



Charity No: 1043081

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

December 2019 Newsletter

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



There is no better way to wish you all a happy Christmas and to look forward to the New Year than to show here the sincerity and urgent appeal in the eyes of Swedish schoolgirl, Greta Thunberg.

Her wake-up call and her actions to save the planet have reverberated around the world.

As the older generation, we must stand up and be counted to take up Greta's call and ensure that the voice of the young is not only heard but acted upon. We say: *Generations unite to save the planet!*

There is no time to lose!

Many, many thanks for the beautiful poinsettia (picture here) and the chocolates (already eaten I'm afraid!) given to me at the Forum meeting on 21st November as thanks for my time as the Forum's secretary. I am proud to have been secretary of IPF — "The voice of Islington's older community", and I see it as a sign of IPF's strength that we can have new officers to carry us forward and bring new ideas and methods to our organisation. The main thing is that we have a team to enable continuity and renewal. As I said at the meeting. I'm not going anywhere soon and will continue as editor of the monthly newsletter.

Lots of love, Dot



A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

I am proud to have represented IPF at the annual wreath-laying ceremony on 10th November at the war memorial on Islington Green.

Thoughts of all those young men and women who lost their lives in war must make us consider what we are doing for today's and tomorrow's young people, and this means listening to them and joining them to build a world without war and want. So I am pleased that we have the picture of Greta Thunberg on the front page of this newsletter.

This is the last newsletter of the year, and so I think it is appropriate that we remind ourselves of our stand on climate change during 2019.

At our February meeting we unanimously welcomed the magnificent stand of 15,000 children and teenagers who took time out of school to demonstrate their concerns about climate change and we congratulated the parents and teachers who supported them

We explained how encouraged we were to read the article in *Islington Tribune* by Nathalie Sowden, the local school student who took part in the London demonstration. She said that she would not be able to look her children in the eyes if she sat back and did nothing and that she felt part of "an amazing new generation that is ready to take on the burden of overcoming the challenges passed down to them".

As I write we are in the last two weeks before the general election and I am reminded of the discussion I had with Nathalie Sowden (published in *Islington Tribune*) following that school strike.

Unity in action based on social conscience is a formidable force for change, but those school children and students will not have a vote in the general election. It is therefore up to us to base our vote on social conscience — so that we can look our younger generation in the eye!

Older People's Activities Hub

We owe everybody an apology for the length of time it is taking to get our Older People's Activities Hub up and running. However, we can now report that production of this has been taken on by a young and enthusiastic IT man who, in sorting out the glitches, will ensure that we have a lively and accessible web-site giving the venues, dates and times of all the activities on offer to older people in Islington.

Once this is up and running, we will advertise it widely, including letting all the community centres, GP surgeries and tenants and residents associations know that it is available, especially for lonely and vulnerable older people. We will keep you fully informed.



The first film afternoon will be on either 15th or 29th January (we will have a full advert in the January newsletter) and the first three shows will be Ken Loach films, starting with "I Daniel Blake".

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Islington Pensioners Forum officers and committee 2019-2020

Chair: **Bob Collins,**

Secretary/Treasurer: **Eric Hill,**

Assistant Secretary, **Annette Thomas,**

Committee: **Luke Daniels, Dot Gibson, Irma Gomez, Eula Harrison, Joyce Herron, Alice Kilroy, David Milner, Eddie Zissler, Pam Zinkin**

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Our Forum discusses the current situation in our NHS

At our November Forum meeting Tony O’Sullivan, paediatrician and vice chair of Keep Our NHS Public, led a panel discussion (with Pam Zinkin and Frances Bradley) on the current situation in our National Health Service.

There are one third fewer beds in the NHS than in Germany and there is 50 per cent more staff in Germany than in the NHS.

He explained that there are two main ways in which the NHS is under attack: underfunding and privatisation; In general, we are being asked — remain or leave the EU — to have the US health system or the EU countries’ system which is closer to our NHS.

There have been bits and pieces of privatisation since the 1980s, and more recently the Coalition government had used the banking crisis to underfund the NHS and other services. The end result is that the NHS is £30 billion a year under-funded and that is why there are big patient waiting lists and staff shortages etc.

Targets in Accident and Emergency are not met, cancer treatment targets are down, 18 per cent of NHS budgets goes to private companies, e.g. over £1 million to Virgin.

Trusts are sending patients to private hospitals to remove them from waiting lists.... so private companies

get 30 per cent of their income from the NHS.

Boris Johnson’s statements that a government led by him would protect our NHS must be questioned — especially as there have already been discussions with Trump’s US about future contracts.

The austerity policy, homelessness and the “hostile environment” policies of the government have meant that 600,000 people are excluded from care.

ooooOoooo

The main questions from members In the Q&A session were on trade deals (being discussed in the general election campaign).

The panel explained that the government is in control of NHS contracts, which are subject to competition on the open market. 7.1 per cent (£10 billion) goes to private companies, e.g. Boots dealing with hearing aids.

Also companies can sue the NHS, e.g. Virgin sued the NHS for £2 million; and Ryhurst (a subsidiary of Rydon, the company involved in the cladding which exacerbated the Grenfell Tower fire) is suing Whittington Hospital over cancellation of a building contract (see below)

Trade deals set up parameters for trading, i.e. the US can refuse the trade proposals of the UK, if the UK refuses the trade proposals of the US — e.g. an increase in the cost of pharmaceuticals.

PAM ZINKIN SAYS. in the general election discussion

- 1. When they say “our NHS is not for sale” it may be true since nobody wants to buy the whole of the NHS. It is too big, too complicated and employs too many people.**
- 2. But parts of it, the profitable parts, are already being privatised. (£18 billion so far).**
- 3. Saying “free at the point of need” is not enough. Even private medical insurance can say this. One pays before and after. Paying medical bills is the main reason for people becoming bankrupt in the US.**
- 4. Our NHS must be publicly owned, publicly financed and above all publicly accountable.**

Defend Whittington Hospital Coalition

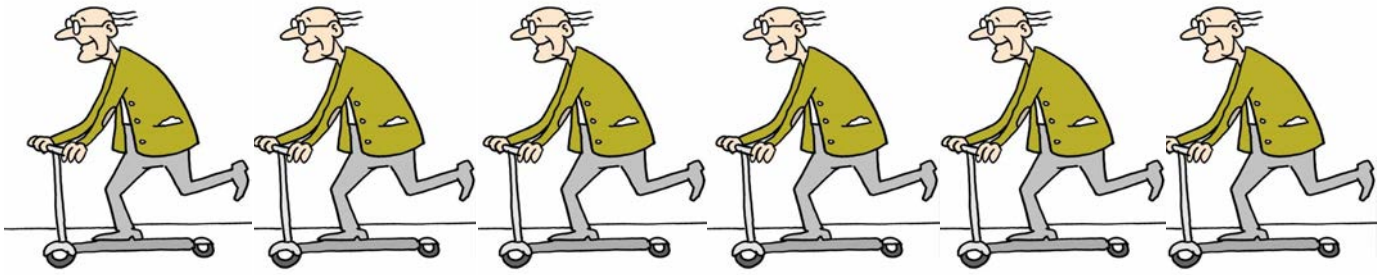
Whittington Health (the hospital plus its outpatient community health services) has been instructed to redevelop its estate of 49 properties. The Boris Johnson government refuses to fund NHS redevelopment, telling hospitals to sell off their land and buildings. (The Whittington is not one of the 40 hospitals promised help by the Boris Johnson government in the general election campaign)

The Whittington Board procured Ryhurst, a subsidiary of Rydon (the Grenfell Tower refurbishment contractor) to manage and initially provide capital for this project — Ryhurst to be paid out of the profits from the land sell-off.

However the Defend Whittington Hospital Coalition campaigned against this, supported by local MPs Jeremy Corbyn, Catherine West and Emily Thornberry, and the Whittington Board withdrew the procurement offer. Now Rydon is suing the hospital for the NHS moneys, claiming a break of contract.

The case is being heard in the Royal Courts of Justice, the Strand, on Monday 9th December and the Defend Whittington Hospital Coalition is calling a protest demonstration outside the court at 9 a.m.

LAY OFF OUR HOSPITAL AND OUR NHS MONEY!



A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY? FATHER CHRISTMAS LEFT A MOBILITY SCOOTER FOR HIS GRANDSON!

**NATIONAL PENSIONERS' CONVENTION
IN SOUTHPORT THIS YEAR!**

Monday 1st to Friday 5th June 2020

£250.00

Return journey by coach to Scarisbrook Hotel for bed, breakfast and evening meal plus evening entertainment.

This hotel is part of Britannia Hotels, the same as the Metropole, Blackpool which we were in last year.

Coming to the Pensioners' Convention (previously "Parliament") is always a good chance to get to know each other and meet pensioners from all round the country.

It will have the same format with expert speakers and discussion on the main issues affecting pensioners; the evening social will take place on Wednesday 3rd June so bring your dancing shoes!



BOOKING FORM

FOR 2020 NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION IN SOUTHPORT:

Monday 1st to Friday 5th June

Name: Telephone:

Address:

Email:

Sharing a room would be helpful and so please tick one of the following:

Single room:..... Share double bed:..... Share twin-bed room:.....

Enclosed: £10 deposit (cheques payable to IPF)

Post to: Dot Gibson, PENSIONERS' CONVENTION, IPF OFFICE,
1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN

When I'm 75

To the tune of the Beatles' "When I'm 64")

A song in the campaign against the means-testing of the free TV licence for over 75 year-olds after the government handed this universal benefit over to the BBC. . . .

When I get older, finishing work, many years from now
Will I draw my pension around 75?
A birthday treat if I'm still alive.
If I decide to watch the TV, do I bolt the door?
Will you still fleece me to watch my TV
When I'm 75?

You'll get old soon too
And if you don't stand by me
Who will stand by you?

Politicians thought it a ruse, free TV is gone,
Older population won't be pushed to one side,
Our generation won't be took for a ride

Doing campaigning, know where it leads
Stops you in your stride
Will you still fleece me to watch my TV
Now I'm 75?

Every granny wants to watch the telly sometimes every night
Let me make it clear,
Don't make us scrimp and save
To watch these programmes on TV
The Beeb, Channel Four and Dave

Send me to prison, give me a fine
If that's what you want to do
Indicate precisely that you want us to pay
Broke or lonely, what do you say?

Pension credit — won't fill in the form
So we will be deprived
Will you still fleece me to watch my TV
When I'm 75

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
16th January 2020	10.30 a.m. Forum Meeting in Islington Town Hall

There is no Forum meeting in December. We will set out the times and place for the “End the Winter Blues“ party in our January newsletter.

A new government must act swiftly on the winter death rate among pensioners

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) is calling upon the next government to respond to figures released on 27th November that show that excess winter mortality rates in 2018 to 2019 reached 23,200 in all English regions and Wales.

Excess winter mortality rates continue to be higher in females compared with males, with the figure highest in females aged 90 years and over. Respiratory diseases, such as pneumonia, remain the leading cause of death.

Today’s figures are proof that older people struggle with poor housing, rising fuel costs, and a basic state pension that is inadequate and bottom of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) league table.

Pensioner poverty is increasing with 2 million pensioners living in poverty and one in three older people living in homes with inadequate heating or insulation making their homes more difficult to heat or keep warm.

Jan Shortt NPC General Secretary said: “The next government must make a commitment to end fuel poverty and ensure that energy companies do not abuse the implementation of the next cap on prices.

The key to tackling winter deaths is to make sure older people have got a well-insulated, warm home and the income needed to pay the fuel bills. This is a basic requirement of what a decent society should do.

We need the next government to roll out a more effective programme to insulate homes, building more suitable properties for older people and raising the winter fuel allowance in line with inflationary costs of energy.”



NPC London Region demo at Downing Street

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)