

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

August/September Newsletter

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PENSIONERS TO LOSE OUT AS WINTER FUEL SUPPORT IS AXED

Pensioners are set to lose out on hundreds of pounds in winter fuel support after Chancellor Rachel Reeves axed the payments this month, leaving help only available to the very poorest.

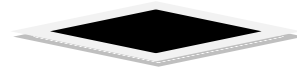
The announcement was part of a range of saving measures that Ms. Reeves introduced to plug a £22 billion "black hole" in the Government's finances which she blamed on the previous Conservative Government.

The National Pensioners' Convention is calling on Chancellor Rachel Reeves to reconsider her shock decision to end universal winter fuel payments. The move will hit millions of older people who are just above the income threshold to qualify for pension credit – effectively imposing a harsh means test on those already struggling next winter.

NPC General Secretary [Jan Shortt](#) said: "This is devastating news for millions of older people whose income is literally just a few pounds above the threshold to receive pension credit.

"These people are already barely able to make ends meet – this move effectively wipes out any benefit they receive from the triple lock increase on the state pension".

Annette Thomas from the Islington Pensioners Forum said "It's an absolute disaster for pensioners who are not on benefits but are struggling. There are thousands of pensioners who don't claim any other benefits but are really on the breadline".



It is with deep sadness that we say goodbye to our friend and committee member Hannah who sadly passed away on 27th July 2024. Hannah was a very active and much loved member of the Committee and she will be very much missed. Please come and celebrate her life.



Tuesday 20th August 2024
Service: 10 am Upper Holloway Baptist Church
11 Tollington Way N7 6RC
Burial: 12.30 Islington and St. Pancras Cemetery
278 High Road, East Finchley N2 9AG
Reception: 2.30 Brickworks, 42 Crouch Hill, Finsbury Park N4 4BY
Please can we request that you do not wear black

Tax credits turned off

If you or your partner gets tax credits, as some older people still do, then you will be getting a letter shortly about what is called 'managed migration' to another benefit. That's because tax credits will end in March 2025.

If you – or your partner if you have one – are under 66 the change will be to Universal Credit. But if you are over 66 it will be to pension credit. The word migration is misleading. What it means is that on a date between now and March next year your tax credits will stop, and it is up to you to claim the alternative benefit. That may be worth less than the tax credits you have been getting, but there is some 'transitional protection' to ensure your benefit is not cut – at least for now – if you claim at the right time.

Do not ignore this letter as it is important to follow it precisely. If you need help, ask Citizens Advice. Acknowledgement to Paul Lewis Saga Magazine

HIROSHIMA DAY

Today, 6th August, is Hiroshima Day.. Since the planting of a cherry tree in Tavistock Square in the late 50's I have joined a gathering to commemorate the dropping of an atomic bomb on the town of Hiroshima - followed by another on Nagasaki. I remember the jubilation at the news that Japan had surrendered and the war was over: Germany had already surrendered and it was arguable that

Japan was about to follow, but there were new weapons to be tested!

At that time it was normal for cinemas to show a newsreel between two films and I still remember my horror when I saw the newsreel of what a nightmare those bombs had created not just to the City but the decimation of the population who were melted into the ground. That is history and we have moved on to another level of destruction. Saying never again didn't include the development of even more terrifying weapons of war. Soon after this event, began the early development of Campaign against Nuclear Weapons which I became involved in and have remained part of until this moment. Apart from during the Covid period I have never missed the gathering under this now huge and beautiful tree. We were at first small in number but grew into hundreds over the years with speakers from all over the world, including the Mayor and councillors of Camden Council and of course our own Jeremy Corbyn and representatives from Japan.

I am writing this because sadly I am no longer able to attend the gathering and if the numbers have dwindled it is probably because we are an ageing group, and young people, to their credit, (and some old) are taking to the streets in opposition to the fascists that have taken to the streets against the victims of yet more wars being carried out in their countries.

Annette Thomas



DAY TRIP TO EASTBOURNE!

Wednesday 4th September
Book early !

£10 for coach and fish 'n chips or vegetarian
lunch



Coach Outing to Eastbourne Wednesday 4th September. please arrive at Islington
Town Hall by 9.45 a.m to leave sharp at 10a.m.

Few spaces left. So book by 20th August before 5.p.m with Lydia on this number
07804 693461. Please speak clearly giving your name and number. Arrangements will
be made for your payment.

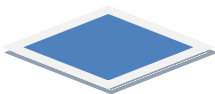
Please let Lydia know if you want to book a seat on the bus.



Free Film Show !



Interested in a free film show at the British Film Institute in Southbank? If so contact Lydia on one of the above telephone numbers. Lydia will let you know arrangements for meeting up to go by bus.



NO FORUM MEETING IN AUGUST

FROM SEPTEMBER THE FORUM MEETINGS AS USUAL ARE ON THE THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT THE TOWN HALL AT 10.30 AM. SPEAKERS BOOKED:

19th SEPTEMBER YANNIS GOURTSOYANNIS (JUNIOR DOCTOR): SUBJECT: NHS CRISIS
17TH OCTOBER MIKE HIGGINS SUBJECT: DISABILITY RIGHTS



On the last Wednesday of the month we have a film afternoon in the IPF hall (address on the front page)



It is £5 for lunch and film
Lunch at 12.30
Film at 2.30

The September (25th) film is the 1987 **Bagdad Café**: A lonely German woman ends up in the most desolate motel on earth and decides to make it brighter.

The October (29th) film is **The Kite Runner** – follows the journey of Amir, a young boy from Kabul, and is set against the tumultuous background of Afghanistan's history from the fall through the rise of the Taliban

Report to the AGM from Secretary Elaine Durack

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

I would like to both thank Jeremy Corbyn for continuing to be our esteemed president and to also congratulate him on his overwhelming majority to be re-elected as our Independent Member of Parliament. 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. We are proud to be included into the long list of community groups which made up Jeremy's support in the General Election campaign

Our thanks also to Lydia for working hard to raise funds for social activities and also providing lunch at the monthly film shows – and thank you to Mohammed for helping to put the films on. Among the social activities Lydia is organising include a coach trip to Eastbourne in September, river trips and films at the National Film Theatre. We are particularly grateful to her for stepping in to help cover the problems with our treasurer becoming ill. We also extend our thanks to Bronwen who has been there to help with admin, updating the website and bringing her expertise to the unenviable task of filling out grant applications – even though she has not fully recovered.

We are now encouraging other members to come forward to join the committee to continue to build IPF. To that end we are encouraged that we are recruiting new members – “young pensioners”! which is what we are aiming for – to help us carry the torch forward.

I would like to thank our wonderful Treasurer Eric Hill who is standing down. We very much hope to fully introduce a new treasurer very shortly.

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 with members more easily. We aim to get as many members as possible to receive our monthly newsletter via email – this will help towards the high costs of postage and to that end, we apologise for having to limit the number of times we send out the newsletters. Our monthly newsletter is distributed to nearly 400 members, informing them of our campaigns, including social care crisis, concern over lack of funding for the NHS and the levels of state pension.

We continue to work with Peter Crockett of Healthy Generations who runs his weekly IT classes – at present on-line but we are now holding these classes in our hall as we did before lockdown. Also the Hub, which should electronically signpost people to all kinds of useful and relevant services, we are hoping to roll this out this month. We will also be advertising our events and updates on the 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. The Commissioning Manager for Islington's "Age Well" team, Sophia Stevens, has been a guest speaker at our Forum meetings on several occasions and has clearly taken on board the questions we have asked her as to 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's 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.

We've had many interesting speakers at our Forum meetings, including Loos for Islington (a campaign group fighting to get more public conveniences), the youth organiser for St Marys, speakers against NHS cuts, and our very own Luke Daniels talking about the Windrush scandal and domestic violence.

Among our other campaigns, IPF fought furiously and successfully to retain the staffed ticket offices at Finsbury Park – with the police trying to move our IPF members and Jeremy – the police failed.

We continue to campaign against digital exclusion of older people leading to isolation for older people. Most shockingly, figures released by Age UK, show that nearly a third of the councils in London do not offer a way to apply for housing benefits or council tax rebates without using the internet. Again, we are working closely with the Council on this issue.

While fully 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 intend to explore other fundraising avenues.

It should always be remembered that we are a key campaigning organisation in Islington uniting and standing up for the rights of older people.

Elaine Durack
Secretary

Loos for Islington

Toilet, lavatory, wc, loo, throne, can, khazi, washroom, restroom etc: the list goes on and on. Whatever term you use I think we can all agree that clean, well maintained sewage facilities are one of the hallmarks of a civilised society. Shoppers happily flock to retail outlets and public spaces where there are clean well maintained public washrooms. There are many elders, those suffering from diseases and disabilities and mothers with young children who feel anxiety about going out because of the dearth of toilet facilities. In my case a cancer operation and seven weeks of radiotherapy led me to the revelation that Islington Council care little for those of their ratepayers who suffer from the 'Loo Leash'. The Loo Leash keeps people at home as there are no hygienic and well maintained toilet facilities.

The Romans saw the need for both public and private toilet facilities. They valued lavatorial excellence and even

had a goddess, Cloacina, 'The Cleanser' . The roguish poet Lord Byron is often attributed as the author of this prayer which I discovered as a young man in the toilet of war hero and former captain of the England Polo Team, Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Forest Harper.

Not rashly swift nor insolently slow.'

Congratulations to Jeremy Corbyn and his whole General Election Team for a spectacular victory. Now let us work together to continue the good work, building the community

*'O Cloacina, Goddess of this place,
Look on thy suppiants with a smiling face.
Soft, yet cohesive let their offerings flow,*



The Roman Lavatory at Housesteads Fort ... reconstruction.

As a former History teacher and avid hiker my wife and I once walked the length of Hadrian's Wall. At Housesteads Fort is the best preserved Roman Loo in Britain. The toilet was flushed by rainwater and (Islington Council take note) the toilet still flushes when it rains. When Loos for Islington came into being in October 2022 it was precisely because none of Islington's automated toilets were functioning. We were one of many London toileteer action groups who presented our case to the London Assembly at City Hall in November 2022. Caroline Russell and the Greens have long been advocates of a London-wide toilet strategy.

In response to our campaign Councillor Turan and Councillor Khondoker, in a letter published on 27th January 2023 in the Tribune, promised £ 1,200,000 worth of

investment in public toilets. Well now we are 18 months into that two year promise and they have replaced just one toilet! One toilet in a borough of nearly a quarter of a million souls.

Go to the Islington Council Website and type in the word 'Toilets' and you will find that as of April 2024, five of the six public toilets are currently out of order. On the same page you will see that toilet training workshops are available. Another example of the 'doublethink' associated with the workings of those responsible for our public washrooms. It is a matter of public health that Islington live up to their promise and replace the defunct automated lavatories which have not lasted twenty years. The Victorian multi-booth attended lavatories lasted over a hundred years and yet in a

barbarian strategy those temples of cleanliness, ceramics, mahogany and disinfectant were closed and replaced by the constantly failing single booth, medieval, filth shacks Islington call public toilets. The only lavatory which was and is regularly functioning is the maintained one in Chapel Street Market. Maintained toilets are free from anti-social behaviour. Simple isn't it?

We would like you to take action by signing our petition at Change. Org <https://bit.ly/LoosForIslingtonPetition>
 If you see us in the street collecting signatures please come and say hello.
 Listen to Leonie Philip our resident poet on Youtube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ha v1bc8iW88>

Cornelius McAfee . Loos For Islington



**You are cordially invited to the IPF and Highbury View Residents
 Annual Garden Party
 Saturday 14th September
 1pm to Dusk
 Food Music and good company!
 Entrance by garden gate 89 Ronalds Road, N5 1XQ**

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

Officers:

NPC

Bob Collins: Chair
 Luke Daniels: Vice Chair
 Elaine Durack: Secretary
 Frances Bradley: Asst. Secretary
 Mike Sanderson: Treasurer

Staff:

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

Committee Members:

Margaret Diffey
 Dot Gibson
 Irma Gomez
 Alan McDonald
 David Milner: Members List
 Philip Richards
 Jan Pollock
 Cornelius McAfee
 Pam Zinkin

Delegates to

London Region:
 Elaine Durack
 Frances Bradley

Committee Meetings on the first Monday of the month at 10.30am at the IPF hall

Forum Meetings on the third Thursday on the month at 10.30 am in the Town Hall