

# ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

## August 2022 Newsletter

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Charity no: 1043081

Hello everyone! There is no meeting in August, but we are having a  
**DAY TRIP TO RAMSGATE BY COACH**  
**ON FRIDAY 19th AUGUST, LEAVING ISLINGTON TOWN**  
**HALL AT 10.15 am SHARP**

Because of the huge increase in the cost of petrol, it is expensive to hire the coach, but we are able to subsidise the fares to you because we received some supermarket donations..... so the cost is

**£13.50 each**

**TO BOOK — CALL LYDIA ON 07804693461**  
**OR LEAVE A MESSAGE ON THE IPF 'PHONE: 0207226 7687**

## **BRONWEN — OUR CO-ORDINATOR — DELIVERED OUR REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN THE TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 21st JULY 2022.....**

We must congratulate ourselves on coming through a totally unprecedented period of difficulty and disruption caused by COVID-19. This has meant that we had our last AGM three long years ago on 18 July 2019.

The first Coronavirus lockdown began in March 2020. We had started collecting deposits for the Pensioners Parliament due to take place in the summer of 2020, but had to stop because the event was called off, like many other activities, because of the pandemic.

We found the lockdown periods very difficult as many of our members are particularly vulnerable to COVID 19 so we had to plan activities very carefully to mitigate this, in particular having to avoid the face to face activities that our members value so highly for the opportunity to socialise with others in the same boat.

Thanks to funding from Cripplegate we had recruited our wonderful Outings and Events Organ-

iser Lydia Batchelor just before the first lockdown. She has been keeping in contact with our members by phone both during the lockdown and also after the end of the lockdown in July 2021 (but not the end of the virus!!) to find out if and when they felt ready to engage in face to face activities.

As a result we were able to organise a well-attended outing to Crewes Hill Garden Centres on 12 May, and another outing on a canal boat on Wednesday 20 July. We are hoping for more outings and events to be organised soon, and we will announce them in our newsletter.

During the various lockdowns we worked hard to keep as many of our activities going as possible, although obviously we could not continue any face-to-face activities. But we continued to produce our popular monthly newsletter mailed out to almost 400 members, plus councillors and

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*Continued from page 1.*

some community groups thanks to the vital support for the printing from the Council.

Thanks to Peter Crockett and Healthy Generations, we kept our online IT class going every week throughout the lockdowns and beyond for members and were able to do this as it took place by zoom, a new video conferencing system that many of us found out about for the very first time as a result of the pandemic.

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We also held our monthly committee meetings via zoom during the lockdown and have held them face to face since February 2022.

We have restarted our monthly Forum meetings, which are open to all our members. The first meeting was on Thursday 19 May in Islington-Town Hall at which Ruth Hayes, a councillor for only six days since the local elections. was our first post-lockdown speaker. Unite bus driver Joanne Harris spoke to us about the cuts to Islington bus routes at our June meeting.

Unfortunately our Coordinator Bronwen Handyside, who did much of our fundraising has gone through a prolonged period of ill health from September 2021 to May 2022. Our treasure of a treasurer Mohammad Jameer has stepped into the gap and has written a number of successful fundraising applications for us.

We'd also like to thank Islington Council very much for the funding which has enabled us to keep going over so many years, and especially excellent Voluntary and Community Sector De-

velopment Team which has helped and supported us as we emerged from the lockdowns. However we seem to be stuck in a never-ending cycle of COVID infections which the current government has no plans to do anything about. As far as they are concerned the pandemic is over, but for thousands it is not. It remains a life-threatening risk in particular for older and vulnerable people.

This is one of the many crucial issues for ordinary people that have been completely ignored by all the candidates in the unlovely spectacle which is the Tory leadership competition. along with the Cost of Living crisis, our creaking and underfunded public services including the NHS, and the climate emergency of which we are seeing the effects all around us.

There is absolutely no attempt to address the fact that millions in the UK, among them many pensioners, are finding it increasingly hard to live.

Meanwhile private companies, like the rail companies, are making enormous profits. One very illuminating fact that has emerged over the last week in the Guardian newspaper is that at the time when Tory Chancellor George Osborne cut £700m government subsidy from London's public transport system, he was simultaneously lobbying the then mayor Boris Johnson to enable gig company Uber to evade regulations and enter London's transport market.

The good news is that many in the unions are fighting back and not only demanding a decent wage, but also pointing to the very unjust and unequal way that our society is organised.

We in Islington Pensioners Forum are determined to support and join in their battles over the next year, with our demands for justice, equal treatment, and decent services for older people

**PLEASE NOTE: We have invited the Leader of the Council to speak at our next regular Forum meeting on Thursday 15th September at 10.30 a.m. in the Town Hall. So get your questions ready for..... Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz ...**



## A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR — Bob Collins

This is the first newsletter after our Annual General Meeting on 19th July. Looking again at the title of this column — *A View from the Chair* — I think it is just right! Why?

Because as chair I am in exactly the right place to experience the interesting questions and discussion that come up at all our meetings... no matter who the speaker is.

It took quite a long time for the trade unions to realise that they needed a proper place for older generation members to continue to be part of the union and so able to put forward ideas and proposals based on their lengthy experience of supporting each other at work, and also, now, bringing in the many social problems that all generations are facing.

It has also taken a long time for women workers to be recognised as an important part of the workforce!

Also — here in Islington — our Forum is part of the National Pensioners Convention which brings together Pensioners' Forums, Action Groups and trade union pensioners' associations organised in NPC Regions all over the country.

At our AGM we renewed our committee and we are now going over all the various jobs that need to be done to ensure that the Forum is active — socially and in campaigns, that we grow our membership and use our newsletter to encourage older people to see that they can join and get to know us.

**IPF Committee in alphabetical order**  
**Committee meetings will take place on the first Monday of the month at 10.30 am at the IPF office.**

Frances Bradley

Bob Collins

Luke Daniels

Elaine Durack

Dot Gibson

Irma Gomez

Eula Harrison

Eric Hill

David Milner

Jan Pollock

Felicia Puddicombe

Annette Thomas

Pam Zinkin

Eddie Zissler

Co-ordinator Bronwen Handyside

Outings/Events Lydia Batchelor

Forum meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 10.30 a.m. at the Town Hall. In the next newsletter we will be able to give the names of the officers and the dates of committee meetings... also we will let members know what's on and the speakers for our Forum meetings.



Flooding after another burst water main in Islington

**One only needs to look at Jeremy Corbyn's regular newsletters to realise that he is constantly and consistently on the job, not only all over Islington North, but also in parliament and at international events.**

Jeremy is a member of the Labour Party, was chosen by 64.3 % of Islington North voters at the last general election as their Labour MP and before that was elected twice by a big majority (over 59% of Labour Party members) to be the leader of that party. But Sir Kier Starmer has deprived him of his Labour Party membership in the House of Commons and so he is currently an "independent" MP, and many members of Islington Pensioners Forum are anxious to know whether he will stand in the next general election for there is a "Friends of Jeremy Corbyn" group in and around the Labour Party who are campaigning for his reinstatement in the Parliamentary Labour Party. Jeremy is the President of Islington Pensioners Forum and took his usual place at our Annual General Meeting on 19th July.



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## **To say "thank you" — letter from Dot Gibson**

When Jeremy Corbyn was nominated and stood in the election for the new Labour leadership in 2015, he put forward policies against the cuts being imposed by the Conservative government on the NHS and local government services throughout the country; he called for a return to public ownership under the slogan "For the Many not the Few", and he won support from thousands of people — membership of the Labour Party grew and thousands attended big rallies all over the country.

We in Islington Pensioners Forum took part in campaigns against the cuts, especially in defence of health and social care. We invited Jeremy to a meeting of our committee and closely questioned him about his policies.

Many of us were there after the Second World War, and experienced the founding of the publicly owned National Health Service and other services — electricity, gas, water, transport etc. We were becoming more and more concerned about the growing privatisation of these services, the enormous profits being made by the private owners, and the attacks on those who need these services and those who deliver them.

Today we are more and more experiencing the result of these attacks, and every day we see the so-called accidents arising from failures to carry out proper health and safety measures and to ensure that our services and facilities are properly maintained — for people and not for profit!

Who can forget the people who died in the Grenfell Tower fire, where private companies used non-fire proof cladding for that building and many others all over the country that still have such cladding?

Just today there was flooding caused by a burst water main in Islington. In the past ten years England's water companies have paid out £13.4bn in dividends and directors' pay has soared. But ordinary people have had their homes flooded and lost their possessions in floods four feet deep; at the same time 3bn litres are lost on a daily basis through leaks.

Islington Pensioners Forum is not a political organisation, but we do stand up for the basic rights of pensioners and our families!. That's why I wanted to say a big THANK YOU to Jeremy for coming to our meeting and for continuing to stand up for his policies and principles.

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# Dear members . . . . .from Lydia

You might be interested in a couple of things that I am also interested in — a simple recipe for homemade scones and a short “home-made” poem

## **Quick and Easy Homemade Scones**

50g unsalted butter  
200g self-raising flour  
1 tbsp caster sugar  
Pinch of salt  
125 mls milk

Pre-heat the oven to 200c (220c fan) or gas 6

Line a baking tray with a sheet of parchment paper

Rub the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs and stir in the salt and sugar until the mixture and the dough come together

Turn out onto a floured surface and shape into balls — 3cm thick

Transfer to the prepared baking sheet then brush over with the milk

Bake for 15 minutes until golden and cooked through

Cool on a wire rack

Serve warm or cold — choose your own topping

**YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS — ENJOY!**

## **Don't miss the butterfly!**

Oh the sun has come out with great delight.

And the little creatures that it brings along for us to see

One that we must not miss is the fluttering of these beautiful colours that goes on by.

In branches of trees, meadows and streams

Oh they are so carefree....

Take a moment. Stop

Have you seen any?

Just look....

The beautiful butterfly that goes fluttering by!

**Lydia Batchelor**



Dear members.....

There are a couple of things I want to raise about the Newsletter. First of all we need a team on part of a day — the first Tuesday of the month in the IPF office — to help with dispatch. The Newsletter has to be printed, folded, put into envelopes (and the envelopes have to have labels stuck on them) franked on our franking machine and taken to the post office. Secondly.... please send in your letters, poems, news, pictures and recipes etc. so that they can be printed in the Newsletter. Thanks, and all the best, Dot

# Our NHS — Pam Zinkin

Over a number of years now we have been writing and discussing the problems facing our National Health Service.

We have been warning and campaigning about the way whole departments across the country are being taken over — sold off — to private companies. We have been explaining and listening to the problems of NHS staff, the cuts in funding, the huge pressure of the pandemic, and the failure of successive governments to overcome the lack of adequate social care.

Today we are publishing the press statement is-



sued by the NHS nurses' union — the Royal College of Nursing and we make no apologies for calling on all our members to do their very best to support the union's decision for a ballot of all their members on strike action to defend their jobs and conditions. The ballot will start on 15th September. As we start

our new year, following our annual general meeting in July, we promise to bring you regular information about our NHS and how important it is to protect it and all the staff who work in it, and we invite you to send us your views, experiences and news about OUR NHS.

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**PRESS STATEMENT FROM THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING. . . . .**

Only hours after the Royal College of Nursing had branded the NHS pay award in England "a grave misstep", nursing staff across England were called to action by their union. In an email to hundreds of thousands of nursing staff on 19th July, the RCN Chair of Council, Carol Popplestone and RCN General Secretary, Pat Cullen, said:

*" Today the UK government confirmed its pay award for NHS staff in England for the year 2022-23. This is yet another pay cut in real terms and we're clear that nursing deserves better.*

*"Tonight an emergency session of your elected Council voted that members in England will be balloted on industrial action.*

*"After years of underpayment and staff shortages, the fight for fair pay must continue. Your voice in the upcoming ballot will be essential to turning the tide on low pay. The government's announcement tried desperately to mislead the public on nursing pay. We need your help in calling it out. This pay award does not help you with the rising cost of living — inflation is rising much higher. It will do nothing to help to recruit more nursing staff where you work. It does not recognise the skill and responsibility of the job you do. Sadly, it will not keep patients safe."*

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**