

## OCTOBER 2017 NEWSLETTER

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**OPEN MEETING  
MONDAY 23 OCTOBER 2017  
CELEBRATING AGE AND BLACK HISTORY  
Stockwell Resource Centre  
1 Studley Road, SW4 6RA  
12.00 pm to 3.00 pm**

**Speakers:** *The Contribution of Older People to the Economy*  
Ellen Lebeth. Chair: Lambeth Pensioners Action Group  
Vice President: National Pensioners Convention

*Caribbean RAF men in World War 2*  
David Horsley. Member, Lambeth Pensioners Action Group

October is the month when we celebrate the achievements and contributions of older people and Black communities world- wide to their families, communities and society so often ignored. We celebrate especially our proud history as members of LAMPAG and of the Lambeth Black community speaking up and campaigning for dignity, respect and financial security for older people in their later years. Our speakers are members of LAMPAG. They are activists and campaigners for the rights of pensioners and will speak *about us, with us* which is always welcome. We have the knowledge and experience of member's right here in the group which we should tap into more.

We will be Celebrating Age and Black History with a social gathering where will again be sharing food, drinks, friendship and warmth. We will be replicating the generosity and camaraderie that we have shown so well in the past. Please bring a plate to share. The day will start with a rally on Windrush Square. (Details overleaf) .

***Do come and help to set up at the venue from 11.30 am***  
**Buffet, music, raffle**

**Note change of Date and Venue for this event**

### **Older People in Private Rented Housing.**

A report based on information collated between 2013 and 2016 by Age UK revealed the reality of life for people over 65 at the bottom of the private housing sector. There are 146,000 households renting privately in London aged 50 and the numbers are rising. The report showed that many live in squalor and distress. They often experienced unexpected rent increases, were fearful of evictions with landlords failing to carry out timely repairs and their problems ignored by letting agencies. Most disquieting of all was that older people stayed quiet because landlords reacted badly to repeated requests for repairs especially if the older person contacted an external body such as the Local Authority Environmental Health Authority. They struggled to voice their concerns with landlords and letting agents refusing to listen.

The inability to properly raise awareness of problems increases the feeling of powerlessness for many older private renters many of whom already feel trapped in frequent rent increases. They fear that increases in rent would be unaffordable without either moving or cutting living costs. It is so bad that some people cut down on heating.

While these issues affect renters of all ages, the problems can have a greater impact on vulnerable people specially those who are older many of who may require assistance to manage these difficulties. Failure to carry out timely repairs to cold damp, mouldy homes and homes of a poor standard are likely to have a disproportionate impact on the health and wellbeing of older people. In fact one person dies every seven minutes of cold related illnesses each winter.

Furthermore, older private tenants looking for a home for life do not feel safe renting with security with Assured Short Tenancies (ASTs) which are often six months and allow short notice evictions. ASTs do not work for older people who do not own their own homes and who want a home for life in their later years. The present horrifying situation facing older private tenants needs to change.

What is called for is a register of landlords, urgent rent controls to deal with greedy landlords, a ban on letting fees, minimum efficiency standards for private renters, security of tenure, adaptations where necessary, more resources for local environmental authorities to ensure that home standards are enforced. Only this will address this appalling situation.

### **IMPORTANT NOTICES**

#### **Wednesday 18 October Lobby of Parliament**

**Could as many of you as possible attend the Lobby of Parliament. It is important that we make our voices heard in the very place where the laws, good or bad, are made and policies drawn up which impact on our lives.**

**Meet 10.15am on steps Lambeth Town Hall for departure 10 30 am prompt for the Houses of Parliament. Alternatively make your own way to Old Palace Yard opposite House of Lords for 11.30 am rally and lobby from 1.00pm to 3.00pm.**

#### **Monday 23 October Celebrating Age and Black History event**

**Please note the change of date and venue and don't forget to bring a dish to share. The day will begin with a rally on Windrush Square. This is an opportunity to show what we do as a pensioners action group and to get our message across. Assemble on the Square at 11 am for rally 11.20am followed by a short march to Brixton Police Station. Catch bus the at Blue Star House for journey to the Stockwell Resource Centre. MP Helen Hayes and the Mayor of Lambeth Cllr Marcia Campbell will join us at the Celebration. We are waiting to hear Invitees MPs Kate Hoey and Chuka Umunna.**

**Committee meeting: Monday 30 October, Manor Court, 11 am to 1.00 pm**

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## Theresa May's Speech

In her speech to Conservative faithfuls at the Party Conference, the PM promised to deal with, burning injustices and in how people of different 'races' are treated, to review the Mental Health Act (long overdue) with the view to updating the law. She also promised to tackle the housing crisis by making £2bn extra available to councils and Housing Associations to bid for the money and to provide certainty over the future rent levels with some homes built for social housing with rent below the market level. This equates to a mere 5,000 new homes per year. The average price of a house in London £536,000 for flats and £600,000 for houses and the below market rent is 80% of the market value. London alone needs at least 35,000 new homes

In the Thatcher Government finalised the deregulation of the private rental sector. Some tenants are already struggling with rents and with rent controls lifted and people cannot afford market rents. In London there is an oversupply of properties at the high end and a chronic shortage at the low end. Her promise on Housing will go no way in tackling the Housing crisis.

The PM also promised end the 'rip off energy prices' with a new cap on bills. However there was little detail about how many people the cap will cover and whether it will be an absolute cap or limit on the rises.

