

LAMBETH PENSIONERS ACTION GROUP

AGM MARCH 2011

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The committee met 10 times over the year to take forward the work of the group. We have managed to carry out our respective roles to the best of our ability despite the constraints of illnesses, hospital appointments and urgent family commitments. We have sent out regular monthly newsletters informing members of meetings as well as news and notices about relevant pensioners' issues. The chair has reported regularly on meetings she attended as representative of LAMPAG and on their outcomes. I thank the committee for their team work and spirit.

In **April** we held a pre-election hustings meeting which was attended by prospective candidates of the main political parties and others i.e. the Greens and the SWP. Candidates made the usual promises about how they valued our contributions to our communities and what they would do if elected to improve the standard of our living in general.

In the **May** Post-election campaign meeting, we faced the uncertainty of not knowing which government would be taking over. What we did know was that we were facing massive cuts of our public services, the further erosion of the Welfare State and benefit cuts. The meeting resolved to bring back the SOS campaign and to align ourselves with workers and community groups to oppose the cuts and to defend our public services.

LAMPAG was represented at the Pensioners Parliament in Blackpool in **June** and was disappointed that the new government has not sent a speaker.

The guest speaker at the June meeting was June Gregory, Lambeth Safeguarding Adults Policy Development Officer. She addressed us on Elder abuse and articulated the need for greater recognition of elder abuse in hospitals, nursing homes and family situations. June also saw the 9th Consultative Health Conference 'Better Care, Better Health' hosted by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust Hospital and organised by LAMPAG. The conference was described as one of the best so far.

The **July** meeting was taken over by a presentation on Lambeth Services for Older People, and was addressed by Jim Dickson Cabinet councillor for Health and Adult Social Care. He outlined services provided by Lambeth for Older people. He told the meeting that Lambeth would be responding to the White Paper on Health and Social Care. He indicated that no decisions had been made with regard to 'savings in social care in the borough as a result of the cuts in Local authority funding.

In **September** we called a special meeting to discuss the conditions as set out in the grant award from Grassroots Community Grants. This led to amendments to the constitution being agreed by the meeting to meet the grant conditions. The meeting also addressed the threats to the fuel allowances, VAT increases, and the Freedom pass.

It brought attention to some of the changes to Health and Social Care delivery proposed in the Government White Paper which was out for consultation.

In **October** we held a successful Celebrating Age and Black History Month March and Rally followed by a buffet lunch in Room 8. Our Guest Speaker was Barry Todman, Chair, NPC London Region and the Deputy Mayor Cllr Tina Valcarcel attended.

The day after members took part in a sponsored walk in Brockwell Park to raise funds for the group. Thank you and well done all of you.

Dot Gibson, NPC National secretary and associate LAMPAG member was the guest speaker at the meeting in **November**. She spoke about the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review outlining the main announcements and how they will affect older people. She emphasised the need for pensioners to pledge themselves to join the campaigns against the cuts with groups across the community.

Our **December** meeting was a festive event where Our President Daphne Marchant spoke about her work with and for older people in the borough and her long-standing link with LAMPAG. She talked about the new Pensioners Hub at the Derby and Joan Club. This was followed by a buffet and drinks and of course the raffle.

The New year began with a **New Year's** Celebration Social event where we shared thoughts and feelings about the past year over a buffet lunch and drinks. A good time was had by all.

Our meeting in **February** was addressed by Cllr Jim Dickson who presented the Lambeth Council's Budget proposal for 2011/2011 with regard to Adult Social Services. He highlighted the services provided by the Council for older people and set out the proposed services which were to be stopped, changed and reduced and said that no decisions had been made. He made out a case of why Lambeth was forced to make the cuts which were seen by many to be unfair. The proposal raised a great deal of disquiet and concern amongst members.

I would like members to set themselves the task of spreading the word about pensioners' conditions and to make a concerted effort to draw in new members. We need to strengthen our campaign base towards achieving our goals.

I would like to thank Julia Shelley, Executive Director of Age UK Lambeth for providing admin and posting support, Patricia Moberly, Chair of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust Hospital for hosting and funding the Health Conference, our president Cllr Daphne Marchant, for her support, Dot Gibson for her IT help and to Fabienne Knee for her voluntary support to the officers.

Ellen Lebethe (Secretary).

