



Charity No: 1043081

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

April 2019 Newsletter

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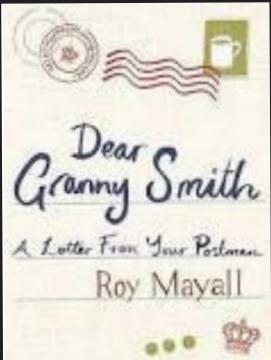


PLEASE TRY TO IMAGINE THE ABOVE PICTURE IN COLOUR!

At the time of producing this newsletter, these beautiful daffodils are a blaze of colour on Highbury Fields, but because of cost constraints, we can only have black and white pictures. Amongst other things, we are looking at making changes to our newsletter so that we can produce it in colour.

At the same time, with the help of a Lottery grant we are in the midst of preparing to launch a new web site as the Islington pensioners' hub giving information about all the community events in the borough helping people to overcome loneliness and isolation. IPF itself, with our various activities is part of this scene, and in addition there are loads of things on in community centres all over the borough — dance, exercise, singing, art, also films, lunches, outings, coffee mornings If you or any of your friends and neighbours feel lost and isolated, please do not hesitate to get in touch — see contact details above and membership form on the back page.

Come to see two short films — one about the NPC "Right not Charity" and the other about multi-cultural London called "We are all Londoners". (have Tea/coffee and cake with us)
Tuesday 7th May, 3 p.m. at the IPF Hall
1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN
The occasion is the annual general meeting of the National Pensioners Education and Welfare Centre charity to which visitors are invited

	<p>page 3 Chapter Nine 'Modernisation' scaling back the service</p>
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A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Sorry we had no speaker at the March Forum. It was disappointing that Arthur Torrington, chair of the Windrush Foundation was unable to come at the last minute because of another urgent call on his time. We received his apology following the meeting; he will speak at a future meeting. But we had a very good debate on a variety of subjects, and I brought up the problem of scams and how to avoid them. I said that I would put something in this newsletter, and so here goes:

BEWARE OF SCAMS

● **Doorstep:** If someone does come to the door, it's important to remember the following:

- =Only let someone in if you're expecting them.
- =Don't feel pressured.
- =Check their credentials.
- =Don't share your pin

Call the police on 101 if not in immediate danger, but call 999 if you feel threatened or in danger; You can call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

● **Postal:** these can take the form of:

- =Lotteries and prize draws.
- =Psychics and clairvoyants.
- =Pyramid schemes.
- =Hard luck stories
- =Unclaimed inheritance.

Contact the Mailing Preference Service to have your name taken off direct mailing list.

● **Phone**

- =Cold call
- =Bank scams.
- =Compensation calls.
- =HMRC (Tax refund/unpaid bill) scams.

If you get a scam call don't reveal personal details.

- =Hang up
- =Ring the organisation
- =Don't be rushed.

Phone the Telephone Service' registered line on 0345 070 0707

● **Pension and investment.**

Pension cold-calling is banned.

Report it to the Information Commissioner's Office on 0303 123 1113.

YOU MAY WANT TO CUT THIS OUT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION

Our Forum, along with local pensioner groups all over the country, is affiliated to the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) and its London Region. What follows are reports of two NPC conferences:

● The biennial delegate conference of the NPC, 12th and 13th March, took place in the Yarfield Conference Centre near Stafford. This conference decides policy and elects the officers. This year a new housing policy was agreed and other decisions mainly confirmed our policies for a state pension based on 70% of the living wage (around £200 a week); defence of the over 75s free TV licence; a free National Care Service paid through taxation; defence of the NHS as a public service; proper provision of public toilets in the public transport system. Conference resolved to investigate and promote the impact of air pollution on older people and

work to promote environmental issues as intergenerational issues. Three new sub groups were agreed on: housing, digital exclusion and lesbian, gay and transgender.

● The annual general meeting of the NPC Greater London Region took place on 28th March. This agreed resolutions: on highway safety considering the impact of silent electric vehicles on those with reduced sensory perception and mobility problems; on the importance of environmental campaigns, especially the increased risk of Alzheimer's disease associated with air pollution; opposition to the further privatisation and break-up of the NHS in the "Integrated Care Providers" schemes; support for the Charter for Change in connection with the inclusion of disabled people (see page 6)

Dot Gibson

Dear Granny Smith : Chapter 9 — Modernisation

Last month we published chapter eight. Roy said: "If we followed these rules we would never be home before tea time. . . ."

More recently, however, they've been talking about serious things. They've been talking about "modernization". It's an interesting word that. Modernisation.

Just roll it around the tongue once or twice. We have to be modern, don't we? Who wouldn't want to be modern". Actually, it's just another euphemism, like "flexibility" or "discretionary".

"Modernisation" means scaling back the service in order to serve the interests of the corporations. It means "profitability" which means "cutting costs" which means "cutting back on fixed expenditures" which means – and I don't have to employ inverted commas for this – lower standards and lower wages.

That's the future. That's what being "modern" is all about. And in between all this we are spoon-fed examples of what this modernization programme will involve.

Mostly it involves the introduction of new technology. Once again, who can argue with that? New technology is a good thing, right? It's, like, computers and stuff. It's faster and it will make our job easier.

So, now, let me give you some real examples of what the Royal Mail have lined up for us. Welcome to the future, folks. This is what it will look like.

ELECTRONIC TROLLEYS. We are all going to be issued with electronic trolleys. Bikes obviously aren't modern enough. So we are all going to walk around following an electronic trolley which will go at a uniform speed. Will the trolley stop or are we supposed to keep up? Apparently they've already been trialed in some parts of the country. Problem is, they're too big for the pavements, so they have to go on the road. Problems with this is they violate all parking laws. The Royal Mail might find themselves being issued with tickets for "illegally parked electronic trolleys".

Also, in the places where the trolleys have been trialed, the round has been extended, from three and a half hours to four. Three and a half hours already means four and a half hours, so four hours will mean five. You can see the thinking behind this. The electronic trolley takes the weight so the postie can work for longer. One man can do more work, a cost saving benefit to the corporation when they take over the running of the Royal Mail.

Of course, this brings up all sorts of issues. Like: if the

electric trolleys go at walking speed, how do we get them to the round? Some rounds are many miles from the office. A bike can go fast, and it can go slow. A bike can get you to the round quickly, and then still serve as a trolley once you're there.

So the trolleys will have to be taken over by van. Currently Royal Mail vans are too small to take the trolleys, so, obviously, a new fleet of vans is required. Also, what about maintenance? All the bikes in our office are currently maintained by one man. They are simple and efficient machines, with replaceable parts. The wheel goes, he puts on a new wheel. The stand goes, he puts on a new stand. Will the electronic trolleys be this straightforward? Will they have to retrain the bike maintenance men so that they can fix the electric trolleys, or will the electric trolley maintenance have to be contracted out? And how much will all of this cost? Will the taxpayer pay for all this, only to have the Royal Mail handed over to a corporation in the end?

"STARBURST". The person who invented this name obviously has theatrical tendencies. It sounds like the name of a musical, or of an interstellar vehicle in some big budget Hollywood science fiction movie.

The idea is that we will all go out on delivery in the backs of vans in teams. We will burst from the back of the van with our pre-packed bags (all singing and dancing, no doubt to the "Starburst" theme) and then scatter, delivering as we go. The vans will carry lots of spare bags of mail and the posties will follow the vans up and down the roads. A bit like the way bin men currently work, a team of guys following a big van. Only this will be in reverse. We bring you your rubbish, the bin men take it away again.

Obviously, the advantage of this is that you can use casual workers to do it. Old-time posties who know the frames can be kept in the office to serve the new teams of casual postal workers who just have to be chucked out on the street and told to deliver. And you can imagine then, can't you, starting the day with a collective "huddle" in which they close heads like an American football team which exhorting each other to greater efforts?

And we could change the name of the Royal Mail too. We could call it "McMail". It has a certain ring.

/This chapter continues next month

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM recognised in the Mayor’s civic awards.

Islington Councillor Sue Lukes nominated Dot Gibson for this year’s Mayor’s civic awards in recognition of the important work carried out by Islington Pensioners Forum and the National Pensioners Convention. The event took place on 14th March in the Town Hall Assembly Hall and was hosted by local paper, Islington Gazette. The picture shows Dot with the Mayor, Councillor Dave Poyser and Ramzy Alwakeel, Editor of Islington Gazette.



On behalf of IPF, I was proud to be with the following people, all doing important work in the borough— **Dot**

● **Shauna Maragh** has been a steering group member of the youth-led Hear2Change project, run by Solace Women’s Aid. It’s work is to prevent violence against women and girls. She has spoken out at school assemblies to promote peer to peer education. Hers was the Kinsella award.

● **Sadia Ali** has been helping mothers, fathers and the Somali youth community for many years; she also works with parents and trains BAME teachers in safeguarding youths in an after-school setting. She is the eyes and ears of her community.

● **Irene Francis** 90-years young, is still active in the community and has been a member of her Tenants and Residents Association from the very start, holding elected members to account in a positive way whilst having a laugh and a joke.

● **Jane Garfield** founded The Toy Project which operates from a shop on Junction Road; this charity re-

cycles unwanted new and used toys and gives them to children in need — low income families, children from refugee/migrant families, prisons, children’s wards, care homes and therapy centres.

● **Steve Griffith** is an exceptional youth work practitioner, engaged with some of the most challenging young people in Islington. He has demonstrated remarkable ability to maintain trusting relationships with vulnerable young people and to re-direct them towards positive engagement.

● **Mick Havens** is chair of the Eagle Recovery project, supporting people experiencing, or in recovery from alcohol or substance misuse issues. He has been an Expert by Experience member of the Making It Real programme to increase personalisation in social care.

● **Jessica Plummer** visits schools to try and guide young people away from carrying knives and to stop mothers and fathers from feeling the same pain that she did and still does — her son, Shaquan was tragically stabbed to death in January 2015, aged 17.



Our picture shows part of our delegation at Islington Town Hall on our way to Whitehall to take part in the National Pensioners Convention protest at the proposal to end or means-test the free over-75s TV licence. The government relinquished responsibility for the licence, handing it over to the BBC in its contract.

A number of MPs spoke in support of our protest at a meeting in Portcullis House hosted by Sharon Hodgson MP. Other speakers were Caroline Abrahams, Chief Executive of Age UK, Miriam Stoppard, Mirror Columnist, and Jan Shortt, secretary of the NPC.

Join the campaign at saveourpostoffice.co.uk

The announcement of a further 74 Crown Post Office closures on 11 October 2018 brought the number of Crown Post Offices closed or franchised to 224 (60%) since 2013. The decision to privatise these branches and hand them to WH Smith “The worst retailer on the highstreet” (Which? survey 2018), is nothing short of a disgrace. Evidence shows that transferring these public assets and services leads to a deterioration of service,

accessibility and high street decline. We, the public, are not being asked whether we want this privatisation to go ahead, yet our money is being used to bankroll the process. The closures can be seen as nothing less than the managed decline of a national treasure. The NPC and many MPs were part of the Communications Workers Union delegation handing in an over-90,000 signature petition to Downing Street on 11th March

A good place to go in our neighbouring borough. 0208 801 6868 ask for Leyla

At the end of last year, I attended a Food and Nutrition Workshop in Tottenham Town Hall. Among the presentations, there was one from "Living Under One Sun", which was really impressive.

This charity was created in 2005 in a corner of Tottenham by mothers of many cultures and ages wanting to reduce their isolation, know more and make their much-neglected neighbourhood safer.

Through a weekly 'meet, cook and eat' peer support group they shared their life stories, gained trust, confidence and strength to reach out – the feeling was "We are all equal under one sun". With a place to meet, a pot full of food and some fun and friendship, they ex-

perienced the power of what they can learn and do for themselves, their families and their neighbourhood.

Soon this grew into a local 'village square' meeting place for all, accessing services, gaining qualifications, training community leaders and delivering projects, supported by a Council community worker.

If you are planning a time out of doors now that Spring has sprung, and you fancy some good nutritious food served by friendly people . . . visit Living Under One Sun and Cafe Connect. . . . Down Lane Park, Park View Road, N 17 9EX A 476 bus takes you to Tottenham Police Station, and it's not far to walk from there.

Dot Gibson

Procedures of Limited Clinical Effectiveness PoLCE

On Monday 11th March, Keep Our NHS Public (KONP) held a public meeting in Islington Town Hall and I am very glad that I was able to attend this.

The PoLCE plans were discussed and speakers warned that the "cradle to grave safety net" of the NHS was being eroded by cuts that push patients towards paying for private treatment.

The STP say that certain procedures are no longer effective, or have become outdated, but KONP says that this is a cost-cutting exercise not based on clinical effectiveness. Hip replacements, cataracts, varicose veins and tonsillectomies will no longer be routinely carried out, and the updated PoLCE list includes knee replacements, replacing a clouded eye lens with an artificial lens, removal of skin benign lesions, hysterectomy for heavy bleeding, carpal tunnel syndrome release, varicose vein surgery and injections for low back pain.

Working behind closed doors STP is planning to reduce

NHS spending in five boroughs (Enfield, Camden, Islington, Haringey and Barnet) with £1bn planned cuts for Islington by 2022.

In many of the cases the procedures will still be funded by the NHS, but only if patients are meeting a new higher threshold of pain!

KONP says that every resident should be able to access the treatment they need and for this to be done they need a personalised conversation with their doctor with clear information to help them make the right choice.

Explaining these issues to an audience of non-medical professionals is very difficult, and some of our members who attended the meeting said that some of the speakers used terms which were difficult to understand. That's why we are so grateful that Pam uses our monthly newsletter to keep us up-dated.

Annette Thomas

NHS News Pam Zinkin

Have you had long waits in A&E or to see your GP?

The NHS is critically short of staff. GPs are resigning as soon as they can and nurses have their traditional bursaries cut so they have to pay for their training.

The NHS management response? Abolish waiting time targets.

GP problem? More complicated, but "local primary care networks" are set to be rolled out throughout the country by 2021. This new system will see the creation of a network of healthcare professionals including GPs, pharmacists and physiotherapists to cater for the needs of 30,000 to 50,000 patients in one area.

Dr Gary Marlowe, a working GP and chairman of the British Medical Association London, warned of the in-

coming system and warned of "large super practices" being planned in order to create the network. And Dr Marlowe warned that these networks would see a "fragmentation" of services with GPs no longer being the first point of contact for patients but paramedics and pharmacists instead. "You won't be seen by a doctor and then moved on. The "amazing benefit in the relationship between a patient and a doctor" will be diminished under the new system.

Dr Marlowe pointed out that the national directive pushes us towards believing that if we have more professionals allied to medicine such as physios all will be well and we'll get around the problem of not enough doctors in primary care. **We are moving away from a humane form of medicine.**

INFORMATION

BINGO	This is suspended for the time being. We will keep you informed.
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
Monday 11th March	7.00 p.m. Islington Town Hall public meeting on NHS (see page four)
Thursday 18 April	10.30 a.m. Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall. Speaker from Friends of the Earth
Wednesday 7th May 3 p.m.	See page 1 — invitation to NPC charity films, tea/coffee and cake
Thursday 16 May	10.30 a.m. Forum meeting at Islington Town Hall,

How to combat exclusion — resolution of NPC Greater London

In July 2018 Global Disability Summit, Charter for Change, was held in London. Many countries and organisations were signatories to the charter that commits to ten promises as a catalyst for leadership for change.

These included making sure that persons with disabilities are consulted and represented, suffer no discrimination or stigma, have rights to learning and access to employment and financial independence and receive support using assistive technology. Practices should be designed for full inclusion, with priority given to cater for those most marginalised. Good data and evidence would be used to address the challenges effectively and the signatories would publish performance reports and be held to account.

London Region NPC notes that the initiative was hosted by the Department for International Development (DFID) and that the DFID strategy focussed on helping developing countries achieve the Charter promises.

Yet we observe that people with disabilities are excluded here in the UK when this could be avoided [remedied] with support from the government. Many public buildings are not equipped to enable people with disability to gain access and to participate fully in activities.

The LR NPC resolves:

- to challenge the authorities responsible whenever we observe that people with disability are not fully included at an event, including the right of attendees to hear speakers and discussion at meetings
- to make arrangements to the best of our ability to include those with disability at our own meetings

- to challenge the government to commit to the Charter for Change to be observed in the UK, and to make further funds available for this to be achieved

- to demand that the government supplies reports on progress made on the Charter.

LRNPC asks other NPC regions to join us in this campaign to combat exclusion.

As part of this campaign, delegates will be asked to notify local MPs, local government and Clinical Commissioning Groups of this motion.

Proposed by Hornsey Pensioners Action Group and

NEW MEMBER <input type="checkbox"/>	RENEWING SUB <input type="checkbox"/>
NAME:	
ADDRESS:	
.....	
POST CODE:	
TELE NO:	
EMAIL:	
ANNUAL SUB ENCLOSED.....£5.00	
PLUS DONATION?.....	
Cheque payable to: IPF Send to:	
Islington Pensioners Forum,	
1a Providence Court, Providence Place,	
Islington N1 0RN	
Or hand in at Forum meeting (see above)	