

<http://www.lampag.org>
info@lampag.org

Chair: Ellen Lebethé, 1 Heyford Ave, London SW8 1EA. Tel 020 75825063

Secretary: Penny Savage, 61 Hackford Road SW9 ORE Tel:020 77357375

Acting Treasurer: Solomon Ghadebo, 20 Sidford House, Briant Estate, Cossen Street London SE1 7DD

Members Secretary: Amanda Evans, 100 Newpark Road, SW2 4LN 020 671 8752

LAMPAG OPEN MEETING **Monday 18 September 2023** **Room 16 Lambeth Town Hall** **12.00 pm to 2.30 pm**

Digital Inclusion

Guest speaker: Jenny Sims NPC Digital Working Party Chair

We live in a technological world which means that we are becoming more and more dependent on digital skills and equipment and on accessing digital devices. Many people still can't get on line because they don't know how to use a computer or the internet. Worryingly, millions face barriers to connecting, learning, and accessing vital digital services because they cannot afford a laptop, a Smartphone or broadband. Half of people aged 75 lack IT skills to get on line and 1 million have cancelled their broadband in the last year because of the cost of living. Access to digital skills and equipment has many advantages and benefits. It opens up a range of opportunities and access to services, information, learning, teaching, shopping, recreation, socialising, volunteering and caring, attending hospital appointments and keeping in touch with friends and family.

Sadly there is a digital divide i.e. a gap between people who have full access to the internet and computers and those who do not. This is especially true of the older generation. Lack of access to IT and equipment is known to lead to social isolation and depression, to greater lack of independence and an increased sense of lack of safety. It is true that digital poverty not only isolates older people but discriminates against them. It is crucial that we address the issues around digital inclusion and exclusion and their impact on the quality of our lives. We also need to open opportunities for people to be able to interact with the digital world and to get support. This is an opportunity for you to learn about the benefits of being digitally included and about the support, provision, knowledge and programmes in place for motivating and inspiring older people to get on line.

End Digital poverty Day Tuesday 12 September organised by NPC partners, Digital Working Party was aimed at raising awareness of the pressing issues faced by people of all ages who are digitally excluded in the UK. **Digital Poverty Alliance** believes that everyone should be able to interact with digital world when and how they need to and is committed along with its partners like the NPC to end digital poverty by 2030. The day was an opportunity to come together as a nation and address the urgent issue head-on by raising awareness, providing practical actions and rallying support from individuals and organisations to make a tangible difference. The NPC Digital Working Party has been working to inform and enable older people- the UK's largest digitally excluded group- to get on line, and issues regular free newsletters. (See handout)

Tea coffee biscuits raffle

Committee meeting. Monday 25 September 12.30 Room 1

Age Friendly Lambeth

Lambeth is committed to becoming an Age Friendly Borough, where residents are respected and included and one in which it is a good place to grow old. Age Friendly communities and cities are based on the WHO (World Health Organisation) eight domains which if acted upon can help to address the barriers to ageing. **The 8 domains cover Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transport, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Information, Community Support and Health Services. If you haven't been able to complete a questionnaire on line there will be hard copies at our open meeting.**

Lambeth Council will be holding a Lambeth Ageing Well Festival on 30 September from 11am-3pm at the Kia Oval (Alec Stewart Gate). There will be free activities, information, food and more. You will have a chance to express your views on what Lambeth needs to know about growing older and what needs to change. LAMPAG will have an information stall at the event to highlight pensioner's issues, to publicise our work and encourage older people to join.

The Freedom Pass at 50

When the Freedom pass was introduced 50 years ago, allowing free travel on buses and the underground for pensioners, it heralded in an era where we had the freedom and opportunities to enjoy our retirement with fewer worries of the cost of travelling. This initiative which was later extended to disabled people transformed the lives of generations of Londoners by giving them free travel on transport throughout Greater London. Today 1.4million Londoners are entitled to us the older person's Freedom Pas and the Disabled Person's Freedom pass.

The use of the Freedom pass has freed us up to visit friends and family, socialise, go shopping, visit theatres and galleries, carry out caring and volunteering duties, to indulge in our hobbies and participate in physical activities. Research has shown that physical activity has benefits to mobility, mental wellbeing, and muscle strength in older people, reducing the risk of falls, and fractures and cardiovascular disease. These in turn represent savings for the NHS. The freedom pass not only confers health and wellbeing benefits to people, it also benefits the local economy, through taxes, through people staying active members of society, participating in civic life, volunteering, unpaid work and informal caring.

A condition of the freedom pass has been free travel between 4.30am and 9.00am. Pensioners are concerned at the devastating decision to permanently cancel the use of the Freedom pass and the 60+ Oyster card before 9.00 am on weekdays. Free travel before 9.00 am was suspended in June 2020. On 18 January London Councils announced that the temporary suspension will become permanent. Older and disabled Londoners will be hard hit by these cuts to travel concessions. Abigail Wood, CEO of Age UK London said: "We are devastated that the voice of older Londoners have been ignored. Affordable transport is a lifeline not a luxury and this cut penalises them with no choice about when and how to travel". This is the wrong decision. It comes at the worst time when the cost of living crisis worsens and older Londoners are plunged into poverty. It is up to us to challenge this decision and to ensure that we not only preserve the Freedom pass but that we ensure that we preserve our right to use it how and when we want to.

There will be a Celebration of 50 years of the London Freedom Pass at 11am on Saturday 23 September in Southwark Park. Bermondsey. Speakers will include Mick Linch, General Secretary of the RMT, RT HON John McDonnell MP, Ellen Lebethe Vice President NPC, Thelma Purcell Southwark pensioner and activist John Murphy, Lead London Bus Officer, Unite.

Celebrating Age and Black History month.

We will be celebrating Age and Black History in October when we will revisit the history and celebrate the contributions of black people to their communities, society and the world at large. We hope to have a speaker, entertainment and refreshments to commemorate the month.

As promised here is the Independent Age Helpline 0800 319 6789

