

JANUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER

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MONDAY 21 JANUARY 2019

Lambeth Town Hall
Brixton Hill
London SW8 1RW
12 pm to 2.30 pm
RoomTH1-16

PROTECTING OUR LIBRARIES

Speakers: Cllr *Sonia Winifred, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture. Laura Swaffield, Defend the Ten. Stephen Carlill, Defend the Ten*

Libraries play a very important role in the progress of knowledge and culture in society. The rewards and services they offer create opportunities for relaxation, learning, creativity and research. Libraries are more than a collection of books. For many smaller communities, they have become community centres with access to electronic equipment and services, ebooks, movies, audio books, computers, video games, film shows, newspapers and support with accessing information. One of the most important functions of a library is that is where librarians are. Without librarians people cannot fully use libraries. For years there has been a campaign for the provision of fully funded, fully staffed, well resourced and equipped libraries with a range of activities and ample community services in Lambeth. Our libraries must never become targets for Local Authority budget savings.

Come and have your voices heard on why Public services including librarians are valuable assets and should be retained, maintained and managed as such.

March AGM

The AGM will take place on Monday 18 =March 2019. Relevant Papers will go out in February 2019.

LOOKING BACK

I hope you have had an enjoyable Festive Season with friends and family. As we begin a new year, we reflect on what the year has been like for us, personal successes, failure, hopes, dreams, aspirations fulfilled or not and most importantly what the future holds for us as pensioners in the future.

The last year has been dominated by Brexit to the exclusion of the real issues which have impacted on the health, well being and financial security of communities across the country as a result of 10 years of Austerity. We've seen the Windrush scandal and the shame of the 34 000 winter deaths as a result of cold related illnesses. Loneliness is escalating. Pensions remain one of the lowest in the developed world. Our television licence and concessionary travel are under threat. The NHS remains grossly underfunded with doctors forced to take industrial action over patient safety caused by staff shortages and real terms underfunding. The social care system is failing to meet the needs of those who need it most. Cuts to Local Authority have left councils introducing cuts to staffing and essential services.

Homelessness amongst young and old abound with some people found dead on the streets of Britain last year. 330 000 among them children are now without a permanent home. The vast majority of working people have seen their income fall in real terms. 70% of those receiving benefits are in work. Universal credit has left thousands without access to food. The Trussell Trust reported the highest levels of food banks on record.

The crisis in our schools are so severe that 2 000 Head Teachers marched on Downing Street. These are just some of the challenges facing communities across the country. As a pensioner's action group campaigning for improvement to the quality of life of today's and tomorrow's pensioners, we need to continue our efforts to build a strong, viable and effective group which will confront the challenges and campaign for real change.

PROFITS BEFORE CARE

An investigation by the Guardian has found that companies which own homes that have been rated inadequate, the lowest possible rating by the Quality Care Commission (CQC) are raking in millions in profits. These homes care for elderly people with Dementia, disabled people and those with learning difficulties. Of the 220 homes rated inadequate by recent inspections are turning over millions of tax free profits at least 44 were owned by private companies. Amongst some of the atrocities inspectors found were too few staff to meet patients' needs; medicines not safely managed; patients at risk from dehydration and malnutrition; dirty and unkempt rooms and staff failing to uphold residents' treatment with dignity and respect.

Barbara Keely Shadow Minister for Social care is reported as saying: *'This investigation has exposed the appalling standards of care being provided by some of the largest providers of outsourced residential care which has left large numbers of vulnerable people in need of care suffering terrible indignity and neglect.'*

The long awaited Green Paper on Social Care has still not been released. When released the NPC will again press its demand for a Social Care System funded through general taxation, free at the point of delivery and staffed by fully trained, fairly paid and care homes scrupulously monitored to deliver quality care which will meet the diverse needs of people in care.

1 FEBRUARY DIGNITY ACTION DAY

We will be celebrating Dignity Action Day with a stall in the Central Hall at St Thomas's Hospital from 11 am to 3pm. We will be highlighting the importance of the treatment of people with dignity in Care Homes, Domiciliary settings, hospitals, public services and places. **Treatment with dignity** is a right not a privilege. We will be joined by the Patient Experience Team who will be highlighting some key initiatives related to dignity at St Thomas Hospital.

MARCH AGM

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Committee Meeting

Thursday 28 January 2019, 11am – 1pm. The venue will be Lambeth Town Hall.