

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

July 2022 Newsletter

1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN Telephone 0207 226 7687
email: ipf@islingtonpensionersforum.org web: www.islingtonpensionersforum.org
Charity no: 1043081



Joanne Harris, London bus driver and elected official of Unite the Union spoke at our June meeting. Our members were especially concerned about plans to cut the no. 4 bus which runs to Whittington Hospital and Morfields eye hospital, (report on page 2)

GET READY TO WELCOME OUR PRESIDENT, JEREMY CORBYN MP AT OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 10.30 am ON THURSDAY 21st JULY IN THE TOWN HALL

It is at the AGM that we set up our committee, which decides on the officers. The committee then meets on the first Monday of the month to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for our members' meetings and activities. and relayed to all members via the monthly newsletter.

Our current committee — elected before the lockdowns is: Bob Collins, Annette Thomas, Pam Zinkin, David Milner, Frances Bradley, Luke Daniels, Eula Harrison, Irma Gomez, Eric Hill, Eddie Zissler, and Dot Gibson; Elaine Durack joined us after the lockdowns. With this newsletter we are sending a separate notice of the AGM, which can be used to put your name, or another members' name forward to be on the committee.

Remember — this can be for a trial period if you want — so that you can withdraw or stay on to suit you.

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR — Bob Collins

Bob is on holiday in Scarborough at the time we are producing this newsletter, and so he has asked us to send everybody his best wishes.... to remind you of the Annual General Meeting and to thank all those who were at the June meeting for their questions and contributions to the discussion. Also, he wants us to follow up discussions we have had in the past about scams against older people, and so there is a report on page 5 from Action Fraud.



ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM JOINS THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CUTS TO LONDON BUS SERVICES AND SUPPORTS BUS WORKERS DEFENDING THEIR JOBS

JOANNE HARRIS, London bus driver and elected official of UNITE the Union, spoke at our June meeting. See information from Islington Council on page 3. Our members are especially concerned about the proposed cut of the no. 4 bus which runs to Whittington hospital and Morfields eye hospital and that other local buses were going to be re-routed, including the 56 which goes to St Bartholomews hospital.

Joanne explained that the plans to cut 15 London routes and re-route another 86 had been landed on bus workers, their union and the travelling public on 1st June. She said: "There is not much time for consultation so every action counts. 3,500 bus workers could lose their jobs, but there has been no real explanation for these drastic plans.

The government says that public transport in our capital city must now rely solely on income from fares to run the services, But the public transport system in every other capital city in Europe receives a government subsidy.

Most IPF members remember when the public LONDON TRANSPORT ran the buses and tubes across London, but since privatisation under the Thatcher government these services are owned by private companies and there are 86 different terms and conditions for the workers. Joanne said that the West London garage where she works is owned by an Australian company and

others are run by a German company. Transport for London (TfL) co-ordinates the service... this comes under Sadiq Khan, London's Mayor but the thrust of government policy is to force TfL to operate as a private company and this is delaying electrification of the fleet and step-free access on the underground system.

The main people who would be affected by the cuts are the economically poor — home care workers, who use buses to get to the sick and cleaners other public sector workers on varying shifts, students and older people who rely on public transport to visit family, do their shopping

and keep hospital appointments. The government has forced TfL into cutting services, and has imposed anti-worker conditions for last minute, short term and inadequate financial bailouts, including attacking pensions, imposing a pay freeze



and cuts to jobs which arise out of cuts to services.

Bob Collins, IPF chair said that the committee had agreed to write a letter of support for the bus-workers' campaign, and urged members to sign up to the campaign publicised on the TfL web site and advertised through Islington Council.

He thanked Joanne Harris for giving her report and the IPF members who had taken part in questions and discussion.

PROPOSED BUS CUTS.....

ISLINGTON COUNCIL CALLS ON ALL OF US TO MAKE OUR VIEWS KNOWN TO LONDON'S MAYOR , TRANSPORT FOR LONDON AND THE GOVERNMENT

Islington Council is urging local people to have their say on proposed Transport for London (TfL) bus service changes that would significantly affect travel in the borough and central London.

Due to a lack of funding from central Government and fewer passengers travelling since the start of the pandemic, TfL is proposing changes to bus services in London. In Islington, the proposals include cutbacks to key bus services, which would have a big impact on local people's ability to move around the borough – particularly people with disabilities and people on lower incomes.

The proposals would see sweeping changes to the local bus network, including:

The changes would make it significantly more difficult for local people to access Whittington Hospital, St Bartholomew's Hospital and Moorfields Eye Hospital by bus, and could lead to children needing to take several buses to get to school.

TfL has launched a consultation on the proposals, which runs until Tuesday 12 July (see haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/busreview

Local people know their streets better than anyone, and Islington Council is encouraging residents to take part in the consultation to ensure their views and any concerns are heard by central Government and TfL. Further information on how to fill in the consultation can be found on TfL's website.

Islington's bus services are a vital lifeline for local people. Buses are the cheapest, most accessible form of public transport in the borough, with 16.6% of all journeys in Islington being made by bus.

Islington Council is committed to creating a cleaner, greener, healthier borough, and enabling people to travel in more sustainable ways, including by bus, is key to achieving this. Buses were responsible for just 3% of total greenhouse gas emissions by transport in the UK in 2019, with cars responsible for 68%. Retaining high quality public transport services and encouraging people to use them is therefore vital to the delivery of net zero carbon targets, in Islington and across London.

The full council has voted to Save Islington's Buses, and calling on central Government to agree a long-term funding deal with TfL.

In Islington, the proposals would involve the following changes to services in the Caledonian Road and Euston Road areas:

Withdrawing the 214 service from Islington, impacting children accessing schools.

Restructuring the 259 service, including cutting back the route from King's Cross to Camden Road. This would result in the loss of direct links between King's Cross and Finsbury Park, with significant interchange issues at Camden Road.

Restructuring the 254 service, including a cut back from Caledonian Road to Finsbury Park.

Restructuring the 205 service, so that it no longer provides a direct link to Paddington from Old Street.

The proposals would also have the following impacts on services in the Essex Road, London Bridge and Tower Bridge areas, including:

Withdrawing the 4 service, an important route between Archway and the Whittington Hospital and Blackfriars.

Withdrawing the 476 route between Kings Cross and Newington Green.

Restructuring the 56 service, which would limit access to St Bartholomew's Hospital and lead to local service users having to walk significant distances between bus stops to access the hospital.

Restructuring the 43 route, including removing a direct route to London Bridge via Moorgate and Bank.

Restructuring the 135 service, leading to patients accessing Moorfields Eye Hospital having to make long additional walks from other bus routes.

Undercover: Britain's Biggest GP Chain

Review of BBC's Panorama programme by Dot Gibson

Jacqui Wakefield went undercover as a GP receptionist for six weeks in a London GP surgery to make this programme. This surgery was one of 70 owned by British company Operose (owned by US Corporation Centene), serving 600,000 patients. In a nutshell Jacqui found that patient safety is being compromised — profits and money are more important than patient care; qualified GPs and nurses are replaced with unqualified staff (Physician Associates). The surgery Jacqui worked in had a turnover of £88million with 20,000 patients on the books.

Jacqui spoke to a nurse, who left the job because she “didn't feel safe”. She was expected to see more and more patients and work with unqualified, untrained PAs who “didn't know what they didn't know!” She said that the patients were not receiving the care they needed and were not getting well.

A couple with long term health problems couldn't get a face-to-face appointment with a GP. Before Operose took over there were 25 full-time doctors in their surgery and now there were only 11.

On her first job at 8 am answering telephone calls from patients (34 of them), Jacqui could not make a single appointment. There was only one GP on duty and he was dealing with another practice. It was the same the next day. Jacqui said “I have never felt so guilty and so stressed.” She did not see the GP director of the surgery once when she was there.

Other receptionists told her that she must not say “he is not here” but say “he is just not on site, but is always available on call.”

She showed the film to Professor Sir Sam Everington, a senior GP, who said it was very worrying that untrained and unqualified PAs were being used to replace GPs; GPs “cannot do the job remotely”. he said.

The PAs who Jacqui spoke to said that they were supposed to get 10 minutes training a day in that surgery, but even though they asked for it, they didn't get it.

In the programme there is an interview with a paramedic. He said his 2-year-old daughter became ill. It was very difficult to get a face-to-face appointment and even when they did get one they were told it was just normal sickness and his daughter should be given Calpol. However, the little girl became more ill and he and his partner wondered whether it was due to the covid pan-

demia but because they saw a different doctor every time they did manage to get an appointment, they went to A&E, and found that she had an acute form of leukaemia. Now she is in the hospital cancer unit.

Meanwhile Operose say that all cases are logged and reported properly and fully! And the CQC rate 95% of Operose practices as good! But Operose has six times more unqualified staff than other surgeries and those working in the same surgery as Jacqui said “that's because PAs are cheaper!”

In rooms above the surgery there was a team of unqualified staff members sorting out a backlog of 1,000 letters and results of patients' medical tests and guidance from hospital departments. In some cases team members are expected to let patients know what they should do, and when they are not sure, they look up the information on line.

Professor Sir Sam Everington told Jacqui that this is not the way such reports and diagnoses should be dealt with. The GP should always have proper access to them; they are responsible for conveying information to their patients and/or taking further action on treatment..

The programme told us that \$264million had gone into “no fault” settlements by Centene in the US and the company had set aside another \$1million to settle more claims.

The CQC told Panorama they take all the information seriously and will follow it up”.

Panorama explained that in 2007 the Labour government had changed the rules under which surgeries were owned and run by groups of GPs, after which private companies (like Virgin and Centene/Operose) could own them..

The final word goes to Jacqui:

“PATIENTS ARE GETTING A RAW DEAL!”

Action Fraud

report published in September 2021

Action Fraud issued a warning to families as criminals continue to target the elderly, cheating them out of cash and high value items through courier fraud.

Over £10 million was lost to courier fraudsters in the first nine months of last year. £10,325,133 was lost by victims to courier fraud — an increase of almost two thirds (63 per cent) compared to the same period in the previous year.

What is courier fraud?

This is when victims receive a 'phone call from a criminal who is pretending to be a police officer or bank official. Typically, victims are told to withdraw a sum of money and someone is sent to their home address to collect it.

Criminals may also convince the victim to transfer money to a "secure" bank account, hand over their bank cards or give the criminal high value items, such as jewellery, watches and gold (coins or bullion).

This is a dreadful crime in which fraudsters specifically target older and vulnerable people by exploiting their trust. Courier fraud can have devastating consequences on victims, both financially and emotionally, which is why we are asking the public to remain vigilant and follow some simple steps to help protect themselves and their loved ones.

Remember, just because someone claims to know a few basic details about you, such as your name and your address, it doesn't mean they are genuine.

From the beginning of 2021 Action Fraud received 2,060 reports of courier fraud, with an average loss per victim of just over £5,000.

Almost two thirds (64 per cent) of victims were aged 70 to 89 years old, and over three quarters (84 per cent) were aged 60 to 99 years old.

One common tactic used is where victims are contacted by a suspect who attempts to persuade them to purchase gold as part of a "police investigation" that is later collected by a courier on behalf of the criminals.

In some cases, the suspects have invited themselves into the victims home and collected other valuables, saying that the victim's possessions

are no longer safe and they, as the "police" can safeguard them.

There are certain things you need to know in order to protect yourself and your loved ones

- Your bank or the police will never call you to ask you to verify your personal details or PIN by 'phone, or offer to pick up your bank card by courier. Hang up immediately if you receive a call like this

- If you need to contact your bank to check the call was legitimate, wait five minutes as fraudsters may stay on the line after you hang up. Alternatively, use a different line altogether to contact your bank and ensure you call them back on a number listed on the bank's website, or on the back of your debit or credit card.

Your debit or credit card is yours: Don't let a stranger take it from you. You should only ever have to hand it over at your bank. If it's cancelled or expired, you should destroy it yourself

Tell-tale signs of attempted courier fraud

- Someone claiming to be from your bank or local police force calls you to tell you about fraudulent activity, but is asking you for personal information, or even your PIN to verify who you are.

- They are suggesting that you call them back, so you can be sure they are genuine, but when you try to return the call, there's no dial tone.

They say they are trying to offer you peace of mind by having somebody pick up the card for you, to save you the trouble of having to go to your bank or local police station.

Action Fraud also advises that the public follow **the advice of the Take Five to Stop Fraud** campaign to keep themselves safe from fraud.

STOP: taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information.

CHALLENGE: could it be fake? It's OK to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT: If you think you've been a victim of fraud, contact your bank immediately and report it to Action Fraud online at actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.

For a number of years before the lockdowns, Islington Pensioners Forum members were invited to the annual garden party held in the garden at Highbury View. This year the Residents Association and Barnsbury Housing Association are holding the first one since the pandemic, and we are invited to join in. Entrance is free, but it would be a friendly gesture if our members could donate a raffle prize and/or something for the buffet or the bar.

The garden entrance is at the Highbury Fields end of Ronalds Road

Highbury View TRA & Barnsbury Housing Association
 YOU'RE INVITED TO
Highbury View
Annual Garden Party

Finger-food buffet
 Drinks
 Live Jazz Band
 Raffle

SATURDAY 9th JULY 2 - 4 pm
89 Ronalds Road, N5 1XQ



WE DEMAND BETTER — ENOUGH IS ENOUGH' Thousands joined the TUC march in London on 18 June, ending with a rally in Parliament Square

Many thanks to those members who sent in their £5 annual subscription and many who also sent in a donation. These are needed to pay for the production and posting of our Newsletter. We renew our appeal..... please send in your £5 sub and, if possible, a donation with your.....

NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER

AND EMAIL ADDRESS

TO IPF, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, N1 0RN **cheques payable to IPF**