

# LPF Newsletter

(or the "retired" and "about-to-retire")

## Sept-Oct 2021

(Pensioners Day Special)



Fifth Floor, Laurence House,  
Catford Road, SE6 4RU

Email: [info@LPforum.org](mailto:info@LPforum.org)

Tel: 020 8690 7869

Est. 1986

Registered Charity No 1158175

website: [LPForum.org](http://LPForum.org) Twitter feed: @LPForum

Dear Members, Friends and Readers,  
Oh well, I'm unhappy. I'm complaining. Why? Because two minibuses full of LPF members, family, and friends went off to Broadstairs and left me at home feeling miserable and in pain following a visit to Epsom - not the races, the Hospital. It was a gruelling day for me. Tracey did call me on the way to tell me what a wonderful time you were having, and what the weather was like, and all of that. I have also seen a couple of comments on what a wonderful day it was. I am really pleased to learn that you all had an enjoyable time. We do try to please, and are happy to receive comments. We are happy that we were able to take you to a place where you could inhale the fresh air and take in the sights, whilst you exhaled and felt happy to be out on a nice day having fun.

My visit to the Epsom hospital left me and my son feeling very frustrated. I had no idea that the old clinics had been knocked down and replaced with parking spaces mostly for staff. There were a few disabled bays BUT Blue Badge holders still have to pay the parking fee. There were many unsigned one-way systems, so we found ourselves following others traversing these. I now anticipate receiving a penalty.

Now, to update you on a number of things, but firstly let me say in case you have not been forewarned. **Our energy bills** are set to rise by AT LEAST £139 per annum for millions of households. But here in South East London we have expert advice at the end of a phonenumber. Read on our middle pages what Dr Giovanna Speciale of SELCE says about this and how you can mitigate its effect.

**THE HEALTH AND CARE BILL** Throughout the summer, while we have all been distracted by other matters, there has been worrying erosion of our NHS with this bill making progress through parliament. This has been a debate in which the NPC (National Pensioners Convention) has been proactive. Whilst they applaud and very much appreciate the opposition raised to the Bill in the House of Commons on 14 July, they feel that many MPs fail to see the dangers and consequences if it is

passed into legislation. The NPC are now calling on worried members to write to our MPs asking them to oppose the new Bill for fear that it will undermine the NHS and put more of the service into the hands of the Private Sector. For a link to the Press Release, and the letter template please see: <https://www.npcuk.org/post/npc-shocked-by-mps-apathy-over-new-health-care-bill-that-threatens-nhs>. As always, our own Lewisham MPs are on-side—I call on you to spread the word to friends and family in other constituencies.

**TRANSPORT TO AND FROM HOSPITAL:** For a long time the debate has raged about whether or not to transport patients to hospital. I for one have been affected by this, and I feel certain that many of you have. I cannot tell you that after a long battle the NHS has committed to improving transport services for older people to and from hospital. I was surprised when Epsom offered me transport, but my son decided he would take me instead. It was a long campaign but the NHS have now decided to review their policy, and take on board the recommendations submitted by Age UK. Well done guys, you worked for us.

**TRIPLE LOCK CAMPAIGN:** You will agree I have been busy. Here is some information on the Triple Lock. The Triple Lock guarantees that the state pension is increased in line with inflation, earnings increases, or 2.5%, whichever is the higher. Because earnings were depressed last year as a result of the pandemic, the earnings increase this year is likely to be around 8%, resulting in a pension increase of around £11 week for those on the "old" state pension (£14 a week for those on the new state pension). Instead of seeing this as an opportunity to improve the very low level of the UK state pension, the Government is considering breaking yet another manifesto pledge to older people. If the Government gets away with suspending the Triple Lock this year, can they be trusted not to do so again in the future? Or if inflation rises rapidly next year because of a post-pandemic boom, will they suspend that element from the Triple Lock. This has been an ongoing

**Do you have an email 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 email). 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.***

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

issue and has been revisited many times. Check matters out online if you can or phone the office for copies of the Greater London Forum fact-sheets..

**OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS:** LPF is in urgent need of a volunteer Bookkeeper/Accountant. We also need an Administrative Officer. If you are, or you know anyone who is able to fill these roles, please let us know. The applicant must be experienced and have proven knowledge/skills, and be dedicated. The potential applicant should provide a CV, and reference from a reputable person.

**DONATING:** I was always told “charity begins at home”. Please do bear the Forum (your home charity) in mind: send us an extra cheque, buy those raffle tickets at Pensioners Day, fill in the donation option as well as the subscription monies on your membership Standing Order.

**LEAVING THE PANDEMIC BEHIND:** We have left the best for the last. You will be pleased to learn that we are proceeding positively about our Pensioners’ Day happening. We are advised that our favourite place, the Broadway Theatre will not be available, and we have secured an equally - if not more - great space, and a band, and you will be able to dance. The tickets are likely to cost a little more, and it will be on a first come basis, as we can accommodate only 350 people. At least one of our Speakers will be a Baroness. I give you advanced notice, so get your glitters out and practise your moves.

**VOLUNTEERS:** If the above is to happen, we will need the usual volunteers to sell raffle tickets, both prior and on the day//usher guests into the space//be on the door//distribute the sandwiches//help tidy the hall at the end//and more. Keep practising!

*Bridgit Sam-Bailey* Chairman

## Beat the Price Cap Increase

**Energy bills are set to go up for 15 million households in England, Wales and Scotland.** *Giovanna explains:*



It's because the energy price cap - the maximum price suppliers can charge customers is going up.

### **Will fuel bills of older people in Lewisham Increase?**

If you are on a standard tariff (you haven't got a particular named deal with your energy supplier) or prepayment meter (a card or key meter), then the answer is “yes”.

The price of electricity and gas will go up in October. Those on standard tariffs could see an increase of £139, from £1,138 to £1,277. Prepayment customers could see an increase of £153, from £1,156 to £1,309. This is an estimate based on an average household in the UK. The price difference for you could be higher or lower depending on the size of your property and how much energy you use. If you have compared prices and switched energy companies in the last year and you are named or fixed deal, then this won't affect you.

### **What is the Price Cap?**

**The energy price cap is an upper limit set by the regulator on the cost of gas and electricity bill. It sets a maximum amount that an energy supplier can charge you for each unit of electricity or gas.** This is the deal you'll get if you don't sign up named deal or a fixed tariff when joining a supplier. If you haven't switched energy companies in the past year, this price increase is likely to apply to you. If you are currently on a named deal with your energy company, you'll also end up on the new higher tariff if you don't switch to a new deal when your current deal comes to an end.

### **Why are Prices Increasing**

Every February and August, Ofgem announces the new level of the price cap. It takes into account the wholesale price of gas and electricity - which is what suppliers have to pay for the energy. This accounts for about 40% of your bill. The wholesale cost of energy has climbed by more than 50%, since February last year which accounts for the latest increase.

### **How can I beat the price cap?**

Some people will simply turn the heating down or off, stick on lots of clothes and hunker close to a little electric heater to reduce costs. You are a hardy generation, but once you get to a certain age being cold can disastrously impact on your health. It exacerbates heart disease, diabetes, cancers and many other conditions: this is because your heart has to work so much harder to keep you warm. It is no exaggeration to say that cold homes shorten lives.

It may surprise you to know that there is an alternative solution to get your energy costs down: simply switch to a better lower cost deal with a new energy company or even with your existing supplier. It's simple to switch using an price comparison site - all you'll need is your

**Is your membership up to date? Have you friends or neighbours who might like to join the Forum?**



A reminder that all paid up members on our books at the end of September have automatic entry into a grand prize draw at Pensioners Day (extra tickets available for £3). Standing order forms available on request (just phone the office on 020 8960 7869) or send in your cheque for £10 (renewals) or £5 for new members signing up. Six newsletters posted to you through the year, exclusive access to Forum outings and, of course, enhancing our campaign voice—*there is strength in numbers!*

postcode, the name of your current supplier, and the name of your current tariff. We recommend <https://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk>

**SELCE and our partners Groundwork London can provide free expert energy advice to help SE London residents get the best deal. You don't need access to the internet or a smart phone to benefit from our support - we can talk you through everything on the phone and fill in any online forms for you.**

## Phone SELCE on 0808 169 1779

### Beware you don't lose your Warm Home Discount

The Warm Home Discount Scheme is a government initiative that gives low-income households a £140 discount on their electricity bill. If you receive pension credit guarantee, you should automatically get this. If you don't, you may still be eligible depending on your circumstances. Beware, however, that you may lose your Warm Home Discount if you switch energy suppliers now. It depends on which energy supplier you switch to. If you want guidance, again, speak to us at South London Healthy Homes.

### Not affected by the Price Cap but still concerned about the cost of energy?

You can always call us for a FREE one to energy advice session. We can

- Provide impartial advice on how to pay less for your electricity, gas and water
- Provide energy and water debt advice
- Support you to access grants or discounts you may be entitled to
- Explain how to reduce your energy use at home by making your house more energy-efficient
- Connect you to other sources of help

Combined this can save £££'s. People are often surprised to find they can slash hundreds of pounds off their energy bills just by talking to our expert team.

**All our help is free, expert and absolutely confidential.**

## Learn something new and meet new people on a course at Adult Learning Lewisham

*Selina Eldridge writes:*

Adult Learning Lewisham (ALL) offers a wide range of courses to help you stay physically active or develop your creativity. ALL also run courses specifically for older people such as retirement wellbeing, get fit with music, Pilates for bone health, and digital skills courses to give you the confidence to set up and use online accounts and services. Enrolment for courses starting in the autumn term is open, with online courses as well as in-person courses available and you can check out Covid safety measures.

**Retirement Wellbeing** starts 14 September 10am-12noon where you can enjoy a wide range of activities, including arts and crafts, guest speakers and guided outings on this ten week course.

**Enrolment will continue for three weeks after the start of the course—so it's not too late!**

Enrol online at: <https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/education/adult/find-a-course> or by phone on 020 8314 6959 or 020 8314 7775 Monday to Friday, 10am–3pm.



### Do you drive a car that will incur a daily charge when the ULEZ is extended?

The TfL scrappage scheme to help low income or disabled Londoners scrap polluting vehicles is still open. It is online and complicated but places where you can get IT support could help you through the process.



## What we've been up to over the summer—Campaigns and Outings

### LPF members joined a delegation from Age UK going to 10 Downing Street—Elaine writes:

*On the Thursday 22nd July 2021, LPF invited me to participate in a campaign alongside Age UK to remind the PM of his promise to us regarding his Health and Social Care commitment, that which he has not kept. LPF has been able to stay in touch with many elderly, disabled, vulnerable, frightened, isolated and lonely members of Lewisham. It is for this reason why I support all the hard work carried out by staff, members, and volunteers.*

Rita was there too and adds:  
*The PM and his cabinet should remember that the elderly people of today are the foundation of the NHS. We deserve better care...*



Felicia refers to the wider picture:

*I very much enjoyed the experience of being there personally to remind the PM to keep his promise. The inequalities in the social care system are incomprehensible and in fact this pandemic has exposed it all... The NHS will never be near perfect if the inadequacy in the social care system is not fixed first.*

On a lighter note, in August the Forum had its first social outing in well over a year and Collene thanks us:  
*I just want to thank you for the lovely trip to Broadstairs ... Both my sister and friend want to say how much they enjoyed themselves. I think we all needed to be beside the seaside! Thanks again.*

And it goes both ways. Word has come back from some of the performers at Kentwell that LPF—engaged and interested—are just the sort of visitors they love!



## Monday Project and More

We are now regularly back in **St. Mauritius House** Lewisham Park, SE13 6QX 10.30am to 3pm each Monday with **activities** (knitting, chess, puzzles, etc.), **music and singing** at 11am, and a 20 minute **“healthy walk”** with the GCDA at 12noon.

*It is fun, it is sociable, and all are welcome.*

You are welcome to drop in—directions below—but it would help if you could ring 020 8690 7869 to let us know. (And the digital is only by appointment.)

*Also please ring Tracey to discuss bringing any activity to share with others in this social context and joining us as a regular volunteer.*

### The project now includes a series of informative and interactive workshops...

**Housing workshop** (linked to the Forum’s July Zoom meeting but new people who did not attend that welcome) **Housing, Health and Covid 19.**

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September**—time to be confirmed. An interactive workshop aimed at listening to members’ experiences of living at home during the pandemic; the challenges as well as the positives; and ideas for local housing improvements and post-Covid recovery. Essential to book in advance by ringing Tracey, the Forum Manager, on 020 8690 7869.

**Beat the Price Cap Surgeries (see middle pages)** SELCE are holding two ‘Beat the Price Cap’ surgeries on **27<sup>th</sup> September** and **11<sup>th</sup> October** 10.30am-3pm. On each day, 10.30 to 11, there will be a short general talk on how to reduce your energy bills. You will also be able to pre-book a 45 minute one-to-one appointment with an advisor for after the talk. Call SELCE on 0808 169 1779.

**A four week Cookery Club with the GCDA** Happening within the Monday Project from 11 to 1pm (followed by lunch) for the **four weeks from Monday 8th November**. Limited spaces so booking in advance is essential (and a commitment to attending if booked). Email Tracey on [projects@lpforum.org](mailto:projects@lpforum.org) or phone the Forum office 020 8690 7869 to go on the list. Priority to LPF members and St Mauritius House residents.

Easy access from all buses going between Catford and Lewisham. Get off at the “Lewisham Park” stop just north of the Hospital—then about 150m up Lewisham Park on the left there is a building with distinctive red and yellow striped brickwork.



## Lewisham Pensioners’ Day *Leaving the Pandemic Behind and Finding Your Feet Again!* Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October

12noon to 4pm (doors open 11.30)

With the Broadway Theatre closed we have a new and appropriate venue

### The Rivoli Ballroom

350 Brockley Road, Crofton Park, SE4 2BY



**Step into the glitz of a former era in the venue that takes you back to a glamorous past and features in dozens of films and TV shows.**

**Trains:** Crofton Park Station is just opposite and Brockley Station a short bus ride away.

**Buses:** Routes 122, 171 and 172 all stop right outside and the P4 goes along Brockley Grove.

**Car or Taxi:** No street parking restrictions in the area but very limited availability. Drop-off bays for taxis outside and opposite.

**Mobility issues:** step-free access up the side alley. (Ring 020 8690 7869 for more information.)

**Tickets £5—and space is limited so purchase in advance from the Monday Project or ring the office.**

New venue but familiar format—arrive, pick up your lunch, speakers (including **Baroness Christine Blower** and **Jill Manthorpe** of Kings College London), members’ prize draw (see page 2) plus our **Grand Raffle**.

The **entertainment hour** will be filled with the welcome return of **Red Hot and Blue** who played to us in the Broadway in 2016.



**Main prize donated by Fonehouse Catford, 148 Rushey Green, SE6 4HQ**

020 8690 0777

**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.