

NOVEMBER 2018 NEWSLETTER

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LAMPAG OPEN MEETING MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2018

Room TH1-16

Lambeth Town Hall

Brixton Hill, SW2 1RW

12.00 pm to 2.30 pm

HOUSING AND OLDER PEOPLE

**Speaker: Tony O'Brien: Committee member, Southwark Pensioners Action Group
Committee member, NPC Greater London Region**

London faces a housing crisis for people of all ages. Central to the promotion of health and wellbeing is the provision of houses which are accessible, affordable, safe, well insulated and warm. For older people especially, it is important that their homes are close to local amenities and designed to meet their needs as they age. At the heart of planning housing is the involvement of older people in the decision making and support with downsizing and adaptations.

Homelessness amongst older people is on the increase and there are severe problems of older people in Private Rented accommodation.

Some of the overarching issues relating to the housing crisis is the government's longstanding privatisation agenda related to the right to buy, the shortage of house building, the 'Bedroom tax', fuel and pensioner poverty and the abolition of the 2014 Housing Act.

It is important to come and participate in the debate on Housing for older people regardless of your type of home whether it be owner occupied or rented. We need to talk about the reforms that need to be adopted to ensure a decent home for all.

Celebrating Age and Black History event

Thank you to members, supporters and friends for your contribution towards making the Celebrating Age and Black History Month event such an enjoyable one. The occasion exuded warmth, camaraderie and friendship. The Diva Tones lightened up the afternoon with their songs of happiness, support and love. Our speakers, the Mayor of Lambeth Christopher

Wellbelove, Frances Evans QC and Ted Knight were well received. Lib Peck, leader of the Council was unable to stay but ensured that she welcomed and communicated with people individually. The healthy sum of £80 generated through the raffle will go a long way to helping us to continue our valuable campaigning work. **Thank You Again.**

Adaptations

Old age does not inevitably result in health decline and disability. However some older people will become less mobile and able and will need to make adaptations to their homes. Home Adaptations can enable older people to live more independent lives and increase their control, confidence and dignity in day to day living. Home adaptations impact on our health and safety and wellbeing. They are important because they do not only enable people to move around their homes more safely, they help to reduce the risk of physical injury particularly from falls. By helping to prevent accidents and reduce stress they can reduce admissions to hospital.

In the budget the Chancellor, Phillip Hammond announced an extra £55m (Clause 5.17) for local authorities to spend on home adaptations in this financial year. This is in addition to the 468m already paid to local authorities for the Disability Facilities Grants (DFG) in 2018/19. The mechanism for paying the extra grant to individual councils is still to be announced. We need to ensure that older people have access to the information and support with accessing the facility.

TV licences for the over 75s

Currently people aged 75 and over enjoy fee-free viewing. However, in 2015 the government decided to shift the financial burden of this to the BBC. This change is set to take effect in 2020. The BBC commissioned Frontier Economics to explore the longer term funding options relating to the over 75 TV licence concessions. The Frontier Economics report option included not changing the current concession, replacing it with a 50% discount for over 75s, increasing the age threshold to 77 or 80 or introducing a form of means testing. A public consultation setting out a range of options will be launched in the future by the BBC. The NPC has criticised the report. Jan Shortt NPC General Secretary said, "Ever since George Osborne forced the BBC to take over responsibility for the free licence, we have known that they would try and get rid of it". The problems it sought to address remain. The call is for the government and not the BBC to fund the free licence.

Advice services in Lambeth

At the Open meeting on Social Care in September, in response to a complaint about the lack of advice services in Lambeth, Cllr Ed Davie referred to Every Pounds Counts. This service is aimed at Lambeth residents in ill- health, people with disabilities, carers and a few other categories. To access this service you have to be referred by a carer or health professional. It is not an open service. As a result of major cuts to the voluntary sector, frailer Lambeth residents find it increasingly difficult to get help from advice service directly available to the public. This issue requires serious attention.

Pensioner Parliament 11 -13 June 2019. Blackpool

LAMPAG and SPAG (Southwark Pensioners Action Group) hopes to take a coach- load of pensioners to the Pensioners Parliament next year. The three day conference is a gathering of pensioners from across the country and includes sessions on a wide range of issues. There are extra activities at the conference including a popular social evening and free tram travel in Blackpool. The event is unique and promotes a shared identity and unity in campaigning, meeting old friends and making new one. Some members have expressed an interest in attending but we need more. Full details of costs payable in instalments will be

made available as soon as we have full details of travelling and hotel costs. They were £250 last year. Kindly indicate your interest in attending to the members' Secretary at the meeting.

**NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION
GREATER LONDON REGION PROTEST
HALT DEATHS FROM COLD RELATED ILLNESSES**

The figures for the number of additional winter deaths of older people will be announced on Friday 30 November. On that day members and supporters of the London region NPC will be releasing black balloons with each balloon representing 1000 pensioner deaths. In 2016 the number was nearly 25,000 deaths. Last year (2017) it was over 34, 000. Balloons will be released at 12 noon on 30th November by George V's statue at Old Palace Yard Westminster opposite the Houses of Parliament. Make every effort to attend and join the protest condemning the disgraceful lack of action being taken to resolve the situation of so many unnecessary deaths.

Subscriptions – Reminder

Subscriptions were due in April. Please note that subscriptions were agreed at the AGM in March this year and are not pro rata. They are payable at the time of the year new members join.

Committee meeting

Monday 26 November 11am to 1pm Lambeth Town Hall.

