



Charity No: 1043081

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

January 2020 Newsletter

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

Best wishes for 2020

Tell Johnson: "A promise is a promise!"

There is no point in saying that older people as well as other generations do not have a fight on their hands in 2020. Take just one problem: frail elderly and young people needing care, as well as their families are crying out for improvement in the care services.

Do you all remember that during the general election campaign Boris Johnson said that under a government led by him, people would not be forced to sell their homes to pay for care?

For that to be the case, we need a National Care Service free at the point of use, funded, as is the NHS, from general taxation; and that means getting rid of means-testing, spreading the cost throughout society and ensuring that local authorities have sufficient funds to provide this care.

So we are called upon to test Prime Minister Johnson — a promise is a promise! We will "take up the cudgels" for this policy right from the outset of this new year and this new government.

Institute for Government explanation on the current delivery of adult social care — see page 3

**"I Daniel Blake" a Ken Loach Film
showing Wednesday 29 January (free)**

**Refreshments at 2.00 pm
Film starts at 2.15 pm**

**IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN — off Upper Street,
next to Screen on the Green cinema — Buses: 4, 19, 30, 43 to Islington Green (Upper Street)
38, 56, 73. 341. 476 to Islington Green (Essex Road)**

SEE BACK PAGE FOR MORE INFO ABOUT THE FILM

HOW CAN WE NOW DOUBT GLOBAL WARMING?

Our December newsletter had a picture of Greta Thunberg on the front page and we said: "As an 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!



A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

So — 2020! I wish you all, members and supporters, a happy new year, and hope that you were able to have a restful and enjoyable Christmas.

It is difficult to know what we can expect following the general election. It seems that many of the new government's promises were forced on them by the obvious and wide hostility to austerity, and their desire to woo voters to "get Brexit done".

However, trying to understand what "get Brexit done" means is like trying to catch smoke in your bare hands! Also, as a result of ending up with a big Parliamentary majority, Prime Minister Johnson was able to get legislation through Parliament ensuring that Brexit will happen at the end of this year — deal or no deal.

Most of us consider that the fate of our NHS is the biggest worry. It is worth repeating what Pam Zinkin pointed out in the December newsletter:

"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 complicated and employs too many people. But parts of it, the profitable parts, are already privatised (£18 billion so far). Saying 'free at the point of need' is

not enough. Even private insurance can say this. One pays before and after. Paying medical bills is the main reason for people becoming bankrupt in the US. Our NHS must be publicly owned, publicly financed and publicly accountable."

In an on-line article Harry Smith, a 91-year-old RAF veteran (in October 2014) explained:

"At the beginning of my life, affordable health care was out of reach for much of the population. A doctor's visit could cost the equivalent of half a week's wages, so most people relied on good fortune rather than medical advice to see them safely through an illness. But luck and guile went only so far and many lives were snatched away before they had a chance to start. The wages of the ordinary worker were at a mere subsistence level and therefore medicine or simple rest was out of the question for many people."

So I want to start this year by underlining Pam's statement. Let's make it our New Year resolution —

**OUR NHS MUST BE PUBLICLY OWNED,
PUBLICLY FINANCED AND PUBLICLY
ACCOUNTABLE.**

DEFEND WHITTINGTON HOSPITAL COALITION AT THE ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE

Defend Whittington Hospital Coalition were joined by the Construction Safety Campaign outside the Royal Courts of Justice on 9 December at the first court hearing of Ryhurst v Whittington Hospital. The company (a subsidiary of Rydon — the Grenfell Tower refurbishment contractor) is suing the hospital for NHS moneys, claiming a break of contract. The Whittington Board had procured Ry-



hurst to manage and initially provide capital for re-development — to be repaid from profits from the sell-off of hospital land.

However the Board withdrew the procurement offer after the Whittington Hospital Coalition campaigned against it, and

they were supported by local MPs: Jeremy Corbyn, Emily Thornberry and Catherine West. The case continues . . .

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**

The Institute for Government says that adult social care is a national as well as a local responsibility

Adult social care in England – the provision of support and personal care (as opposed to treatment) to meet needs arising from illness, disability or old age – is either paid for publicly or privately, or provided voluntarily, typically by family and friends.

The National Audit Office (NAO) estimates that most social care is unpaid and provided by friends and family, equating to £62–103 billion (bn), followed by publicly funded care (£22bn) and self-funded care (£11bn).

[Around 40,000 people, as self-funders, are forced to sell their homes each year to pay for social care — also many family members are forced to give up work to become carers — Ed.]

Local authorities have a legal duty to fund care for those who pass centrally-set needs and means tests *[i.e. if you have £23,250 in savings, including the value of your home, you must pay the full cost of your care— Ed.]*

Local authorities commission care services for any

adults who meet the requirement of the tests. These services are often delivered by the private and charitable sectors, though some local authorities also provide care services directly themselves. Local authority spending differs between authorities based on the amount of money they have, and their local priorities.

Though adult social care is delivered and mainly funded locally, decisions by central government strongly shape how much money local authorities have to do this – as well as what they are obliged to spend it on.

Demand for publicly funded adult social care is likely to continue rising faster than the money local authorities have to spend on it. Unless local authorities can make further efficiencies, the government will either have to spend more or accept that local authorities will have to reduce the quality of, or access to, care.

This makes adult social care a national as well as a local responsibility.

We ask Prime Minister Johnson: are you going to keep your promise, that: “nobody will need to sell their home to pay for care”? — Ed.

THERE IS A CRISIS IN HEALTH AND CARE

under-funded — under-staffed — over-worked

On Monday 30th December, Maurice, who lives at Highbury View (sheltered housing) arrived home in the middle of the afternoon and found an ambulance parked outside. Inside the scheme two hospital transport staff from Whittington hospital were trying to “deliver” Mary to her flat.

Maurice questioned the Whittington drivers: Mary is suffering dementia and is physically frail — had anybody been told that she was coming home? Was her flat warm? Was there any food for her? If so who was going to prepare it for her?

The answer was that Mary had been discharged by the hospital and the drivers’ only instructions were to transport her and make sure that she is safely taken into her home.

The sheltered housing manager was away but the scheme qualifies as sheltered if it is registered with Islington’s Link service.

After some discussion, the ambulance staff contacted the hospital by ‘phone and Mary was taken back. Hower later that same evening Mary’s discharge was confirmed and she was again driven home and this time she was taken into her flat — Maurice presumes that Islington Link and the care

company were informed, for a carer came to her, but on the morning of 31st December Mary was vomiting. The emergency services were called and, after all the usual health checks, she was taken back to hospital. Mary’s regular carer said that she had been in hospital for several days three times in five weeks.

This is not a unique situation — THERE IS A CRISIS IN HEALTH AND CARE! The NHS is under-funded, under-staffed and overworked — local council services are under-funded, under-staffed and overworked — older people like Mary cannot fend for themselves. Mary has no family.

Hospital staff are already at “the end of their tether” — on top of everything else, the care crisis is creating impossible situations.’

All these problems were raised in the general election campaign and for years before — now we must continue to ring all the alarm bells more and more urgently. It is not right that frail elderly and disabled young people are left to the mercies of governments which only promise ANOTHER commission of inquiry, ANOTHER Green Paper, ANOTHER cross-party discussion!

***Saturday
1st February
is National Dignity
Action Day — join
our campaign stall
from 12 pm to 1pm
at Angel Station***

Pam Zinkin: “Happy New Year, 2020!

Parliamentary scrutiny of trade deals may be a line of defence in protecting the NHS

We now have a new government with a majority in parliament which means that they can do whatever they want there.

This makes us, the people, even more important as we must try to make sure they keep the promise not to sell our precious NHS.

Johnson promised that the NHS would be a priority but we must watch carefully what he means. I have said before nobody will buy the whole NHS but parts of it are already privatised and more are threatened.

NHS hospitals can now be run by the private sector. The private sector has been building and providing support services under the Public Private Partnerships, yet we are now seeing private health corporations running hospitals for the NHS, either as new facilities or where an NHS trust has been 'failing'.

Services such as hearing testing and provision are almost all privately provided but they are still seen as NHS, because they use the NHS logo. So keep a look-out.

It is likely that the NHS (and services such as public health) will be included in future trade deals in obscure ways. So parliamentary scrutiny of forthcoming UK deals may be a line of defence in protecting the NHS.

Caroline Lucas MP of the Green Party has proposed an amendment to the Bill that aims to ensure that there is meaningful:

- Oversight and vote on the mandate before negotiations
- Transparency during negotiations
- Public consultation and sustainability impact assessment

There's no guarantee that her amendment will be agreed so it is even more important that we do whatever we can, however small it seems, to insist on being heard.

Greta Thurnberg, cited in last month's newsletter, said nobody is too small not to make a difference. I would add nobody is too old not to make a difference.

Let's ensure that we have a successful 2020 National Pensioners Convention. There are so many important issues for older people that are “in limbo” — together in the National Pensioners Convention we can stand up for justice and basic rights.

BOOKING FORM

FOR 2020 NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION IN SOUTHPORT:

Monday 1st to Friday 5th June

£250

Name: **Telephone:**

Address:

Email:

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

Single room:..... Share double bed room 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**

DIALOGUE IN THE DARK

Dialogue in the Dark is the name of an unusual exhibition currently at SPACES, 129-131 Mare Street, Hackney, which I visited on 3rd January at a get-together for Grace, my granddaughter's twenty-sixth birthday. Six of us — her Mum and Dad, her brother and partner plus Grace and me were joined by two other visitors. It was not so much visiting, but experiencing this exhibition.

The eight of us, armed only with a blind person's stick, travelled through the rooms (three I think) in pitch-black dark! Yes — we could not see a thing!

Accompanied by a blind guide who we can hear and sometimes touch, but cannot see, we use our sticks to feel our way and the voice of the guide gives us some bearings. The journey takes an hour, during which we hear background sounds and we are encouraged to speak to each other to get some idea of where they are in relation to where we are. But still we bump into each other and clutch at sleeves and hands.

First is the park where we feel with our feet and our stick the gravel pathway, the grassy areas, and we feel with our hands, the trees :(I bump into one), shrubs, park bench (I sit on this), railings, a wall and we hear a dog barking.

Then over a bridge. where we can feel a breeze on our faces and on to a road with traffic noises. We feel a bus stop and a bus comes along. The voice of the friendly bus driver tells us that he will wait so that we can all get on. The engine starts up and after a short journey we

get off, painfully slowly through the back door.

We have arrived at a market, but we must cross a busy road! Traffic is zooming past. Eventually we all get over the road and go into the market, where somebody says "That's a pineapple!" and then all of us feel the fruit, veg, clothes, shoes, books etc. on the market stalls.

Our last port of call is a cafe. One of us opens the door and others follow, but not all of us, so somebody else has to find the door and the rest follow. We are greeted by the voice of a man selling refreshments. There is the soft sound of music in the background. After we have bought what we want, i.e. tea, water, crisps, using money we cannot see and receiving change we cannot see from the man we cannot see, we make our way to an "invisible" large table with a bench on both sides.

Then we all sit together to have our refreshments, but it has not been so easy to access the table and have the confidence to put our drinks on it or to find a way of squeezing between the table and the bench to sit down and move along so that others can also sit down.

We couldn't believe that our hour was up. It was an incredible and unforgettable experience. We all declared that we will be much more thoughtful when we offer help to a blind person in future.

I thought: "Trust Grace to think of something so unusual for her birthday". But I am the proud grandmother of an NHS Occupational Therapist — so what else should I expect from her!

Dot Gibson

First World War Factory Girls and Women's Football

In 1915, when Dick, Kerr & Co. Ltd. changed from a trams to a munitions manufacturer and the men were taken off to war, the intake of women workers was greatly increased.

In 1917 the factory set up a ladies' football team to raise money through charity matches for the military hospital in Preston, but the company had no idea that this group of working girls would take the country by storm.

Their first match was on Christmas day; an astonishing 10,000 spectators turned up at Preston North End. The team beat the Coulthards Foundry team, raising £600 for the hospital (£50,000 in today's money).

The munitions factory girls became the centre of national attention. On Boxing Day 1921, they drew the biggest crowd ever seen at a women's club match. when they played St. Helens at Goodison Park. Around 53,000 spectators turned up, and 14,000 fans were left standing outside the stadium.

By 1921 their popularity was at its height — they were being booked to play an average of two games a week

across the country — over 60 games in that year alone, and these factory girls all remained working full time!

But the heady years of the team were not to last — claiming that they'd received complaints about women playing football, the FA took the decision on 5th December 1921 to ban women from using league grounds, excluding them to amateur pitches and poorly-developed facilities.

Amid claims that football was a dangerous game for females (some doctors decided that it could affect their fertility) the FA said: "The Council feel impelled to express their strong opinion that the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and ought not to be encouraged". But the decision was more about the FA's decision to control the flows of money in football — to make a buck on ticket admissions instead of giving proceeds to charity.

The ban wasn't lifted until 1969, but it was only in 2019 that women's football had its monumental success.

Maybe the FA now sees it as a money-maker?

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 — BUT: WEDNESDAY 29 JANUARY —	1 pm in IPF Hall, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place N1 0RN 2 pm refreshments 2.15 FILM (see front page and below)
IT and Smart Phones on alternate Wednesdays	3.30 pm in the IPF Hall, address above
Thursday 16th January 2020	10.30 a.m. Forum Meeting in Islington Town Hall
Thursday 27th February	End the Winter Blues Party (SEE BELOW)

IPF Film Club starts on Wednesday 29 February with: “I, Daniel Blake”

I, Daniel Blake, directed by Ken Loach, for which he was awarded a Palme D’Or, is the first film in our new Free Film Club — refreshments also provided (**see above and front page for details**).

On one level it is about a faceless benefits bureaucracy stripping claimants of their humanity by reducing them to mere numbers. The film shows an increasingly frustrated Daniel trying to cope with this bureaucracy. He is a skilled carpenter, but unemployed and he is not skilled at IT — so accessing and filling in the forms is really difficult.

On another level the film is a celebration of the decency and kinship of (extra)ordinary people who look out for each other when the state abandons them. For all its raw anger and the impersonal mistreatment of a single mother and an ailing widower in depressed but resilient Newcastle, the film is often surprisingly funny, and reveals so much that is moving in the unbreakable bonds of so-called “broken Britain”. Dave Johns and Hayley Squires are brilliant in this film.

END THE WINTER BLUES PARTY **Thursday 27th February** **1—3 pm**

Hopefully this will take place in the Town Hall, but we will definitely advertise the venue in the next issue of the Newsletter

This is a good time to invite friends and neighbours along to introduce them to our Forum.

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)