

ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM

The voice of Islington's older community

MAY/JUNE Newsletter

1a Providence Court, Providence Place N1 0RN Tel: 0207 226 7687

Email: ipf@islingtonpensionersforum.org web: www.islingtonpensionersforum.org

Labour Day for IPF

May Day or International Labour Day is celebrated on different days all over the world. It has its origins in the labour union movement, specifically the eight-hour day movement, which advocated eight hours for work eight hours for recreation and eight hours for rest. In the UK it is celebrated as a public holiday on the 1st May or the first Monday in May. This year on the 1st May, Trade Unions and other labour organisations from all over the world gathered at Clerkenwell Green, opposite the Marx Memorial Library, in a carnival atmosphere. The march eventually moved off in the 24% heat to the sounds of the May Day Band playing a variety of labour tunes including the 'international', as the trade unions and other organisations marched behind them, some with their own musical accompaniment. The large procession winded its way towards Trafalgar Square where supporters awaited their entry to the square. A stage was erected to accommodate the speakers representing the different Trade Unions. The Palestine ambassador received an especially warm, rousing welcome. Long live May Day!

Luke Daniels



INSIDER JOB

HIGH PRAISE from health secretary Wes Streeting for his department's new permanent secretary Samantha Jones, whose "wealth of experience from the frontline of healthcare" includes working for US and private equity-owned healthcare firms chasing public contracts.

In 2019 Jones, a former NHS England director, became chief executive officer of Operose Health, then-owned by US health giant Centene. Operose bought up GP practices, leading to protests by campaigners who feared it would put profits before proper NHS procedures. Jones left Operose in March 2021; and in early 2022 a BBC investigation confirmed campaigner fears: an undercover reporter said she found evidence Operose let less qualified staff see patients without adequate supervision, using "physician associates" instead of fully qualified doctors.



Jones moved on to become then prime minister Boris Johnson's lead NHS adviser from 2021-2, before returning to the private sector as an adviser to HCA Healthcare, the US health giant running private hospitals in the UK, as well as to management consultants PA Consulting and Bain. From June 2023 to the present, Jones has chaired Keys Group, Britain's second largest operator of children's homes, also running homes and schools for those with learning difficulties.

Keys Group is owned by private equity firm G Square Capital, which also employed Jones as an "operating partner". The group has a £288m income, mostly from public sector local and health authorities, and under Jones it bought more children's homes, leading to worries about profiteering by private equity as councils faced increasing charges (*Eye* 1637).

In its 2024 accounts, the firm's income for "residential services" increased by 28 percent to £184m. Keys Group homes mostly get good reports from inspectors, but a minority are judged by the Care Quality Commission to "require improvement", including for safety.

Given Jones's appointment, how long before more public money find its way to US and private equity-owned firms under Streeting's NHS reforms?

More HP Sauce over

Let us Pop in to your Inbox

A new service for our readers - elsewhere in this newsletter we have published a list of Community centres so that you can identify your local services if you haven't already.

We are introducing a new email address to receive correspondence from you on subjects of your concern, where you might need signposting assistance and we will do our best to direct you to the appropriate service/support team and if we are unable to we will also let you know we have failed!!!

Letters@islingtonpensionersforum.org

We will also use this email address to send out activities run by 3rd party community centres such as social lunch clubs, free health classes for us elders, guided walks of the borough and free gardening activities.

These activities crop up too quickly to put in our newsletter so if you wish to receive these timely notifications whilst still receiving your physical copy just email us at this email address.

Coming Soon at IPF

The BFI has once a month free seniors film 1st Monday of the month.

A range of Healthy Living Activities

Chair base exercise

Lets Dance (no dance experience needed)

Make your own bag (no sewing involved)

Singing (no experience needed)

Art and Craft (with relaxing with music)

Knitting

Please contact Lydia if you are interested in any of these activities 07804 693461

Notices.

There will be a STOP THE CUTS, 'Welfare Not Warfare' National Demonstration organised by the Peoples' Assembly on Saturday June the 7 th from 12 Noon, starting at Portland Place W1B and marching to Whitehall.

Pensioners can obtain free help and support from 'Access Islington Hub' by calling: 020 752 72000 or Email: heretohelp@islington.gov.uk or visiting Access Islington Hub at 222 Upper Street, 6-9 Manor Gardens N7 6LA, or at the Finsbury Library 245 St. John Street EC1V 4NB

Next Islington Pensioners Forum public meeting on June 19 th at 10.30am at the Islington Town Hall. All pensioners welcome- bring a friend or neighbour.

Remembering George Floyd

Family and friends gathered on 25th of May in Houston to mark five years since the killing of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police. Millions around the world viewed the video showing Floyd's life being extinguished by a police officer, as he pleaded for his life-even calling for his mother before he died. The murder sparked world-wide protest including in the UK where the statue of slave trader



Edward Colston was pulled from its plinth and rolled down the street and unceremoniously dumped into the Bristol Harbour. Campaigners had for years called for its removal from the centre of Bristol where it was lassoed and pulled down. The Black Lives Matter Movement in the UK grew, as support from the media and individuals swelled its numbers and coffers. There was the inevitable backlash and soon there were calls for All Lives Matter, to challenge the notion of making a special case for black lives which had historically been brutalised during enslavement and colonisation.

The Black Lives Matter movement seemed to herald a new impetus to racial justice in the UK. However, five years after the protests the Guardian newspaper assessed the effect of 40 years of enquires into anti-racism campaigning for change and found it wanting. Their researchers found that of the nearly 600 recommendations over the years and spanning education, business, health, the criminal justice system and community cohesion less than a third were implemented. Prof Ted Cantele, who led the cohesion review team said: " We're in this doom loop where a riot happens or there's an acknowledgement of some sort of issue, a review happens and the recommendations aren't really taken up and then the process starts again." We should not be surprised that as a result of inaction racism persists in society. The government must follow up on the recommendations if we are to see change.

Luke Daniels

Small win .. but Prime Minister must now look at full reinstatement of our Winter Fuel Payment

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's announcement that he is rethinking the cuts to the winter fuel payments is welcome - but the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) still wants the allowance reinstated to all older people.

Mr Starmer told Prime Ministers Questions in the House of Commons today (21st May) that he 'wants more pensioners to be eligible for winter fuel payment (WFP).' He said, 'the government is looking at making changes to the policy, including the (qualifying income) threshold for payments.' But the actual detail will not be revealed until the autumn financial statement.

Jan Shortt, General Secretary of the NPC, commented: "NPC has been campaigning tirelessly for the full reinstatement of the universal Winter Fuel Payment, and it looks like this may be a first step towards success.

"But, as always the devil is in the detail, and the government wants to wait until the autumn before they let us all know what they are actually planning.

"While this announcement is a welcome step, it takes no account of individual everyday living costs and the damage that has already been done over the coldest months of the year. Nine million older people lost the universal payment when the government scrapped it in favour of means testing. Many have now endured a long winter without this vital assistance, with ever increasing energy bills not to mention the rising costs of food and other essentials.

"The government assumes that because some pensioners appear to have a good occupational pension, they are not in need. But for many millions the £200 to £300 help with their energy bills through the winter fuel payment was the difference between heating and eating.

"The NPC wants to see the reinstatement of the winter fuel payment for all pensioners, and we will continue to campaign for this to happen."

Dot Gibson writes:

Having Daniel Elson speaking at our May IPF meeting jogged my memory. . . . It reminded me of my training when I was elected general secretary of the National Pensioners Convention (2009 – 2017).

The previous general secretary was Joe Harris (2001 - 2009), who had been chair of Islington Forum before George Durack. As general secretary Joe wrote a book entitled “Paupers Progress – From Poor Relief to Old Age Pension”; on the front cover it stated “Out of the Workhouse – Pensioners now, Not Paupers!”

This book, and Joe himself taught me a lot; I was proud to follow him as the General Secretary, but, when I reached 83 years old, I considered it right not to stand for election again, but to encourage the younger generation of pensioners to take on the leadership of the NPC

The book was – is – important because Joe recognised the need for members to understand the background and history of the NPC as a campaigning organisation. His book reveals the path of ordinary workers, from farm labourers to factory workers, who once not able to work for wages became poverty-stricken i.e. Paupers, with no income, and often evicted from their homes because they could no longer pay the rent.

To quote the Foreword of *Paupers Progress* by Professor Alan Walker

“ [the book] charts the exclusion and degradation of older people over the last seven centuries and, in doing so, exposes the roots of the present paternalistic and demeaning attitudes towards older people and the inadequacies of public pensions. The case for public risk pooling for old age was made in Britain as early as the thirteenth century and periodically reiterated over the years. As Joe Harris shows, older people were identified as the 'deserving poor' in the nineteenth century due to the work of [social reformer] Charles Booth, and then ensued the long campaign for a decent pension.”

NOTE: In December 1898 a conference was held in SE London dealing with the needs of the elderly. In Joe's book he reports: “All in all 266,314 workers were represented by trade union delegates, and a further 110,634 by trades councils”

Here's a list of staffed community centres that have a large range of activities like singing, dancing, knitting, chair-based yoga, cage-fighting (no not really)!!!

Community Centre	Postcode	Website
Andover	N7 7RY	55 Corker Walk 0207 272 3493
Brickworks	N4 4BY	https://hanleycrouch.org.uk/
Highbury Roundhouse	N5 1XB	https://www.highbury-roundhouse.org.uk/
Hilldrop	N7 0JE	https://www.hilldrop.org.uk/
Hornsey Lane	N19 3YJ	https://www.hleca.org.uk/
Jean Stokes	N1 0DX	Coatbridge House, Carnoustie Drive. Jeanstokescommunitycentre@islington.gov.uk
Mildmay	N16 8NA	https://www.mildmaycommunitycentre.org/
Vibast	EC1V NH	167 Old Street. 0207 527 4605
Whittington Park	N19 4RS	https://www.whittingtonpca.org.uk/
Caxton House	N19 3RQ	https://caxtonhouse.org/
Elizabeth House	N5 1ED	https://elizabeth-house.org.uk/
Holloway Neighbourhood Group Old Fire Station	N7 6QT	https://www.hng.org.uk/
The Arc	N1 7DF	https://www.thearccentre.org/
Peel Institute	EC1R 0HU	https://thepeel.org.uk/
Ringcross Community Centre	N7 8RH	https://piliontrust.info/
St. Lukes Community Centre	EC1V 8AJ	https://www.slpt.org.uk/#!event-list

Loos for Islington - Cornelius McAfee

The good news is Loos for Islington has collected 2000 signatures and the subject of public loos in the London Borough of Islington is to be debated in a full Council Meeting on the 27th of February. If you would like to hear about our campaign and the progress we have made try the Google Notebook LM audio overview.

<https://notebooklm.google.com/notebook/0b7dbb22-6ea9-4a2b-8eae-89acaae03826/audio>

**ISLINGTON PENSIONERS FORUM
MEMBERSHIP FORM
PENSIONERS CAMPAIGNING FOR PENSIONERS
JOIN US TODAY!**

All you have to join is to fill out the form and pay a small yearly fee and you are a member! We will send you our regular newsletter keeping you up to date with issues that affect you and give you the opportunity to join us at all the social events we organise - day trips to interesting places, our fund-raising events, and film club.

Membership is just £10 per year. We don't wish to exclude anyone, so for those who may find it difficult to afford the membership fee, just contact us. Of course, if you can afford more – please do – as this helps us fund the newsletter and events.!

Come along to Islington Town Hall on the 3rd Thursday of every month between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm to and hear our speakers and give your opinions!

www.islingtonpensionersforum.org

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

Postcode.....

Tel:.....

Email:.....

Get newsletter by email or post: email: [] post: []

Please email the above details to: ipf@islingtonpensionersforum.org

It would be great if you could pay your membership fee by Direct Debit or Standing Order – this will be a yearly payment only!

Account Name: *Islington Pensioners Forum*

Sort Code: *08 90 33*

Account No. *5001427900*

Or cheques by post to: Islington Pensioners Forum, 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, London N1 0RN