



ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

September 2019 Newsletter

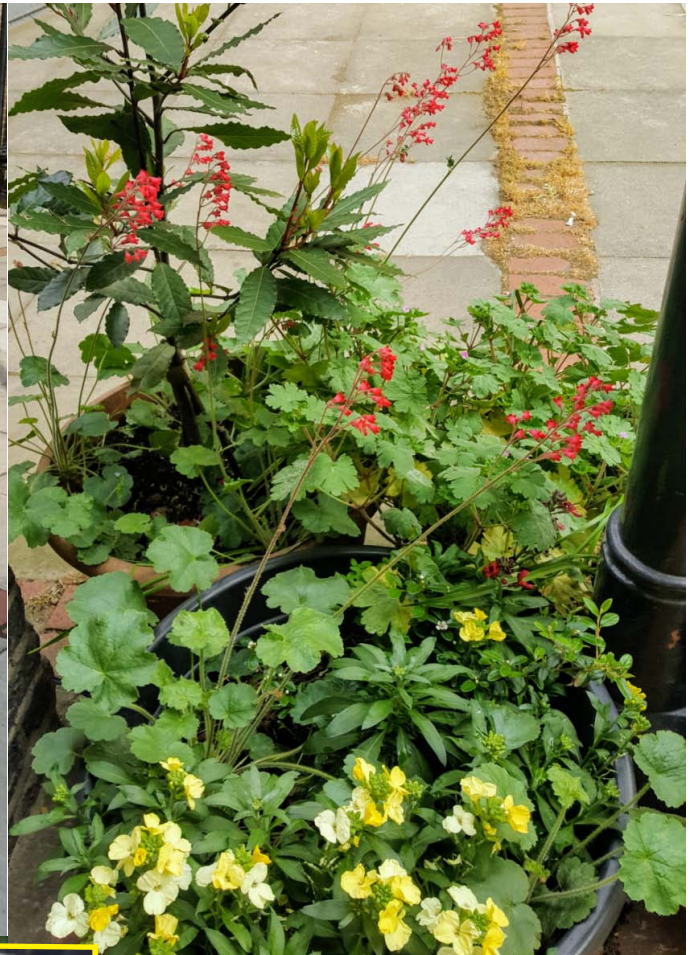
1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN

Telephone 0207 226 7687

Email: ipf@islingtonpensionersforum.org Website: www.islingtonpensionersforum.org

Office opens from 10.30 am to 2.30 pm Monday & Wednesday (but 'phone first)

Charity No: 1043081



We are proud to be able to print these pictures of the plants in front of our office and in the small space at the back.... but we are not so proud of the truth that we had neglected our garden for a long time.... and then member Supa Kusumratana came along ('photo inset). She added new plants and gave our garden the loving care it needed. She showed us that quiet thoughtful attention and action to improve the world around us is more than simply "being right" in our political and campaigning stand. See page 5 for articles on climate change campaigning.

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

The first committee meeting following our AGM was on Monday 6th August, and so I take this opportunity to personally thank our long-standing committee members, and specially Supa Kusumratana for her terrific contribution. Unfortunately she is having to take a bit of a back seat for the time being, but we hope that she will be able to return at some time in the future. She assures us that although she will not be at committee meetings, we will be seeing her at Forum meetings and other events which she hopes to be able to attend.

I also want to welcome new committee members, Irma Gomez, Eula Harrison, Alice Kilroy and Luke Daniels. By the looks of that first meeting, they are all going to make a terrific contribution to our deliberations and to our campaigning. One of the important things is that they are all very much in touch with others in the community through their various other activities, and that is an important way of bringing in new ideas and methods of doing things.

It is so important for us all to be in touch with others, for we know that there is a very big problem of loneliness and isolation among older people, and that is why I am pleased to be attending the London, Eastern and

South East TUC pensioners' network annual seminar entitled: "I care because you do" on 3rd September with speakers and discussion on loneliness and isolation. I will write a report for the October newsletter.

A campaign I think we should support is called "Age Friendly London"; it deals with problems under a number of headings: Respect and Social Inclusion; Housing; Community Support and Health Services and Transport. We will make sure to study their views and research.

If the decision to means-test the free TV licence for over 75-year olds goes ahead it will mean more lonely people, as there is no doubt that television programmes and news bulletins keep many (especially home-bound) older people in touch with things. Of course our new Prime Minister knows this, and he gave lots of older people the false impression that there was a change in this decision when he was interviewed on camera at the recent G7 meeting in Berlitz and called upon the BBC to keep the free TV licence for all over 75-year olds. But it was a cynical and opportunist ploy to make people think that the decision had nothing to do with his party in government. (See box below).

'Do not prorogue Parliament'

The petition set up on 15 August opposing the prorogation of Parliament had fewer than 100,000 signatures but this rose to over 1 million within 24 hours on 28/29 August when Prime Minister Boris Johnson got the Queen to authorise his anti-democratic closure of Parliament aimed at preventing our MPs discussing Brexit and the possibility of leaving the EU without a deal.

When we printed this newsletter on 2 September the number of signatures had reached:

1,704,390

And the number of Islington signatories within that figure was:

15,735

Sign up! The campaign continues.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/269157>

DON'T SWITCH US OFF! GOVERNMENT SHOULD FUND THE OVER 75s FREE TV LICENCE

With his well-known opportunism, Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, whilst in front of TV cameras at the G7 meeting in Berlitz, called on the BBC to change its decision and ensure that all over 75-year olds continue to get the free TV licence.

This confused many pensioners — they thought we had won our campaign. Johnson even said that the BBC was reneging on its agreement with government. NOT TRUE!

The free TV licence was originally introduced by Labour as a government-funded UNIVERSAL BENEFIT to "top-up" the very low state pension.

(Pensioners' free prescriptions and concessionary free bus passes are also Universal Benefits).

Disgracefully, the Theresa May government used renewal of its contract to force this responsibility onto the BBC, and now Johnson cynically blames them for the cut! So how can we be sure that other Universal Benefits will not be cut?

We must keep up the fight for our rights!

NHS News Pam Zinkin

PRIVATISATION OF NHS PATIENTS' PERSONAL DATA

“Ernst and Young (now known as EY) is one of the world's big four accounting firms. They provide tax planning, financial audit and consulting services to companies.

So what has that to do with us?

Well they have got interested in your patient data.

Why?

Because a report says that data held by the NHS could be worth nearly £10bn a year says EY.

The report considers the TRADING values of health and life sciences companies with “significant patient data assets” as well as recent commercial transactions involving companies and patient data.

By taking into account the 55 million primary care records in the UK, (that is your personal information given to your GP) as well as a “treasure trove of information detailing health, wellness, illness and the associated care pathways” held by the NHS.

Ernst & Young puts the value of our NHS data at £9.6 billion per year.

So who is the “treasure trove” for?

Mostly companies concerned with artificial intelligence (AI) in making sense of – and unlocking value from – data sets held by NHS organisations.

This could be a useful aid to health work but the issue is that companies' first duty is to their shareholders and not to us, the patients.

AND IT IS OUR DATA!

SOME INFORMATION ABOUT VACCINES

My regular NHS articles are not medical advice but just to let you know what is happening in our precious more threatened than ever, NHS. Hoping we have ideas how to defend and improve it. But I had a request to inform pensioners about vaccines so will do so but please check everything with your GP.

Vaccines for us are :

1. Flu vaccine — Helps to protect against flu (influenza). We need this every year because the flu virus keeps changing so a new vaccine is needed. Even so it may not protect completely so if you feel you have flu you are probably right. Don't take antibiotics unless your GP prescribes them.

2. Pneumococcal vaccine — This is usually needed only once! It protects us from some forms of pneumonia

3. Shingles vaccine — In the NHS this is recommended for people over 70 up to 80. It is said not to be effective for those of us over 80 but the research is incomplete. This vaccine helps to protect older people against shingles (herpes zoster). This is the same virus

which causes chickenpox. It can get reactivated in older people and then is accompanied by a painful rash in an area of the skin supplied by a nerve from the spinal cord. The virus affects the spinal root and thus the rash is seen along its pathways. The real problem is that in many people there is intense pain in these areas long after the rash has subsided. The pain may go on for a long time and is very difficult to treat, and because of this, it is recommended that we ask our GPs for the anti-shingles vaccine .

Measles vaccine — The world health organisation has just announced that the UK has lost its status as a measles-free country. In the light of this we have an important role in supporting our grandchildren to get the MMR vaccine.(two doses) . This is very effective and there is NO link with autism. (The gastroenterologist who started these suggestions had a financial interest in single vaccines and has been stuck off the medical register.)

See my personal comment on the shingles vaccine on page 5 — Dot

THE LISTERIA SANDWICH SCANDAL

In the listeria sandwich scandal, out-sourced catering resulted in the deaths of nine patients in Manchester hospitals.

Both main parties, even Health Secretary, Mat Hancock, have called publicly for NHS managers to end their dependence on external private suppliers.

Hospitals once again should employ their own chefs and rely on quality local food.

ISLINGTON HOMES FOR ALL

Defending the future of Holloway Prison site

FOR OVER TWO YEARS housing activists and residents campaigned for the Holloway Prison site to be kept in public ownership.

With around 14,000 families on the Islington waiting list, we argued the land should be used to build hundreds of council homes alongside community facilities and green space. A petition signed by 6,000 people called on the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, to buy the site. Instead, he loaned £42 million of Londoners' money to Peabody Housing Association (who already have assets of £6.3 billion!) to buy Holloway from the Ministry of Justice for £81.5 million.

During the campaign, Islington Council issued a planning guide for Holloway Prison. It requires any developer to provide at least 50% "genuinely affordable" (35% social rents, 15% shared ownership or London living rent) housing on the site alongside a building offering services for women, with the new development to be sensitive to environmental issues.

When announcing the loan to Peabody, Sadiq Khan said that 1,000 new homes will be built on the site, with 600 of them to be "affordable". We also note Peabody's

commitment to a minimum of 60% affordable housing provision.

But we're very concerned that these pledges allow too many loop-holes for developers. Peabody are talking about completely razing the site, without any consideration of important bio-diversity mature trees. Their track-record on providing homes for social rent is very patchy.

Two-thirds of the homes they build each year are actually for the private market and their "affordable" rents are significantly more expensive than council rents. Their tenants complain about poor services and they regularly sell homes intended for social rent to property speculators. They've also been involved in developments where the children of social housing tenants have been denied access to playgrounds.

We need to keep a careful eye on Peabody, particularly because it looks like they're trying to rush through a planning application without giving local people a proper opportunity to comment.

That's why we're launching a "Charter for Holloway Prison site".

Support the CHARTER for Holloway Prison site

- The terms of the loan from the Mayor of London to be made public.
- A clear commitment from Peabody to consult at every stage and provide detailed plans of their proposals — with local residents and community groups to be represented in all discussions and on working groups to have a formal role in governance of the project.
- All 600 affordable homes to be let at Islington Council social rent levels with permanent tenancies and no hidden "service charges".
- No "poor doors", separate play areas or segregated space.
- A bespoke woman's building.
- Commit to compliance with the Construction Charter.
- The development to be environmentally responsible (eg. recycling materials, re-using buildings where possible, protecting trees) and all new homes to be to the highest energy efficient standards, including renewable energy systems.

I support the Charter for Holloway Prison site development

Name:

Address:

Email:

Return to Islington Homes for All, PO Box 33519, London, E2 9WW

GLOBAL WARMING — WHAT THE SCIENTISTS SAY

Glaciers are melting, sea levels are rising, cloud forests are dying, and wildlife is scrambling to keep pace. It has become clear that humans have caused most of the past century's warming by releasing heat-trapping gases as we power our modern lives. Called greenhouse gases, their levels are higher now than at any time in the last 800,000 years.

We often call the result global warming, but it is causing a set of changes to the Earth's climate, or long-term weather patterns, that varies from place to place. While many people think of global warming and climate change as synonyms, scientists use "climate change" when describing the complex shifts now affecting our planet's weather and climate systems—in part because some areas actually get cooler in the short term.

Climate change encompasses not only rising average temperatures but also extreme weather events, shifting wildlife populations and habitats, rising seas, and a range of other impacts. All of those changes are emerging as humans continue to add heat-trapping greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, changing the rhythms of climate that all living things have come to rely on.

- An excerpt from an article in National Geographic

GENERATIONS UNITED — SUPPORT THE SCHOOL CHILDREN AND STUDENTS TAKING A STAND TO DEFEND THE PLANET

On Friday 20 September the school children and students will have a strike day to urgently raise the crisis of global warming. On Thursday 19 September, Islington Pensioners Forum has a meeting in the Town Hall (10:30am), and we are proposing to have our "Defend the Planet" banner ready and to display it outside the Town Hall following our meeting in solidarity with the young generation — our grandchildren. PLEASE MAKE SURE TO COME ALONG TO TAKE PART

A member asked about vaccines, and particularly the shingles vaccine. . . . so I thought I would share my experience:

When I was in my 30s, my three children had chicken pox, and I can remember even now being really ill when I also caught it. Then one day when I was in my early 60s some tiny blisters appeared on my temples and I had difficulty keeping food and drink in my mouth when a kind of slight paralysis set in. At the A&E department this was diagnosed as the onset of shingles, and after a week-long course of seroids I was back to normal, but there was no guarantee that I would not develop shingles again.

However, when I was 78 my GP recommended the shingles vaccine, which I gladly accepted. This is given as a single injection into the upper arm, and you only need to have it once (at any time of the year). It is expected to reduce your risk of getting shingles and if you do go on to have the disease, your symptoms may be milder and the illness shorter. You are eligible aged 70-78 so check it out with your GP.

Dot Gibson

Extinction Rebellion (XR), the climate change global emergency campaign, will be holding a day of action on 7th October. We were handed a leaflet by a group of campaigners on the Holloway Road on which we saw that there is an Islington XR group, and we propose to invite a speaker to a Forum meeting. In the meantime, here is the statement from their leaflet:

The UN has warned us that if we do not act immediately, there will be global food shortages, mass starvation and social collapse across the world. This is an emergency and we need to ACT NOW. We have three demands in the UK:

- The government must tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency, working with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change.
- The government must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025.
- The government must create and be held by the decisions of a Citizens' Assembly on climate and ecological justice.

INFORMATION

Please do not hesitate to send us items of news or opinions for publication in our Newsletter. Send to address on front of Newsletter.

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 pm in the IPF Hall, address above
Thursday 19th September	10.30 am Forum at Islington Town Hall. Speaker GLA Cllr. Jennette Arnold also Bernard Manson, Drayton Park School

**Claude Moraes MEP invited to speak in October or November on: "Brexit – where we are and what next?"
We propose to invite a speaker from Extinction Rebellion at the meeting when Claude Moraes cannot speak**

We are advertising for an outings organiser

We cancelled our garden party on Saturday 17th August because the weather forecast said "rain and wind all day". Certainly it was pouring with rain and there was a stiff wind throughout Friday, and so putting the gazebos up would have been difficult, if not impossible for us. Anyway the weather on Saturday wasn't as forecast and so, we can only say sorry for the cancellation. We had planned a visit to the "Living Under One Sun" garden and Cafe Connect in Downs Lane Park, Haringey on Thursday 22nd August, but when I went there to check it out, I found that it was closed until 29th August, and so we spent the afternoon in the Highbury

View garden instead. The weather was lovely; we had sandwiches and scones with jam and cream; lots of talking and sharing experiences. So in the end we had a good time.

Hopefully our outings will be properly arranged soon, because we are advertising for an outings organiser to join Bronwen, our co-ordinator so that we can have properly organised outings of all sorts throughout the year.

Although I don't think that we can expect anybody to be sure of the weather!

Dot Gibson

**TA-RA-RA BOOM-
DE-AY!**

Music Hall in Islington

Monday to Saturday

10 am to 5 pm

to 22nd October 2019

(closed Wednesday & Sunday)

ISLINGTON MUSEUM

245 St John Street,

London, EC1V 4NB

NEW MEMBER RENEWING SUB

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)