Universal Credit.

On day two there was a choice of three sessions in the morning and in the afternoon on: ● pensions, inequality and intergenerational fairness ● social care ● understanding funeral poverty ● the NHS ● making public transport accessible and ● tackling loneliness. It would not do justice to these sessions to try to report on them in a short space, but there will be a full report of the Parliament in print and on line very soon.

There was also a choice of four lunchtime events: ● active minds still learning ● older women travelling safely ● solidarity singing workshop and ● walking football.

Also on the evening of the second day there was dancing until 11.30 p.m. and entertainment in the Winter Gardens' enormous beautiful ballroom. The tribute acts were Elton John, Rod Stewart and Tina Turner. These got a large number up and bopping, with our delegation being at the heart of the dancers!

Parliament ended at lunchtime on the Thursday, after speeches from the NPC secretary and general secretary giving a round-up of the sessions and making proposals to prepare for next year.

Back in our hotel on the Tuesday and Thursday evenings we had a bingo session and also on Tuesday we were entertained by Louise Allen, the highly accomplished niece of Graham, manager of Highbury Fields sheltered Housing Scheme, who was also with us in Blackpool. Louise sung songs of the 40s onwards and Elizabeth and Geoffrey couldn't resist dancing; so much so that the hotel manager was moved to present them with a big trophy cup; they filled it with Prosecco and shared it round the whole group!

On the Thursday afternoon most of us took the free ride on the tram along the coast to Fleetwood and the famous historic market. This free trip is only available to pensioners with their freedom passes and the entry ticket to the Parliament.

The £250 cost of the week in Blackpool included return coach, bed, breakfast and evening meal and the Pensioners' Parliament ticket. Arrangements were made for this to be paid in installments; we will soon start collecting for the next Pensioners' Parliament, which is set to take place in the week 10-14 June 2019.

Following Frances, most of the members who had attended Parliament spoke, and quite clearly there is enthusiasm to go again next year.



50,000 people marched through London in the blazing heat on Saturday 30 June to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the National Health Service, and to warn against privatisation and the government's failure to properly fund this vital service.

13 members of Islington Pensioners Forum and Tottenham and Wood Green Pensioners Action Group staged a static demonstration near Trafalgar Square, greeting the marchers as they made their way to Whitehall and displaying National Pensioners Convention banners, including the one pictured here (produced and donated by artist/banner maker Ed Hall), which looks splendid in full colour! (unfortunately the cost of producing our newsletter does not allow us to use colour).

It was great to see so many health professionals on the march; they are the backbone and the champions of our NHS. without whom the service could not carry out its vital work for the rest of us.

Make no mistake, as this banner states: the campaign to "keep our NHS safe for all generations" goes on, and we in the pensioners' movement are fully involved in this.

FROM REPORT IN ISLINGTON TRIBUNE: 29th June 2018: Whittington Hospital chiefs have officially abandoned plans for a 10-year private property deal. The NHS trust said it was "no longer necessary" to hire Ryhurst, part of Rydon Group, the lead Grenfell Tower contractor. Instead of entering into an "estates strategy" partnership aimed at sizing up what the hospital should do with its site and buildings in Archway, the Whittington said yesterday that the expertise could now be found "in-house". The announcement chalked up another major campaign victory for Defend Whittington Hospital Coalition, which had repeatedly staged protests against the board over the Ryhurst deal and organised a packed public meeting in Islington town hall.

CARE GREEN PAPER DELAYED

In November last year the government announced that it would publish a Green Paper on the future funding of social care this summer. But just weeks before its publication the Minister, Jeremy Hunt says that it is now delayed until the autumn.

In the meantime Teresa May has promised an additional £20bn for the NHS with no mention of social care, its desperate need for funding and the huge pressures placed on the NHS from the social care crisis.

We reject the view that it is better to delay the Green Paper and “get it right”. There are no signs that this government will “get it right”.

Jan Shortt, NPC general secretary said: “Our view is that care should be free at the point of need, funded through taxation by society as a whole and of the very highest standards”,

We must continue our campaign for this!

WORKING UNTIL YOU DROP

An estimated 23 million people will need to keep working beyond retirement age, according to new research by Canada Life.

The rising cost of living, the decline of many final salary occupational pension schemes and poor returns on savings mean that up to three quarters of British workers simply cannot afford to retire.

Almost half will be over 70 before they can give up work — up from 37 per cent last year.

By October 2020, the State Pension Age (SPA) will go up to 66 for both men and women before rising to 67 by the end of 2028. The government is also keen to introduce a SPA of 68 in 2036 seven years earlier than originally planned.

Our call for a “Living State Pension” underlines our campaign, standing up for today’s and tomorrow’s pensioners!

AN EXTRA NHS NOTE FROM PAM ZINKIN

The comptroller of the National Audit Office said that the money the government is putting into the NHS is only enough to maintain current services, not improve them.

He also says that the cuts in social care damage the health services (as we know).

He wants a service that prevents illness and says the best thing you can do for someone is keep them out of hospital.

This needs prevention and good social care. And that’s not just old people.

CRUEL DISCRIMINATION

Southern Rail parent company, Govia Thameslink has told staff not to help people with reduced mobility on to trains if there is a chance it might delay the service!

This is cruel discrimination! And the National Pensioners Convention has promoted a petition condemning this. See:

<https://www.change.org.p/everyone-allow-disabled-people-freedom-to-travel-on-trains?>

LUNCH AT ST. MARK’S SCHOOL

I recently had lunch with the children at St. Mark’s Primary School, Sussex Way, Islington (N19), and it was a really great experience. I was with seven other older people, and the invitation came so that we in Islington Pensioners Forum could prepare a regular arrangement for older people (our members) to have lunch there. We queued with the children to get our meal and several of the children had been appointed to very politely take away our used plates. Watch this space! We will let you know when the regular arrangement is in place.

It is a great idea to “mix” young and old in this way and it looks as if other schools in Islington are thinking of following this lead.

Dot Gibson

ROYAL SOCIETY REPORT ON AGEISM

The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) reports that almost a third of the public (30 per cent) believe “being lonely is just something that happens when people get old”, while a quarter (25 per cent) of 18-34 year olds believe it is “normal” for older people to be unhappy and depressed! Also that two in five of 18-24 year olds (40 per cent) believe there is no way to escape dementia as we age.

The RSPH is calling for an end to the use of the term “anti-ageing” in the cosmetics and beauty industry, “age” to be included in the Editors’ Code of Practice as a characteristic by which journalists must not discriminate and positive ageing to be promoted within schools and nurseries; also that nurseries and care homes to be combined under the same roof, reducing ageism by bringing generations together.

NOTE: The information on this page came from the National Pensioners Convention monthly electronic bulletin “Campaign!” (July 2018 issue). If you would like to receive this bulletin for activists in the pensioners’ movement, you can add your name to the distribution list by sending a request to:
info@npcuk.org

INFORMATION

BINGO will resume later in the year	
Lunch and a chat on Wednesdays	1 pm in IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
IT and Smart Phones on Wednesdays	3.30 p.m in the IPF Hall, address above
Thursday 19th July 10.30 a.m.	Town Hall. IPF Annual General Meeting — with Jeremy Corbyn — our President in attendance.... BRING YOUR FRIENDS
<u>THERE IS NO FORUM MEETING IN AUGUST</u>	<u>WE WILL PRODUCE AN AUGUST NEWSLETTER IN TIME TO LET YOU KNOW ABOUT ACTIVITIES IN SEPTEMBER.</u>

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

1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN

Telephone: 0207 226 7687

Email: 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

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

GARDEN PARTY AT Highbury View ON SATURDAY 9 JUNE

John Walters, Islington's own PEARLY KING came up trumps, leading the sing-along in the beautiful Highbury View (sheltered housing) garden. John is a firm favourite, with his friendly ready smile and down-to-earth wit. There was plenty to eat and drink, and the added bonus of a tai chi display (see picture).



We want your suggestions and also your help to arrange more social events and outings in the coming year. so come to the AGM (see front of this newsletter) ready with your ideas.