

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

August 2023 Newsletter

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READ IPF ANNUAL REPORT HERE.

On 20th July we had our Annual General Meeting. Our president, Jeremy Corbyn MP took the chair for the election of our committee, and we are pleased to announce the election of five new members. The first committee meeting was on Monday 7th August, and the officers and other responsibilities were decided. The full list is on page two.

Elaine Durack gave the Annual Report:

Welcome to our AGM, and thank you all for coming.

Firstly, we would like to thank Islington Council for their continued support with funding, which has enabled us to keep going over many years, and especially the excellent Voluntary and Community Sector Development Team.

Following lockdown members who were not on the committee were invited to come to its meetings, and I accepted the invitation. After that, at last year's AGM I was elected to the committee and became secretary. I am proud of that — to be able to keep the flag flying just as George did for all those years. We are now encouraging other members to come forward to join the committee to continue to build IPF.

We would like to thank Bronwen, our co-ordinator, who gave the annual report in 2022, and kept the newsletter and the web site going during lockdown despite having a quadruple heart bypass. Also thanks to Lydia who became the outings/events organiser just before lockdown, kept in touch all the way through the lockdown and has taken on more responsibilities because of Bronwen's continued ill-health. Also thanks to Mohammad who retired from his accountancy

services to IPF, but raised the money for the film club and will be taking responsibility for that starting on Tuesday 25th July. (see box on page 2)

It was Jeremy's 40th anniversary as Islington North's MP recently, and we have a presentation to make to mark this. We thank him for standing up for IPF and for the whole community in the borough, with kindness and in a completely inclusive way.

In remembering George, we also remembered his warning about the way Jeremy was badly treated by the press and some of his so-called colleagues, and how, in our newsletter we have used a picture of George and a group of IPF members displaying a banner in 2017 telling the press to stop their unfair and unfounded abuse of Jeremy.

A few months ago, IPF was invited to send a delegation to the Council's "Dignity in Social Care" awards ceremony. This was a very moving and uplifting event.

I can report that myself and Frances are our delegates to the London Region of the National Pensioners Convention and hopefully we will be attending its regional meetings in the coming year and build contacts with other pensioner groups in London.

We have also updated our IT system, and are seeking ways to update our membership data so that we can build better contact with members, and keep in touch more easily. We aim to get as many members as possible to receive our monthly newsletter via email — this will help towards the high cost of postage.

continued on back page

Our A.G.M. decided to take a stand against railway ticket office closures. See back page story. Come to Finsbury Park Station at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 17th August

A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR — Bob Collins

We had a really good Annual General Meeting on 20th July. It felt that we were finally getting back to normal after the lockdown. It was encouraging that we now have five new members of our committee: *Margaret Diffey, Hannah Fagbesa, Alan McDonald, Philip Richard and Juliana Simon.* You can see these names in the box below, and you can see that at our committee meeting on 7th August we decided on the officers and other responsibilities.

Sadly we lost Elula and she will be missed. Some of us attended her memorable funeral service, and I think she would be pleased if we share this picture of her farewell on the last page of the service booklet. Clearly her sons saw this picture as a loving memory



Subscriptions

The AGM resolved: *“In view of the increase in costs, particularly for production of our monthly newsletter — stationery, printing, toner and postage — this AGM of Islington Pensioners Forum decides to increase the annual membership subscription from £5 to £10 and calls upon the committee to make finance an urgent agenda item at all committee meetings and to ensure that the monthly Forum meetings are kept informed”*

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

Officers

Bob Collins — Chair
Luke Daniels — Vice Chair
Elaine Durack — Secretary
Frances Bradley — Assistant Secretary
Eric Hill — Treasurer

Committee Membe

Margaret Diffey
Hannah Fagbesa
Dot Gibson — Newsletter editor
Irma Gomez
Alan McDonald
David Milner — Members list
Jan Pollock
Philip Richard
Juliana Simon
Annette Thomas
Pam Zinkin — NHS Information

Delegates to the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) London Region

Elaine Durack and Frances Bradley

Staff:

Bronwen Handyside — Co-ordinator
Lydia Batchelor — Outings/events organiser

First Monday of the month: Committee meeting at IPF office (address on page 1)

First Tuesday of the month: Newsletter printing and dispatch at IPF office (address page 1)

Third Thursday of the month: Town Hall meeting of Forum, 10.30 a.m.

Last Tuesday of month Film Club at the IPF hall (address on page 1) so tea and biscuits at 2 p.m. and film — **La La Land** at 2.30 pm on Tuesday 29th August

Your recycling and rubbish service

Islington Council has just issued a new information leaflet (title above) which shows in pictures and explains how we should get rid of our rubbish and the stuff for recycling.

www.islington.gov.uk/recycling
email: recycling@islington.gov.uk
phone: 0230 7527 2000

Want to “Spend a Penny”“

“Loos for Islington’ are a group of residents calling on the Council to take urgent action to improve the quality of life of residents who want to spend more time out and about. They call for action to improve signage and accessible information on location of public toilets, and a public toilet strategy based on consultation. You can find out more about the campaign at: LoosForIslington@gmail.com

*****A great garden party on 29th July*****

We couldn't believe our luck! it was sunny all day!! This was a garden party jointly hosted by the sheltered housing Residents Association and Islington Pensioners Forum (IPF) Cllr. Gary Heather, Islington's Mayor spent most of the day with us.

He told us he remembered when Highbury View sheltered housing first opened in the 1980s. He had been a telephone engineer at the time and involved in getting the buildings ready for tenants.

And he told us many of the members of IPF were old friends of his.

Jeremy Corbyn MP and his partner Lara joined us for much of the afternoon. Jeremy is President of IPF and represents Islington North, the constituency in which Highbury View is situated. Clive Anderson, Highbury View's neighbour was also at the party. A TV presenter and actor Clive was at the Park Theatre in Jan/Feb 2023 in "On The Ropes", and will be appearing in Park's new Season.



Mayor Gary Heather spoke to us and drew the raffle tickets assisted by Ruby Parris.

Resident, Moira King won a jar of Jeremy's (famous) home made jam!

Below left: our party music makers, Julie and Diana, & right: Clive and Jeremy with residents and IPF members.

The garden party-goers were very pleased with the music brought to us by Julie and Diana, and with the food

chicken, vegetables, rice & salad from Banaadiri-Restaurant in Seven Sisters Road; Roasted Veg Lasagne and Quiche Lorraine from Cook in Muswell Hill; Sausages from Godfreys in Highbury Barn; French baguettes from Parisienne (via Budgens), and later strawberries and cream donated by resident and IPF member, Joe Hagland. And let's not forget the other donations from residents and IPF members: terrific raffle prizes, cakes, bread pudding, trifle, cheese rolls, salads; and also the time spent by Barnsbury Housing Association staff to get the gazebos, chairs, tables and bunting in place, with special thanks to Colette the support manager. (see more pics over page)

Report by Dot Gibson
Resident and IPF member



Just a small selection of pictures taken at the garden party.



POST SCRIPT: The garden at Highbury View is a great venue in Spring and Summer months to have events where people can get together with family and friends. 13 grown-ups and six children from my family joined us this year, and they had a good time! So get ready for next year. We used to have two garden parties each year — one hosted by the Residents and the other by Islington Pensioners Forum.....so let's aim for that next year! Dot

2023
People's Day

Tuesday October 10th, 12pm - 5pm

Tottenham Green Leisure Centre
1 Philip Lane, London N15 4JA
in the Sports Hall.

Hosted by Tottenham, Wood Green and Hornsey
Pensioners Action Groups
with Haringey Over 50's

Opened by the Mayor of Haringey

For more information please contact
Sheila.Peacock@haringey.gov.uk

Many stalls offering items of interest,
refreshments, an area with many Speakers on
different topics, plus live entertainment, a tombola

What about our neighbouring pensioners' campaigning groups?

We hope that in the coming year we can get to know the pensioners groups in our neighbouring boroughs a bit better.

So let's start with Haringey.... This leaflet shows us that there are two Pensioners Action Groups in Haringey — Tottenham, Wood Green is one and Hornsey is the other.

They have sent this leaflet to invite us in Islington Pensioners Forum to their "People's Day" on Tuesday 10th October at the Philip Lane, Sports Hall.

We can hopefully talk about it at our September meeting and see if we can go there together from Islington.

Letter.....

Trapped by traditional capitalist ideas!

Taking steps to tackle climate change is often seen as a luxury, but the people who will be hardest hit by rising global temperatures are the people with the least resources and resilience, which of course includes us as elders.

People can avoid eating beef and dairy products, stop using private cars and take public transport or walk, but the single most effective action we can possibly take is to vote for political parties whose policies are aimed at addressing the climate crisis and averting human catastrophe.

Only policy change can bring about the scale of change that is needed, for example to effect a ten-fold reduction in CO2 emissions. The gap between what science tells us about climate change and politics has widened because both left and right parties say putting green policies in their manifesto would make them unelectable.

This was illustrated recently in a serious political discussion podcast: "The Rest is Politics", where Rory Stewart and Alastair Campbell discussed the de-growth with Kate Raworth, who is famous for her "doughnut economics". Stewart and Campbell both agreed (a) that Raworth's theory was spot on, and (b) that neither the Conservatives nor Labour would enact such a policy.

Raworth says we are trapped by the traditional capitalist ideas that economic growth reduces inequality and that people are merely self-interested individuals. She points out that politicians bend to the will of corporations and elites, which have little interest in changing the status quo. She says to address the climate crisis we must think differently. Central to her "doughnut" theory is that the economy should distribute wealth fairly, regenerate the resources it uses and allow people to prosper.

Frances Bradley

***Our picture is of the last boat trip.
Now there is going to be another
one!***

***Wednesday 30th August
cost £12.50***

***This time on Angel Boats' new
boat....."LONG TOM"***

***if you are interested, please leave
a clear message for Lydia WITH
YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER on
the IPF telephone: 0207 226 7687.
But seats are limited, so don't
leave it too late.***

***But also don't be too upset if you
"miss the boat" because Lydia is
planning other nice friendly things
to do.***



Annual Report continued from page 1

We continue to work with Peter Crockett of Healthy Generations who runs the weekly IT classes —at present on-line but we are working towards holding these classes in our hall as we did before lockdown.

Also we are hoping to roll out the Hub soon. This is aimed at electronically sign-posting people to all kinds of useful and relevant services. We will also be advertising our events and updates on electronic noticeboards the Council has throughout the borough.

We know that one of the biggest concerns of older people relates to dementia and we are working closely with the Council on this issue. In April we had the Commissioning Manager for Islington's "Age Well" team, Sophia Stevens as a guest speaker, but mainly asking us questions about what the Council needs to do to develop services in the "Age Well" programme.

Due to government austerity cuts to Council funding, 65 per cent of dementia patients are in care homes outside of the borough. The Council team is therefore working with us on the needs of people with dementia, as well as those with other disabilities and needing assistance with shopping and companionship.

In March we had Councillor Janet Burgess explaining her responsibilities as the Council's EC member for adult social care for the last ten years. She says she is now taking a back seat, but we wanted to acknowledge the terrific leadership she has provided in standing up for the rights of older and disabled people and their carers.

She said that across the country Islington is the fifth borough with the most deprived pensioners. Islington Council has ensured the living wage for carers and payment of travel time to be included

in the Council's contracts for home care workers. Rightly so!

Another concern for older people is digital exclusion — leading to isolation. For example, train tickets only being available on-line — exacerbated at a time when there are threats to close many ticket offices.

It should always be remembered that we are a key campaigning organisation in Islington uniting and standing up for the rights of older people. Islington Pensioners Forum is a non-party political organisation, but we do stand up for the basic rights of pensioners. That's why we are proud to have Jeremy Corbyn as our president, and we thank him for his continued support.

Our monthly newsletter is distributed to nearly 400 members, informing them of our campaigns, including the social care crisis, concern over lack of funding for the NHS and the levels of the state pension.

While appreciating the grant we get from the Council, in order for our organisation to continue to thrive and offer social activities for our members we need to explore other fund-raising avenues.

Finally, after a long delay because of the lockdown, we are pleased to say that the memorial to George Durack, the long time chair of IPF, was unveiled on 1st July in Navigator Square, Archway. George died, aged 94, in September 2018. Jeremy Corbyn was the guest speaker, along with the Mayor, Gary Heather. The memorial consists of a beautifully designed chess table and chairs next to the Archway Tavern, and bears a plaque to recognise George's contribution to the IPF, local services and his work in the trade union movement.

STOP THE CLOSURE OF RAILWAY TICKET OFFICES!

The consultation into the plan to close hundreds of ticket offices in England has been extended until 1 September. Organisers of the consultation said some train companies did not provide accessible formats, preventing people from being able to respond to plans. Even so, more than 170,000 responses have been received, according to watchdogs Transport Focus and London TravelWatch. The plan sparked concern from rail unions and disability groups over accessibility issues.

In a discussion on this important issue, our A.G.M. decided to call on members and supporters to join together on Thursday 17th August at Finsbury Park Station to make a stand. Just like "driver only trains" this proposal is another step towards cutting jobs and leaving elderly and disabled people without proper support to get their tickets and to travel safely.