



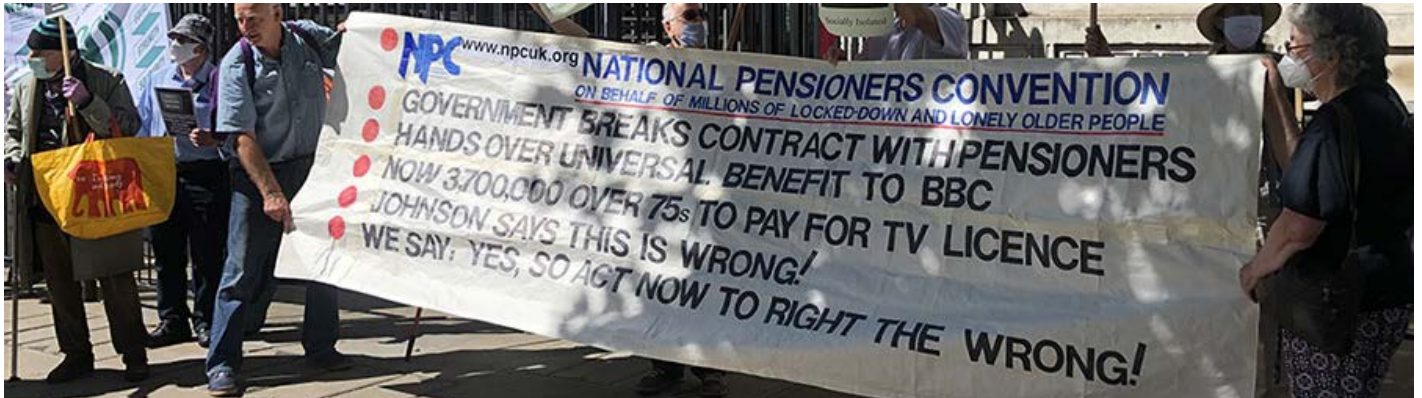
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ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM The voice of Islington's older community August 2020 Newsletter

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Office closed during the lockdown



Members of the NPC London protesting at Downing Street about the TV licence universal benefit (see page 2)

Pam Zinkin says: "I am more concerned than I have ever been about the safety of our NHS"

Since its inception in 1948 our NHS has been attacked.

Then some doctors were worried that a good NHS would not only be used by the poor but if it was as good as it seemed it was going to be, it would be used as well by their better-off middle class private patients.

They would no longer be the source of extra income. So the British Medical Association (BMA) opposed it. In the end Aneurin Bevan won the doctors over...or rather bribed them. When asked how he had done it he famously said "I stuffed their mouths with gold". That was good NHS salaries and doctors could have some private practice. In their contracts 9/11 of their time was for the NHS and 2/11 for private practice.

The long term aim of those opposed to the NHS is to turn it into a medical insurance company, US style. And in spite of promises and denials it will be part of any trade deal with the USA as long as Trump is president and Johnson is our prime minister with unelected Cummings as his chief adviser.

Since the Health and Social Care Act in 2012, the NHS in England has been forced to outsource more services to private companies. The Government has accelerated its aggressive outsourcing to private firms during the COVID-19 pandemic. Significant contracts have been given to companies to procure and store personal protective equipment, manage national drive-in testing centres and super-labs and build the COVID-19 data store.

Capita and Serco were given the tasks of recruiting and overseeing the return of NHS health workers and running the contact-tracing programme, respectively.

These firms are no strangers to the health service, and certainly have notable failures. Capita was responsible for wrongly archiving 160,000 GP records in 2018, and Serco admitted in 2012 that it presented false data to the NHS 252 times on the performance of its out-of-hours GP service in Cornwall – just two examples of how these firms have performed when given responsibility for NHS services. Still this government wants to fragment and privatise.

Our NHS should be publicly provided and publicly accountable, Fully funded through government investment and progressive taxation, free at the point of need and fully available to everyone living in this country

At the time of writing it is rumoured that the government intends to fund social care through a separate tax of the over 40s. I don't have details but such a tax undermines the basic principles of shared risk. Shared risk is the opposite of how most insurance companies provide — that is individual risk.

They calculate premiums based on individual characteristics. it is complicated and expensive to calculate — **whereas shared risk means that we all pay what we can to cover the health and social needs of all of us.**

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Hallo everybody! I hope that you are all keeping well and surviving the lockdown.

The long and well-supported campaign opposing the May government's decision to hand over to the BBC the responsibility for the universal benefit of a free TV licence to those over 75 has ended. Although Prime Minister Johnson said this is wrong — he would do nothing to stop it. And the BBC has decided on a means-tested system starting on 1st August.

It means that about 5 million people in the UK over the age of 75 are losing their automatic right to a free TV licence — of these, 3.7 million will have to pay and those receiving Pension Credit will continue to get it free

TV Licensing says that you do not have to do anything until it contacts you. The fee is £157.50 a year, payable as a lump sum annually or in weekly, fortnightly or monthly instalments at no extra cost.

You can make payments on line with your debit or

credit card at tvlicensing.co.uk or call the 24/7 payment line on **0300 555 0298**.

To qualify for a free TV licence, you need to be in receipt of Pension Credit (a benefit for people who have reached the state retirement age, and are on a low income). But lots of people fail to apply – it is estimated that of the 1.5 million over-75s eligible for Pension Credit, about a third do not **receive it**. AgeUK.org.uk has a useful online guide to pension credit, or you can call the pension credit claim line on **0800 99 1234**.

Pension credit not only entitles you to a free TV licence, it may qualify you for help with housing costs and council tax, automatically qualifies you for the cold weather payment and entitles you to claim funeral payments.

PS: The BBC has awarded the “collection” contract to private company Capita to follow up those who should pay for their licence, but have not done so.

[Also from our Chair, Bob Collins:](#) The National Pensioners Convention staged protests across the UK on 30th and 31st July in an 11th hour bid to save the free TV licence for all over 75-year-olds. But come 1st August and only those over 75s receiving Pension Credit are eligible for the free TV licence, and there are moves to “next business” with letters and leaflets explaining how to pay, who is eligible and how to apply for Pension Credit. . . . OK we need to know that, and see the information above but importantly: We must continue to stand up against the continuous drive to replace the welfare state system — *everybody paying what they can for our services, giving everybody the right to receive these services* — with the hated Victorian means-testing. . . . Below is the demo leaflet:

3.7 million UK pensioners over 75 will have to pay for their TV licence from 1st August as the BBC's decision to means-test this benefit is enacted, meaning that only over 75s who are on Pension Credit will get the free TV licence..

Boris Johnson says this is wrong! So why doesn't he act to stop it? It was the Tory government under Theresa May that included responsibility for this Universal Benefit in the BBC's contract. If he really thinks it is wrong, Johnson could revoke this decision! But he has completely ignored Age UK's petition with nearly 700,000 signatures.

Right now, during this pandemic, it has become increasingly clear that the TV gives vulnerable lonely people a window on the world – not only is it a companion, but programmes are something to look forward to, to break the monotony, to revive memories and show what's new.

We are living longer, but many, especially in poor

areas, spend more years with a disability. Ending the free TV licence to all over 75 year-olds is an act of cruelty!

But it is more than that. There is a legal question. The UK state pension remains amongst the least adequate in Europe, with the risk of poverty among older people ranked fourth out of 27 EU countries. However, rather than increase the basic state pension, successive governments have brought in universal benefits, i.e. free bus travel, winter fuel payments, free prescriptions for over 60s, eye tests, and free TV licences for over 75s.

Now that the government has broken its contract with pensioners on the free TV licence, will it seek to take this further – to other universal benefits?

The BBC has been landed with responsibility for the free TV licence, so what's to stop government ending concessionary travel and telling the NHS to make pensioners pay for prescriptions?

Another offshore currency & property trading company lands lucrative government “coronavirus contract”

Ayanda Capital, a London-based family office was awarded a £252.5m contract to supply the government with personal protective equipment (PPE) at the height of the coronavirus crisis.

Details regarding the contract were published at the end of June on the EU’s Tenders Electronic Daily website, which states only one tender for the contract was submitted.

Also, the listing was highlighted in a series of tweets by Jo Maugham QC, director of the Good Law Project, which is seeking a judicial review of a £108m PPE contract given to Sussex-based pest control firm PestFix, also awarded a government contract without going through the competitive tender process. (reported in our June/July Newsletter)

Owned by the Horlick family through a Mauritius-based holding company, Ayanda Capital agreed to provide an

undisclosed number of face masks to the Department of Health and Social Care by 29 April.

The company is headed by ex-Kleinwort Benson director Tim Horlick. The firm was incorporated in 2017 and formerly registered as Ayanda Trading until last September. Its website states it specialises in ‘currency trading, offshore property, private equity and trade financing’.

Asked by *Wealth Manager* what led the firm to get involved in supplying PPE and how many masks were requested in the contract, Ayanda chief operating officer Nathan Engelbrecht declined to provide specific answers “because the details of our contract are commercially confidential”. A spokesperson for the Department of Health and Social Care also declined to reveal how many masks were purchased through the contract.

Covid-19 by Eula Harrison

A cry went out throughout our land,
Stay at home and wash your hands.
A fearful invader has arrived.
Travelling far from a secretive land.
Where it did an awful wallow,
Destroying its inhabitants,
With many more to follow.
Leaving behind a land in fear,
This fearful entity Coronavirus.
Having taken hold of many other countries,
Leaving disaster in its wake.

Our government meet,
Discussions daily they repeat.
We are facing an enemy we don’t understand,
Stay at home, isolate and wash your hands.
Only underneath a microscope,

Can this virus be seen.
This fearful foe,
How can anyone know,
If it’s near to them or far?

The first warnings was for the elderly:
Stay indoors, isolate, wash your hands.
In them you hold your fate,
The lockdown is now for everyone.
We all have to learn,
How to be self-entertaining,
While isolating.

Whatever you do,
Keep connected,
Keep smiling.



In her poem, Eula says: “We all have to learn how to be self-entertaining, while isolating”. It would be good to hear from you if you and/or members of your family have any home-made item. poems, paintings etc. you would like to share with us? My granddaughter made paper flowers from “sticky note” pads. and I have been knitting clothes for a doll I got for a fiver on a market stall ages ago. Dot



From our GREEN correspondent: Frances Bradley

For many people COVID-19 has shone a light on the fragility of the relationship between human survival and the natural environment. It is now possible to find people across the political spectrum stating they do not wish the economic recovery to be built on fossil fuel consumption (for example major road building) simply because our reliance on burning fossil fuels is the major cause of our impending climate catastrophe.

Recent opinion polls indicate that only 7-9% of the UK population want to return to how life was before the pandemic, which points to a tremendous appetite for change.

A sustainable recovery from COVID-19 is one which creates worthwhile jobs, addresses inequality and is good for the planet. There are various movements campaigning for widespread, meaningful recovery, with social and environmental goals central to their mission.

Two major ones are Labour's Green New Deal — developed before the pandemic in response to inequality and the climate catastrophe — and Build Back Better, a grassroots response to the pandemic.

Build Back Better is aiming for mass mobilisation via community organising to shift public opinion and thereby pressurise politicians to change direction towards people-friendly policies, because political and economic business-as-usual has not worked for the vast majority of humankind or for the planet.

In their Summer Statement central government announced £2 billion worth of "green home grants" to retro-fit properties to make them more energy efficient,

“We can all do our bit to raise understanding and bring about a reduction in car use to make life better for everyone in the long term”

and at the same time create much-needed local jobs. Applications for vouchers for green, energy saving improvements can be made from September 2020. Vouchers will cover at least 2/3 of the cost up to £5000 per household, or up to £10,000 and covering the whole cost for low income households.

Islington Council's post-Covid green initiative is People Friendly Streets, which aligns with their existing target of becoming a net-zero carbon borough by 2030. People Friendly Streets is aimed at enabling social-distancing for pedestrians as well as reducing the number of vehicles using residential streets as short cuts.

Stopping non-local traffic using these back streets will improve living environments by reducing air and noise pollution and improve safety, encouraging more people of all ages to walk and cycle which is good for both physical and mental health. The first areas to be established are Canonbury East and St

Peter's. The council is consulting residents on their general road policy and all contributions and suggestions are welcome at :

<https://islingtonpeoplefriendlystreets.commonplace>

It is to be hoped that if sufficient numbers of residents understand the council's rationale and support the closure of streets to non-local traffic, the minority of motorists who complain will come to understand that car use harms the environment at all scales and should be avoided whenever possible.

We can all do our bit to raise understanding and bring about a reduction in car use to make life better for everyone in the long term.

Straight talking a shaming poem

Today, there are campaigns which aim to encourage people to boycott clothes and other goods, produced in factories delivering huge profits, while workers are forced into inhuman and dangerous conditions — virtual slaves in the 21st century — but these are not easy campaigns.

During the anti-slavery campaign the sugar boycott burst into life in response to Parliament's 1791 rejection of the (slave) abolition bill. . . . Campaigners were delighted to find that people were taking the action into their own hands. . . . in some parts of the country grocers reported sugar sales dropping by a third to a half in a few months. . . .the boycott caught people's imagination . . .as far back as the 1700s it brought to light the hidden ties of the increasingly globalised

economy laying bare the huge profits being made in the slave trade. But like today, it took some straight talking as can be seen from William Cowper's shaming poem:

*I own I am shock'd at the purchase of slaves,
And fear those who buy them and sell them are knaves;
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures
and groans,
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones
I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
For how could we do without sugar and rum?
Especially sugar, so needful we see,
What: give up our desserts, our coffee and tea!*

Coronavirus — an angry letter

For the last four months, we have been experiencing the worst pandemic — Coronavirus — since the beginning of the last century.

This has been made infinitely worse by the behaviour of an inept Government which initially made light of it, then eventually began to feed us with conflicting instructions on how to deal with it.

In a very short space of time many more people than necessary (including doctors and nurses) died, largely because we lacked the necessary equipment of every kind; including protection for the hospital staff, and perhaps worst of all elderly people with the illness being transferred to care homes.

During the last 15 years of a Conservative government we have seen the NHS cut to the bone, and now we

hear boasting that the NHS is recruiting large numbers of nurses. . . . I could go on but I expect a lot of you have read a similar version of what I am writing. However it is not enough! I am sure there is a lot more to emerge as this dreadful virus continues.

Even now we have Ministers issuing conflicting accounts of what we *must/should/maybe would like* to do, to protect ourselves. Wear or not wear masks; travel or not travel. Depends on what Minister is speaking at any given time:

Worst of all we have a Prime Minister who rarely puts in an appearance, particularly in Parliament, seems incapable of making his own decisions (where's Dominic!!) How can I ever believe anything else this Government might say!

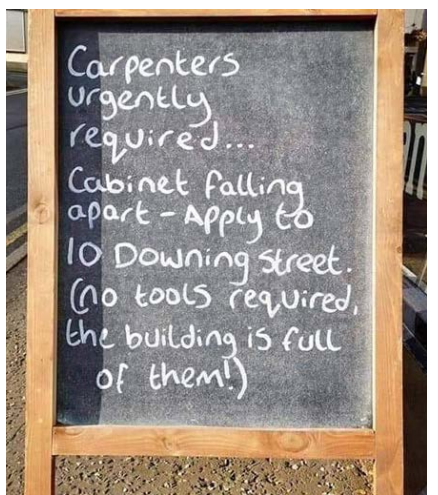
Annette Thomas



To keep us all safe we are only allowing one customer in the shop at any one time.

Please also adhere to the government rules and wear a mask. If you don't then we will have to take your temperature!

P.S. We only have rectal thermometers!!



Thought I'd share some of the pictures I have received from friends and family on my new "tablet" - Dot



**WELL
DONE!
NO
MORE
WORDS
NEEDED!**

INFORMATION

Islington Pensioners Forum officers and committee 2019-20 Chair: **Bob Collins**,
Secretary/Treasurer: **Eric Hill**, Assistant Secretary, **Annette Thomas**, Committee: **Frances Bradley, Luke Daniels,**
Dot Gibson, Irma Gomez, Eula Harrison, Joyce Herron, David Milner, Eddie Zissler, Pam Zinkin

Peter Crockett holds IT classes on line during the lockdown

In the box below there is an exaggerated example of an exchange between an IT user and a “windows” IT expert about getting a password for an IT account — maybe to order some goods. Have you been in this predicament? It always seems as if, no matter what you do, the password is not acceptable! Well, Peter Crockett runs an IT class on line during the lockdown, and so it is probable that he can help with this problem. If you have access to internet, you can get yourself on his list of participants; to get involved, contact Peter, his email address is: **crockettpeter@aol.com**

See “A view from the chair” on page 2 — Bob Collins gives information on TV licence and Pension Credit.

The Old Fire Station community centre is slowly re-opening for activities... with social distancing. Current timetable, all free, unless indicated is as follows:

Film club – Tuesday, 1.30pm to 3.30pm

Bingo – Wednesday, 12 noon to 1pm - £1

Art for Wellbeing – 2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month, 2pm to 4pm

Men–Talk - Thursday, 10.30am to 12.30pm

GOOD THINGS FOUNDATION

Our vision is a world where everyone benefits from digital. We are a social change charity, helping people to improve their lives through digital.

Call:0114 349 1666

Email:hello@goodthingsfoundation.org

Find us at:

1st Floor, 1 East Parade,
Sheffield, S1 2ET



**MELODY LANE
COURTYARD
CONCERT**

SUNDAY 9 AUGUST 6PM

6-32 MELODY LANE N5 2BQ

**STRING QUARTETS BY
MOZART, HAYDN,
BEETHOVEN**

£10 TICKET
BOOK VIA EMAIL
CORRANQUARTET@OUTLOOK.COM

CORRAN QUARTET

Now there is just space to send warm greetings to all our members, families and friends. from IPF officers and committee. We thank you for your patience and commitment during this really difficult time.

<input type="checkbox"/> NEW MEMBER	<input type="checkbox"/> RENEWING SUB
NAME:	
ADDRESS:	
POST CODE:	
TELE NO:	
EMAIL:	
ANNUAL SUB ENCLOSED.....£5.00	
PLUS DONATION?.....	
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