

# LPF Newsletter

(for the “retired” and “about-to-retire”)

May to June 2020

website: [lpforum.org](http://lpforum.org)

Est. 1986 Registered Charity No 1158175



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Dear Members, Colleagues and Friends,

The summer promises to be a hot one, and “hot” in so many ways which we had not anticipated. We now have to adjust to the warm weather AND the changes we have had to make in our daily lives.

We suddenly have to stay indoors and protect ourselves from COVID-19. We have had to adapt our lifestyles and our freedoms are curtailed.

Whereas we would be soaking up the sun we now have to STAY SAFE, STAY AT HOME, and SELF ISOLATE. In a way, it brings back memories of when I was a little girl in my homeland. That was during WWII, when father would ensue we had a good stock of “provisions” and sweets—bulls eyes and peppermints in particular, and as soon as he returned home he did a roll call.

We’re now in a different kind of warfare, one for which we were not prepared. We are now on “Lockdown”. This is tough, because we cannot welcome any visitors— “not even family” we are told. This is having a devastating effect, especially when we rely on our children to help us.

## Care Home Issues

You have heard the furore about the reporting of the mortality rates amongst older people in care homes: the disjoint between the daily reporting of hospital deaths and the other reports with a big time-lag from the Office of National Statistics. From what I have read in the media, it seems to me that older people are at the bottom of the list for appropriate care: no PPE in the care homes, etc. and the incidence of under-reporting is particularly disturbing. There are also anecdotal reports that care homes are being advised that residents over the age of 75 should not be admitted to hospital, and what’s worse, residents may be asked to complete Advance Care Directive Forms without the knowledge or support of family.

## Resilient care of our mental well-being

At times like this we need to take good care of our mental health (the main thrust of the Mayor of London’s letter on page 2),

If you’ve gone down the “digital” route you will know that there are lots of resources out there on-line (and send an e-mail to Tracey to find out our plans for a “virtual” Monday Project). However, “we’re all in this together” and the various help lines listed on the back page will put you in touch with volunteer organisations that can supply you with books (audio or otherwise) and puzzles. You could also knit us some squares or make a panel for the LPF wall-hanging (see page 3), or unleash your dormant talents to submit entries to the King Lear Prize competitions, and do share them with us.

## Scam awareness

Regrettably our event on SCAMS did not happen, although so pertinent at this time as there are many unscrupulous people around trying to profit from the dilemma we are in, but we are pleased to share advice from National Trading Standards and, of course, never give out your personal or financial details on-line, over the phone or at the door.

## Better times ahead

What this crisis has done is to raise an awareness that we all need each other, so it is important that we keep a check on our neighbours and stay in touch with our distant friends and relatives. I found that in telephoning members, many were keen to chat and spoke of plans for a bit get together to come. As the cheery poster on page 3 says “This Won’t be Forever”, but in the meantime, please observe and follow the guidance given by the Borough and the Government: STAY HOME: PROTECT THE NHS: SAVE LIVES.

Best wishes,

*Bridgit A Sam-Bailey* Chairman

**Do you have an e-mail contact address?** We are committed to the bi-monthly paper newsletter to go to all members by post (unless anyone asks to receive it only by e-mail). However some items crop up between mailings that you might be interested in and if we have an e-mail we can let you know about them.

***Our list is totally confidential and will not be shared with any other body.***

***E-mail [info@lpforum.org](mailto:info@lpforum.org) to benefit from this free service.***

# MAYOR OF LONDON

Sadiq Khan writes on 18 April

As we enter another three week period of lockdown I wanted to start a frank conversation about the toll this is taking on the mental health of many Londoners.

This is a difficult time for our city - uncertain and stressful - and we can't do many of the things we'd normally do to look after our mental health.

None of us are superhuman. Right now it's especially important that anyone is able to get mental health support when they need it. I want you all to know that it's not just okay, but the right thing, to ask for help. ...

## TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

**Talk to someone trust.** Especially in these extraordinary times, we must open up and talk to each other about how we are coping. Don't be scared to show your vulnerabilities during this difficult time; pick up the phone and reach out to a family member or friend.

**Help is available.** Just like with a physical illness, if a mental illness gets too much it's important to seek outside help. Visit our website to find the right help for you. It connects to Thrive LDN and many other national and citywide services, depending on your particular needs.

**Get help if you are grieving.** Any loss of a loved one can be traumatic, but it can be especially challenging right now, if you're cut off from your support system. If you are bereaved and finding it difficult to cope, please don't hesitate to reach out to support services.

## You are not alone.

Thank you, and take care,

Mayor of London,  
Sadiq Khan

#LondonTogether



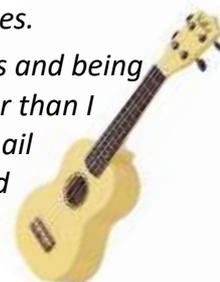
## Monday Project withdrawal symptoms? or never come but would like to find out about it...

Contact Tracey on [info@LPforum.org](mailto:info@LPforum.org) and she will let you know what we are arranging on a "virtual" basis.

Barbara Moore also writes:

*Missing my trips to the Lewisham market to buy fruit and vegetables for the 'bring and share' sessions. Even so, trying to follow the eatwell guide and eat a variety of fruit and vegetables and ensure I get enough fibre every day. And avoiding sugary foods and anything containing artificial sweeteners. Got to keep healthy in these trying times.*

*Missing even more the ukulele sessions and being able to enjoy hearing songs sung better than I can manage. If you did not get the email from Ray with all the music, do ask and I can email it to you so you can keep on practising in the months to come.*



*GCDA together with walk leaders are hosting Zoom sessions for virtual walking groups or at home chats to help everyone who enjoyed the walking groups. If you would like to take part in a session please send your email address to me at [info@LPForum.org](mailto:info@LPForum.org) with 'Walking Chat' in the subject and I will be able to send*



*you an invite to the next Walk 'n' Zoom chat session. Let me know in the email if you are interested in joining a virtual-walking group or chat-at-home group, and your preferred day of the week.*  
Barbara Moore

## Social Calendar

For obvious reasons we did not make it to either the Dulwich Picture Gallery in March or on the return trip back to Essex in April, but we trust that these visits can be reinstated in our "Social Calendar" later at some other time.

In the meantime, for those who can access the internet through a computer, i-pad or smart phone, if you go to [dulwichpicturegallery.org](http://dulwichpicturegallery.org), and click on the tabs "Our Collection" and then "Explore our Collection" a fabulous and conveniently searchable array is laid before you to ponder, read about and click on a further link for the audio commentary.

If you're regretting the Essex trip, what about something rather different? You can go to [essexwt.org.uk](http://essexwt.org.uk) and by following the links through "protecting wildlife" to "webcams" get up close and personal (at the right times of day) with badgers, bats, swallows or owls. Enjoy!



Poster "Drawn with Love" by Emma@imagistic.co.uk This was re-tweeted by LPF (following Bexley Together). If you have a smart-phone do sign up to Twitter and follow us— @LPForum. Also check your e-mail, if you've given it to us, for an invite to our new members' chat forum.

## QUARANTINE



## COOKS

Charlotte Whiston writes: Myself and a friend Joe are working on a project funded by Culture Seeds (the Mayor of London), that helps connect people in South East London who are finding

it hard to cook due to the restrictions that COVID-19 brings. We want to partner participants or 'recipe-ants' (who for whatever reason are unable to cook for themselves with keen cooks or 'Quarantine Cooks' in the local area. The Quarantine Cook will receive a recipe from the 'recipe-ant' (sweet or savoury) and will cook the recipe for both households.

All expenses on us, this wont cost either of you a penny. If really keen, the Quarantine Cooks can also cook their favourite food for their recipe-ant too and you can write to each other about the cooking.

So then, if you are either a keen cook in the South East London area or know of any older, socially isolated people or busy or stressed households who would appreciate their favourite meal being cooked for them, then please get in touch! This is a unique project and one we really believe will help those who are feeling disconnected in these weird times. We all know the importance of a good meal don't we...

Contact me on 07703 395 509 or email [quarantine.cooks.london@gmail.com](mailto:quarantine.cooks.london@gmail.com)

*Each one of us can help the scientific fightback— please read and see how sharing your health status on a readily downloadable App can give researchers the large database they need to find the answers to bring this under control. (And someone you trust can do it for you if you don't have the kit.)*



### **Ageing, frailty and COVID-19**

*April 23, 2020 Dr. Claire Steves of KCL writes:*

Initial data which came out of China warned us that COVID-19 affects older people more seriously. But does it affect them in the same way? With the COVID symptom tracker, we are looking at how age, and the way we age might change the symptoms we get. To get this question right we really need more older people registering on the app, which is why we are so pleased that many charities are joining our call today, which highlights the new feature on the app which allows people to report for others. In the meantime, I'd like to share with you some important preliminary analyses on the data from the app which have yielded some really important results. We have looked at the symptoms experienced during proven COVID-19 infection by people who are over 85, report limiting health problems, or need help or physical aids. These are all pointers that a person might be more vulnerable to stressors of life – so called “frailty” – but what about COVID-19? We found that this group of people testing positive for COVID-19 experienced **more shortness of breath**, than other test-positive groups. Interestingly, they also experienced **more headache, confusion and diarrhoea** than non-frail people. These symptoms are not normally considered typical of COVID-19. If this is confirmed, it is a really important finding - people experiencing these symptoms may not realise they could have COVID-19, and therefore may not seek testing. Also, healthcare workers may not think of COVID-19 when patients report these symptoms, so it could be missed, and therefore spread. The fact their symptoms are different could also mean that the virus affects the bodies of frailer people in a different way, and this could have a serious effect on future vaccination and treatment options. Clearly, more work is needed on the effects of COVID-19 on people who are frail but this is an important start. Our app now allows for people to input symptoms on behalf of someone else. Perhaps you have a relative who is frail or unable to submit their symptoms themselves? Someone who doesn't use a smartphone maybe?



*Our planned April Forum meeting on safeguarding against scams did not happen,*

*so we're sharing here an update from the National Trading Standards Scams Team*

**Wash your hands of corona virus scams!**

**Be aware of people offering or selling:**

- Virus testing kits—these are only offered by NHS.
- Vaccines or miracle cures—there is currently no vaccine or cure.
- Overpriced or fake goods to protect yourself from coronavirus such as anti-bacterial products.
- Shopping or medication collection services.
- Home cleaning services.

**Protect yourself and others:**

- Don't be rushed into making a decision. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.
- Only purchase goods from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.
- Don't assume everyone is genuine. It's okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- If someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for ID. Be suspicious of requests for money up front. If someone attempts to pressurise you into accepting a service they are unlikely to be genuine. Check with family and friends before accepting offers of help if you are unsure.

**Don't hesitate to contact your bank if you think you have been scammed.**

*Phone numbers for the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline and Action Fraud (to report a scam) are on the back page.*

*Also beware of a very realistic copy of the TV Licensing site/form that might turn up in your email inbox inviting you to click and renew. This is not genuine and the sender cannot be traced. Delete such an email and share this information.*

## The new national creative arts competition for over 70s stuck at home because of Coronavirus £1000 prizes                      Five categories

**Closing date Friday 29 May**

Many people in the UK are staying at home and are not able to go out for social gatherings due to Coronavirus.

Our greatest writer, William Shakespeare, was faced with a similar situation, with outbreaks of the plague throughout his career, and in particular in 1605-06, when he wrote his *King Lear*.

We have launched the *King Lear Prizes* to encourage ordinary people, who have never been published before and are not professional writers, musicians or artists, to create new works of literature, poetry, music, drama and art during the time they are quarantined.

### Short story

- 2,000 to 10,000 words
- In English
- Any subject or setting
- Submit full text

### Poetry

- Up to 40 lines
- In English
- Any form or subject
- Submit full text

### Solo Musical Composition

- Up to 4 minutes
- For one solo instrument only
- Any instrument
- Submit manuscript or audio recording

### Short Drama

- Up to 15 minutes in running time
- Performed by up to 4 people
- In English
- Any subject or setting
- Submit full script

### Art

- Painting, drawing, photography, textiles, crafts
- Submit a photograph of your work

Entries via the website [kinglearprizes.org](http://kinglearprizes.org) or by post.

For a postal entry ask someone (friend relative or neighbour) to go on-line to download and print the rules and an application form, or else phone LPF Trustee and Secretary, Anne Schuman, on 020 8699 1933 and she will pop one in the post for you to send in your entry to: **King Lear Prize Committee, 26 Montagu Mews West, London. W1H 2EE**



## Membership Matters

The Forum Trustees and staff are deeply disappointed not to have had our usual chance of meeting up with many of you as you come in to pay the annual subscription at Membership Day. But a big thank you to those who have already paid by cheque, or who pay by standing order (new cards for 2020-2021 enclosed with this newsletter). A call out, though, to a couple of you who would be expecting to get a new card but haven't—we've had one unidentified bank transfer and a postal order with no name attached! **Phone Anne Schuman, Secretary, on 020 8699 1933 and we'll sort it out.**

If you haven't managed to pay your sub ***don't worry!*** We definitely won't stop sending you our newsletter and you can catch up with the payment when life gets back to normal again. ***This edition of the newsletter is being widely distributed and if you're not a member of LPF but would like to join (among other things ensuring you have future issues posted direct to you) please complete the form overleaf and send it in. Introductory offer for new members joining is £5 through to March 2021.***

## Let's get crafty about things

Fancy taking up knitting again to some purpose? The Monday Project Knit 'n' Natter group fundraise for the Forum by selling their goods. Find those needles and make small toys and fancy goods or even just squares to be sewn into lap-blankets. If you can ask someone who can tap into local social media there will be wool out there for the asking, and jig-saw puzzles too if that is your thing.

There's also the LPF embroidery/fabric painting project to be continued when all "this" is over.

Anne Schuman writes:

*If you find a picture of a London landmark, and can reproduce it on a piece of cotton (preferably white), spend some of your spare time making a patch and we can affix it when we meet up again at the Monday Project. Phone her on 020 8699 1933 to find out more.*



Initial here to give your consent to our holding your details on our membership data base as required by Data Protection			
Title	Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss/Other	First Name	
Last Name			
Address			
		Postcode	
Tel.		Mobile	
Email			
(write clearly distinguishing "r"/"v", "0"/"O", "2"/"z", "n"/"u", etc.)			
Initial here with the further opt-in to our using your e-mail			
Y of B	Reg. disabled?	Yes / No	Housebound? Yes / No
Any skills or interests to offer to the Forum? e.g., Management, Book-keeping, Knitting, the NHS, housing issues			
Send to: <b>LPF, Old Town Hall, Catford Road, London, SE6 4RU</b> With your cheque for £5 for membership to March 2021 plus any donation			

CCG and/or SLH



**Can't get to your bank for cash?**

### The local post office might be able to help

*Extract from an article in the Telegraph On-line*

*By Harry Brennan 13 April 2020*

New services at local Post Offices will allow elderly, vulnerable and self-isolating people greater access to cash to pay for deliveries or reimburse helpful neighbours, family and friends.

Those unable to leave their homes and with limited access to their finances can call up their bank, building society or credit union and order cash to be collected from the local Post Office, which is now offering extra services because of coronavirus.

Financial institutions will send a one-time voucher via text to a mobile phone, email or through the post on request, which customers can use to redeem cash at a Post Office branch.

The cash can also be collected by a trusted helper or carer. Similar vouchers can be ordered to allow cheques to be cashed too.

It is especially useful for elderly or self-isolating individuals who do not use or have access to online banking and means they can pay back local suppliers or helpers dropping off food deliveries and other essentials without leaving the house. ....

Martin Kearsley of the Post Office said being able to access cash was still an absolute necessity for many and asked people using the enhanced service to be mindful of social distancing guidelines, suggesting cheques and cash could be put through letterboxes to minimise contact.

# Which?

*An alert sent out to Tracey from her Which? subscription that she wants to share with you.*

## **What is price-gouging?**

Price gouging is when businesses heavily inflate the price of products or services that are in high-demand.

This can lead to consumers paying over the odds, while the seller makes a profit.

The coronavirus outbreak has led to a number of online sellers hiking prices on items that have been difficult to get hold of.

## **Examples of price-gouging**

A *Which?* investigation found that some sellers on eBay and Amazon have dramatically increased their prices of household items during the COVID-19 crisis.

These items include:

- Hand sanitiser
- Antibacterial handwash
- Bleach products
- Baby formula
- Medicines
- Thermometers
- Sanitary products

## **The types of price hikes we've heard about include:**

- A 250ml bottle of Carex, normally retailed for £1, priced for more than £10 on Amazon and eBay
- Dettol bleach and cleaning sprays, being sold for ten times and in one case, 25 times the typical price.

## **Sterilising fluid for baby bottles for more than ten times the original price.**

## **How to spot price-gouging**

Sometimes price-gouging is easy and obvious to spot.

If you regularly buy a household product from local stores you'll know how much it typically costs, though factor in what you consider is reasonable for postage as well.

Similarly, if you place regular repeat orders for products online, you'll know how much you 'should' pay.

If you're not entirely sure how much something would usually cost though, consider the following:

Ask yourself whether the price is reasonable. If it seems absurdly high, take a minute to look at the prices charged by other retailers.

Shop around and compare prices. It's worth looking at what other well-known retailers are charging, so you get a better idea of what a reasonable price looks like.

Be aware of pressure selling tactics. Some sellers will try and push you into making a purchase, using messages such as:

- 'selling fast'
- '42 looking at this product now'
- 'In high-demand'

Don't let these tactics push you into spending more than you need to.

Check if the item has been used. Some unscrupulous sellers have been selling 'used' hand sanitiser for high prices on online marketplaces. If the item is used, consider whether the price seems fair, or whether you want to buy it at all.

Watch out for 'package deals'. As well as multiples of the same item being sold together, you might also find different products sold as a single lot. Quite simply, work out how much they are costing you per unit to make sure you're not overpaying.

Be careful when you're placing your order. Listings can be misleading – we've seen examples of a low initial price, but heavily inflated postage. Always check the final price carefully at the checkout stage before you place your order.

The *Which?* website is well worth checking out if you are able to do so—information on goods and services and petitions and campaigns on consumer interests, like resisting pressure from the banking sector to move us all on-line and into a cashless society.

## Useful numbers:

**Distressed or in Crisis?** South London & Maudsley—**0800 731 2864** and press “1”

**Scams** Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline (for advice on scams) **0808 223 11 33**  
Action Fraud (to report a scam) **0300 123 2040**

**Need help?** Call the Silver Line anytime, a free confidential helpline for information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day. **0800 4 70 80 90**



**Pensions Credit** queries: call the Department of Work and Pensions on **0800 99 1234**

Independent Age Helpline—free impartial advice over the telephone **0800 319 6789**

Damien Egan

LPF have previously teamed up with

**SOUTH EAST LONDON COMMUNITY ENERGY**



and here's what they can do for you:

- Help with topping up prepayment meters whilst self-isolating
- Explaining the government support available to help with energy bills in this emergency
- Providing impartial advice on finding a suitable tariff and supplier for your electricity, gas & water
- Providing debt advice
- Supporting access to grants or discounts you may be entitled to
- Explaining how to reduce energy use by making your home more energy-efficient
- Connecting you to other sources of help

**Book a FREE telephone advice session by calling them on 0808 169 1779.**

Lewisham Local

**Disclaimer:** The charity, Lewisham Pensioners Forum, is not to be held responsible for the accuracy of information received from other sources or the views and opinions, implicit or explicit, in pieces written under a personal by-line.